Bernard Williams was one of the most important philosophers of the last fifty years, but he was also a distinguished critic and essayist with an elegant style and a rare ability to communicate complex ideas to a wide public. This is the first collection of Williams's popular essays and reviews, many of which appeared in the New York Review of Books, the London Review of Books, and the Times Literary Supplement. In these pieces, Williams writes about a broad range of subjects, from philosophy and political philosophy to religion, science, the humanities, economics, socialism, feminism, and pornography.

Included here are reviews of major books such as John Rawls’s Theory of Justice, Robert Nozick’s Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Alastair MacIntyre’s After Virtue, Richard Rorty’s Consequences of Pragmatism, and Martha Nussbaum’s Therapy of Desire. But many of these essays extend beyond philosophy and together provide an intellectual tour through the past half century, from C. S. Lewis and Umberto Eco to Noam Chomsky. No matter the subject, Williams probes and challenges arguments, teases out their implications, and connects them to the wider intellectual scene. At the same time, readers see a first-class mind grappling with landmark books in “real time,” before critical consensus had formed and ossified.

In his foreword, Michael Wood discusses Williams’s style and sensibility and his concern that philosophy contribute to the larger intellectual conversation.

Bernard Williams (1929–2003) was Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, where he later served as provost of King’s College, before assuming professorships at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Oxford. His many books include Morality, Moral Luck, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Shame and Necessity, and Truth and Truthfulness (Princeton).
The Essential Hirschman

Albert O. Hirschman
Edited and with an introduction by Jeremy Adelman
Afterword by Emma Rothschild & Amartya Sen

The Essential Hirschman brings together some of the finest essays in the social sciences, written by one of the twentieth century’s most influential and provocative thinkers. Albert O. Hirschman was a master essayist, one who possessed the rare ability to blend the precision of economics with the elegance of literary imagination. In an age in which our academic disciplines require ever-greater specialization and narrowness, it is rare to encounter an intellectual who can transform how we think about inequality by writing about traffic, or who can slip in a quote from Flaubert to reveal something surprising about taxes. The essays gathered here span an astonishing range of topics and perspectives, including industrialization in Latin America, imagining reform as more than repair, the relationship between imagination and leadership, routine thinking and the marketplace, and the ways our arguments affect democratic life. Throughout, we find humor, unforgettable metaphors, brilliant analysis, and an elegance of style that give Hirschman such a singular voice.

Featuring an introduction by Jeremy Adelman that places each of these essays in context as well as an insightful afterword by Emma Rothschild and Amartya Sen, The Essential Hirschman is the ideal introduction to Hirschman for a new generation of readers and a must-have collection for anyone seeking his most important writings in one book.

Albert O. Hirschman (1915–2012) was one of the leading intellectuals of the twentieth century, renowned for his contributions to economics, the social sciences, and the history of ideas. Jeremy Adelman is the Walter Samuel Carpenter III Professor of Spanish Civilization and Culture at Princeton University. His books include Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman (Princeton).

“An excellent selection of essays including all of Hirschman’s finest pieces.”

“Albert O. Hirschman’s work should be rediscovered and studied by every new generation of social scientists for a long time to come.”
—Claus Offe, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin

NOVEMBER

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INTELLECTUAL HISTORY • SOCIAL SCIENCE

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“There will probably never be a consensus about the origins, nature, chronology, and future of racism. Now, however, thanks to Francisco Bethencourt’s brave, reflective, provocative, painstaking, and searching history, the problems are clearer than ever before, and the continuing debates will be immeasurably better informed.”
—Felipe Fernández-Armesto, author of 1492: The Year the World Began

Groundbreaking in its global and historical scope, Racisms is the first comprehensive history of racism, from the Crusades to the twentieth century. Demonstrating that there is not one continuous tradition of racism in the West, distinguished historian Francisco Bethencourt shows that racism preceded any theories of race and must be viewed within the prism and context of social hierarchies and local conditions. In this richly illustrated book, Bethencourt argues that in its various aspects, all racism has been triggered by political projects monopolizing specific economic and social resources.

