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One of the most profound thinkers of modern history, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was a central figure of the European Enlightenment. He was also its most formidable critic, condemning the political, economic, theological, and sexual trappings of civilization along lines that would excite the enthusiasm of romantic individualists and radical revolutionaries alike. In this study of Rousseau's life and works Robert Wokler shows how his philosophy of history, his theories of music and politics, his fiction, educational and religious writings, and even his botany, were all inspired by visionary ideals of mankind's self-realization in a condition of unfettered freedom. He explains how, in regressing to classical republicanism, ancient mythology, direct communion with God, and solitude, Rousseau anticipated some post-modernist rejections of the Enlightenment as well. 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. Secondary edition statement from sticker on cover. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was an extraordinarily original philosopher, whose influence on twentieth-century thinking goes well beyond philosophy itself. In this book, which aims to make Wittgenstein's thought accessible to the general non-specialist reader, A. C. Grayling explains the nature and impact of Wittgenstein's views. He describes both his early and later philosophy, the differences and connections between them, and gives a fresh assessment of Wittgenstein's continuing influence on contemporary thought. 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. Foucault is one of those rare philosophers who has become a cult figure. Born in 1926 in France, over the course of his life he dabbled in drugs, politics, and the Paris SM scene, all whilst striving to understand the deep concepts of identity, knowledge, and power. From aesthetics to the penal

system; from madness and civilisation to avant-garde literature, Foucault was happy to reject old models of thinking and replace them with versions that are still widely debated today. A major influence on Queer Theory and gender studies (he was openly gay and died of an AIDS-related illness in 1984), he also wrote on architecture, history, law, medicine, literature, politics and of course philosophy, and even managed a best-seller in France on a book dedicated to the history of systems of thought. Because of the complexity of his arguments, people trying to come to terms with his work have desperately sought introductory material that makes his theories clear and accessible for the beginner. Ideally suited for the Very Short Introductions series, Gary Gutting presents a comprehensive but non-systematic treatment of some highlights of Foucault's life and thought. Beginning with a brief biography to set the social and political stage, he then tackles Foucault's thoughts on literature, in particular the avant-garde scene; his philosophical and historical work; his treatment of knowledge and power in modern society; and his thoughts on sexuality.

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. From the schools of ancient times to the present day, Gary Thomas looks at how and why education evolved as it has. By exploring some of the big questions, he examines the ways in which schools work, considers the differences around the world, and concludes by considering the future of education worldwide.

Very Short Introductions: Brilliant, Sharp, Inspiring

The Arctic is demanding global attention. It is warming, melting, and thawing in a manner that threatens fundamental state-change. For communities that call the Arctic 'home' this is unwelcome. A warming Arctic brings with it the spectre of costly disruption and interference in indigenous lives and communal welfare. For others, the disappearance of sea ice makes the Arctic appear more accessible and less remote. This also brings with it dangers such as the prospect of a new era of great power rivalries involving China, Russia, and the United States. Submarine and long-range bomber patrolling are now commonplace. New terms such as 'global Arctic' are being used to capture the dynamic of change while others muse about the 'return of a Cold War'. The reality is inevitably more complex. The physical geography of the Arctic is highly varied and variable. Environmental change brings opportunities for indigenous and non-indigenous life-forms to survive and even thrive. The Arctic's four million people are not helpless pawns in a game of global geopolitics. The Arctic is not only a resource hotspot but also a place where sustainable energy systems are being introduced. A warming Arctic with less ice and permafrost is not unique in the longer history of the Earth either. The Arctic is a complex space. In this Very Short Introduction, Klaus Dodds and Jamie Woodward consider the major dimensions of the region and the linkages beyond - from the geopolitical to the environmental. They examine the causes, drivers, and effects of cultural, physical, political, and economic change, and ponder the future of the Arctic. As they show, it is a future which will affect us all.

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. What is knowledge? Is it the same as opinion or truth? Do you need to be able to justify a claim in order to count as knowing it? How can we know that the outer world is real and not a dream? Questions like these have existed since ancient times, and the branch of philosophy dedicated to answering them - epistemology - has been active for thousands of years. In this thought-provoking Very Short Introduction, Jennifer Nagel considers the central problems and paradoxes in the theory of knowledge and draws attention to the ways in which philosophers and theorists have responded to them. By exploring the relationship between knowledge and truth, and considering the problem of scepticism, Nagel introduces a series of influential historical and contemporary theories of knowledge, incorporating methods from logic, linguistics, and psychology, using a number of everyday examples to demonstrate the key issues and debates.

