



The War Against Cliche: Essays and Reviews, 1971-2000

Martin Amis

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In this collection of essays and reviews spanning twenty-five years of criticism, Martin Amis asserts the writer's obligation to battle "not just cliches of the pen but cliches of the mind and cliches of the heart." He marshals the forces of his infamous arsenal: his language, his wit, and his intolerance for suffering fools to review, consider, and in some cases, condemn. He takes to task the best and the brightest, including Cervantes and Milton, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, and Norman Mailer and Elmore Leonard. From "Great Books" to "Some American Prose," from "Popularity Contest" to the "Ultramundane," Amis parses the classics and the unconventional with the subversive brilliance he brings to everything he touches.

He also skewers myths about masculinity, with great skepticism and more than a dash of nose-thumbing humor. Unflinchingly, he lambastes the "supercharged banality" of Elvis, the monumentally self-absorption of Andy Warhol, and American squeamishness about movie violence. Evaluating the present participle, casting a cold eye on the Guinness Book of Records, and the sacrosanct image of Abraham Lincoln, Amis astutely surveys our cultural landscape and fluctuates between celebration and castigation, with the precision of a hypodermic.

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