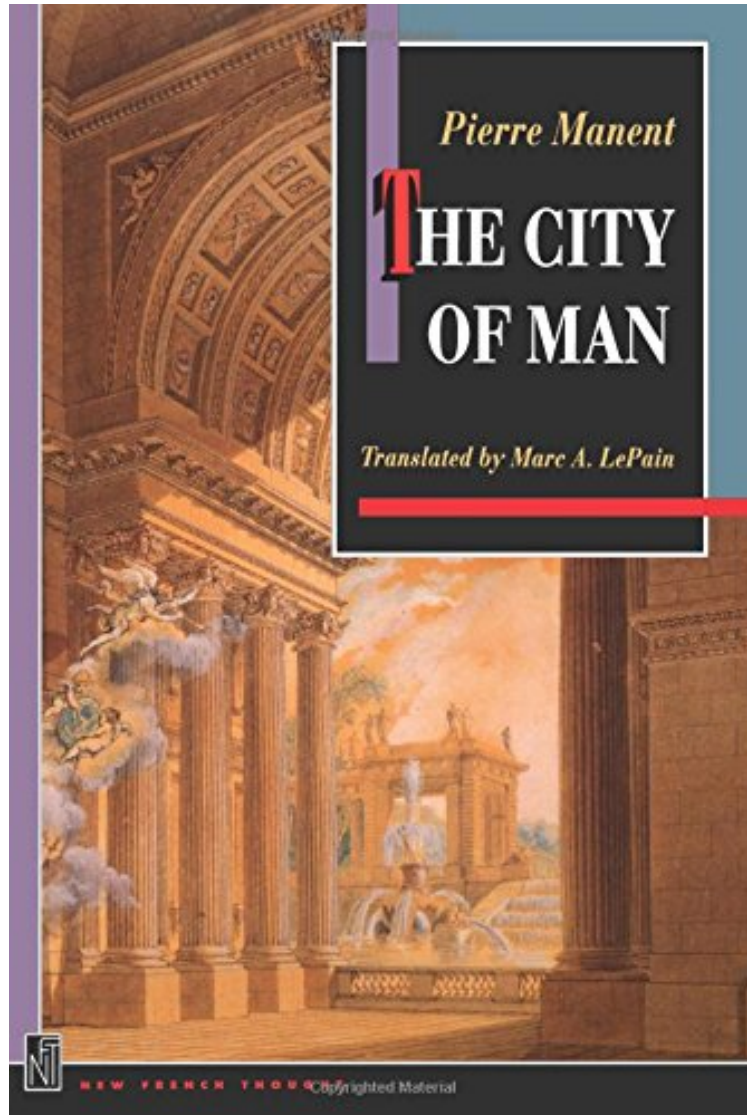


(Free pdf) The City of Man

The City of Man

Pierre Manent

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#1656782 in Books 2000-04-17 2000-04-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.10 x .60 x 6.10l, .75 #File Name: 0691050252248 pages | File size: 56.Mb

Pierre Manent : The City of Man before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The City of Man:

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Manent's City of ManBy K. KuehlPretty dense philosophical reading, but if you have the endurance to get through it, Manent is very insightful. He really does great job challenging the tenants of modernity, but leaves us questioning what can take their place.44 of 46 people found the following review helpful. Amendment to the previous reviewBy A CustomerThe first .com review here offered by a reader from Dallas, Texas, strikes me as slightly misleading. "Good fascists," Christian monks, and heroic military invention make

