Egoism morality and justice

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EGOISM, MORALITY, AND JUSTICE

by

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This thesis repudiates the position that egoism can serve as an accurate description of human nature and that ethical egoism can serve as a first principle of society. Ethical egoists argue that human beings are naturally and completely self-interested. They act rightly, therefore, when they act in their own interest. Moreover, acts of benevolence and altruism are impossible for human beings, and social cooperation reflects only the interests of individual members. Moral objectivists reject ethical egoism by arguing that humans are naturally moral beings capable of benevolence and altruism toward others. This description allows for societies that include the natural cooperation of moral individuals.

To prove that ethical egoists are wrong about individuals and societies, I examine Plato's Gorgias and Republic, and John Rawls' A Theory of Justice. In the Gorgias, Plato presents the ethical egoists' position clearly and forcefully in the arguments of Callicles. Socrates fails, however, to defeat Callicles' version of ethical egoism in the Gorgias. In the Republic, Plato again fails to defeat ethical egoism, although he succeeds in re-defining self-interest to include acting for the good of the ideal city. John Rawls' Theory of Justice defeats ethical egoism by providing a modern alternative that denies self-interest as a basis for a society of moral individuals.
1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Among modern writers of popular non-fiction, one group consistently tops the best-seller lists. The authors in this group write what I call "self-help" literature. These authors offer various versions of a common solution to life's problems, solutions which take self-interest to be the legitimate motivation for human action and interaction. They argue that human beings ought to act out of self-interest. This simple rule characterizes the moral theory known as ethical egoism.

Although my list of "self-help" authors is far from complete, I consider several who succinctly state the position commonly held by the group. First, I discuss Norman Vincent Peale's Power of Positive Thinking. This book is a good, early example of "self-help" literature that is as popular today as it was when it first appeared in 1952. Peale suggests that individuals rid themselves of self-doubt as a sure means to happiness and success. Next, I examine Passages, by Gail Sheehy. Although Sheehy's book succeeds Dr. Peale's by 26 years, she restates his messages in her own terms. If individuals prepare themselves to survive life crises, they will survive and even prosper from them, regardless of what happens to other individuals involved. This survival depends on the rule of ethical egoism successfully applied to difficult times in life. I
have also included references to two "self-help" books without elaboration, _Egospeak_ by Edmond Addeo and Robert Burger, and _Body Language_, by Julius Fast. These works are important because they go beyond the common formulae of admonishment and advice for success. These books encourage individuals to "help themselves," quite literally, to other people, who exist as means to their ends. These authors contend that intimidation and suggestive, decisive behavior enable individuals to manipulate others. Finally, I have included discussions of _Your Erroneous Zones_, by Dr. Wayne Dyer, and _Looking Out for #1_, by Robert Ringer. Taken together, these "self-help" books argue forcefully for the ethical egoists fundamental moral rule. Both Dyer and Ringer justify their positions by claiming that ethical egoism offers the best means to the lives that rational individuals want.

In general, "self-help" authors all subscribe to the idea that egoism accurately describes human nature. These books can be understood as guides for discovering and implementing egoistic laws of human nature. That is, these authors describe a world wherein individuals are encouraged to act exclusively for their own benefit. This view of human nature is highly suspect, if not completely mistaken. The egoism that these authors either mindfully advocate or unmindfully imply is based on a theory of moral relativism that is destructive of individuals and pernicious to
society. Ethical egoism ignores and finally disallows many common actions that we recognize as distinctly human. Moreover, ethical egoism restricts society to minimal cooperation without moral significance.

The "self-help" authors represent a tradition in the history of philosophy that includes Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and the Sophists of Plato's dialogues. Hobbes, the first philosopher to propose a fully developed political theory based on ethical egoism, is important to my discussion for two reasons. First, he gives the "self-help" authors a philosophical legitimacy by showing that these authors have not created their ideas by themselves. Rather they are the newest advocates of a system of thought with a rich historical and philosophical context. Second, an analysis of Hobbes' thought shows the social implications of ethical egoism. If we believe, with the "self-help" authors, that human nature is essentially egoistic, so that society must be merely a collection of legitimately self-interested individuals, then we can look to Hobbes' analysis for a view of what that society would be like.

The Sophists of Plato's dialogues also provide an historical and philosophical context for the "self-help" authors. Both Socrates and Plato were familiar with the Sophists and their persuasive arguments about ethical egoism in human nature and society. Indeed my criticism of
"self-help" literature is analogous to Socrates and Plato's criticisms of the Sophists. Consequently, my analysis and repudiation of the "self-help" authors as modern Sophists reflects and elaborates the Platonic tradition, especially Socrates' arguments from the Gorgias and the Republic.

Next, I include an analysis of John Rawls' book, A Theory of Justice. Rawls' theory of justice includes an "original position" wherein persons remain while choosing principles to order the basic structure of society. With the original position, Rawls imagines a situation where individual choosers remain ignorant of information inconsistent with a moral point of view, and always choose principles of justice.

Rawls' theory eliminates ethical egoism as a first principle for a society of moral individuals. He denies that ethical egoism could serve as a first principle in a just society because of the natural relationship that exists between moral theory and moral experience. Finally, Rawls argues that individual moral development, a good for persons and society, is consistently realized with his theory of justice as fairness.

My conclusion, based on my analysis of the "self-help" authors, Hobbes' Leviathan, Plato's Gorgias and Republic, and Rawls' Theory of Justice, includes an explanation of human nature that opposes ethical egoism. Human beings are
moral beings, and thus different from all other animals. This is, finally, the quintessential human characteristic, that allows benevolent and altruistic human actions between friends. These relationships give rise to societies that reflect the moral core of human existence.
2.0 EGOISM AND MODERN SOCIETY

2.1 Ethical Egoism And Ethical Objectivism

Throughout history people have assumed the existence of moral principles and their availability to rational minds. Human behavior often reflects this assumption. We praise individuals for their moral courage and blame them for immoral acts. In extreme cases of wrongdoing we punish those responsible. As common as moral praise and blame are, there have always been those who denied the assumptions upon which these actions rested; since the days of Socrates, there have been thinkers who argued that moral values had no objective existence, that moral knowledge was not possible.

Philosophers refer to the view that moral standards exist and that human beings can know them as ethical objectivism.

We call an ethical theory objective if it holds that the truth of what is asserted by some ethical sentence is independent of the person who uses the sentence, the time at which he uses it, and the place where he uses it.[1]

These theories assume that human beings' unique nature, the capacity for rational thought, enables them to apply moral concepts to their discussions of the ends of human action, choose effective means to those ends, and to apply moral guidelines to help determine acceptable actions and laws to govern those actions. Furthermore, theories of ethical
objectivism, sometimes called ethical absolutism, assume a single, eternally true, and valid moral code for all rational men. [2] The morality that offers guidelines for human action is in some sense objective. Human actions are right or wrong, everywhere and always, because they are held to be a single set of objective moral principles. Objective moral principles include real truths that human beings must discover, recognize, and accept. These principles give meaning to the language of moral terms and they make sense of the lives of moral individuals.

Theories of ethical objectivism can account for many human actions. Different historical, racial, cultural, and religious groups have held different, sometimes opposing, views of morally correct action. Even groups that have coexisted historically often have radically different views of what constitutes moral action. These differences help explain the warfare and social chaos that comprise much of human history. From the ethical objectivist's point of view, however, disagreements among individuals or groups about morally correct action do not imply that one or the other of them is right or wrong; indeed both may be wrong. Nor would agreement on the moral acceptability of particular actions guarantee their correctness. All human actions are either right or wrong, regardless of what any individual or group believes. Therefore, individuals must be able to recognize right actions--only then can they act as moral
persons. Moreover, if an individual or group abhors an action that others condone, all the parties may still be wrong about its moral propriety. But they cannot all be right. Right actions never issue automatically from accidents of human judgment, opinions, or ignorance.

According to theories of ethical objectivism, morally right action remains constant for all men for all time. Ethical objectivism requires, then,

that before we come to revealed religion, to the Bible, to the wise men of the community, or to any other source of moral refinement, we have the capacity to think ethically, to learn the general requirements of good conduct, and to discover, at least in a general way, what our obligations are.[3]

The single standard of morally correct action is an existing framework of moral guidelines that are extensive, widely acceptable, recognizable, internally consistent, and grounded in human nature prior to the practical agreements of individuals. These guidelines they can choose to accept or reject. Additions and refinements in this general position have provided an endlessly fascinating variety of specific theories for real and imagined human actions.

Because ethical objectivism presupposes human interaction and requires that individuals be capable of acting with and for one another, it follows that ethical objectivism allows such theories as benevolence and
altruism, and systems of law and government based on natural law. These theories recognize that human beings act for reasons other than self-interest, for example. Action that promotes the benefit of another exclusively, without direct regard for self-interest, is called benevolent action. The possibility of benevolent action underlies theories of human action such as altruism, action devoted predominantly but not exclusively to the interests of others. Explanations of law and government that include theories of benevolence and altruism are called theories of natural law. Objective, existing, moral principles provide guidelines for laws and political institutions as a logical extension of their effect on naturally social individuals.

Theories of ethical objectivism can best be illustrated by examining the opposing view.[4] Ethical relativism essentially denies that human beings can invoke absolute moral standards to explain human action. Ethical relativists and ethical objectivists generally agree that historical, cultural, racial, and religious differences among individuals and groups account for disagreements over correct moral action. But the two disagree on how to interpret these facts in the context of moral philosophy. Ethical relativists conclude from these differences that absolute moral standards simply do not exist. Moral standards, like moral actions, vary according to time, place, and circumstance. That is, similar actions have
different moral value for individuals or groups, depending upon history, culture, and geography.

Ethical relativism denies that differences over current moral action only reflect conflicting analyses of right or wrong based on ignorance of moral standards. Rather relativists argue that similar actions can be morally acceptable in one case and unacceptable in another. Appropriate moral action reflects solely what individuals think or agree is right.

Ethical relativism thus denies that absolute moral standards exist at all. Theories based on ethical relativism do not even recognize objective standards for each time or place. A common example of ethical relativism, cultural relativism, is offered by modern anthropologists as scientific truth.[5] Individual, subjective standards, relative to history, culture, and geography, comprise equally the myriad of determinants of moral action.

A popular variant of ethical relativism is ethical egoism. Ethical egoism means that individuals determine moral standards. That is, sets of moral standards applicable to human action are as numerous as acting individuals. Generally, ethical egoists act in their own interest. There are both weak and strong versions of ethical egoism. Those who advance arguments for the weak version describe human action as self-interested. They
contend that, as a matter of fact, human beings act for self-interest. The weak version still allows, however, for the possibility of benevolent actions, regardless of how infrequently they might occur. The weak version describes how human beings act, but it does not claim that that is how they should act. Although the weak version implies a stronger position than it takes, it does not preclude the possibility of other kinds of actions from individuals. The weak version leaves some room for absolute moral standards that could inform benevolent action, for example.

The strong version of ethical egoism, on the other hand, disallows even the possibility of benevolent actions for human beings. Proponents of the strong version claim that rational individuals always act in their own interest. Furthermore, individuals ought to act self-interestedly, because that is the rational way to act. Proponents of the strong version of ethical egoism understand human nature and social interaction as void any other considerations. For them any theory that includes objective moral standards remains fantastic and irrelevant to rational minds. The normal political and social organizations of individuals under ethical egoism is based upon the social contract. The social contract allows cooperation among egoistic individuals. It maintains their individual priority by letting them participate in society without sacrificing their self-interest. Generally, the social contract
establishes the collectivity as an agreement between the individuals who make it up. The social contract requires only that individuals do not violate the claims to self-interest that other participants assert. The contract limits any individual's activities if they interfere with the self-interest of other members. The limits on self-interested action are established by the laws and social institutions of the society designed to maximize the satisfaction of individual self-interest.

A conspicuous feature of our own society is the egoistic behavior of its members. Individuals constantly claim the priority of self-interest, and they do it with a vengeance. No price seems too great to pay for the right to "do their own thing." This talk of "rights" typefies the modern view. Of course, many "rights" claims are trivially valid, but they almost always fail to address the substantive moral issues involved or to explore the implications of their acceptance. It is simply easier to claim rights than to answer what constitutes morally right action.

The egoistic view of human nature is seriously mistaken. Acts of benevolence are not only possible for rational individuals, but actually flourish in a society that misunderstands, frequently misinterprets, and sometimes impugns them. In this paper I examine ethical egoism as a
variant of ethical relativism and analyze its philosophical foundations, including defenders and detractors in the history of philosophy. I do so to reject the position and to argue instead for benevolent action and the absolute moral standards that inform it.

Section 2.2 examines a group of popular modern authors who share an egoistic view of human nature. Some of these authors offer the weak version of egoism. Since men usually act self-interestedly, individuals should recognize that they can act to serve their interests specifically. The authors explain how self-interest can inform and direct choices and conduct to help individuals get what they want. Other, more confident authors support a strong version of egoism. These writers contend that all rational men always naturally act to realize their own interests, and that any human conventions that interfere with those activities are to be ignored. Those who offer the strong version of egoism contend finally that moral norms or concepts have no application to the development or functioning of human nature or social interaction.

Although arguments for ethical egoism are common to every age, the first philosopher to propose a political theory based on egoism was Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes argued in the *Leviathan* that the essentially egoistic nature of man dictated specific consequences for human society. For
Hobbes individuals cooperate socially through social contracts, whereby they agree to compromise self-interested action if others do the same. With these contracts they avoid the social chaos they would otherwise face. Participation in society under these conditions is a prudent choice for individuals, but it is also unnatural to them.

In Chapter 3, I examine Plato's attempts to silence the detractors of ethical objectivism at work in his time. Although Plato does not name ethical objectivism specifically, he alludes throughout his dialogues to a universe of absolute moral laws, included in his Theory of Forms. These laws substantiate his arguments for the idea of the polis as a natural possibility for society constituted by moral and social individuals. The idea of the polis is not an accidental by-product of the philosophy of Hellenic Greece. Nor did Plato misunderstand the moral implications of the polis. But Athens, the greatest polis of all, had suffered a radical decline in Plato's lifetime, so his refutation of the Sophists had to include an alternative to the historical events that seemed to reinforce their view. In the Gorgias and the Republic Plato uses Socrates to argue for an ideal political society and to repudiate the egoism of its detractors, the Sophists.
In the Republic Socrates imagines an ideal polis and examines it. The shortcomings of the good city that Plato exposes through Socrates' dialogue with the other interlocutors finally undermines the possibility of realizing an ideal society, but this does not diminish Plato or Socrates' enthusiasm for the larger enterprise of connecting the ideal Forms to the world of human beings, or for the rightness of their general position on moral responsibility and social interaction.

Chapter 4 examines John Rawls' theory of justice. Rawls' theory is a modern alternative to Hobbes' egoistic political theory. Rawls imagines an elaborate arrangement of social cooperation based on morality. Rawls' system includes a hypothetical "original position" with a "veil of ignorance" behind which individuals would remain while choosing principles to order the basic structure of society. Rawls contends that principles chosen under these conditions would be principles of justice, specifically his two principles of "justice as fairness." Rawls' analysis excludes considerations of egoism as a possible basis for social cooperation. Rawls excludes egoism on grounds of its being a non-moral position that cannot adequately inform social organization for moral individuals.
In Chapter 5, I reply to the modern egoists, offer a repudiation of Hobbes' theory, and argue for the superiority of ethical objectivism over ethical relativism. Although ethical egoism currently enjoys wide acceptance, it remains as inappropriate a view of human nature and society for us as it was for Socrates and Plato. The authors of the self-help literature either advocate patently immoral acts in the name of self-interest or dismiss moral terminology as meaningless, thereby revealing their nihilism and cynicism. Hobbes' analysis cannot account for many common human actions, including actions among family members. Ethical objectivist theories, especially John Rawls' theory of justice, provide an explanation of human nature and society that accounts for the diversity and complexity of moral experience.

