



# A Hedonist Manifesto: The Power to Exist (Insurrections: Critical Studies in Religion, Politics, and Culture)

By Michel Onfray

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## A Hedonist Manifesto: The Power to Exist (Insurrections: Critical Studies in Religion, Politics, and Culture) By Michel Onfray

Michael Onfray passionately defends the potential of hedonism to resolve the dislocations and disconnections of our melancholy age. In a sweeping survey of history's engagement with and rejection of the body, he exposes the sterile conventions that prevent us from realizing a more immediate, ethical, and embodied life. He then lays the groundwork for both a radical and constructive politics of the body that adds to debates over morality, equality, sexual relations, and social engagement, demonstrating how philosophy, and not just modern scientism, can contribute to a humanistic ethics.

Onfray attacks Platonic idealism and its manifestation in Judaic, Christian, and Islamic belief. He warns of the lure of attachment to the purportedly eternal, immutable truths of idealism, which detracts from the immediacy of the world and our bodily existence. Insisting that philosophy is a practice that operates in a real, material space, Onfray enlists Epicurus and Democritus to undermine idealist and theological metaphysics; Nietzsche, Bentham, and Mill to dismantle idealist ethics; and Palante and Bourdieu to collapse crypto-fascist neoliberalism. In their place, he constructs a positive, hedonistic ethics that enlarges on the work of the New Atheists to promote a joyful approach to our lives in this, our only, world.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

*A Hedonist Manifesto* is a finely wrought and far-sweeping book by an author who has established himself as a voice of wit and acuity in contemporary debates surrounding atheism and the revival of a general Epicurean/Lucretian sensibility. Michel Onfray's writing is lucid and digestible, while the sense of immediate social and cultural relevance remains paramount. He stands out as uniquely immersed in the project of a constructive hedonist ethical and political program in this highly readable and simply enjoyable work.

(Rocco Gangle, Endicott College)

A highly original contribution to the literature, *A Hedonist Manifesto* is a short yet wide-ranging text that attempts to develop a post-Christian, post-Platonist, postidealistic ethical framework. I read it with great interest and enjoyment.

(Levi Bryant, Collin College)

The strength of this book, along with its moving personal style, can be found in its reassertion of philosophy as an art of living and not just written doctrine. Whether or not you agree with Onfray's brand of Enlightenment hedonism, this book will stimulate parts of your mind that may have lain fallow for awhile.

(Graham Harman, American University in Cairo)

A deep and intriguing glimpse into the ethical and political theory of French philosopher Michel Onfray.

(*Marx & Philosophy*)

### **About the Author**

Michel Onfray is a French philosopher and public intellectual who founded and teaches at the free Popular University of Caen. He has written more than sixty books, many of them best sellers, including *Atheist Manifesto: The Case Against Christianity, Judaism, and Islam* and the award-winning *Sculpting the Self*.

Joseph McClellan earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University and has taught Asian and Western philosophy and religion at several universities.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Jose Longoria:**

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**Tracey Cook:**

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