



The Oxford History of Western Philosophy

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This splendidly written volume takes the reader on a magnificent chronological tour through the revolutions of thought that have forged the Western philosophical tradition from ancient times to the present. Throughout, the six contributors-an internationally renowned team of philosophers including Roger Scruton, Anthony Quinton, and Anthony Kenny-bring the astonishingly diverse, wide-ranging landscape of intellectual history into sharp focus, emphasizing how notions seen today as part of an inevitable march of ideas were in their own time often considered radical, if not revolutionary. Thus we are treated to lively accounts of how Plato's "theory of forms" and Aristotle's pioneering exercises in logic broke with the past to irrevocably alter the course of Western thought. The authors also reveal the relationships between landmark thinkers, and the ways they drew on their intellectual heritage. They show, for instance, how St. Augustine and Aquinas, though advancing the cause of Christian doctrine, picked up where their pagan Greek forebears had left off. We witness how, during the Renaissance, the profound empiricist ideas underlying Descartes's famous utterance- "I think, therefore I exist" -lived in a tense but complementary relationship with Locke's rationalist theories. Moving into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the book explores how Hume greatly influenced Kant's conception of the "transcendental aesthetic," and how Hegel drew upon the lesser known (but groundbreaking) work of Fichte and Schelling. The authors bring the story up to our own time, vividly recounting the existential trend from Nietzsche ("God is dead") to Sartre, along with other increasingly fractious schools of thought. Engagingly written and astonishingly far-reaching, The Oxford History of Western Philosophy provides the consummate introduction to the intellectual bedrock upon which Western civilization is built.

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