Bethencourt focuses on the Western world, but opens comparative views on ethnic discrimination and segregation in Asia and Africa. He looks at different forms of racism, particularly against New Christians and Moriscos in Iberia, black slaves and freedmen in colonial and postcolonial environments, Native Americans, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, and Jews in modern Europe. Exploring instances of enslavement, forced migration, and ethnic cleansing, Bethencourt reflects on genocide and the persecution of ethnicities in twentieth-century Europe and Anatolia. These cases are compared to the genocide of the Herero and Tutsi in Africa, and ethnic discrimination in Japan, China, and India. Bethencourt analyzes how practices of discrimination and segregation from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries were defended, and he systematically integrates visual culture into his investigation.

Moving away from ideas of linear or innate racism, this is a major interdisciplinary work that recasts our understanding of interethnic relations.

Francisco Bethencourt is the Charles Boxer Professor of History at King’s College London. He is the author of The Inquisition and the coeditor of Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, and Racism and Ethnic Relations in the Portuguese-Speaking World. He has served as director of the Gulbenkian Cultural Center in Paris and the National Library of Portugal.
Redeeming The Prince
The Meaning of Machiavelli’s Masterpiece

Maurizio Viroli

In Redeeming “The Prince,” one of the world’s leading Machiavelli scholars puts forth a startling new interpretation of arguably the most influential but widely misunderstood book in the Western political tradition. Overturning popular misconceptions and challenging scholarly consensus, Maurizio Viroli also provides a fresh introduction to the work. Seen from this original perspective, five centuries after its composition, The Prince offers new insights into the nature and possibilities of political liberation.

Rather than a bible of unscrupulous politics, The Prince, Viroli argues, is actually about political redemption—a book motivated by Machiavelli’s patriotic desire to see a new founding for Italy. Written in the form of an oration, following the rules of classical rhetoric, the book condenses its main message in the final section, “Exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarians.” There Machiavelli creates the myth of a redeemer, an ideal ruler who ushers in an era of peace, freedom, and unity. Contrary to scholars who maintain that the exhortation was added later, Viroli proves that Machiavelli composed it along with the rest of the text, completing the whole by December 1513 or early 1514.

Only if we read The Prince as a theory of political redemption, Viroli contends, can we at last understand, and properly evaluate, the book’s most controversial pages on political morality, as well as put to rest the cliché of Machiavelli as a “Machiavellian.”

Bold, clear, and provocative, Redeeming “The Prince” should permanently change how Machiavelli and his masterpiece are understood.

Maurizio Viroli is professor emeritus of politics at Princeton University and professor of political communication at the University of Italian Switzerland in Lugano. His many books include Niccolò’s Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli (Hill & Wang), Machiavelli’s God (Princeton), and The Liberty of Servants: Berlusconi’s Italy (Princeton).

Praise for Maurizio Viroli’s Niccolò’s Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli:

“A welcome antidote to the clichéd image of self-interested knavery for which [Machiavelli] has become known…. [A] fascinating portrait.”
—Alexander Stille, New York Times Book Review

“Elegant and accessible.”
—Mark Lilla, Washington Post Book World
Lending to the Borrower from Hell
Debt, Taxes, and Default in the Age of Philip II

Mauricio Drelichman & Hans-Joachim Voth

Why do lenders time and again loan money to sovereign borrowers who promptly go bankrupt? When can this type of lending work? As the United States and many European nations struggle with mountains of debt, historical precedents can offer valuable insights. Lending to the Borrower from Hell looks at one famous case—the debts and defaults of Philip II of Spain. Ruling over one of the largest and most powerful empires in history, King Philip defaulted four times. Yet he never lost access to capital markets and could borrow again within a year or two of each default. Exploring the shrewd reasoning of the lenders who continued to offer money, Mauricio Drelichman and Hans-Joachim Voth analyze the lessons from this important historical example.

Using detailed new evidence collected from sixteenth-century archives, Drelichman and Voth examine the incentives and returns of lenders. They provide powerful evidence that in the right situations, lenders not only survive despite defaults—they thrive. Drelichman and Voth also demonstrate that debt markets cope well, despite massive fluctuations in expenditure and revenue, when lending functions like insurance. The authors unearth unique sixteenth-century loan contracts that offered highly effective risk sharing between the king and his lenders, with payment obligations reduced in bad times.