2.2 Self-help And Self-interest:

As Americans we feel confident that we know ourselves, who we are and where we are going. We share common values that we believe are right. This knowledge informs our choices and determines our actions, validates our achievements and shapes our goals. Americans regard freedom of choice almost reverently. As informed citizens, for example, we choose political leaders to shape our society from among various economic, political, and social alternatives. This we call self-determination, the
implementation of rights guaranteed by our Constitution. As individuals we plan and shape our lives to realize what we already know we want. Children can't begin too soon to consider what they will become "when they grow up." Furthermore as consumers of the goods and services of society we trust our inclinations—we know what we like. Life plans and material wealth, what we do and what we have; these and other elements characterize success, society's imprecise but important measure of individual worth.

Our sense of ourselves as knowing individuals underlies our economic ideology. Americans constantly extol the virtues of free market capitalism in which, ideally, buyers and sellers meet to exchange goods and services at a rate determined by supply and demand. These market transactions are allegedly clean, competitive, and fair, and prices are self-regulating. The market supplies the essential needs of our existence and includes the potential for much more. The essential needs stabilize the market because they form a constant demand for certain goods and services. "Supply and demand" also regulates market size and diversity. Among the countless accessories of our lives, all available in the ideal market place, selective preference shapes the market as it reflects individual personalities. Many contend that without a visible class structure in American society, you are what you own. The market provides the freedom to choose what that will be.
The success of our nation and the accomplishments that naturally result from the self-knowledge and free choice of individuals defines our image as a nation of doers. As citizens of the most powerful economic nation on earth and the undisputed center of world capitalism, we also know collectively what we want and, in most cases, what we need to get it. This sense of ourselves automatically invites comparison with other nations abroad and among individuals at home. Despite the international influences of American capitalism, however, it is individuals who make things happen, individuals motivated by self-interest and the prospect of economic success. Individuals take the risks, they win or lose, and they reap the rewards they have earned. Rewards make sense of individual efforts, because without the anticipation of reward even informed choices become pointless striving. In that case they can only choose randomly, and they become irrational as well as uninteresting. Individual effort in anticipation of reward is their best expression of themselves.

Advertising helps individuals choose their rewards, offering "distinctive" products that presuppose self-knowledge. "You deserve a break today." "For all you do, this beer's for you." "Isn't it time you owned a 'Cadillac'?" "Preference" hair coloring--because you're worth it." For these slogans to have their appropriate appeal we must accept their unspoken premises. These are, first, that
individual effort is rational and deliberate, based on what we know we want. Second, it is reasonable to reward individual effort and to expect recognition as an achiever. Finally, our achievements rightly qualify us for these rewards. We should treat ourselves well because in most cases we have earned it, and these products are excellent means to that end.

Given our society's profound preoccupation with individual achievement and reward, it is not surprising to find various types of instruction and advice on success. From the emulation of society's winners to the sage retrospection of the also-rans, books and articles supply society's demand for knowledge of how to go about getting what it already know it wants. These primers for success include descriptions of necessary attitudes and tested methods of winning.

Practical suggestions on choosing correctly among lifestyle alternatives and competing successfully in society is the subject of much popular literature. Both formal and informal "assertiveness training" abounds. Popular songs urge us to "make our own kind of music, sing our own special song." [6] Magazines and newspapers regularly devote space for psychological advice and counseling. Many books also deal with popular psychology, enhancing self-image and developing the confidence that makes individuals competitive
and successful. In general they extol what Norman Vincent Peale has called "the power of positive thinking that begins with faith in oneself."[7]

Published in 1952, The Power of Positive Thinking is an influential example of today's popular psychology. Peale argues that individuals have the power to shape their lives if they will take the initiative to do so. His opening sentences state his thesis:

This book is written to suggest techniques and to give examples which demonstrate that you do not need to be defeated by anything, that you can have peace of mind, improved health, and a never ceasing flow of energy. In short that your life can be full of joy and satisfaction.[8]

Peale claims that many people are "hampered and made miserable by the malady popularly called the inferiority complex."[9] To dispel feelings of anxiety, despair, or self-doubt, he suggests honest self-analysis with a view toward reconditioning faulty attitudes about life. If you discover the source of the negative aspects of your personality, you can replace them with positive statements of religious faith. These restore self-image and feelings of individual power and self-worth. Usable statements of religious faith abound in the Bible. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phillipians 4:13), and "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), are good examples. "Remind yourself", he suggests, "that God is with you and nothing can defeat you. Believe
that you now receive power from Him." If God is all powerful, and you receive your power from God, then you too are all powerful. This Peale calls "applied Christianity; a simple yet scientific system of practical techniques of successful living that works."[10]

A recent bestseller, Passages, by Gail Sheehy, also discusses individual maturity and growth in adult life. According to Sheehy, everyone goes through established stages in life, much like the predictable schedule in William Shakespeare's "Seven Stages of Man."[11] These stages she calls "marker events."

Everything that happens to us—graduations, marriages, childbirth, and divorce, affect us. These marker events are the concrete happenings of our lives. A developmental stage, however, is not defined in terms of marker events; it is defined by changes that begin within. The underlying impulse toward change will be there regardless of whether or not it is manifested in or accentuated by a marker event.[12]

For Sheehy change, or passage, is inevitable in human beings, a constant of the journey from birth to death. By itself change is neither good nor bad, so questions about why changes occur are uninteresting to her. Change does, however, present individuals with opportunities for growth.

The best of all parents have not shielded us from wrestling with the problems of security, acceptance, control, jealousy, rivalry. The strategies we develop, some causing us to be tender and loving and others egging us on to be competitive and cruel, form parts integral to our distinctive character by the end of childhood. To
"know thyself" in the full sense, one must eventually allow acquaintance with all these parts. This is the one opportunity presented to us as we move through a series of critical passages.[13]

The solutions to the problems of life involve a willingness to change. Smart individuals recognize that life choices are theirs to make, and if they choose correctly, the rewards are theirs to enjoy.

Dr. William Dyer's books also explain how to enjoy the rewards of modern life. From Your Erroneous Zones through Pulling Your Own Strings to The Sky's the Limit, his titles are uplifting, his prose style direct, and his mood imperative. Dyer's books reflect his confidence in himself, and his message for success is simple and often repeated:

As an individual you know what you want from life; now you must develop the proper attitudes and discipline to realize it in the face of the conflicts and disappointments that accompany being human.[14]

Consider Your Erroneous Zones. Dyer emphasizes the power of individuals to create and sustain happiness for themselves, and his books tell how. First you must make the right choices about your emotions. That is, you must decide in advance to be happy and healthy and independent.[15]
The things that interfere with individual happiness he calls "erroneous zones." Erroneous zones are self-defeating patterns of behavior, emotions, or attitudes that force you to live in a moment other than "now." You may, for example, feel guilty about your past, badly about your present, and apprehensive about your future. These feelings restrict your choices for happiness. Nor can you be happy if you are hateful, angry, sullen, jealous, vindictive, or even shy. Overcome these, he admonishes, so that you can shape your life correctly.

Dyer's books help individuals discover and recognize "erroneous zones" in their personalities, and they offer strategies for eliminating them.[16] He concludes Your Erroneous Zones by characterizing an ideal individual—the person you could be. He likes everything about life. He never complains or feels badly about injustice; he accepts the world as it is. He loves himself in the present without regret for past actions or worry about the future. In short, he makes the right choices, and he is happy.[17]

Other books explain how to 'read' the characters of others to determine what to expect from them as potential adversaries. Examples of these are Body Language, by Julius Fast, and Egospeak: Why No One Listens to You, by Edmond Addeo and Robert Burger. The common theses of these books are that things individuals say and do, the subtle delivery
of an innocuous phrase or a seemingly insignificant movement reveal valuable information about them that a careful listener or observer can use to his advantage. Furthermore, since these skills are readily learned, the smart individual develops and uses them.

The cover of *Egospeak* states its promise: "Read this book and people will listen." The claim on the back cover of *Body Language* also sets a confident tone for the text.

Your body doesn't know how to lie. Unconsciously, it telegraphs your thoughts as you fold your arms, cross your legs, stand, walk, move your eyes and mouth. The new science of kinesics deals with these physical signals that we all send out. Read *Body Language* so that you can penetrate the personal secrets, both of intimates and total strangers.[18]

These books tell how to determine the predispositions of others by examining what they say and how they say it, as well as how they hold and carry themselves. The term body language, for example, refers to "any nonreflexive or reflexive movement of a part, or all of the body, used by a person to communicate an emotional message to the outside world."[19] Individuals' external characteristics send out signals about their inner selves. Others decode these signals to determine if an individual might, for example, be lonely and receptive to sexual advances, or secure and satisfied, and unreceptive to a stranger. Moreover, this awareness allows one to send, as well as receive, signals.
Deliberate eye contact, aggressive posture, and 'crowding' others in personal encounters could signal that you are in control, that you are not easily discouraged or defeated, or that you know how to get what you want. In short, "if understood and used adroitly, (body language) can serve to break through defenses."[20] Business executives, politicians, and others would probably find these abilities very valuable indeed.

If we acknowledge with these authors that we know what we want from life, then we can apply their methods to our situations to obtain it, or we can develop our own. Indeed these authors encourage individuals to choose and apply pieces of their advice wherever appropriate, to experiment with different approaches, to decide what works, and to use it. They share their view of reality for the price of a paperback, no strings attached. They show how our lives can be, but claim neither credit nor blame for what we do with the knowledge we gain.

For other authors, however, the importance of individual success does more than describe methods to realize rational goals. For them the importance of individual happiness serves as an ethic to inform human action by itself. For them, individual happiness answers the 'why?' of action as well as the 'how'.
These authors share a specific view of human nature. Implicitly or explicitly they all see man as naturally egocentric, with self-interest the actual motive for all of his actions. So they prescribe conduct that naturally proceeds from this view. This view of human nature creates problems when moral notions that conflict with self-interest must be considered. The authors argue that justice, for instance, is an illusory notion that is at worst false and fantastic, and at best counterproductive of individual achievement, leading to complicated and sometimes impossible choices. Consider Dr. Dyer's view of morality in general, and justice in particular:

If the world were so organized that everything had to be fair, no living creature could survive for a day. The birds would be forbidden to eat worms, and everyone's self-interest would have to be served . . . We are conditioned to look for justice in life and when it doesn't appear, we tend to feel anger, anxiety, or frustration. Actually, it would be equally productive to search for the fountain of youth, or some such myth. Justice does not exist. It never has, and it never will. The world is simply not put together that way. Robins eat worms. That's not fair to the worms. Spiders eat flies. That's not fair to the flies. Cougars kill coyotes. Coyotes kill badgers. Badgers kill mice. Mice kill bugs. Bugs . . . You have only to look at nature to realize there is no justice in the world. Tornados, floods, tidal waves, draughts are all unfair. It is a mythological concept, this justice business. The world and the people in it go on being unfair every day. You can choose to be happy or unhappy, but it has nothing to do with the lack of justice you see around you. This is not a sour view of humanity and the world, but rather an accurate report of what the world is like. . . . Justice is simply a concept that has almost no applicability, particularly as it pertains to your own choices about fulfillment and
happiness.[21]

Dyer implies that when self-interest succeeds as individual happiness, it justifies human action. Reality denies a place for the myths of morality and other conventions of man. At best morality comprises a view relative to individuals, depending, for example, on whether you are the dinner or the diner. At worst moral concepts demand choices based on considerations other than self-interest, considerations that simply do not apply.

Self-interest as the sole motivator and only necessary justification for human action is the theme for Looking Out for #1, by Robert J. Ringer. Ringer's title prescribes as well as describes a way of life and a means for living. According to Ringer, "all people act in their own self-interest all the time."[22] Everyone's primary objective in life is to be as happy as possible, he claims, and all other objectives are only means to that end. Since happiness is a matter of degree, any degree of happiness in any individual at any given moment depends on the rationality of his goals and his success in attaining them. To the degree individuals act rationally and succeed, they feel good. "Feelin' good" is the state of mind most conducive to individual happiness. Furthermore (and fortunately), the more rational one's objectives are, the easier they are to obtain.
Ringer's analysis disallows benevolent action for rational human beings. Action that is not self-interested is either a mistaken choice caused by irrational selfishness or an imprudent choice caused by lack of introspection. Any other possibility is nonsense. If by altruism someone claims to mean sacrificing for others, he admits that he is irrationally selfish--mistakenly doing what he thinks will make him feel good by "surrendering a higher value to a lower one."[23] That is, he mistakenly tries to substitute an arbitrary human convention, in this case moral concepts, for an immutable law of nature, the priority of self-interested action. In this case he acts for the wrong reason. The other explanation for benevolent acts criticizes the choice itself. Acts of self-sacrifice are fundamentally foolhardy, Ringer argues, because with them one offers a value with no guarantee that an equal value will return.[24] Since finite individuals have finite resources, and self-interest has a natural priority, unselfish acts could invite disaster over the long term. The interesting question for Ringer is not whether you choose to act selfishly or unselfishly, but whether you choose to be rationally or irrationally selfish. These choices determine whether you mostly enjoy life's pleasures or endure its pains.
Rationally selfish individuals base choices on reason and logic. Reason and logic dictate the point of view of individuals, although it varies among them. But if no one can decide what's right or wrong for another, how can individuals choose correct rational actions to achieve happiness? Correct long term choices are easily recognized; irrational choices result in failure to achieve objectives, and rational choices accompany success. Correct short term choices are more difficult, but Ringer offers two helpful guidelines. He suggests we preface every action with two questions:

1. Will the act include a potential for bettering our existence by bringing pleasure or eliminating pain?

2. Will the act forcibly interfere with the rights of others to their happiness?[25]

"I cannot explain this phenomenon any more than I can explain where space ends or time began, but I have perceived its workings, clearly and without fail, over many years."[26]

Rational selfishness constitutes the method of Looking Out for #1. 'Looking Out' means spending most of your time doing things that give you pleasure. It also requires that you regard your interests chiefly but not solely. Simple reasoning indicates that you must sometimes cultivate the interests of others to achieve your objectives, always
relating to them on a value-for-value basis.

Fellow human beings represent potential values to you in business or personal relationships, and the rational individual understands that to harvest those values he must be willing to fill certain needs of others. In this way the most rationally selfish individual is also the most "giving" person, since he best understands the soundness of value-for-value relationships.[27]

Moreover the self-interested activity, 'looking out', brings happiness to others besides yourself. This Ringer recognizes as "one of the beautiful realities of life."[28] At its best, rational selfishness benefits you and others. At worst it benefits you and interferes with no one else. Indeed every act of rational selfishness finally benefits everyone because a happy individual is "one more person on the face of the earth who does not represent a burden to the rest of the population."[29]

Despite Ringer's dismissal of moral concepts as man-made conventions, wholly subservient to egoistic laws of human nature, he addresses questions about the morality of Looking Out for #1. Is rational selfishness right? For Ringer the results of rational selfishness in the quest for happiness make it right. He answers the foregoing question by posing another: "Can you see any reason why you shouldn't try to make your life more pleasurable and less painful, so long as you don't forcibly interfere with the rights of others?"[30] The burden of proof now falls to you,
Ringer's position of rational selfishness resembles Dyer's exhortations to take control of your life, and Sheehy's and the others' encouragement to recognize and exploit opportunities for personal gain. Besides offering programs for individual success these authors attempt to inform and justify human action in the name of self-interest. This establishes the basis for right and wrong, rational or irrational, individual choices, for example. In short, each case serves its author as an ethic, and each denies that his position is morally problematic. At the same time, each position claims its independence of absolute standards by which to judge human action. The authors themselves insist on this distinction when they argue for the relativity of man-made moral conventions and the priority of natural laws about human nature. When these authors simultaneously claim the rightness of their position and the relativity of moral standards, they seem to be oblivious to the problems inherent in the choices they recommend. They encourage individuals to act immorally while implying that these acts are morally acceptable because they are self-interested. This view is not only mistaken, it is deceptive and dishonest.
2.3 The Social Implications Of Egoism:

Mindful of Arnold Toynbee's insight that "it would be a mistaken homage to originality to do again badly what one feels to have been done better already,"[31] despite the revelatory character of these authors' narratives, this view of human nature is not new. Questions about the motives and responsibilities of individuals in society have interested philosophers from the time of Plato and Aristotle. However the first fully developed, completely egoistic view of human nature we have was offered in the 17th century by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes' *Leviathan* defines the essential nature of man as egoistic and then explores the consequences of this nature for society.

