



Machine-Age Comedy (Modernist Literature and Culture)

Michael North

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In this latest addition to Oxford's Modernist Literature & Culture series, renowned modernist scholar Michael North poses fundamental questions about the relationship between modernity and comic form in film, animation, the visual arts, and literature. *Machine-Age Comedy* vividly constructs a cultural history that spans the entire twentieth century, showing how changes wrought by industrialization have forever altered the comic mode. With keen analyses, North examines the work of a wide range of artists--including Charlie Chaplin, Walt Disney, Marcel Duchamp, Samuel Beckett, and David Foster Wallace--to show the creative and unconventional ways the routinization of industrial society has been explored in a broad array of cultural forms. Throughout, North argues that modern writers and artists found something inherently comic in new experiences of repetition associated with, enforced by, and made inevitable by the machine age. Ultimately, this rich, tightly focused study offers a new lens for understanding the development of comedic structures during periods of massive social, political, and cultural change to reveal how the original promise of modern life can be extracted from its practical disappointment.

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