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. Art history encompasses the study of the history and development of painting, sculpture and the other visual arts. In this Very Short Introduction, Dana Arnold presents an introduction to the issues, debates, and artefacts that make up art history. Beginning with a consideration of what art history is, she explains what makes the subject distinctive from other fields of study, and also explores the emergence of social histories of art (such as Feminist Art History and Queer Art History). Using a wide range of images, she goes on to explore key aspects of the discipline including how we write, present, read, and look at art, and the impact this has on our understanding of art history. This second edition includes a new chapter on global art histories, considering how the traditional emphasis on periods and styles in art originated in western art and can obscure other critical approaches and artwork from non-western cultures. Arnold also discusses the relationship between art and history, and the ways in which art can tell a different history from the one narrated by texts. 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. Issues in medical ethics are rarely out of the media and it is an area of ethics that has particular interest for the general public as well as the medical practitioner. This short and accessible introduction deals with moral questions such as euthanasia as well as asking how health care resources can be distributed fairly. Biographies are one of the most popular and best-selling of the literary genres. Why do people like them? What does a biography do and how does it work? This Very Short Introduction examines different types of biographies, why certain people and historical events arouse so much interest, and how they are compared with history and fiction. Michael Allen Fox considers the complex meaning of home. He discusses what dwelling is, and the variety of dwellings people live in. He also looks at the politics of home, homelessness, refugeeism, and migration; the importance of place to our psyche; and the future of the concept of home. Starting with an examination of how historians work, this "Very Short Introduction" aims to explore history in a general, pithy, and accessible manner, rather than to delve into specific periods. This book is intended to capture the interest of anyone who has been attracted to Russian culture through the greats of Russian literature, either through the texts themselves, or encountering them in the cinema, or opera. Rather than a conventional chronology of Russian literature, the book will explore the place and importance of literature of all sorts in Russian culture. How and when did a Russian national literature come into being? What shaped its creation? How have the Russians regarded their literary language? The book will use the figure of Pushkin, 'the Russian Shakespeare' as a recurring example as his work influenced every Russian writer who came after him, whether poets or novelists. It will look at such questions as why Russian writers are venerated, how they've been interpreted inside Russia and beyond, and the influences of such things as the folk tale tradition, orthodox religion, and the West. 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. In a startling reinterpretation of the evidence, Stillman Drake advances the hypothesis that Galileo's trial and condemnation by the Inquisition was caused not by his defiance of the Church, but by the hostility of contemporary philosophers. Galileo's own beautifully lucid arguments are used to show how his scientific method was utterly divorced from the Aristotelian approach to physics in that it was based on a search not for causes but for laws. Galileo's method was of overwhelming significance for the development of modern physics, and led to a final parting of the ways between science and philosophy. 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. This book will transform the way you think about design by showing how integral it is to our daily lives, from the spoon we use to eat our breakfast cereal to the medical equipment used to save lives. John Heskett goes beyond style and taste to look at how different cultures and individuals personalise objects. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is probably the most divisive philosopher of the twentieth century. Considered by some to be the greatest charlatan ever to claim the title of 'philosopher', by some as an apologist for Nazism, he was also an acknowledged leader and central figure to many philosophers. Michael Inwood's lucid introduction to Heidegger's thought focuses on his most important work, 'Being and Time', and its major themes of existence in the world, inauthenticity, guilt, destiny, truth, and the nature of time. These themes are then reassessed in the light of Heidegger's later work, together with the extent of his philosophical importance and influence. This is an invaluable guide to the complex and voluminous thought of a major twentieth-century existentialist philosopher. 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. Today many people take reading for granted, but we remain some way off from attaining literacy for the global human population. And whilst we think we know what reading is, it remains in many ways a mysterious process, or set of processes. The effects of reading are myriad: it can be informative, distracting, moving, erotically arousing, politically motivating, spiritual, and much, much more. At different times and in different places reading means different things. In this Very Short Introduction Belinda Jack explores the fascinating history of literacy, and the opportunities reading opens. For much of human history reading was the preserve of the elite, and most reading meant being read to. Innovations in printing, paper-making, and transport, combined with the rise of public education from the late eighteenth century on, brought a dramatic rise in literacy in many parts of the world. Established links between a nation's levels of literacy and its economy led to the promotion of reading for political ends. But, equally, reading has been associated with subversive ideas, leading to censorship through multiple channels: denying access to education, controlling publishing, destroying libraries, and even the burning of authors and their works. Indeed, the works of Voltaire were so often burned that an enterprising Parisian publisher produced a fire-proof edition, decorated with a phoenix. But, as Jack demonstrates, reading is a collaborative act between an author and a reader, and one which can never be wholly controlled. Telling the story of reading, from the ancient world to digital reading and restrictions today, Belinda Jack explores why it is such an important aspect of our society. 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 twentieth century saw a remarkable upsurge of research on drugs, with major advances in the treatment of bacterial and viral infections, heart disease, stomach ulcers, cancer, and mental illnesses. These, along with the introduction of the oral contraceptive, have altered all of our lives. There has also been an increase in the recreational use and abuse of drugs in the Western world. This Very Short Introduction, in its second edition, gives a non-technical account of how drugs work in the body. Reviewing both legal (alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine) and illegal drugs, Les Iversen discusses why some are addictive, and whether drug laws need reform. 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 topic of stem cells has a high profile in the media. We've made important advances in our scientific understanding, but despite this the clinical applications of stem cells are still in their infancy and most real

