



Socratic Puzzles

Robert Nozick

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One of the foremost philosophers of our time, Robert Nozick continues the Socratic tradition of investigation. This volume, which illustrates the originality, force, and scope of his work, also displays Nozick's trademark blending of extraordinary analytical rigor with intellectual playfulness. As such, *Socratic Puzzles* testifies to the great pleasure that both doing and reading philosophy can be.

Comprising essays and philosophical fictions, classics and new work, the book ranges from Socrates to W. V. Quine, from the implications of an Israeli kibbutz to the flawed arguments of Ayn Rand. Nozick considers the figure of Socrates himself as well as the Socratic method (why is it a "method" of getting at the truth?). Many of these essays bring classic methods to bear on new questions about choice. How should you choose in a disconcerting situation ("Newcomb's Problem") when your decisions are completely predictable? Why do threats and not offers typically coerce our choices? How do we make moral judgments when we realize that our moral principles have exceptions? Other essays present new approaches to familiar intellectual puzzles, from the stress on simplicity in scientific hypotheses to the tendency of intellectuals to oppose capitalism.

As up to date as the latest reflections on animal rights; as perennial as the essentials of aesthetic merit (doggerel by Isaac Newton goes to prove that changing our view of the world won't suffice); as whimsical as a look at how some philosophical problems might appear from God's point of view: these essays attest to the timeliness and timelessness of Nozick's thinking. With a personal introduction, in which Nozick discusses the origins, tools, and themes of his work, *Socratic Puzzles* demonstrates how philosophy can constitute a way of life.

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