

Plato's revolution work

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Professor's Name Class' Name Date ` Plato was a renowned philosopher in the early times. He has dealt with diverse issues in his work such as the politea, the philosopher king among others. He was in the early years inspired to become a politician but later on was discouraged by the circumstances that happened in the environment that he was in. He however diverted his focus to the study of philosophy. The final work that he did is normally taken to be comprised of a set of seven dialogues. His mentor, Socrates who was also his teacher greatly inspired his work.

He was the first to establish an academy in Athens. He greatly helped to lay the foundations of most of the western philosophy. A. N Whitehead asserts that most of the European philosophy contains footnotes of Plato. One of the greatest works of Plato concerns the republic, popular as politeia, which contains a wealth of descriptive materials on the kind of a republic that dispenses justice and the right kind of leadership expected in such a just society. The Plato's republic dialogues took place around the time of Peloponnesian War. The work describes how an ideal leadership can be achieved in the society.

In addition, Plato also describes how an ideal leader can be able to attain the best character that can enable him/her to be the right leader in the society. He calls the ultimate position that one attains to become the best leader as ' sunnum bonnum'. He describes the concept of justice in an in-depth manner. He treats the concept of justice both from the societal point of view and from the point of view of the individual. He argues out that there are two things that an individual can hold in life. There is reality and just appearance (Plato & Jowett, 1941).

There is also the rightful means of acquiring knowledge. The foundations of morality are also clearly elaborated in the work of the republic. He also says that there are the right components of an effective education which an individual must follow in order to be the best leader in any given society.

Basing on the work of Plato, the reality of nature is not always contained in what we can be able to see. He says that human beings who have attained the highest sense of knowledge are those whose focus transcends the visible world to focus to the invisible. He perceives that the visible in most times can be deceiving. His first attempt was to give a detailed account of the analysis of the formation and organization of the state. He then used this to apply to the individual person. According to him, the reason why we form a society is because we cannot be self sufficient as individuals. We are highly dependent on each other. No one is self sufficient that can work alone and acquire of the necessities of life. The society is therefore comprised of individuals who come together so that they can be able to achieve common goals.

The discussion on the significance of society elaborates further that specialization and division of labor leads to establishment of a worthwhile community. This concept is in line with the idea held by the functionalism sociological theories which holds the idea that the attainment of harmony in the society results when individuals are held responsible in different positions in the society. He gives an example of a typical society composed of the citizens in addition to other classes that ensure mutual benefit. There are the guardians, who are held responsible for society's management.

There are different types of guardians, the soldiers and the rulers. The function of the soldiers is to defend the state against external attack by enemies. The work of the rulers is to make decisions concerning the public as well as resolve disagreements among citizens. The soldiers cannot have private properties or have children and they can be from both genders. They are perceived to see reality beyond what the senses can allow them to reach. I can agree with Plato's concept of justice regarding the responsibilities of the different classes in the state.

However, I disagree with his concept on the restrictions that are to be imposed on the guardians. The natural division of each person's responsibilities where the children whose parents are rulers take up the responsibilities as well as the idea of telling lies or myths when they are called. The choice of rulers basing on inheritance is not also objective. This is because the choice of incoming leaders from the outgoing leader's children leaves out the possibility of electing the rightful leader from among the general population.

To be able to govern the state, the guardians have to be special people. They must be endowed with capacity to be temperamental. They have to think philosophically. The value of good education was emphasized in Plato's concept of the republic. He advocated for an organized and an in-depth system that will ensure that the individual will definitely attain the highest sense of education. This will erase the issue of the person confusing between deceptions/ illusions with reality. The highly educated man will eventually gain all the necessary skills to be able to govern the state.

Self-deception on the other hand created by lack of sufficient education, may lead to an individual's ignorance of the truth about their natures as human beings. From his point of approach, Plato says that it is important to control the kind of materials that children are in touch with. Those that they read see and hear. The training given to the individuals in form of education is the one that equips them to be able to handle the governance of the state. Depending on the level of training of the person, they can either be the soldiers or the rulers.