Hobbes attaches a notion of social cooperation to a particular conceptual framework that includes extreme egoism as its basis. His psychology insists that human action is always prudent and self-protecting, and never benevolent. Rational individuals act only for their own good; self-interest always drives individual choice. Moreover, individuals are natural adversaries, even enemies of their fellow men, whom they distrust and fear. Men survive by rightfully controlling scarce resources as their own, defending themselves against invaders, and otherwise maintaining themselves and their property.

It may seem strange to some man that has not well weighed these things that nature should thus
dissociate and render men apt to invade and destroy one another; and he may therefore, not trusting to this inference made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself—when taking a journey he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied, when going to sleep he locks his doors, when even in his house he locks his chests, and this when he knows there be laws and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall be done him—what opinion has he of his fellow citizens when he locks his doors, and of his children and servants when he locks his chests? Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions as I do by my words?[32]

In the natural state of mankind, "every man has a right to everything, even to another's body."[33] Competition for survival resources quickly becomes conflict, the war of every man against every other.

And from this diffidence of one another there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as to anticipate—that is, by force or wiles to master the persons of all men he can, so long till he sees no other power great enough to endanger him; and this is no more than his own conservation requires, and is generally allowed.[34]

And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation, . . . endeavor to destroy or subdue one another.[35]

The war of every man against every other is 'generally allowed' as an empirical circumstance because it is 'no more than his conservation requires'. Moreover, in general there is no individual powerful enough to stop it. For Hobbes, individuals hope to endure by having the wisdom to use their abilities to acquire the resources they need to survive.
Contracts between persons cannot replace these fundamentals of human nature.

Besides accepting egoism as an accurate description of human nature, Hobbes views egoism as a first principle for society. Hobbes' idea of social cooperation is limited to the protection of members by a tension that says roughly, "survive and let survive, as much as resources permit." Civil society protects its constituents from invasions from without and violations from within as long as it maintains the power to do so; that is, as long as its members can be required to accept the restraints on aggression that make sense of its existence. Hobbes claims that all men possess an equality of ability to attain their ends. This might imply a social harmony among men because the threat of aggression from a strong individual could be deterred by cleverness in another, or by a defensive confederacy that a bellicose outsider would have to respect. For Hobbes, however, an equality of ability means only that men are equally vulnerable to attack. Even though enforced social agreements encourage individual restraint, social cooperation actually exacerbates individual vulnerability while it implies a false sense of security. Next, he claims that humans are equally convinced of the superiority of their own wisdom. "There is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of anything than that every man is contented with his share."[36] Although this might also be a
point for agreement among men, Hobbes sees it as a basis for inevitable conflict. Individual survival requires that individuals remain narrow in their world-view, rather than achieving a broad overview. Societies can do no better, and rarely, if ever, do as well. Finally Hobbes says that men have an equality of hope of attaining their ends, their "similitude of passions."[37] Individuals believe that their desires are both necessary to their lives and reasonable for them to achieve. Again, rather than a point of cooperation or for species promulgation, this characteristic leads only to ruthless competition for individual survival. Social cooperation becomes merely an elaborate arena for the competition of self-interested activity.[38] If Hobbes is correct that man always acts for his own good only, and that that good involves using scarce resources as the means to his survival, then rational individuals could take no comfort in the company of others. Even the closest personal relationships would include potential competitors for the resources. Harmony in society cannot exist because the best social arrangements would comprise only convenience viewed with suspicion. Life under these circumstances would indeed be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[39]

For Hobbes, civil society arises when individuals respond to the chaotic state of nature. Without a social contract, human beings know only competition for the resources they need to survive. With a social contract,
members agree to limit their aggressive actions toward each other as long as the society protects them. Participants naturally keep their contracts as long as it remains in their interest to do so; that is, as long as they get from the arrangement what they agreed to when they entered. The authority for civil society comes from the participants. When they accept a social contract, they allow a government to legislate on their behalf.

Legislation to protect participants against aggression also restraints their fundamental human nature. Individuals participate in society for the "foresight of their preservation," and "a more contented life."[40] But this requires that they relinquish rights that distinguish them as human beings, namely their self-interested nature. Thus Hobbes' society is an unnatural arrangement. Moreover, the government must maintain the power to guarantee that the social contract will remain in force. The state must be able to punish individuals who ignore the contract, whoever they are. This power is at the same time difficult to justify and indispensable to the success of the social contract.

Finally, Hobbes' society cannot replace the suspicion and fear of others that characterizes the state of nature. When individuals agree to forfeit their natural rights of self-interest, they only do so to the extent required for
them to be accepted. Men by nature keep their contracts, but when they are so minimally involved, the society can never be more than a collection of self-interested individuals. Furthermore, everyone knows that everyone else is only committed to the society as much as they are. Therefore, meaningful social cooperation that could lead to the happiness of individuals is never realized.
3.0 PLATO'S ATTACK ON EGOISM

3.1 The Idea Of The Polis:

Some philosophers have argued that arrangements of social cooperation among persons arise as natural human responses to the problems of self-preservation. These problems are based on the availability of resources and skills required for self-preservation, physical environment, historical conditions, and other circumstances.[41] Moreover, these philosophers maintain that humans are by nature political, moral beings, and in this they differ from other animals.[42] Besides acts of prudent or reckless behavior, individuals may act rightly or wrongly. These philosophers further suppose that benevolent action occurs.

In contrast, Hobbes' analysis characterizes human individuals as naturally autonomous, and human action as radically self-interested. Hence, Hobbes' commonwealth never transcends a fragile, unnatural alliance of individuals. Natural distrust and fear requires that individuals defer to the commonwealth's power for protection. But this deference also requires that they forfeit some claims to the resources necessary for their survival. This individuals do because they abhor the alternative, the inevitable war they would face if the commonwealth did not exist and they had to seize and defend resources by themselves. They participate in the
commonwealth to minimize threats to their preservation with the hope that social cooperation would eventually allow civilized interaction between individuals to flourish.

Plato and Aristotle were philosophers of the former sort. They viewed relationships between individuals and society as natural and essential to the development of each. The polis, the unified city-state, embodied the social and political structure that reflected the Greek ideal of individuals in social cooperation. The polis made citizenship possible and reasonable. It fixed the allegiance of individual Greeks to a specific society at a particular place. The polis comprised the life and being of citizens beyond considerations of individuality and survival. As Victor Ehrenberg observes in The Greek State:

The use of the same word for individual participation in the state (politeia) and for its general structure (polis) shows that the participation was not in the main a purely legal act between individuals and states; it reflected the vital adherence of the individual to the citizen body, as also to communities inside the state, and therewith was bound to them, bound to religion and soil.[43]

The polis was a society based on kinship that could encompass human existence. Religion, art, goods and services, political and moral discussion—all these needs and more could be satisfied in the polis. The Greeks admired individuals who could fend for themselves, but they also recognized the necessity of the polis.[44]
The Greeks envisioned a polis implemented through the rule of law (nomos). The laws allowed the polis to maintain the power of life and death, acceptance or rejection, over its members. As Ehrenberg observes:

Venerable in age, yet new every day, the nomos could be experienced by every citizen as a tangible reality; it preserved the sacred traditions of his ancestors and kept the past alive; as the will of the gods it ensured the future; it expressed, in fact, a sense of eternity that united the citizen with his ancestors and descendants.[45]

The view that the Greek polis represented encourages an examination of morality in society. Athens, the most important polis of all, had declined radically after the Peloponnesian War. Athenian society and government in Plato's lifetime were far from ideal. Were the Sophists correct when they argued for the priority of self-interest and attacked the idea of the polis? The dialogues of Plato answer these and other important questions about morality and society. In the Gorgias, Callicles argues for an explanation of human nature that demonstrates the lure of egoism as absolute political power. Callicles denies the possibility of a polis because he sees every society as secondary to the appetites of the tyrants who rule them. Society remains only a convenient arena for manipulation and self-aggrandizement. In the Republic, Socrates imagines an ideally just polis, characterizing life therein, and exploring its implications for citizens. I turn now to
these dialogues because they inform my criticism of the ethical egoism of their day and ours.

3.2 The Gorgias:

The Gorgias begins with Socrates seizing an opportunity to ask the famous teacher and rhetorician, Gorgias, a simple question: What exactly does he profess and teach (447c)?[46] Gorgias, who claims as a "feature of his display" (447c), to have an answer for any question, replies that he is an expert rhetorician and teacher of rhetoric (449a). This exchange sets the tone for the dialogue that follows. Socrates begins with questions as usual; Gorgias answers unhesitatingly and without reflection. Gorgias knows about the art of persuasion with words, and he also knows how to make artists of others. This knowledge has made him rich, famous, and successful, and his reputation makes his visit an occasion. Immediately, however, Socrates poses questions that demand more than the usual display from Gorgias.[47] Socrates insists that Gorgias reply specifically and succinctly, in short, in an unusual (although not unfamiliar) way. But Gorgias remains unruffled. "You will admit", he promises, "you have never heard a speaker more concise"(449c).[48] Gorgias intends to show Socrates that restricting his oration to concise answers will not guarantee the specific information that Socrates seeks. Socrates persists in the face of the
implication that Gorgias controls all the information of their dialogue, including that which Socrates will finally extract.

The dialogue between Socrates and Gorgias proceeds until Socrates catches Gorgias in an inconsistency. At 454b, Gorgias claims that rhetoric, "the power to convince by your words"(452e), creates "persuasion employed in the law courts and other gatherings . . . and concerned with right and wrong"(454b). That is, the master of rhetoric knows right from wrong, and this knowledge helps him persuade others to do right. But as Socrates points out, rhetoric can also create conviction that is "persuasive but not instructive about right and wrong"(455). Rhetoric can also issue in belief without knowledge. Furthermore, at 456e-457a, Gorgias observes that students of rhetoric, or any art, sometimes go wrong, and he disavows blaming teachers when this happens. An evil individual might use rhetoric to enhance himself politically, or to amass a personal fortune; he might compromise other citizens or the city-state for his own ends. Like other arts, rhetoric requires professional responsibility in its application, according to Gorgias.

One should make proper use of rhetoric as of athletic gifts, and if a man becomes a rhetorician and makes a wrongful use of this faculty and craft, you must not, in my opinion, detest and banish his teacher from the city. For he imparted it for a good use, but the pupil abuses it (457b).
Later Gorgias regains his self-confidence. At 460, he claims that if his students cannot tell right from wrong, he can teach them. Having knowledge of justice assures that students of rhetoric will persuade rightly and shun injustice (460c). But this conclusion ignores facts of political life and human history. Many individuals with the best instruction from the greatest teachers have proven themselves evil. Many have embraced injustice in the past; some have become tyrants. These claims are also at odds with Gorgias' earlier contention that teachers should not be held responsible for the wrongs of their students. If teachers possess knowledge of right and wrong and withhold that knowledge from students, they are directly responsible when a student, in ignorance, acts unjustly. This is especially true if the teacher has prepared the student for a political career. On the other hand if Gorgias cannot teach his students right from wrong, then he is an idle braggart and a liar because he cannot answer any question. At this point Gorgias retires from the discussion.

At 461b Polus enters the discussion in earnest. After some initial sparring between an indignant Polus, who believes his master has suffered unnecessary insult from Socrates, and an impatient Socrates, whose questions of Gorgias remain unanswered, the dialogue begins anew. Polus claims that he knows what Gorgias knows, and like Gorgias can answer any question. Socrates challenges Polus directly
and immediately: "Then do whichever of the two you choose now, question or answer" (462b). In reply to Polus' first question, Socrates states that rhetoric is not art but "routine," a way of doing something. That is, rhetoric is like cooking or any form of individual "flattery" that helps guarantee desired responses. This evaluation elaborates Socrates' repudiation of Gorgias. Rhetoricians massage the powerful with words, and enjoy the rewards that favor earns. These exchanges relate to truth and knowledge, however, only as much as honorable persuaders or coincidence provide.

Although Polus claims that rhetoric is "the noblest of arts" (448e), Socrates has shown that the practice of rhetoric can not guarantee the truth of its content or the character of its agents. In fact, Socrates claims, rhetoricians often pursue their own interests without regard for either truth or knowledge. Their successes in these endeavors depend on special "knacks" they have learned from experience.[49]

Socrates characterizes the routine of rhetoric, like cooking, as dependent upon tricks that gratify the tastes of patrons. Polus agrees. "(But) you do not think rhetoric a fine thing, if it can produce gratification among men?" (462c). Socrates answers that because these activities share a common source in flattery, they remain deceptive and finally dishonest means to self-interested ends. Rhetoric bears no relation to anything true or real. Rather it allows deception and contrived knowledge as means to
persuade. Still, Polus observes that orators do in fact exercise powers of life and death, wealth or poverty, and acceptance or banishment over the citizens of a city-state (466c-d). Furthermore we should envy orators because their power enables them to do whatever they want, to act in their own interest. Socrates replies that if rhetoric's primary goal is self-interest, then rhetoricians are hedonists and thus neither enviable nor pitiful (466b). Moreover, rhetoric cannot serve self-interest unless rhetoricians know exactly what that entails. Socrates' repudiation of Gorgias shows that rhetoricians cannot claim that knowledge with certainty.

Socrates argues that men will what they do for the good they seek; they act for the sake of good. For example, an individual may slaughter others or banish them or confiscate their property if those actions prove good for him or the city-state he represents. But if an individual kills or banishes another because he mistakes a harm for a good, then he acts upon what seems good to him. Individuals whose ignorance allows mistakes cannot possess great power. Polus replies that any exercise of power makes the perpetrator enviable to the powerless, regardless of knowledge.

Polus denies Socrates' distinction between power justly and unjustly applied. For Polus any power brings more good to the possessor than its absence. Socrates counters with
his remarkable assertion that individuals who act unjustly are pitiful and never enviable because "to do wrong is the greatest of evils" (469b), far greater than suffering wrongdoing. Polus questions Socrates' sincerity, and the dialogue seems deadlocked. Polus yearns for the absolute power of the tyrant, while Socrates denies that he would accept that role under any circumstances. Polus argues for an egoistic view of human nature, a view that Socrates cannot accept.

Polus offers a specific example to prove that men often act unjustly and remain happy, that is, they avoid punishment. He recounts the tale of Archelaus, the ruler of Macedonia. This wicked man, son of a slave, murdered his master and another rightful heir, and seized the throne for himself.

And so now after committing greater crimes than any in Macedonia, (and realizing the power of the throne), he is the most wretched, not the happiest of all Macedonians, and I suppose there are other Athenians besides yourself who would prefer to be any Macedonian rather than Archelaus (471c).

Polus notices that Archelaus' star has risen spectacularly, regardless of the actions he took to ascend. Naturally then, he is happier—rulers are always happier than slaves. No other conclusion makes sense. Can Socrates seriously contend that Archelaus the tyrant was unhappy compared to his former condition as Alcetas' slave? Can Socrates pretend that anyone besides himself believes this prattle?
Polus thinks not. Rather he implies that Socrates is playing devil's advocate.

Socrates replies that rhetoric is, in fact, "worthless toward discovering the truth" (472a). He contends, and Polus agrees, that doing wrong is more shameful than suffering it. Furthermore, shameful behavior brings evil to the soul. Therefore, doing wrong is worse than suffering wrongdoing, because it damages the wrongdoer's soul.

