



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN
Institutt for filosofi og førstesemesterstudier (FOF)

Gjesteforelesning

"Distinctive Features of Plato's Concept of Virtue"

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Sted: Rom 218, Sydneplassen 12-13



Abstract

Aristotle's ethics have been brought back to life over the last fifty years or more by a series of fine ethical thinkers. My question is this: Can Plato's ethics be revived? Is there a distinctive Platonic approach to ethics that could enlighten modern thinking about virtue? I think so. A revival of Platonic ethics would amount to a revival of the best elements in Kant's ethics, Kant being essentially a modern Platonist.

The main features of Platonic ethics are as follows:

1. Virtue (good character) is an ideal (as in Kant)
2. Good character is unitary.
3. Good character is analogous to physical health (no one willingly chooses bad health or bad character).
4. Good character can be acquired, but cannot be taught (is not knowledge, but is contagious).
5. Character in individuals runs parallel to character in communities.
6. Community leaders carry the main responsibility for character in both communities and individuals.