

Crossing Boundaries: Selected Writings

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Abstract

During the last half century, Albert O. Hirschman has single-handedly redefined the scope and limits of political economy, in theory and in practice. His contributions as both a scholar and an economic advisor have definitively shaped an innovative program for social change and economic development. Gathered here for the first time in one volume are recent writings of interdisciplinary range, erudite sophistication, and limitless curiosity. In two essays on commensality and the "invention" of democracy in classical Greece, and on the workings and making of the Marshall Plan, Hirschman shows how his personal and political experience allow him to forge new connections between the past and the present, between intellectual life and lived experience. The third piece, "Trespassing," is an interview Hirschman gave in Italian in 1993, which he has translated and edited for this volume. Although in the past Hirschman has resisted autobiographical meditation, here he recounts—with frankness, humor, and insight—some of the most compelling and formative moments of his life divided between the "European" and the "American" years. Not only does he discuss how his personal experiences have shaped and influenced

his thinking about economic and social development, democracy and capitalism, he also reveals the "key terms" of his scholarship—concepts he is constantly rethinking, subverting, and reinventing.

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