Socrates ends his discussion with Polus by implying that rhetoric is of little use except to those who do wrong. At 481b Callicles picks up the dialogue with Socrates. Callicles has listened to Socrates repudiate Gorgias and Polus, but he remains incredulous. "Tell me Chaerephon, is Socrates earnest or joking?" (481b). With this question Callicles re-establishes the sophists' skepticism about universal standards of knowledge and moral value. "If Socrates is correct," Callicles remarks sardonically, "then rational persons everywhere have chosen to act opposite the way they should"(481c). This Callicles finds preposterous. The dialogue between Polus and Socrates leaves unanswered questions about whether or not overwhelming evidence precludes the possibility that rational human beings can act other than egoistically. Callicles will speak to this point directly.
Throughout Polus' discussion with Socrates, he offers examples to show his envy of individuals who install themselves as tyrants. Callicles accepts and reinforces Polus' admiration for tyrants when he argues for the naturally human aspect of the tyrant's methods. Furthermore, Callicles dismisses questions of right or wrong pertaining to the tyrant's actions—tyrants always act rationally to maximize self-interest and consolidate power. Acting otherwise would be irrational, unnatural, inhuman. Unlike Polus and Gorgias, Callicles is fully aware of the implications of his position. Callicles readily accepts responsibility for his understanding of the world and human nature. He is not a practicing Sophist, but he is an excellent rhetorician, "a typical product of their education."[50] Callicles' zeal and conviction demonstrate the appeal, the power, and the danger of rhetoric. He employs popular prejudices taught by skeptical Sophists, fraudulent means of justification, and false notions about human nature to reinforce his contention that rational human activity naturally includes striving for absolute political power to realize self-interested ends. Callicles' speeches epitomize ethical egoism.

At 482c Callicles challenges Socrates' contention that to do wrong and avoid punishment constitutes the worst of evils. Callicles draws a distinction between nature and convention; nature reflecting the world and human nature in
fact, and convention reflecting the way the masses would prefer them. According to Callicles, Socrates ignores this essential distinction as he chooses, and this tactic helps him trick Gorgias and Polus into admitting contradictions. That is, while Socrates "claims to pursue the truth, (he) actually drags (his interlocutors) into these tiresome popular fallacies, looking for what is fine and noble, not by nature, but by convention"(482e).[51] Furthermore, since nature and convention are fundamentally antagonistic, ignoring this distinction results in confusion when someone tries to speak for one or the other. This confusion comprises Socrates' delight. If one does not distinguish between the priority of individual good over collective good, for example, any argument preferring individual good will include collective good, and vice versa. If no distinction exists between concepts, then one can never have priority. Callicles argues that because nature and convention are mutually exclusive concepts, proceeding without clearly distinguishing between them is impossible.

To some extent Callicles has accurately criticized Socrates' position. Socrates does not take time in his discussions with Gorgias and Polus to define his terms. This is not surprising, however, because the Sophists make the claims to knowledge that Socrates questions. Still, Socrates' questions could be more penetrating if he required Gorgias and Polus to define their terms. Plato uses
Callicles to keep Socrates honest. Callicles brings an objectivity to the discussions with Socrates that forces Socrates from his usual method of investigation. In short, Callicles forces Socrates to state his beliefs; that is, to define his terms. Meanwhile, Callicles maintains a view opposite Socrates' with great enthusiasm and self-assurance. He remains a committed egoist.

Socrates himself seems to regard Callicles highly. In reply to Callicles' accusation that Socrates has wasted his individual potential on philosophy, Socrates expresses his delight.

If my soul were wrought of gold, Callicles, do you not think I should be delighted to find one of those stones wherewith they test gold—the best of them—which I could apply to it, and if it established that my soul had been well nurtured, I should be assured that I was in good condition and in no need of further test? (486c).

In meeting Callicles, Socrates considers that he has found such a "godsend" (486e).

Callicles dismisses human conventions as the opinions of the weak majority. The majority intends to restrain natural leaders, the strongest among them, from emerging to claim their advantage. But according to Callicles, "nature herself makes it plain that it is right for the better to have the advantage over the worse, the more able over the less" (483c). Thus man is like other animals. Furthermore, societies of human beings resemble groups of animals. A
strong individual dominates those weaker than himself, subjects them to his will, and enjoys his advantages over them. The differences between societies of human beings and animals arise with human conventions that discourage strong individuals from realizing their potential. These conventions cannot alter the natural condition of society.

Socrates asks Callicles to confirm his definition of justice, "that the more powerful carries off by force the property of the weaker, the better rules over the worse, and the nobler takes more than the meaner" (488b). Callicles further states that superior physical strength naturally commands the respect of weakness, because 'better' is always preferable to 'worse.' [52] Socrates points out that if the many are more powerful than an individual, if they can restrain his will to dominate them to realize his advantage, then the majority also maintains a valid claim to rule. Strangely, Callicles agrees (488e). Next Socrates states that if the majority in its conventional wisdom believes that it is more shameful to do than to suffer wrong, then because they are in fact collectively physically superior to individuals, their beliefs and ordinances also enjoy a natural validity. So Callicles was wrong when he distinguished between nature and convention at 482e, because Socrates has shown that they are equivalent. Socrates challenges Callicles to show how a strong individual is qualitatively superior to the many, and can claim the right
to rule on that basis. Callicles responds with a thinly disguised ad hominem abusive argument that also begs the question of whether or not adults should study philosophy. Callicles again suggests that Socrates is too old for philosophy, which is what he asserted and did not prove at 484c.

Socrates begins again by asking Callicles to clarify his use of "better," if it does not mean stronger.[53] By "better," Callicles means nobler, wiser, more sensible individuals (490). Specifically Callicles refers to individuals "wise in the affairs of the State" (491b). These men have the courage and wisdom to rule, so they naturally deserve that right. Moreover, the best ruler will "suffer his appetites to grow to the greatest extent and not check them, and through courage and intelligence should be competent to minister to them at their greatest to satisfy every appetite with what it craves" (492).

This passage relates material wants to the power of rule. According to Callicles, all individuals deserve whatever rewards they can seize, and the best rulers reward themselves with whatever they want. Callicles implies that this is an essential motivation to rule. Consequently, the best rulers will live as they rule, by serving their appetites as they guard and enhance their power. This demonstrates their enthusiasm and fitness for rule. But
what happens if a ruler becomes obsessed with satisfying his appetites to the exclusion of every other aspect of his rule? Socrates does not ask and Callicles does not reply. Probably the next "natural leader" seizes the power that allows him to act in his interest.

Callicles' position is now clear. The best rulers have the most of everything they want because they have the power to seize it for themselves. The fact of this situation establishes the rightness of it. At 492e Socrates turns to examine the implications of Callicles' position. From here on, Socrates and Callicles make parallel speeches that cannot converge to agreement. These speeches contain none of the agreement that Socrates hoped would lead to truth. For Callicles the facts of society are that individuals naturally exhibit egoistic tendencies. Socrates counters that human happiness can never depend on an egoistic view of human nature.

At 495, Callicles agrees that there is no distinction between pleasure and good. Good things yield pleasures to their owners, and pleasure is good by definition. But this position contradicts Callicles earlier shock at Socrates' discussion of pederasty as an example of an evil pleasure. Socrates then reiterates Callicles' distinction of courage from knowledge, and pleasure from them both. These distinctions require that knowledge and courage exist apart
from the good, which Callicles will not admit. Fools and cowards can never be good men; wise and brave men always are. (Otherwise no distinction exists between wise men and fools, and brave men and cowards.) Callicles further contends that knowledge and courage must include goodness, and Socrates argues that the three must remain separate. At 499 the interlocutors agree that good and bad individuals exhibit respective qualities in equal degrees; that is, through an equal presence of good or evil in them. But Callicles still insists on degrees of pleasure and pain, increased pleasure better and increased pain worse. Furthermore, some pleasures will profit individuals and some will prove costly. The same holds for pain. Therefore, Callicles argues, individuals should pursue the most profitable pleasures and pains to enhance self-interest because individuals act for that good and not for pleasure only. With this Callicles effectively abandons the hedonism of his earlier statements.

At 500d Socrates discusses seeking good and seeking pleasure.

Since you and I have agreed that there is a good and there is a pleasant, and that the pleasant is different from the good, and that there is a method of studying and contriving to acquire each, one method for pursuing pleasure, another for pursuing good.

A method of studying to acquire good would help a ruler rule for good, to improve the souls of citizens, and not simply
for his pleasure (503d). This method would eliminate the need for rhetoricians to teach political leaders at all.

Socrates' questions at the end of the Gorgias remain unanswered, just as Callicles remains unconvinced by the challenge from Socrates' mythical tale to "let anyone despise you as a fool and do you outrage if he wishes, for you will suffer no harm thereby if you are really a good man and an honorable, and pursue virtue"(527c). More importantly, Socrates has not defeated egoism in the Gorgias.

3.3 The Republic:

In the Gorgias Socrates reveals the nihilism of the Sophists by exposing the inconsistent logic of their positions. Socrates also rejects but does not effectively repudiate the extreme egoism of Callicles. Socrates raises many questions in the dialogue that remain unanswered, and he makes assumptions about the relationships between individuals and society that he fails to prove. For example, he postulates that moderation in individuals equates with justice in cities. In the Republic Plato continues to expound Socrates' philosophy and to examine the relationship between ethical egoism and moral objectivism in society.
The Republic recounts a discussion between Socrates and others on the subject of justice. Through the conversations of Socrates and his interlocutors Plato tried to create an ideal city in speech and determine the nature of moral goodness in the individual. Socrates constructs a theoretical polis as a social and political structure which makes sense of the moral lives of its citizens. He attempts to explain how we can understand individuals and cities as simultaneously distinct and naturally interrelated, so that justice in the cities reflects the nature of their citizens.

Like the Gorgias, the Republic operates on several levels. It attempts to elaborate Plato's Theory of Forms. Socrates' argues for moral absolutes in which instances of morally right acts participate. Socrates de-emphasizes the disjunction between the ideal and actual as wrongheaded. From the outset Plato challenges the view that theory and practice are mutually exclusive or even separate. For Plato practice was only worthwhile as it was adequately grounded in theory. Throughout the Republic the theoretical and actual are essentially conjoined by Socrates to create an ideal social structure.

In Book I Socrates attempts to expose and repudiate the definitions of justice presented by the rhetorician Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus denies the possibility of justice as a moral absolute in favor of a definition based
on experience and convention. His position denies any legitimate position for theory. Socrates argues for the notion that justice must be a transcendant good, but when his exercise falls short of convincing his interlocutors, they require him to construct a theoretical city in which justice is as indispensible to citizens as the structure itself is natural to them.

Furthermore the Republic is an exercise in education for Plato's brothers, Glaucou and Adeimantus. The situation of the discussion is reminiscent of that in the Gorgias and other Platonic dialogues. Here Socrates seeks a definition of justice in discussion with young aristocrats who are future leaders. Similarly he has dialectically pursued a definition of courage with generals in the Laches, and a definition of moderation with future tyrants in the Charmides. But the Republic is also different from the other dialogues. The former end without finally resolving the definition in question. Only the first Book of the Republic displays this character. The change in tone in the subsequent Books and the transformation of Socrates from a questioner to a teacher about the nature of justice indicate the importance of an adequate definition in this case.

The method in the Republic is also purposefully constructed. The decision to seek justice within the city first and to maintain the ethical distinctions between
cities and men keeps before our eyes the question of whether that which makes for healthy cities is essentially the same as that which affords a healthy soul for individuals. The answers to these questions will help us decide whether an individual can realize the advantages of self-interest by living in a city. They will form the basis for the education of Glaucon and Adeimantus.

The Republic begins with Socrates and Glaucon returning from the Piraeus where they had gone (probably) to help celebrate a new goddess in the Athenian cult.[55] Polemarchus and Adeimantus meet Socrates and Glaucon and persuade them to remain in the Piraeus with the promise of continued festivities to honor the new goddess. The travelers agree, and all repair to the house of Polemarchus' father, Cephalus. At Cephalus' house they encounter a group of men, including Thrasymachus the Chalcedonian, a Sophist and teacher of rhetoric. Discussion immediately ensues, and after greeting Cephalus, the well-respected old man, Socrates asks him this question: "What do you suppose is the greatest good you have enjoyed from possessing great wealth?"(I, 330d). Cephalus replies that his wealth has allowed him to avoid deception and always give his due in dealings with gods and men (I,331b).[56]. This behavior reflects Cephalus' view of himself as a just man, one who "speaks the truth and pays debts" (I,331b).
Cephalus defines justice as telling the truth and giving what is due to gods and men. This can be determined by the laws of the city governing ownership, which are sanctioned and protected by the gods. To act justly for Cephalus is to act from self-interest, specifically to protect one's property. To act justly is to appease creditors, human and divine. Cephalus' definition of justice is a version of the definition offered later by Thrasymachus.

Cephalus' definition is vulnerable on two related accounts. First, everyone would agree, according to Socrates, that it is just to pay one's debts. But we could imagine a situation where in order to serve his own interests, one would avoid paying debts. In the case of the madman and his weapons (I, 331c), Cephalus' definition could require an action that did not serve the interest of either party; the result of abiding by the law would probably be a great injustice.

Moreover Cephalus' definition only gives an account of what appears to be justice, which may or may not be realized in the actions of individuals. Imagine, for example, a rich man with money to pay his debts who does so only grudgingly. Under Cephalus' definition he would be considered a just man because of his payment. Conversely a poor man who wanted to pay his debts but could not would be considered unjust.
Cephalus takes no account of the inclinations of an individual in his actions toward others. His claims to decency are founded on facts which bear only incidentally on the moral issues involved.

At this point Polemarchus comes to the aid of his father. He begins by arguing that "it is just to give to each what is owed" (I, 331e). By this he means that we should do good for friends and harm to enemies. This is a political definition which still implies extreme self-interest. For Polemarchus justice is a means to the preservation of one's life and property, and his city as well.

Socrates shows that if the world of human activity can be divided into crafts or professions, then justice as defined by Polemarchus is useless in doing good or harm. A craftsman may do good or harm, but this is nothing beyond the exercise of his craft. Polemarchus finally agrees that the just man would do good for friends and not harm anyone.

Thrasymachus then can refrain from participation in the discussion no longer. His strategy from the outset is to dismiss Socrates' position in his exchanges with both Cephalus and Polemarchus as nonsense. He argues that justice will not be defined unless someone takes the initiative to define it. This is not likely in dialogue, with its constant searching, questioning, and refutation.
"Why do you act like fools making way for one another?", he asks (336c). Nothing can be decided about justice if someone does not define the term and defend his definition against detractors.

Thrasymachus offers rhetoric, the opposite of the dialectical method, to establish the superiority of one definition of justice over others. Thus he challenges Socrates to "answer yourself and say what you assert justice to be" (I, 336d). Thrasymachus has invited Socrates to debate justice as an exercise in rhetoric. Thrasymachus hopes to prove himself the superior rhetorician by defending his definition of egoism.

Thrasymachus defines justice as the advantage of the stronger, specifically, "Justice is the same in all cities, the advantage of the established government" (I, 339a). The ruling class will determine the way of life in the city. Laws, therefore, will vary with the dispositions of those who rule. Rulers decide what serves their own interests, and they legislate to advance those interests. That is, as rulers they offer their egoism as a first principle for their societies.

For Thrasymachus the notion of justice as an ideal is a dead-end street. Justice is nothing other than what is advantageous to the stronger. Even if a transcendental justice did exist it would have to be affected through the
laws of a city, and the laws advance the rulers' interests. Moreover, the city is merely a collection of factions in competition for power. Shifts of power inevitably result in new laws and an accompanying re-definition of justice. Simply stated, Thrasymachus' position is that the will of the lawmakers defines justice, and different sets of laws from different rulers will reflect different definitions of justice. Obedience to the law is not necessary to the advantage of non-citizens or even to the citizens themselves, but it always reflects the interests of the rulers. Thracymachus also asserts that injustice is more profitable than justice. This supports Socrates' contention that justice exists as an ideal, and it undermines Thrasymachus' position that justice is simply what is advantageous to the powerful.

