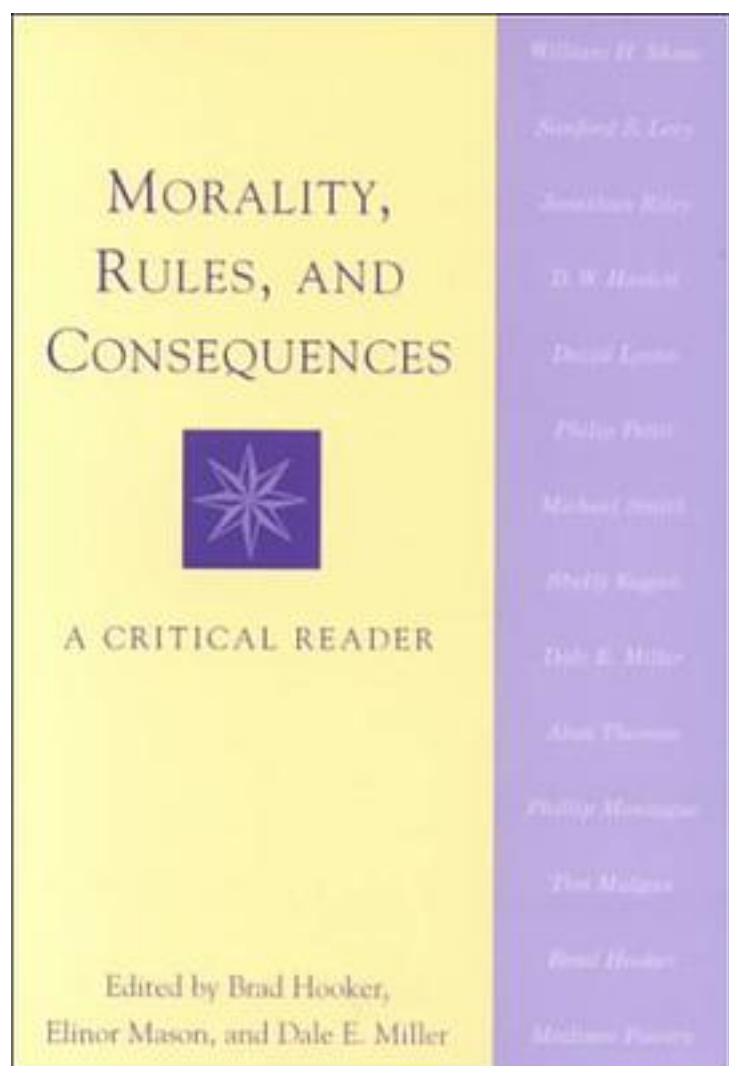


Morality, Rules and Consequences



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出版者:Rowman & Littlefield

出版时间:2000-7-19

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780742509702

What determines whether an action is right or wrong? One appealing idea is that a moral code ought to contain a number of rules that tell people how to behave and that are simple and few enough to be easily learned. Another appealing idea is that the consequences of actions matter, often more than anything else. Rule consequentialism tries to weave these two ideas into a general theory of morality. This theory holds that morally wrong actions are the ones forbidden by rules whose acceptance would maximize the overall good. *Morality, Rules, and Consequences: A Critical Reader* explores for students and researchers the relationship between consequentialist theory and moral rules. Most of the chapters focus on rule consequentialism or on the distinction between act and rule versions of consequentialism. Contributors, among them the leading philosophers in the discipline, suggest ways of assessing whether rule consequentialism could be a satisfactory moral theory. These essays, all of which are previously unpublished, provide students in moral philosophy with essential material and ask key questions on just what the criteria for an adequate moral theory might be.

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目录:

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