stem cell therapy carried out today is some form of bone marrow transplantation. At the same time, a scandalous spread of unproven stem cell treatments by private clinics represents a serious problem, with treatments being offered which are backed by limited scientific rationale, and which are at best ineffective, and at worse harmful. This Very Short Introduction introduces stem cells, exploring what they are, and what scientists do with them. Introducing the different types of stem cells, Jonathan Slack explains how they can be used to treat diseases such as retinal degeneration, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, heart disease, and spinal trauma. He also discusses the important technique of bone marrow transplantation and some other types of current stem cell therapy, used for the treatment of blindness and of severe burns. Slack warns against fake stem cell treatments and discusses how to distinguish real from fake treatments. He also describes the latest scientific progress in the field, and looks forward to what we can expect to happen in the next few years.

Very Short Introductions: Brilliant, Sharp, Inspiring

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.

When Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses (reputedly nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg), he unwittingly launch a movement that would dramatically change the course of European history. This superb short introduction to Martin Luther, written by a leading authority on Luther and the Reformation, presents this pivotal figure as historians now see him. Instead of singling him out as a modern hero, historian Scott Hendrix emphasizes the context in which Luther worked, the colleagues who supported him, and the opponents who adamantly opposed his agenda for change. The author explains the religious reformation and Luther's importance without ignoring the political and cultural forces, like princely power and Islam, which led the reformation down paths Luther could neither foresee nor influence. The book pays tribute to Luther's genius but also recognizes the self-righteous attitude that alienated contemporaries. The author offers a unique explanation for that attitude and for Luther's anti-Jewish writings, which are especially hard to comprehend after the Holocaust. Logic is often perceived as having little to do with the rest of philosophy, and even less to do with real life. Graham Priest explores the philosophical roots of the subject, explaining how modern formal logic addresses many issues.

Fashion is a dynamic global industry that plays an important role in the economic, political, cultural, and social lives of an international audience. It spans high art and popular culture, and plays a significant role in material and visual culture. This book introduces fashion's myriad influences and manifestations. Fashion is explored as a creative force, a business, and a means of communication. From Karl Lagerfeld's creative reinventions of Chanel's iconic style to the multicultural reference points of Indian designer Manish Arora, from the spectacular fashion shows held in nineteenth century department stores to the mix-and-match styles of Japanese youth, the book examines the ways that fashion both reflects and shapes contemporary culture. Using historical and contemporary examples, it gives a clear understanding of how fashion has developed since the renaissance, while raising questions about its status, ethical credibility, and influence on consumers. The book provides insight into the structure of the fashion industry and how fashions are designed, promoted and consumed, in relation to relevant historical, social and cultural contexts. It is structured thematically, to look at the role and development of designers, the growth of shopping and the different businesses involved in making and selling fashionable clothes. Fashion's relationship to the wider culture is also explored, by considering its representation in art and collaborations between designers and artists, the moral controversies surrounding fashion, and attempts to produce ethical clothing, and the effects of globalisation on the fashion trade.

