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978-1-107-00032-2 - The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry

Raymond Barfield

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## The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry

From its beginnings, philosophy's language, concepts, and imaginative growth have been heavily influenced by poetry and poets. Drawing on the work of a wide range of thinkers throughout the history of Western philosophy, Raymond Barfield explores the pervasiveness of poetry's impact on philosophy and, conversely, how philosophy has sometimes resisted or denied poetry's influence. Although some thinkers, such as Giambattista Vico and Friedrich Nietzsche, praised the wisdom of poets and saw poetry and philosophy as mutually beneficial pursuits, others resented, diminished, or eliminated the importance of poetry in philosophy. Beginning with the famous passage in Plato's *Republic* in which Socrates exiles the poets from the city, this book traces the history of the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry through the works of thinkers in the Western tradition ranging from Plato to the contemporary thinker Mikhail Bakhtin. This new perspective provides an illuminating way of reading philosophy that can be extended and applied to other philosophers.

Raymond Barfield is associate professor in the Schools of Divinity, Nursing, and Medicine at Duke University.

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*For Karen, Micah, and Alexandra*

*And in memory of John Stone, physician and poet*

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Poems are but evidence of Poetry.  
Ben Mazer, *Poems*

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