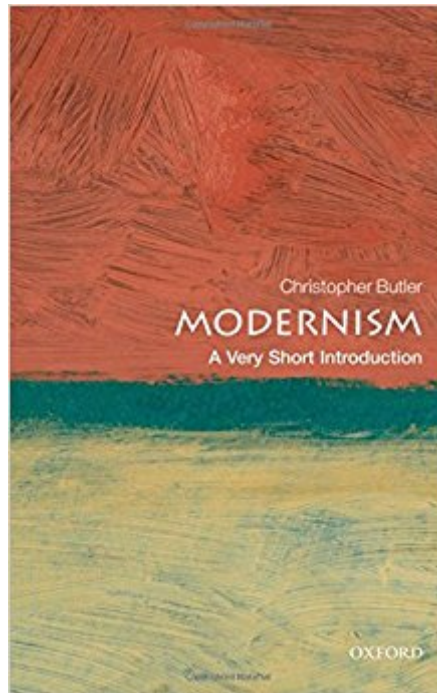


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# Modernism: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

Modernism ushered in some of the most exciting innovations in art and literature, from Fauvism, Cubism, and Dada, to the novels of James Joyce and Franz Kafka, to such provocative works as Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain." But Modernism also left many people puzzled in its wake. How can a routine bathroom fixture be considered a work of art? Shouldn't a novel have a beginning, a middle, and an end--or at least a story? In this Very Short Introduction, Christopher Butler provides a coherent account of Modernism across various aesthetic and cultural fields. Butler examines how and why Modernism began, explaining what it is and showing how virtually all aspects of 20th and 21st century life have been influenced by its aesthetic legacy. Butler considers several aspects of modernism, including some classic modernist works, movements and notions of the avant garde, and the idea of "progress" in art. Finally, Butler sheds light on modernist ideas of the self, subjectivity, irrationalism, people and machines, and the political dimensions of modernism as a whole. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A useful introduction, as lucid and engaging as it is concise. / Peter Blair, University of Chester

Christopher Butler is Professor of English Language and Literature at Christ Church College, University of Oxford.

As advertised.

Although I had expected something clear and understandable... it was far from that!

it's awfully pedantically written.

I like this collection (A Very Short Introduction) a lot, but this book in particular fails at giving a definition of modernism.

This is a good quick introduction. A good supplement to a course on modernist literature or art. What is important is that it shows the Modernist project as something that encompassed art, literature, psychology, science, and politics--in other words, it contextualizes the movement.

Very good comprehensive introduction to Modernism. Only not too helpful for me at the moment because I was looking for something more specific. Butler has this wonderful ability to make connections between the arts. He constructs a bigger picture of the Modern movement where many forms are interlinked, influenced and informed one another. He also has a longer book Early Modernism that might be more helpful if you are looking for in-depth and more detailed discussions.

Excellent intro to a complicated subject. Much superior to other more well-known -- and wordier -- attempts at explaining modernism.

This book is everything it claims to be. It's a short but relatively comprehensive introduction to its subject matter that you could easily read in one sitting, maybe while out on your back porch on a day off. You learn enough of the subject matter that, while you may not have a full understanding of it, you'll at least be able to follow along with a conversation about it.

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