



Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945

Ann L. Ardis, Leslie W. Lewis

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In *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875–1945*, literary scholars working with a variety of interdisciplinary methodologies move feminine phenomena from the margins of the study of modernity to its center. Analyzing such cultural practices as selling and shopping, political and social activism, urban field work and rural labor, radical discourses on feminine sexuality, and literary and artistic experimentation, this volume contributes to the rich vein of current feminist scholarship on the "gender of modernism" and challenges the assumption that modernism rose naturally or inevitably to the forefront of the cultural landscape at the turn of the twentieth century.

During this period, "women's experience" was a rallying cry for feminists, a unifying cause that allowed women to work together to effect social change and make claims for women's rights in terms of their access to the public world—as voters, paid laborers, political activists, and artists commenting on life in the modern world. Women's experience, however, also proved to be a source of great divisiveness among women, for claims about its universality quickly unraveled to reveal the classism, racism, and Eurocentrism of various feminist activities and organizations.

Complementing recent attempts to historicize literary modernism by providing more thorough analyses of its material production, the essays in this volume examine both literary and non-literary writings of Jane Addams, Djuna Barnes, Toru Dutt, Radclyffe Hall, H.D., Pauline Hopkins, Emma Dunham Kelley, Amy Levy, Alice Meynell, Bram Stoker, Ida B. Wells, Rebecca West, and others as discursive events that shape our conception of the historical real. Instead of focusing exclusively or even centrally on modernism and literature, these essays address a broad array of textual materials, from political pamphlets to gynecology textbooks, as they investigate women's responses to the rise of commodity capitalism, middle-class women's entrance into the labor force, the welfare state's invasion of the working-class home, and the intensified eroticization of racial and class differences.

Contributors include: Ann L. Ardis, University of Delaware; Katherine L. Biers, University of Chicago; Clair Buck, Wheaton College; Lucy Burke, University of Manchester; Carolyn Burdett, University of North London; James Davis, Nassau Community College; Rita Felski, University of Virginia; Deborah Garfield, UCLA; Barbara Green, University of Notre Dame; Piya Pal-Lapinski, Bowling Green State University; Leslie W. Lewis, College of Saint Rose; Carla L. Peterson, University of Maryland; Francesca Sawaya, University of Oklahoma; Talia Schaffer, Queens College, CUNY; Alpana Sharma, Wright State University; Lynn Thiesmeyer, Keio University; Ana Parejo Vadillo, Birkbeck College, University of London; and Julian Yates, University of Delaware.

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