Socrates argues, on the other hand, that justice must exist prior to laws to provide a sufficient condition for good laws. Socrates does not deny that in ordinary circumstances it is the stronger that establish laws with their rule. He also agrees with Thrasymachus that the nature of rulers is the essential feature of politics. His questions, however, are concerned with the nature of justice itself and its relationship to politics in general, and to rulers and their laws in particular. Are laws established by those in power right by that fact? Must all rulers be motivated by self-interest in the way that Thrasymachus
claims they are? Is there a possibility of a ruling class or party that is both capable because it is strong and just because it is public-spirited? Is justice merely a function of the laws of a party in power, or a pre-existing standard for morally correct action among human beings?

At 338c Socrates turns to refute Thrasymachus' position. He begins by examining the ruler's situation. He places Thrasymachus on the defensive, showing that by his own admission, rulers sometimes make mistakes about their advantage. But justice cannot be understood in terms of lawfully serving rulers unless they know their advantage. Furthermore if those who are ruled are required to act in ways disadvantageous to rulers, the law allows injustice, that is, "the weaker are commanded to do what is doubtless disadvantageous for the stronger" (I, 339e).

At this point Cleitophon interrupts the conversation to come to Thrasymachus' aid. He suggests that perhaps Thrasymachus meant that the advantage of the stronger is what the stronger believes to be advantageous, whether or not this is in fact the case. His position is that justice is what the city says is just, and the city may be mistaken. The city's apparent advantage could be other than its real advantage. Thrasymachus declines Cleitophon's explanation as a restatement of his position. Thrasymachus is a teacher of rhetoric and shaper of individual political fortunes.
This position presumes that he has knowledge to transmit; that is, some craft to teach in return for his fee. And if he teaches anything to potential rulers about how to realize their advantage, he must also be able to instill in them the confidence to determine what that is. Cleitophon's interpretation implies that the ruler is defined by his position and not by any skill which allows him to determine his self-interest. This would undermine Thrasymachus' credibility as a teacher.

In declining Cleitophon's argument as a clarification of his own, Thrasymachus seems to abandon his common sense view of justice. Surely actual rulers often make mistakes about their advantage, and by embracing Cleitophon's position, Thrasymachus could still argue for his definition based on the human frailty that often gives advantage to the superior rhetorician. But Thrasymachus sees the matter differently. If that which is just is equivalent to that which is legal, and if there can be no appeal from the laws of a city, then the laws must be infallible. Moreover laws must always reflect someone's advantage. The rulers know their advantage, and they make laws to reflect that knowledge.

The debate then focuses on Thrasymachus' egoism. It is Thrasymachus' position that ruling is an art which is conducive to the ruler's good. But Socrates argues, and
Thrasymachus finally agrees, that arts consist in serving others. Socrates concludes, "there isn't ever anyone who holds any position of rule, insofar as he is a ruler, who considers or commands his own advantage rather than that of what is ruled and of which he himself is the craftsman" (I, 342e). So if ruling is an art Socrates has refuted Thrasymachus' definition because rulers serve the ruled as well as themselves. Socrates argues that men cannot at the same time rule in Thrasymachus' precise sense while they primarily seek their own advantage.[57]

Thrasymachus' definition of justice is absolute for those in power and arbitrary for those not in power. But he alludes to Socrates' notion of justice as transcendental when he uses the idea to explain the actions of those in power. He offers the fact that men submit to stronger rulers to ground his claim that they ought to do so as a moral requirement. At the same time, however, he has disallowed the existence of justice as an independent moral ideal. To apply his definition he must make assumptions that he has denied were possible; namely, that theoretical moral considerations exist at all. This he assumes when he argues that injustice is more profitable than justice.

It is clear at this point that Socrates has accepted Thrasymachus' challenge and has defeated him at the rhetorical exercise. Thrasymachus' reasoning is inadequate
and his definitions indefensible. The principles upon which he has based his definitions, however, have remained intact. Socrates has failed to show that justice is in fact more profitable in every way than injustice. The deficiency in Socrates' argument in Book I is that he attempts to prove that justice is good without first saying what it is. Several definitions are considered and rejected, but Socrates does not offer one of his own. He only says that justice exists as an ideal. Justice is the art which assigns to every citizen that which is good for his soul and determines the common good of the city. Thrasymachus, retains his assertion that these are distinct goods which cannot exist in harmony, or even side by side. Socrates has failed to defeat egoism by the end of Book I. Rather, he argues in the remainder of the Republic for a version of Thrasymachus' egoism. He will argue that morality and self-interest in fact coincide in the good city.

In Book II Glaucon and Adeimantus challenge Socrates to prove that injustice and its effects are always bad and justice and its effects are always good. Socrates' role changes in Book II from that of "questioner about justice" to "teacher about the just." Glaucon and Adeimantus' part in this new endeavor is to elaborate Thrasymachus' position about the nature of justice so that Socrates can summon his best defenses against it. Plato casts Glaucon and Adeimantus as moral men. They believe in the ideal of
justice, so they are authorized to attack it vigorously. They attack justice to provoke Socrates to its praise.

Glaucón elaborates Thrasymachus' position with three claims. First, Glaucón argues that to do wrong is naturally good and to suffer wrong is naturally bad. Suffering injury, however, far exceeds in badness the good gained from inflicting it. Therefore those who have experienced both, and are unable to avoid being injured while inflicting injury, will agree to social arrangements with laws that minimize the opportunities for both. These laws define justice in the society (II, 359a). Thus justice exists as a mean between extremes of human action, the best being to do wrong without paying the penalty, and the worst being to suffer wrongdoing without the power of revenge. On the other hand, an individual who has the power to do wrong and avoid injury would be mad to agree to such a contract. His agreement would require him to sacrifice the power to act as he wants for the protection he already enjoys (II, 359b).

Glaucón's second claim is that individuals practice justice against their will, specifically because they lack the power to do wrong without penalty. Rather human beings should practice injustice, because of "the desire for undue gain, which every organism by nature pursues as a good" (II, 359c). Hence justice may be necessary for human beings but it is not always good for them. Social arrangements arise
from human circumstance and not human nature. This point is powerfully illustrated in the Gyges myth (II, 359c). Any two individuals, just or unjust, would proceed from the shepherd's situation exactly as he did. Under those circumstances, no one could resist becoming "like a god among men" (II, 360c).

Thirdly, Glaucon claims that the life of an unjust man would, in fact, be better than that of a just man. Glaucon insists that if we imagine the most just and the most unjust of human beings "face to face"(II, 360e), it is clear that the most unjust individual will have the happier life. Thus injustice is more profitable than justice.

With his praise of injustice Adeimantus demands further that Socrates praise justice per se without including notions of punishment or reward. Justice per se should not be accounted for in terms of what gods or men think is just.[58] Moreover, Adeimantus reiterates Glaucon's contention that the universal praise of justice will itself supply the incentive to praise injustice if the latter can be mistaken for the former. This, he concludes, leaves only two kinds of men who are just by choice, those who instinctively feel revulsion at their own unjust actions, and those who abstain from unjust acts because they know better (II, 366c-e).
Socrates offers an alternative view of the origins of cities. Socrates agrees with Glaucon and Adeimantus that human beings naturally seek after their own good. He also agrees with Adeimantus that humans are incapable of meeting all their own material needs, specifically because they are naturally more suited to some tasks than to others. Hence they naturally establish cities for mutual benefit. Thrasymachus has argued that the good for individuals differs from the good for cities, so justice must be one or the other. Socrates argues that these goods are identical so that he can examine justice in cities as an easily observable example of justice in individuals. Glaucon and Adeimantus agree with this strategy (II, 369a). Socrates further insists that human beings are naturally disposed to do good and not harm to others. So besides protecting the weak and supplying material needs, cities also provide an environment where the natural human disposition to do good to others is fulfilled. This view of cities eliminates egoism as a first principle for society.

The development of the ideal city occurs in three stages:

1. the rudimentary city-Adeimantus' description;
2. the feverish (luxurious) city-Glaucon's description;
3. the good city-Socrates' description;

The rudimentary city originates in human needs. It is based on the inability of individuals to meet all their own
material needs. The rudimentary city allows individuals to acquire the necessities of life. Self-interest leads individuals to cooperate socially. Everyone in the city earns a living performing his craft and the differences between individuals assure that many different crafts will be represented. Furthermore, almost all the work is done for others. Each produces according to his capacities and receives according to his needs. Through exchanges of goods and services the city realizes the advantage of everyone. The rudimentary city is a place of happiness because every member’s basic needs are satisfied. Moreover the good of self-interest is identified with the common good of the city. The rudimentary city is naturally just.

Glauccon argues that the rudimentary city is unrealistically simple. It cannot supply the luxuries of life. Glauccon’s city, the feverish city, is characterized by unlimited striving. Individuals exercise whatever craft or combination of pursuits that proves most lucrative. Strictly corresponding rewards for goods and services no longer exist. This leads to inequality and conflicts, and a need for government to define justice and maintain order. The feverish city therefore requires education of leaders to determine what is just, because justice is no longer naturally effected.
Socrates expands the discussion of the city along his own lines. The luxurious, or feverish city, is characterized by inequality and scarcity. Its perpetuation requires an army and strong government. As the rudimentary city was moderate and harmonious, the feverish city reflects a constant state of imbalance. Glaucon's city cannot claim that it harms no one; its justification lies in the quality of life that it provides for its citizens. For protection its army must be like trained dogs, merciless to enemies, disinterested and even harsh to strangers, and gentle to citizens. To these ends the army is thoroughly educated in virtue.

Because the character of the ruling class will determine the way of life in the city, Socrates proceeds with a discussion of the education of the guardians. Proper education is necessary to cultivate "spiritedness" in the guardians. Spiritedness is seen as a characteristic indifference to life which overcomes the desire for goods, for the sake of higher virtues. The guardians' education must transform their courage into civil courage, without the motivation of realizing the usual spoils of victory in the process. The guardians must be educated in moderation.

The guardians are more than an additional class of craftsmen. Others serve primarily to satisfy desires. Spiritedness, however, requires indifference to desire. The
guardians' services cannot be compensated by the usual means. Hence, spiritedness must exist beyond the economic system of the city. Indeed the city can survive if and only if there are those who will enthusiastically sacrifice and die for it.

The end of the education of the guardians is a love of noble things, especially moderation and civil courage. Since justice comes from moderation and courage in proper combination, it becomes especially important for them. But a good city is not part of a community of cities. Therefore if a parallel between the individual and the city is to be maintained we must understand the virtues of individuals in terms other than justice. Hence the discussion of the eros of the beautiful takes the place of justice in explaining the essential differences between the city and the robber band.

The difference between justice and the eros which is the end of the guardian's education is illustrated in Socrates' discussion of rulers. Besides protecting citizens, rulers must have a calculated love for the city because justice as a common good is not chosen for its own sake. The guardians' education instills a love of beautiful things, the most important of which are intangible qualities. Thus they love simplicity, harmony, courage, moderation, and reason. Furthermore they love these
qualities for themselves, beyond simply cultivating admirable traits in their behavior. Members of the guardian class who best love the intangibles are the best candidates for philosopher-kings.

Foremost among these intangibles are the Forms. Love of the Forms finally distinguishes the philosopher-kings from others in the guardian class.[59] Because of this highest love, the philosopher-kings not only do not distinguish between their interests and those of the city, in fact they cannot make this distinction. Because of their preoccupation with the Forms, it is impossible for the philosopher-kings to act other than altruistically.

By 427c the establishment of Socrates' polis is complete. In this city rulers rule for the advantage of the ruled. This is the opposite of Thrasymachus' description from Book I, but consistent with both Socrates and Thrasymachus' understanding of art in the strict sense. Moreover, Socrates has elaborated a city where philosophy can be a public activity because it does not contradict the authority of the regime. The guardians will be moderate in the name of the city-state. This is analogous to Socrates' demand that self-interested desires be moderated by individuals in the name of education in philosophy. If this is impossible then Socrates' polis is impossible, because then philosophy must remain a private activity, and rule
must be administered by the prejudices of self-interest; that is, informed by egoism. Socrates assumes without proof that individuals with the potential to become philosopher-kings as he has described them do in fact exist. If this assumption is mistaken, there will be no philosopher-kings, no ideal city, and no justice.

Before looking for justice within the completed city, however, Socrates changes the terms of the discussion. By 427c the question has shifted from "What is justice, and is it good for men?" to "What good thing is justice?" Socrates set out to prove that justice was choiceworthy for its own sake and not merely on account of its consequences. Now he declares that the question is whether in order to be happy one must possess justice. But we still do not know if justice is advantageous to society. Socrates states at 427e that if the city they have theorized is good, then it must possess all of the virtues included in the discussion thus far: wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. But even in the good city justice is difficult to find. It soon proves, however, to be the principle which has guided the founding of the city from the outset. Justice consists in everyone performing the tasks for which they are naturally suited, and in minding their own business (IV, 433a). Thus justice was operative in the rudimentary city but lost in the feverish city. Furthermore justice is "the power by which all these others came into being" (IV, 433b). Justice exists
as a Form, and characterizes good cities and moderate men, but Socrates does not establish any connection that makes the former a necessary or sufficient condition for the latter, or that shows the latter exists as an instance of a larger reality that includes the former.

From the problems with the relationship of justice in the polis to justice in the Form it follows that rulers do not have sufficient reason to make the sacrifices to become philosophers, and philosophers lack sufficient motivation to rule. One task of education in general and education to philosophy in particular is to make explicit the natural insufficiency of individuals apart from the polis. Education explains moral responsibility within the polis. In this sense philosophers are best educated, and they are the best candidates for rule. Socrates observes that,

Unless the philosophers' rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place, while the many natures now making their way to either apart from the other are by necessity excluded, there is no rest from ills for the cities (V, 473d).

As noted above, Socrates assumes without proof that a philosopher-king is a possibility for a ruler. But even if his assumption is correct, problems remain. The Myth of the Cave liberates selected individuals from the need to exploit cities to satisfy their appetites and desires. Those who have seen the light of knowledge outside the cave and return
know that the others are slaves and they are free. These men want nothing from the city, and that solves the problem of where to find disinterested rulers.

But it also becomes clear that philosophers do not want to be rulers and that they must be compelled. Compulsion is necessary since rhetoric cannot deceive philosophers. Now the tables are turned. Previously it appeared that the philosophers are anxious to rule and must persuade a recalcitrant populace. In the investigation of the philosophic nature it has by accident, as it were, emerged that philosophers want nothing from the city and that their contemplative activity is perfectly engrossing, leaving neither time nor interest for ruling. So, if the philosophers are to rule, it must be the city that forces them to do so; and it is in the philosopher's interest to keep the knowledge of their kingly skills from the people. It is a perfect circle. The people must be persuaded to accept the philosophers; but the philosophers must be compelled to persuade the people to compel them to rule. And who would do that?[60]

In the final analysis, Thrasymachus and Glaucos' original question about rulers remains unanswered, and Socrates' problem remains unsolved. Citizens obey good rulers, and that is clearly to their advantage. But it remains unclear whether it is to the ruler's advantage to care for the citizenry, except in terms of the ruler's self-interest. As a founder of a polis, Socrates wants his city and its rulers to be just. That position does not prove, however, that it is good for them to be just. These problems prohibit the good city from becoming a reality, and prevent Socrates from repudiating Thrasymachus' position that in society might makes right for rulers and their
self-interest.

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates repudiates the egoism of Gorgias and Polus, and rejects the extreme egoism of Callicles. In the *Republic*, Socrates refutes Thrasymachus initially, then proceeds to construct a *polis* in speech against the elaboration of Thrasymachus' position by Glaucon and Adeimantus. Socrates' theoretical *polis* attempts to establish relationships between rulers and citizens that remain free of self-interest. The philosopher-king as Socrates describes him cannot act other than altruistically. Socrates offers the philosopher-king as proof that altruism is a possibility for human beings, and to repudiate the egoism of Callicles and Thrasymachus.

