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Charles Ferrall

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MODERNIST WRITING AND REACTIONARY POLITICS

In *Modernist Writing and Reactionary Politics*, Charles Ferrall argues that the politics of Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Lawrence, and Wyndham Lewis were a response to the increasing separation of art from a society undergoing a second industrial revolution. Fascism became attractive to these writers because it promised to reintegrate art into society while simultaneously guaranteeing its autonomy. As a kind of parodic avant-garde, it therefore allowed the reactionaries to be both 'primitive' and 'modern' at the same time. Yet with the exception of Pound and Yeats, these writers all finally rejected fascism preferring instead to see the aesthetic as a sphere in permanent opposition to liberal democracy, rather than the basis for a new social order. Individual chapters focus on Yeats and decolonisation, Pound and 'the Jews', Eliot and the uncanny, Lawrence and homosexuality, and Lewis and the Cartesian primitive. Ferrall's account of why some of the greatest writers of the early twentieth century became involved in reactionary politics offers new insights into the relation between modernist aesthetics, technology and avant-gardism.

CHARLES FERRALL is Lecturer in the School of English, Film and Theatre at Victoria University of Wellington. His articles have been published in *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *English Studies in Canada*, and *Modern Fiction Studies*.

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