



## Human Society in Ethics and Politics

*Bertrand Russell*

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**Human Society in Ethics and Politics** Bertrand Russell

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## Human Society in Ethics and Politics Details

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### loafingcactus says

The book was written to be accessible and is thus infused with an optimism and engagement which is refreshing after spending time recently on more academic books. The book is also another example of how one can write about philosophy and ethics with seriousness--no one could possibly accuse Russell of not being serious--and also with kindness and good manners.

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### Ollie says

You can always count on Bertrand Russell to speak his mind no matter what the consequences may be. And while sometimes he wrote on very specific topics like education or western philosophy, other times he wrote on much broader subjects like in this book Human Society in Ethics and Politics.

I suppose this tendency to speak freely had gained him a reputation for being a curmudgeon of sorts throughout the years, because this book's aim was to change people's opinion of Russell, and at its core lies the idea that human nature is good and should be allowed to develop without restrictions.

What are the origins of our morals and ethics? It's hard to say because our views on them have changed so much over the years. What was once considered immoral (such as working in the bible, is now considered virtuous). So here Russell tries to find some common ground for these highly subjective ideas. He comes to some interesting conclusions.

Ethics are fueled by emotions, while science is fueled by precepts (sort of like laws of nature). If you take away God or a World Spirit, ethics become hard to justify. What is just is what causes the least amount of discontent. And something is good when it is valued for its own sake and right when it promotes the general good. It can be said that when someone tries to satisfy their own desires, this is considered good. And wrong? Wrong can be defined as something that can be satisfied by thwarting other desires.

This is where law comes in: to mitigate these desires. Using the law, we try to apply morals which are there to promote behavior that serves the interest of the group. Obedience, sin, competition and are all interpreted based on these criteria, and lots of times they are contradictory like power and politics which serve to give some an undue share of goods, and traditions which are based on superstition and have no practical use in modern society.

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It's both common sense and complicated at the same time, and Russell helps us digest these ideas and does so gracefully.

### Sepehr says

"The important thing is not what you believe, but how you believe it."

**Valerie says**

His views on politics and religion are thought provoking.

Abby says

I skipped around in here. Some essays are stronger than others. This collection contains one of my favorites, Politically Important Desires, which is basically the content of Russell's 1950 Nobel lecture.  
<http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts...>

**mohammad firouzi says**

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## Remo says

Russell es un gran tipo. Sus razonamientos contra Kant, el parlamentario inglés y otros son realmente mordaces. Es una auténtica luminaria. En esta obra intenta esbozar una ética universal, o al menos describir sus principales características. La política debe basarse en la ética y por ello deja por escrito el autor sus dudas acerca del destino de la humanidad (le entiendo) si los países con poder siguen tolerando y fomentando el odio entre los pueblos. Es un gran libro de una gran mente.