

On Human Nature

Human Nature offers a wide-ranging and holistic view of human nature from all perspectives: scientific, historical, and sociological. Mary Clark takes the most recent data from a dozen or more fields, and works it together with clarifying anecdotes and thought-provoking images to challenge conventional Western beliefs with hopeful new insights. Balancing the theories of cutting-edge neuroscience with the insights of primitive mythologies, Mary Clark provides down-to-earth suggestions for peacefully resolving global problems. Human Nature builds up a coherent, and above all positive, picture of who we really are.

In this short book, acclaimed writer and philosopher Roger Scruton presents an original and radical defense of human uniqueness. Confronting the views of evolutionary psychologists, utilitarian moralists, and philosophical materialists such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, Scruton argues that human beings cannot be understood simply as biological objects. We are not only human animals; we are also persons, in essential relation with other persons, and bound to them by obligations and rights. Scruton develops and defends his account of human nature by ranging widely across intellectual history, from Plato and Averroës to Darwin and Wittgenstein. The book begins with Kant's suggestion that we are distinguished by our ability to say "I"—by our sense of ourselves as the centers of self-conscious reflection. This fact is manifested in our emotions, interests, and relations. It is the foundation of the moral sense, as well as of the aesthetic and religious conceptions through which we shape the human world and endow it with meaning. And it lies outside the scope of modern materialist philosophy, even though it is a natural and not a supernatural fact. Ultimately, Scruton offers a new way of understanding how self-consciousness affects the question of how we should live. The result is a rich view of human nature that challenges some of today's most fashionable ideas about our species.

Human Nature and Suffering is a profound comment on the human condition, from the perspective of evolutionary psychology. Paul Gilbert explores the implications of humans as evolved social animals, suggesting that evolution has given rise to a varied set of social competencies, which form the basis of our personal knowledge and understanding. Gilbert shows how our primitive competencies become modified by experience - both satisfactorily and unsatisfactorily. He highlights how cultural factors may modify and activate many of these primitive competencies, leading to pathology proneness and behaviours that are collectively survival threatening. These varied themes are brought together to indicate how the social construction of self arises from the organization of knowledge encoded within the competencies. This Classic Edition features a new introduction from the author, bringing Gilbert's early work to a new audience. The book will be of interest to clinicians, researchers and historians in the field of psychology.

In his new preface E. O. Wilson reflects on how he came to write this book: how *The Insect Societies* led him to write *Sociobiology*, and how the political and religious uproar that engulfed that book persuaded him to write another book that would better explain the relevance of biology to the understanding of human behavior.

A philosophical account of human nature that defends the concept against dehumanization, Darwinian, and developmentalist challenges. Human nature has

always been a foundational issue for philosophy. What does it mean to have a human nature? Is the concept the relic of a bygone age? What is the use of such a concept? What are the epistemic and ontological commitments people make when they use the concept? In *What's Left of Human Nature?* Maria Kronfeldner offers a philosophical account of human nature that defends the concept against contemporary criticism. In particular, she takes on challenges related to social misuse of the concept that dehumanizes those regarded as lacking human nature (the dehumanization challenge); the conflict between Darwinian thinking and essentialist concepts of human nature (the Darwinian challenge); and the consensus that evolution, heredity, and ontogenetic development result from nurture and nature. After answering each of these challenges, Kronfeldner presents a revisionist account of human nature that minimizes dehumanization and does not fall back on outdated biological ideas. Her account is post-essentialist because it eliminates the concept of an essence of being human; pluralist in that it argues that there are different things in the world that correspond to three different post-essentialist concepts of human nature; and interactive because it understands nature and nurture as interacting at the developmental, epigenetic, and evolutionary levels. On the basis of this, she introduces a dialectical concept of an ever-changing and “looping” human nature. Finally, noting the essentially contested character of the concept and the ambiguity and redundancy of the terminology, she wonders if we should simply eliminate the term “human nature” altogether.

Our suppositions about human nature colour everything from the way we bargain with a used-car dealer to our expectations about further conflict in the Middle East. Our assumptions about human nature underlie our reactions to specific events. Wrightsman designed this second edition of his book to enhance our understanding of many significant issues about human nature, including the relationship of attitudes to behaviour, the unidimensionality of attitudes and the influence of social movements on beliefs.

Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive, this multi-million-copy New York Times bestseller is the definitive manual for anyone interested in gaining, observing, or defending against ultimate control – from the author of *The Laws of Human Nature*. In the book that *People* magazine proclaimed “beguiling” and “fascinating,” Robert Greene and Joost Elffers have distilled three thousand years of the history of power into 48 essential laws by drawing from the philosophies of Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and Carl Von Clausewitz and also from the lives of figures ranging from Henry Kissinger to P.T. Barnum. Some laws teach the need for prudence (“Law 1: Never Outshine the Master”), others teach the value of confidence (“Law 28: Enter Action with Boldness”), and many recommend absolute self-preservation (“Law 15: Crush Your Enemy Totally”). Every law, though, has one thing in common: an interest in total domination. In a bold and arresting two-color package, *The 48 Laws of Power* is ideal whether your aim is conquest, self-defense, or simply to understand the rules of the game.

The Laws of Human Nature On Human Nature Princeton University Press

This major new study by one of the most penetrating and persistent critics of philosophical and scientific orthodoxy, returns to Aristotle in order to examine the salient categories in terms of which we think about ourselves and our nature, and the distinctive forms of explanation we invoke to render ourselves intelligible to ourselves. The culmination of 40 years of thought on the philosophy of mind and the nature of the mankind Written by one of the world’s leading philosophers, the co-author of the monumental 4 volume *Analytical Commentary* on the

Philosophical Investigations (Blackwell Publishing, 1980-2004) Uses broad categories, such as substance, causation, agency and power to examine how we think about ourselves and our nature Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions of human nature are sketched and contrasted Individual chapters clarify and provide an historical overview of a specific concept, then link the concept to ideas contained in other chapters

"This is the only free-standing English translation of the entire Treatise on human nature, which includes St. Thomas's account of the metaphysical status of the human soul and its relation to the human organism (Questions 75-77); the powers of the soul, especially the higher intellectual powers that distinguish humans from other animals (Questions 78-89); and, those questions on human origins, the creation of the first man and first woman, and their status as being created in the image of God (Questions 90-102)."--Cover, p. 1.

Mixtures is of central importance for Galen's views on the human body. It presents his influential typology of the human organism according to nine mixtures (or 'temperaments') of hot, cold, dry and wet. It also develops Galen's ideal of the 'well-tempered' person, whose perfect balance ensures excellent performance both physically and psychologically. Mixtures teaches the aspiring doctor how to assess the patient's mixture by training one's sense of touch and by a sophisticated use of diagnostic indicators. It presents a therapeutic regime based on the interaction between foods, drinks, drugs and the body's mixture. Mixtures is a work of natural philosophy as well as medicine. It acknowledges Aristotle's profound influence whilst engaging with Hippocratic ideas on health and nutrition, and with Stoic, Pneumatist and Peripatetic physics. It appears here in a new translation, with generous annotation, introduction and glossaries elucidating the argument and setting the work in its intellectual context.

In this provocative, revelatory tour de force, Jesse Prinz reveals how the cultures we live in - not biology - determine how we think and feel. He examines all aspects of our behaviour, looking at everything from our intellects and emotions, to love and sex, morality and even madness. This book seeks to go beyond traditional debates of nature and nurture. He is not interested in finding universal laws but, rather, in understanding, explaining and celebrating our differences. Why do people raised in Western countries tend to see the trees before the forest, while people from East Asia see the forest before the trees? Why, in South East Asia, is there a common form of mental illness, unheard of in the West, in which people go into a trancelike state after being startled? Compared to Northerners, why are people in the American South more than twice as likely to kill someone over an argument? And, above all, just how malleable are we? Prinz shows that the vast diversity of our behaviour is not engrained. He picks up where biological explanations leave off. He tells us the human story.

This volume illustrates Melford Spiro's explorations of key relationships among culture, society, and human nature. He addresses such fundamental issues as the limitations of cultural relativism, the problem of explanation in the social sciences, and the importance of a comparative approach to the study of social and cultural system.

Is human nature something that the natural and social sciences aim to describe, or is it a pernicious fiction? What role, if any, does 'human nature' play in directing and informing scientific work? Can we talk about human nature without invoking-either implicitly or explicitly-a contrast with human culture? It might be tempting to think that the respectability of 'human nature' is an issue that divides natural and social scientists along disciplinary boundaries, but the truth is more complex. The contributors to this collection take very different stances with regard to the idea of human nature. They come from the fields of psychology, the philosophy of science, social and biological anthropology, evolutionary theory, and the study of animal cognition. Some of them are 'human nature' enthusiasts, some are sceptics, and some say that human nature is a concept with many faces, each of which plays a role in its own investigative niche. Some want to eliminate the notion altogether, some think it unproblematic, others want to retain it with reforming modifications. Some say that human nature is a target for

