

Political philosophy and plato assignment



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Credited as one of the founders of Western philosophy, he is an enigmatic figure known chiefly through the accounts of later classical writers, especially the writings of his students Plato and Xenophobe, and the plays of his contemporary Aristotelian. Many would claim that Plat's dialogues are the most comprehensive accounts of Socrates to survive from antiquity. Through his portrayal in Plat's dialogues, Socrates has become renowned for his contribution to the field of ethics, and it is this

Platonic Socrates who also lends his name to the concepts of Socratic irony and the Socratic method, or lunches. The latter remains a commonly used tool in a wide range of discussions, and is a type of pedagogy in which a series of questions are asked not only to draw individual answers, but also to encourage fundamental insight into the issue at hand. It is Plat's Socrates that also made important and lasting contributions to the fields of epistemology and logic, and the influence of his ideas and approach remains strong in providing a foundation for much western philosophy that followed.

As one recent commentator has put it, Plato, the idealist, offers " an idol, a master figure, for philosophy. A Saint, a prophet of the ' Sun-God', a teacher condemned for his teachings as a heretic. " Yet, the ' real' Socrates, like many of the other ancient philosophers, remains, at best, enigmatic and, at worst, unknown. Perhaps his most important contribution to Western thought is his dialectic method of inquiry, known as the Socratic method or method of " lunches", which he largely applied to the examination of key moral concepts such as the Good and Justice.

It was first described by Plato in the Socratic Dialogues. To solve a problem, it would be broken down into a series of questions, the answers to which gradually distill the answer a person would seek. The influence of this approach is most strongly felt today in the use of the scientific method, in which hypothesis is the first stage. The development and practice of this method is one of Socrates' most enduring contributions, and is a key factor in earning his mantle as the father of political philosophy, ethics or moral philosophy, and as a figurehead of all the central themes in Western philosophy.

To illustrate the use of the Socratic method; a series of questions are posed to help a person or group to determine their underlying beliefs and the extent of their knowledge. The Socratic method is a negative method of hypothesis elimination, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. It was designed to force one to examine one's own beliefs and the validity of such beliefs.

In fact, Socrates once said, " I know you won't believe me, but the highest form of Human Excellence is to question oneself and others. " Philosophical beliefs The beliefs of Socrates, as distinct from those of Plato, are difficult to discern. Little in the way of concrete evidence exists to demarcate the two. The lengthy theories given in most of the dialogues are those of Plato, and some scholars think Plato so adapted the Socratic style as to make the literary character and the philosopher himself impossible to distinguish.

Others argue that he did have his own theories and beliefs, but there is much controversy over what these might have been, owing to the difficulty

of separating Socrates from Plato and the difficulty of interpreting even the dramatic writings concerning Socrates. Consequently, distinguishing the holographic beliefs of Socrates from those of Plato and Xenophobe is not easy and it must be remembered that what is attributed to Socrates might more closely reflect the specific concerns of these thinkers.

The matter is complicated because the historical Socrates seems to have been notorious for asking questions but not answering, claiming to lack wisdom concerning the subjects about which he questioned others. Socratic Paradoxes Many of the beliefs traditionally attributed to the historical Socrates have been characterized as “ paradox” because they seem to conflict with moon sense. The following are among the so-called Socratic Paradoxes. No one desires evil. NO one errs or does wrong willingly or knowingly.

Virtue-?? all virtue-?? is knowledge. Virtue is sufficient for happiness. The phrase Socratic paradox can also refer to a self-referential paradox, originating in Socrates’ phrase, “ I know that I know nothing noble and good”. Knowledge One of the best known sayings of Socrates is “ I only know that I know nothing”. The conventional interpretation of this remark is that Socrates’ wisdom was limited to an awareness of his own ignorance. Socrates believed wrongdoing was a consequence of ignorance and those who did wrong knew no better.

The one thing Socrates consistently claimed to have knowledge of was “ the art of love”, which he connected with the concept of “ the love Of wisdom”, I. E. , philosophy. He never actually claimed to be wise, only to understand the

path a lover of wisdom must take in pursuing it. It is debatable whether Socrates believed humans (as opposed to gods like Apollo) could actually become wise. On the one hand, he drew a clear line between human ignorance and ideal knowledge; on the other, Plat's Symposium (Diotima's Speech) and Republic (Allegory of the Cave) describe a method for ascending to wisdom.

In Plat's Thesaurus (1 AAA), Socrates compares himself to a true matchmaker (monopoly; g promontories), as distinguished from a panderer (Topiary; q progress). This distinction is echoed in Xenophobe's Symposium (3. 20), when Socrates jokes about his certainty of being able to make a fortune, if he chose to practice the art of pandering. For his part as a philosophical interlocutor, he leads his respondent to a clearer conception Of wisdom, although he claims he is not himself a teacher (Apology).

