



Modernity and Progress: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Orwell

Ronald Berman

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Breaks new critical ground by exploring philosophical and aesthetic issues germane to the writings of three major modern literary figures.

In the 1920s and '30s, understandings of time, place, and civilization were subjected to a barrage of new conceptions. Ronald Berman probes the work of three writers who wrestled with one or more of these issues in ways of lasting significance.

Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Orwell all grappled with fluid notions of time: Hemingway's absolute present, Fitzgerald's obsession with what might be and what might have been, and Orwell's concerns with progress. For these authors, progress is also tied to competing senses of place--for Fitzgerald, the North versus the South; for Hemingway, America versus Europe. At stake for each is an understanding of what constitutes true civilization in a post-war world. Berman discusses Hemingway's deployment of language in tackling the problems of thinking and knowing. Berman follows this notion further in examining the indisputable impact upon Hemingway's prose of Paul Cézanne's painting and the nature of perception.

Finally, Berman considers the influence on Orwell of Aristotle and Freud's ideas of civilization, translated by Orwell into the fabric of *1984* and other writings.

Ronald Berman is Professor of English at the University of California at San Diego and past chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is author of six books, including "*The Great Gatsby*" and *Fitzgerald's World of Ideas* and *Fitzgerald-Wilson-Hemingway: Language and Experience*.

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