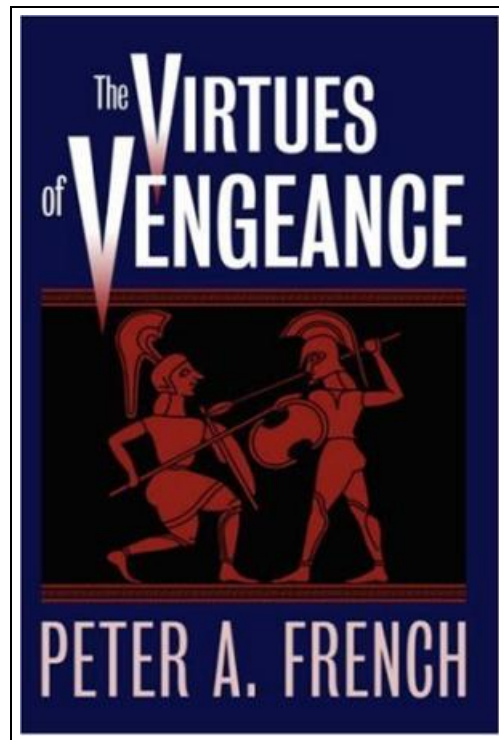


The Virtues of Vengeance



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Reviews

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THE VIRTUES OF VENGEANCE



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University Press of Kansas. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Virtues of Vengeance, Peter A. French, Although most moral philosophers reject vengeance as a barbaric sentiment, Peter French argues that it has fallen into disrepute without being seriously examined with respect to its real moral value. In beginning his philosophical examination of the virtues of vengeance, he investigates the use of vengeance themes in literature and popular culture. Literary works from the Iliad to Hamlet and modern film Westerns such as Clint Eastwood's Unforgiven are reviewed in his exploration of the philosophical and ethical aspects of vengeance. He then concentrates on the conditions that could make acts of vengeance virtuous. Film Westerns play an illustrative role in French's work because of their frequent use of the vengeance plot. As self-conscious morality plays, they seldom wander from an investigation of the social, psychological, political, and moral implications of revenge. French uses such classics as The Searchers and Winchester '73 to identify crucial philosophical elements of the concept of vengeance that are then examined in detail in later parts of the book. In the course of his study of vengeance as a moral concept, French exposes important distinctions between types of moral theories (karmic and non-karmic) and between people who are morally handicapped and those who are morally challenged. He examines concepts relevant to vengeance such as honor, moral authority, and evil, and issues such as the rationality of revenge and proportionality in punishment. French concludes that exiling vengeance to a dark corner of human action has robbed morality of one of its most potent and persuasive elements and that mere condemnation or ostracism are inadequate responses to heinous acts. The maintenance of the authority of morality often requires more hostile responses. His book challenges us to reconsider the value, indeed...



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