



Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectuals Abroad

David G. Farley

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As the study of travel writing has grown in recent years, scholars have largely ignored the literature of modernist writers. *Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectuals Abroad*, by David Farley, addresses this gap by examining the ways in which a number of writers employed the techniques and stylistic innovations of modernism in their travel narratives to variously engage the political, social, and cultural milieu of the years between the world wars.

Modernist Travel Writing argues that the travel book is a crucial genre for understanding the development of modernism in the years between the wars, despite the established view that travel writing during the interwar period was largely an escapist genre—one in which writers hearkened back to the realism of nineteenth-century literature in order to avoid interwar anxiety. Farley analyzes works that exist on the margins of modernism, generically and geographically, works that have yet to receive the critical attention they deserve, partly due to their classification as travel narratives and partly because of their complex modernist styles. The book begins by examining the ways that travel and the emergent travel regulations in the wake of the First World War helped shape Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. From there, it goes on to examine E. E. Cummings's frustrated attempts to navigate the "unworld" of Soviet Russia in his book *Eimi*, Wyndham Lewis's satiric journey through colonial Morocco in *Filibusters in Barbary*, and Rebecca West's urgent efforts to make sense of the fractious Balkan states in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. These modernist writers traveled to countries that experienced most directly the tumult of revolution, the effects of empire, and the upheaval of war during the years between World War I and World War II. Farley's study focuses on the question of what constitutes "evidence" for Pound, Lewis, Cummings, and West as they establish their authority as eyewitnesses, translate what they see for an audience back home, and attempt to make sense of a transformed and transforming modern world.

Modernist Travel Writing makes an original contribution to the study of literary modernism while taking a distinctive look at a unique subset within the growing field of travel writing studies. David Farley's work will be of interest to students and teachers in both of these fields as well as to early-twentieth-century literary historians and general enthusiasts of modernist studies.

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