

Springer

1st
edition

2012, X, 158 p.

Printed book

Hardcover

Printed book

Hardcover

ISBN 978-94-007-0765-8

£ 109,99 | CHF 141,50 | 119,99 € |

131,99 € (A) | 128,39 € (D)

Available

Discount group

Science (SC)

Product category

Monograph

Series

Library of Ethics and Applied Philosophy

Other renditions

Softcover

ISBN 978-94-007-3714-3

Softcover

ISBN 978-94-007-0767-2

Philosophy : Ethics

Van der Rijt, Jan-Willem

The Importance of Assent

A Theory of Coercion and Dignity

- Shows the importance of subjective moral judgments to moral theory and practice
- Brings together Kantian and republican moral theory
- Contains a new argument in favour of retributivism based on the dignity of victims
- Presents a new interpretation of moral law-giving as the basis for the dignity of persons

The view that persons are entitled to respect because of their moral agency is commonplace in contemporary moral theory. What exactly this respect entails, however, is far less uncontroversial. In this book, Van der Rijt argues powerfully that this respect for persons' moral agency must also encompass respect for their subjective moral judgments – even when these judgments can be shown to be fundamentally flawed. Van der Rijt scrutinises the role persons' subjective moral judgments play within the context of coercion and domination. His fresh, original analysis of Kant's third formulation of the Categorical Imperative reveals how these judgments are intimately connected to a person's dignity. The result is an insightful new account of coercion, a novel Kantian reformulation of the republican notion of non-domination and a compelling, innovative argument in favour of retributive justice. "In this admirably clear and insightful work, Van der Rijt develops an original account of coercion and dignity. On the basis of his analysis of the relation between these two concepts, he also provides an intriguing new angle on the nature of republicanism. I recommend this book to anyone interested in freedom and power and their roles in normative political theory." Ian Carter - University of Pavia "In this carefully argued and original study Jan-Willem van der Rijt offers an analysis of coercion, a broadly Kantian argument that coercion is an affront to dignity, and an illuminating contrast with Philip Pettit's republicanism. A most welcome contribution." Thomas E. Hill, Jr.

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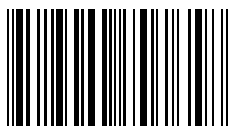
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ISBN 978-94-007-0765-8 / BIC: HPQ / SPRINGER NATURE: SCE14000

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