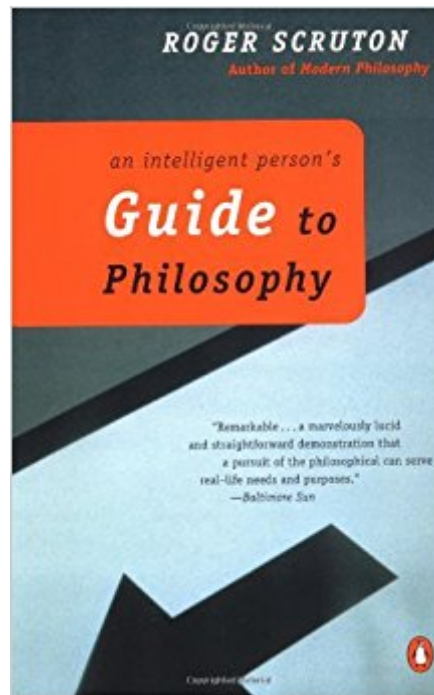




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An Intelligent Person's Guide To Philosophy



Synopsis

"Philosophy's the 'love of wisdom', can be approached in two ways: by doing it, or by studying how it has been done," so writes the eminent philosopher Roger Scruton. In this user-friendly book, he chooses to introduce philosophy by doing it. Taking the discipline beyond theory and "intellectualism," he presents it in an empirical, accessible, and practical light. The result is not a history of the field but a vivid, energetic, and personal account to guide the reader making his or her own venture into philosophy. Addressing a range of subjects from freedom, God, reality, and morality, to sex, music, and history, Scruton argues philosophy's relevance not just to intellectual questions, but to contemporary life.

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Customer Reviews

Roger Scruton's "An Intelligent Guide to Philosophy" is a fantastic book with a tremendous amount of interesting things to say but which at times is very hard to understand. The first chapter "Why?" delves into that word which gives rise to philosophy. We can answer that question by giving a cause, a reason (which might also be a cause) or something that makes an action intelligible, according to Scruton. Science gives causes of the first kind while philosophy, in the way the world currently is, "attempts to justify the other kinds of 'Why?' - the 'Why?' which looks for a reason, and the 'Why?' which looks for a meaning" (pg 25). This plays into a constant theme of Scruton's, "If this book has a message, it is that scientific truth has human illusion as its regular by-product, and that philosophy is our surest weapon in the attempt to rescue truth from this predicament" (pg 8). The next three chapters "Truth", "The Demon" and "Subject and Object" deal with truth, language and

skepticism about the external world (and maybe some other subjects as well). This addresses Descartes's evil demon and the skepticism about the external world that has plagued modern philosophy since Descartes's "Meditations on First Philosophy" (1630). After dealing with these metaphysical/epistemological subjects, Scruton turns to questions of human nature and ethics in chapters 5 through 10. He has some very interesting things to say about what distinguishes humans from animals (language is important) and about the crucial need that religion has addressed for human beings. I can't resist: "... the rational being lives in a condition of metaphysical loneliness" (pg 89).

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