

# Moral Tradition and Individuality

## *Moral Tradition and Individuality*

JOHN KEKES

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Here John Kekes develops the view that good lives depend on maintaining a balance between one's moral tradition and individuality. Our moral tradition provides the forms of good lives and the permissible ways of trying to achieve them. But to do so, the author argues, we must grow in self-knowledge and self-control to make our characters suitable for realizing our aspirations. The first half of the work concentrates on social morality, establishing the conditions all good lives must meet. The second discusses personal morality, the sphere of individuality. Its development enables us to discover what is important to us and how we can fit our personal aspirations into the forms of life our moral tradition provides. The argument derives its inspiration from Aristotle's objectivism, Hume's emphasis on custom and feeling, and Mill's concentration on individuals and their experiments in living. Kekes makes these philosophical views concrete by drawing on a rich variety of literary sources, including the works of Sophocles, Henry James, Tolstoy, and Edith Wharton.

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