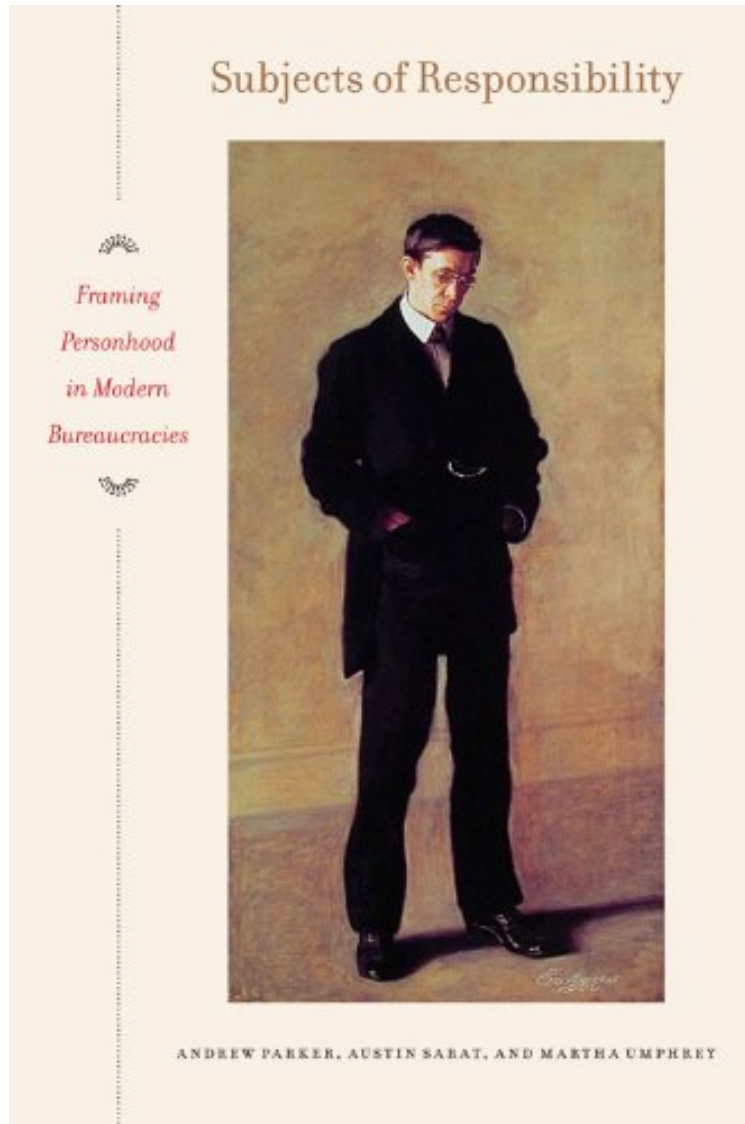



## Subjects of Responsibility: Framing Personhood in Modern Bureaucracies

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**From Fordham University Press : Subjects of Responsibility: Framing Personhood in Modern Bureaucracies** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Subjects of Responsibility: Framing Personhood in Modern Bureaucracies:

How and why has the concept of responsibility come to pervade the fabric of American public and private life? How are ideas of responsibility instantiated in, and constituted by, the workings of social and political institutions? What place do liberal discourses of responsibility, based on the individual, have in today's biopolitical world, where responsibility is so often a matter of risk assessment, founded in statistical probabilities? Bringing together the work of scholars in anthropology, law, literary studies, philosophy, and political theory, the essays in this volume show how state and private bureaucracies play crucial roles in fashioning forms of responsibility, which they then enjoin on populations. How do government and market constitute subjects of responsibility in a culture so enamored of individuality? In what ways can those entities centrally, in modern culture, those engaged in insuring individuals against loss or harm themselves be held responsible, and by whom? What kinds of subjectivities are created in this process? Can such subjects be said to be truly responsible, and in what sense?

This volume examines the ongoing overlap between earlier liberal understandings of responsibility and the rise of new and biopolitical forms of responsibility in our time. Liberal discourses of responsibility no longer correspond to actual political practices (if they ever did) but such discourses live on nonetheless in ways that pervert, distort and enable contemporary practices. In this way, the language of individual responsibility has been mapped uneasily onto a practice based on torts, insurance and risk assessment. The contributions in this volume wonderfully illuminate this clash of values; they richly describe the consequences of such bifurcation and, in varying ways, ask us what contemporary practices are best suited for our times. They consider how best to navigate the complex overlay of discourses that constitute contemporary legal and ethical approaches to responsibility. This book will be invaluable to those scholars who write on responsibility and a delight to read for anyone interested in these questions. (James Martel San Francisco State University) About the Author Andrew Parker is Professor of English at Amherst College. Austin Sarat is William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Science at Amherst College. He is the author or co-editor of over seventy books and the recipient of numerous prizes and awards. Martha Merrill Umphrey is Professor of Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought at Amherst College.