



# Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture

By Robert B. Pippin

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*Modernism as a Philosophical Problem, 2e* presents a new interpretation of the negative and critical self-understanding characteristic of much European high culture since romanticism and especially since Nietzsche, and answers the question of why the issue of modernity became a philosophical problem in European tradition.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Library Journal

Pippin's "modernism" is the ideology behind empirical science, liberal democracy, and universal reason. Arnold Toynbee first noticed that modernism was in danger in his landmark *A Study in History*. Lately, it has been flayed by philosophers (Derrida, Foucault) and others who see it as a bourgeois "first world" doctrine. Pippin thinks there is an alternative: Hegel rejected every kind of external constraint on what humans ought to believe (postulating limitations even to empirical science and morality based on Kant's objective universal reason), but he showed us our interdependence and so gave us a basis for community. Pippin claims Hegel's logic is imperfect and imperfectible, and he is skeptical of the time-transcending Absolute Spirit and the notion of objective historical progress serving to undergird human rights. He thus leaves the oppressed to appeal to the communal reasoning of their oppressors. This difficult book will challenge those who believe in objective reason.

- *Leslie Armour, Univ. of Ottawa, Canada*

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#### From the Back Cover

*Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, Second Edition presents an interpretation of the negative and critical self-understanding characteristic of culture since romanticism and especially since Nietzsche, and answers the question of why the issue of modernity became a philosophical problem in European tradition.

Pippin defends an original re-narration of the development of modern philosophy, substantially different from that common in orthodox, postmodernist and critical theory discussions, and one much more sensitive to the radicality of the most complete expression and defense of a modernist self-understanding - the classical German Idealist tradition, especially the position defended by Hegel. This interpretation is the basis for the claim that no paradigm shift, ideology critique, or new way of thinking can dispense with or overcome such modernist aspirations. In fact, the author argues, one can still detect the persistence of such aspirations and commitments in some of the harshest modernity critics, in Nietzsche and in Heidegger especially.

This unique and engaging view of modernity is an essential read for students, academics, and researchers studying Modernism, 20th Century Philosophy, Social Theory, and Hegel and German Idealism.

#### About the Author

**Robert B. Pippin** is the Raymond W. and Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor in the Committee on Social Thought and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. He is the author of several books on the modern philosophical tradition and one on literature, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life* (1999), as well as numerous articles on similar topics.

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