

# Research paper on justice and education in platos republic

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Book II of Plato's Republic details the ideas behind justice, and presents a pair of complex arguments that shed further light on the detailed and complicated questions that just behavior raises. Glaucon asks Socrates and the others to find a way to prove that justice is something that should be sought after to the point where it is desired in and of itself and for whatever consequences may arise.

According to Glaucon, many people will consider justice to be something that we do not want around, but we feel it is necessary in order to stave off chaos and complete disorder. Due to humanity's propensity for chaos and crime, not to mention violence, justice is something that has to be put up with, but not enjoyed. It is an informal social contract that allows everyone to live in peace, despite our own base desires. Justice is a burden that must be undertaken in order to enjoy having a civil society that people can be comfortable in (Reeve, 2005).

This is necessary because being unjust is simply a part of life, something that many people desire to be, as it allows them to be free to express themselves and feel comfortable in their actions. The just man, on the other hand, hates that he has to hold himself back, but forces himself to do it in order to fit in among the rest of society.

Adeimantus then adds to that argument, pointing out that people are only just because it will get them favor in the afterlife, and so it is not entirely a selfless act. With that theory of justice, Socrates must prove that justice is something that people actively want to have in their lives, and would choose it given the option.

However, Socrates retorts with a vision of justice that splits it into two types, the kind for man and the kind for the state, or polis. Cities are more important and larger in scale than a man, with many different facets of justice, including political. He forms a perfectly ideal and just city for his hypothesis, and looks at how justice enters into this city. Through this city, he builds on his thesis in order to determine the best way for justice to thrive for its own sake.

In Book II of Plato's Republic, he also discusses the principles of education, and how it plays into the body and soul of a person (Lane, 2009). The quality of an education is absolutely important, as getting the wrong kind of education will poison your mind with erroneous ideas. Specialization is an important aspect of education - finding an individual's best strengths and speaking most fervently to them, allowing that person to serve the polis the best way he can. Whether it is through food or medicine, or craftsmanship, the producing class is the basic specialization to fill, because it fills the most pressing needs of the people. According to Socrates, "The result, then, is that more plentiful and better-quality goods are more easily produced if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited, does it at the right time, and is released from having to do any of the others." A specialist can do one thing very well, and rely on the others to provide the rest of the things that the people need due to their specializations.

This basic form of the city, from the producing class on, is the "healthy city," allowing it to only be operated based on what is necessary. However, as Gaucon states, this kind of city is out of the realm of reality, as some desires

are unnecessary but must be met. Culture and art are not necessary for physical survival, but people crave them anyway.

As a result, Socrates continues to build it into a luxurious city, where the other specializations for culture, trade and education are created. Warriors will also be enlisted and trained in order to defend this presumably prosperous state from harm. Since specialization is necessary, no producers can act as warriors, since they must be allotted to farming and making.

The education of the guardians is very important - they must find a proper balance between rigidity and gentility, being neither too tough or too soft. The selection of these warriors must be a careful process - they must have the right mindset and spirit, and love honor and philosophy in addition to their physical prowess.

Guardians will not come about through simple nature; there are some aspects to warriors that are inherent, but those qualities must be nurtured and cared for through education. Warriors are educated both in mind and body, giving physical training a supplement in philosophy and intelligence. They must only be told certain stories about the gods, in order to shape their opinions and mindsets on what is good and responsible, and what must be protected. Therefore, unjust gods must be ignored or not confronted in this education, because there is a risk that these warriors would glorify that unjust behavior and replicate it on their own. What's more, the gods that are shown to warriors cannot be tricksters who lie and disguise themselves, as that is not the proper behavior for a warrior. Honesty and transparency are

vital to a guardian's personality and demeanor, and so those stories must be avoided.

While these restrictions on education are regretful, they are important, as a warrior must be shaped and transformed into an instrument of the polis, a warrior who will defend the city at any cost. Any presentation of doubt or dishonesty in a flattering light would shake the foundation of what they are being taught.

In conclusion, Plato presents the importance of education and justice in the city in Book II of *The Republic*. His ruminations on how complex justice can be, and what really drives us to do what we do are infinitely interesting and provocative, and they raise many questions about why people do the things they do. Also, he stresses the importance of specificity in education, and providing a particular message for those who are attempting to achieve a specialization, such as being a warrior.

## **Works Cited**

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