



Sophists, Socratics and Cynics (Routledge Revivals)

David Rankin

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The Sophists, the Socratics and the Cynics had one important characteristic in common: they mainly used spoken natural language as their instrument of investigation, and they were more concerned to discover human nature in its various practical manifestations than the facts of the physical world.

The Sophists are too often remembered merely as the opponents of Socrates and Plato. Rankin discusses what social needs prompted the development of their theories and provided a market for their teaching. Five prominent Sophists – Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias and Thrasymachus – are looked at individually. The author discusses their origins, aims and arguments, and relates the issues they focussed on to debates apparent in contemporary literature.

Sophists, Socratics and Cynics, first published in 1983, also traces the sophistic strand in Greek thought beyond the great barrier of Plato, emphasising continuity with the Cynics, and concludes with a look forward to Epicureans and Stoics.

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