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Philosophers have various reasons to be interested in individual autonomy. Individual self-rule is widely recognized to be important. But what, exactly, is autonomy? In what ways is it important? And just how important is it? This book introduces contemporary philosophical thought about the nature and significance of individual self-rule.

Andrew Sneddon divides self-rule into autonomy of choice and autonomy of persons. Unlike most philosophical treatments of autonomy, Sneddon addresses empirical study of the psychology of action. The significance of autonomy is displayed in connection with such issues as paternalism, political liberalism, advertising and physician-assisted suicide. Sneddon both introduces the themes of contemporary autonomy studies and defends a novel account of its nature and significance. Autonomy is an ideal introduction for advanced-level undergraduate and postgraduate students to the issues and debates surrounding individual self-rule.