

Introduction to Aristotle

Edited by Richard McKeon



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Edited, with and Introduction, by Richard McKeon

Introduction to Aristotle Details

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Erik Graff says

This book covers substantially the same material as The Basic Works of Aristotle, but this edition had updated introductions by editor McKeon. My reading of it was for the new and different matters within.

Bojan Tunguz says

It's been said somewhere, don't remember by whom, that all of western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato and Aristotle. This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the fact remains that these two seminal figures of western thought have left at least an indirect mark on all of the subsequent thinkers. And yet, it's been my experience that Plato is much more widely read and studied, in college courses and otherwise, than his equally famous erstwhile disciple. This probably has to do a lot with the style: Plato's "Socratic dialogs" have been written in a form that makes them instantly accessible to readers of all ages, and tends to belie the complexities and subtleties of the underlying ideas. Aristotle's style is much more pedantic and scholarly. One could easily see his writings appearing in peer-reviewed journals.

In part due to the above considerations, it took me a while to finally pick up a book of Aristotle's writings and try to go through at least some of them. This volume brings a few of his works in their entirety, but for most part only more important excerpts are given. Reading it requires some effort on the part of the reader, especially if you are not used to the style and substance of ancient Greek thought. However, the effort was worthwhile, and I've come away from reading this work with renewed and deepened appreciation for Aristotle. In terms of the sheer breadth of his inquiry, there has not been anyone quite like him before or since.

Sympawtico says

I enjoy Aristotle's philosophy, but find the writing circular in the extreme. This translation does nothing to mediate that. I would love to see an edition that brought the language current. But maybe that's not possible while staying true to Aristotle's diligent categorization and analyzation of his various subjects...

Keith says

The educational value is obvious though not easily accessible. For a great feeling of accomplishment I highly recommend pressing one's way through this volume. If you prefer an educational text to facilitate understanding look elsewhere.

William Schram says

I mostly skimmed this one but I still enjoyed it quite a bit. It reminded me of the other book on Aristotle I read, and it has the same person to introduce the works. This book includes a biography of Aristotle as well as a short introduction to each work. Since I had previously read a lot of the pieces included in this text, I really only had to read Rhetoric and some other parts that interested me. It has the same line number system that the other book has, so that must be some kind of standard for Aristotle's works, you know, like how they number Classical Music pieces.

I liked how they began with his work on Logic and the Syllogism because it is a gateway to his analytical methods of thinking and classifying things. This would be a great book to study Aristotle, but alas, I must return it since it is from the Library. Some of his thinking is really outdated, but he can't help knowing things about medicine and diseases and other stuff that had to wait for the Renaissance.

Matt Chatham says

To call this an "introduction" is a pretty severe exaggeration. McKeon's General Introduction (with the exception of his section on 'Aristotle's Life and Times') and his introduction to *Analytica Posteriora* are both horrendously written, and thus far in my reading of AP much of the content has been entirely unintelligible without outside research due to a lack of explanation within the text by Aristotle, who assumes the reader familiar with his ideas and terms, as well as an almost complete lack of glosses by the editor. I do not believe for one second that the difficulty I'm having with this text is because the ideas are to esoteric or complex for me to understand; rather, it is because of poor writing and editing on the part of McKeon. True, it is reasonable to expect the reader to put some work into a book--I'm not saying otherwise. But to expect the reader to do their own research on basic terminology and ideas goes beyond reason in a book termed an "Introduction."

Jonathan says

None

Ted says

This is a great introduction to Aristotle, suitable for anyone who wants a taste of his most famous works without investing a great amount of time or money in any single one of them.

I've only read most, though not all, of the selections in this book, not always from this edition.

What I have read in this edition are *De Anima*, *Metaphysica*, *Ethica Nicomachea*, and *Politica*.

The book's selections of The Posterior Analytics (Logic), On the Soul (Psychology/Biology), Nichomachean Ethics and the Poetics are all complete. These are Aristotle's writings that are probably of most interest to us modern readers, so the editor selected well I think.

(The Politics is still referred to fairly often, so a larger selection from that would have been useful.)

One thing I don't like about the book, at least this first edition of it, is the footnotes. They are very cryptic, and given in a style that seems ultra-academic, perhaps outdated, and impossible in some cases to even interpret.

For example, in the Politics selection Aristotle says, at the beginning of Chapter 11, book III, "Most of these questions may be reserved for another occasion." The footnote to this statement is

cc. 12-17, iv., vi

huh?

Well not all the footnotes are that indecipherable, thank goodness.

Debbie says

have 1947 edition
