Revered for his contributions to empiricism, skepticism, and ethics, David Hume remains one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy. His first and broadest work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), comprises three volumes, concerning the understanding, the passions, and morals. He develops a naturalist and empiricist program, illustrating that the mind operates through the association of impressions and ideas. This companion features essays by leading scholars, who evaluate the philosophical content of the arguments in Hume’s *Treatise*, while considering their historical context. The authors examine Hume’s distinctive views on causation, motivation, free will, moral evaluation, and the origins of justice, which continue to influence present-day philosophical debate. This collection will prove a valuable resource for students and scholars exploring Hume, British empiricism, and modern philosophy.

**Donald C. Ainslie** is the Principal of University College and Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He has published articles in numerous journals, including *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Journal of the History of Philosophy, the Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Hume Studies,* and *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics.*

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Preface

The idea for this project was conceived in the late 1990s, and most of the contributors joined it with the expectation that it would appear in the early 2000s. The volume’s delayed appearance was the result, in part, of the normal problems associated with edited volumes: a few recalcitrant contributors, last-minute withdrawals, and the like. But my personal shortcomings, as I tried to balance a demanding administrative role with my research responsibilities, also contributed significantly. I owe many thanks to Annemarie Butler for joining the project as a coeditor; she did the heavy lifting required to bring the project to completion. I also would like to thank the other contributors for their patience and apologize to them for the long gestation of the volume.

Donald C. Ainslie
Method of Citation

References to Hume’s texts are normally given parenthetically, but on some occasions these references may be placed in a note. Parenthetical references follow the form of these examples:

*A Treatise of Human Nature*: T, followed by Book, Part, Section, and paragraph numbers of the Clarendon Edition (see T in the list of abbreviations); after this, SBN is followed by page number[s] from the Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition. References to this work will produce, for example, the form (T 1.4.7.14, SBN 272–73).

*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*: DNR, followed by the Part and page numbers of the Norman Kemp Smith edition. References to this work will produce, for example, the form (DNR 1, 137).

*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: EHU, followed by the Section and paragraph numbers of the Clarendon Edition (see EHU in the list of abbreviations); after this, SBN, is followed by page number[s] from the Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition. References to this work will produce, for example, the form (EHU 1.5, SBN 8).

*An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*: EPM, followed by the Section and paragraph numbers in the Clarendon Edition (see EPM in the list of abbreviations); after this, SBN, is followed by page number[s] from the Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition. References to this work will produce, for example, the form (EPM 7.16, SBN 256).

*Essays*: E-, followed first by an abbreviation of the title of the particular essay cited (for these abbreviations see E in the list of abbreviations) and then by the relevant page number[s] of the edition of Hume’s *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* described at E, to produce, for example, the form (E-Sc 172).
Abbreviations


E-DM  Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature (1741; “or Meanness” added in 1770)

E-DT  Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion (1741)

E-MSL  Of the Middle Station of Life (1742)

E-OC  Of the Original Contract (1748)

E-PO  Of Passive Obedience (1748)
List of Abbreviations

E-RA Of Refinement in the Arts (1752; title changed from “Of Luxury” in 1760)
E-Sc The Sceptic (1742)
E-SE Of Superstition and Enthusiasm (1741)
E-SR Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing (1742)
E-St The Stoic (1742)
E-ST Of the Standard of Taste (1757)