



# Pox: Genius, Madness, And The Mysteries Of Syphilis

*Deborah Hayden*

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## **Pox: Genius, Madness, And The Mysteries Of Syphilis** Deborah Hayden

From Beethoven to Oscar Wilde, from Van Gogh to Hitler, Deborah Hayden throws new light on the effects of syphilis on the lives and works of seminal figures from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. Writing with remarkable insight and narrative flair, Hayden argues that biographers and historians have vastly underestimated the influence of what Thomas Mann called "this exhilarating yet wasting disease." Shrouded in secrecy, syphilis was accompanied by wild euphoria and suicidal depression, megalomania and paranoia, profoundly affecting sufferers' worldview, their sexual behavior, and their art. Deeply informed and courageously argued, Pox has been heralded as a major contribution to our understanding of genius, madness, and creativity.

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