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Informed by both structuralism and poststructuralism, these essays by art critic and historian Yve Alain Bois seek to redefine the status of theory in modernist critical discourse. Warning against the uncritical adoption of theoretical fashions and equally against the a priori rejection of all theory, Bois argues that theory is best employed in response to the specific demands of a critical problem. The essays lucidly demonstrate the uses of various theoretical approaches in conjunction with close reading of both paintings and texts. Yve-Alain Bois was a founder of the French journal *Macula* and a Fellow at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris. He is currently Professor of the History of Art at Harvard University.