

American Paradise Hidden Ironies Contradictions Illusions And Delusions Paradoxes Dilemmas And Absurdities In American Life

[#American life paradoxes](#) [#contradictions in America](#) [#illusions of American dream](#) [#hidden ironies America](#) [#delusions about America](#)

Delve into the complex fabric of American life, uncovering the hidden ironies and profound contradictions in America that challenge its idyllic image. This exploration confronts the prevalent illusions of the American dream and the delusions about America, revealing the deep paradoxes and absurdities woven into its societal narrative.

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American Paradise

The way we live, work, and die-alone and with other Americans-have so many hidden layers that we might as well say that there are two Americas: one we think we know and the other virtually unknown to us. Huer discusses this alien part of America in American Paradise.

The Myth of Sisyphus

In this profound and moving philosophical statement, Camus poses the fundamental question: Is life worth living? If human existence holds no significance, what can keep us from suicide? As Camus argues, if there is no God to give meaning to our lives, humans must take on that purpose themselves. This is our 'absurd' task, like Sisyphus forever rolling his rock up a hill, as the inevitability of death constantly overshadows us. Written during the bleakest days of the Second World War, The Myth of Sisyphus argues for an acceptance of reality that encompasses revolt, passion and, above all, liberty. This volume contains several other essays, including lyrical evocations of the sunlit cities of Algiers and Oran, the settings of his great novels The Outsider and The Plague. Albert Camus is the author of a number of best-selling and highly influential works, all of which are published by Penguin. They include The Fall, The Outsider and The First Man. He is remembered as one of the few writers to have shaped the intellectual climate of post-war France, but beyond that, his fame has been international. Translated by Justin O'Brien With an Introduction by James Wood

The Irony of American History

"[Niebuhr] is one of my favorite philosophers. I take away [from his works] the compelling idea that there's serious evil in the world, and hardship and pain. And we should be humble and modest in our

belief we can eliminate those things. But we shouldn't use that as an excuse for cynicism and inaction. I take away . . . the sense we have to make these efforts knowing they are hard."—President Barack Obama Forged during the tumultuous but triumphant postwar years when America came of age as a world power, *The Irony of American History* is more relevant now than ever before. Cited by politicians as diverse as Hillary Clinton and John McCain, Niebuhr's masterpiece on the incongruity between personal ideals and political reality is both an indictment of American moral complacency and a warning against the arrogance of virtue. Impassioned, eloquent, and deeply perceptive, Niebuhr's wisdom will cause readers to rethink their assumptions about right and wrong, war and peace. "The supreme American theologian of the twentieth century."—Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *New York Times* "Niebuhr is important for the left today precisely because he warned about America's tendency—including the left's tendency—to do bad things in the name of idealism. His thought offers a much better understanding of where the Bush administration went wrong in Iraq."—Kevin Mattson, *The Good Society* "Irony provides the master key to understanding the myths and delusions that underpin American statecraft. . . . The most important book ever written on US foreign policy."—Andrew J. Bacevich, from the Introduction

The Post-Modern Aura

"Inflation affects literary occupations and preoccupations quite as much as it does financial scrip." Starting from this premise, Charles Newman ventures forth on an irreverent, wide-ranging discussion of the "Post-Modern" attitude in fiction, culture, and sensibility. Newman questions the "revolutionary" claims of avant-garde novelists and literary theorists, but he is no less critical of the arguments of neoconservatives, neorealists, and advocates of "moral fiction." Newman argues that neither of these groups has confronted the unprecedented break with tradition entailed by an economics and culture of inflation. A combination of cultural critique, literary criticism, economic forecast, and historical jeremiad, *The Post-Modern Aura* is finally a positive statement, celebrating "The Act of Fiction" and suggesting how the forces which have been devaluing it might be overcome.

