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La utilidad de lo inútil

El oxímoron evocado por el título La utilidad de lo inútil merece una aclaración. La paradójica utilidad a la que me refiero no es la misma en cuyo nombre se consideran inútiles los saberes humanísticos y, más en general, todos los saberes que no producen beneficios. En una acepción muy distinta y mucho más amplia, he querido poner en el centro de mis reflexiones la idea de utilidad de aquellos saberes cuyo valor esencial es del todo ajeno a cualquier finalidad utilitarista. [...] Si dejamos morir lo gratuito, si renunciamos a la fuerza generadora de lo inútil, si escuchamos únicamente el mortífero canto de sirenas que nos impele a perseguir el beneficio, sólo seremos capaces de producir una colectividad enferma y sin memoria que, extraviada, acabará por perder el sentido de sí misma y de la vida. Y en ese momento, cuando la desertificación del espíritu nos haya ya agostado, será en verdad difícil imaginar que el ignorante homo

sapiens pueda desempeñar todavía un papel en la tarea de hacer más humana la humanidad.

The Usefulness of the Useless *Paul Dry Books*

"A little masterpiece of originality and clarity."—George Steiner
 "A necessary book."—Roberto Saviano "A wonderful little book that will delight you."—François Busnel International Best Seller / Now in English for the First Time In this thought-provoking and extremely timely work, Nuccio Ordine convincingly argues for the utility of useless knowledge and against the contemporary fixation on utilitarianism—for the fundamental importance of the liberal arts and against the damage caused by their neglect. Inspired by the reflections of great philosophers and writers (e.g., Plato, Dante, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Borges, and Calvino), Ordine reveals how the obsession for material goods and the cult of utility ultimately wither the spirit, jeopardizing not only schools and universities, art, and creativity, but also our most fundamental values—human dignity, love, and truth. Also included is Abraham Flexner's 1939 essay "The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge," which originally prompted Ordine to write this book. Flexner—a founder and the first director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton—offers an impassioned defense of curiosity-driven research and learning.

Nona's Room *Peter Owen Publishers*

Winner: Premio Nacional de Narrativa (2016) Premio de la Crítica Española (2016) Premio Dulce Chacón (2016) Book of the Year 2015: La Vanguardia, El Cultural, Babelia and ABC An award-winning collection of Gothic and uncanny stories from one of Europe's most celebrated contemporary writers of short fiction. In *Nona's Room* the everyday fantasies of women slowly turn into nightmare, delusion and paranoia. A young girl who is envious of the attention given to her sister has a brutal awakening. A young woman, facing eviction, misplaces her trust in an old lady who invites her into her home. A mature woman spends the night in a hotel in Madrid and falls into a time warp... Cubas's stories are suffused with the chilling tones of Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* and the psychological intensity of Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train*.

The Wreck of the Batavia

In this riveting account of the shipwreck of the *Batavia*, Leys travels to the site of the disaster and reveals the brutality and tragedy of the bloody island massacre which befell the ship's survivors.

Long Live Latin *Farrar, Straus and Giroux*

A lively exploration of the joys of a not-so-dead language From the acclaimed novelist and Oxford professor Nicola Gardini, a personal and passionate look at the Latin language: its history, its authors, its essential role in education, and its enduring impact on modern life—whether we call it “dead” or not. What use is Latin? It's a question we're often asked by those who see the language of Cicero as no more than a cumbersome heap of ruins, something to remove from the curriculum. In this sustained meditation, Gardini gives us his sincere and brilliant reply: Latin is, quite simply, the means of expression that made us—and continues to make us—who we are. In Latin, the rigorous and inventive thinker Lucretius examined the nature of our world; the poet Propertius told of love and emotion in a dizzying variety of registers; Caesar affirmed man's capacity to shape reality through reason; Virgil composed the *Aeneid*, without which we'd see all of Western history in a different light. In *Long Live Latin*, Gardini shares his deep love for the language—enriched by his tireless intellectual curiosity—and warmly encourages us to

engage with a civilization that has never ceased to exist, because it's here with us now, whether we know it or not. Thanks to his careful guidance, even without a single lick of Latin grammar readers can discover how this language is still capable of restoring our sense of identity, with a power that only useless things can miraculously express.

Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now *Henry Holt*

"You might have trouble imagining life without your social media accounts, but virtual reality pioneer Jaron Lanier insists that we're better off without them. In *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, Lanier, who participates in no social media, offers powerful and personal reasons for all of us to leave these dangerous online platforms"--

The Time Seller *John Wiley & Sons*

The *Time Seller*, the second book of business fiction from Fernando Trías de Bes—author of the international acclaimed bestseller *Good Luck*—is not your standard business model book nor a “get with the program” corporate drone story. It breaks the mold and offers a funny (and perhaps existential) meditation on time, work, meaning, and the true costs of “selling out” to the system. Trías de Bes has written an acerbic commentary that seeks to awaken those bound to a routine that has become the source of alienation.

El Túnel

Breakthroughs in Science

Twenty-six far-reaching discoveries and the twenty-nine scientists who made them - from Archimedes, who boasted he could move the world, to Goddard, who sent the first liquid-fuel rocket toward space. These men of vision and genius set their sights beyond the known to bring about hold advances in scientific thinking and enlarge our knowledge of man and his environment.

Daodejing *OUP Oxford*

'Of ways you may speak, but not the Perennial Way; By names you may name, but not the Perennial Name.' The best-loved of all the classical books of China and the most universally popular, the *Daodejing* or *Classic of the Way and Life-Force* is a work that defies definition. It encapsulates the main tenets of Daoism, and upholds a way of being as well as a philosophy and a religion. The dominant image is of the Way, the mysterious path through the whole cosmos modelled on the great Silver River or Milky Way that traverses the heavens. A life-giving stream, the Way gives rise to all things and holds them in her motherly embrace. It enables the individual, and society as a whole, to harmonize the disparate demands of daily life and achieve a more profound level of understanding. This new translation draws on the latest archaeological finds and brings out the word play and poetry of the original. Simple commentary accompanies the text, and the introduction provides further historical and interpretative context. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being *Harper Collins*

When *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* was first published in

English, it was hailed as "a work of the boldest mastery, originality, and richness" by critic Elizabeth Hardwick and named one of the best books of 1984 by the New York Times Book Review. It went on to win the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction and quickly became an international bestseller. Twenty years later, the novel has established itself as a modern classic. To commemorate the anniversary of its first English-language publication, HarperCollins is proud to offer a special hardcover edition. A young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing; one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover -- these are the two couples whose story is told in this masterful novel. Controlled by day, Tereza's jealousy awakens by night, transformed into ineffably sad death-dreams, while Tomas, a successful surgeon, alternates loving devotion to the dependent Tereza with the ardent pursuit of other women. Sabina, an independent, free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals -- of parents, husband, country, love itself -- whereas her lover, the intellectual Franz, loses all because of his earnest goodness and fidelity. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence we feel, says the novelist, "the unbearable lightness of being" -- not only as the consequence of our private acts but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine. This magnificent novel encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, and embraces, it seems, all aspects of human existence. It juxtaposes geographically distant places (Prague, Geneva, Paris, Thailand, the United States, a forlorn Bohemian village); brilliant and playful reflections (on "eternal return," on kitsch, on man and animals -- Tomas and Tereza have a beloved doe named Karenin); and a variety of styles (from the farcical to the elegiac) to take its place as perhaps the major achievement of one of the world's truly great writers.

Social Contract *Simon and Schuster*

In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourses on the Origin of Inequality*, he outlines his own history of the development of human society. He explains in general terms how the differences between social and economic classes arose alongside the formation of modern states. He also explores the means by which these inequalities were actually built into and perpetuated by the foundational notions of modern society and government. Rather than endorse a return to the peaceful ways of pre-modern human beings, Rousseau addresses these inequalities in his seminal work, *The Social Contract*. Rousseau does not see government as an inherently corrupting influence, and he makes very clear and precise recommendations about how the state can and should protect the equality and character of its citizens.

