

# Reflection paper on "the republic" by plato assignment

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Assignment 1. Reflection on: the “ Republic,” by Plato. Greek philosopher, Plato, is considered to be one of the most influential people in Western Philosophy. The fact that he was a student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle leaves no questions about his competence. One of his fundamental works is the “ Republic”. Even though it was written in 380 BC, Plato’s and Socrates’s thoughts are still relevant in twenty first century.

This paper will evaluate the quote from the “ Republic” and provide a summary of a quote; provide a context from the text for the quote; and finally, it will include y own thoughts on the quote and the Socrates’s argument as a whole. The given quote is a paragraph from the fourth book of the “ Republic”. It says that a just person is a person, who has every part of his soul doing its own work. In other words, his soul should be in harmony, where the spirited part has to listen to reason and be its helper, and where the reason with a help of spirit control the appetitive part of the soul.

According to Socrates, there is only one way for a person to be just, to be a friend of himself, to be wise in his actions – it is to achieve this inner harmony. The quote is related to the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon about “ justice”. Glaucon had doubts on such questions as ‘ What makes a person just or unjust? “; “ isnt it more beneficial to be unjust? “; “ why people are willing to be just if it’s not beneficial for them? “. In order to get answers for these questions, he came to Socrates. First of all, Socrates has identified that the soul of a person is divided into three parts.

The first part is “ reason”, which is needed for calculation and making decisions. Socrates also called “ reason” as the rational part of the soul. The

opposite of the rational part is the appetitive or irrational part, with which a person lusts, hungers, thirsts and gets excited by other appetites. The last thing in the soul Socrates called the spiritual part, and defined it as a helper of the rational part, provided that it hasn't been corrupted by a bad upbringing. Furthermore, Socrates provides an analogy between a person and a city- state.

According to Socrates, the city is similar to a human being in a sense that it also consists of three classes: the money-making (appetitive), auxiliary (spirit), and deliberative (reason). He claims that the city is just if, and only if, all these three classes do their own job and do not interfere in one another's actions. Consequently, a person is just because all 3 parts of his soul are doing their own job, according to provided analogy. In my opinion, it is not right to divide the world into just and unjust.

Justice itself is subjective, in a sense that everybody has his own justice. Moreover, not necessarily all three parts should be in harmony in order to be just. For example, let us imagine that there are two best friends. One of them has a gun made of gold, and he tells his friend: " Could you please hold my golden gun for some time and give it back to me when I will ask you to do so. " The other guy takes the gun and he is willing to give it back when the time comes. But, the friend, who is the gun-owner, becomes angry and wants to kill his neighbor because he is too loud.

After the second friend was informed of it, the first tells him to give him the gun. In this situation, the friend's reason tells him not to give the gun back, because he wants to avoid a murder. His will wants to give the gun back,

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because he must do so. And finally, his appetites want to hold the gun, because he always wanted to have a golden gun. Therefore, if the gun will not be given back, then the person will be just, according to the argument that the spirit will obey the reason, and these two will restrain appetites.

However, supposing the same situation happened to different pair of friends, but another person's reason will tell him to give the gun back to its owner, because he gave a promise to his best friend and he cannot violate it. Then, a person will be just if he will give the gun back. Socrates could argue that the reason of one of them is not enough developed. But those two friends, who both faced this uneasy dilemma, are both the best philosophers in the world.

If Socrates's objection is correct, then it is impossible to identify what is really just and what is really unjust, even if there is a proper idea of a "justice". On the other hand, if Socrates's objection is incorrect, then one possible explanation for this is that different people have different views about what is just and what is not. To conclude, Socrates's argument was that the idea of a "justice" is to maintain a harmony in the soul, so that all its parts (desires, spirit and reason) do not intervene in each other's work.

Also, he mentioned that a just person never acts without this inner harmony. However, from my personal perspective, the knowledge about the idea of a "justice" is not enough for analyzing just and unjust actions. The same issues might be just and unjust at the same time for different people. Therefore, "justice" is subjective term. However, the suggestions above do not contradict to the main quote or to the Socrates's arguments. For this reason,

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I agree with the argument that a just person is the one who has a reason and its helper - will, taken the appetites under control.