Plato considers the Sophists' objections seriously. Besides advocating egoism, the Sophists based their teachings in skepticism, a position opposite the world view that included immutable, knowable Forms. Socrates and Plato differed in their approaches from the Sophists because they began from the belief that absolute knowledge of moral standards was possible and necessary both for individuals and societies. Socrates and Plato imposed upon themselves to produce positive philosophical investigations of moral issues based on these beliefs. Thus Socrates imagines an ideal city-state wherein the best of moderate men rule justly, that is, for the benefit of everyone as indistinct
from themselves. The good city holds the potential for happiness, that is, for maximizing the improvement of souls all around. But Socrates' polis remains theoretical because the best candidates for rule may not exist, and according to Bloom, would also be the least likely to participate. But Plato's failure in the Republic does not eclipse the vitality of the larger venture of pitting absolute knowable standards against the ethical relativism that allows egoism to flourish. Indeed in the Crito, Socrates argues finally that men have no social or political relationships that transcend their responsibility to obey laws that reflect absolute moral values.[61] Remaining to face the sentence that the Athenian court decreed constitutes Socrates' final rejection of egoism.
4.0 EGOISM AND JOHN RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE

4.1 Rawls' Theory And Egoism:

John Rawls is a contemporary moral philosopher in the Platonic tradition. Although Rawls rejects egoism as a viable view of human nature and first principle of society, he does so with little discussion. He offers instead a theory of justice based on individual morality and a social contract.

John Rawls theory of justice is a deontological moral theory emphasizing right actions, actions showing respect and concern for persons. This respect and concern characterizes the two principles of justice chosen in what Rawls calls an "original position," and is consistent with common notions of social cooperation. The principles of justice provide a basic structure for society that fairly distributes what he calls "primary goods" among its members. Rawls' principles are justified because if everyone did not have the equality of First Principle primary goods, for example, then some would find themselves without those goods in society and society could be unjust. Rawls seeks a just society, one which takes individuals and their rights seriously.
Rawls argues that his two principles of justice would provide the fairest distribution of the benefits of social cooperation. These benefits Rawls calls primary goods. Primary goods are those goods that persons would want and need to realize their individual life plans, whatever else they might want. Primary goods are objective measures of the well-being of individuals. They impart substance to the principles by defining the advantages to which the principles will refer. The principles chosen in the original position reflect each rational person's attempt to most fully realize by his choice that which he expects to gain by his involvement in society.

In his theory Rawls includes egoistic conceptions in a list of possible alternative principles for organizing the basic structure of society. From the outset Rawls assumes that the presence of others precludes individuals from realizing everything they want. Even without total indulgence, however, the goods and services of society do not distribute themselves. Egoism could serve to determine that distribution.

Rawls recognizes three types of egoism, first person dictatorship, free rider, and general.[62] In the first person dictatorship Rawls imagines an arrangement in which everyone serves the interests of one individual. The laws of this society would require that everyone join with the
dictator to further his interests, regardless of the consequences for themselves or the society. In the free rider conception of egoism, everyone in society acts according to organizing principles adopted by the society except for the free rider, who exempts himself as he chooses. If the laws of society interfere with the free rider's interests, he ignores them. He remains above the law and immune to its restraints. In general or "free-for-all" egoism, recalling Hobbes' state of nature, everyone advances his own interest as he is able.

Rawls asserts that rational individuals would never agree to social cooperation based on a first person dictator or a free rider other than themselves. That leaves the free-for-all, where everyone serves his own interests as much as circumstances allow. This situation would produce a society in extreme disarray, or more accurately, a non-society. General egoism coincides with Hobbes' state of nature and all of its non-social consequences for individuals. Rawls prefers society to the state of nature.

Now obviously no one can obtain everything he wants; the mere existence of other persons prevents this. The absolutely best for any man is that everyone else should join with him in furthering his conception of the good, whatever it turns out to be. Or failing this, that all others are required to act justly but that he is authorized to exempt himself as he pleases. Since other persons will never agree to such terms of association these forms should be rejected."[63]
Because Rawls considers egoism incompatible with the moral point of view, it can exist as a challenge to any conception of justice but not as an alternative. Egoism, in fact, characterizes the point of no agreement in Rawls theory, and like Hobbes' state of nature, the circumstance of no social cooperation.

Rawls does not offer explicit arguments against general or "free-for-all" egoism. Instead, he offers a complete theory of distributive justice as an elaborate alternative to egoism. There are, however, aspects of Rawls' analysis that argue against egoism. Section 4.2 will consider Rawls' theory of justice and his rejection of egoism.

4.2 Rawls' Theory Of Justice As A Denial Of Egoism:

Rawls offers an heuristic for choosing principles to govern the distribution of social benefits consistent with the moral point of view. This hypothetical device he calls the original position. It also includes a veil of ignorance and a choice following from mutually disinterested rationality. The original position in Rawls' theory of justice is analogous to the state of nature of traditional social contract theory, or at least to a pre-contractual situation. It is not, however, intended to explain an actual or realizable state of affairs. "Nothing resembling it (the original position) need ever take place, although we
can by deliberately following the constraints it expresses simulate the reflections of the parties."[64] The original position is offered as a purely hypothetical situation imagined to lead to a particular notion of justice in society, namely justice as fairness. This hypothetical aspect of the original position is one of its essential features.

The veil of ignorance guarantees that rational, moral men choosing principles will select principles of justice; specifically Rawls' principles of justice as fairness. Thus the members of society choose together, consistent with the demands of everyone considering everyone else. The veil insures an equality of ignorance about information extraneous to the moral point of view. The strength of the veil is that persons in the original position would have no basis for bargaining, and thus no means to tailor the principles to any individual's advantage while excluding the rest. The veil allows choosers information about the circumstances of justice and the general facts of society. But no one in the original position would be allowed information that was irrelevant from a moral standpoint. That is, no chooser would have specific information about exactly who he was to be in the society, what his social status might be, or which of the succeeding generations of the society he would belong to. Furthermore, he would not know the extent or nature of his natural abilities, the
particulars of his individual life-plan, or even be aware of his personal conception of the good. Likewise he would remain oblivious to information about his psychological makeup, his willingness to take certain risks, for example.

The veil of ignorance thus insures that the original position allows a choice between moral, rational, benevolent individuals, and that the principles agreed to in that situation would be fair. The veil assures respect and concern for individuals. Persons choosing principles would not know enough about themselves to choose specific principles or bargain effectively to their exclusive advantage. Nor would they provide an attractive prospect for anyone else. These individuals not only do not know what would benefit them specifically, they also have nothing anyone else wants. Rawls' system seeks the highest possible index of primary goods for everyone, and disregards comparative circumstances, except for the restrictions of the Difference Principle. Choices of principles in these circumstances should always yield principles of justice because each chooser should be convinced by the same general arguments. Furthermore the same principles should be chosen because the information and restrictions remain the same for all.
The other essential feature of the original position is the mutually disinterested rationality. Mutually disinterested rationality requires persons in the original position to be concerned with their individual interests. Rawls' mutually disinterested rationality allows choosers to know what the primary goods of society are and to realize that, to achieve their life-plans, they want these goods for themselves. Individuals are, then, capable of choosing just principles in the original position, even when restricted by the veil of ignorance. By employing a mutually disinterested rationality, Rawls avoids controversial assumptions about human motivation while guaranteeing that his two principles will be chosen in the original position. In the original position, with its essential features, the particular circumstance is imagined from which Rawls' principles of justice as fairness would proceed.

The concept of the original position, as I shall refer to it, is that of the most philosophically favored interpretation of this initial choice situation for the purposes of a theory of justice. [65]

The problem for individuals in the original position is not so much how to deal with moral 'givens'; it is rather how to formulate reasonable and generally acceptable principles that rational individuals might reasonably expect from a moral point of view.
Rawls attempts to define the original position as a status quo circumstance in which the agreements reached are fair.[66] The people involved represent themselves and their expectations and the resulting principles would not be affected by considerations irrelevant from the moral point of view. Rawls argues that the principles that he offers are the principles that moral men would choose given the situation of the original position as he describes it.

The original position in Rawls' system is set against the background of specific circumstances and the best available information concerning the general facts of society. The three "circumstances of justice", as Rawls calls them, are the factors that inspire individuals to seek a social contract. "Thus one can say that the circumstances of justice obtain whenever mutually disinterested persons put forward conflicting claims to the division of social advantages under conditions of moderate scarcity."[67] Persons in the original position are allowed to know that the circumstances of justice obtain, and they are also allowed general facts of society. This information is relevant for a choice of principles consistent with a moral point of view.

The first circumstance of justice recognizes the relative scarcity of goods in the world. We do not enjoy the happy circumstance of having whatever we want whenever
we want. This circumstance motivates individuals to move from a state of nature to realizing the benefits of cooperation by social contract. Further, the chances of realizing individual expectations in society improves over a state of nature, because mutual cooperation helps remove scarcities.

The second circumstance of justice recognizes that people entering into a social arrangement have approximately equal power and share generally similar needs and common interests. This circumstance further enhances the desirability of social cooperation, because a collaboration among persons with similar capacities for tyranny, for example, would discourage one individual or group of participants from dominating the others. Also the notion of common needs and interests makes the cooperative enterprise possible, since a general agreement about priorities leads to basic principles acceptable to all concerned. The individuals will still be concerned, however, with how they might realize an adequate share of primary goods, distributed as the benefits of the cooperation. Thus it is reasonable to presume that the individuals in the society would be rational. They would also have expectations which could be realized by more rather than fewer primary goods. From this it follows that conflicts of interest will arise as persons compete for the goods necessary to their individual life plans. In short, persons involved in the
contract would not be indifferent to the distribution of the benefits of cooperation. Interested individuals would help restrict unfair domination by a majority in society, much as the circumstance of similar capacities and common interests precludes the unjust domination by a minority.

The third circumstance of justice recognizes the fallibility of individuals as human beings. Rawls states:

'I assume that the parties take no interest in one another's interests. I also suppose that men suffer from various shortcomings of knowledge, thought, and judgment. Their knowledge is necessarily incomplete, their powers of reasoning, memory, and attention are always limited, and their judgment is likely to be distorted by anxiety, bias, and a preoccupation with their own affairs. Some of these defects spring from moral faults, from selfishness and negligence; but to a large degree, they are simply part of man's natural situation. As a consequence individuals not only have different plans of life, but there exists a diversity of philosophical and religious belief, and of political and social doctrine.[68]

Besides realizing the benefits for individuals in a social cooperation, this circumstance underscores the necessity of attaining a satisfactory system, to enhance and insure individual life plans and to prevent as much as possible any compromising of just expectations from human frailty.

In addition to the three circumstances of justice Rawls allows to persons choosing in the original position access to selected additional information concerning the general facts of society. These facts would include the most modern and comprehensive political and economic theories. The
latest data from the social sciences, specifically psychology and sociology, would also be available. Choosers would be aware of information about the habits, desires, and motivations of man *qua* man, as well as studies of collective social arrangements. Also, persons in the original position would be allowed the best available information about the amount, kind, availability, and potential for exhaustion of society's natural resources. This requirement assures that the choice of principles is rational and fair for succeeding generations of the society, not only for the one in which the choice is made. This becomes important for the veil of ignorance restriction about which generation an individual chooser will eventually belong to.

Rawls' principles are chosen to order the conflicting claims of individuals on the relatively scarce goods described by the circumstances of justice. This ordering shall be done fairly. Rawls offers an analysis of what he understands justice to be. His principles must be consistent with a notion of moral fairness, and also must reflect the reasonable expectations of rational moral individuals in the original position. To accomplish this Rawls insists that the principles chosen meet five constraints. Not surprisingly, these constraints rule out egoism as a choice of principles.
1. **The principles chosen should be general.** This condition assures that the principles will order society generally, without references to proper names or "rigged definite descriptions."[69] Actually this constraint should not be a problem for persons in the original position because of the veil of ignorance. Without the specific information about who he was to be, a chooser would not be able to prejudice the choice of principles to his advantage. The point here is that generality is a distinct condition that assures the principles would always hold for any succeeding generation of a well-ordered society. It also rules out egoism.

2. **The principles should be universally applied.** "They must hold for everyone by virtue of their being moral persons."[70] This condition assures that the principles will apply fairly to all. It also insures against selective compliance and rules out group tyrannies.

3. **The principles must be public.** This condition assures that the principles will be known, understood, and generally accepted by everyone involved. This stabilizes the social contract because the parties in the original position could evaluate different conceptions of justice that are in the common interest. It follows, according to Rawls, that the conception of justice as fairness would still be chosen, given the restrictions of the veil of
4. **The principles must order conflicting claims.** The principles thus determine legitimate claims for moral persons. This prevents "free-for-all" egoism, reminiscent of the Hobbesian state of nature.

5. **The principles must also be final.** The principles embody the de-ontological force of the system. They reflect moral standards that everyone recognizes. There is no prior teleological 'given' that the principles are the means to realize. The principles of justice, in short, are not subsumable to any higher authority or more important consideration. They specify all of the considerations relevant from the moral point of view, and resolutions of conflicting claims consistent with them are therefore decisive. "There are no higher standards to which arguments in support of claims can be addressed; reasoning successfully from these principles is conclusive."[71]

Although the original position is a purely hypothetical situation, for Rawls it yields principles that moral, rational individuals recognize as reasonable and just. That is, the original position expresses the just limits and fair aims of social cooperation. Rawls concludes that the original position requires the choice of principles of justice, specifically, his two principles of justice as fairness. The first principle states that all persons shall
enjoy the equality of basic rights, and the economic worth of those rights, as long as they do not compromise the similar basic rights of others. The second states that inequalities in the sharing of remaining special goods shall benefit everyone, especially the least advantaged. Rawls claims that these principles would maximize primary goods for individuals in a just society.

Rawls insists on a lexical ordering of his two principles. The primary goods guaranteed by the first principle maintain a priority over those covered by the second, or Difference principle. Rawls would not allow tradeoffs of first principle primary goods for a greater share of remaining primary goods. For example, Rawls would prohibit trading basic freedom for a high-paying job as a slave. Rawls' theory takes seriously the notion of individual worth, so he insures that fair principles proceed from the original position.

The principles of justice as fairness structure society from the moral point of view and provide an environment where persons compete fairly for primary goods. The principles allow individuals to make claims upon each other within a framework of rules. A just society, founded on principles of justice, helps its members realize rational life plans. Applying principles of justice, especially the Difference principle, Rawls assumes that society can assign
"an expectation of well being" to individuals in society. [72] This expectation defines individuals' life prospects and gives direction to individual striving. The expectation depends on the distribution of rights and duties through the basic structure. Rawls adapts Josiah Royce's definition of an individual as a "human life lived according to a rational plan." [73] Life plans are rational if they are consistent with principles of rational choice when applied to the relevant features of individual situations. Moreover, rational plans include any that an individual would choose in view of relevant facts and consequences. The principles chosen in the original position encourage and provide an individual's best choice of life plans. Since these criteria for rational life plans include everyone in society, Rawls' principles of justice assure treatment as equals where individual life plans are concerned. This assurance is an ultimate reflection of the moral point of view.

Rawls' original position includes formal constraints on the concept of right for a just society. As noted above, the formal constraints exclude notions of egoism as possibilities for choice in the original position. The first constraint, the generality condition, prohibits manipulation of the system by a particular egoist. Dictators and free riders cannot exempt themselves from principles that order society in a general way for two
reasons. First, unless the dictator or free rider was assured that he would continue with that status in the society, he could not rationally choose to include that possibility for others. Second, each case requires individual identification so the egoist can choose principles that allow him to assume a specific role in society. The generality constraint requires that the principles chosen order the society without recognition or preference for specific individuals, groups, or generations. The fourth constraint, that principles will fairly order conflicting claims, prevents the general "free-for-all" egoism that characterizes Hobbes' state of nature. In a just society everyone can and ought to advance claims to realize his life plan, even though conflicts will arise when they do. The ordering condition provides for fair adjudication of competing claims without determining which are more important than others. This prevents the moral breakdowns that could otherwise occur.