His role, he claims, is more properly to be understood as analogous to a midwife (papa maim). Socrates explains that he is himself barren of theories, but knows how to bring the theories of others to birth and determine whether they are worthy or mere "wind eggs" (acetateњova anemia). Perhaps significantly, he points out that midwives are barren due to age, and women who have never given birth are unable to become midwives; they would have no experience or knowledge of birth and would be unable to separate the worthy infants from those that should be left on the hillside to be exposed.

To judge this, the midwife must have experience and knowledge of what she is judging. Virtue Bust of Socrates in the Palermo Archaeological Museum.

Socrates believed the best way for people to live was to focus on self-development rather than the pursuit of material wealth. He always invited others to try to concentrate more on friendships and a sense of true community, for Socrates felt this was the best way for people to grow together as a populace.

His actions lived up to this: in the end, Socrates accepted his death sentence when most thought he would simply leave Athens, as he felt he could not run away from or go against the will of his immunity; as mentioned above, his reputation for valor on the battlefield was without reproach. The idea that humans possessed certain virtues formed a common thread in Socrates' teachings. These virtues represented the most important qualities for a person to have, foremost of which were the philosophical or intellectual virtues.

Socrates stressed that "virtue was the most valuable of all possessions; the ideal life was spent in search of the Good. Truth lies beneath the shadows of existence, and it is the job of the philosopher to show the rest how little they really know. Politics It is often argued that Socrates believed "ideals belong in a world only the wise man can understand", making the philosopher the only type of person suitable to govern others. In Plat's dialogue the Republic, Socrates was in no way subtle about his particular beliefs on government.

He openly objected to the democracy that ran Athens during his adult life, It was not only Athenian democracy: Socrates objected to any form of government that did not conform to his ideal of a perfect republic led by philosophers, and Athenian government was far from that. It is, however,

possible that the Socrates of Plat's Republic is colored by Plat's own views. During the last years of Socrates' life, Athens was in continual flux due to political upheaval. Democracy was at last overthrown by a junta known as the Thirty Tyrants, led by Plat's relative, Criticus, who had been a student of Socrates.

The Tyrants ruled for about a year before the Athenian democracy was reinstated, at which point it declared an amnesty for all recent events. Socrates' opposition to democracy is often denied, and the question is one of the biggest philosophical debates when trying to determine exactly what Socrates believed. The strongest argument of those who claim Socrates did not actually believe in the idea of philosopher kings is that the view is expressed no earlier than Plat's Republic, which is widely considered one of Plat's "Middle" dialogues and not representative of the historical Socrates' views.

Furthermore, according to Plat's Apology of Socrates, an "early" dialogue, Socrates refused to pursue conventional politics; he often stated he could not look into other's matters or tell people how to live their lives when he did not yet understand how to live his own. He believed he was a philosopher engaged in the pursuit of Truth, and did not claim to know it fully. Socrates' acceptance of his death sentence, after his conviction by the Boulez (Senate), can also be seen to support this view. It is often claimed much of the anti-democratic leanings are from Plato, who was never able to overcome his disgust at what was done to his teacher.

In any case, it is clear Socrates thought the rule of the Thirty Tyrants was at least as objectionable as Democracy; when called before them to assist in the arrest of a fellow Athenian, Socrates refused and narrowly escaped death before the Tyrants were overthrown. He did however fulfill his duty to serve as Partisan when a trial of a group of Generals who presided over a disastrous naval campaign were judged; even then he maintained an uncompromising attitude, being one of those who refused to proceed in a manner not supported by the laws, despite intense pressure.

Judging by his actions, he considered the rule of the Thirty Tyrants less legitimate than the Democratic Senate that sentenced him to death.

Contributions of Socrates One: Awakened thinkers to the need to examine and reexamine their political, moral, and philosophical views in order to discover and root out errors and misconceptions that impede progress.

Socrates accomplished this task by demonstrating, through cross-examination of people he encountered, that many accepted precepts, conventions, and beliefs were based on faulty logic or outright errors.

A quotation attributed to him states: " The unexamined life is not worth living. " In other words, a human being must not be complacent and self-satisfied; instead, he must be ever probing, exploring, and reconnecting his soul in order to discover ways to improve. Two: Effectively rebutted a central tenet of the Sophists, traveling teachers who harder fees for educating young men. This tenet maintained that the guiding principles of a society, such as justice and truth, were relative concepts—that is, they changed according to the needs of men in a particular time and place.

