

Plato: the republic assignment



**ASSIGN
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Introduction to Philosophy Plato is one of the many philosophers who have had an influence on the ideas of humane thinking. Born in Athens, believed to be around 428 BC, Plato has expressed various works pertaining to idealism and the theory of forms. Plato has made many allegories and metaphors of life. One of his many famous writings would be included in his collected dialogues. The Republic, Book 1, is a Socratic dialogue written by Plato around his mid-life. The Republic (Book 1) focuses on the definition of justice and the order and character of the just city-state and the just man.

The Republic is Plato's best known work and has proven to be one of the most influential works of philosophy and political theory. In the Republic, Socrates as well as other various philosophers discuss the meaning of justice and examine whether or not the just man is happier than the unjust man. The people included in the argument also bring out topics pertaining to the theory of forms, immortality of the soul, and the roles of the philosopher and of poetry in society.

Socrates defines justice as a man who tells the truth and paying back all his debts or whoever he owed (developed from what was said from Cephalus and earlier to Socrates and the others). But in his same idea of what justice is, he admits that this action can be unjust according to other synopses. The scenario that Socrates uses in the book is that if a person took over weapons from a friend who was in his right mind and the friend later on goes mad and demands it back but the man does not return the weapons then the man is not just.

His actions were just but others would consider him an unjust man because it is as if he held possessions that were not his. Justice is doing what the superior people believe is right and will also benefit others. So Socrates concludes that justice is nothing more than honoring legal obligations and being honest. After Cephalus leaves the argument of what justice is, Polemarchus takes over and proposes another idea of justice. He says that justice is when you owe friends help, and you owe enemies harm.

Both Cephalus and Polemarchus idea of what justice is shows the underlying importance of how giving what you owe to someone is appropriate and just. Polemarchus's idea of what justice is derives from a popular thought of the ambitious young politician whereas his father's, Cephalus, idea shows the opinion of what justice is to an old businessman. Socrates refutes Polemarchus's idea of what justice is by saying how our judgment of justice cannot be based on friends and enemies because we are not friends with "the most virtuous individuals" and our enemies are not always the "scum of society."

So if we go by Polemarchus, it will lead us to harming the good and helping the bad. The two ideas of what justice is from both Polemarchus and Cephalus leads to Thrasymachus opinion on what is justice. In book 1, Socrates and Thrasymachus begin to quarrel back and forth about justice of the sophist. Sophists were the philosophers who taught people how to make weaker arguments appear stronger. They were more interested in winning an argument than discovering the truth. Thrasymachus was one and he included the idea that justice is the interest of the stronger. It is the advantage of the stronger that is the just, while the unjust is what profits a

man's self and is for his advantage" quoted from page 594 , 344 c.

Thrasymachus simply says how it does not pay to be just but when unjust, you receive a type of profit. Thrasymachus assumes that justice is the unnatural desire of humans wanting to have more. Justice is a convention imposed on human beings. We do not benefit from adhering to just actions. Thrasymachus concludes that the rational thing to do is to ignore justice entirely.

After Thrasymachus proposes his idea of justice, the whole discussion had been shifted and Socrates has to now prove what justice is and prove that it is worthwhile. Socrates has three arguments against Thrasymachus proposal. First, he makes Thrasymachus admit that his idea promotes injustice as a virtue, or moral excellence and an admirable quality. According to Thrasymachus, life is seen as a continual competition to get more money, power, etc. and whoever is the most successful in the game has the greatest virtue.

Then Socrates explains how injustice cannot be a virtue because it is the opposite of wisdom. The man with many skills will never seek to beat another who has the same skills. Socrates then moves on to another argument which is that one must be "moderately just" by following rules so that he will reach the goals that is wanted (money, power, etc.). Finally, he argues that since justice is a "virtue of the soul", which means health pertaining to the soul, justice is desirable because it will benefit one's soul by providing health for their soul.

The introduction and the conclusion are the frame for the body of the Republic. It expresses the question asked frequently “ is justice better than injustice? ” and “ will an unjust man fare better than a just man? ‘ These questions are balanced by the concluding answer that Socrates supplies the readers with. “ Justice is preferable to injustice”. Book 1 of the Republic is the short dialogue expressing the opinions about Justice from the common public. Plato’s collected dialogues give human beings a new idea on justice and how we should be virtuous and stick to being just rather than being unjust.