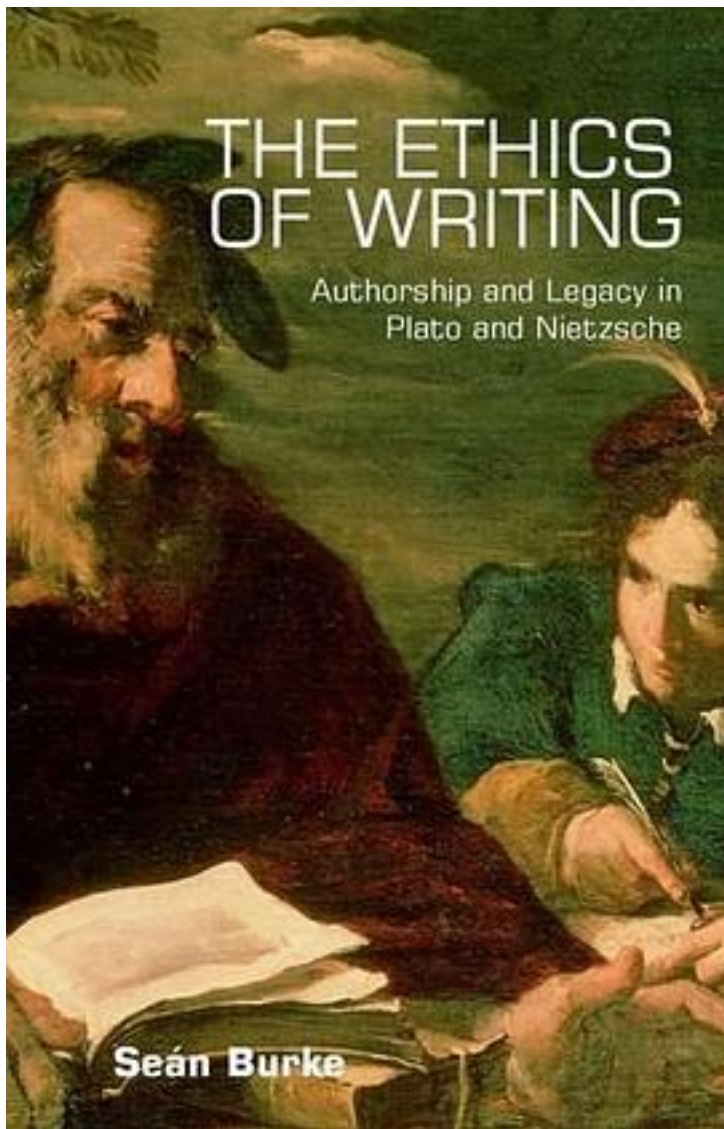


The Ethics of Writing



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Book Description

The ethical question is the question of our times. Within critical theory, it has focused on the act of reading. This study reverses the terms of inquiry to analyse the ethical composition of the act of writing. What responsibility does an author bear for his legacy? Do 'catastrophic' misreadings of authors (e.g. Plato, Marx, Nietzsche) testify to authorial recklessness? These and other questions are the starting-point for the development of a theory of authorial ethics.

Beginning with a discussion of Plato's argument in Phaedrus that writing is dangerous because it can neither select its audience nor call upon its author to the rescue, Burke goes on to analyse the dangerous game which Nietzsche played with posterity, and the ambiguous status of writing within the ethical thought of Emmanuel Levinas. At issue is how authors may protect against 'deviant readings' and assess 'the risk of writing'. Burke recommends an ethic of 'discursive containment'.

Continuing the mission of the 'returned author' begun in his pioneering book *The Death and Return of the Author*, Burke recommends the 'law of genre' as a contract drawn up between author and reader to establish ethical responsibility. Criticism, under this contract, becomes an ethical realm and realm of the ethical.

作者介绍:

About the Author

Sean Burke is Reader in English at the University of Durham. He is the author of *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992; 2nd edn, 1998) and the editor of *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

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