

Plato's ideal city

Philosophy



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The Ideal City In Plato's book " Republic" he describes what he thinks would be an ideal city, for this city to be ideal it would have to be just. In his just city there are three classes of people; gold, silver, and bronze/iron; known as the National Division of Labor. The guardians of the city are placed in the gold category, the auxiliaries in the silver, and the farmers and craftsmen are in the bronze/iron category. Plato argues that the National Division of Labor reflects the requirements of nature and produces a harmonious whole. Wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice are the four virtues that this ideal city must have to be just. The guardians, also known as philosopher kings, being in the gold class of the city, are wise, knowledgeable, and most importantly they are philosophers. They enjoy learning about forms and think that anything else won't bring somebody happiness. They believe that forms are the highest level of happiness and that by learning about and understanding forms brings knowledge.

To be a guardian they must be ruled by their reason and not let spirit or appetites take over. They are responsible for ruling the city. Guardians are not allowed to make any money or have a job outside of guardianship nor are they able to own anything. At childhood they start an extensive amount of study in music, poetry, and physical training. The study of these subjects develops harmony between them and is said to be good for the soul. Plato argues that " a good soul by its own virtue makes the body as good as possible" (403d).

In the silver class of the city are the auxiliaries, or in other words the warriors. These people have to be courageous; they are responsible for

protecting the city and keeping everything at peace. They love victory and honor and go through massive physical training to be strong for battle and enforce the laws of the guardians. Instead of focusing on forms, like the guardians, auxiliaries put their focus towards particulars. That is essential in the job that they have because they need to understand what particulars are and how they operate to be able to fight.

If they the people in the silver class flourish and thrive in their jobs, then they will experience happiness. Just like the lives of the guardians, the lives of the auxiliaries are completely controlled; they all live in the same place and don't have any privacy, they all eat the same thing and have their schedule planned out for them and they're not allowed to own anything. They're not allowed to make any money or have anything that isn't needed to be a warrior. Basically, the auxiliaries don't have lives other than training.

The farmers and craftsmen are considered to be in the bronze/iron category, they are the producers of the city. Unlike the guardians and auxiliaries, they tend to be ruled by their appetites other than reason and spirit. The farmers and craftsmen seem to focus more on belief and opinion other than the forms or particulars. They have more creativity than the guardians and auxiliaries which was highly despised of by Plato. Plato believed that imagination was nothingness and ignorance; he did not think that it helped you flourish or thrive in any way.

He said that a thing such as art and imagination only brought pleasure and not knowledge, which he said wasn't happiness. Even if you were and artist and you flourished and thrived in that area you still weren't considered to be

happy because you don't know anything about the forms and art is projected as ignorance. They are able to have jobs, make money, buy and sell property, and own whatever they want. Farmers and craftsmen are considered free people compared to guardians and auxiliaries, they only have to follow certain rules obtained by the guardians.

The city wouldn't be able to exist without the bronze/iron category; the farmers and craftsmen grow all the food and make every product that is needed. If I had to choose which category I would like to be in I would choose the bronze/iron category. I wouldn't prefer to be in the gold or silver category because I wouldn't want my life completely controlled and not be able to have any privacy. Having my life all about the rest of the city and having my life planned out isn't something that I would enjoy, I would want to make my own decisions and not having them made for me.

Sure you could say that that is selfish and unjust but that is what would truly make me happy. Plato says that to truly be happy that you have to flourish and thrive as opposed having pleasure. I think that if I was in the bronze/iron class that I would flourish and thrive because in that class I have more opportunities to succeed in different areas of life. In the bronze/iron class you are able to live your own life, the life you want to live instead of being told what to do and how to live every day.

In this ideal and just city, everyone: the guardians, auxiliaries, and farmers and craftsmen, have to do their own task, otherwise it wouldn't be just. The people in these three classes all have to flourish and thrive in whichever class they are in. The guardians can't do the job of the auxiliaries or the

farmers and craftsmen, the auxiliaries can't do the job of the guardians or farmers and craftsmen, and the farmers and craftsmen can't do the job of the guardians or auxiliaries. If everything works out the way that Plato plans, then this ideal and just city would be the perfect utopia.