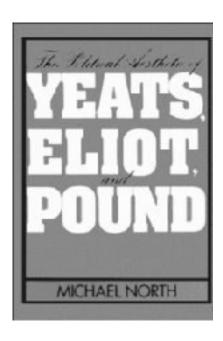
The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound



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The politics of Yeats, Eliot and Pound have long been a source of discomfort and difficulty for literary critics and cultural historians. In The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot and Pound, Michael North offers a subtle reading of these issues by linking aesthetic modernism with an attempt in all these writers to resolve basic contradictions in modern liberalism. The many contradictions of modernism, which is seen as inwardly personal yet impersonal, subjective and yet beholden to tradition, fragmented and yet whole, mark the reappearance in art of these political contradictions. Though Yeats, Eliot and Pound certainly attempted to resolve in art problems that could not be resolved in actuality, their very attempt resulted in a politicised aesthetic, one that confessed their inability to do so. Yet this aesthetic retained an element of critical power, precisely because it could not cover up the political contradictions that concerned it; the poetry remains a valid criticism of the

status quo and even in its failure suggests the beginnings of an alternative.
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