investigation that the human sciences cannot do without, others argue that the term does far more harm than good. The diverse perspectives articulated in this book help to explain why we disagree about human nature, and what, if anything, might resolve that disagreement. How reading the Bible as a work of cultural and scientific evolution can reveal new truths about how our species conquered the Earth The Bible is the bestselling book of all time. It has been venerated -- or excoriated -- as God's word, but so far no one has read the Bible for what it is: humanity's diary, chronicling our ancestors' valiant attempts to cope with the trials and tribulations of life on Earth. In *The Good Book of Human Nature*, evolutionary anthropologist Carel van Schaik and historian Kai Michel advance a new view of *Homo sapiens'* cultural evolution. The Bible, they argue, was written to make sense of the single greatest change in history: the transition from egalitarian hunter-gatherer to agricultural societies. Religion arose as a strategy to cope with the unprecedented levels of epidemic disease, violence, inequality, and injustice that confronted us when we abandoned the bush -- and which still confront us today. Armed with the latest findings from cognitive science, evolutionary biology, archeology, and religious history, van Schaik and Michel take us on a journey through the Book of Books, from the Garden of Eden all the way to Golgotha. The Book of Genesis, they reveal, marked the emergence of private property--one can no longer take the fruit off any tree, as one could before agriculture. The Torah as a whole is the product of a surprisingly logical, even scientific, approach to society's problems. This groundbreaking perspective allows van Schaik and Michel to coax unexpected secrets from the familiar stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Able, Abraham and Moses, Jesus of Nazareth and Mary. The Bible may have a dark side, but in van Schaik and Michel's hands, it proves to be a hallmark of human indefatigability. Provocative and deeply original, *The Good Book of Human Nature* offers a radically new understanding of the Bible. It shows that the Bible is more than just a pillar for religious belief: it is a pioneering attempt at scientific inquiry.

A brilliant inquiry into the origins of human nature from the author of *The Better Angels of Our Nature* and *Enlightenment Now*. "Sweeping, erudite, sharply argued, and fun to read..also highly persuasive." --*Time* Now updated with a new afterword One of the world's leading experts on language and the mind explores the idea of human nature and its moral, emotional, and political colorings. With characteristic wit, lucidity, and insight, Pinker argues that the dogma that the mind has no innate traits--a doctrine held by many intellectuals during the past century--denies our common humanity and our individual preferences, replaces objective analyses of social problems with feel-good slogans, and distorts our understanding of politics, violence, parenting, and the arts. Injecting calm and rationality into debates that are notorious for ax-grinding and mud-slinging, Pinker shows the importance of an honest acknowledgment of human nature based on science and common sense.

This book is written for young students in high schools and normal schools. No knowledge can be of more use to a young person than a knowledge of himself; no study can be more valuable to him than a study of himself. A study of the laws of human behavior, --that is the purpose of this book. What is human nature like? Why do we act as we do? How can we make ourselves different? How can we make others different? How can we make ourselves more efficient? How can we make our lives more worth while? This book is a manual intended to help young people to obtain such knowledge of human nature as will enable them to answer these questions. I have not attempted to write a complete text on psychology. There are already many such books, and good ones too. I have selected for treatment only such topics as young students can study with interest and profit. I have tried to keep in mind all the time the practical worth of the matters discussed, and the ability and experience of the intended readers.

Enhance your understanding of the theories of human nature with *ON HUMAN NATURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY!* Organized in a historical format that draws from sources including Ancient Asian sources, classical thinkers, medieval thinkers, modern thinkers, and

contemporary minds, this philosophy text provides you with an introduction to age-old debate that is as crucial now in our technological and scientific age as it has ever been. Study questions provided for each reading and the book-specific website provide you with the opportunity to practice what you have learned.

In this book, Jonathan H. Turner combines sociology, evolutionary biology, cladistic analysis from biology, and comparative neuroanatomy to examine human nature as inherited from common ancestors shared by humans and present-day great apes. Selection pressures altered this inherited legacy for the ancestors of humans—termed hominins for being bipedal—and forced greater organization than extant great apes when the hominins moved into open-country terrestrial habitats. The effects of these selection pressures increased hominin ancestors' emotional capacities through greater social and group orientation. This shift, in turn, enabled further selection for a larger brain, articulated speech, and culture along the human line. Turner elaborates human nature as a series of overlapping complexes that are the outcome of the inherited legacy of great apes being fed through the transforming effects of a larger brain, speech, and culture. These complexes, he shows, can be understood as the cognitive complex, the psychological complex, the emotions complex, the interaction complex, and the community complex.