A fascinating story of finance and empire, Lending to the Borrower from Hell offers an intelligent model for keeping economies safe in times of sovereign debt crises and defaults.

Mauricio Drelichman is associate professor in the Vancouver School of Economics at the University of British Columbia and a fellow in the Institutions, Organizations, and Growth program of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. Hans-Joachim Voth is ICREA Research Professor in the Economics Department at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, where he is also a member of the Centre for Research in International Economics. He is the author of Time and Work in England during the Industrial Revolution and coauthor of Prometheus Shackled.

“The fruit of long, intense original research, this convincing book revises the standard histories of public credit and imperial Spain.”
—Larry D. Neal, professor emeritus of economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

WHAT THE LOANS AND DEFAULTS OF A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY KING CAN TEACH US ABOUT SOVEREIGN DEBT TODAY

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ECONOMICS | HISTORY

THE PRINCETON ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE WESTERN WORLD
Joel Mokyr, Series Editor

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Running Randomized Evaluations
A Practical Guide

Rachel Glennerster & Kudzai Takavarasha

This book provides a comprehensive yet accessible guide to running randomized impact evaluations of social programs. Drawing on the experience of researchers at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, which has run hundreds of such evaluations in dozens of countries throughout the world, it offers practical insights on how to use this powerful technique, especially in resource-poor environments.

This step-by-step guide explains why and when randomized evaluations are useful, in what situations they should be used, and how to prioritize different evaluation opportunities. It shows how to design and analyze studies that answer important questions while respecting the constraints of those working on and benefiting from the program being evaluated. The book gives concrete tips on issues such as improving the quality of a study despite tight budget constraints, and demonstrates how the results of randomized impact evaluations can inform policy.

With its self-contained modules, this one-of-a-kind guide is easy to navigate. It also includes invaluable references and a checklist of the common pitfalls to avoid.

- Provides the most up-to-date guide to running randomized evaluations of social programs, especially in developing countries
- Offers practical tips on how to complete high-quality studies in even the most challenging environments
- Self-contained modules allow for easy reference and flexible teaching and learning
- Comprehensive yet nontechnical

Rachel Glennerster is executive director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Kudzai Takavarasha holds degrees in chemical engineering and economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and was a policy manager at J-PAL from 2004 to 2012.

“Randomized impact evaluations, pioneered by Rachel Glennerster and her colleagues, have emerged as a powerful new tool in the fight against poverty. This book gives us a critical guide for how to actually do them. It is required reading for students, professionals, and researchers committed to using evidence to guide policy.”
—Dean Karlan, coauthor of More Than Good Intentions
"The Limits of Partnership offers a riveting narrative on U.S.-Russian relations since the Soviet collapse and on the challenges ahead. It reflects the unique perspective of an insider who is also recognized as a leading expert on this troubled relationship. American presidents have repeatedly attempted to forge a strong and productive partnership only to be held hostage to the deep mistrust born of the Cold War. For the United States, Russia remains a priority because of its nuclear weapons arsenal, its strategic location bordering Europe and Asia, and its ability to support—or thwart—American interests. Why has it been so difficult to move the relationship forward? What are the prospects for doing so in the future? Is the effort doomed to fail again and again?

Angela Stent served as an adviser on Russia under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, and maintains close ties with key policymakers in both countries. Here, she argues that the same contentious issues—terrorism, missile defense, Iran, nuclear proliferation, Afghanistan, the former Soviet space, the greater Middle East—have been in every president’s inbox, Democrat and Republican alike, since the collapse of the USSR. Stent vividly describes how Clinton and Bush sought inroads with Russia and staked much on their personal ties to Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin—only to leave office with relations at a low point—and how Barack Obama managed to restore ties only to see them undermined by a Putin regime resentful of American dominance and determined to restore Russia’s great power status.

The Limits of Partnership calls for a fundamental reassessment of the principles and practices that drive U.S.-Russian relations, and offers a path forward to meet the urgent challenges facing both countries.