However, the concept of natural selection of leaders will possibly be threatened by a revolution against the guardians if they do not meet the expectations of the subjects. From Plato's point of view, the society needs first to convince the general population on the idea of natural division of labor from childhood. This idea would play a big role in shaping the thinking of the children and the people in general such that their minds will be fixed. This is contrary to his ideas on the potentiality of human mind as explicitly explained in the analogy of the cave.

The justification of naturalness on the position of the individual in the society will create natural hierarchy which will indirectly affect the quality of leadership in the society. His approach is however, aimed at preventing the citizens from rebelling as well as keeping justice by everyone doing what he/she is supposed to be doing. The children according to Plato's idea should only be taught the relevant material and literature that will ultimately ensure that they are skilled on the area of their duties.

There should be restrictions as well as the quality on what the children are taught to ensure that satisfaction and efficiency in the state's activities are maintained. However, there could be self deception by the children of the guardians that they are the best to take over from their parents which creates a false illusion (Plato & Jowett, 1941). Quality of leadership can be compromised which would hitherto disrupt Plato's just society. Plato's concept also emphasizes gender equality. It does not differentiate between the men and women.

He believes that both men and women have equal intellectual capacity. Therefore according to him, the women as well can also be able to perform roles such as being guardians because their children will be reared by different parents. They are also detached from enjoying worldly pleasures such as being paid lowly. These disadvantages therefore discourage others from aspiring from becoming guardians. The guardians would approach issues from philosophical points of view and education that provided them with training that ensured that they reach the highest level of education.

This would enable them to be able to distinguish between fiction and reality. This achievement is what Plato calls the highest sense of goodness, "sunnum bonnum" (Plato & Jowett, 1941). With this situation, they have attained the highest level of knowledge that can enable them to rule the people. The progress of the guardians is compared to the case of prisoners in an underground cave who are in darkness. At first, they could see shadows in the cave as reality (Watt, 1997). The people can however detach themselves and receive the light or truth.

They are at first reluctant to receive the truth. The process of enlightenment according to Plato is a painful one entailing a lot of courage, persistence and patience. After the individual receives the truth concerning the reality, they should also enlighten others so that they should also know the reality and change the society. This is what produces change in the society. The training explained by Plato is the one that is directed towards the perceived guardians. The level of performance of the children being trained at an early age depends on whether they can be guardians or not.

It also depends on whether they will be soldiers or rulers. To Plato, it is the duty of the society to be able to design a kind of educational system that will distinguish the future citizen's roles. The training of the young people should be in line with their abilities (Plato & Jowett, 1941). Three distinct people in the state are brought out by Plato; rulers, soldiers and the commoners (Plato & Jowett, 1941). He maintained that membership in the guardian class will solely depend on the possession of appropriate skills.

However, he held the idea that the off springs of the current guardians will most likely take over from them. These believe held by Plato is probably a means of social control and a tool used to maintain the status quo even by the unscrupulous leaders. Severe restrictions should be imposed to the guardians to control their quest to own properties. Since they are already endowed with superior natures, there is no need for wealth or other external rewards. The guardians should not own private properties. They should not also earn surplus income more than what fulfils their basic needs.

In this case, most people will be discouraged from seeking the position of leadership. The kind of leadership that he advocates is the one that seeks the welfare of the state. This will ensure that the best of the citizens will be attained. The different classes working for the common good of the state need to develop certain qualities or virtues in order to achieve the best. The rulers, being responsible for making public decisions which affect the citizens, must have the virtue of wisdom. This is the capacity to make the right decisions, make impartial judgments and comprehend reality.

The soldiers are endowed with the capacity to defend the state. They must therefore develop the virtue of courage. This is the willingness to sacrifice oneself and offer themselves to accomplish the interests of the state regardless of their personal welfares such as personal risks. The commoners must not pursue their own personal interests but must in all capacities strive to obey rules that emanate from the leaders. They must therefore exhibit the virtue of moderation. This involves the process of moderating ones personal desires for the purpose of a higher course.

Plato asserted that when the different classes play their roles without overlapping with the roles of the other party, harmony is attained in the society and everything flows smoothly (Watt, 1997). Justice according to him is not the exclusiveresponsibilityof one of the classes but it is the harmonious interrelationship between the different classes in the state. He then used the concept of the state to explain the virtues of the individual human beings. He presumed that just like the state, the individual has a

complex system of different parts that function to attain harmony within the individual.

