

## POETRY AND THE LIMITS OF MODERNITY IN DEPRESSION AMERICA

Furnishing a novel take on the poetry of the 1930s within the context of the cultural history of the Depression, this book argues that the period's economic and cultural crisis was accompanied by an epistemological crisis in which cultural producers increasingly cast doubt on language in its ability to represent society. *Poetry and the Limits of Modernity in Depression America* pursues this guiding premise through six chapters, each framing the problem of the ongoing vitality of language as a social medium with respect to a particular poet: Louis Zukofsky and the commodification of language; Muriel Rukeyser and documentary photography; Charles Reznikoff and Depression-era historiography; Sterling A. Brown and the blues as both an ethnographic phenomenon and a marketable cultural product; Norman Macleod and Southwest regionalism; and Lorine Niedecker and ethnographic surrealism. The book closes by examining the shifting status of the poet as society transitioned from a focus on production to an emphasis on consumption in the post-war period.

JUSTIN PARKS is Associate Professor at the Institute for Language and Culture at UiT-The Arctic University of Norway. His work is rooted in modern and contemporary poetry and American studies, with particular interest in Depression-era culture. His recent work engages with energy humanities; he is currently researching poetry's relationship to energy discourses in the twentieth century.

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# POETRY AND THE LIMITS OF MODERNITY IN DEPRESSION AMERICA

JUSTIN PARKS

*University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway*



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*For Minna  
and Milena*

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