Angela E. Stent is professor of government and foreign service and director of the Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies at Georgetown University. Her books include Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe (Princeton).
Throughout the twentieth century, the U.S. government willingly deployed power, hard and soft, to protect American investments all around the globe. Why did the United States get into the business of defending its citizens’ property rights abroad? The Empire Trap looks at how modern U.S. involvement in the empire business began, how American foreign policy became increasingly tied to the sway of private financial interests, and how postwar administrations finally extricated the United States from economic interventionism, even though the government had the will and power to continue.

Noel Maurer examines the ways that American investors initially influenced their government to intercede to protect investments in locations such as Central America and the Caribbean. Costs were small—at least at the outset—but with each incremental step, American policy became increasingly entangled with the goals of those they were backing, making disengagement more difficult. Maurer discusses how, all the way through the 1970s, the United States not only failed to resist pressure to defend American investments, but also remained unsuccessful at altering internal institutions of other countries in order to make property rights secure in the absence of active American involvement. Foreign nations expropriated American investments, but in almost every case the U.S. government’s employment of economic sanctions or covert action obtained market value or more in compensation—despite the growing strategic risks. The advent of institutions focusing on international arbitration finally gave the executive branch a credible political excuse not to act. Maurer cautions that these institutions are now under strain and that a collapse might open the empire trap once more.

With shrewd and timely analysis, this book considers American patterns of foreign intervention and the nation’s changing role as an imperial power.

Because of rapidly aging populations, the number of people worldwide experiencing dementia is increasing, and the projections are grim. Despite hundreds of millions of dollars invested in medical research, no effective treatment has been discovered for Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia. *The Alzheimer Conundrum* exposes the predicaments embedded in current efforts to slow down or halt Alzheimer’s disease through early detection of presymptomatic biological changes in healthy individuals.

Based on a careful study of the history of Alzheimer’s disease and extensive in-depth interviews with clinicians, scientists, epidemiologists, geneticists, and others, Margaret Lock highlights the limitations and the dissent implicated in this approach. She stresses that one major difficulty is the well-documented absence of behavioral signs of Alzheimer’s disease in a significant proportion of elderly individuals, even when Alzheimer neuropathology is present in their brains. This incongruity makes it difficult to distinguish what counts as normal versus pathological and, further, makes it evident that social and biological processes contribute inseparably to aging. Lock argues that basic research must continue, but it should be complemented by a realistic public health approach available everywhere that will be more effective and more humane than one focused almost exclusively on an increasingly frenzied search for a cure.

Margaret Lock is the Marjorie Bronfman Professor Emerita in the Department of Social Studies of Medicine and the Department of Anthropology at McGill University. Lock’s many books include *Encounters with Aging*, *Twice Dead*, and *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*.
**Oxygen**

A Four Billion Year History

**Donald E. Canfield**

The air we breathe is twenty-one percent oxygen, an amount higher than on any other known world. While we may take our air for granted, Earth was not always an oxygenated planet. How did it become this way? *Oxygen* is the most current account of the history of atmospheric oxygen on Earth. Donald Canfield—one of the world’s leading authorities on geochemistry, earth history, and the early oceans—covers this vast history, emphasizing its relationship to the evolution of life and the evolving chemistry of the Earth. With an accessible and colorful first-person narrative, he draws from a variety of fields, including geology, paleontology, geochemistry, biochemistry, animal physiology, and microbiology, to explain why our oxygenated Earth became the ideal place for life.

Describing which processes, both biological and geological, act to control oxygen levels in the atmosphere, Canfield traces the records of oxygen concentrations through time. Readers learn about the great oxidation event, the tipping point 2.3 billion years ago when the oxygen content of the Earth increased dramatically, and Canfield examines how oxygenation created a favorable environment for the evolution of large animals. He guides readers through the various lines of scientific evidence, considers some of the wrong turns and dead ends along the way, and highlights the scientists and researchers who have made key discoveries in the field.

Showing how Earth’s atmosphere developed over time, *Oxygen* takes readers on a remarkable journey through the history of the oxygenation of our planet.

