

Gyges' Ring

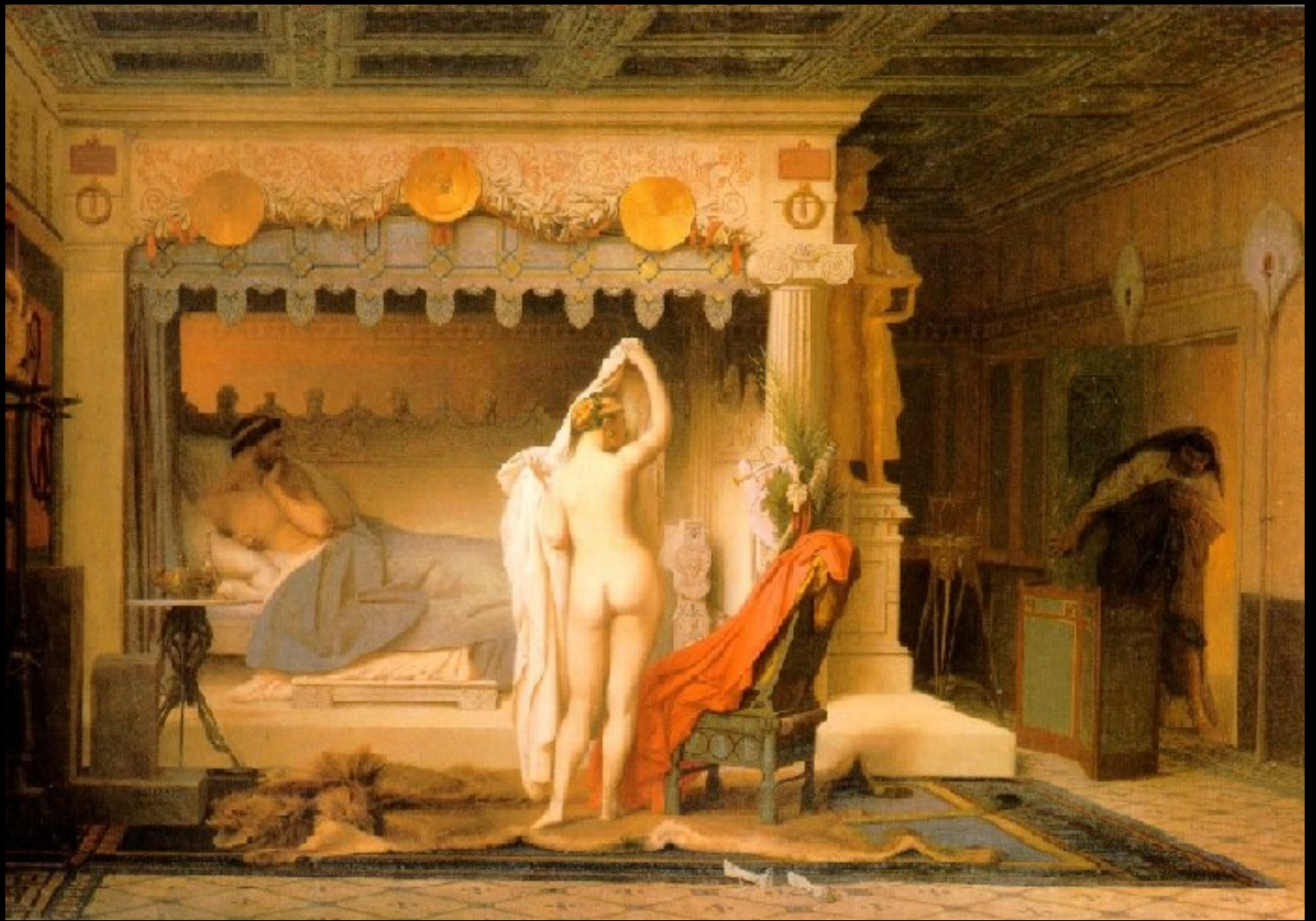
- A lowly shepherd finds a ring which gives him the power of invisibility



Gyges' Ring

- Gyges uses the ring to seduce the Queen and usurp the Kingdom
- Grave-robbing
- Adultery
- Assassination



