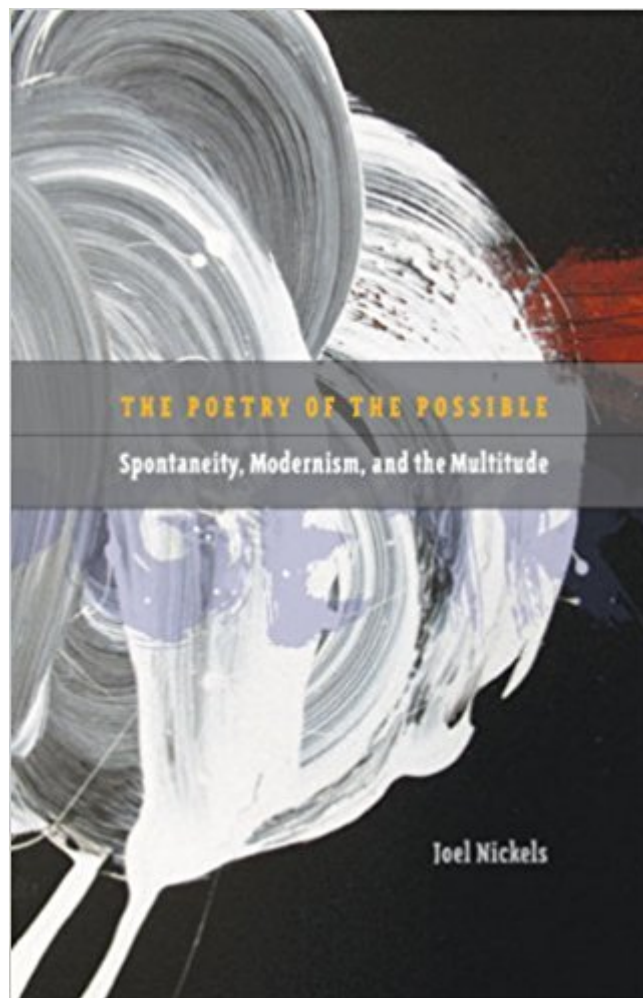




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The Poetry Of The Possible: Spontaneity, Modernism, And The Multitude



Synopsis

The Poetry of the Possible challenges the conventional image of modernism as a socially phobic formation, arguing that modernism's abstractions and difficulties are ways of imagining unrealized powers of collective self-organization. Establishing a conceptual continuum between modernism and contemporary theorists such as Paulo Virno, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, and Alain Badiou, Joel Nickels rediscovers modernism's attempts to document the creative potenza of the multitude. By examining scenes of collective life in works by William Carlos Williams, Wyndham Lewis, Laura Riding, and Wallace Stevens, Nickels resurrects modernism's obsession with constituent power: the raw, indeterminate capacity for reciprocal counsel that continually constitutes and reconstitutes established political regimes. In doing so, he reminds us that our own attempts to imagine leaderless networks of collective initiative are not so much breaks with modernist forms of knowledge as restagings of some of modernism's most radical moments of political speculation. Setting modernism's individual and collective models of spontaneity in dialogue with theorists of political spontaneity such as Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno, Nickels retells the story of modernism as the struggle to represent powers of collective self-organization that lie outside established regimes of political representation.

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Customer Reviews

Last weekend President Obama stirred up a debate when he observed that businesses succeed from the toil of workers and the brains of government employees and officials. A business owner's

contribution to an enterprise is only one part of the social efforts that create wealth. The President didn't expand the proposition to its obvious corollary, namely that workers and government are entitled to the full measure of wealth that their muscles and brains create. The best summary of the President's point was made in the on-line Christian Science Monitor by guest writer Jeffrey R. Cornwall: "Business success takes a village." This builds on Hilary Clinton's memorable book title It Takes A Village To Raise A Child. The best detailed discussion of the social theories underpinning the President's comment is a small volume released by the University of Minnesota Press, by coincidence, on the same weekend that the President made his comments. The book of literary criticism is the Poetry Of The Possible: Spontaneity, Modernism And The Multitude. This is a small volume that looks at the work of four Twentieth Century poets through the lens of a Marxist critique. This insightful book is the work of University of Miami (Florida) professor Joel Nickels. The poets discussed by Professor Nickels are William Carlos Williams, Wyndham Lewis, Laura Riding and Wallace Stevens. Except for Laura Riding, these are names of poets that most of us will recognize. Laura Riding is less well-known. An explanation is hinted at deep in the book's page of copyright permissions. Jackson's "...

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