



Justice as the Purpose of the State (cont)

Plato and Aristotle

NO JUSTICE

NO PEACE

Know Justice

Know Peace

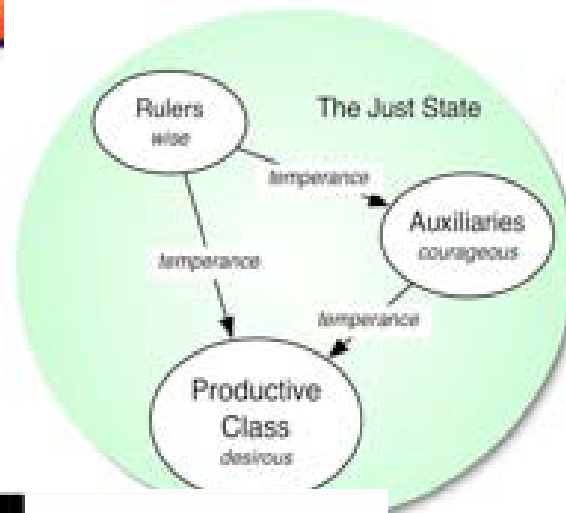
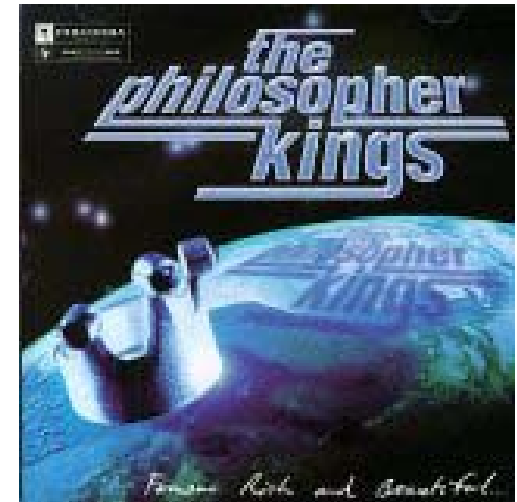
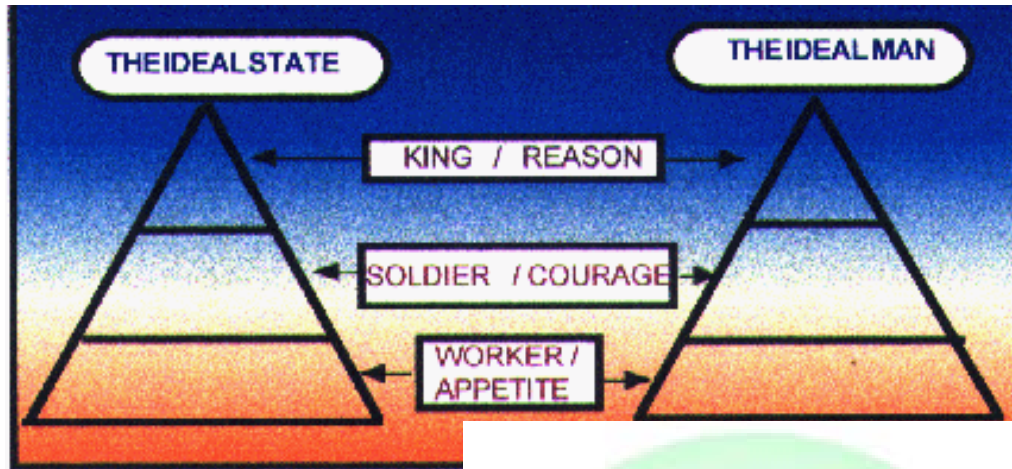
The “Noble Lie” and the Birth of the State

- What is the lie? Why does it involve “the Gods?”
- Is it really a lie? Why is it considered noble? Did it just benefit the ruling class? Can a lie ever be good? Is there a difference between noble lies and ordinary lies? Can a noble lie go bad?
- Do most states lie to their people? When they lie, are the lies “noble” because they come from the state?