Bullshit Jobs *Simon & Schuster*

From bestselling writer David Graeber—"a master of opening up thought and stimulating debate" (Slate)—a powerful argument against the rise of meaningless, unfulfilling jobs...and their consequences. Does your job make a meaningful contribution to the world? In the spring of 2013, David Graeber asked this question in a playful, provocative essay titled "On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs." It went viral. After one million online views in seventeen different languages, people all over the world are still debating the answer. There are hordes of people—HR consultants, communication coordinators, telemarketing researchers, corporate lawyers—whose jobs are useless, and, tragically, they know it. These people are caught in bullshit jobs. Graeber explores one of society's most vexing and deeply felt concerns, indicting among other villains a particular

strain of finance capitalism that betrays ideals shared by thinkers ranging from Keynes to Lincoln. "Clever and charismatic" (The New Yorker), *Bullshit Jobs* gives individuals, corporations, and societies permission to undergo a shift in values, placing creative and caring work at the center of our culture. This book is for everyone who wants to turn their vocation back into an avocation and "a thought-provoking examination of our working lives" (Financial Times).

The Sciences in the European Periphery During the Enlightenment *Springer Science & Business Media*

The articles in this volume of *ARCHIMEDES* examine particular cases of 'reception' in ways that emphasize pressing historiographical and methodological issues. Such issues arise in any consideration of the transmission and appropriation of scientific concepts and practices that originated in the several 'centers' of European learning, subsequently to appear (often in considerably altered guise) in regions at the European periphery. They discuss the transfer of new scientific ideas, the mechanisms of their introduction, and the processes of their appropriation at the periphery. The themes that frame the discussions of the complex relationship between the origination of ideas and their reception include the ways in which the ideas of the Scientific Revolution were introduced, the particularities of their expression in each place, the specific forms of resistance encountered by these new ideas, the extent to which such expression and resistance displays national characteristics, the procedures through which new ways of dealing with nature were made legitimate, and the commonalities and differences between the methods developed by scholars for handling scientific issues.

The Teachings of Don Juan *Univ of California Press*

Of Crimes and Punishments *ReadHowYouWant.com*

Creating Tomorrow's Schools Today *A&C Black*

Drawing on the incredible story of Grange Primary School, Gerver argues that our education system no longer works for today's generation of learners.

The Freemason's Monitor

Miguel Venegas and the Earliest Jesuit Theater *Jesuit Studies*

Miguel Venegas and the Earliest Jesuit Theater offers a fresh look at the origins of Jesuit theater and provides a detailed account of the life and work of Miguel Venegas (1529-after 1588) within the Iberian tradition.

The Posthuman *John Wiley & Sons*

The *Posthuman* offers both an introduction and major contribution to contemporary debates on the posthuman. Digital 'second life', genetically modified food, advanced prosthetics, robotics and reproductive technologies are familiar facets of our globally linked and technologically mediated societies. This has blurred the traditional distinction between the human and its others, exposing the non-naturalistic structure of the human. The *Posthuman* starts by exploring the extent to which a post-humanist move displaces the traditional humanistic unity of the subject. Rather than perceiving this situation as a loss of cognitive and moral self-mastery, Braidotti argues that the posthuman helps us make sense of our flexible and multiple identities. Braidotti then analyzes the escalating effects of post-anthropocentric thought, which encompass not only other species, but also the sustainability of our planet as a whole.

Because contemporary market economies profit from the control and commodification of all that lives, they result in hybridization, erasing categorical distinctions between the human and other species, seeds, plants, animals and bacteria. These dislocations induced by globalized cultures and economies enable a critique of anthropocentrism, but how reliable are they as indicators of a sustainable future? The Posthuman concludes by considering the implications of these shifts for the institutional practice of the humanities. Braidotti outlines new forms of cosmopolitan neo-humanism that emerge from the spectrum of post-colonial and race studies, as well as gender analysis and environmentalism. The challenge of the posthuman condition consists in seizing the opportunities for new social bonding and community building, while pursuing sustainability and empowerment.

Fog Island *Phaidon Press*

"Top 10 Children's Book 2013 - New York Times Book Review A Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of 2013 A New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Book of 2013 "Tomi Ungerer has created another masterpiece." - Eric Carle In this imaginative tale from master storyteller Tomi Ungerer, two young siblings find themselves cast away on mysterious Fog Island. No one has ever returned from the island's murky shores, but when the children begin to explore, they discover things are not quite as they expected. Ungerer's captivating drawings evoke the eerie beauty and magic surrounding this timeless adventure. Selected by both The New York Times and Publishers Weekly as one of the year's best children's books, Fog Island is destined to become a modern classic. "

