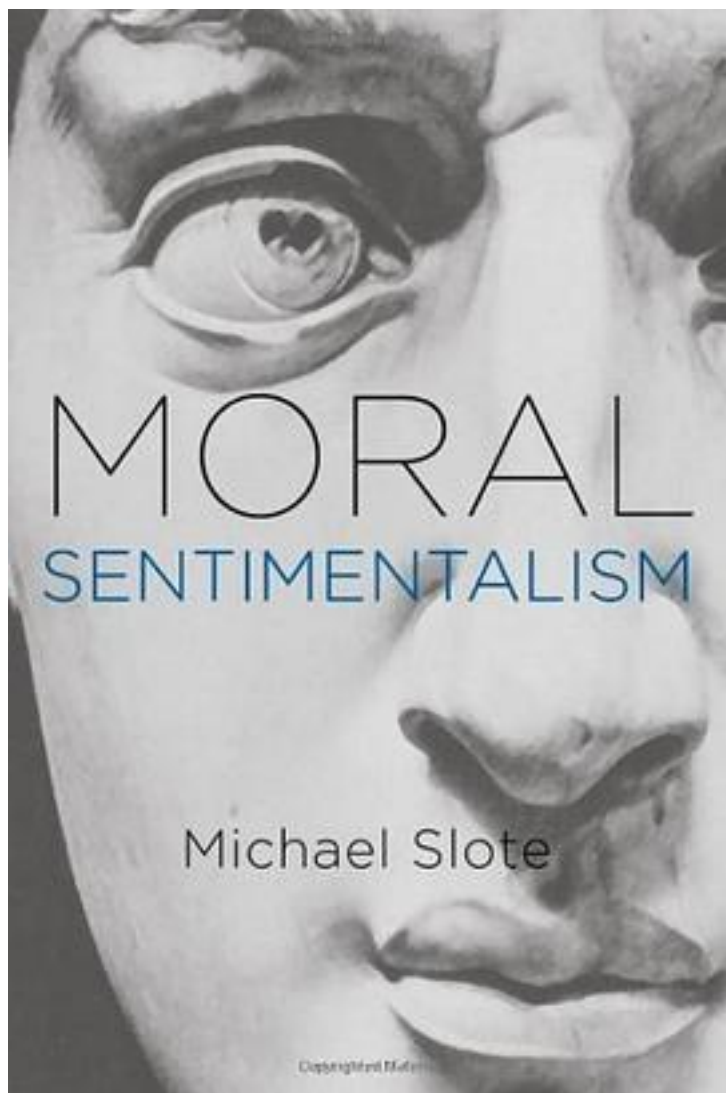


# Moral Sentimentalism



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著者:Michael Slote

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There has recently been a good deal of interest in moral sentimentalism, but most of that interest has been exclusively either in meta-ethical questions about the meaning of moral terms or in normative issues about benevolence and/or caring and their place in morality. In *Moral Sentimentalism* Michael Slote attempts to deal with both sorts of issues and to do so, primarily, in terms of the notion or phenomenon of empathy. Hume sought to do something like this over two centuries ago, though he didn't have the term "empathy" and used "sympathy" instead. Slote therefore attempts to give moral sentimentalism a second wind. By relying so systematically on empathy in its account of normative morality and in what it has to say about the meaning of moral vocabulary, Slote offers a unified overall ethical picture that can then be tested against ethical rationalism. Rationalism has recently dominated the scene in ethics, but by showing how sentimentalism can make coherent and intuitive sense of such preferred rationalist notions as autonomy, respect, and justice-and by showing how a sentimentalism based in empathy can deal with ethically significant aspects of the moral life that rationalism tends to ignore or skimp on-Slote hopes a wider and more active debate between rationalism and sentimentalism can be set in motion. There are signs that sentimentalist modes of thought are gaining new footholds on the way ethics is done, and this new book is very hopeful about these possibilities.

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