



Rereading Read: New Views on Herbert Read

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From poverty and a Yorkshire orphanage, Herbert Read went on to become the most significant cultural critic to come out of England in the twentieth century.

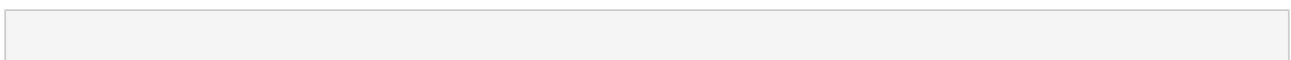
Between 1940 and 1960 he was the most well-respected writer on modernist art in the English language, effectively defining the movement during that period. He was a major art theorist and writer on literature, and a key figure in anarchist politics.

He was a leading figure in many European art movements, including Constructivism and Surrealism, and was one of the first English writers to embrace the Existentialist theories of Jean-Paul Sartre. Remarkably Read was once accused by the leading English modernist, Percy Wyndham Lewis, of being too radical in his artistic tastes.

Read was also a notable poet of the First World War, and in later years helped to found numerous art organisations, including the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. And yet, after his death in 1968, he became an almost forgotten figure in art and cultural studies, eclipsed by later figures such as Clement Greenberg and Raymond Williams.

In this book sixteen of the world's leading writers on modernist cultural history look at Read's work again, focusing on his anarchist political beliefs, his work on art and literature, and his own creative writings. They place him in the context of twentieth century cultural life, and offer startling explanations for his neglect by later writers on modernism.

The book is very well illustrated in full colour, with images of works by many of the artists Read championed.



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