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. Have you ever wondered how it's possible to build a skyscraper, a big bridge, a jumbo jet, or a cruise liner? Everything has structure. Structure is the difference

between a random pile of components and a fully functional object. Through structure the parts connect to make the whole. Natural structures vary from the very smallest part of an atom to the entire cosmology of the universe. Man-made structures include buildings, bridges, dams, ships, aeroplanes, rockets, trains, cars and fair-ground rides and all forms of artefacts, even large artistic sculptures. The wide range of different industries in which structural engineers work includes construction, transport, manufacturing, and aerospace. In this Very Short Introduction, David Blockley explores, in non-technical language, what structural engineering is all about, including examples ranging from the Shard in London and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco to jumbo jets like the A380 and the Queen Elizabeth cruise liner. 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. This text is about the central role of evolution in shaping the nature and diversity of the living world. It describes the processes of natural selection, how adaptations arise, and how new species form, as well as summarizing the evidence for evolution

Existentialism was one of the leading philosophical movements of the twentieth century. Focusing on its seven leading figures, Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty and Camus, this Very Short Introduction provides a clear account of the key themes of the movement which emphasized individuality, free will, and personal responsibility in the modern world. Drawing in the movement's varied relationships with the arts, humanism, and politics, this book clarifies the philosophy and original meaning of 'existentialism' - which has tended to be obscured by misappropriation. Placing it in its historical context, Thomas Flynn also highlights how existentialism is still relevant to us 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. Teeth are a vital component of vertebrate anatomy and a fundamental part of the fossil record. It was the evolution of teeth, associated with predation, that drove the evolution of the wide array of fish, amphibians, reptiles, and then mammals. Peter S. Ungar looks at how, without teeth, none of these developments could have occurred. Climate change is still, arguably, the most critical and controversial issue facing the world in the twenty-first century. Previously published as *Global Warming: A Very Short Introduction*, the new edition is now *Climate Change: A Very Short introduction*, reflecting an important change in the terminology of the last decade. In the third edition, Mark Maslin includes crucial updates from the last few years, including the results of the 2013 IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, the effects of ocean acidification, and the impact of changes to global population and health. Exploring all of the key topics in the debate, Maslin makes sense of the complexities climate change involves, from political and social issues to environmental and scientific. Looking at its predicated impacts, he explores all of the controversies, and also explains the various proposed solutions. 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. Identity has become one of the most widely used terms today, appearing in many different contexts. Anything and everything has an identity, and identity crises have become almost equally pervasive. Yet 'identity' is extremely versatile, meaning different things to different people and in different scientific disciplines. To many its meaning seems self-evident, since its various uses share common features, so often the term is used without a definition of what, exactly, is meant by it. This provokes the core question: What exactly is identity? In this Very Short Introduction Florian Coulmas provides a survey of the many faces of the concept of identity, and discusses its significance and varied meanings in the fields of philosophy, sociology, and psychology, as well as politics and law. Tracing our concern with identity to its deep roots in Europe's intellectual history,

individualism, and the felt need to draw borderlines, Coulmas identifies the most important features used to mark off individual and collective identities, and demonstrates why they are deemed important. He concludes with a glimpse at the many ways in which literature has engaged with problems of identity throughout history.

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. This clear and concise new introduction examines all the major debates and issues using a wide range of well-known examples. It discusses the challenge of using verbal and written language to analyse a visual form. Dana Arnold also examines the many different ways of writing about art, and the changing boundaries of the subject of art history. Topics covered include the canon of Art History, the role of the gallery, 'blockbuster' exhibitions, the emergence of social histories of art (Feminist Art History or Queer Art History, for example), the impact of photography, and the development of Art History using artefacts such as the altarpiece, the portrait, or pornography, to explore social and cultural issues such as consumption, taste, religion, and politics. Importantly, this book explains how the traditional emphasis on periods and styles originates in western art production and can obscure other critical approaches, as well as art from non western cultures.

