



# The Enemies of Perfection: Oakeshott, Plato, and the Critique of Rationalism

*Debra Candreva*

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## **The Enemies of Perfection: Oakeshott, Plato, and the Critique of Rationalism** Debra Candreva

While some philosophers feel that Plato corrupted the practice of Western metaphysics, others feel his legacy has been abandoned to the detriment of Western thought. Even though Michael Oakeshott is well known for his critique of rationalism, and his denial that human reason is capable of achieving eternal truths?truths such as those articulated by Plato and his contemporaries?Oakeshott does not view Plato as the source of either error or truth. He instead considers Plato to be the proponent of an important dialectical manner of thinking.

In *The Enemies of Perfection*, author Debra Candreva argues that Plato's philosophy is among the most important influences on Oakeshott's thought, with his debts to Plato far outweighing his criticisms. Further, Candreva's examination of Oakeshott's treatment of Plato forms the basis of an argument against the view that a radical gap between ancient and modern thought renders ancient philosophy either inaccessible or irrelevant to current thinking.

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