



On Ancient Philosophy (Wadsworth Philosophical Topics)

John Peterman

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ON ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY examines ancient Greek thought from the world views of Homer and Hesiod through the developments of and challenges to rational inquiry in the Presocratics to the multi-layered dynamic approaches to inquiry and criticism in the dialogues of Plato and the writings of Aristotle to the fading echoes of this inquiry in the post-Aristotelian Hellenistic schools. The discussion of the Presocratics is given the same amount of space and detail as those on Plato and Aristotle. This book provides readers with the philosophical and cultural background in order to better appreciate and evaluate the philosophical contributions of these thinkers. The roles of rhetoric, religion, war, politics and the study of nature as the impetus to inquiry instead of doctrine are all explained and connected. Many of our textbooks and discussions use the ideas of these ancient thinkers only as points of departure, frequently as examples of misguided reasoning, instead of as our peers facing similar problems and using similar methods to confront them. The intention here is to help readers gain a positive understanding of their ideas and the language they used to express them. It is not meant to be an interpretation of these ideas so much as an approach to help readers understand the issues, create better informed questions and opinions about them, and know where to find further information to pursue their inquiries. A glossary of Greek terms is included to help negotiate the centuries of translations and interpretations that have often obscured as much as revealed the ideas of these vital thinkers.

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