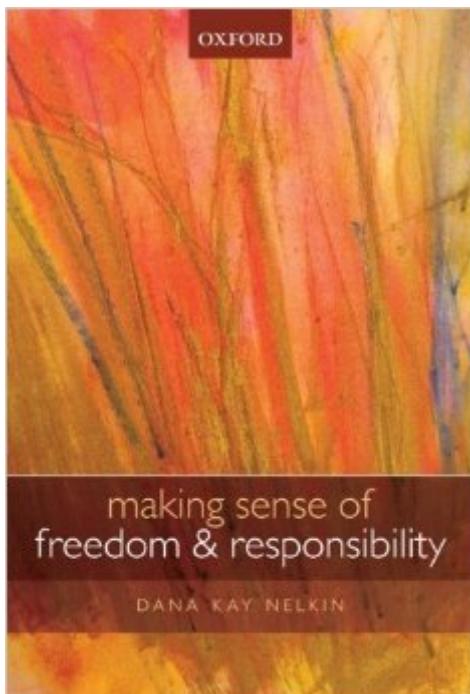


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Making Sense Of Freedom And Responsibility



Synopsis

Dana Kay Nelkin presents a simple and natural account of freedom and moral responsibility which responds to the great variety of challenges to the idea that we are free and responsible, before ultimately reaffirming our conception of ourselves as agents. *Making Sense of Freedom and Responsibility* begins with a defense of the rational abilities view, according to which one is responsible for an action if and only if one acts with the ability to recognize and act for good reasons. The view is compatibilist--that is, on the view defended, responsibility is compatible with determinism--and one of its striking features is a certain asymmetry: it requires the ability to do otherwise for responsibility when actions are blameworthy, but not when they are praiseworthy. In defending and elaborating the view, Nelkin questions long-held assumptions such as those concerning the relation between fairness and blame and the nature of so-called reactive attitudes such as resentment and forgiveness. Her argument not only fits with a metaphysical picture of causation--agent-causation--often assumed to be available only to incompatibilist accounts, but receives positive support from the intuitively appealing Ought Implies Can Principle, and establishes a new interpretation of freedom and moral responsibility that dovetails with a compelling account of our inescapable commitments as rational agents.

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