

Preface

The lectures and essays collected in this volume were written over a period of some fifteen years, on different occasions, and they are here presented in various degrees of revision (indicated in the headnotes). Like the hieroglyphic patterns in Thoreau's thawing sandbank, the result is "a somewhat hybrid product," with a certain amount of repetitiveness on the one hand and a number of gaps on the other. Except for minor changes, both repetitions and gaps were retained since each of the essays is meant to make sense on its own, as they hopefully did in their original form. The degree to which they can also be read as chapters in a book will be indicated in the Introduction.

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