

Paradox of the republic: plato assignment



The Republic was written in dialogues narrated by Socrates. These dialogues were Socrates' teachings as best Plato could remember them. His writings left an undeniable mark on the world. The Republic was one of his most famous works. It outlines the core of his beliefs. Politically, Plato explains the paradox of justice and the law. Plato believes that absolute justice is the same for everyone without exception. This justice goes beyond power and or money. He feels justice is not necessarily the law. " Law is an imperfect form of justice. What is legal is not necessarily moral. In Book 1 of Plat's The Republic, Plato explains that justice is a balance teens reason, courage and man's needs or in other words, the head, the heart and the stomach. He goes on to explain that justice or fairness does not always mean equal. The law may change but justice remains constant. A good rule or law however is a just rule. Plato felt that to get people to act justly one must teach them ethics and values. He also believed that along with these ethics and values we must have a reasonable understanding of these rules.

An understanding of these rules is needed so people are more apt to comply with them and therefore maintain a just and fair society. Another paradox scudded in Plat's The Republic is authority and liberty. Plato strongly favors authority. He has little faith in man. Plato believes that men are more unreasonable than reasonable. He feels that most men and women cannot be objective and make rules that benefit all of society not just themselves or their family. He feels that personal liberty and choice only bring disunity, unhappiness and anxiety.

Even today experts agree that children brought up with rules tend to be more secure and happy than children who are not taught acceptable

behavior or who don't have authority figures in their lives. In *The Republic*, Plato explains that the authority will be made up of people who are able to make up reasonable rules. These people, men and or women would be chosen and then educated in ethics, morals and reasoning. He further explains that if the authorities' give people objective rules with reasons then objective behavior should follow. In Plat's *Republic*, by using reasonable authority he is trying to create a reasonable social order.

He feels that reasonable rules should come from the outside not from each person's inner feelings. The guardians, or authority are able, by using reasoning and assign just laws to keep the dignity and liberty of the individual and also maintain a just and orderly society. In Plat's *The Republic* men and women would be treated equally. Both genders would be educated until the age of 18. Between the ages of 18 and 22 everyone would go to the army to gain courage. After the army all would go to college until age 26. During college they would be selected for what ever service they are qualified for.

Either a man or women could become a guardian, server or helper, and or a producer. The guardians themselves would make equal amounts of money so they could concentrate on a immaterial existence. Plato felt an inequality of wealth would cause an ethical breakdown. These three groups, the guardians, servers and the producers, although different in the roles they play and jobs they have would not be considered better or worse, inferior or superior to one another, just different. Each group would fulfill a societal need by bringing goods and services or rules for everyone to benefit by.

When Plato was thinking out his Republic he felt society took president over the individual. "The whole is greater than its parts", he said. However, Plato also said, "you need to balance the order of society with the rights of the individual." Plato felt in a natural state people would war against one another. That is why a civil or social contract is needed to keep man from killing one another. Man would then enter into this social contract for protection, to trade goods and services with others and simply to have their needs taken care of.

For this social contract to be successful each individual must have a responsibility and an obligation to his fellow man and follow the rules of the contract. In this way the individual will gain but society will prevail. It is a give and take proposition. People are working for the benefit of society and individuals benefit from working for the society. Plato wanted to set up an interdependent society where we would service one another with competence, where each one would better themselves by working for the society and fulfilling different needs. Everyone would be working for the betterment of society and thereby helping themselves. We are stronger together than we are individually. "In the paradox of order and change, Plato favors order. In Plato's Republic he speaks of a specific social order and feels that there are absolute laws and reasons without exceptions to keep that order. He feels order will give a permanent sense of security. He feels that change can only create chaos and anxiety. He says that each person will belong to a specific group and should work at a specific job throughout their life time. Not necessary the job a person may want, but one that he or she is good at.

He wants people to do only one thing in their life and not change their jobs. He says people are happiest when they are doing something they are good at. It would be too emotionally draining and chaotic to do several jobs, or to try different professions just for the heck of it He wants people to follow the rules to maintain order in the society and in only that way can society be happy and emotionally healthy. Plato was a deductive thinker. He was able to take general information and break it down to specifics. His was not knowledge completely dependent on experience or prior knowledge.

He was able to use assumptions not necessarily based on facts or principles from which a logical conclusion could be drawn. Deduction transcends direct observations. With deductive reasoning you start with a premise and a conclusion will then follow. An example fifth would be when we have a mathematical hypothesis and we must go through the specific steps to prove it. We start off with a general idea and break it down to its specifics. With inductive reasoning the premise is made by observation and the conclusion stands only in relation to the observations on which it is based.

It is more concrete thinking. "What you see is what you get". This type of thinking "posteriori" or after the fact reasoning would not allow the guardians to successfully rule. They would not be able to anticipate future problems or have insight to successfully rule society. Therefore Plato felt the people who are able to use "priori" reasoning or deduction and are able to come up with ideas should be the guardians or the people in authority. Absolute and Relativism Here again, Plato believed in the absolute. There is only one reality.

There is only one rule for everyone. With relativism it can become so individualized and so changing that it will bring a lack of social order. Absolutism will give universal order. "The world is what it is not what is thought about it." Absolutism is straight forward. Plato felt that there was a universal concept or idea. The idea or concept never changes but tangible objects do. For example, the idea of a table whose definition is: an article of furniture supported by one or more vertical legs and having a flat horizontal surface. The table itself may change.

