

REVISED
FIFTH EDITION

SOCRATES TO SARTRE

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY



SAMUEL ENOCH STUMPF

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Samuel Enoch Stumpf

Vanderbilt University

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A History of Philosophy

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SAMUEL ENOCH STUMPF holds the Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He was a Ford Fellow at Harvard University and a Rockefeller Fellow at Oxford University. For fifteen years he was chairman of the philosophy department at Vanderbilt University, served a term as president of Cornell College of Iowa, and returned to Vanderbilt as professor of the philosophy of law in the School of Law and as research professor of medical philosophy in the School of Medicine. He participates in various national organizations and lectures widely in the fields of philosophy, medical ethics, and jurisprudence.



To JEAN

Paul	Mark	Sam
&	&	&
Barbara	Betsy	Jane

PREFACE



There are many ways to approach the study of philosophy. Nevertheless, an introduction to philosophy is best achieved through a study of its history. Through this approach, we discover a striking interplay of ideas as one philosopher after another offers insights about our nature, the nature of human knowledge, and the realities of the world around us. Because philosophers write with a knowledge of what their predecessors have thought, their own work is at once a criticism of earlier thought and a creative contribution at the growing edge of philosophy. Because the history of philosophy is, to such an extent, a history of criticism, I have chosen not to inject my own critical evaluations; rather, I have sought to present each writer's major ideas and thereby focus upon the central problems, conflicts, and contributions of philosophic thought in the West.

This book is addressed to the beginning student of philosophy, to the student in other disciplines who needs a concise presentation of philosophical ideas, and to interested members of the general reading public. The needs of these groups have prompted me to undertake the task in spite of the obvious pitfalls encountered in condensing the wealth of Western philosophical thought into one short volume.

In this fifth edition of *Socrates to Sartre*, the major new material includes



a study of Richard Rorty's attempt to overcome the limitations of contemporary analytic philosophy and of classical theories of knowledge in general, reflecting questions concerning the adequacy of the linguistic turn. I have also added a section on Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose work expresses developments in contemporary French philosophy, especially through his distinctive theory of the primacy of perception and his philosophical basis of political thought.

Once again, even though the whole book is an elucidation of philosophical ideas, I have added some key concepts to the Glossary. Also, titles have been added to the Bibliography to facilitate further study and to encourage the reader to become acquainted with some original writings and critical commentaries.

As always, I am grateful to my wife, Jean, for the many ways she has been of assistance along the way.

Samuel Enoch Stumpf

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ONE


THE
ANCIENT PERIOD:
THE
SHAPING OF
THE
PHILOSOPHIC
MIND



Socrates' Predecessors: Philosophy and the Natural Order

Philosophy began when humans' curiosity and wonder caused them to ask the questions "What are things really like?" and "How can we explain the process of change in things?" What prompted these questions was the gradual recognition that things are not exactly what they seem to be, that "appearance" often differs from "reality." The facts of birth, death, growth, and decay—coming into being and passing away—raised not only the questions about personal destiny but also the larger questions of how things and persons come into existence, can be different at different times, and pass out of existence only to be followed by other things and persons. Many of the answers given to these questions by the earliest philosophers are not as important as the fact that they focused upon just these questions and that they approached them with a fresh and new frame of mind that was in contrast to that of the great poets.

The birthplace of philosophy was the seaport town of Miletus, located across the Aegean Sea from Athens, on the western shores of Ionia in Asia Minor, and for this reason the first philosophers are called either Milesians or Ionians. By the time the Milesian philosophers began their systematic work,