Wonder, Horror, Mystery

Wonder, Horror, Mystery is a dialogue between two friends, both notable arts critics, that takes the form of a series of letters about movies and religion. One of the friends, J.M. Tyree, is a film critic, creative writer, and agnostic, while the other, Morgan Meis, is a philosophy PhD, art critic, and practicing Catholic. The question of cinema is raised here in a spirit of friendly friction that binds the personal with the critical and the spiritual. What is film? What's it for? What does it do? Why do we so intensely love or hate films that dare to broach the subjects of the divine and the diabolical? These questions stimulate further thoughts about life, meaning, philosophy, absurdity, friendship, tragedy, humor, death, and God. The letters focus on three filmmakers who challenged secular assumptions in the late 20th century and early 21st century through various modes of cinematic re-enchantment: Terrence Malick, Lars von Trier, and Krzysztof Kie[lowski]. The book works backwards in time, giving intensive analysis to Malick's *To The Wonder* (2012), Von Trier's *Antichrist* (2009), and Kie[lowski's *Dekalog* (1988), respectively, in each of the book's three sections. Meis and Tyree discuss the filmmakers and films as well as related ideas about philosophy, theology, and film theory in an accessible but illuminating way. The discussion ranges from the shamelessly intellectual to the embarrassingly personal. Spoiler alert: No conclusions are reached either about God or the movies. Nonetheless, it is a fun ride.

All that is Solid Melts Into Air

The experience of modernization -- the dizzying social changes that swept millions of people into the capitalist world -- and modernism in art, literature and architecture are brilliantly integrated in this account.

The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature

The Best Nonfiction Masterpiece of the 20th Century? "There are two lives, the natural and the spiritual, and we must lose the one before we can participate in the other." - William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* is not a book about a specific religion. The author, psychologist William James does not try to convince the reader one religion is better than the other. He doesn't even make a case for atheism and the scientific approach. The book is in fact about human nature and how we experience religion at a psychological level. Xist Publishing is a digital-first publisher. Xist Publishing creates books

for the touchscreen generation and is dedicated to helping everyone develop a lifetime love of reading, no matter what form it takes

Epistemologies of the South

This book explores the concept of 'cognitive injustice': the failure to recognise the different ways of knowing by which people across the globe run their lives and provide meaning to their existence. Boaventura de Sousa Santos shows why global social justice is not possible without global cognitive justice. Santos argues that Western domination has profoundly marginalised knowledge and wisdom that had been in existence in the global South. She contends that today it is imperative to recover and valorize the epistemological diversity of the world. *Epistemologies of the South* outlines a new kind of bottom-up cosmopolitanism, in which conviviality, solidarity and life triumph against the logic of market-ridden greed and individualism.

The Cultural Contradictions Of Capitalism

With a new afterword by the author, this classic analysis of Western liberal capitalist society contends that capitalism—and the culture it creates—harbors the seeds of its own downfall by creating a need among successful people for personal gratification—a need that corrodes the work ethic that led to their success in the first place. With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new world order, this provocative manifesto is more relevant than ever.

Monstrous Liminality

This book examines the transformation of the figure of the stranger in the literature of the modern age in terms of liminality. As a 'spectral monster' that has a paradoxical and liminal relationship to both the sacred and the secular, the figure of the modern stranger has played a role in both adapting and shaping a culturally determined understanding of the self and the other. With the advent of modernity, the stranger, the monster, and the spectre became interconnected. Haunting the edges of reason while also being absorbed into 'normal' society, all three, together with the cyborg, manifest the vulnerability of an age that is fearful of the return of the repressed. Yet these figures can also become re-appropriated as positive symbols, able to navigate between the dangerous and chaotic elements that threaten society while serving as precarious and ironic symbols of hope or sustainability. The book shows the explanatory potential of focusing on the resacralizing – in a paradoxical and liminal manner – of traditionally sacred concepts such as 'messianic' time and the 'utopian,' and the conflicts that emerged as a result of secularized modernity's denial of its own hybridization. This approach to modern literature shows how the modern stranger, a figure that is both paradoxically immersed and removed from society, deals with the dangers of failing to be re-assimilated into mainstream society and is caught in a fixed or permanent state of liminality, a state that can ultimately lead to boredom, alienation, nihilism, and failure. These 'monstrous' aspects of liminality can also be rewarding in that traversing difficult and paradoxical avenues they confront both traditional and contemporary viewpoints, enabling new and fresh perspectives suspended between imagination and reality, past and future, nature and artificial. In many ways, the modern stranger as a figure of literature and the cultural imagination has become more complicated and challenging in the (post)modern contemporary age, both clashing with and encompassing people who go beyond simply the psychological or even spiritual inability to blend in and out of society. However, while the stranger may be altering once again the defining or essentializing the figure could result in the creation of other sets of binaries, and thereby dissolve the purpose and productiveness of both strangeness and liminality. The intention of "Monstrous Liminality" is to trace the liminal sphere located between the secular and sacred that has characterized modernity itself. This space has consequently altered the makeup of the stranger from something external, into a figure far more liminal, which is forced to traverse this uncanny space in an attempt to find new meanings for an age that is struggling to maintain any.

