

# David Hume: Moral and Political Theorist



**David Hume: Moral and Political Theorist** by Russell Hardin

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2196 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 273 pages  
Lending : Enabled



David Hume was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist who is best known for his skeptical approach to knowledge and his naturalistic approach to ethics and politics. Hume was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1711. He studied at the University of Edinburgh and then traveled to France, where he spent several years studying and writing. In 1739, he returned to Scotland and published his *Treatise of Human Nature*, which was his most important work on philosophy.

Hume's philosophy is characterized by its skepticism and naturalism. He argued that we can never know anything for certain and that all of our knowledge is based on experience. He also argued that human nature is fundamentally selfish and that all of our actions are motivated by self-interest.

Hume's ethical theory is based on the idea of utility. He argued that the only thing that makes an action good or bad is its consequences. He also

argued that the only way to determine the consequences of an action is to look at its effects on human happiness.

Hume's political theory is based on the idea of a social contract. He argued that the only legitimate government is one that is based on the consent of the governed. He also argued that the best form of government is a constitutional monarchy.

Hume's philosophy has been highly influential in the development of Western thought. His ideas have been used to support a wide range of political and economic theories, including liberalism, conservatism, and socialism.

### **Hume's Moral Theory**

Hume's moral theory is based on the idea of utility. He argued that the only thing that makes an action good or bad is its consequences. He also argued that the only way to determine the consequences of an action is to look at its effects on human happiness.

Hume's utilitarianism is different from other forms of utilitarianism in that it does not require us to maximize happiness for all people. Instead, it only requires us to maximize happiness for ourselves and those who are close to us.

Hume's utilitarianism has been criticized on a number of grounds. One criticism is that it is too selfish. Another criticism is that it is too difficult to apply in practice.

Despite these criticisms, Hume's utilitarianism remains one of the most influential ethical theories in Western thought.

## **Hume's Political Theory**

Hume's political theory is based on the idea of a social contract. He argued that the only legitimate government is one that is based on the consent of the governed. He also argued that the best form of government is a constitutional monarchy.

Hume's social contract theory is different from other social contract theories in that it does not require us to give up our natural rights in Free Download to join society. Instead, it only requires us to give up those rights that are necessary for the smooth functioning of society.

Hume's social contract theory has been criticized on a number of grounds. One criticism is that it is too individualistic. Another criticism is that it is too optimistic about human nature.

Despite these criticisms, Hume's social contract theory remains one of the most influential political theories in Western thought.

David Hume was one of the most important philosophers of the Enlightenment. His ideas have had a profound influence on the development of Western thought in a wide range of areas, including ethics, politics, and economics.

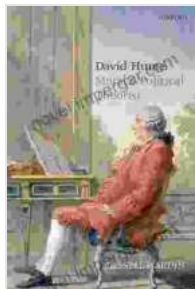
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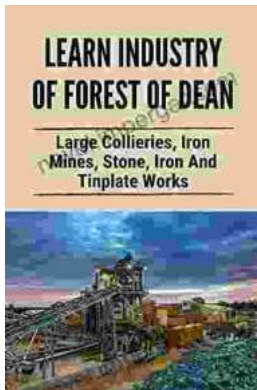


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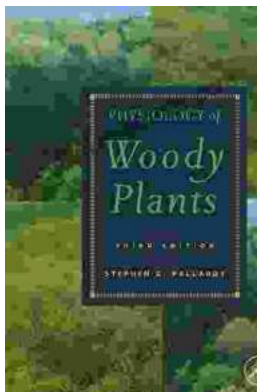
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