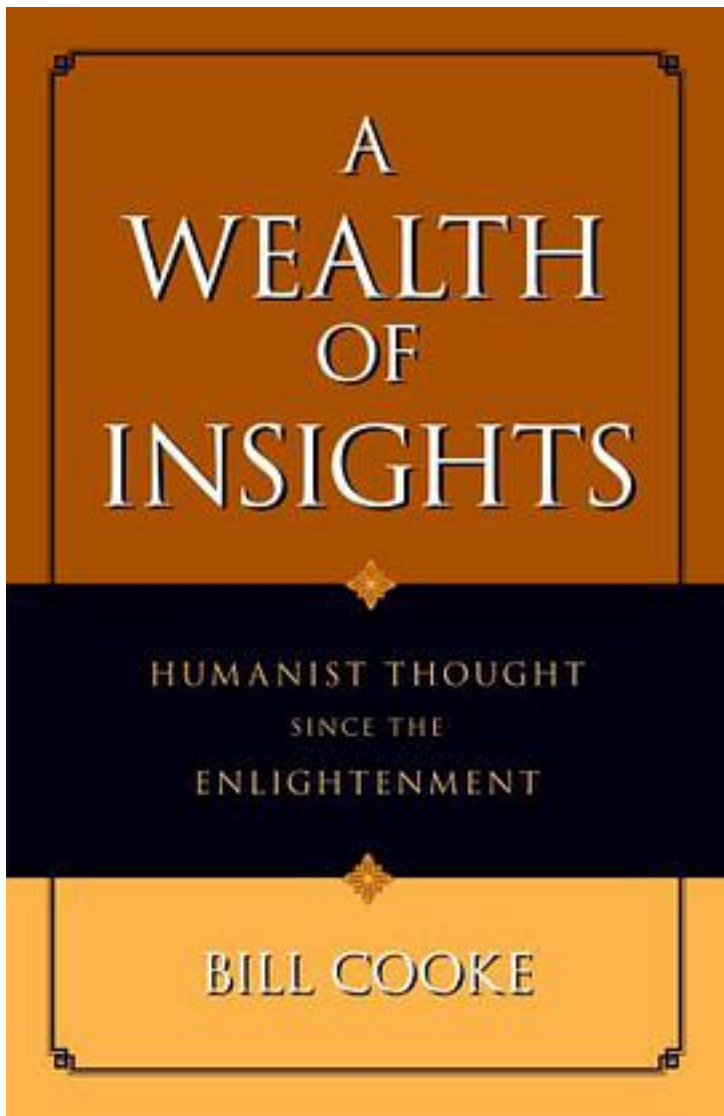


Wealth of Insights



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Humanism is a relatively young word, being coined only in 1808, and yet it is the most transcultural mode of thought ever conceived. It is also one of the oldest, with roots that can be traced back to ancient China, India and Greece. Until now there has never been an account of humanism that outlines the extent of this cultural and intellectual richness, not only for Anglo-American humanism, but also for the less well-known humanist traditions in India, China, the Near East, and Africa. In this broad overview of the global humanist tradition, Bill Cooke shows that humanism has indeed produced a wealth of insights. In the first of three main sections, Cooke accounts for the renewed interest in the humanist idea provoked by Hegel and others in the early nineteenth century. He also follows the growth of related ideas of renaissance humanism and what we now call liberal humanism, in the works of John Stuart Mill and others. The second section follows the various strands humanism followed in the twentieth century, including scientific humanism, pragmatism, religious and Christian humanism, and the humanism of the European thinkers. This involves discussion of people as varied as F C S Schiller, John Dewey, Julian Huxley, Martin Heidegger, H G Wells, and Albert Schweitzer. The third section traces the story of humanism in India, China, the Near East, and Africa. Much of this history is breaking new ground in the history of humanism. Cooke finishes the book with a survey of humanist thought on the environment, tackling the thorny issue of humanism and speciesism. He then looks at the prospects for a genuine planetary humanism, examining the thoughts of John Rawls, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Paul Kurtz, among others.

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