

DAVID HUME ON TACIT CONSENT

“Should it be said, that, by living under the dominion of a prince, which one might leave, every individual has given his *tacit* consent to his authority, and promised him obedience; it may be answered, that such an implied consent can only have a place, where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice. . . Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives, from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master, though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish the moment he leaves her.”

--from David Hume, “Of the Original Contract” (originally published in 1748)