The physical body corresponds to the land, buildings and other physical material resources of the city. In addition, every human being has got three souls that correspond to the three classes in the state. Each of them contributes in their own way to the successful operation of the person as a whole. There is the rational soul. It is also the mind or the intellect. This is the thinking portion of all humans that is responsible for discernment of reality and differentiates it with illusions. What is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. There is also the spirited soul.

It is the active portion of the humans that normally acts the will of the intellect. Finally we have the appetitive soul, which is emotional and contains desires. It wants and feels many desires. Most of the desires emanating from it must be deferred if the individual is to exercise self control directed by the rational pursuits. Just as in the case of a well organized state, justice in an individual is achieved when all the components making up the individual work in harmony. The tripartite division as explained by Plato forms the basis of understanding the individual.

From the view that Plato develops, justice is better than injustice. True justice in human beings is a kind of good health that can only be attained when all the sections of the soul work together in harmony (Irwin, 1999). In an unjust person, the parts are in constant conflicts, poorly organized and disintegrated compromising the personality. The whole idea of the state is explained by Plato from the philosophical point of view. He states that

philosophy opens up peoples thinking to be able to see far. This is parallel to the light provided by the sun.

Philosophy is a great tool that helps people to be able to deal with life issues on a logical point of view. Just like the sun sheds light in the morning and darkness disappears, the same way philosophy enlightens the individual to be able to view issues from a wider and in depth perspective. This helps one to solve issues that affect the individual and those that affect the society. According to Plato, the love of philosophy is the love of reality. Those who remain in the world of shadows miss a lot of reality. When they are enlightened, they behave in the most noble way.

To elaborate further the issue of enlightenment brought about by philosophy, Plato used the analogy of the cave. The allegory of the cave presents a condition where a group of prisoners are chained in a cave. The cave is dimly lit. The prisoners cannot be able to turn their heads and hands because they are fastened by ropes. They stare to a wall in front all day. There is a small fire outside the cave. A group of puppeteers are walking along a small raised path which is adjacent to the cave. The small fire projects shadows on the wall they are facing on. They just see the shadows of the objects which are outside.

They believe that the shadows that they see are true. The people have been in the cave since childhood and have never seen the outside light (Plato & Jowett, 1941). The raised path also contains people who are walking along it. As usual some are talking while others are silent. The prisoners just see the shadows of the objects in the opposite wall. They cannot be able to see the

real objects because their legs, hands and necks are fast chained. What they can only see images of themselves as well as the images of the outside objects being projected by the fire which is lit outside.

They do not also hear the reality of what the people are saying. To them the truth is literally nothing else than the shadows that they can see (Plato & Jowett, 1941). Plato tries to explain what would happen when the prisoners are released from the underground cave. Plato explains what would happen when one of the prisoners is liberated and allowed to see the real objects outside. When one of the individuals is allowed to see the light outside, the eyes will suffer sharp pains due to the glare of the light outside. At first, he will not be able to see the realities which at first he had seen as shadows.

He will also conceive someone saying to him that what he was saying was just an illusion. When he gets nearer to the reality and more light continues to shed on him, he is likely to react differently from his earlier conditions. If he is asked to name the objects that are real, he is likely to say that the shadows he saw earlier were the real objects and that what he was being shown was the illusion. When he is compelled to look straight into the glare, he might feel a sharp pain in the eyes that will compel him to resist reality and instead want to go back to see the objects which he can see without the pain.

When he will be forced to see the light of the sun, he is also likely to be pained and irritated. When he approaches to the light, the eyes are likely to be temporarily blinded and he may not see anything of the realities. Other released prisoners are likely to behave differently. Some are likely to be

resilient while others are likely to adapt to the reality world. In explaining this, when each of the individuals are placed in such a situation, they are also likely to behave in a similar to the prisoners. The allegory of the cave explains the process in which individuals undergo in the process of being enlightened.

Each of the human beings has their own cave that they live in before the process of enlightenment turns an individual to think objectively. When one is not enlightened, they are like prisoners who are living in an underground cave. They always have the habit of seeing darkness. They distort reality and confuse reality for illusions. In a political situation for instance, the leaders do not know the reality about how they are supposed to lead. They therefore lead the people in the wrong direction because of the concepts that they hold which are not universal and are based on superficial reasoning.

