



Re-making it New: Contemporary American Poetry and the Modernist Tradition (Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture)

Lynn Keller

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As a tradition modernism has fostered particularly polarised impulses - though the great modernist poems offer impressive models, modernist principles, epitomised in Ezra Pound's exhortation to 'make it new', encourage poets to reject the methods of their immediate predecessors. *Re-making it New* explores the impact of this polarised tradition on contemporary American poets by examining the careers of John Ashbery, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Creeley and James Merrill. To demonstrate how these four have extended modernist attitudes to create a distinctive post-modern art, each one's poetry is compared with that of a modernist who has been an important influence: Ashbery is discussed in conjunction with Wallace Stevens, Bishop with Marianne Moore, Creeley with William Carlos Williams and Merrill with W. H. Auden. Lynn Keller's book shows that contemporary poets have chosen not to reach for order as their modernist predecessors did; instead, they attempt to dissolve hierarchical distinction and polarising categories in a modest spirit of accommodation and acceptance.

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