

Essay about a forgotten virtue

Discretion

PETER VENMANS

We live in indiscrete times, characterized by curiosity, intrusiveness and forced transparency. We share everything with everyone. There are quite a few advantages to being transparent, and up to a point it is indispensable to the functioning of a democratic society. This book claims that a forgotten virtue, discretion, is at least as important. If we make transparency obligatory, then we lose the ability to decide for ourselves about our appearances and disappearances, an ability that is a precondition of leading a good life.

Discretion is a conservative word, despite the fact that those who continue to find its purport valuable are anything but conservative in spirit.

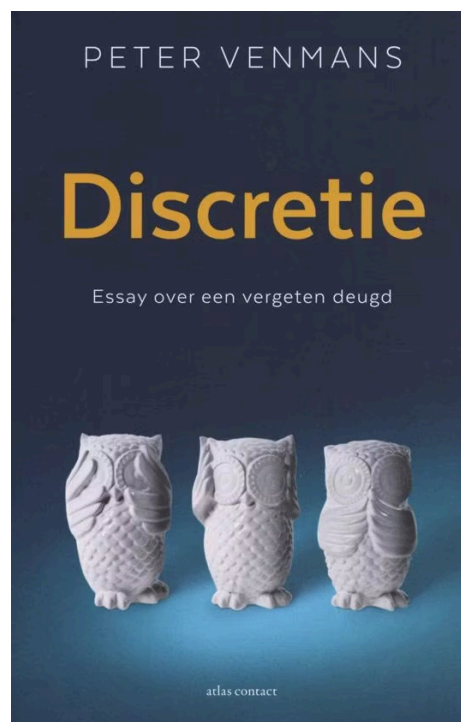
VRIJ NEDERLAND

In this essay philosopher Peter Venmans explores what discretion has meant through history and what it can mean today in various areas of life. He also investigates whether there is an art of living discretely and what such a life looks like.

'Discretion' is a stimulating philosophical essay about a virtue we are in danger of losing but which we need now more than ever. At the same time, it is a criticism of the spirit of our times and a plea for a twilight zone, for refuge from the storm and for mental agility. Discretion is important because it helps us to relate to those things that are important to us. Discretion is vital as self-protection, as a way of respecting others, and as an inconspicuous form of love for the world.

This erudite and pleasingly readable book is a warm appeal for discretion in our pressurized era of transparency and relentless self-expression.

VOLKSKRANT



AUTHOR



Peter Venmans (b. 1963) is a philosopher and expert on Spain who has made a point of publishing very readable books about philosophy and society. His earlier essays include 'The Discovery of the World. On Hannah Arendt' (2005), 'On the Purpose of Usefulness' (2008), 'The Third Part of the Soul. On Thymos' (2011) and 'Amor Mundi' (2006). His work has won him several awards and been translated into Spanish.

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