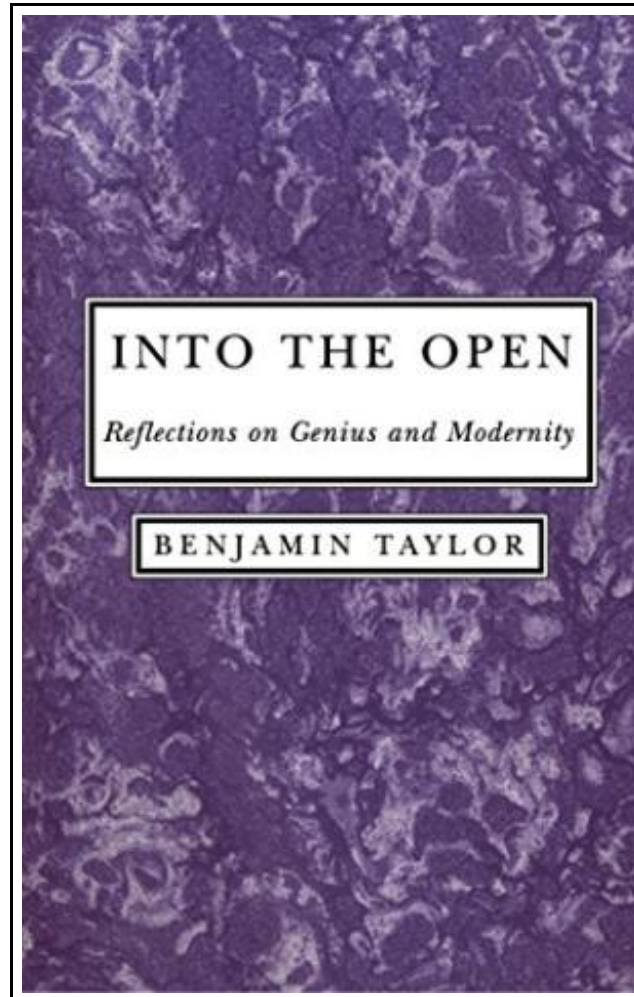


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Reviews

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INTO THE OPEN: REFLECTIONS ON GENIUS



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New York University Press, 1995. Hard Cover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. 1st Edition. New book, never been read. From the publisher -- This book "is an inquiry into the deeper meanings of an indispensable modern word: "genius." What legacy do we invoke when we use it? Taylor answers in an original way, exploring the role of Leonardo da Vinci in the works of Walter Pater, Paul Valery, and Sigmund Freud. Da Vinci becomes an issue for each, Taylor argues, because for each the received idea of genius has ceased to be a romantic certitude or sacred truth and has become a problem. Taking Nietzsche's drastic critique of genius as his control, Taylor assesses the far less programmatic, far more anxious cases of Pater, Valery, and Freud. Whereas Nietzsche sought for and found a way out of romantic humanism, Pater, Valery, and Freud remain troubled, equivocal witnesses to the modern plight. They do not share in Nietzsche's jubilant transvaluating nihilism. They cannot relinquish the idea of genius, hedged about though it is in their works by skepticism. "A myth of genius has been our way of making good the losses our romantic modernity entails," Taylor writes. "A myth of genius has existed to affirm that, among human lives, some have sacramental shape; that, among human lives, some put into abeyance the equation between life and loss. Such is the post-theological, post-metaphysical role we have compelled our geniuses into. They make for us one last claim on the sublime." Current list price: \$55.00.



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