



Nihilism in Postmodernity: Lyotard, Baudrillard, Vattimo

By Ashley Woodward

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Nihilism in Postmodernity is an exploration of the nature of the problem of meaninglessness in the contemporary world through the philosophical traditions of nihilism and postmodernism. The author traces the advent of modern nihilism in the works of Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger, before detailing the postmodern transformation of nihilism in the works of three major postmodern thinkers: Lyotard, Baudrillard, and Vattimo. He presents a qualified defense of their positions, arguing that while there is much under-appreciated value in their responses to nihilism, they fail to address adequately the problem of contingency in contemporary life. Drawing on the critical encounters with nihilism in both existentialist and postmodern traditions, the author concludes by staking out future directions for combating meaninglessness.

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Nihilism in Postmodernity: Lyotard, Baudrillard, Vattimo By *Ashley Woodward* Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2717791 in Books
- Published on: 2009-05-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .75" w x 6.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 330 pages

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