

Ethics and Social Survival (Routledge Studies in Ethics and Moral Theory)

Milton Fisk



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When speaking of society's role in ethics, one tends to think of society as regimenting people through its customs. *Ethics and Social Survival* rejects theories that treat ethics as having justification within itself and contends that ethics can have a grip on humans only if it serves their deep-seated need to live together. It takes a social-survival view of ethical life and its norms by arguing that ethics looks to society not for regimentation by customs, but rather for the viability of society. Fisk traces this theme through the work of various philosophers and builds a consideration of social divisions to show how rationalists fail to realize their aim of justifying ethical norms across divisions. The book also explores the relation of power and authority to ethics—without simply dismissing them as impediments—and explains how personal values such as honesty, modesty, and self-esteem still retain ethical importance. Finally, it shows that basing ethics on avoiding social collapse helps support familiar norms of liberty, justice, and democracy, and strives to connect global and local ethics.

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