Giordano Bruno and the Philosophy of the Ass *Yale University Press*

In this highly original study, Nuccio Ordine uses the figure of the ass as a lens through which to focus on the thought and writings of the great Renaissance humanist philosopher Giordano Bruno. The donkey played a prominent role as a symbol in sixteenth-century literature, and the ass and human asininity became a recurring motif in Bruno's writings. Ordine offers the first analysis of Bruno's use of this complex symbol, which encompasses contradictory characteristics ranging from humble and hardworking to ignorant and idle. The result is a deeper understanding of Bruno the philosopher, along with a stronger appreciation of Bruno the literary artist. Ordine looks especially closely at Bruno's use of the figure of the donkey in his attacks on the theologies of both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, and in issues that have become modernist concerns. Ordine's analysis sheds light on each of the major themes of Bruno's philosophy: science and knowledge, myth and religion, language and literature.

Catalogue of the manuscripts in the Spanish language in the British museum

Justine *Phoemixx Classics Ebooks*

Justine Marquis De Sade - Justine (or The Misfortunes of Virtue) is set just before the French Revolution in France and tells the story of a young woman who goes under the name of Therese. Her story is recounted to Madame de Lersagne while defending herself for her crimes, en route to punishment and death. She explains the series of misfortunes which have led her to be in her present situation.

Radical Enlightenment *Oxford University Press, USA*

Arguably the most decisive shift in the history of ideas in modern times was the complete demolition during the late seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries - in the wake of the Scientific Revolution - of traditional structures of authority, scientific thought, and belief by the new philosophy and the philosophes, culminating in Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. In this revolutionary process which effectively overthrew all justification for monarchy, aristocracy, and ecclesiastical power, as well as man's dominance over woman, theological dominance of education, and slavery, substituting the modern principles of equality, democracy, and universality, the Radical Enlightenment played a crucially important part. Despite the present day interest in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century, the origins and rise of the Radical Enlightenment have been astonishingly little studied doubtless largely because of its very wide international sweep and the obvious difficulty of fitting in into the restrictive conventions of 'national history' which until recently tended to dominate all historiography. The greatest obstacle to the Radical Enlightenment finding its proper place in modern historical writing is simply that it was not French, British, German, Italian, Jewish or Dutch, but all of these at the same time. In this novel interpretation of the Radical Enlightenment down to La Mettrie and Diderot, two of its key exponents, particular stress is placed on the pivotal role of Spinoza and the widespread underground international philosophical movement known before 1750 as Spinozism.

The spirits' book *FEB Editora/CEI*

After you have read The Spirits' Book, you will no longer have any reason to fear death. The Spirits' Book will provide you with the answers to nearly all the questions you may have with regards to the origin, nature and destiny of each and every soul on earth - and those of other worlds as well. It also addresses the issues of God, creation, moral laws and the nature of spirits and their relationships with humans. The book contains answers that were dictated to mediums by highly evolved spirits who love God. The Spirits' Book is the initial landmark publication of a Doctrine that has made a profound impact on the thought and view of life of a considerable portion of humankind since the first French edition was published in 1857.

Practicalities *Grove Press*

"It's the women who upset the apple cart. Between themselves they talk only about the practicalities of life", declares Duras in this collection of her transcribed conversations with friend Jerome Beaujour. Some of her free-ranging meditations are short and deceptively simple, while many are autobiographical and reveal her most intimate thoughts about motherhood, her struggle with alcohol, her love for a young man, and more.

21 Lessons for the 21st Century *Random House*

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • In *Sapiens*, he explored our past. In *Homo Deus*, he looked to our future. Now, one of the most innovative thinkers on the planet turns to the present to make sense of today's most pressing issues. "Fascinating . . . a crucial global conversation about how to take on the problems of the twenty-first century."—Bill Gates, The New York Times Book Review NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY FINANCIAL TIMES AND PAMELA PAUL, KQED How do computers and robots change the meaning of being human? How do we deal with the epidemic of fake news? Are nations and religions still relevant? What should we teach our children? Yuval Noah Harari's *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* is a probing and visionary investigation into today's most urgent issues as we move into the uncharted territory of the future. As technology advances faster than our understanding of it, hacking becomes a tactic of war, and the world feels more polarized than ever, Harari addresses

