

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910453286603321
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Titolo	Pessimism [[electronic resource]] : philosophy, ethic, spirit // Joshua Foa Dienstag
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, N.J., : Princeton University Press, c2006
ISBN	1-4008-2748-5 1-282-93546-1 9786612935466
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (313 p.)
Disciplina	149.6
Soggetti	Pessimism Pessimism - Political aspects Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [273]-282) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Abbreviations -- Part I. -- Chapter One. The Anatomy Of Pessimism -- Part II. -- Chapter Two. "A Philosophy That Is Grievous But True" Cultural Pessimism In Rousseau And Leopardi -- Chapter Three. "The Evils Of The World Honestly Admitted" Metaphysical Pessimism In Schopenhauer And Freud -- Chapter Four. "Consciousness Is A Disease" Existential Pessimism In Camus, Unamuno, And Cioran -- Part III. -- Chapter Five. Nietzsche's Dionysian Pessimism -- Chapter Six. Cervantes As Educator Don Quixote And The Practice Of Pessimism -- Chapter Seven. Aphorisms And Pessimisms -- Chapter Eight. Pessimism And Freedom (The Pessimist Speaks) -- Afterword -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Pessimism claims an impressive following--from Rousseau, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, to Freud, Camus, and Foucault. Yet "pessimist" remains a term of abuse--an accusation of a bad attitude--or the diagnosis of an unhappy psychological state. Pessimism is thought of as an exclusively negative stance that inevitably leads to resignation or despair. Even when pessimism looks like utter truth, we are told that it makes the worst of a bad situation. Bad for the

individual, worse for the species--who would actually counsel pessimism? Joshua Foa Dienstag does. In *Pessimism*, he challenges the received wisdom about pessimism, arguing that there is an unrecognized yet coherent and vibrant pessimistic philosophical tradition. More than that, he argues that pessimistic thought may provide a critically needed alternative to the increasingly untenable progressivist ideas that have dominated thinking about politics throughout the modern period. Laying out powerful grounds for pessimism's claim that progress is not an enduring feature of human history, Dienstag argues that political theory must begin from this predicament. He persuasively shows that pessimism has been--and can again be--an energizing and even liberating philosophy, an ethic of radical possibility and not just a criticism of faith. The goal--of both the pessimistic spirit and of this fascinating account of pessimism--is not to depress us, but to edify us about our condition and to fortify us for life in a disordered and disenchanting universe.
