



The Philosophers: Their Lives and the Nature of their Thought

Ben-Ami Scharfstein

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This highly readable volume offers a broad introduction to modern philosophy and philosophers. Ben-Ami Scharfstein contends that personal experience, especially that of childhood, affects philosophers' sense of reality and hence the content of their philosophies. He bases his argument on biographical studies of twenty great philosophers, beginning with Descartes and ending with Wittgenstein and Sartre. Taken together, these studies provide the beginnings of a psychological history of the philosophy of the period. Scharfstein first focuses on the philosophers' efforts to arrive at the objective truth and to persuade themselves and others of its existence. He then explores truth and relevance, both proposing the broadening of the traditional philosophical conception of relevance and considering philosophers' need to create something that belongs to and transcends them as individuals.

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