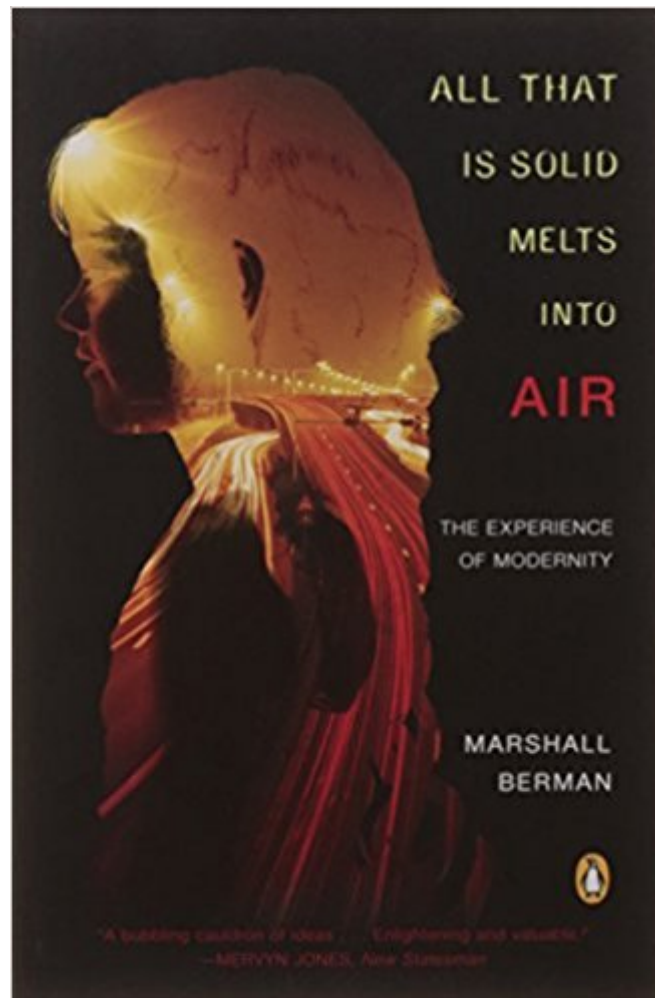




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All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience Of Modernity



Synopsis

"A bubbling caldron of ideas . . . Enlightening and valuable." —Mervyn Jones, New Statesman. The political and social revolutions of the nineteenth century, the pivotal writings of Goethe, Marx, Dostoevsky, and others, and the creation of new environments to replace the old—all have thrust us into a modern world of contradictions and ambiguities. In this fascinating book, Marshall Berman examines the clash of classes, histories, and cultures, and ponders our prospects for coming to terms with the relationship between a liberating social and philosophical idealism and a complex, bureaucratic materialism. From a reinterpretation of Karl Marx to an incisive consideration of the impact of Robert Moses on modern urban living, Berman charts the progress of the twentieth-century experience. He concludes that adaptation to continual flux is possible and that therein lies our hope for achieving a truly modern society.

Book Information

Paperback: 383 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reissue edition (June 7, 1988)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140109625

ISBN-13: 978-0140109627

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

This work is an important text on modernism and image. It builds off of Karl Marx's work, understandably since Berman was a Marx scholar. I haven't finished it, yet but I read it in a class about fragmented cities and Walter Benjamin. I'd definitely recommend it, because of its writing style.

A masterpiece about the ways that modernity whas been experienced in different parts of the world.

great book

These ratings are not relevant to this book. It is a brilliant work of scholarship by a great scholar.

Really interesting book

Item as described. Would use seller again.

My American Government professor recommended this book to us and it was a decent price so I said what the heck .. The book is good so far.

This is an amazing book. Most works that try to explicate modernity seem to take the French revolution as their starting point, but Berman's intense, wide-ranging examination is rooted much more in Germanic and Russian thought. He uses Goethe, Marx, Baudilare (ok, so some french), Dostoyevsky, Bely etc. to try and show how the sensibility of modernity itself has developed largely out of literature, and how we can see that sensibility at work in our own age with issues of geography and city planning. Not only does he offer brilliant examinations of those thinkers and their works, he re-contextualizes them with an intense, deep look of their work in order to develop and back up his own assertions of modern life. Berman's analysis is a wonder to behold. There aren't many writers capable of drawing out such large, powerful assertions about such an intellectually huge topic with such sustained focus and discipline (Edward Said and Susan Sontag come to mind). The writing in this book is fiercely original and pitiless. That being said, the books very last section, in which he tries to examine the 1960's through the 1970's struck me as a bit weak, simply because it's more autobiographical, and obviously a bit more personal to write about your own age. But this work is 30 years old, and it's assertions about modernity, about the chaotic, constant forces of change and destruction that make our world what it is today, rings even truer now than it must have in the early 1980's. I can't believe something this brilliant has been so neglected.

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