



# PLATO'S JUSTICE DEBATE

# THE CENTRAL QUESTION

## What is justice?

Plato examines this through a series of dialogues with different characters





# CEPHALUS' VIEW

**Justice is:**

**Telling the truth**

**Repaying debts**

**Problem: What if returning a weapon to a mad friend?**



# POLEMARCHUS' DEFINITION

**Justice is:**

**Giving every man his due**

**Helping friends, harming enemies**

**Problem: Justice cannot involve harm**





# JUSTICE AS HUMAN EXCELLENCE

Mastering music

Skill in horse riding

**Justice is a skill that must be developed**

Thus Harming can not be Justice



# THRASYMACHUS: THE SOPHIST

**Justice is:**

**Might makes right**

**Advantage of the stronger**

**A radical challenge to conventional morality**





# PLATO'S COUNTER-ARGUMENT

**Problem with 'might is right':**

**What if the strong make wrong laws?**

**Justice cannot involve self-harm**



# THE PHYSICIAN ANALOGY

**Just as a physician cannot:**

**Aim to produce more patients**

**Work against their proper function**

**Justice must work toward its proper purpose**

