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978-1-107-01750-4 - Schadenfreude: Understanding Pleasure at the Misfortune of Others

Edited by Wilco W. Van Dijk and Jaap W. Ouwerkerk

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Schadenfreude

When someone suffers a mishap, a setback or a downfall, we sometimes find ourselves experiencing schadenfreude – an emotion defined as deriving pleasure from another’s misfortune. Schadenfreude is a common experience and an emotion which is seemingly inherent to social being. This book offers a comprehensive summary of current theoretical and empirical work on schadenfreude from psychological, philosophical, and other scientific perspectives. The chapters explore justice as an underlying motive for schadenfreude, and the role played by social comparison processes and envy in evoking pleasure at the misfortunes of others in interpersonal relations. Schadenfreude is also described as a common phenomenon in intergroup relations. This is a compelling volume on a fascinating subject matter that aims to increase our understanding of the nature of this emotion and the role it plays in social relations.

Wilco W. van Dijk is Associate Professor of Psychology at Leiden University.

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