

NOTE TO THE READER

The essays collected in this volume span a period of thirty-three years, from among the very earliest I published to the most recent. They have been selected to cover close to the full the range of topics my work has addressed.¹ Most are previously published, scattered in time and far-flung in publishing context. Their content intersects with that of the published books but also supplements them in important respects.

The essays are not presented in chronological order, nor are they necessarily grouped by subject area. They have been paired in order to suggest cross-connections, on the chance that different transversals might form than in a reading process framed by conventional categories or ordered to suggest a linear development of ideas.

There is, of course, no imperative that the essays be read couplet by couplet. They can be traveled in order from the beginning, the last of one couplet connecting the first of the next. Or they may be dipped into here and there in spot visits following the reader's inclinations, composing informal couplets along the way. However the book is approached, it is hoped that transversal connections will emerge among the essays and, for readers familiar with them, with the books. This book is made for meandering.

Previously published texts have not been significantly edited. The changes are largely restricted to updating bibliographical citations (for example, when a book cited in French subsequently appeared in English translation, or an essay later appeared in a collection that became the standard reference). The previously unpublished essays were in various states of incompleteness and have undergone revision to round them out. Newly added notes have been enclosed in brackets. The dates attached to each title indicate the year of composition, which does not always coincide with the year of publication.