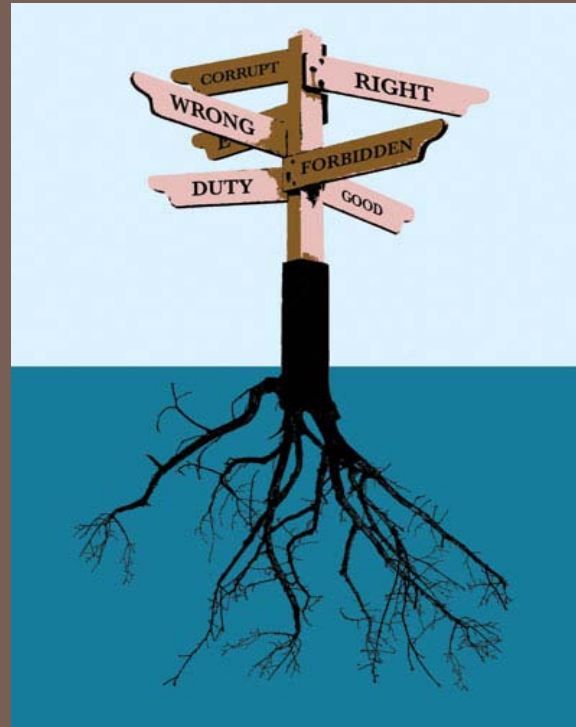


WHY SHOULD I BE MORAL?

PLATO



Emily Grace

Background

- Socrates and Glaucon discuss the question, “why should I be moral?”
- Is it really in our personal best interest to act “morally”?
- What motivates one to be moral?
- How large a part does one’s ego play?

Glaucon's Premise

- Glaucon questions, “is it better in every way to be just than unjust?”
- People who are just act morally out of fear
- The life of an unjust man is much better than the life of a just man

Glaucon's 3 Issues

- 1. The nature and origin of justice
- 2. People practice justice unwillingly
- 3. We have no good reason to act justly

Nature and Origin

- “The origin and nature stand between the best and the worst, the best being to do wrong without paying the penalty and the worst to be be wronged without the power of revenge”
- Related to consequences and fear of being caught
- Desire and power to achieve it

People Practice Justice Unwillingly

- We are naturally driven by desire
- Often held back because afraid of public reputation
- “the reason is the desire for undue gain which every organism by nature pursues as a good, but the law forcibly sidetracks him to honor equality.”

Ring of Gyges

- Just man given power (invisibility ring) so he can escape consequences bad reputation
- Commits awful crimes because he can

No Good Reason to be Just

- The goal of acting morally is to *appear* just
- Focus on reputation and image

Just Man vs. Unjust Man

- Emphasize the fact that a truly just man shouldn't care about his reputation
- Extreme example: reverse reputations
 - ▣ Just man given reputation of unjust person
 - ▣ Unjust man given reputation of just person

Socrates' Premise

- The just man lives a better life because he is at peace with himself and does not have to worry about his reputation or getting caught for wrong doings

Socrates' Definition of Justice

- “The soul is made up of three parts: a rational part, a spirited part, and an appetitive or passionate part”
- “Justice is defined as a harmony of the soul when each part fulfills its proper function- reason ruling, the spirit courageously serving reason, and the appetites living in temperance, being guided by reason.”

“Selfish” Reasoning

- A man is just for reasons that benefit himself- his external actions do not necessarily have as much importance
- “It does not lie in a man’s external actions, but in the way he acts within himself, really concerned with himself and his inner parts

Control and Order

- Justice is based on ruling oneself and controlling thoughts
- “To produce justice is to establish the parts of the soul as ruler and ruled according to nature, while injustice means they rule and are ruled contrary to nature”

Personal Strength

- Strength is measured by the ability to be moral without reasons such as external benefits or reputation
- “He will have the same end in view as regards honors. He will share in, and willingly taste, those which he believes will make him a better man, but he will avoid both public and private honors which he believes will destroy the existing condition of his soul.”

Discussion

How are both philosophies centered on selfish concerns and needs?

Which theory are you more inclined to believe?

