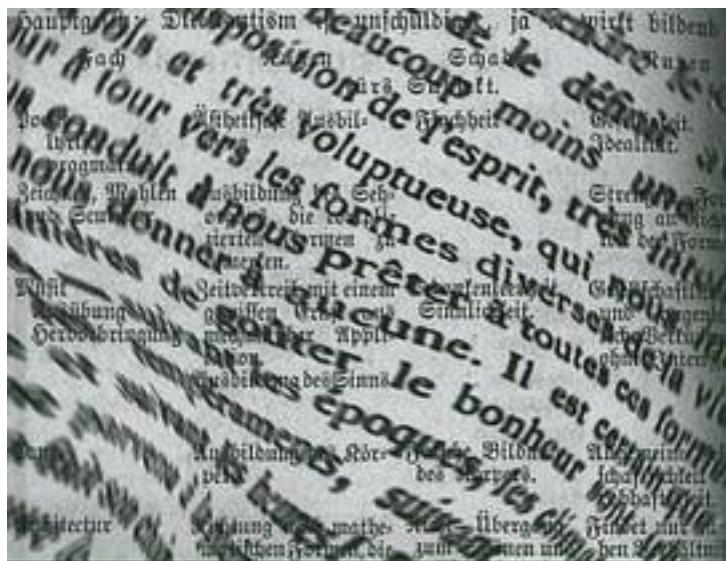


# Dilettantism and Its Values



STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 9

## Dilettantism and its Values

*From Weimar Classicism to the fin de siècle*

Richard Hibbitt



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The concept of dilettantism has not always been associated with amateurism or superficiality. It played a significant role in French and German critical discourse from the late eighteenth century until the fin de siecle, embracing notions such as apprenticeship, fruitful error, parody, aestheticism and scepticism. Attempts to define dilettantism in a binary relationship with art have often foundered due to a fundamental ambivalence to its values. The major texts on the subject are Goethe and Schiller's unfinished 'dilettantism project' (1799) and Paul Bourget's essay on Ernest Renan (1882), although the term was also used by writers including Wieland, Baudelaire, Laforgue, Nietzsche, Hofmannsthal and Thomas Mann. In this wide-ranging study Richard Hibbitt provides the first book-length comparative analysis of the concept of dilettantism, tracing its chronological development and proposing a synthesis of its diverse aspects and values.

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