



# Socrates and the Irrational

*James S. Hans*

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## **Socrates and the Irrational** James S. Hans

Traditionally, Socrates has been linked to the view of reason as the most important element in human behavior, the means through which our irrational capacities are tamed. Yet, one might ask, if his legacy were solely derived from his having been a master reasoner, why would he have been able to maintain his place in our imaginations for so long? In *Socrates and the Irrational*, James Hans argues that when Socrates speaks for himself, he reveals a far more complex portrait of the nature of human existence than the Platonic conception of him has conveyed. Exploring Socratic thought through four key dialogues—the *Ion*, the *Apology*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Republic*—Hans offers a larger vision of both Socrates and human potential that goes beyond the reductive placement of reason on the side of the good and unreason on the side of the bad. Embracing Socrates' reverence for poets, his reliance on feeling and intuition, his attitude toward death, and his defense of prophecy and love, Hans shows how thoroughly the Socratic idea of reason is based on the affective aspects of bodily existence that traditional approaches to his thought ignore. For those who have a philosophical interest in the foundation of Western thought as well as those whose interests in the humanities encompass the nature of the examined life, *Socrates and the Irrational* is both an accessible and an erudite journey into the mind of this central figure of our civilization.

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