

PLATO: WHY SHOULD I BE MORAL?

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GLAUCON'S ARGUMENT

THREE KINDS OF GOOD THINGS

- Things desired for their own sake
- Things desired for their own sake and their beneficial consequences
- Things burdensome in themselves but that bring beneficial consequences
 - Ex. Medicine, Exercise (for some), Cleaning your room
- Glaucon: Justice in 3rd category
Socrates: Justice in 2nd category

HYPOTHESIS

- Ethical Egoism
- “Good life” results from power– and pleasure–seeking
- If everyone sought these desires, there would be chaos and unhappiness for all
- Communities must compromise to prevent this end
- The result is a concept of morality and justice

THE ORIGIN OF JUSTICE

- Having power and inflicting pain feels good, but suffering pain is bad
- Men who both have power but suffer will agree not to hurt each other
 - Ultimate power-holder would not submit
- Result: laws, compromise, sense of justice

JUSTICE IS PRACTICED UNWILLINGLY

- Given freedom, a just man will act the same as an unjust man
- Every organism pursues a desire for undue gain
- Everyone has same base, corrupted nature
- Ex. Ring of the Shepherd of Lydia

THE UNJUST LIFE IS BETTER THAN THE JUST LIFE

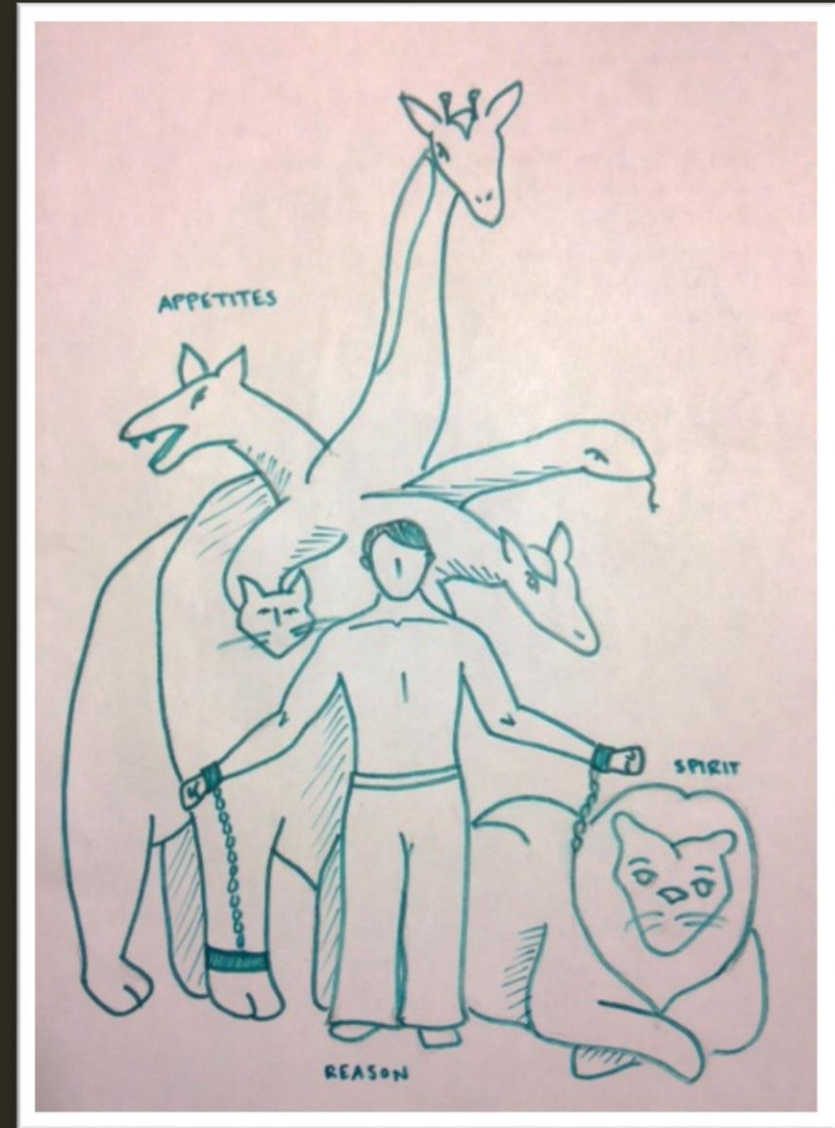
Thought Experiment:

- Perfectly unjust man
 - Never caught, successfully covers up any slip-ups
- Just man
 - Poor reputation to avoid confusing his motives
- The unjust man
 - Can better serve his friends, family, gods
 - Has any freedom that comes with trust of community
- The unjust man's life appears better – is it?

SOCRATES' ARGUMENT

THREE PARTS TO A SOUL

- Appetites:
 - “multiform beast with many heads”
 - Heads of both tame and wild animals
 - Can choose to grow or shrink certain heads
- Spirit:
 - Form of a lion
 - Largest part of soul
- Reason:
 - Form of a man
 - Second largest part of soul



DEFINITION OF JUSTICE

- Every part has (and does) its own function
- Harmony among the parts:
 - Soul controls body
 - Man controls himself
 - Tripartite soul is in harmony
- Just actions keep and encourage harmony in the soul
- Like a city:
 - Ruler controls ruled, and they obey him
 - Reduces crime, chaos, suffering

DEFINITION OF INJUSTICE

- War between the parts
- The parts do not serve their function, but instead confuse roles
- Unjust actions disrupt harmony in the soul
- What do you think? How does this conflict with modern-day interpretations of injustice?

JUSTICE vs. INJUSTICE

- Justice is like health, injustice like disease
- “If then he enslaves the most divine part of himself to the most ungodly and disgusting part and feels no pity for it, is he not wretched” (59)
- Basically, is life worth living if your soul is corrupted?
- Purpose of laws:
 - Control those who can't control the beast within
 - Help them to tame the beast and become better people

CONCLUSION

- **Glaucon's Argument:**
 - Justice results from laws and compromises made to protect the welfare of a community
 - Given the opportunity, the just and unjust man will behave the same
 - This is because an unjust life is more desirable than a just life
- **Socrates' Argument:**
 - Justice is harmony in the soul; injustice is its imbalance
 - Illustrated by the tripartite beast
 - Laws result from justice
 - Why you should be moral:
 - To preserve your soul and inner peace
 - For the betterment of the community

Do you
agree?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- <http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-20-2-c-hobbes-locke-montesquieu-and-rousseau-on-government.html>
- Conference with Jackson