Allegories of America

Allegories of America offers a bold idea of what, in terms of political theory, it means to be American. Beginning with the question What do we want from a theory of politics? Dolan explores the metaphysics of American-ness and stops along the way to reflect on John Winthrop, the Constitution, 1950s behavioralist social science, James Merrill, and William Burroughs. The pressing problem, in Dolan's view, is how to find a vocabulary for politics in the absence of European metaphysics. American political thinkers, he suggests, might respond by approaching their own theories as allegories. The

postmodern dilemma of the loss of traditional absolutes would thus assume the status of a national mythology—America's perennial identity crisis in the absence of a tradition establishing the legitimacy of its founding. After examining the mid-Atlantic sermons of John Winthrop, the spiritual founding father, Dolan reflects on the authority of the Constitution and the Federalist. He then takes on questions of representation in Cold War ideology, focusing on the language of David Easton and other liberal political "behaviorists," as well as on cold War cinema and the coverage of international affairs by American journalists. Additional discussions are inspired by Hannah Arendt's recasting of political theory in a narrative framework. here Dolan considers two starkly contrasting postwar literary figures—William S. Burroughs and James Merrill—both of whom have a troubled relationship to politics but nonetheless register an urgent need to articulate its dangers and opportunities. Alongside Merrill's unraveling of the distinction between the serious and the fictive, Dolan assesses the attempt in Arendt's *On Revolution* to reclaim fictional devices for political reflection.

Speculative Everything

How to use design as a tool to create not only things but ideas, to speculate about possible futures. Today designers often focus on making technology easy to use, sexy, and consumable. In *Speculative Everything*, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby propose a kind of design that is used as a tool to create not only things but ideas. For them, design is a means of speculating about how things could be—to imagine possible futures. This is not the usual sort of predicting or forecasting, spotting trends and extrapolating; these kinds of predictions have been proven wrong, again and again. Instead, Dunne and Raby pose "what if" questions that are intended to open debate and discussion about the kind of future people want (and do not want). *Speculative Everything* offers a tour through an emerging cultural landscape of design ideas, ideals, and approaches. Dunne and Raby cite examples from their own design and teaching and from other projects from fine art, design, architecture, cinema, and photography. They also draw on futurology, political theory, the philosophy of technology, and literary fiction. They show us, for example, ideas for a solar kitchen restaurant; a flypaper robotic clock; a menstruation machine; a cloud-seeding truck; a phantom-limb sensation recorder; and devices for food foraging that use the tools of synthetic biology. Dunne and Raby contend that if we speculate more—about everything—reality will become more malleable. The ideas freed by speculative design increase the odds of achieving desirable futures.

Character and Opinion in the United States

This is Friedrich Nietzsche's seminal work; "*Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*" - first published in 1878. It constitutes the first work in his signature aphoristic style, discussing many different concepts in brief paragraphs and sentences. The 638 aphorisms are divided into nine sections by subject, with a short poem as an epilogue. This fantastic book is highly recommended for students of philosophy, and is not to be missed by fans of Nietzsche's work. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) was a German philosopher, poet, composer, and scholar. He wrote numerous critical essays on morality, culture, philosophy, science, and religion - radically questioning the value and objectivity of truth. Many antiquarian texts such as this, particularly those dating back to the 1900s and before, are increasingly hard to come by and expensive. It is with this in mind that we are republishing this book now in an affordable, modern, high quality edition. It comes complete with a specially commissioned new biography of the author.