Examples of The Noble Lie today

- Lies the Wikileaks revealed.
- Was the invasion of Iraq based on a “noble lie?”
- Why am I belaboring this issue of the Noble Lie?
- Is there more justice without noble lies?
- Are we happier without knowing the truth?

Justice is Peace in Plato's Republic



shapes the individual



defines the state

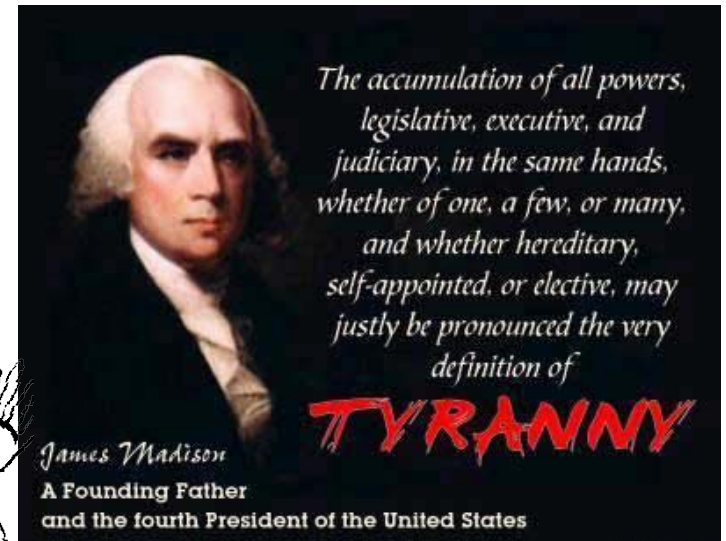
NO JUSTICE

NO PEACE

Know Justice

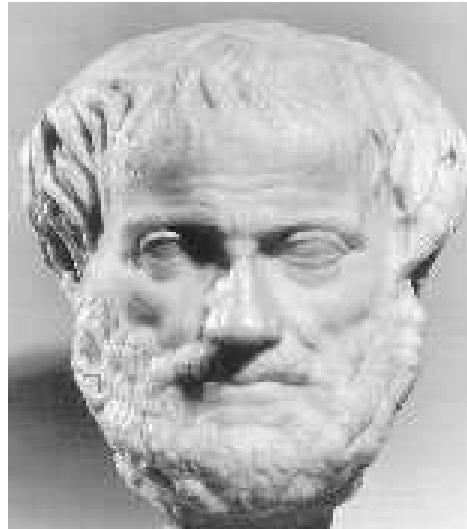
Know Peace

Plato: No Justice under Different forms of government.....



Political Economy in Plato and Aristotle

- Who Gets What?
 - What is the decision rule?
 - What is a Just distribution of rights and resources?
- Says who?



What is the Community? Who's in and who's out?

Plato

- **The Political Community (polis) is inclusive:** It is composed of folks performing all functions
- all are citizens (women and slaves excluded)
- All of society is the natural political community

Aristotle

- **The Political Community (polis) is exclusive:** composed of men who devote time to education and self-improvement
- Minimum wealth requirement
- Those who do not devote their time to self-improvement and education are not citizens (especially women and slaves)
- Outside the polis are households, farms, villages

Aristotle: in the Polis...Educated men are naturally political and they perfect the “good life”

- The purpose of the political community is to perfect the good life among its citizens
- "**Any *polis*** which is truly so called, and is not merely one in name, **must devote itself to the end of encouraging goodness.** Otherwise, a political association sinks into a mere alliance. ... **The end and purpose of a *polis* is the good life,** and the institutions of social life are means to that end." *Politics*, Book III, Chapter 9
- **Freedom and Rationality**

Political Economy Questions: Who Gets What? And.....