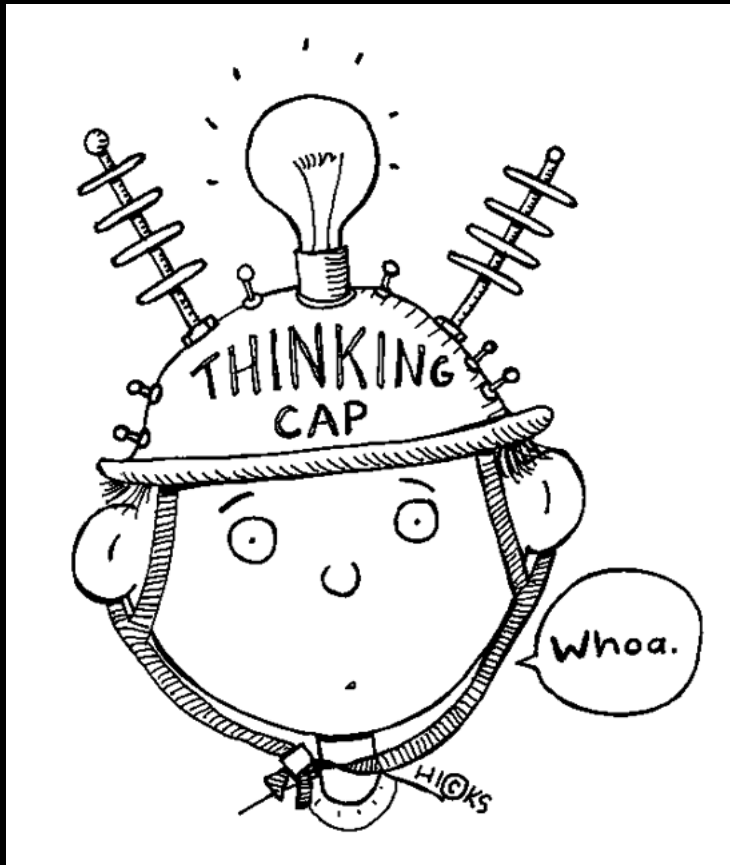


Gyges' Ring

- Justice requires restraint, sacrifice of self-interest
- People only act justly because they fear punishment (personal, social, legal)
- Punishment depends on detection
- Gods can be bought off with sacrifice



The completely rational man will seek to be unjust where possible, just when necessary



- Injustice is always better...*if you can get away with it!*
- Justice is only instrumentally good in some cases
 - High chance of being caught
 - Severe consequences



RepWeiner 27 mins 28 secs ago



 Reply





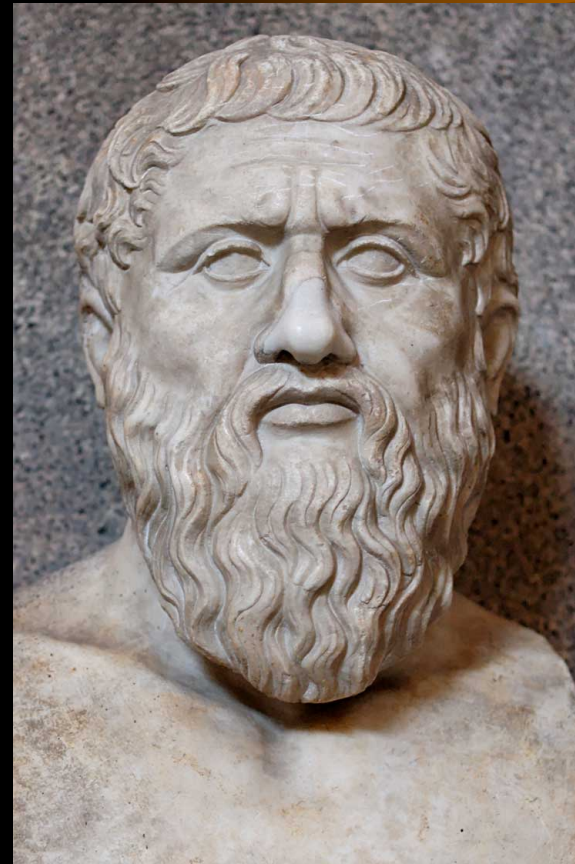
THIS
WILL NOT END WELL



Glaucon's Challenge

Plato's Response

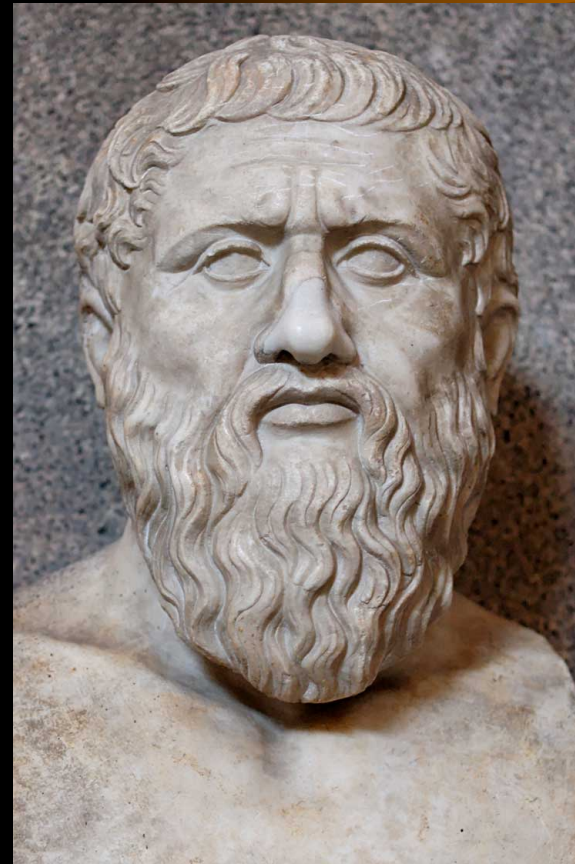
- Glaucon's Challenge:
Prove justice is better than injustice
- Plato says injustice
 - subordinates reason to desire, dehumanizes
 - is the sign of an unbalanced or diseased mind



