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0521860504 - Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics: The Virtuous Egoist

Tara Smith

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Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics

The Virtuous Egoist

Ayn Rand is well known for advocating egoism, but the substance of that egoism's instruction is rarely understood. Far from representing the rejection of morality, selfishness, in Rand's view, actually demands the practice of a systematic code of ethics. This book explains the fundamental virtues that Rand considers vital for a person to achieve his objective well-being: rationality, honesty, independence, justice, integrity, productiveness, and pride. Tracing Rand's account of the naturalistic ground of value and the harmony of human beings' rational interests, Tara Smith examines what each of these virtues consists in, why it is a virtue, and what it demands of a person in practice. Along the way, she addresses the status of several conventional virtues within Rand's theory, considering traits such as kindness, charity, generosity, temperance, courage, forgiveness, and humility. *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics* thus offers an in-depth exploration of several specific virtues and an illuminating integration of these with the broader theory of egoism.

Tara Smith is professor of philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin. She is the author of *Moral Rights and Political Freedom* and *Viable Values: A Study of Life as the Root and Reward of Morality*, and she has contributed to the *Journal of Philosophy*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Social Philosophy and Policy*, and *Law and Philosophy*.

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To the memory of my father, Gerald, who quietly taught me so much.

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Acknowledgments

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