

Ethics

The Essence of Morality

Peter Kropotkin • Edited by Joey Aloï and Christopher Coquard
Additional essays from Marie Goldsmith

The Essence of Morality offers a bold, coherent vision of ethics grounded in cooperation rather than coercion, an argument as provocative today as when Kropotkin first set pen to paper.

Left unfinished at his death, Peter Kropotkin's two-volume work on ethics is a rejection of both divine command and the moral dictates of a ruling class. Kropotkin roots ethical life in something far older and more universal: the mutual aid practices that allow social species to survive.

Published here for the first time in English, this second volume deepens and sharpens his engagement with the major European moral theorists of his era, challenging their assumptions while advancing a constructive alternative. Drawing on evolutionary science, anthropology, and political insight, Kropotkin argues that our sense of justice and our capacity for reason do not stand apart from our animal nature but grow out of it.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) was the foremost theorist of the anarchist movement and was imprisoned for his activism in Russia and France. Born a Russian prince, he rejected his title to become a revolutionary, seeking a society based on freedom, equality, and solidarity. His writings include *The Conquest of Bread; Fields, Factories, and Workshops; Anarchism, Anarchist-Communism, and the State; Memoirs of a Revolutionary;* and *Modern Science and Anarchism*. New editions of his classic works *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution;* *Words of a Rebel;* and *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1793* were published by PM Press to commemorate his life and work on the centennial of his death.

Joey Aloï is an environmental philosopher who lives and works in Central Appalachia.

Chris Coquard is a Canadian English professor and world traveler currently living in San Francisco. In his free time he is busy with many projects pertaining to Peter Kropotkin and Kropotkin's lifelong friend and amazing scientist Marie Goldsmith.

Marie Isidorovna Goldsmith (1871–1933) was a scientific luminary and anarchist militant whose work united biology and revolutionary thought. Born to socialist revolutionaries exiled by the Tsarist regime, she grew up in an environment that fused political commitment with intellectual rigor. Goldsmith pursued a successful scientific career, collaborating with evolutionary biologist Yves Delage and coauthoring influential studies on evolution, heredity, and animal behavior. Alongside her scientific work, she was also deeply engaged in anarchist activism, writing, editing, and corresponding with leading figures such as Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman, and advocating anarchist communism and revolutionary syndicalism. Check out the Marie Goldsmith Project at <https://mariegoldsmith.uk/> for more information



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