



Modernism and Style

Ben Hutchinson

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Tracing the stylistic self-conceptualization of modernism from Schopenhauer and Flaubert in the 1850s, through Nietzsche and the symbolists in the 1880s, to the high modernists of the 1920s, this book explores the far-reaching implications of Roland Barthes' claim that modern literature is "saturated with style." It offers both a broad, comparative survey of European modernism and an inventive re-reading of the major genres of the period, namely poetry, prose, and the manifesto. With reference to a wide range of canonical figures, including Aragon, Baudelaire, Eliot, Rémy de Gourmont, Joyce, Mina Loy, Thomas Mann, Jean Paulhan, Proust, Rilke, Tzara, Valéry, and Virginia Woolf, Hutchinson argues that modernism oscillates between embracing a literature of "pure" style and rejecting a literature that is "purely" style. Between these two poles, style emerges, in the words of John Middleton Murry, not as "an isolable quality of writing, but as writing itself."



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