

The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics (Oxford World's Classics)

By Arthur Schopenhauer


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These two important essays show Schopenhauer at his most accessible, offering two self-contained and clearly argued contributions to ethical theory, published here in a new translation that preserves Schopenhauer's style in a lucid and engaging way. This is also the only paperback edition to publish both essays together. Schopenhauer argues, in uniquely powerful prose, that self-consciousness gives the illusion of freedom and that human actions are determined, but that we rightly feel guilt because our actions issue from our essential individual character. He locates moral value in the virtues of loving kindness and voluntary justice that spring from the fundamental incentive of compassion. Morality's basis is ultimately metaphysical, resting on an intuitive identification of the self with all other striving and suffering beings. The Introduction by leading Schopenhauer scholar Christopher Janaway gives a clear summary of the argument of the essays in the context of Schopenhauer's life and works and the history of ethics in the modern period. The volume includes helpful notes, up-to-date bibliography, and a full index.

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The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics (Oxford World's Classics) By Arthur Schopenhauer Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #947422 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2010-06-11
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.10" h x .90" w x 7.70" l, .53 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages



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About the Author

David Cartwright is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

Edward E. Erdmann is Associate Professor in Languages and Literature at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

Christopher Janaway is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southampton.

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