This volume begins with excerpts from Aquinas' commentary on De Anima, excerpts that proceed from a general consideration of soul as common to all living things to a consideration of the animal soul and, finally, to what is peculiar to the human soul. These are followed by the Treatise on Man, Aquinas' most famous discussion of human nature, but one whose organization is dictated by theological concerns and whose philosophical importance is thus best appreciated when seen as presented here: within the historical philosophical framework of which it constitutes a development. Aquinas' discussions of the will and the passions follow, providing fruitful points of comparison with other philosophers.

Drawing from hundreds of studies in half a dozen fields, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature* makes a powerful case that caring and generosity are just as natural as selfishness and aggression. This lively refutation of cynical assumptions about our species considers the nature of empathy and the causes of war, why we (incorrectly) explain all behavior in terms of self-interest, and how we can teach children to care.

Recent empirical and philosophical research into the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens*, the origins of the mind/brain, and the development of human culture has sparked heated debates about what it means to be human and how knowledge about humans from the sciences and humanities should be understood. *Conversations on Human Nature*, featuring 20 interviews with leading scholars in biology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and theology, brings these debates to life for teachers, students, and general readers. The book-outlines the basic scientific, philosophical and theological issues involved in understanding human nature;-organizes material from the various disciplines under four broad headings: (1) evolution, brains and human nature; (2) biocultural human nature; (3) persons, minds and human nature, (4) religion, theology and human nature; -concludes with Fuentes and Visala's discussion of what researchers into human nature agree on, what they disagree on, and what we need to learn to resolve those differences.

Why do gardeners delight in the germination and growth of a seed? Why are our spirits lifted by flowers, our feelings of tension allayed by a walk in a forest or park? What other positive influences can green nature bring to humanity? In *Green Nature/Human Nature* Charles A. Lewis describes the psychological, sociological, and physiological

Unpopular in its day, David Hume's sprawling, three-volume 'A Treatise of Human Nature' (1739-40) has withstood the test of time and had enormous impact on subsequent philosophical thought. Hume's comprehensive effort to form an observationally grounded study of human nature employs John Locke's empiric principles to construct a theory of knowledge

from which to evaluate metaphysical ideas. A key to modern studies of eighteenth-century Western philosophy, the *Treatise* considers numerous classic philosophical issues, including causation, existence, freedom and necessity, and morality. Unabridged republication of the edition originally published by Oxford at the Clarendon Press, London, 1888.

Drawn from Parerga and posthumously published works, these six essays offer an accessible approach to the author's philosophy. Topics include government, free will and fatalism, character, moral instinct, and ethics.

Philosophers have traditionally concentrated on the qualities that make human beings different from other species. In *Beast and Man* Mary Midgley, one of our foremost intellectuals, stresses continuities. What makes people tick? Largely, she asserts, the same things as animals. She tells us humans are rather more like other animals than we previously allowed ourselves to believe, and reminds us just how primitive we are in comparison to the sophistication of many animals. A veritable classic for our age, *Beast and Man* has helped change the way we think about ourselves and the world in which we live.

Was human nature designed by natural selection in the Pleistocene epoch? The dominant view in evolutionary psychology holds that it was—that our psychological adaptations were designed tens of thousands of years ago to solve problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors. In this provocative and lively book, David Buller examines in detail the major claims of evolutionary psychology—the paradigm popularized by Steven Pinker in *The Blank Slate* and by David Buss in *The Evolution of Desire*—and rejects them all. This does not mean that we cannot apply evolutionary theory to human psychology, says Buller, but that the conventional wisdom in evolutionary psychology is misguided. Evolutionary psychology employs a kind of reverse engineering to explain the evolved design of the mind, figuring out the adaptive problems our ancestors faced and then inferring the psychological adaptations that evolved to solve them. In the carefully argued central chapters of *Adapting Minds*, Buller scrutinizes several of evolutionary psychology's most highly publicized "discoveries," including "discriminative parental solicitude" (the idea that stepparents abuse their stepchildren at a higher rate than genetic parents abuse their biological children). Drawing on a wide range of empirical research, including his own large-scale study of child abuse, he shows that none is actually supported by the evidence. Buller argues that our minds are not adapted to the Pleistocene, but, like the immune system, are continually adapting, over both evolutionary time and individual lifetimes. We must move beyond the reigning orthodoxy of evolutionary psychology to reach an accurate understanding of how human psychology is influenced by evolution. When we do, Buller claims, we will abandon not only the quest for human nature but the very idea of human nature itself.

