



Egocentricity and Mysticism: An Anthropological Study

By Ernst Tugendhat

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Ernst Tugendhat sees mysticism as a response to a deep need for peace of mind. We experience this need in connection to our discursive practices that relate us to and differentiate us from one another and the world we inhabit for a short period of time. This condition, Tugendhat shows, prompts us to “step back” from our egocentric concerns. Mysticism satisfies our need for self-transcendence born from the tensions arising from language, social interaction, and mortality.

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Editorial Review

Review

Ernst Tugendhat's groundbreaking essay in philosophical anthropology explores with analytical lucidity and existential depth our twofold disposition to speak and act in the first person while going beyond egocentricity, relativizing our singular senses of selfhood in 'mystical' apperceptions of what it means to possess agency, to pursue the good, to ponder mortality, to achieve peace of mind, and to be responsible for others and to life itself?in sum, to be human. (Michael Jackson, author of *As Wide as the World is Wise: New Directions in Philosophical Anthropology*)

This is an engaging and thoughtful philosophical reflection that packs much into its relatively short span. It admirably ranges from what is involved in our ability to say 'I,' through what counts as important in our moral lives, to the large and recurrent questions dealing with life and death, mysticism, religion, and wonder at the existence of the world. Its lucid style of philosophizing joins the precision of analysis with a finessed feel for the larger picture. In its own way, it impressively spans the so-called divide between the analytic and continental approaches to philosophical questions. Warmly recommended. (William Desmond, author of *God and the Between*)

Ernst Tugendhat demonstrates how a sense of mysticism, that is, the capacity for 'stepping back,' is not only necessary for a more humane anthropology but also for philosophy's own theoretical practice. (Santiago Zabala, author of *The Remains of Being: Hermeneutic Ontology After Metaphysics*)

Egocentricity and Mysticism is a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary work. In addition to straddling the so-called continental/analytic divide in contemporary philosophy, it also makes significant and original contributions to the fields of philosophical anthropology, existential phenomenology, and theology?not to mention semantics and even ethics as well. (Martin Woessner, author of *Heidegger in America*)

About the Author

Ernst Tugendhat is professor emeritus at Freie Universität Berlin and honorary professor at the University of Tübingen.

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