

Ethics for Adversaries

The Morality of Roles in Public and Professional Life



ARTHUR ISAK APPLBAUM

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AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

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For Sally

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Little Deer Isle, Maine
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PART I

NECESSARY OFFICES

Likewise in every government there are necessary offices which are not only abject but also vicious. Vices find their place in it and are employed for sewing our society together, as are poisons for the preservation of our health. If they become excusable, inasmuch as we need them and the common necessity effaces their true quality, we still must let this part be played by the more vigorous and less fearful citizens, who sacrifice their honor and their conscience, as those ancients sacrificed their life, for the good of their country. We who are weaker, let us take roles that are both easier and less hazardous. The public welfare requires that a man betray and lie and massacre; let us resign this commission to more obedient and suppler people.

Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Useful and the Honorable"