4.3 Rawls' Implicit Refutation Of Egoism:

There are three kinds of arguments for the moral point of view in Rawls' theory. The first is the elaborate and plausible theory of justice with which he is primarily concerned in his book. This has been explained in section 4.2 above. Suffice it to say that the attractiveness and moral force of Rawls' theory, in contrast with Hobbes'
analysis, would have to be viewed as a giant mistake by an ethical egoist. Two other, more subtle, arguments against ethical egoism also appear in Rawls' book. In section 9 of *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls discusses the relationship between moral theory and moral experience. In sections 63, 65, and 66, Rawls details the moral development of persons and argues for the consistency of that development as a result of his theory of "justice as fairness."

In section 9 Rawls briefly discusses the nature of moral theory. As we might expect, he assumes that

Each person beyond a certain age and possessed of the requisite intellectual capacity develops a sense of justice under normal social circumstances.[74]

Rawls argues that by the time most individuals face experiences in their lives that require moral choice, they have developed their moral sensibilities. They judge the actions of others, and they act themselves, in accordance with these notions.

But individuals cannot achieve a sense of justice by simply listing the moral judgments they are prepared to render.

Rather what is required is a formulation of a set of principles which, when conjoined to our beliefs and knowledge of the circumstances, would lead us to make these judgments with their supporting reasons were we to apply these principles conscientiously and intelligently.[75]
Common sense notions of morality cannot serve by themselves to inform a sense of justice, even for moral persons. In fact, "considered judgments," (as Rawls calls them), those moral judgments in which individual moral capacities are accurately displayed, will likely be excessively influenced by self-interest. Thus they would lead to inconsistent and conflicting views of what counts as morally correct action. To promote a sense of justice for a society of individuals with minimum interference from such restricted perspectives, Rawls argues the need for principles that go beyond individual moral sensibilities and common experience. Indeed the thoughtful moral life as Rawls characterizes it in Section 9, challenges our considered judgments with careful attention to a moral theory. For Rawls, moral theory and considered judgments go hand in hand, each reinforcing and validating the other. Rawls challenges us to understand our moral lives in these terms.

In sections 63, 65, and 66, Rawls details the moral development of persons in a just society. In section 63, Rawls argues that the central, private benefit for persons participating in a just society involves realizing their individual life-plans. The realization of each individual's life-plan determines his definition of the good. Furthermore if his life-plan is rational, then his conception of the good is likewise rational, and his fulfillment of rational goals will bring him happiness.
In section 65, Rawls discusses what he calls the "Aristotelian Principle." This principle states that,

Other things being equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities and that this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity. [76]

Rawls then uses this principle to define primary goods. Primary goods thus become those goods that permit human beings to develop and exercise their realized capacities according to the Aristotelian Principle.

In section 66, Rawls defines a good person as a person of moral worth,

one who has to a higher degree than average the broadly based features of moral character that it is rational for the persons in the original position to want in one another. [77]

Since the principles chosen in the original position are the same for all, according to Rawls, then choosers will participate in and enjoy the society most when they know that others in the society share the moral characteristics that they want to include in society, and which they themselves would express. In a society whose basic structure is determined by persons choosing just principles in the original position, the best circumstance occurs when everyone can realize rational life plans according to the Aristotelian Principle, and most importantly, when they can participate fully in a society peopled with other moral persons like themselves who share a social vision of mutual
cooperation and concern.
5.0 EGOISM AND SOCIAL COOPERATION

5.1 Reply To The Modern Egoists:

Egoism currently enjoys wide acceptance as an explanation of human nature. If self-interest informs human action, then information about how to realize self-interest becomes a valuable means to individual success. Thus we understand the popular "self-help" literature. Furthermore, ethical egoism yields a particular character for society when it serves as a first principle. This character is well illustrated by Glaucon and Adeimantus at the beginning of Book II in the Republic, and by Hobbes' thorough explication in the Leviathan. But ethical egoism must finally be rejected as philosophically unsound. Egoism cannot explain many actions that are common to rational individuals, so it has no value as an hypothesis about human nature. Nor can ethical egoism serve as an adequate first principle for society, because the society based on egoism is an unnatural collection of individuals who are preoccupied with self-interest. This view actually prohibits meaningful social cooperation from occurring.

Significantly, the modern egoists imply that their programs offer morally correct options to achieve individual happiness. Their programs are most effective at allowing individuals to get what they know they want. At the same time, however, these means to individual happiness must
remain free of moral evaluation. The weak version of ethical egoism allows for benevolent action for rational individuals; the strong version does not. When the modern egoists argue for the weak version of ethical egoism, they force the conclusion that many of the methods they advocate are patently immoral, because they depend on an individual point of view. By retaining moral concepts, the modern egoists license this immoral action, because it helps realize their self-interest. The strong version regards egoism as a non-moral position, but this position discounts much common human activity as irrational. Moral concepts help explain common human activity that is not self-interested.

When the modern egoists feel compelled to justify their positions on moral grounds, when they argue for a weak version of ethical egoism, they demonstrate a fundamental confusion reminiscent of the confusion Socrates uncovered in Gorgias and Polus. That is, they propound the weak version of ethical egoism but commit themselves to the consequences of the strong version. For example, they defend self-interested action as morally correct without first deciding whether morally correct action is possible for self-interested individuals. But if they accept the consequences of the strong version, then justifications of self-interested action that use moral terms are meaningless. On the other hand, if they propound the weak version, they
advocate immoral actions for the results they seek. We can only conjecture whether or not those who offer the weak version subscribe to the strong version that their positions imply. Those who do support the strong version, however, reveal their nihilism, and a cynicism about human nature reminiscent of Callicles'. In either case ethical egoism in general, and these modern egoists in particular, offer little to discussions of human nature and the moral point of view. Hobbes argues in the *Leviathan* that rational individuals naturally act for their own good only. Benevolent action is not a possibility for rational men. Apparently benevolent acts are instances of disguised self-seeking based on man's prudence in the face of social chaos. In general our modern authors share this forcefully expressed view of human nature.

To overcome an "inferiority complex," a uniquely individual malady, Norman Peale urges individuals to realize that God attends them singly. Peale's concept of "applied Christianity," in which individuals shape their lives and realize happiness for themselves, suggests that they do so naturally. But his analysis ignores human and Christian acts of profound selflessness. Peale's ethical egoism creates a tension with his religious beliefs that his analysis in *The Power of Positive Thinking* does not mediate. Peale offers the following individual success story that illustrates the tension between positive thinking and
To build up feelings of self-confidence the practice of suggesting confidence concepts to your mind is very effective. If your mind is obsessed by thoughts of insecurity and inadequacy it is, of course, due to the fact that such ideas have dominated your thinking over a long period of time. Another and more positive pattern of ideas must be given to the mind, and that is accomplished by repetitive suggestion of confidence ideas. In the busy activities of daily existence thought disciplining is required if you are to re-educate the mind and make of it a power-producing plant. It is possible, even in the midst of your daily work, to drive confident thoughts into consciousness . . . One icy winter morning (a friend) called for me at a hotel in a Midwestern city to take me about thirty-five miles to another town to fill a lecture engagement. We got into his car and started off at a rather high rate of speed on the slippery road. He was going a little faster than I thought reasonable, and I reminded him that we had plenty of time and suggested that we take it easy. "Don't let my driving worry you", he replied, "I used to be filled with all kinds of insecurities myself, but I got over them. I was afraid of everything. I feared an automobile trip or an airplane flight; and if any of my family went away I worried until they returned. I always went around with a feeling that something was going to happen, and it made my life miserable. I was saturated with inferiority and lacked confidence. This state of mind reflected itself in my business and I wasn't doing very well. But I hit upon a wonderful plan which knocked all these insecurity feelings out of my mind, and now I live with a feeling of confidence, not only in myself but in life generally.[78]

Peale explains that the "wonderful plan" involved embracing positive religious slogans as if they applied personally. But the driver's resolution of his "inferiority complex" overlooks the passenger's legitimate safety concerns. Recalling his final sentence, we wonder how long it will be before our driver slides (self-confidently) into an oncoming car, driven perhaps by another whose positive thinking
allows him also to ignore a prudent regard for himself, his passengers, and others on the road. Peale offers no solution to this problem. He leaves us to speculate about the relationship of self-confidence to good judgment. Nor does he reveal how he resolved his own apprehension (perhaps with a prayer) or if he rode with the driver again. Instead Peale concludes,

This plan used by my friend is a very wise one. By filling his mind with affirmations of the presence, support, and help of God, he had actually changed his thought-processes. He put an end to the domination of his long-held sense of insecurity. His potential powers were set free.[79]

In this instructive example, Peale analyzes a common human situation in terms of the driver of the car. The driver's actions show total disregard for his own safety and the safety of others as a subtle but important manifestation of his self-interest. Acting self-interestedly, even in this seemingly innocuous way, necessarily includes immoral consequences of endangerment that he cannot avoid. By violating the legitimate safety concerns of himself and others he clearly illustrates the bad morality of self-interested action, in this case. Based on the legitimate safety concerns of everyone, including himself, Peale's friend should have remained insecure.
Gail Sheehy's book also implies that acts of benevolence are unproductive and harmful if they threaten individual "survival" in life crises. For Sheehy, the important thing is to recognize the inevitability of change and to respond positively to the marker events. Thus individuals survive the inevitable swirl of events that affect their lives. Individuals can use Passages to prepare for and profit from change, however drastic. This approach also illustrates the bad moral character of self-interested action. Enduring life changes requires that individuals ignore the legitimate concerns of others, and finally of themselves. What does it matter if change is good or bad, welcomed or feared, constructive or destructive? Since change is inevitable, individuals can only prepare with a view toward saving themselves. But this approach includes a choice that may or may not be their own. That is, self-interest in this case could be determined by someone other than the self.

Dr. Wayne Dyer characterizes benevolent acts simply and cynically. Let us examine Dr. Dyer's remarkable analysis of justice:

If the world were so organized that everything had to be fair, no living creature could survive for a day. The birds would be forbidden to eat worms, and everyone's self-interest would have to be served. . . We are conditioned to look for justice in life and when it doesn't appear we tend to feel anger, anxiety, or frustration. Actually, it would be equally productive to search for the fountain of youth, or some such myth. Justice does not exist.
It never has, and it never will. The world is simply not put together that way. Robins eat worms. That's not fair to the worms. Spiders eat flies. That's not fair to the flies. Cougars kill coyotes. Coyotes kill badgers. Badgers kill mice. Mice kill bugs. Bugs . . . You have only to look at nature to realize there is no justice in the world. Tornados, floods, tidal waves, draughts, all are unfair. It is a mythological concept, this justice business. The world and the people in it go on being unfair every day. You can choose to be happy or unhappy, but it has nothing to do with the lack of justice you see around you. This is not a sour view of humanity and the world, but rather an accurate report of what the world is like . . . Justice is simply a concept that has almost no applicability, particularly as it pertains to your own choices about fulfillment and happiness.[80]

Dyer succinctly presents his version of ethical egoism and immediately becomes mired in the inconsistencies of his position. He begins by arguing that moral acts between human beings are impossible and justice as a moral concept is mythological because similar relationships do not exist between animals in nature. In fact, they eat each other. This observation, although true, is irrelevant to the issue he wants to address; namely, whether or not justice or any moral concept can exist and inform human action. Presumably Dr. Dyer could argue further that human beings eat cows, and that's unfair to the cows. But he stops his rambling before it becomes philosophically interesting; that is, before he considers an example relevant to questions of justice. He does not, for example, argue that strong human beings sometimes eat weak human beings, and that's unfair to the weak. This example would provide a confirming instance
of his hypothesis about justice. Rather he dwells on relationships between animals in nature, not because cannibalism among humans is uncommon or even unusual, which it is, but because human cannibalism remains in some sense morally unacceptable to rational individuals. Nonetheless from his irrelevant examples of animals and random weather disturbances he concludes that moral concepts have no relevance for actions between human beings. This confused thinking pervades Dyer's works and finally renders them useless. To argue, therefore, that justice exists only conceptually assumes that men, like animals and storms, are naturally incapable of benevolent actions in any case, so the language of moral terms is at best frivolous and at worst a sinister (if meaningless) sham. This sense of morality also serves to justify the advantages offered in Egospeak and Body Language.

Robert Ringer's egoism represents the strong version. According to Ringer, "all people act in their own self-interest all the time."[81] Benevolent action among rational human beings is impossible. For Ringer the question is not whether one chooses to act selfishly or unselfishly, but whether one chooses to be rationally or irrationally selfish.
This position includes remarkable implications for friendships between human beings. Ringer's definition of friendship recognizes degrees of attachment. Rationally selfish individuals cultivate many friends who are, in different degrees, useful to them. Thus individuals maintain casual friends, good friends, and best friends. Finally, however, Ringer defines a friend as "a person who fills a need for you."[82] The same is true from the friend's point of view.

And from his standpoint, your function is to fill a need for him. It's losing sight of the latter that causes so many friendship problems. When both sides understand the entire equation and perform accordingly, the basis for a solid, value-for-value relationship exists—the only kind of relationship which can be both honest and lasting.[83]

Ringer claims that cultivating friends involves finding "those people who can add the greatest amount of pleasure to your life."[84] This statement may be true, but not in the perverse sense that Ringer implies. For Ringer "honest and lasting" friendships are like financial investments that guarantee good returns. Friends wish each other well to incur "credits" that will translate into future fulfillment of their needs. Wishing a friend well is like wishing your bank well, because if it prospers it will fatten the account you maintain there. That is, Ringer views friendship as completely mercenary, totally lifeless, and calculated as much as possible to oblige others to you. It is difficult
to imagine a more cynical or nihilistic view of human social relationships.

Aristotle considers Ringer's restricted definition of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Book VIII, Ch. 3, Aristotle defines three kinds of friendship, each based on a different object of love. First come friendships of utility. These friends love each other for their usefulness. In the second kind of friendships, friends love each other because they find each other mutually agreeable and pleasant (NE, 1156a 10-15). Aristotle characterizes these friendships as "incidental," because the friends love each other as sources of pleasure or utility to themselves. The changing nature of both utility and pleasure undermines the desirability and permanence of these relationships.

Perfect friendships, on the other hand, are "friendships of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves—(they are) those who wish well to their friends for their (the friend's) sake" (NE, 1156b 5-15). For Aristotle, true friends are much more than useful and pleasant. According to Aristotle, friendships of types 1 and 2 above cannot finally produce true friends. True friends wish you well for your sake alone, without regard for their self-interest. This view of friendship is preferable to Ringer's because it presupposes human morality.
and the genuine concern for others that morality implies.

5.2 Repudiation Of Hobbes:

In Book I of the Republic, Socrates accepts Thrasymachus' challenge to discuss justice as a rhetorical exercise, and Socrates emerges victorious. But the implications of Thrasymachus' definition of justice leave questions that remain unanswered. That is, Socrates has failed to repudiate the principle upon which Thrasymachus has based his definition of justice, his egoistic view of human nature. In Book I Socrates fails to show that ethical egoism is unacceptable as a first principle of society. It is from Glaucon and Adeimantus recognition of this failure that they restate and elaborate Thrasymachus' position in Book II.

Glaucon and Adeimantus argue that social arrangements exist as contracts between individuals who do not have the power to live as they choose. They are bound against their will to agree to a contract determined by their circumstances and not by their nature. Hence even those who practice justice do so unwillingly.

This we could realize very clearly if we imagined ourselves granting to both the just and the unjust the freedom to do whatever they liked. We could then follow both of them and observe where their desires led them, and we would catch the just man redhanded travelling the same road as the unjust. The reason
is the desire for undue gain which every organism by
nature pursues as a good, but the law forcibly
sidetracks him to honour inequality (II, 359b).

This quotation illustrates the point of the Gyges myth. Any two individuals, just or unjust, would proceed from the shepherd's situation as he did. Under these circumstances no one could resist becoming like "a god among men"[II, 360c].