the challenge of navigating life in the face of constant and disorienting change and raises the important questions we need to ask ourselves in order to survive. In twenty-one accessible chapters that are both provocative and profound, Harari builds on the ideas explored in his previous books, untangling political, technological, social, and existential issues and offering advice on how to prepare for a very different future from the world we now live in: How can we retain freedom of choice when Big Data is watching us? What will the future workforce look like, and how should we ready ourselves for it? How should we deal with the threat of terrorism? Why is liberal democracy in crisis? Harari's unique ability to make sense of where we have come from and where we are going has captured the imaginations of millions of readers. Here he invites us to consider values, meaning, and personal engagement in a world full of noise and uncertainty. When we are deluged with irrelevant information, clarity is power. Presenting complex contemporary challenges clearly and accessibly, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* is essential reading. "If there were such a thing as a required instruction manual for politicians and thought leaders, Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari's *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* would deserve serious consideration. In this collection of provocative essays, Harari . . . tackles a daunting array of issues, endeavoring to answer a persistent question: 'What is happening in the world today, and what is the deep meaning of these events?'"—BookPage (top pick)

CITADELLE

Ismaelillo *Wings Press (TX)*

A bilingual edition of the noted Cuban poet's first published book of poetry, written while he was in exile far from his wife and son, expresses his love for his child and his hopes for the boy's future.

The Novel and the New Ethics *Stanford University Press*

For a generation of contemporary Anglo-American novelists, the question "Why write?" has been answered with a renewed will to believe in the ethical value of literature. Dissatisfied with postmodernist parody and pastiche, a broad array of novelist-critics—including J.M. Coetzee, Toni Morrison, Zadie Smith, Gish Jen, Ian McEwan, and Jonathan Franzen—champion the novel as the literary genre most qualified to illuminate individual ethical action and decision-making within complex and diverse social worlds. Key to this contemporary vision of the novel's ethical power is the task of knowing and being responsible to people different from oneself, and so thoroughly have contemporary novelists devoted themselves to the ethics of otherness, that this ethics frequently sets the terms for plot, characterization, and theme. In *The Novel and the New Ethics*, literary critic Dorothy J. Hale investigates how the contemporary emphasis on literature's social relevance sparks a new ethical description of the novel's social value that is in fact rooted in the modernist notion of narrative form. This "new" ethics of the contemporary moment has its origin in the "new" idea of novelistic form that Henry James inaugurated and which was consolidated through the modernist narrative experiments and was developed over the course of the twentieth century. In Hale's reading, the art of the novel becomes defined with increasing explicitness as an aesthetics of alterity made visible as a formalist ethics. In fact, it is this commitment to otherness as a narrative act which has conferred on the genre an artistic intensity and richness that extends to the novel's every word.

Leisure, the Basis of Culture *St Augustine PressInc*

One of the most important philosophy titles published in the

twentieth century, Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* is more significant, even more crucial, today than it was when it first appeared fifty years ago. Pieper shows that the Greeks understood and valued leisure, as did the medieval Europeans. He points out that religion can be born only in leisure -- a leisure that allows time for the contemplation of the nature of God. Leisure has been, and always will be, the first foundation of any culture. He maintains that our bourgeois world of total labor has vanquished leisure, and issues a startling warning: Unless we regain the art of silence and insight, the ability for nonactivity, unless we substitute true leisure for our hectic amusements, we will destroy our culture -- and ourselves. These astonishing essays contradict all our pragmatic and puritanical conceptions about labor and leisure; Josef Pieper demolishes the twentieth-century cult of "work" as he predicts its destructive consequences.

Imperial Subjects *Duke University Press*

In colonial Latin America, social identity did not correlate neatly with fixed categories of race and ethnicity. As *Imperial Subjects* demonstrates, from the early years of Spanish and Portuguese rule, understandings of race and ethnicity were fluid. In this collection, historians offer nuanced interpretations of identity as they investigate how Iberian settlers, African slaves, Native Americans, and their multi-ethnic progeny understood who they were as individuals, as members of various communities, and as imperial subjects. The contributors' explorations of the relationship between colonial ideologies of difference and the identities historical actors presented span the entire colonial period and beyond: from early contact to the legacy of colonial identities in the new republics of the nineteenth century. The volume includes essays on the major colonial centers of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, as well as the Caribbean basin and the imperial borderlands. Whether analyzing cases in which the Inquisition found that the individuals before it were "legally" Indians and thus exempt from prosecution, or considering late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century petitions for declarations of whiteness that entitled the mixed-race recipients to the legal and social benefits enjoyed by whites, the book's contributors approach the question of identity by examining interactions between imperial subjects and colonial institutions. Colonial mandates, rulings, and legislation worked in conjunction with the exercise and negotiation of power between individual officials and an array of social actors engaged in countless brief interactions. Identities emerged out of the interplay between internalized understandings of self and group association and externalized social norms and categories. Contributors. Karen D. Caplan, R. Douglas Cope, Mariana L. R. Dantas, María Elena Díaz, Andrew B. Fisher, Jane Mangan, Jeremy Ravi Mumford, Matthew D. O'Hara, Cynthia Radding, Sergio Serulnikov, Irene Silverblatt, David Tavárez, Ann Twinam