It may be made out of wood or plastic, it may be different colors or have designs on it or not, but the idea or concept of a table still remains the same. It is still an article of furniture that everyone knows as a table. Plato felt that the concept was more important because the concept never changed.

Idealism and Materialism Plato is an idealist. An idealist "asserts that reality consists of ideas and thoughts rather than material objects and forces." Material possessions, although important to live are not paramount for an idealist, Plato says "materialism can increase your standard of living but it does not teach values. An idealist feels that the world has meaning apart from its surface appearance." "The world of sight, sounds and individual things is the perishable world and not the real world" Plato said the "idea or concept is more real than the individual thing." Idealism emphasizes the significance or essence of the person and the mental or spiritual side of life. Plato felt "that behind the world of change, the world we see and feel, there is an ideal world of eternal essence, forms or ideas. Although idealists feel reality is immaterial, Plato would not say that there is nothing real except mind and its experiences.

He realized the importance of material objects needed for a comfortable life. Because of this, he wanted equal wealth for the guardians so they would be able to concentrate on a immaterial existence. No matter how idealistic you may be there are material things that humans need to survive. Plato felt that man's decisions were predetermined by an unbroken chain of cause and effect. Therefore he felt man had no real free will. Rather, his choices or decisions were decided y previous actions or events that acted on his character.

If our choice is always explicable by the reference to some want and wants are not themselves chosen, then it seems that all our actions are predetermined. Plato says we can not help any decisions in any strict sense. Therefore, no one can be blamed or held responsible for wrong doing. Plat's position on this paradox is nearer to " no one intentionally does wrong. " He pities rather than blames a wrong doer. Plato also however is committed to a determinist picture of deliberate action but also holds fast to the concept that no one is expansible for wrong doing.

Plato is more interested in character rather than choice. The conflict of free will and determinism is really the conflict between one's higher and lower self or one's reason and one's physical urges. He feels that if man is taught to be ethical and honest then making the right decision will come naturally. Your free will will be really determined by the education and training one would receive growing up in a very orderly, ethical and structured society. In other words no one would makes decisions based on their own needs but would always have the good of society in mind because hat is what you were taught.

Relativism in ethics is when a person's ethics or justice comes from within that individual. Relativism assumes that the individual has dignity and therefore good judgment. In relativism, however, it always depends. There are no absolute values or truths in relativism. All values are relative to time, place and culture. Each truth may vary according to the individual group, time and area he lives. Plato on the other hand was very much an absolutist. He felt with "absolute" thinking there is no question as to proper behavior. We should have the same rules and norms for everyone without exception.

Plato felt absolute laws or rules will give people or society universal order. He felt there was a universally accepted code of behavior that all should follow in order to insure an orderly, safe and productive society. Plato felt that to be able to be a guardian of the rules one must be able to think objectively. One must be able to put his own thoughts and feelings aside and have the outcome unaffected by these internal cues. In other words to be objective one must be open minded. Plato felt that truth or justice should be absolute and reached objectively, not depended on any one errors quirks.

He felt that if you give people objective rules with reasons for them then you will get objective behavior thereby balancing the social order with the rights and dignity of the individual. Being subjective, one would not be able to put personal feelings aside and make decisions to benefit the whole of society.

All decisions would be biased and based on ones' own wants and needs.

Plato wanted a mutual interdependent society where we would service each others needs competently. He felt as a society we are stronger together than we are individually. The whole is more important than its parts as his feeling. Plato did not believe that it is a good thing for each man to run his own life

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as he seems fit. " In the Republic, Plato explains " people should not choose the trade they wish to practice rather they are to be given the job for which they are best suited. " Although Plato did not place a high value on freedom of the individual, he did consider happiness to be important. He felt happiness could be achieved if a person would perform as best he could the job for which he was best suited. Plato felt that Greek society gave individuals too much freedom to run their own lives and the exults were that they became undisciplined and unhappy. People come together to form a community because they are not self sufficient as individuals. Without cooperation they cannot supply themselves with the things they need. " Therefore society must be paramount in order to make the individual happy and well cared for. If the individual were most important it would be every man for himself. No one would care about the big picture, each man would only worry about himself and getting through the day. Each man would have to take care of all his needs instead of everyone helping each other. Society would break down and no one would be safe or cared for.

Plato was a reasonable man. He believed that reason is the foundation for a civilized society. However he felt that man was more unreasonable than not. He felt man had to be taught to be reasonable In his republic he was trying to create a reasonable social order. He felt that reason comes from the outside or in other words reasoning needs to be taught it is not an in born trait. If these reasons were to be followed rather than following one's emotions, a reasonable social order with dignity of the individual would thrive. Plato was to in favor of teaching poetry or music to the young.

He believed that the arts just stirred up emotions and reasons not emotions are what will give society structure. Plato did feel that in training young people one could use lies, stories or tales to get children emotionally involved with learning morals or values. Plato felt " man will be disciplined or self controlled when his reason is in charge and when his emotions and desires do not struggle against his reason. " He felt we must all follow reason or we will not have a civilized society. People who rely on their emotions instead of thinking or reasoning UT a problem run the risk of not seeing all sides or being fair to everyone involved.