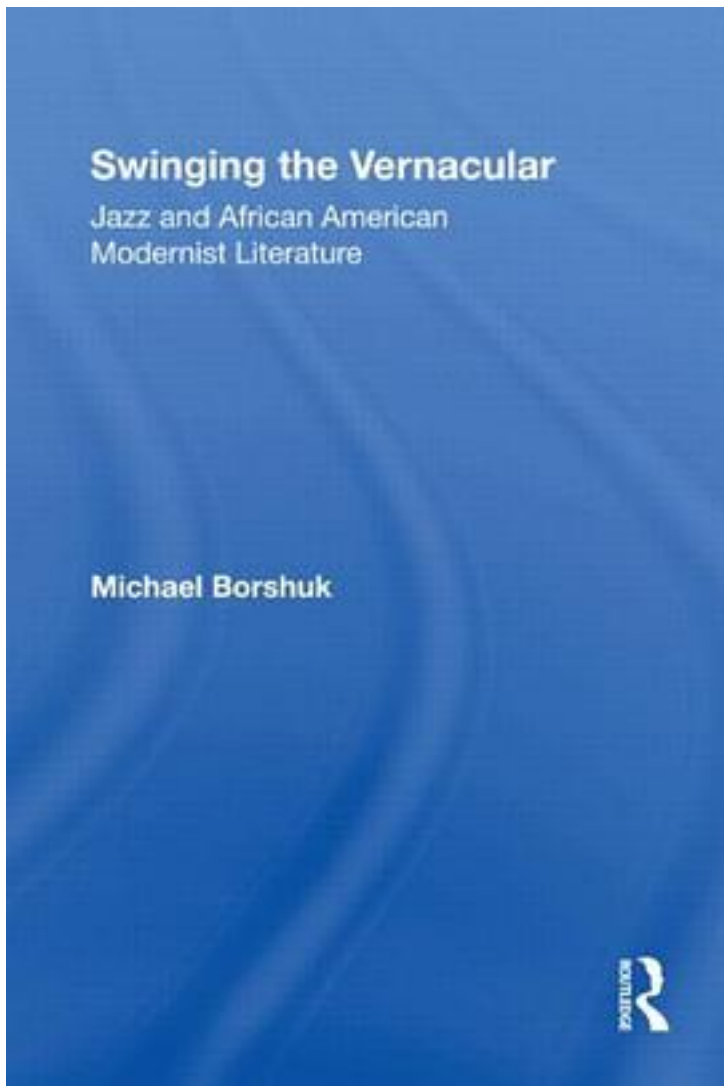


Swinging the Vernacular



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Exploring twentieth-century African American writing in light of recent critical reconsiderations of American modernism, this book focuses on the poetry of Langston Hughes and Michael S. Harper, and the fiction of Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray. Recent studies have suggested that American modernism thrives on a cultural hybridity unique to the United States. Michael Borshuk argues that there is a recognizable strand of African American modernist literature that negotiates this hybridity by adopting signal elements from a jazz musical aesthetic: namely, intertextuality, dialogism and parody. Borshuk analyzes how this African American jazz-modernist tradition complements the aesthetic innovation of 'mainstream' modernism in its experimentation with jazz form, but at the same time constitutes an important political intervention in American culture, as it redresses social inequities through an aesthetic of intertextual play. All the more valuable for combining contemporary cultural and musicological theory with an engaging prose style, this book presents a timely contribution to American modernist studies.

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