Human - All-Too-Human - A Book for Free Spirits

A New York Times bestseller by the author of *Sophie's Choice*: Two Americans search for the truth about a mysterious long-ago murder in Italy. Shortly after World War II, in the village of Sambuco, Italy, two men—Virginia attorney Peter Leverett and South Carolina artist Cass Kinsolving—crossed paths with Mason Flagg. They both had their own reactions to the gregarious and charismatic movie mogul's son. For the impressionable Peter, it was something close to awe. For the alcoholic Cass, it was unsettled rage. Then, after the rape and murder of a peasant girl, Mason's body was found at the base of a cliff—an apparent suicide. He'd been distraught, the authorities said, over committing such a heinous crime. Peter and Cass went their separate ways, and never spoke of it again. Now, years later, Peter is still haunted by what he knows—and by what he doesn't. He's sought out Cass in Charleston for closure, and something close to the truth. Together both men will share their tales of that terrible season in Italy, each with their own ghosts—and their own reasons to exorcise them. But neither Peter nor Cass is prepared for where this path of revenge, complicity, and atonement will take them.

A profound exploration of the evil that men do, and what the innocent must endure to accommodate it, *Set This House on Fire* is more than a byzantine murder mystery, it's "one of the finest novels of our times" from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, *Darkness Visible*, and other modern classics (San Francisco Chronicle). This ebook features a new illustrated biography of William Styron, including original letters, rare photos, and never-before-seen documents from the Styron family and the Duke University Archives.

Set This House on Fire

One of the world's most respected economists and author of the international bestseller "Bad Samaritans" equips readers with an understanding of how global capitalism works--and doesn't.

23 Things They Don't Tell You about Capitalism

This publication considers how cinema, as a major modern art form, has covered topics relating to the Holocaust in documentaries and fiction, historical reconstructions and more symbolic films, focusing on the question of realism in ethical and artistic terms. It explores a range of issues, including whether cinema is an appropriate method for informing people about the Holocaust compared to other media such as CD-ROMs, video or archive collections; whether it is possible to inform and appeal to the emotions without being explicit; and how the medium can nurture greater sensitivity among increasingly younger audiences which have been inured by the many images of violence conveyed in the media. Films discussed include *Schindler's List*, *Life is Beautiful*, *The Pianist*, *Sophie's Choice*, *Shoah*, *Au revoir les enfants*, *The Great Dictator* and *To Be or Not to Be*.

The Shoah on Screen

Widely acknowledged as a contemporary classic that has introduced thousands of readers to American literature, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* brilliantly charts the fascinating story of American literature from the Puritan legacy to the advent of postmodernism. From realism and romanticism to modernism and postmodernism it examines and reflects on the work of a rich panoply of writers, including Poe, Melville, Fitzgerald, Pound, Wallace Stevens, Gwendolyn Brooks and Thomas Pynchon. Characterised throughout by a vibrant and engaging style it is a superb introduction to American literature, placing it thoughtfully in its rich social, ideological and historical context. A tour de force of both literary and historical writing, this Routledge Classics edition includes a new preface by co-author Richard Ruland, a new foreword by Linda Wagner-Martin and a fascinating interview with Richard Ruland, in which he reflects on the nature of American fiction and his collaboration with Malcolm Bradbury. It is published here for the first time.

From Puritanism to Postmodernism

The sixtieth anniversary edition of Frantz Fanon's landmark text, now with a new introduction by Cornel West. First published in 1961, and reissued in this sixtieth anniversary edition with a powerful new introduction by Cornel West, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is a masterful and timeless interrogation of race, colonialism, psychological trauma, and revolutionary struggle, and a continuing influence on movements from Black Lives Matter to decolonization. A landmark text for revolutionaries and activists, *The Wretched of the Earth* is an eternal touchstone for civil rights, anti-colonialism, psychiatric studies, and Black consciousness movements around the world. Alongside Cornel West's introduction, the book features critical essays by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha. This sixtieth anniversary edition of Fanon's most famous text stands proudly alongside such pillars of anti-colonialism and anti-racism as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

