

Plato's *Republic*



- The Platonic response to Glaucon's challenge
 - The three-part soul:

	Relates to this part of the body	Is like this kind of an animal	Is the locus for this primary virtue		
Reason	Head	Man	Wisdom	}	Justice
Spirit (passions)	Heart	Lion	Courage		
Appetite ▼ (bodily desires)	Belly	Many-headed beast	Moderation		

- Justice is a condition of soul when each part is playing its proper role, with reason wisely ruling the appetites with the help of a courageous spirit, thereby making them temperate. (cf. 443d)

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- The Platonic response (cont.)
 - The just person has a healthy, harmonious soul, and thus enjoys true happiness regardless of outward circumstances.
 - In contrast, injustice is an disordered, unhealthy condition of soul.
 - Instead of inner harmony, the unjust person experiences an inner “civil war,” rendering reason the slave of the passions and appetites. (cf. 589c-d)
 - Injustice is “a kind of faction among those three—their meddling and interfering with one another’s jobs; the rebellion of a part of the soul against the whole in order to rule in it inappropriately ... [T]heir disorder and wandering is injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, ignorance, and, in a word, the whole of vice.” (444b)
 - He is even more wretched if he gets away with injustice, for punishment helps subdue the inner beast. (cf. 591a-b)

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- Why should we be moral (just)?
 - Acc. to the masses, we should be moral only to the extent that we cannot *be reasonably sure* of getting away with injustice.
 - Acc. to Plato, we should always be moral because we *can't* get away with injustice, nor should we want to.
 - Virtue *is* its own reward and vice *is* its own punishment.
 - “Life does not seem worth living when the body’s natural constitution is ruined, not even if one has food and drink of every sort, all the money in the world, and every political office imaginable. So how—even if one could do whatever one wished, except what would liberate one from vice and injustice and make one acquire justice and virtue—could it be worth living when the natural constitution of the very thing by which we live is ruined and in turmoil?” (445a-b)

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- A new argument for immortality (608d-611a)
 - Soc.: “Haven’t you realized that our souls are immortal and never destroyed?” (608d)*
 - Only what’s bad can destroy (608e).
 - Each kind of thing has its own proper sort of goodness and badness (608e).
 - e.g., health & disease for the body; justice & injustice for the soul.
 - Only the sort of badness proper to each thing can destroy it (609a).
 - Therefore, only injustice could possibly destroy the soul.
 - But injustice doesn’t destroy the soul (609d). (And if it did, it would benefit the wicked, for then they would escape their evils (610d).)
 - Hence, nothing destroys the soul, and so it is immortal (610e-611a).

What do you think of this argument?

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- On the nature of the soul (611a-612a)
 - “[W]e must not think ... that the soul in its truest nature is full of multicolored variety and dissimilarity and conflict with itself. ... [I]t is not easy for something to be immortal when it is composed of many elements and is not composed in the most beautiful way” (611a-b).
 - The true nature of the soul cannot be fully understood while it is in the body (611b-612a)

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- The “why be moral?” question revisited (612a-
 - Now we’re going to let external consequences back in (612b-c).
 - The just man receives favor from the gods in this life; the unjust man, their disfavor (612e-613b).*
 - In the long run the just man receives favor from other people; the unjust man, their disfavor (613b-c).*
 - Finally, the just man receives his due reward in the afterlife; the unjust man his due punishment (614a-621c).
 - The myth of Er
 - In sum, justice is intrinsically and *also* instrumentally good, whereas injustice is both intrinsically and instrumentally bad.