



A History of Modern Aesthetics 3 Volume Set

By Professor Paul Guyer

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A History of Modern Aesthetics narrates the history of philosophical aesthetics from the beginning of the eighteenth century through the twentieth century. Aesthetics began with Aristotle's defense of the cognitive value of tragedy in response to Plato's famous attack on the arts in *The Republic*, and cognitivist accounts of aesthetic experience have been central to the field ever since. But in the eighteenth century, two new ideas were introduced: that aesthetic experience is important because of emotional impact - precisely what Plato criticized - and because it is a pleasurable free play of many or all of our mental powers. This book tells how these ideas have been synthesized or separated by both the best-known and lesser-known aestheticians of modern times, focusing on Britain, France, and Germany in the eighteenth century; Germany and Britain in the nineteenth; and Germany, Britain, and the United States in the twentieth.

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Review

Praise for Volume 1:

"In this splendid study, Paul Guyer knits together the controversies of the eighteenth century, placing in dialogue the influential theorists - some famous, some forgotten - of Britain, France, and Germany. Not only is this a work of stunning historical scholarship, it is also a compelling and distinctive analysis of the complex character of modern aesthetics."

Carolyn Korsmeyer, University at Buffalo, State University of New York

Praise for Volume 2:

"With a remarkable blend of comprehensiveness and concision, Guyer traces the evolving interplay between competing conceptions of the aesthetic - as play, emotional arousal, and higher cognition. German philosophers, many relatively obscure, are united in a single narrative with artists and critics from the English-speaking world. A unique contribution to the field."

Christopher Janaway, University of Southampton

Praise for Volume 3:

"By weaving its story around the questions of whether and how twentieth-century philosophy accommodates all the elements of the experience of art - engaging the imagination, stimulating cognition, and producing pleasure - the third volume of Paul Guyer's monumental history of aesthetics, like its predecessors, is not just an encyclopaedic account of various views (which it certainly is): it is a work of original philosophy in its own right."

Alexander Nehamas, Princeton University

"Never faltering across 750,000 words, Guyer's writing exemplifies the scrupulous honesty of the finest scholarship."

Ian Ground, The Times Literary Supplement

About the Author

Paul Guyer is the inaugural Jonathan Nelson Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at Brown University. He is author of nine books, and editor of six collections on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, including four focusing on Kant's aesthetics. He has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and prizes, including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship and an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Prize. *A History of Modern Aesthetics* was facilitated by a Laurance Rockefeller Fellowship at the Princeton University Center for Human Values. Professor Guyer is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has been president of both the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association and the American Society for Aesthetics.

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