



Philosophy and the Return to Self-Knowledge

Donald Phillip Verene

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This book contends that both Anglo-American analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy have lost their vitality, and it offers an alternative in their place. Donald Phillip Verene advocates a renewal of contemporary philosophy through a return to its origins in Socratic humanism and to the notions of civil wisdom, eloquence, and prudence as guides to human action. Focusing in particular on the traditions of some of the late Greeks and the Romans, Renaissance humanism, and the thought of Giambattista Vico, this book's concern is to revive the ancient Delphic injunction "know thyself, " an idea of civil wisdom that Verene finds has been missing since Descartes. The author recovers the meaning of the vital relations that poetry, myth, and rhetoric had with philosophy in thinkers like Cicero, Quintilian, Isocrates, Pico, Vives, and Vico. He arrives at a conception of philosophy as a form of memory that requires both rhetoric and poetry to accomplish self-knowledge.

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