From a wide field of view, Plato believes that to maintain harmony and justice in society, everyone should be able to perform his/her activity in the society. I agree with this conception of Plato because a just and an efficient society is where there is no overlapping of issues. Where individuals play roles that they are not meant to be playing, there will be confusion and conflict is likely to arise in such situations. For instance, in a typical society where the police have been employed, they are supposed to maintain law and order in order to ensure that activities in the society run normally.

They will punish the law breakers which will ensure that vices do not happen in the society. On another level, the traffic police would be able to deal with the drivers who break traffic rules. This will ultimately tend to minimize the

accidents that happen on the roads. This ultimately produces harmony in the society. The issue that the lives of individuals are predetermined raises concerns on the freedom of the individual to rise to the position of leadership based on merit. Personal freedom is the key factor that determines who we are.

Individuals should therefore be given a chance to choose the kind of life that they want to lead. It is through freedom that people come to know the kind of positions that is best suited to them. This happens through the meaning that is attached to things. In this case, Plato seems to ignore important factors such as hard work, passion and experience that allow humans to do extremely well in their endeavors even though they may not seem to be naturally gifted in such areas. Success in matters concerning leadership requires an integration of different factors apart from the natural qualities.

Tasks are accomplished easily by use of the natural talents but they do not guarantee efficient accomplishment. Moreover, people with the zeal to succeed in certain tasks may at times do it better than those who are gifted because they are motivated to excel in such activities. A contradiction also arises in the case where Plato advocates for telling of lies in order to perpetuate the natural division of the different roles. On one hand, Plato advocates for morality. On the other hand, it is ironical to advise the educators to propagate falsehoods in order to reinforce the issue of naturalness of division of labor.

Educators are meant to be role models in terms of being a role moral educator. Kant argues that everybody is equal, free and able to reason.

Therefore holding the believe that the guardians are pure and are the ones who can only reason logically is a fallacy. The fact that the guardians are endowed with the capability of thinking philosophically does not in any way deny other people a chance to exploit their intellectual capability. The focus of such a concept can only be aimed at maintaining the status quo of the elites.

They therefore prevent other categories from accessing chances in such status and analyzing the different possibilities of change that can be effected. (Foster, 1937). The concept of Plato seems to bring about discrimination in the society. This happens when he advocates for the guardians to choose their partners from their fellow guardians. This will consequently tend to maintain power and authority among a small group of people. It is viable to choose leaders by producing intelligent people with philosophical thinkers. The idea that the guardians should live in poverty without families or property ownership is a violation of human nature.

Plato provides an ideal situation of a different human who can live special lives. They can even fully sacrifice their comforts for the sake of the general population. This however is not always the truth. It could be hard if such a system was to be induced (Foster, 1937). Most of the people are employed to gain material wealth. Denying them such kind of a right would repel services from such people. Plato's concept of the allegory of the cave is highly applicable especially in the contemporary society. First, it brings out the real meaning of education.

From his explanation, education is not meant to make individuals conform to the prevailing conditions. It is meant to reform the intellectual capability of the individual such that they can be able to discover issues on their own. The work of the educator is to ignite the person. From there the learner can be able to discover things on their own. He refuses to believe that the human mind is limited in any way. He believes that the human intellect is special in that it has an endless potential to venture into the infinite world of possibilities.

From this understanding, human beings may realize their full potential and engage their full potential in solving problems especially those that affect the society. For example in leadership, the leaders should not be limited to the thinking applied since their childhood. As they grow up they should learn to adapt to new ways of solving problems and relating with the general public. Plato's concept will also help every individual to respect each other regardless of their tribe or race as long as they understand that they are all special creatures.

In a nutshell therefore, the work of Plato is still influential today as it can be applied to solve many problems in the current society. Works cited M. B. Foster. "A Mistake of Plato's in the Republic." *Mind*, 46 (1937): 386–393. T. H. Irwin. "Republic 2: Questions about Justice." in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. , Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 164–185. Watt, Stephen (1997), "Introduction: The Theory of Forms ", *Plato: Republic*, London: Wordsworth Editions, pp. pages xiv–x Plato, & Jowett, B. (1941). *Plato's The Republic*. New York: The Modern Library.