no appearance in Pierre Manent's *THE CITY OF MAN*. They are, rather, that particular reader's context for understanding what Manent is writing about: namely, Montesquieu and the career of liberal political theory and its social-scientific offspring in the past several centuries. Manent's project is to try to understand "modern man." But to do so confronts us immediately with a riddle. To understand modern man, we would seem first to need to understand man's NATURE; but then, if man has a nature, HISTORY should not matter, and there could be no deep difference between modern man and ancient man. Yet we intuitively know that there is a very real modern "difference." "Modern man" seems to be both a natural being and an historical being. How can we understand this paradox? In pursuing this question with formidable dialectical subtlety, Manent has opened genuinely new ground in political philosophy -- or at least retrieved a possibility which has been eclipsed for several centuries. Manent has learned much from Leo Strauss, and it is perhaps readers of Strauss who will find this book most extraordinary. For Manent in effect takes issue with a central tenet of Strauss's political philosophy: the alternatives we face are NOT exhausted by those offered by "ancients" and "moderns." For such a structuring of the history of political philosophy fails to do justice to what is unique in Christianity. Manent's singular contribution, then, is to recover the genuinely philosophical implications of Grace.⁶ of 8 people found the following review helpful. City of Man = America By Austin Christopher Manent has produced a work of genius. And America is the place he describes: where man can be "free" without any conception of what he really is or what he is for, and thus without any conception what freedom really is.

The "City of God" or the "City of Man"? This is the choice St. Augustine offered 1500 years ago--and according to Pierre Manent the modern West has decisively and irreversibly chosen the latter. In this subtle and wide-ranging book on the Western intellectual and political condition, Manent argues that the West has rejected the laws of God and of nature in a quest for human autonomy. But in declaring ourselves free and autonomous, he contends, we have, paradoxically, lost a sense of what it means to be human. In the first part of the book, Manent explores the development of the social sciences since the seventeenth century, portraying their growth as a sign of increasing human "self-consciousness." But as social scientists have sought to free us from the intellectual confines of the ancient world, he writes, they have embraced modes of analysis--economic, sociological, and historical--that treat only narrow aspects of the human condition and portray individuals as helpless victims of impersonal forces. As a result, we have lost all sense of human agency and of the unified human subject at the center of intellectual study. Politics and culture have come to be seen as mere foam on the tides of historical and social necessity. In the second half of the book, titled "Self-Affirmation," Manent examines how the West, having discovered freedom, then discovered arbitrary will and its dangers. With no shared touchstones or conceptions of virtue, for example, we have found it increasingly hard to communicate with each other. This is a striking contrast to the past, he writes, when even traditions as different as the Classical and the Christian held many of these conceptions in common. The result of these discoveries, according to Manent, is the disturbing rootlessness that characterizes our time. By gaining autonomy from external authority, we have lost a sense of what we are. In "giving birth" to ourselves, we have abandoned that which alone can nurture and sustain us. With penetrating insight and remarkable erudition, Manent offers a profound analysis of the confusions and contradictions at the heart of the modern condition.

From Library Journal As we approach the end of the century, which has seen perhaps the most rapid and pervasive changes in society and culture ever, many Western writers are reexamining the consequences of these changes and are discovering that they have not necessarily all been for the good. In this book, first published in France in 1994 and now translated into English for the first time, Manent (philosophy, *École des Hautes Études Sociales*, Paris) examines what he takes to be the fundamental rootlessness of Western civilization. He argues that in freeing ourselves from the intellectual orientation of the ancient world, which studied man "as man," we have become excessively self-conscious, fixing upon the study rather of "modern man." The result of this refocusing, Manent argues, is that we have lost man "as man" as a focus of study and come to see our culture as influenced by various waves of historical, social, and political necessity. In essence, we have become divorced from the traditions that formerly helped us to anchor and sustain ourselves, and we are now drifting confused, the victims of forces that we do not control and quite probably do not understand. Manent's thesis is not new, but his contribution to the debate is the presentation of the problem in a clear and cogent fashion, and for this reason, his work is valuable. Recommended for all libraries. A Terry C. Skeats, Bishop's Univ. Lib., Lennoxville, Quebec Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "[Manent's] book is probably the most relentless assault on modernity to appear in many years. It is in many ways a brilliant book."--Peter Berger, *The Wall Street Journal* "Working within a framework that sees the modern project as a sustained attempt to abolish the question of 'man' and replace it with 'history,' Manent breathes new life into the debate between ancients and moderns."--*The Politics* "Certainly a word of thanks is due to the editors of the *New French Thought* series, and to Marc A. LePain, the translator of this volume, for making available to an American audience a work of such challenging clarity and depth."--Dianna Schaub, *The Washington Times* "Manent is perhaps the brightest light in a new generation of French intellectuals."--Russell Hittinger, *First Things* Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original

Language: French