Plato

- **Functional hierarchy:**
 - To Each his own according to his function
- People deserve what their role and function requires
- All are equal in their “belonging” to the community but different in their functions
- Some are more “fit” than others to do certain jobs
- All material goods are divided equally among the guardians—others have wealth and leisure

Aristotle:

- **Class hierarchy**
 - Citizens deserve to have their material needs met by non-citizens (women and slaves)
 - They get to have the “good life”
- Economic Production takes place outside the polis
 - Provides all needs for life (but doesn’t provide the “good” life)
- Goods should not be divided equally in the polis
- Economic inequality defines the polis—
- But who cares?

Says Who? What is the best Regime to decide who gets what?

Answer = Elective aristocracy by well-educated, prosperous slave-owners. Get to decide who gets what and rule over everyone else

Answer is also naturalistic (everything has a natural purpose, which is its only proper purpose) and agent-centered (be a virtuous person or a virtuous city – the doing will naturally follow)

Says who? Communities and forms of rule: Aristotle gets practical

- Different communities require different forms of rule (and hence different skills)
 - The family is ruled *politically* (though unequally, for Aristotle)
 - The economic community is ruled *despotically*: some use others as tools for their own ends and not vice-versa
 - The Polis can have various forms of rule: aristocracy, democracy, constitutional rule, etc.

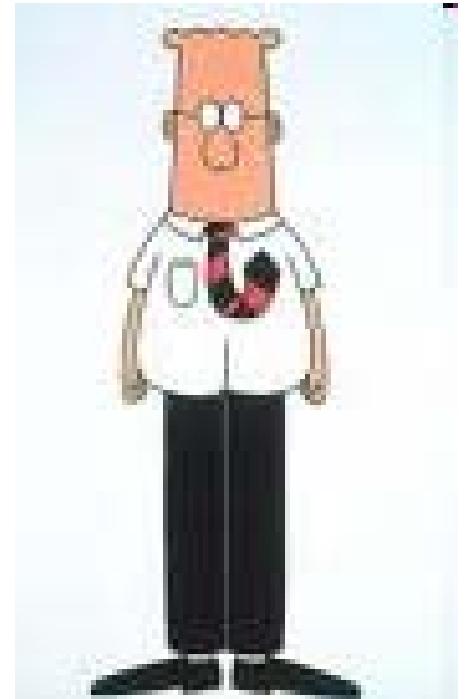
Polis and economic community

- Is the *polis* essentially identical to the (enlarged) economic community?
 - No: the end of the *polis* is different from the end of the economic community. The difference is qualitative.
 - **Morally, material wealth is not interesting in the Polis...Real value is in the good life and not in the economy**

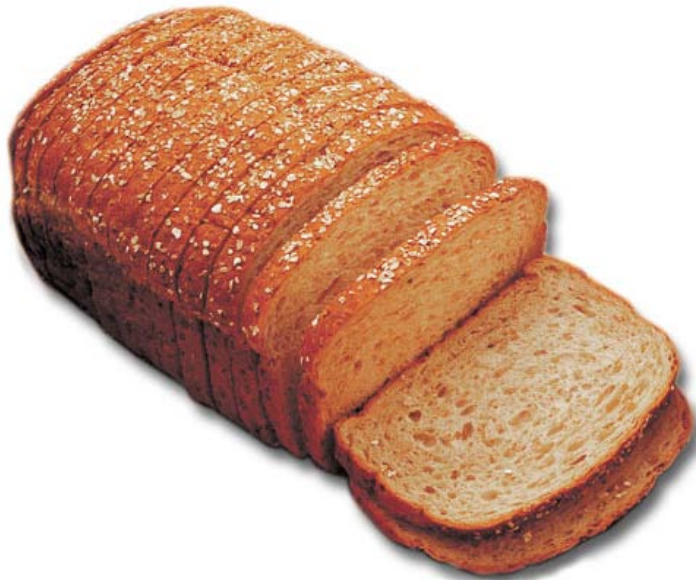
Slavery: Human beings as tools

- What is the difference between the “wage-slave” and the actual slave?

