



Innocence and Experience

By Stuart Hampshire

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Innocence and Experience By Stuart Hampshire

Human beings have lived by very different conceptions of the good life. In this book, Stuart Hampshire argues that no individual and no modern society can avoid conflicts between incompatible moral interests. Philosophers have tried in the past to find some underlying moral idea of justice which could resolve these conflicts and would be valid for any society. Hampshire claims that there can be no such thing. States can be held together, and war between them avoided, only by respect for the political process itself, and it is in these terms that justice must be defined.

The book closely examines the critical relationship between morality and justice, paying particular attention to Hume's moral subjectivism (which Hampshire disputes) and proposing a reply to Machiavelli's claim that the realities of politics inevitably oblige leaders to choose between unavoidable evils.

Most academic and moral philosophy, Hampshire argues, has been a fairy tale, representing ideals of private innocence rather than the realities of public experience. Conflicts between incompatible moral interests are as unavoidable in social and international arenas as they are in the lives of individuals. Philosophers, politicians, and theologians have all looked for an underlying moral consensus that will be valid for any just society. But the diversity of the human species and important differences in how various cultures define the good life militate against the formation of any such consensus. Ultimately, conflicts can be mediated only by respect for procedural justice.

Hampshire believes that themes of moral philosophy come from the writer's own experience, and he has given a brief but compelling account of his own life to help the reader understand the sources of his philosophy. Combining intellectual rigor with imaginative power, in *Innocence and Experience* Stuart Hampshire vividly illuminates the tensions between justice and other sources of value in society and in the life of the individual.

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Innocence and Experience By Stuart Hampshire Bibliography

- Rank: #1329892 in eBooks
- Published on: 1991-10-01
- Released on: 1991-10-31
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Hampshire sharply separates justice from the rest of morality, arguing that while conceptions of the good vary over time and differ among persons and societies, the virtue of procedural justice remains constant: Everyone has the right to present his or her standpoint for consideration by impartial methods. Although this procedural view of justice will not suffice for universal agreement on the good, it does secure consensus about some things, e.g., the need to avert manifest evils, such as murder and ruthless suppression of dissent. Hampshire's contention is in part the outcome of his facing the horror of Nazism in intelligence work during World War II. He presents his argument skillfully and persuasively but tends to steer clear of details: What happens, e.g., if people do not agree on fair procedures? Nevertheless, Hampshire's book is illuminating. Highly recommended.

- *David Gordon, Social Philosophy and Policy Ctr., Bowling Green State Univ., Ohio*

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From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Stuart Hampshire is Bonsall Professor of Philosophy at Stanford University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Hilda Baker:

The book *Innocence and Experience* will bring one to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. If you try to find new book you just read, this book very ideal to you. The book *Innocence and Experience* is much recommended to you to see. You can also get the e-book from the official web site, so you can more readily to read the book.

Richard Bennett:

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Innocence and Experience.

Donald Tuel:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Innocence and Experience, it is possible to enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Sandra Brown:

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