

Richard Boulton

Dialectic, Rhetoric and Contrast

The Infinite Middle of Meaning

SERIES IN PHILOSOPHY

About the author

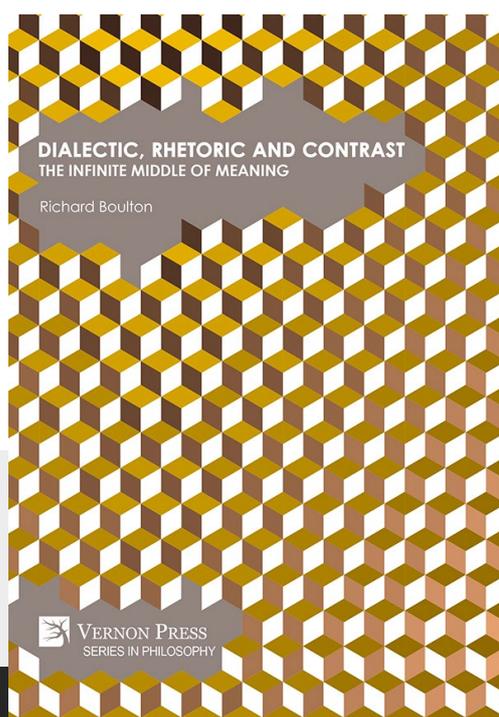
Richard Boulton teaches sociology in Kingston University and St George's, University of London, and is an alumnus of the Centre for Invention and Social Process, Goldsmiths College, University of London. His research interests include epistemology and theories of knowledge, and he has worked first-hand in disciplines across the divides of science, the social sciences and humanities. His work up to now has explored the boundaries of knowledge and the delineation of academic disciplines and their implementation in the 'real' world.

Summary

By compiling an experimental method combining both dialectic and rhetoric, 'Dialectic, Rhetoric and Contrast: The Infinite Middle of Meaning' demonstrates how singular meanings can be rendered in a spectrum of 12 repeating concepts that are in a continuum, gradated and symmetrical. The ability to arrange meaning into this pattern opens enquiry into its ontology, and presents meaning as closer to the sensation of colours or musical notes than the bivalent oppositions depicted in classical logic. However, the experiment does not assert that this pattern suggests some sort of constant or absolute principle; instead, it theorises on the ways in which meaning can be considered to be recursive. To explain this, the book explores the concept of contrast itself. No exactitude on the precise existence of contrast can ever be struck because the answer varies infinitely depending upon the scale of measurement used to gauge the meeting point. This characteristic of contrast helps to define a whole new dimension from which sensation, meaning, cognition and consciousness can be analogised to the infinite forms between forms.

At a time when the widest consensus in philosophy is the exhaustion of its central themes, the significance of such a hypothesis provides fresh impetus to revise some of the key meanings and concepts underpinning contemporary thought. To do this, the method explores the opposing themes of idealism and realism that run throughout western philosophy from Plato to the Speculative turn.

This book will be of interest to professional academic audiences in the humanities and social sciences, from graduates to senior scholars. It will also be an interesting read to anyone wishing to keep abreast of developments in continental philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, and the sociology of knowledge.



June 2021 | Hardback 236x160mm | 148 Pages | ISBN: 978-1-64889-149-6

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