Glaucon's Challenge

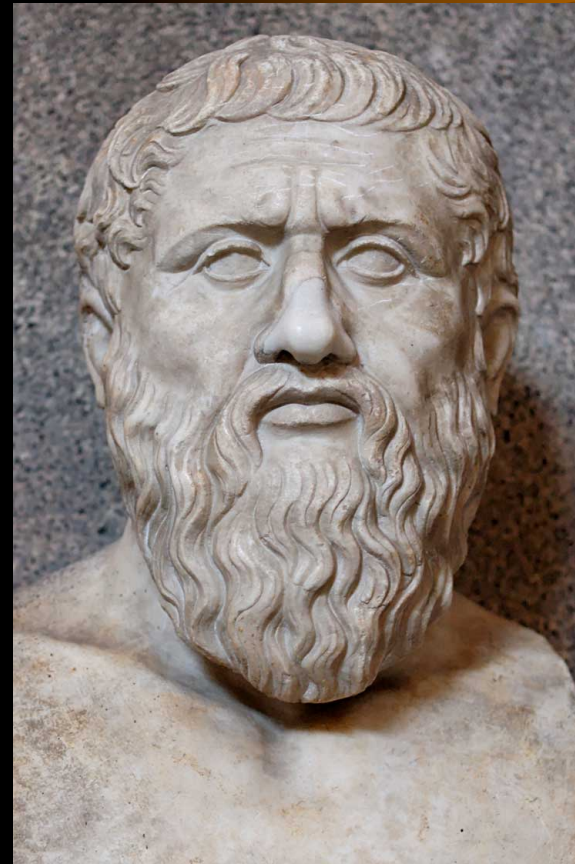
Plato's Response

- Plato says injustice
 - makes us a slave to our desires
 - robs us of freedom
- Free choices are made through rational deliberation, not compelled by desire



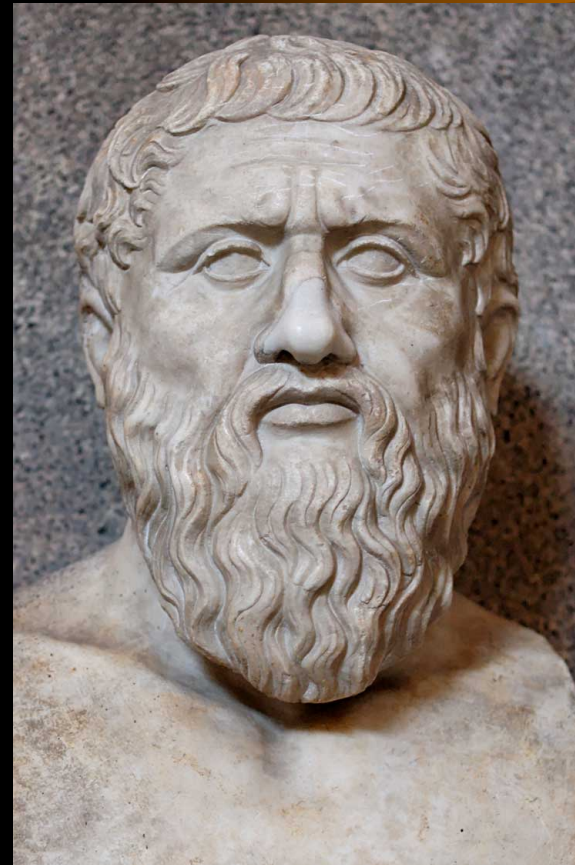
Critique of Plato's Response

- Man *is* an animal
 - Dualist assumptions
 - Denigration of the body and its desires
 - Philosophy as practice for death