The Wretched of the Earth

Drawing Futures brings together international designers and artists for speculations in contemporary drawing for art and architecture. Despite numerous developments in technological manufacture and computational design that provide new grounds for designers, the act of drawing still plays a central role as a vehicle for speculation. There is a rich and long history of drawing tied to innovations in technology as well as to revolutions in our philosophical understanding of the world. In reflection of a society now underpinned by computational networks and interfaces allowing hitherto unprecedented views of the world, the changing status of the drawing and its representation as a political act demands a platform for reflection and innovation. *Drawing Futures* will present a compendium of projects,

writings and interviews that critically reassess the act of drawing and where its future may lie. Drawing Futures focuses on the discussion of how the field of drawing may expand synchronously alongside technological and computational developments. The book coincides with an international conference of the same name, taking place at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, in November 2016. Bringing together practitioners from many creative fields, the book discusses how drawing is changing in relation to new technologies for the production and dissemination of ideas.

Drawing Futures

This book explores the nature of power in persons, groups, and nations by asking a question that we can understand in contemporary terms: what would Bill Gates do if he had Hitler's absolute power? It is a sociological question that exposes power as a tool of control over the powerless, not as a psychological trait or manners of personal interactions. With Hitler's power, any individual, group, or nation could become as crazy as Hitler or as cruel as the Nazis. Call from the Cave argues that the savage struggle for power, exemplified in the free market system of America--history's first and purest "natural" society--is in our very human nature. In the footsteps of the ancient Romans and the recent Nazis, we push on in every waking moment of our lives to expand our power and to control the souls and minds of other human beings to do our bidding. The book concludes that this is the very destiny of humanity we cannot escape.

Call from the Cave

Unpacks Adorno's critique of popular culture in an engagingly, looking at the development of theories of authority, commodification and negative dialectics. Goes on to consider Adorno's writing on specific aspects of popular culture.

Adorno on Popular Culture

From the author of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, "a book to think with through the political impasses and cultural confusions of our day" (*Harper's Magazine*) Hannah Arendt's insightful observations of the modern world, based on a profound knowledge of the past, constitute an impassioned contribution to political philosophy. In *Between Past and Future* Arendt describes the perplexing crises modern society faces as a result of the loss of meaning of the traditional key words of politics: justice, reason, responsibility, virtue, and glory. Through a series of eight exercises, she shows how we can redistill the vital essence of these concepts and use them to regain a frame of reference for the future. To participate in these exercises is to associate, in action, with one of the most original and fruitful minds of the twentieth century.

The Great Transformation

Henri Lefebvre has considerable claims to be the greatest living philosopher. His work spans some sixty years and includes original work on a diverse range of subjects, from dialectical materialism to architecture, urbanism and the experience of everyday life. *The Production of Space* is his major philosophical work and its translation has been long awaited by scholars in many different fields. The book is a search for a reconciliation between mental space (the space of the philosophers) and real space (the physical and social spheres in which we all live). In the course of his exploration, Henri Lefebvre moves from metaphysical and ideological considerations of the meaning of space to its experience in the everyday life of home and city. He seeks, in other words, to bridge the gap between the realms of theory and practice, between the mental and the social, and between philosophy and reality. In doing so, he ranges through art, literature, architecture and economics, and further provides a powerful antidote to the sterile and obfuscatory methods and theories characteristic of much recent continental philosophy. This is a work of great vision and incisiveness. It is also characterized by its author's wit and by anecdote, as well as by a deftness of style which Donald Nicholson-Smith's sensitive translation precisely captures.

