

Plato's *Phaedo*



Concluding practical reflections (107c-118a)

- “If the soul is immortal, it requires our care not only for the time we call our life, but for the sake of all time, and that one is in terrible danger if one does not give it that care. If death were escape from everything, it would be a great boon to the wicked to get rid of the body and of their wickedness together with their soul. But now that the soul appears to be immortal, there is no escape from evil or salvation for it except by becoming as good and wise as possible.” (107c-d)
- “No sensible man would insist that these things are as I have described them, but I think it is fitting for a man to risk the belief ... that this, or something like this, is true about our souls and their dwelling places, since the soul is evidently immortal, and a man should repeat this to himself as if it were an incantation.” (114d)

Plato's *Republic*



- Characters: Socrates
 Glaucon and Adeimantus (Plato's brothers)
- Topic: Why be moral (just)?
 - Glaucon: “Do you want to *seem* to have persuaded us, Socrates, that it is better in every way to be just rather than unjust, or do you want to *really* persuade us of this?” (357a)
 - I.e., is being moral (just) *always* best for a person?
 - Glaucon will play “devil’s advocate” and argue for the negative.

Plato's *Republic*



- Three kinds of goods (357b-c):
 - Goods valued *only* for their own sake and *not* for their consequences (e.g., “harmless pleasures”, watching TV, eating yummy stuff)
 - Goods valued *both* for their own sake *and* for their consequences (e.g., knowledge, sight, health)
 - Goods valued *only* for their consequences and *not* for their own sake (e.g., medical treatment, working at Burger King)
- What kinds of good is justice?
 - Acc. to Socrates, justice belongs in the second or “finest” class. (358a)
 - Acc. to “the masses,” justice belongs in the third or “burdensome” class. (358a)

Plato's *Republic*



- Glaucon's argument on behalf of the masses (358e-362c)
 - Justice originates in a social contract
 - “People say ... that to do injustice is naturally good and to suffer injustice bad. ...[T]he badness of suffering [injustice] far exceeds the goodness of doing [injustice].” (358e)
 - “As a result, they begin to make laws and covenants; and what the law commands, they call lawful and just.” (359a)
 - Justice is a compromise between the best (being able to do evil with impunity) and the worst (being forced to suffer evil without chance for revenge). (359a)
 - Hence, “[t]hose who practice [justice] do so unwillingly, because they lack the power to do injustice.” (359b)

Plato's *Republic*



- Glaucon's argument (cont.)
 - The ideal unjust life is better than a just life w/o external compensation.
 - Exhibit A: a perfectly unjust man with a sterling reputation for justice and the shrewdness to protect that reputation while acting unjustly
 - Exhibit B: a perfectly just man with a thoroughly undeserved reputation for extreme injustice.
 - Whose life would you rather live?
- The structure of Socrates' response:
 - Books II-IX: Justice is an intrinsic good; injustice an intrinsic evil. No other intrinsic good is better for us than justice.
 - Book X: Justice is instrumentally good; injustice instrumentally bad. No other instrumental good is better for us.