Critique of Plato's Response

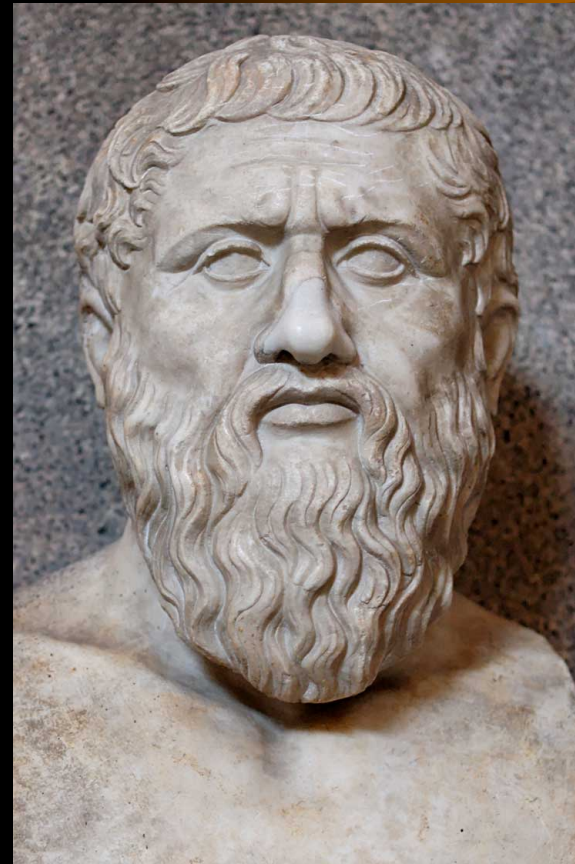
- Disease account relies on primitive, pre-scientific model
- Anti-social behavior as “sick” = a hidden normative judgment, assumes “proper function” - naturalistic fallacy



Plato's Response

Critique

- Reason itself
 - cannot motivate
 - chooses means, not ends
- Weakness of will is a conflict between two desires, not reason and desire



Weak Arguments



“The weed of crime
bears bitter
fruit...crime does *not*
pay!”

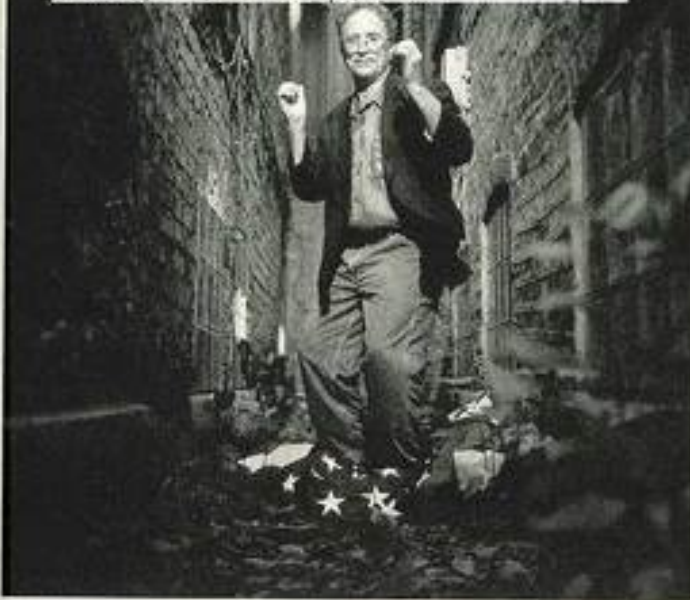
Most career criminals are
not rational

We only see the ones
who get caught

Mao, Stalin didn't pay

Weak Arguments

The group was dealing with the past with a kind of amnesia about violent actions. Bill Ayers recollected his adventurous violence with practiced jokes. "Guilty as hell, free as a bird, it's a great country," he said. He also said his three sons were incredulous to hear that Bill had burned his draft card to protest the Vietnam War. "Burned your credit card!" asked one little boy. "Man, I'm not that stupid," Bill said.



Bill Ayers, August 2001, former Weatherman, stomps on U.S. flag. As a result of their friendship with Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert, Bill and Bernardine Dohrn raised Chelsea Boudin.

- The assumption that immorality will *always* lead to worse consequences
 - Naïve
 - Mystical (e.g. a personification of justice as a force, like karma)
 - Assumes a perfect Platonic world where justice is a law which cannot be violated without tragic effects



REVENGE

A dish best served cold.

Is it worth taking a chance?



- Even petty crime has serious consequences
- Consistent bad behavior will ostracize you
- Large consequences can make even a small risk not worthwhile

Practical considerations



- Pragmatic considerations: injustice as impractical most of the time in modern American society
- Social and legal structures generally reward good behavior

*“You can’t derive an ‘ought’ from an ‘is.’” –
David Hume*



- You can’t derive a statement of value from a statement of empirical fact
- Morality is based in feelings, not facts
- Moral statements are neither true nor false

Emotivism



- Sentiments of sympathy and benevolence
- I irrationally associate the sufferings of others with my own even when there is no direct causal connection

Emotivism



- Moral statements express subjective feelings of approval and disapproval
- Similar from person to person due to human nature
- Vary due to differences in experience

Neo-Humeanism based on evolution



- Evolutionary psychology
- Humans are social animals
- Morality based on blood and kinship, abstracted to “the human family”