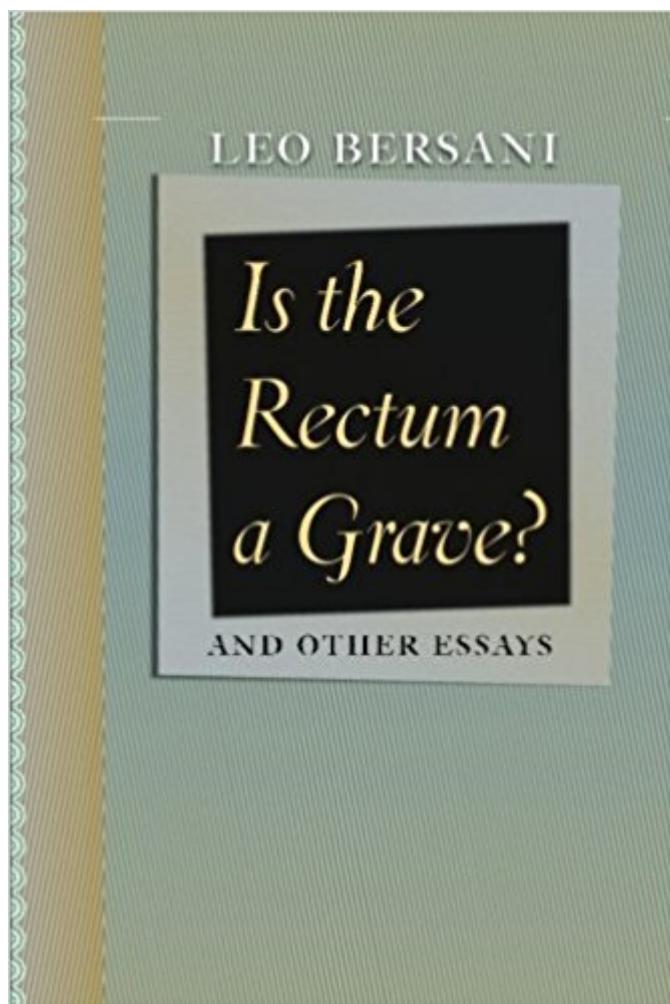


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# Is The Rectum A Grave?: And Other Essays



## Synopsis

Over the course of a distinguished career, critic Leo Bersani has tackled a range of issues in his writing, and this collection gathers together some of his finest work. Beginning with one of the foundations of queer theory—his famous meditation on how sex leads to a shattering of the self, “Is the Rectum a Grave?”—this volume charts the inspired connections Bersani has made between sexuality, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics. Over the course of these essays, Bersani grapples with thinkers ranging from Plato to Descartes to Georg Simmel. Foucault and Freud recur as key figures, and although Foucault rejected psychoanalysis, Bersani contends that by considering his ideas alongside Freud’s, one gains a clearer understanding of human identity and how we relate to one another. For Bersani, art represents a crucial guide for conceiving new ways of connecting to the world, and so, in many of these essays, he stresses the importance of aesthetics, analyzing works by Genet, Caravaggio, Proust, Almodóvar, and Godard. Documenting over two decades in the life of one of the best minds working in the humanities today, *Is the Rectum a Grave? and Other Essays* is a unique opportunity to explore the fruitful career of a formidable intellect.

## Book Information

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bodies, talk, and all manner of things both dangerous and sustaining." - Judith Butler"

Leo Bersani is professor emeritus of French at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Homos* and coauthor, with Adam Phillips, of *Intimacies*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

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