From the legendary songwriter Diane Lampert, based on a musical piece she wrote with Pulitzer Prize and nine-time Grammy-winning jazz musician Wynton Marsalis, comes an exquisitely illustrated folktale about how we humans got some of our...naughtier traits, and what overcomes them all. Mother Nature is a very busy woman. Her job is to tend to the Earth and all the creatures that dwell there—she must wake up the bulbs and warm the land in spring, she must freeze the ponds and create snow in winter. But more than anything, Mother Nature wanted children of her own. So with twigs and things she made five: Fear, Envy, Hate, Greed, and Fickle. She asks the most helpless of creatures—the poor, wingless humans—to watch over them as she works. But then her children's wild personalities begin to seep into human nature in a way that Mother Nature never intended. A lilting, lyrical ode to all of our human shortcomings and the one trait—love—that can overcome them all.

Psychology and 'Human Nature' problematizes what psychology usually takes for granted - the meaning of the psyche or 'human nature'. Peter Ashworth provides a coherent account of many of the major schools of thought in psychology and its related disciplines, including: sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, radical

behaviourism, existentialism, discursive psychology and postmodernism. For each approach he considers the claims or assumptions being made about 'human nature', especially regarding issues of consciousness, the self, the body, other people and the physical world. Psychology and 'Human Nature' will be essential reading for all students of psychology. Series Details; The Psychology Focus Series provides students with a new focus on key topic areas in psychology. Each short book: * presents clear, in-depth coverage of a discrete area with many applied examples * assumes no prior knowledge of psychology * has been written by an experienced teacher * has chapter summaries, annotated further reading and a glossary of key terms

Is there such a thing as human nature? Here Sean Sayers defends the controversial theory that human nature is in fact an historical phenomenon. He gives an ambitious and wide ranging defence of the Marxist and Hegelian historical approach and engages with a wide range of work at the heart of the contemporary debate in social and moral philosophy. This book explores the relationship between Hume's sceptical philosophy and his Newtonian ambition of founding a science of human nature. Assessing both received and 'new' readings of Hume's philosophy, Stanistreet offers a line of interpretation which, he argues, makes sense of many of the apparent conflicts and paradoxes in Hume's work and describes how well-known controversies concerning Hume's thinking about causation, induction and the external world can be resolved. Stanistreet argues that Hume's notorious sceptical arguments are not the episodic outbursts of an unsystematic philosopher, but emerge as part of his attempt to provide science and philosophy with grounds which face up to and withstand the scepticism to which reflective thinkers are naturally prone. Offering important new contributions to Hume scholarship, this book also surveys and assesses the new research responsible for the recent sea-change in thinking about Hume. It offers an accessible overview of these developments while suggesting significant revisions to current readings of Hume's philosophy.

On Human Nature: Biology, Psychology, Ethics, Politics, and Religion covers the present state of knowledge on human diversity and its adaptative significance through a broad and eclectic selection of representative chapters. This transdisciplinary work brings together specialists from various fields who rarely interact, including geneticists, evolutionists, physicians, ethologists, psychoanalysts, anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, historians, linguists, and philosophers. Genomic diversity is covered in several chapters dealing with biology, including the differences in men and apes and the genetic diversity of mankind. Top specialists, known for their open mind and broad knowledge have been carefully selected to cover each topic. The book is therefore at the crossroads between biology and human sciences, going beyond classical science in the Popperian sense. The book is accessible not only to specialists, but also to students, professors, and the educated public. Glossaries of specialized terms and general public references help nonspecialists understand complex notions, with contributions avoiding technical jargon. Provides greater understanding of diversity and population structure and history, with crucial foundational knowledge needed to conduct research in a variety of fields, such as genetics and disease Includes three robust sections on biological, psychological, and ethical aspects, with cross-fertilization and reciprocal references between the three sections Contains contributions by leading experts in their respective fields working under the guidance of internationally recognized and highly respected editors