For Aristotle, there is very little difference: in both cases a person is made into or (makes himself into) the tool of another (and to that extent he or she is unfree)



Wealth and trade: other implications of Aristotle's argument



vs.



Sum: Aristotle and Economic Justice: Paving the way for Aquinas

- Economics is a lower form of activity than politics
 - Economics is a means to an end; politics is an end in itself
 - those who contribute to the economy do not have citizenship!
 - The Polis is must not tainted with economic activity
 - The privilege of political leadership must not be based on wealth---it must be based on merit
- The good life has nothing to do with wealth and wealth has nothing to do with value
- Those whose activity serves others have less merit than those whose activity—reasoning—is an end in itself.
 - Skills must be ends in themselves

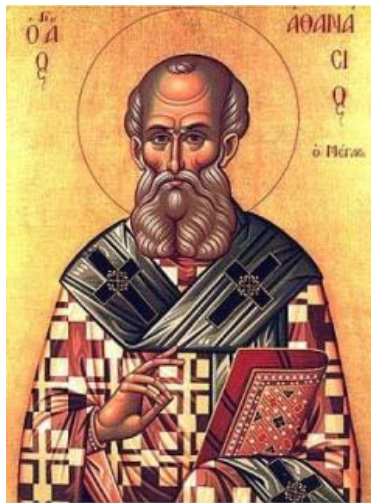
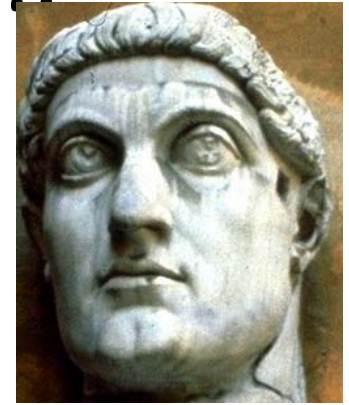
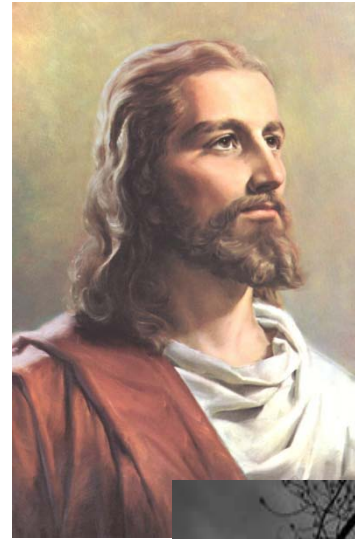
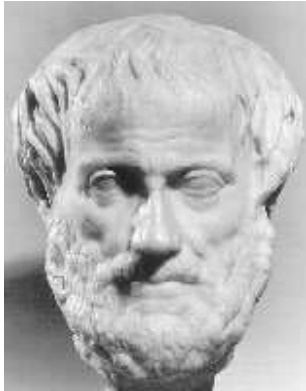
Aristotle's contempt for money and retail trade

- The purpose of material goods is use.
 - There is a limit to what we can use
 - Therefore the limitless accumulation of money is unjustified.
- The purpose of wealth is to free those in the polis from necessity, from being tools of others, and free them to pursue the good life of rational activity
- The value of any good is intrinsic—given by its use and not its price in exchange
 - Barter is natural; retail trade is not.
 - Making a profit is not natural, not honorable
 - Money has no intrinsic value: “He who is rich in coin may often be in want of necessary food.”
 - Making money with money i(usury) is contemptible

Two Threads: Reason and Freedom



Fast Forward History....



The “Just Price”



Thomas Aquinas modifies “Just Price” as the market takes over social life

- The Questions
 - Of unjust sales as regards the price; namely, whether it is lawful to sell a thing for more than its worth?
 - Of unjust sales on the part of the thing sold;
 - Whether the seller is bound to reveal a fault in the thing sold?
 - Whether it is lawful in trading to sell a thing at a higher price than was paid for it?

