After a long wait, our collection has finally seen the light of day!

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Selected Works by Seth Benardete
This volume is a tribute to the thought of Seth Benardete by contributors who had the rare good fortune of studying with him or those who discovered the treasure of his writings. Benardete’s classical scholarship and remarkable knowledge of Greek served his philosophic quest to understand the nature of things, which he pursued through a brilliant practice of interpretation of texts. He found in the Platonic dialogue—in the action through which the argument unfolds—the key to philosophic thinking, and this enabled him, in turn, to read the poets philosophically. He was fully immersed in the world of the ancients, starting with Homer, but their works opened up for him a way to the fundamental questions—about justice and love, nature and law, the city and the gods. Seeing, as he once put it, that “the problem of the human good is grounded in the city, and the problem of being in god,” he came to the conclusion that “Political philosophy is the eccentric core of philosophy.” Benardete wrote this statement reflecting on the political-theological issue in the work of his teacher, Leo Strauss; but the paradoxical notion of an “eccentric core,” which gives this volume its title, expresses the characteristic way his own thinking so often moves from an off-center observation to disclose, unexpectedly, the unifying focal point of a whole.

This collection had its origin in a small conference organized by Patrick Goodin in the spring of 2005 at Howard University. It expanded to include papers from an earlier memorial conference for Benardete at the New School for Social Research in December 2002 and a reflection just after his death, in November 2001, as well as reviews of his books published over the years. The essays about or inspired by Benardete’s thought—on the Bible and Homer, the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle and the Roman writers—suggest the remarkable range of his teaching and studies. The centrality of Plato is evident not only in these essays but also in the reviews, by readers who appreciate the importance of Benardete’s work, its subtlety and its depth. The volume closes with three of Benardete’s previously unpublished essays and a bibliography of his writings.

Patrick Goodin is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Howard University, where he has taught since 1996. He received his PhD from the New School for Social Research in 1996 after writing his dissertation, under Benardete’s supervision, on Aristotle’s de Anima. His research and teaching interests include Ancient Greek Philosophy, Africana, Afro-Caribbean and African American Philosophy.

Ronna Burger is Catherine & Henry J. Gaisman Chair and Professor of Philosophy at Tulane University. After completing her dissertation on Plato’s Phaedrus, directed by Benardete, she went on to write The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth (Yale 1985, St.

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