What does it mean to be a part of—rather than apart from—nature? This book is about how we interact with wildlife and the ways in which this can make our lives richer and more fulfilling. But it also explores the conflicts and contradictions inevitable in a world that is now so completely dominated by our own species. Interest in wildlife and wild places, and their profound effects on human wellbeing, have increased sharply as we

face up to the ongoing biodiversity extinction crisis and reassess our priorities following a global pandemic. Ian Carter, lifelong naturalist and a former bird specialist at Natural England, sets out to uncover the intricacies of the relationship between humans and nature. In a direct, down-to-earth style he explains some of the key practical, ethical and philosophical problems we must navigate as we seek to reconnect with nature. This wide-ranging and infectious personal account does not shy away from controversial subjects—such as how we handle invasive species, reintroductions, culling or dog ownership—and reveals in stark terms that properly addressing our connection to the natural world is an imperative, not a luxury. Short, pithy chapters make this book ideal for dipping into. Meanwhile, it builds into a compelling whole as the story moves from considering the wildlife close to home through to conflicts and, finally, the joy and sense of escape that can be had in the wildest corners of our landscapes, where there is still so much to discover.

In *Human Nature*, 12 of today's most influential nature and conservation photographers address the biggest environmental concerns of our time. • Joel Sartore • Paul Nicklen • Ami Vitale • Brent Stirton • Frans Lanting • Brian Skerry • Tim Laman • Cristina Mittermeier • J Henry Fair • Richard John Seymour • George Steinmetz • Steve Winter

Alongside their reflections, they present curated selections from their photographic careers. Stories and extraordinary images from around the world come together in a powerful call to awareness and action. • The United Nations has declared that nature is in more trouble now than at any other time in human history. • Extinction looms over one million species of plants and animals. • *Human Nature* wrestles with challenging questions: What do we have? What do we stand to lose? This book offers inspiration to environmentalists, activists, photography fans, and anyone concerned about the future of our world. • This illuminating book tackles our modern environmental future through the lens of preeminent photographers • Great gift for photographers, nature enthusiasts, those who enjoy backpacking and camping, and anyone who cares about Earth's climate and future • Add it to the shelf with books like *National Geographic The Photo Ark Vanishing: The World's Most Vulnerable Animals* by Joel Sartore, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* by Elizabeth Kolbert, and *Dire Predictions: The Visual Guide to the Findings of the IPCC* by Michael E. Mann and Lee R. Kump.

Bernard Williams is one of the most influential figures in ethical theory, where he has set a considerable part of the current agenda. In this collection a distinguished international team of philosophers who have been stimulated by Williams's work give responses to it. The topics covered include equality; consistency; comparisons between science and ethics; integrity; moral reasons; the moral system; and moral knowledge. Williams himself provides a substantial reply, which shows both the directions of his own thought and also his present view of earlier work of his which has been extensively discussed for twenty years (such as that on utilitarianism). This volume will be indispensable reading for all those interested in ethical theory.

Through an examination of people in the workplace, this book offers a look at the four factors that drive human beings and lead them to the choices that they make. Conventional wisdom holds that the murder rate has plummeted since the Middle Ages; humankind is growing more peaceful and enlightened; man is shortly to be much improved--better genes, better neural circuits, better biochemistry; and we are approaching a technological singularity that will may usher in utopia. *Human Nature*

eviscerates these and other doctrines of a contemporary nihilism masquerading as science. In this wide-ranging work polymath David Berlinski draws upon history, mathematics, logic, and literature to retrain our gaze on an old truth many are eager to forget: there is and will be about the human condition beauty, nobility, and moments of sublime insight, yes, but also ignorance and depravity. Men are not about to become like gods.

A Treatise of Human Nature is a book by Scottish philosopher David Hume, considered by many to be Hume's most important work and one of the most influential works in the history of philosophy. The Treatise is a classic statement of philosophical empiricism, skepticism, and naturalism. In the introduction Hume presents the idea of placing all science and philosophy on a novel foundation: namely, an empirical investigation into human nature. Impressed by Isaac Newton's achievements in the physical sciences, Hume sought to introduce the same experimental method of reasoning into the study of human psychology, with the aim of discovering the "extent and force of human understanding". Against the philosophical rationalists, Hume argues that passion rather than reason governs human behaviour. He introduces the famous problem of induction, arguing that inductive reasoning and our beliefs regarding cause and effect cannot be justified by reason; instead, our faith in induction and causation is the result of mental habit and custom. Hume defends a sentimentalist account of morality, arguing that ethics is based on sentiment and passion rather than reason, and famously declaring that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave to the passions". Hume also offers a skeptical theory of personal identity and a compatibilist account of free will.

He discusses the theory of human nature held by the founders of the American Constitution, giving special attention to James Madison and the "Federalist Papers."

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