



Mediating Modernity: German Literature and the "New" Media, 1895-1930 (Refiguring Modernism)

Stefanie Harris

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Mediating Modernity examines this probing question: “What happens to the writing of a printed text when the phonograph and cinematograph—and both names refer, not accidentally, to writing—are able to fix the hitherto unwriteable data flow of time and the visual image?” In her study of literary modernism, Stefanie Harris counters existing scholarship by studying literature as a part, rather than an opponent, of its contemporary *mediascape*, a term used to define not only the existing and emerging technologies that serve to record and transmit information, but also, more broadly, the means by which the world is experienced and understood.

Through an interdisciplinary examination that includes close studies of Rilke, Döblin, Dos Passos, Pinthus, Musil, and Hofmannsthal—and relies on the theoretical works of Foucault, Benjamin, and particularly Friedrich Kittler—Harris proposes that literary authors in the early twentieth century, while generally considered far removed from mass culture, engaged in an inevitable, if uneasy, relationship with widespread emergent technologies. These technologies, which radically reoriented temporal and spatial orders and thus the organization of modes of understanding the world, compelled literary authors to draw literature definitively out of the poetically ideal realm and into adaptive contact with other forms of media.

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