

Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form

Charles H. Kahn



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Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form Charles H. Kahn This book proposes a new paradigm for the interpretation of Plato's early and middle dialogues. Rejecting the usual assumption of a distinct 'Socratic' period in the development of Plato's thought, this view regards the earlier works as deliberate preparation for the exposition of Plato's mature philosophy. Differences between the dialogues do not represent different stages in Plato's own thinking but rather different aspects and moments in the presentation of a new and unfamiliar view of reality. Once the fictional character of the Socratic genre is recognised, there is no reason to regard Plato's early dialogues as representing the philosophy of the historical Socrates. The result is a unified interpretation of all of the dialogues down to the Republic and the Phaedrus.



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