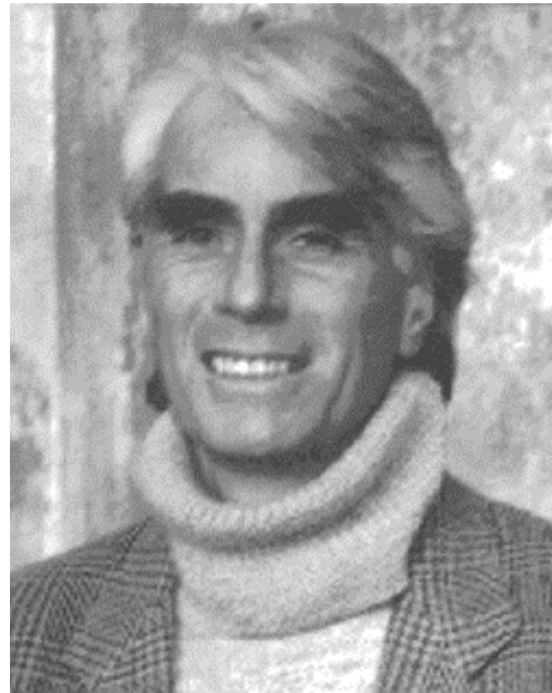


## Robert Nozick

(\* 1938 Brooklyn, NY - †2002  
Cambridge, Mass.)

He spent almost his whole intellectual life as a professor for philosophy at the Harvard University. With "Anarchy, State, and Utopia" (1974) he became one of the most influential thinkers of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the field of political philosophy, at least in the Anglo-American world. This book is not only a comprehensive critique of "A Theory of Justice" by John Rawls, but a modern theory of individual rights and of the minimal state. Nozick argues that the rights of the individuals including the property rights are primary. Nothing more than a minimal state can be justified to protect these rights against violence and theft. Every "redistribution" of wealth violates the rights of the people. Therefore the modern welfare states are not legitimate. Nozick also shows that under the framework of a minimal state different communities with their own values can coexist. Nozick never wanted to be an ideologue of a political movement. He said that individual liberty has to be seen as a whole, including the opportunities of a free market and strong individual rights as for instance gay rights and the freedom of prostitution. Aside from his political writings he had widespread interest as a philosopher and wrote books about different topics.



### Literature:

Robert Nozick: Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Basic Books 1977.

Jonathan Wolff: Robert Nozick: Property, Justice, and the Minimal State, Stanford University Press 1991.

Jeffrey Paul (ed.): Reading Nozick: Essays on "Anarchy, State and Utopia", Rowman & Littlefield 1981.

Sascha Tamm