The Book of Chuang Tzu *Penguin UK*

The *Book of Chuang Tzu* draws together the stories, tales, jokes and anecdotes that have gathered around the figure of Chuang Tzu. One of the great founders of Taoism, Chaung Tzu lived in the fourth century BC and is among the most enjoyable and intriguing personalities in the whole of Chinese philosophy.

Philosophers of Peace and War *CUP Archive*

Examines the contributions of Kant, Clausewitz, Marx and Engels, and Tolstoy to the understanding of the character and causes of war and of the possibility of peace between nations.

Swann's Way *Wyatt North Publishing, LLC*

Marcel Proust (1871-1922) was a French novelist, and considered one of the finest writers of the 20th century. *Swann's Way* is one of his most celebrated works.

Medical Enhancement and Posthumanity *Springer Science & Business Media*

As we are increasingly using new technologies to change ourselves beyond therapy and in accordance with our own desires, understanding the challenges of human enhancement has become one of the most urgent topics of the current age. This volume contributes to such an understanding by critically examining the pros and cons of our growing ability to shape human nature through technological advancements. The authors undertake careful analyses of decisive questions that will confront society as enhancement interventions using bio-, info-, neuro- and nanotechnologies become widespread in the years to come. They provide the reader with the conceptual tools necessary to address such questions fruitfully. What makes the book especially attractive is the combination of conceptual, historical and ethical approaches, rendering it highly original. In addition, the well-balanced structure allows both favourable and critical views to be voiced. Moreover, the work has a crystal clear structure. As a consequence, the book is accessible to a broad academic audience. The issues raised are of interest to a wide reflective public concerned about science and ethics, as well as to students, academics and professionals in areas such as philosophy, applied ethics, bioethics, medicine and health management.

PISA, Power, and Policy *Symposium Books Ltd*

Over the past ten years the PISA assessment has risen to strategic prominence in the international education policy discourse. Sponsored, organized and administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA seems well on its way to being institutionalized as

the main engine in the global accountability regime. The goal of this book is to problematize this development and PISA as an institution-building force in global education. It scrutinizes the role of PISA in the emerging regime of global educational governance and questions the presumption that the quality of a nation's school system can be evaluated through a standardized assessment that is insensitive to the world's vast cultural and institutional diversity. The book raises the question of whether PISA's dominance in the global educational discourse runs the risk of engendering an unprecedented process of worldwide educational standardization for the sake of hitching schools more tightly to the bandwagon of economic efficiency, while sacrificing their role to prepare students for independent thinking and civic participation.

El periquillo sarniento

The Hall of Uselessness *New York Review of Books*

An NYRB Classics Original Simon Leys is a Renaissance man for the era of globalization. A distinguished scholar of classical Chinese art and literature and one of the first Westerners to recognize the appalling toll of Mao's Cultural Revolution, Leys also writes with unfailing intelligence, seriousness, and bite about European art, literature, history, and politics and is an unflinching observer of the way we live now. The Hall of Uselessness is the most extensive collection of Leys's essays to be published to date. In it, he addresses subjects ranging from the Chinese attitude to the past to the mysteries of Belgium and Belgitude; offers portraits of André Gide and Zhou Enlai; takes on Roland Barthes and Christopher Hitchens; broods on the Cambodian genocide; reflects on the spell of the sea; and writes with keen appreciation about writers as different as Victor Hugo, Evelyn Waugh, and Georges Simenon. Throughout, The Hall of Uselessness is marked with the deep knowledge, skeptical intelligence, and passionate conviction that have made Simon Leys one of the most powerful essayists of our time.