**Donald E. Canfield** is professor of ecology at the University of Southern Denmark and director of the Nordic Center for Earth Evolution (NordCEE). He is a member of the National Academy of Science, coauthor of *Aquatic Geomicrobiology* and coeditor of *Fundamentals of Geobiology*.

“*In Oxygen,* Don Canfield recounts two epics in one—the evolution of breathable air over the entirety of Earth history, and the equally engaging account of how scientists have reconstructed this history from chemical details in ancient rocks. Even those who know the story well, or think they do, will find much food for thought.”

—Andrew Knoll, Harvard University, author of *Life on a Young Planet*

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“Brilliant, provocative, and clearly and forcefully argued, this is an instant classic of literary criticism. Addressing nothing less than the history of the novel from its beginnings in ancient Greece to the second half of the twentieth century, Pavel analyzes more than a hundred works, presenting exciting new ways of understanding them and their place in the genre’s development.”
—David Quint, Yale University

_The Lives of the Novel_
A History

Thomas G. Pavel

This is a boldly original history of the novel from ancient Greece to the vibrant world of contemporary fiction. Thomas Pavel argues that the driving force behind the novel’s evolution has been a rivalry between stories that idealize human behavior and those that ridicule and condemn it. Impelled by this conflict, the novel moved from depicting strong souls to sensitive hearts and, finally, to enigmatic psyches. Pavel makes his case by analyzing more than a hundred novels from Europe, North and South America, Asia, and beyond. The result is a wide-ranging survey of the novel and a provocative reinterpretation of its development.

According to Pavel, the earliest novels were implausible because their characters were either perfect or villainous. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, novelists strove for greater credibility by describing the inner lives of ideal characters in minute detail (as in Samuel Richardson’s case), or by closely examining the historical and social environment (as Walter Scott and Balzac did). Yet the earlier rivalry continued: Henry Fielding held the line against idealism, defending the comic tradition with its flawed characters, while Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot offered a rejoinder to social realism with their idealized vision of strong, generous, and sensitive women. In the twentieth century, modernists like Proust and Joyce sought to move beyond this conflict and capture the enigmatic workings of the psyche.

Pavel concludes his compelling account by showing how the old tensions persist even within today’s pluralism, as popular novels about heroes coexist with a wealth of other kinds of works, from satire to social and psychological realism.

Thomas G. Pavel is Distinguished Service Professor of French, Comparative Literature, and Social Thought at the University of Chicago. His books include _Fictional Worlds_ and _The Spell of Language_.

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320 pages. 6 x 9.
LITERATURE

PRESS.PRINCETON.EDU
Time, History, and Literature
Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach

Edited and with an introduction by James I. Porter and translated by Jane O. Newman

Erich Auerbach (1892–1957), best known for his classic literary study Mimesis, is celebrated today as a founder of comparative literature, a forerunner of secular criticism, and a prophet of global literary studies. Yet the true depth of Auerbach’s thinking and writing remains unplumbed. Time, History, and Literature presents a wide selection of Auerbach’s essays, many of which are little known outside the German-speaking world. Of the twenty essays culled from the full length of his career for this volume, twelve have never appeared in English before, and one is being published for the first time.

Foregrounded in this major new collection are Auerbach’s complex relationship to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, his philosophy of time and history, and his theory of human ethics and responsible action. Auerbach effectively charts out the difficult discovery, in the wake of Christianity, of the sensuous, the earthly, and the human and social worlds. A number of the essays reflect Auerbach’s responses to an increasingly hostile National Socialist environment. These writings offer a challenging model of intellectual engagement, one that remains as compelling today as it was in Auerbach’s own time.

James I. Porter is professor of classics and comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine. His books include Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future and The Origins of Aesthetic Thought in Ancient Greece. Jane O. Newman is professor of comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine. Her books include The Intervention of Philology and Benjamin’s Library. (See page 56 for a new edition of Erich Auerbach’s Mimesis.)