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. Focusing on highly topical issues such as torture, arbitrary detention, privacy, and discrimination, this book will help readers to understand for themselves the controversies and complexities behind human rights. How ought we to live? What really exists? How do we know? This book introduces important themes in ethics, knowledge, and the self, via readings from Plato, Hume, Descartes, Hegel, Darwin, and Buddhist writers. It emphasizes throughout the point of doing philosophy, explains how different areas of philosophy are related, and explores the contexts in which philosophy was and is done.

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. What is knowledge? How does it differ from mere belief? Do you need to be able to justify a claim in order to count as knowing it? How can we know that the outer world is real and not a dream? Questions like these are ancient ones, and the branch of philosophy dedicated to answering them - epistemology - has been active for thousands of years. In this thought-provoking Very Short Introduction, Jennifer Nagel considers these classic questions alongside new puzzles arising from recent discoveries about humanity, language, and the mind. Nagel explains the formation of major historical theories of knowledge, and shows how contemporary philosophers have developed new ways of understanding knowledge, using ideas from logic, linguistics, and psychology. Covering topics ranging from relativism and the problem of scepticism to the trustworthiness of internet sources, Nagel examines how progress has been made in understanding knowledge, using everyday examples to explain the key issues and debates

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. John Arnold's Very Short Introduction is a stimulating essay about how we study and understand history. The book begins by inviting us to think about various questions provoked by our investigation of history, and explores the ways these questions have been answered in the past. Concepts such as causation, interpretation, and periodization, are introduced by means of concrete examples of how historians work, giving the reader a sense of the excitement of discovering not only the past, but also ourselves.

Introduction; 1 The information revolution; 2 The language of

information; 3 Mathematical information; 4 Semantic information; 5 Physical information; 6 Biological information; 7 Economic information; 8 The ethics of information; Conclusion; References. Translation is everywhere, giving us dubbed films, and access to foreign news and the literature of other cultures. Considering subtitling, interpreting, and adaptations, Matthew Reynolds reveals how translation is changing radically in the new age of electronic media. Offers a wealth of insight into the paradoxical nature of film, considering its role and impact on society in the 20th century as well as its future in the digital age. Original. Newton's contributions to an understanding of the heavens and the earth are considered to be unparalleled. This very short introduction explains his scientific theories, and uses Newton's unpublished writings to paint a picture of an extremely complex man whose beliefs had a huge impact on Europe's political, intellectual, and religious landscape. Explores the philosophical notion of love, and argues that love is more complex than conventional thought would have us believe. What does diaspora mean? Until quite recently, the word had a specific and restricted meaning, referring principally to the dispersal and exile of the Jews. But since the 1960s, the term diaspora has proliferated to a remarkable extent, to the point where it is now applied to migrants of almost every kind. This Very Short Introduction explains where the concept of diaspora came from, how its meaning changed over time, why its usage has expanded so dramatically in recent years, and how it can both clarify and distort the nature of migration. Kevin Kenny highlights the strength of diaspora as a mode of explanation, focusing on three key elements--movement, connectivity, and return--and illustrating his argument with examples drawn from Jewish, Armenian, African, Irish, and Asian diasporas. He shows that diaspora is not simply a synonym for the movement of people. Its explanatory power is greatest when people believe that their departure was forced rather than voluntary. Thus diaspora would not really explain most of the Irish migration to America, but it does shed light on the migration compelled by the Great Famine. Kenny also describes how migrants and their descendants develop diasporic cultures abroad--regardless of the form their migration takes--based on their connections with a homeland, real or imagined, and with people of common origin in other parts of the world. Finally, most conceptions of diaspora feature the dream of a return to a homeland, even when this yearning does not involve an actual physical relocation. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable. In the 1800s mathematicians introduced a formal theory of symmetry: group theory. Now a branch of abstract algebra, this subject first arose in the theory of equations. Symmetry is an immensely important concept in mathematics and throughout the sciences, and its applications range across the entire subject. Symmetry governs the structure of crystals, innumerable types of pattern formation, how systems change their state as parameters vary; and fundamental physics is governed by symmetries in the laws of nature. It is highly visual, with applications that include animal markings, locomotion, evolutionary biology, elastic buckling, waves, the shape of the Earth, and the form of galaxies. In this Very Short Introduction, Ian Stewart demonstrates its deep implications, and shows how it plays a major role in the current search to unify relativity and quantum theory. 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.

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