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Mere Reading: The Poetics of Wonder in Modern American Novels (Paperback)

By Lee Clark Mitchell

Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, United States, 2017. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Mere Reading argues for a return to the foundations of literary study established nearly a century ago. Following a recent period dominated by symptomatic analyses of fictional texts (new historicist, Marxist, feminist, identity-political), Lee Clark Mitchell joins a burgeoning neo-formalist movement in challenging readers to embrace a rationale for literary criticism that has too long been ignored-a neglect that corresponds, perhaps not coincidentally, to a flight from literature courses themselves. In close readings of six American novels spread over the past century-Willia Cather's *The Professor's House*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* and *The Road*, and Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*-Mitchell traces a shifting strain of late modernist innovation that celebrates a species of magic and wonder, of aesthetic bliss (as Barthes and Nabokov both coincidentally described the experience) that dumbfounds the reader and compels a reassessment of interpretive assumptions. The novels included here aspire to being read slowly, so that sounds, rhythms, repetitions, rhymes, and other verbal features take on a heightened poetic status-in critic Barbara Johnson's words, the...



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