“The brilliant, innovative, and eminently sophisticated essays in this vitally important and long-overdue book demonstrate not only the breadth of Auerbach’s erudition, but also the continued relevance of his work for literary scholars today. A stunning achievement.”
—John Hamilton, Harvard University
“In six short essays, Arasse shows what it is to enter into the complexity of a work, inspect the nooks and crannies, and reject conventional wisdom.”
—Phillippe Dagen, Le Monde

“The casual nature of Arasse’s language cannot mask his tremendous erudition, all while emphasizing his ease in navigating within the pieces and his familiarity with the Zeitgeist.”
—Armelle Godeluck, Lire

“[The chapters in Take a Closer Look] have the depth of scholarly essays and the irreverent charm of the best fiction.”
—Michèle Gazier, Télérama

“Arasse was a terrific writer with a brilliant mind and this book is redolent with wit and intellectual authority. He has a wonderful way of asking questions, of taking the reader with him on his intellectual journey. In this case each journey begins with the problem posed by a single prominent old-master painting, and ranges widely from there across interpretive and historical concerns. The informal, speculative, and performative quality of Arasse’s voice in these pages will help assure the book’s wide appeal and accessibility.”
—Marc Gotlieb, Williams College

What happens when we look at a painting? What do we think about? What do we imagine? How can we explain, even to ourselves, what we see or think we see? And how can art historians interpret with any seriousness what they observe? In six engaging, short narrative “fictions,” each richly illustrated in color, Daniel Arasse, one of the most brilliant art historians of our time, cleverly and gracefully guides readers through a variety of adventures in seeing, from Velázquez to Titian, Bruegel to Tintoretto.

By demonstrating that we don’t really see what these paintings are trying to show us, Arasse makes it clear that we need to take a closer look. In chapters that each have a different form, including a letter, an interview, and an animated conversation with a colleague, the book explores how these pictures teach us about ways of seeing across the centuries. In the process, Arasse freshly lays bare the dazzling power of painting. Fast-paced and full of humor as well as insight, this is a book for anyone who cares about really looking at, seeing, and understanding paintings.

Daniel Arasse (1944–2003) was professor of art history at the Sorbonne, director of the French Institute in Florence, and director of studies at l’École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales. His many books include Vermeer (Princeton), Botticelli, and Anselm Kiefer.
Maimonides was the greatest Jewish philosopher and legal scholar of the medieval period, a towering figure who has had a profound and lasting influence on Jewish law, philosophy, and religious consciousness. This book provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to his life and work, revealing how his philosophical sensibility and outlook informed his interpretation of Jewish tradition.

Moshe Halbertal vividly describes Maimonides’s childhood in Muslim Spain, his family’s flight to North Africa to escape persecution, and their eventual resettling in Egypt. He draws on Maimonides’s letters and the testimonies of his contemporaries, both Muslims and Jews, to offer new insights into his personality and the circumstances that shaped his thinking. Halbertal then turns to Maimonides’s legal and philosophical work, analyzing his three great books—Commentary on the Mishnah, Mishneh Torah, and The Guide of the Perplexed. He discusses Maimonides’s battle against all attempts to personify God, his conviction that God’s presence in the world is mediated through the natural order rather than through miracles, and his locating of philosophy and science at the summit of the religious life of Torah. Halbertal examines Maimonides’s philosophical positions on fundamental questions such as the nature and limits of religious language, creation and nature, prophecy, providence, the problem of evil, and the meaning of the commandments.

A stunning achievement, Maimonides offers an unparalleled look at the life and thought of this important Jewish philosopher, scholar, and theologian.

Moshe Halbertal is professor of law at New York University and IDC Herzliya in Israel, and professor of Jewish thought and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His books include On Sacrifice and Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and Its Philosophical Implications (both Princeton).
“A World without Why is a fascinating collection of essays by one of the most original, witty, profound, passionate, and erudite philosophers alive today.”
—Wendy Brown, author of Walled States, Waning Sovereignty

“These essays are, as always with Geuss, engagingly written, challenging, and extremely interesting.”
—Daniel Brudney, author of Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy

Wishful thinking is a deeply ingrained human trait that has had a long-term distorting effect on ethical thinking. Many influential ethical views depend on the optimistic assumption that, despite appearances to the contrary, the human and natural world in which we live could, eventually, be made to make sense to us. In A World without Why, Raymond Geuss challenges this assumption.

