



Wisdom: A History

By Trevor Curnow

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“There’s no fool like an old fool,” the saying goes. What is it about wisdom that sets it apart from mere intelligence? What is that elusive difference between a simple grasp of the facts and profound understanding? Wisdom has fascinated the human race for thousands of years; philosophers are notorious for being *in love* with it, and for centuries writers have tried to capture its essence in proverbs and fables. In this book, Trevor Curnow provides an accessible introduction to wisdom and the many ways we have thought about and tried to achieve it throughout history.

Drawing on examples from a diversity of eras and places—from ancient Egypt to medieval Europe to modern Africa—Curnow explores the ways we have sought to overcome the problems posed by our existence, such as love and death, with a steadfast wisdom. He shows how many cultures have attributed wisdom to deities such as Apollo, Odin, and Sarasvati, and how, especially, we have placed it within the vehicle of the proverb, which has safeguarded its lessons throughout time and across cultures.

Including a collection of one hundred sayings that offer a rich record of wisdom’s reification, this history gives new insight into what wisdom actually is and where we might find it.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Trevor Curnow is professor of philosophy at the University of Cumbria, UK. He is the author of *Oracles of the Ancient*, *Ancient Philosophy and Everyday Life*, and *Wisdom in the Ancient World*.

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