

Ordinary Vices (Belknap Press)

Judith N. Shklar



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The seven deadly sins of Christianity represent the abysses of character, whereas Shklar's "ordinary vices"-cruelty, hypocrisy, snobbery, betrayal, and misanthropy--are merely treacherous shoals, flawing our characters with mean-spiritedness and inhumanity.

Shklar draws from a brilliant array of writers--Moliere and Dickens on hypocrisy, Jane Austen on snobbery, Shakespeare and Montesquieu on misanthropy, Hawthorne and Nietzsche on cruelty, Conrad and Faulkner on betrayal--to reveal the nature and effects of the vices. She examines their destructive effects, the ambiguities of the moral problems they pose to the liberal ethos, and their implications for government and citizens: liberalism is a difficult and challenging doctrine that demands a tolerance of contradiction, complexity, and the risks of freedom.

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