



Nihilism and the Sublime Postmodern (Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory)

Will Slocombe

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This book examines the relationship between nihilism and postmodernism in relation to the sublime, and is divided into three parts: history, theory, and praxis. Arguing against the simplistic division in literary criticism between nihilism and the sublime, the book demonstrates that both are clearly implicated with the Enlightenment. Postmodernism, as a product of the Enlightenment, is therefore implicitly related to *both* nihilism *and* the sublime, despite the fact that it is often characterised as *either* nihilistic *or* sublime. Whereas prior forms of nihilism are 'modernist' because they seek to codify reality, postmodernism creates a new formulation of nihilism - 'postmodern nihilism' - that is itself sublime. This is explored in relation to a broad survey of postmodern literature in two chapters, the first on aesthetics and the second on ethics. It offers a coherent thesis for reappraising the relationship between nihilism and the sublime, and grounds this argument with frequent references to postmodern literature, making it a book suitable for both researchers and those more generally interested in postmodern literature.

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