

# Insult and the Making of the Gay Self



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A bestseller in France following its publication in 1999, "Insult and the Making of the Gay Self" is an extraordinary set of reflections on "the gay question" by Didier Eribon, one of France's foremost public intellectuals. Known internationally as the author of a path-breaking biography of Michel Foucault, Eribon is a leading voice in French gay studies. In explorations of gay subjectivity as it is lived now and as it has been expressed in literary history and in the life and work of Foucault, Eribon argues that gay male politics, social life, and culture are transformative responses to an oppressive social order. Bringing together the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, and Erving Goffman, he contends that gay culture and political movements flow from the need to overcome a world of insult in the process of creating gay selves. Eribon describes the emergence of homosexual literature in Britain and France at the turn of the last century and traces this new gay discourse from Oscar Wilde and the literary circles of late-Victorian Oxford to Andre Gide and Marcel Proust. He asserts that Foucault should be placed in a long line of authors - including Wilde, Gide, and Proust - who from the nineteenth century onward have tried to create spaces in which to resist subjection and reformulate oneself. Drawing on his unrivaled knowledge of Foucault's oeuvre, Eribon presents a masterful new interpretation of Foucault. He calls attention to a particular passage from *Madness and Civilization* that has never been translated into English. Written some fifteen years before "The History of Sexuality", this passage seems to contradict Foucault's famous idea that homosexuality was a late-nineteenth-century construction. Including an argument for the use of Hannah Arendt's thought in gay rights advocacy, "Insult and the Making of the Gay Self" is an impassioned call for critical, active engagement with the question of how gay life is shaped both from without and within.

作者介绍:

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