



An Eye for An I: Philosophies of Personal Power

Robert Spillane

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How can we gain insight into and mastery of ourselves? Entering the world of the great philosophers and engaging with them, we become aware of what we are capable of becoming. They speak to us of themselves and the good life and thereby offer the possibility for self-development.

While this sounds like psychology, it is what the ancient Greeks called moral philosophy and its main precept is 'know oneself'. To know oneself is to embrace one's personal power.

From Socrates to Sartre, from Plato to postmodernism, philosophers have important things to say about the personal power that underpins human existence. This book discusses ten philosophical perspectives, or worldviews, which present original ideas capable of evoking in us values that are guidelines for personal conduct. Harmonising knowledge, values and conduct maximises our personal power and thereby enables us to solve the practical and psychological problems of human existence, or overcome those that cannot be solved.

The philosophers discussed in this book embody ideas of considerable fascination and force which can change our lives by penetrating the illusions of appearance and the delusions of common sense. As philosophy is thinking critically about thinking, it is a liberating activity because philosophers confront us with our prejudices and arouse our curiosity without satisfying it.

They show us what they were and how philosophy inspired them to live productive lives. They did not seek disciples but encouraged others to philosophise with them.

We cannot escape from philosophy because we philosophise when we reflect critically on how well we are living.

Philosophy is, therefore, a meditation on who we are and what we can become: it is an eye for an I.



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