

# WHAT IS JUSTICE AND WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT IT?

Book I and Book II through 367e

# THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT JUSTICE

1. Is it just to do X?
2. Is it advantageous to be just?
3. What is justice?

# THE CHALLENGE TO JUSTICE



# 3 KINDS OF GOODS:

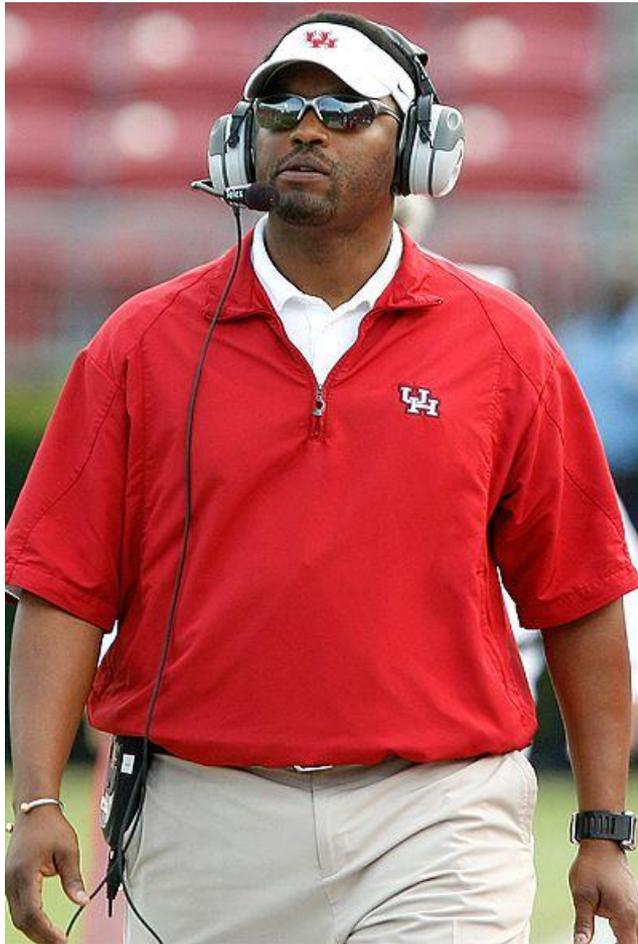
1. Goods that are only good for the consequences they bring. *Instrumental goods.*
2. Goods that we enjoy for their own sake, not for their consequences. *Intrinsic goods.*
3. Goods that we enjoy both for their own sake and for their consequences.

**The Challenge:** Justice is a good in category 1—only good for the consequences it brings.

# THE RING OF GYGES



# THE JUST MAN



# THE UNJUST MAN



# GLAUCON'S GOAL

- ⦿ Create “thought experiments” where justice and injustice are **isolated from any positive or negative consequences** that come from them.
- ⦿ Show that no one would praise justice under these conditions.

# ADEIMANTUS PILES ON

- ◉ We learn to praise justice and resist injustice only for its consequences from:
  1. Our parents.
  2. Religion
  3. The poets.
  
- ◉ Biggest critics of injustice are...the weak, cowardly, old, and powerless.
  
- ◉ “They blame in injustice because they are unable to do it.” (43)

# BACK TO QUESTION 3

**“What is Justice?”**

# SOME PROPOSALS

- ⦿ Paying what you owe, telling the truth.
- ⦿ Doing good to your friends, harming your enemies.
- ⦿ Doing good to your friends *if they are good*, harming your enemies *if they are bad*.

# THRASYMACHUS' MONKEY WRENCH

p. 16, 338d

- ⦿ The rules of justice are something that powerful people put in place for their own benefit.
- ⦿ There is no single conception of justice, it **depends on the rulers and the form of government.**

# PLATO'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGE

- ◎ The concept of justice is *artificial and relative*.
- ◎ The question “what is justice” is *misconceived*.
- ◎ Justice has no essential nature.