The essays in this collection—several of which are published here for the first time—explore the genesis and historical development of this optimistic configuration in ethical thought and the ways in which it has shown itself to be unfounded and misguided. Discussions of Greco-Roman antiquity and of the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Adorno play a central role in many of these essays. Geuss also ranges over such topics as the concepts of intelligibility, authority, democracy, and criticism; the role of lying in politics; architecture; the place of theology in ethics; tragedy and comedy; and the struggle between realism and our search for meaning.

Characterized by Geuss’s wide-ranging interests in literature, philosophy, and history, and by his political commitment and trenchant style, A World without Why raises fundamental questions about the viability not just of specific ethical concepts and theses, but of our most basic assumptions about what ethics could and must be.

Raymond Geuss is professor of philosophy at the University of Cambridge. His books include Politics and the Imagination and Philosophy and Real Politics (both Princeton).
After Civil Rights
Racial Realism in the New American Workplace

John D. Skrentny

What role should racial difference play in the American workplace? As a nation, we rely on civil rights law to address this question, and the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964 seemingly answered it: race must not be a factor in workplace decisions. In After Civil Rights, John Skrentny contends that after decades of mass immigration, many employers, Democratic and Republican political leaders, and advocates have adopted a new strategy to manage race and work. Race is now relevant not only in negative cases of discrimination, but in more positive ways as well. In today’s workplace, employers routinely practice “racial realism,” where they view race as real—as a job qualification. Many believe employee racial differences correspond to unique abilities or evoke desirable reactions from clients or citizens. They also see racial diversity as a way to increase workplace dynamism. The problem is that when employers see race as useful for organizational effectiveness, they are often in violation of civil rights law.

After Civil Rights examines this emerging strategy in a wide range of employment situations, including the low-skilled sector, professional and white-collar jobs, and entertainment and media. In this important book, Skrentny urges us to acknowledge the racial realism already occurring, and lays out a series of reforms that, if enacted, would bring the law and lived experience more in line, yet still remain respectful of the need to protect the civil rights of all workers.

John D. Skrentny is professor of sociology and director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego. His books include The Minority Rights Revolution and The Ironies of Affirmative Action: Politics, Culture, and Justice in America.

“A After Civil Rights is a terrific book. Employers are increasingly using race-consciousness to improve their own bottom line, and they are doing so in ways that neither Congress nor the Supreme Court has expressly condoned. There is no one better suited to tell this story than Skrentny.”
—Deborah Malamud, New York University School of Law
Debates about U.S. foreign policy have revolved around three main traditions—liberal internationalism, realism, and nationalism. In this book, distinguished political scientist Henry Nau delves deeply into a fourth, overlooked foreign policy tradition that he calls “conservative internationalism.” This approach spreads freedom, like liberal internationalism; arms diplomacy, like realism; and preserves national sovereignty, like nationalism. It targets a world of limited government or independent “sister republics,” not a world of great power concert or centralized international institutions.

Nau explores conservative internationalism in the foreign policies of Thomas Jefferson, James Polk, Harry Truman, and Ronald Reagan. These presidents did more than any others to expand the arc of freedom using a deft combination of force, diplomacy, and compromise. Since Reagan, presidents have swung back and forth among the main traditions, overreaching under Bush and now retrenching under Obama. Nau demonstrates that conservative internationalism offers an alternative way. It pursues freedom but not everywhere, prioritizing situations that border on existing free countries—Turkey, for example, rather than Iraq. It uses lesser force early to influence negotiations rather than greater force later after negotiations fail. And it reaches timely compromises to cash in military leverage and sustain public support.

A groundbreaking revival of a neglected foreign policy tradition, Conservative Internationalism shows how the United States can effectively sustain global leadership while respecting the constraints of public will and material resources.

Henry R. Nau is professor of political science and international affairs in the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. His many books include The Myth of America’s Decline, At Home Abroad, and Perspectives on International Relations.