

Inheritance and Originality

Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kierkegaard

What might it mean to think of philosophy as being in the condition of modernism -- in which its relation to its own past, and hence its sense of its own future, has become an undissolvable problem? If philosophy's hitherto-defining conventions can neither be taken for granted nor rejected, they must be put in question -- which means re-evaluating the relation between the form and content of philosophical writing, rethinking the demands that such writing must place on its readers, and reconceiving the nature of philosophy itself. *Inheritance and Originality* argues that the writings of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Kierkegaard are best understood as responsive (each in their own way) to such questions, and as driven in consequence to strikingly similar reconceptions of language, reason, and understanding, doubt and scepticism, morality, and the structure of selfhood. Through detailed re-readings of these authors' most influential texts, as attentive to their specificity as to their family resemblances, Stephen Mulhall reorients our sense of the philosophical work each text aims to accomplish, to engender a critical dialogue between them from which the elements of a new conception of philosophy might emerge, and to uncover that conception's indebtedness to certain fundamental theological preoccupations.

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