The Perfectibility of Man

From the bestselling author of *The Black Swan*, a bold book that challenges many of our long-held beliefs about risk and reward, politics and religion, finance and personal responsibility 'Skin in the game means that you do not pay attention to what people say, only to what they do, and how much of their neck they are putting on the line' Citizens, artisans, police, fishermen, political activists and

entrepreneurs all have skin in the game. Policy wonks, corporate executives, many academics, bankers and most journalists don't. It's all about having something to lose and sharing risks with others. In his most provocative and practical book yet, Nassim Nicholas Taleb shows that skin in the game, often seen as the foundation of risk management, in fact applies to all aspects of our lives. In his inimitable style, Taleb draws on everything from Antaeus the Giant to Hammurabi to Donald Trump, from ethics to used car salesmen, to create a jaw-dropping framework for understanding this idea. Among his insights: For social justice, focus on symmetry and risk sharing. Minorities, not majorities, run the world. You can be an intellectual yet still be an idiot. Beware of complicated solutions (that someone was paid to find). Just as The Black Swan did during the 2007 financial crisis, Skin in the Game comes at precisely the right moment to challenge our long-held beliefs about risk, reward, politics, religion and business - and make us rethink everything we thought we knew.

Between Past and Future

Paid work is absolutely central to the culture and politics of capitalist societies, yet today's work-centred world is becoming increasingly hostile to the human need for autonomy, spontaneity and community. The grim reality of a society in which some are overworked, whilst others are condemned to intermittent work and unemployment, is progressively more difficult to tolerate. In this thought-provoking book, David Frayne questions the central place of work in mainstream political visions of the future, laying bare the ways in which economic demands colonise our lives and priorities. Drawing on his original research into the lives of people who are actively resisting nine-to-five employment, Frayne asks what motivates these people to disconnect from work, whether or not their resistance is futile, and whether they might have the capacity to inspire an alternative form of development, based on a reduction and social redistribution of work. A crucial dissection of the work-centred nature of modern society and emerging resistance to it, The Refusal of Work is a bold call for a more humane and sustainable vision of social progress.

The Production of Space

Projects that bring the 'hard' sciences into art are increasingly being exhibited in galleries and museums across the world. In a surge of publications on the subject, few focus on regions beyond Europe and the Anglophone world. Decolonizing Science in Latin American Art assembles a new corpus of art-science projects by Latin American artists, ranging from big-budget collaborations with NASA and MIT to homegrown experiments in artists' kitchens. While they draw on recent scientific research, these art projects also 'decolonize' science. If increasing knowledge of the natural world has often gone hand-in-hand with our objectification and exploitation of it, the artists studied here emphasize the subjectivity and intelligence of other species, staging new forms of collaboration and co-creativity beyond the human. They design technologies that work with organic processes to promote the health of ecosystems, and seek alternatives to the logics of extractivism and monoculture farming that have caused extensive ecological damage in Latin America. They develop do-it-yourself, open-source, commons-based practices for sharing creative and intellectual property. They establish critical dialogues between Western science and indigenous thought, reconnecting a disembodied, abstracted form of knowledge with the cultural, social, spiritual, and ethical spheres of experience from which it has often been excluded. Decolonizing Science in Latin American Art interrogates how artistic practices may communicate, extend, supplement, and challenge scientific ideas. At the same time, it explores broader questions in the field of art, including the relationship between knowledge, care, and curation; nonhuman agency; art and utility; and changing approaches to participation. It also highlights important contributions by Latin American thinkers to themes of global significance, including the Anthropocene, climate change and environmental justice.

Skin in the Game

Michel Foucault examines the archeology of madness in the West from 1500 to 1800 - from the late Middle Ages, when insanity was still considered part of everyday life and fools and lunatics walked the streets freely, to the time when such people began to be considered a threat, asylums were first built, and walls were erected between the "insane" and the rest of humanity.

The Refusal of Work

The Great Art Hoax exposes the real fakery and hypocrisy of the art world: how art is manufactured and marketed; how the pathology of private possession drives up the price; and how false art is hyped as

true art to the tune of millions of dollars. Jon Huer demonstrates convincingly that what the art market deals as art need not be art at all. "

Decolonizing Science in Latin American Art

Yearning to escape her life of prostitution in 1870s London, Sugar finds her fate entangled in the complicated family life of patron William, an egotistical perfume magnate.

Madness and Civilization

This book offers a detailed discussion of Conrad's most brilliant and problematic work. Many significant aspects of *Heart of Darkness* are examined, from plot and characterisation to imagery and symbolism, and particular attention is paid to its ambiguity and paradoxes. By relating the text to a variety of contexts, Cedric Watts explores Conrad's central preoccupations as a writer and as a commentator on his age. The first edition of this study appeared in 1977, and reviewers described it as 'criticism of the highest order' (*Joseph Conrad Today*) and 'an important book' (*Conradiana*).

