



Making Love Modern: The Intimate Public Worlds of New York's Literary Women

Nina Miller

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In the teens and twenties, New York was home to a rich variety of literary subcultures. Within these intermingled worlds, gender lines and other boundaries were crossed in ways that were hardly imaginable in previous decades. Among the bohemians of Greenwich Village, the sophisticates of the Algonquin Round Table, and the literati of the Harlem Renaissance, certain women found fresh, powerful voices through which to speak and write. Enda St. Vincent Millay and Dorothy Parker are now best remembered for their colorful lives; Genevieve Taggard, Gwendolyn Bennett, and Helene Johnson are hardly remembered at all. Yet each made a serious literary contribution to the meaning of modern femininity, relationship, and selfhood.

Making Love Modern uncovers the deep historical sensitivity and interest in these women's love poetry. Placing their work in the context of subcultures nested within national culture, Nina Miller explores the tensions that make this literature so rewarding for contemporary readers. A poetry of intimate expression, it also functioned powerfully as public assertion. The writers themselves were high-profile embodiments of femininity, the local representatives of New Womanhood within their male-centered subcultural worlds. This book captures the literary lives of these woman as well as the complex subcultures they inhabited--Harlem, the Village, and glamorous midtown Manhattan.



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