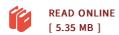# Ashes Taken for Fire Aesthetic Modernism and the Critique of Identity

By Kevin M. Bell

Univ Of Minnesota Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 240 pages. Dimensions: 8.9in. x 5.9in. x 0.7in.For years critics have held that literary modernism was both apolitical and solipsistic. While the former charge began to give way with the recession of New Criticism, the latter has grown in strength as a lead-in to the claim that postmodernism is apolitical and solipsistic. Against this backdrop, Kevin Bell surveys fiction by Conrad, Woolf, Faulkner, West, Ellison, and Himes to show that modernism is a sharply philosophical archive. In Ashes Taken for Fire, he argues that modernism exposes cultural identities such as blackness as mere strategies of conforming the self into belonging. Bells examination pursues the question of nonidentity through sound, silence, and gesture, treating these as technologies of reading the contradictions, breakdowns, and erasures that constitute subjectivity. His analysis of these texts reveals that the aesthetic investigations they perform undo the logic of cultural identity, devastating such reductive rubrics as race or gender. Ashes Taken for Fire explores the experience of blackness in both its chromaticocular and racial registers. For while blackness operates as a standard figural expression for disorientation, its presumably voided character is reprojected in this work as an immanent...

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