The Great Art Hoax

It has been suggested that 'spirituality' has become a word that 'can define an era'. Why? Because paradoxically, alongside a decline in traditional religious affiliations, the growing interest in spirituality and the use of the word in a variety of contexts is a striking aspect of contemporary western cultures. Indeed, spirituality is sometimes contrasted attractively with religion, although this is problematic and implies that religion is essentially dogma, moralism, institutions, buildings, and hierarchies. The notion of spirituality expresses the fact that many people are driven by goals that concern more than material satisfaction. Broadly, it refers to the deepest values and sense of meaning by which people seek to live. Sometimes these values are conventionally religious. Sometimes they are associated with what is understood as 'the sacred' in a broader sense - that is, of ultimate rather than merely instrumental importance. This Very Short Introduction, written by one of the most eminent scholars and writers on spirituality, explores the historical foundations of the thought and considers how it came to have the significance it is developing today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

The Crimson Petal and the White

For Bataille, 'the absence of myth' had itself become the myth of the modern age. In a world that had 'lost the secret of its cohesion', Bataille saw surrealism as both a symptom and the beginning of an attempt to address this loss. His writings on this theme are the result of profound reflection in the wake of World War Two. *The Absence of Myth* is the most incisive study yet made of surrealism, insisting on its importance as a cultural and social phenomenon with far-reaching consequences. Clarifying Bataille's links with the surrealist movement, and throwing revealing light on his complex and greatly misunderstood relationship with Andre Breton, *The Absence of Myth* shows Bataille to be a much more radical figure than his postmodernist devotees would have us believe: a man who continually tried to extend Marxist social theory; a pessimistic thinker, but one as far removed from nihilism as can be. Introduced and translated by Michael Richardson.

Conrad's Heart of Darkness

The international bestseller about life, the universe and everything. 'A simply wonderful, irresistible book' DAILY TELEGRAPH 'A terrifically entertaining and imaginative story wrapped round its tough, thought-provoking philosophical heart' DAILY MAIL 'Remarkable ... an extraordinary achievement' SUNDAY TIMES When 14-year-old Sophie encounters a mysterious mentor who introduces her to philosophy, mysteries deepen in her own life. Why does she keep getting postcards addressed to another girl? Who is the other girl? And who, for that matter, is Sophie herself? To solve the riddle, she uses her new knowledge of philosophy, but the truth is far stranger than she could have imagined. A phenomenal worldwide bestseller, *SOPHIE'S WORLD* sets out to draw teenagers into the world of Socrates, Descartes, Spinoza, Hegel and all the great philosophers. A brilliantly original and fascinating

story with many twists and turns, it raises profound questions about the meaning of life and the origin of the universe.

Deschooling Society

Text World Theory is a cognitive model of all human discourse processing. In this introductory textbook, Joanna Gavins sets out a usable framework for understanding mental representations. Text World Theory is explained using naturally occurring texts and real situations, including literary works, advertising discourse, the language of lonely hearts, horoscopes, route directions, cookery books and song lyrics. The book will therefore enable students, teachers and researchers to make practical use of the text-world framework in a wide range of linguistic and literary contexts.

Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction

When first published, Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* made history with its radical view of the effects of electronic communications upon man and life in the twentieth century.

The Absence of Myth

The *Das Kapital* of the 20th century, *Society of the Spectacle* is an essential text, and the main theoretical work of the Situationists. Few works of political and cultural theory have been as enduringly provocative. From its publication amid the social upheavals of the 1960's, in particular the May 1968 uprisings in France, up to the present day, with global capitalism seemingly staggering around in its Zombie end-phase, the volatile theses of this book have decisively transformed debates on the shape of modernity, capitalism, and everyday life in the late 20th century. This 'Red and Black' translation from 1977 is Introduced by Notting Hill armchair insurrectionary Tom Vague with a galloping time line and pop-situ verve, and given a more analytical over view by young upstart thinker Sam Cooper.

Sophie's World

Text World Theory