



The Argument of the Action: Essays on Greek Poetry and Philosophy

By Seth Benardete, Ronna Burger, Michael Davis

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This volume brings together Seth Benardete's studies of Hesiod's *Theogony*, Homer's *Iliad*, and Greek tragedy, of eleven Platonic dialogues, and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. These essays, some never before published, others difficult to find, span four decades of his work and document its impressive range. Benardete's philosophic reading of the poets and his poetic reading of the philosophers share a common ground that makes this collection a whole. The key, suggested by his reflections on Leo Strauss in the last piece, lies in the question of how to read Plato. Benardete's way is characterized not just by careful attention to the literary form that separates doctrine from dialogue, and speeches from deed; rather, by following the dynamic of these differences, he uncovers the argument that belongs to the dialogue as a whole. The "turnaround" such an argument undergoes bears consequences for understanding the dialogue as radical as the conversion of the philosopher in Plato's image of the cave.

Benardete's original interpretations are the fruits of this discovery of the "argument of the action."

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This collection of essays by Benardete (classics, New York Univ.) brings together 20 unpublished or difficult-to-find works covering a period of approximately four decades. Subjects addressed include *The Iliad*, Greek tragedy, several Platonic dialogues ("Timaeus," "Lysis," "Symposium," "Phaedo," and others) and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The introduction discusses Benardete's approach to his work and the manner in which he carries out his analyses and is a useful preparatory to the essays. For those who have extensive backgrounds in Greek classics or philosophy, these essays will be of considerable interest and value. They are not, however, intended for newcomers to these fields of study, as the detail and depth of the analyses are quite extensive. Benardete is an exceptional writer; his prose is clear, and the structure of his discussion is always evident. This collection should be a welcome addition to academic libraries supporting upper undergraduate or graduate studies in classics or philosophy, particularly since several of the essays have never before appeared in print.

-Terry C. Skeats, *Bishop's Univ. Lib., Lennoxville, Quebec*

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About the Author

Seth Benardete (1930–2001) was professor of classics at New York University. He is the author of *Plato's Laws: The Discovery of Being*, and translated Aeschylus' *The Persians* and *The Suppliant Maidens*, all published by The University of Chicago Press.

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