

Character

Joel J. Kupperman

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We often speak of a person's character-good or bad, strong or weak--and think of it as a guide to how that person will behave in a given situation. Oddly, however, philosophers writing about ethics have had virtually nothing to say about the role of character in ethical behavior. What is character? How does it relate to having a self, or to the process of moral decision? Are we responsible for our characters? *Character* answers these questions, and goes on to examine the place of character in ethical philosophy. Both the Kantian and utilitarian traditions, Kupperman argues, have largely ignored the ways in which decisions are integrated over time, and instead provide a "snapshot" model of moral decision. Kupperman demonstrates the deficiencies of a number of classic and contemporary ethical theories that do not take account of the idea of character, and offers his own character-based theory. Along the way he touches on such subjects as personal identity, the importance of happiness, moral education, and the definition of a valuable life.



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