



Robert Musil and the NonModern

Mark M. Freed

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Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities* is widely recognized as a monument of modernist literature alongside *Remembrance of Things Past* and *Ulysses*. But while Musil is a major scholarly industry in the German-speaking world, critical attention from English-speaking scholars remains disproportionately small. Moreover, there has been little engagement with Musil's contribution to cultural theory from those working outside literary studies.

Freed brings Musil into dialogue with such critics of the modern as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Lyotard and argues that Musil's theory and literary performance of *essayism* constitutes a strategy of nonmodernity: that is, an engagement with the problems of modernity that does not re-inscribe the distinctions on which modernism grounded itself.

This book not only offers an understanding of Musil's essayism made possible by Latour's account of modernity: it also articulates what the discursive and cultural project of nonmodernity might look like. The book thereby introduces Musil scholars and those working in the problematics of postmodernism to one another's interests.



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