Glaucan's characterization of human nature and society in Book II of the Republic conforms closely to Hobbes' statements about human nature and society in the Leviathan. Each assumes an egoistic view of human nature and argues that the priority of individual self-interest has specific consequences as a first principle of society. Hobbes contends that rational and prudent human beings agree to social contracts to avoid inevitable conflict for the resources that make their existence possible. Individuals agree to cooperate socially because they are too weak to resist their naturally aggressive neighbors by themselves. Furthermore, Hobbes' would agree with Glaucan that social contracts would be unnecessary for anyone who could "live like a god among men." If someone had the power to protect himself and his resources from aggressors, he would not participate in society. Rather his self-interest would be better served if he didn't have to pay the price of sacrificing his power when he complied. Like Thrasymachus'
tyrants, he would define justice in his own way. Hobbes' argues that rational individuals cannot make mistakes about their self-interest. Actions that seem to reflect concerns other than self-interest in fact represent self-interest prudently disguised.

Socrates attacks ethical egoism in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* by taking the opposite view. Socrates contends that a common good which is at the same time good for individuals could be realized in a proper city. Thrasymachus claims that one or the other must prevail because they are different. Hobbes, on the other hand, denies the very possibility of a common good for rational human beings.

But Hobbes' egoism not only fails as a first principle for society, it also undermines the social relationships that make life worth living. Hobbes egoism suffers from two principal types of defects. It cannot explain many common human actions in normal social relationships. Hobbes' arguments reduce to absurdity when he tries. Many common human actions exist that contain insights into human nature and that cannot be explained by Hobbes' analysis. Sometimes individuals act for their own good, and sometimes they act altruistically. Still, Hobbes might dismiss these examples as actions that reflect self-interest prudently disguised. Finally, however, Hobbes analysis requires that individuals
act irrationally, a possibility for human action that Hobbes
denies.

Hobbes' analysis cannot explain family relationships. Hobbes
cannot account for the bonds that exist in relationships among children, parents, brothers, sisters, and spouses. These bonds form the basis for benevolent acts between family members, and they define love within the family unit. Family members openly express their love for one another. They recognize occasions of special significance for each other, birthdays, anniversaries, and so on. These celebrations cannot be understood in terms of self-interest. Rather they are a convenient means to afford special recognition to others that is characteristic of the family relationships.

But it is parental caring and sacrifice which provide the most important counterexamples to Hobbes' position. We take much time and effort, for example, to teach young children about the dangers of playing near deep water without adequate swimming instruction, which we then provide, or of crossing streets unless they have been impressed by the danger of passing cars. Parents sometimes risk their own lives to save their children or the children of others from harm, based on their moral responsibilities to them. As parents we encourage children to examine the world to discover its intricacies for themselves, and to
determine their place within it, even while we protect them from its dangers. We seek at every turn to broaden their horizons and to prepare them for a rich, fulfilling life.

Compromises of self-interest are also common to families. I have a friend who was offered a lucrative promotion at his job. He had been with a certain company for several years, and the promotion seemed like a genuine reward for loyal and capable service, as well as reflecting the logical progression of his career. The pay increase would have allowed the family to enhance their lifestyle, and the added responsibility would have provided a great professional challenge. But there were other considerations. The promotion required that he relocate to a branch office in another city. His oldest daughter was a junior in high school, and she hoped to continue and graduate from a local school. Moreover his wife was in pursuit of her career, and was not keen on moving either. Although the decision had to be made quickly, an immediate move would have been difficult. He finally deferred to a family consensus and declined the promotion. My friend's decision was a response to interests other than his own. If his choice had only to reflect his own interests, the family would certainly have moved. But they did not.
Examples of benevolent action that reflect familial love are common in literature. Many great stories explore the decisions of morally sensitive and thoughtful individuals who make hard choices in conceivable situations of human life. Remember, for example, the biblical story of Moses, and the sacrifices for the infant whose parents finally abandoned him rather than allow him to be killed as the Pharoah's edict had decreed. Knowing that a child has worked hard and fairly achieved what he set out to do is a common source of pride and satisfaction for parents. Nor is it uncommon for children to care for parents in old age. Consider Antigone's actions in the name of love for Oedipus, or those of Cordelia for King Lear. In the former case the bonds of family overrode allegiances to powerful civil authorities, while in the latter they overcame the cruelty and shortsightedness of the father. When other hope was gone the love of family remained.

Another powerful disconfirming instance of Hobbes' thesis occurs in the Bible. In the parable of the Prodigal Son and his Elder Brother,[85] a young man comes to his father to request his patrimony. Allow for the moment that the father as a Hobbesian individual can reasonably claim his children as his own to this point, and that he is wealthy enough to bequeath a portion of his resources without undermining his security against aggressive neighbors. Hobbes' analysis implies that the children
become threatening to the father when they mature to individuals in their own right. It would be reasonable for the father to give patrimony to his son, because with the resources he would presumably depart; that is, he would be removed from threatening the father. But using Hobbes' model, how can we explain his actions at the son's return? The threat has returned, and the father responds with gifts, celebration, and other expressions of his happiness. How can this be?

Viewing the father as a Hobbesian, financing the younger brother to depart made more sense than his actions toward the older brother. He financed the younger brother to depart, but did not even attempt to persuade the other. Rather, he placed all of his remaining resources at the disposal of the older brother as undifferentiated from his own. Is the father suicidal? Does the parable recount the actions of a madman? The parable is not offered to explain the irrational activities of a father in an irrational relationship with his sons. The father's actions cannot be explained using Hobbes' description of human nature. The actions reflect the father's love for his sons because he acts selflessly toward them. The parable recounts his attempt to treat them with equal respect and concern. Consider also the common human act of choosing to have a family. Hobbes observes that,

Men have no pleasure, but on the contrary, a great
deal of grief, in keeping company where there is no power able to overawe them all. For every man looks that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself; and upon all signs of contempt or undervaluing naturally endeavors, as far as he dares (which among them that have no common power to keep them in quiet is far enough to make them destroy each other), to extort a greater value from his contemnors by damage and from others by example.[86]

This leads inevitably to quarreling among men and finally to invasion to extend a realm of influence and assure the safety of one's own. Although Hobbes includes wives, children, and cattle as parts of one's own, it is interesting to imagine the implications of this analysis as the children become individuals in their own right.[87] The children would eventually become threatening to the father in the same way that others have been threatening all along.

Hobbes might argue that acts of loving and caring for children reveal disguised self-interest, that they are really attempts to keep children from becoming threatening to parents for as long as possible. The parents' efforts will fail, however, because the family is not normally large enough to insure individual protection even if children remain loyal to parents. Hobbes creates problems for his analysis when he insists on qualitative as well as quantitative differences between a family and a commonwealth. "A family is not properly a commonwealth, unless it be of that power by its own number or by other opportunities as not to be subdued without the hazard of
war."

The family cannot replace the commonwealth because without extraordinary power to enforce its will, members must still survive as individuals. In general a family's size affords no power to deter aggression of those who would usurp its resources and consequently the family structure has no value for collective security. Therefore, it would be irrational, on Hobbes' model, to choose to nurture or even propagate children. Having a family would be equivalent to directing resources away from the business of repelling aggressors, thus undermining one's security. Furthermore as the children mature, those resources would finally become directed against parents, because the family cannot replace the commonwealth. Man's desire to propagate children contradicts his instinct to survive as an individual.

Hobbes could also argue that self-interest actually precluded the propagation of children, and that, strictly speaking, rational individuals do not choose to have families. Self-interested action includes sexual gratification, and the fact that children often result does not affect the rationality of parents when they satisfy their natural desires. This argument would have been more persuasive in Hobbes' time than it is in ours. Modern society offers a wide range of contraception methods that allow virtually everyone who so chooses to remain childless and still satisfy themselves sexually. Still, many rational
individuals choose to propagate and raise families.

Propagating children is a powerful and obvious example of selfless action that is common in human experience. It exists as a disconfirming instance of Hobbes' claim that individuals always act for their own good only. Either Hobbes is wrong, or men must be capable of irrational action. The latter possibility violates Hobbes' law of nature, "by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or takes away the means of preserving the same and to omit that by which he thinks it may best be preserved."[89] Therefore Hobbes is wrong, and men sometimes do act for reasons other than their own good. Hobbes' view of human nature is untrue as an empirical claim about how men act because it fails to account for many kinds of common human action. Furthermore his egoism is unacceptable as an explanation of what motivates human behavior, because it forces him to argue for a position that is clearly absurd.

5.3 The Superiority Of Ethical Objectivism:

As we have seen, egoism fails to explain human nature, and it cannot serve as a first principle of social cooperation. Benevolence exists as a possibility for human action. That is, human beings reserve a natural disposition to be moral, at least some of the time. This fact allows us to invest moral terms with meaning. Societies that include
benevolent individuals can institute laws that serve as
guides to encourage moral actions. These laws then become
suitable objects of moral evaluation. Social cooperation
creates environments where benevolence and morality can exist and flourish.

Human beings are not naturally self-interested beings. Rather they are naturally moral beings, capable of benevolent action. If human beings are capable of benevolence, then they have a natural capacity for morality. Inconsistency in moral behavior indicates only imperfection in an imperfect world. Individuals are moral when they interact socially for reasons other than self-interest—when they act benevolently toward each other. Sometimes individuals do things for and with others rather than simply to them. The language of moral terms derives its meaning from these exchanges. Individuals act lawfully or unlawfully, morally or immorally in society, and they do not respond favorably to an essentially lawless, strictly non-moral social environment. Although the actual conduct of individuals toward one another is not consistently moral or immoral, men do sometimes act for the good of others.

The capacity for benevolent action also helps define the character of human society. Human beings are naturally moral because they are capable of benevolence. A just society is a logical extension of benevolent individual
action to natural social interaction. Furthermore, egoism, the non-moral position, has no place in such a society. Egoism is essentially antisocial because it precludes the possibility of that morality upon which social cooperation is naturally based, and it denies the possibility of significant cooperation. It precludes actions and relationships that run to the core of human experience. It requires that humans exist as subhuman beings. Finally, neither individuals nor societies are what egoists claim they are. It is not true that there is nothing in social arrangements that throws individuals together like self-interest keeps them apart. Morality does.

John Rawls' theory of justice attempts to synthesize the classical and modern understandings of relationships between individuals and society. Rawls imagines a society that includes basic institutions structured by principles of "justice as fairness." These principles allow social institutions to encourage the moral conduct of individuals.

Rawls establishes an environment for ethical objectivism when he includes the "original position" in his analysis. The conditions for choice in the original position are so restrictive, and those for their application so general, that Rawls achieves with his theory a situation analogous to the ideal polis that Plato sought.
To the extent that Plato and Rawls attempt to refine ethical objectivism and natural law theory by imagining arrangements of social cooperation responsive to the needs of moral men, they are involved in a common if not identical philosophical enterprise. Each has rejected egoism and offered a social ideal in its place. As visionaries each has attempted to fit social cooperation to the needs of members from a moral point of view. Each imagines an arrangement of social cooperation that allows naturally benevolent human beings to interact socially by requiring that their institutions reflect basic moral principles. In this sense each argues for theories of ethical objectivism and natural law to help men realize a good life from their social cooperation. These attempts give reason to hope that more concrete and less preliminary answers to questions about ethical objectivism can be found.
FOOTNOTES


4. This is also Stace's strategy. See "Ethical Absolutism and Ethical Relativism," p.52.


6. This is a recurring theme in popular music. The specific reference is to a song titled "Make Your Own Kind of Music" by "Mama Cass" Elliott. New York: Columbia Records, 1969.


8. Ibid., p.IX.

9. Ibid., p.1

10. Ibid., p.XI.

11. The reference is to Jacque's famous speech on the "ages of man" in William Shakespeare's play, As You Like It, (II, vii, 139).


13. Ibid., p.105.

15. Dyer arrives at this conclusion through some remarkable syllogisms. He intends to establish that "you can attack the myth of not being in charge of your emotions through logic." (Dyer, p.20). This is his example of logic, a syllogism in which the major and minor premises agree:

Major premise: Aristotle is a man.

Minor premise: All men have facial hair.

Conclusion: Aristotle has facial hair.

This is his example of illogic, a syllogism in which the major and minor premises do not agree:

Major premise: Aristotle has facial hair.

Minor premise: All men have facial hair.

Conclusion: Aristotle is a man.

Having established the difference between logic and illogic, he offers this syllogism to "forever put to rest the notion that you cannot take charge of your own emotional world." (Dyer, p.21).

Major premise: I can control my thoughts.

Minor premise: My feelings come from my thoughts.

Conclusion: I can control my feelings.

That done, you "begin to examine your life in the light of choices you have made or failed to make. This puts all responsibility for what you are and how you feel on you. Becoming happier and more effective will mean becoming more aware of the choices that are available to you. YOU ARE THE SUM TOTAL OF YOUR CHOICES, and I am just "far out" enough to believe that with an appropriate amount of motivation and effort you can be anything you choose." (Dyer, p.14).


17. Throughout this paper the masculine gender, when I use it generically, refers to women and men equally.

19. Ibid., p.2.
20. Ibid., p.5.
23. Ibid., p.51.
24. According to Ringer, every action in life, especially those involving relationships, should be based on "value-for-value" exchanges; that is, when the value an individual places on a relationship equals the pleasure he derives from it.
25. Ringer denies that his position is hedonistic because it includes this "rational, civilized tag." Primary moral duty lies in the pursuit of pleasure so long as the pursuer does not interfere with the rights of others. Rationality precludes interference, which causes more pain than pleasure.
27. Ibid., p.46.
28. Ibid., p.22.
29. Ibid., p.22.
30. Ibid., p.21.
33. Ibid., p.110.
34. Ibid., p.106.
35. Ibid., p.105.
36. Ibid., p.105.
37. Ibid., p.24.
38. Although the authors of the "self-help" literature do not mention it specifically, this sense of society as extraneous to individual fulfillment pervades their work like it does Hobbes'.


40. Ibid., p.139.


44. Aristotle points to the natural dependence of individuals to prove that the polis is the primary natural association of men. See Aristotle, *Politics*, (Bk.I, Ch.2, 1253a25).


46. I have used W.D. Woodhead's translation for this and all subsequent references to the *Gorgias*.

47. Thus it is of little consequence that Socrates has arrived too late to hear Gorgias' "fine and varied display."

48. The joke on Socrates is soon exposed when, after several single-word replies from Gorgias, Socrates comments, "your answers could not be briefer"(449d).

49. These "tricks of the trade" constitute the real power of rhetoric and comprise the body of what the Sophists teach.


51. According to Callicles, this strategy works two ways for Socrates. "If a man speaks on the basis of convention, you slyly question him on the basis of nature, but if he follows nature, you follow convention"(483).

52. This discussion recalls the Athenians' position in the Melian debate. The Athenians argued that Melos would either agree to capitulation or suffer destruction, because

53. Although Callicles agreed with Socrates' analogy at 488e, that the better are the stronger with the nobler ordinances, he tries to reject that position at 489b.

54. For an elaboration of these characteristics of individuals and their relationship to the city-state, see Republic I, 368.


56. I have used G.M.A. Grube's translation for this and all subsequent references to the Republic.

57. Thrasymachus' precise sense of rulers as those who know their advantage well enough to establish laws that will reflect it has been elucidated by his rejection of Cleitophon's position.


59. Actually the philosopher-kings have this quality before they are introduced to the Forms. See RepublicIII, 412d).


63. Ibid., p.119.
64. Ibid., p.120.
65. Ibid., p.18.
66. Ibid., p.120.
67. Ibid., p.128.
68. Ibid., p.127.
69. Ibid., p.131.
70. Ibid., p.132 (my emphasis).
71. Ibid., p.135.
72. Ibid., p.64.
73. Ibid., p.408.
74. Ibid., p.46.
75. Ibid., p.46.
76. Ibid., p.426.
77. Ibid., p.437.
79. Ibid., p.8.
81. Ringer, Robert. Looking Out for #1. p.44.
82. Ibid., p.255.
83. Ibid., p.261.
84. Ibid., p.264.
87. That is, with an equality of strength with their father, their own beliefs about the superiority of their wisdom, and their natural right to everything for their survival.


89. Ibid., p.109.
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