



Transatlantic Modernism: Moral Dilemmas in Modernist Fiction

Martin Halliwell

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Transatlantic Modernism traces the intersection of artistic and moral ideas in European and American literary modernism. Rather than reading modernism as a complete rejection of social morality, this perceptive study shows how early twentieth-century writers such as Conrad, Faulkner, Gide, Kafka, Mann and Stein devised new aesthetic techniques to address ethical problems. By focusing on a range of decadent, naturalist, avant-garde and expatriate writers between the 1890s and 1940s, this book reassesses the moral trajectory of fiction on both sides of the Atlantic.

The book is divided into four parts - Part I deals with Decadence and Naturalism, Part II with Symbolic Centres of Modernism, Part III with Sexual and Cultural Difference, and Part IV with Modernist Trickery - to discuss how modernist writers forged creative, but sometimes dangerous, links between personal and social morality. The chapters alternate between considering broad literary trends, such as the European avant-garde, American writers in Paris and the modernist picaresque, and the close study of influential texts, including *The Immoralist*, *Death in Venice*, *The Secret Agent*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Amerika* and *Mephisto*. In response to the recent emergence of ethical theory in the humanities and the shifting parameters of national morality in the early twentieth-first century, Halliwell's book provides a fresh and timely analysis of the ways in which transatlantic modernists used fiction as a testing-ground for moral possibility. This new paperback edition contains an updated conclusion which explores modernist continuities in the early twenty-first century, literary responses to September 11 and the shifting parameters of national morality.

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