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0521648696 - Theorizing the Avant-Garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity

Richard Murphy

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In *Theorizing the Avant-Garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity*, Richard Murphy mobilizes theories of the postmodern to challenge our understanding of the avant-garde. He assesses the importance of the avant-garde for contemporary culture and for the debates among theorists of postmodernism such as Jameson, Eagleton, Lyotard and Habermas. Murphy reconsiders the classic formulation of the avant-garde in Lukács, Bloch and Bürger, especially their discussion of aesthetic autonomy, and investigates the relationship between art and politics via a discussion of Marcuse, Adorno and Benjamin. Combining close textual readings of a wide range of works of literature as well as films, it draws on a rich array of critical theories, such as those of Bakhtin, Todorov, MacCabe, Belsey and Raymond Williams. This interdisciplinary project will appeal to all those interested in modernist and avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century, and provides a critical rethinking of the present-day controversy regarding postmodernity.

RICHARD MURPHY has taught at Columbia University and at the University of Freiburg, and is Associate Professor in the Literature Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He has published numerous essays on literary theory, film and twentieth-century culture.

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*Literature, Culture, Theory 32*



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1999

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Palatino 10/12.5 pt. [vN]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 63291 9 hardback  
ISBN 0 521 64869 6 paperback

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