



Modernism: The Lure of Heresy

By Peter Gay

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“Rich, learned, briskly written, maddening yet necessary study.”?Lee Siegel,
New York Times Book Review

Peter Gay explores the shocking modernist rebellion that, beginning in the 1840s, transformed art, literature, music, and film. Modernism presents a thrilling pageant of heretics that includes Oscar Wilde, Pablo Picasso, D. W. Griffiths, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Walter Gropius, Arnold Schoenberg, and (of course!) Andy Warhol. 16 pages of four-color illustrations and 92 black-and-white illustrations throughout

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Putting a Freudian view of life as an arena of conflict at the center of a view of modernism, this outspoken study tracks the avant-garde across a wide array of high culture—literature, music and dance, painting and sculpture, architecture and film. Conventional Victorians, according to Gay, found the belief in art for art's sake of libertine and aesthete Oscar Wilde as much a perversion as his homosexuality. But even fans often get it wrong, says Gay, embracing Edvard Munch's most famous painting, *The Scream*, as the quintessential symbol of modern angst, while Munch meant his nightmarish vision as a confession of his own inner state. And thanks to generous patrons, the oeuvre of anti-artist Marcel Duchamp, an enemy of museums, is featured prominently at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Modernism isn't a single style, Gay shows: in literature, *Ulysses*'s wordy, sensual world stands in direct opposition to Virginia Woolf's in *Mrs. Dalloway*, spare and cool. This latest from Gay (National Book Award winner for *The Enlightenment*) isn't a monumental or definitive treatise but a highly personal, arbitrary and invigorating collection of mini-essays that view a variety of artistic works from a fresh perspective. 16 pages of color, and b&w illus.. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

"It's done so gracefully, and engagingly, that even as I raced to finish before our interview, I couldn't make myself skim." (Katie Bolick - Boston Globe)

"A masterful work of cultural history . . . and it's truly a pleasure to read." (Mia Fineman - Slate)

"A sweeping survey . . . offering shrewd analyses." (William Grimes - The New York Times)

"Peter Gay is perhaps our leading historian of culture and ideas." (Tim Rutten - Los Angeles Times)

"An ambitious survey . . . [by] a superior popularizer." (Michael Dirda - Washington Post)

About the Author

Peter Gay (1923?2015) was the author of more than twenty-five books, including the National Book Award winner *The Enlightenment*, the best-selling *Weimar Culture*, and the widely translated *Freud: A Life for Our Time*.

Users Review

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