What was considered right and just in Athens was not necessarily right and just in another society, the Sophists maintained. One man's virtue could be another man's vice. Three: Pioneered the use of inductive reasoning to draw logical conclusions. According to Aristotle, Socrates founded the "scientific method." Four: Demonstrated that wrongdoing results from ignorance. If a man lies, Socrates might have said, he does so because he does not understand the benefits of telling the truth.

Five: Inspired philosophers in his own time and in later times to pursue the truth through rigorous analysis of available, facts, opinions, and so on. Two of the most important philosophers in the history of the world, Plato and Aristotle, both esteemed Socrates as a supreme thinker and infused their philosophical systems with Socratic thought. Plato was a pupil of Socrates, and Aristotle was a pupil of Plato. Six: Showed the world the meaning of integrity and moral commitment by accepting a death sentence rather than recanting his principles. Seven: Made clear that a human being is more than his appearance.

Socrates was ugly, wore old clothes, and walked barefooted through the streets of Athens. But his mind and the words he spoke were beautiful. The trial of Socrates The Trial of Socrates refers to the trial and the subsequent execution of the classical Athenian philosopher Socrates in 399 BC. Socrates was tried on the basis of two notoriously ambiguous charges: corrupting the youth and impiety. More specifically, Socrates' accusers cited two "impious" acts: 'failing to acknowledge the gods that the city acknowledges' and "introducing new deities. A majority of the 501 dikasts (Athenian citizens chosen by lot to serve as jurors) voted to convict him. Consistent with <https://assignbuster.com/political-philosophy-and-plato-assignment/>

common practice, the dikasts determined Socrates' punishment with another vote. Socrates was ultimately sentenced to death by drinking a hemlock-based liquid. The accuser Melitus swore before the Archon, a state officeholder with primarily religious duties. Having decided that there was a case to answer, the Archon summoned Socrates to appear before a jury of Athenian citizens, to answer charges of corrupting the youth of Athens and impiety.

Athenian juries were drawn by lottery from a group of male citizen volunteers. Unlike trials in many modern societies, majority verdicts were the rule rather than the exception. Neither Plato nor Xenophon mentions the number of Socrates' judges, though Plato's *Apology* 38a-b does suggest some definite boundaries: that if just thirty of the votes had been otherwise then he would have been acquitted, and that (perhaps) less than three fifths voted against him. After the vote on Socrates' guilt, Socrates and his prosecutor suggested alternative sentences.

Socrates, after expressing his surprise of the little amount he needed to be have been found innocent, jokingly suggested free meals at the Prytaneion, a particular honor held for city benefactors and winners at the Olympic Games, then offered to pay a fine of 100 drachmas, which was a fifth of his property and a testament to Socrates' poverty. Finally he settled on the sum of 3000 drachmas, put forward by Plato, Critias and Charmides, who guaranteed the payment. His prosecutor proposed the death penalty. The jury voted for death as the penalty - the larger majority showing (Diogenes Laertius 2. 2). Perhaps Socrates had lost support by his slighting and unapologetic tone. Socrates' followers encouraged him to flee, and citizens

expected him to do so and were probably not averse to it; but he refused on principle. Apparently in accordance with his philosophy of obedience to law, he carried out his own execution, by drinking the hemlock provided to him. Socrates died at the age of 70. Most scholars see the conviction and execution of Socrates as a deliberate choice made by the famous philosopher himself. If the accounts of Plato and Xenophobe are reasonably accurate,

Socrates sought not to persuade jurors, but rather to lecture and provoke them. The trial and execution of Socrates produced the first martyr for free speech. PLATO Plato 428/427 BC - 348/347 BC), was a Classical Greek philosopher, mathematician, student of Socrates, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. Along with his mentor, Socrates, and his student, Aristotle, Plato helped to lay the foundations of Western philosophy and science. In the famous words of AN.

Whitehead: The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. Allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them. Plat's sophistication as a writer is evident in his Socratic dialogues; thirty-six dialogues and thirteen letters have been ascribed to him. Plat's writings have been published in several fashions; this has led to several conventions regarding the naming and referencing of Plat's texts.

Plat's dialogues have been used to teach a range of subjects, including philosophy, logic, ethics, rhetoric, and mathematics Plat's philosophical views had many societal implications, especially on the idea of an ideal state or government. There is some discrepancy between his early and later views. Some of the most famous doctrines are contained in the Republic during his middle period, as well as in the Laws and the Statesman.

However, because Plato wrote dialogues, it is assumed that Socrates is often speaking for Plato. This assumption may not be true in all cases.

Plato, through the words of Socrates, asserts that societies have a tripartite class structure corresponding to the appetite/spirit/reason structure of the individual soul. The appetite/spirit/reason stand for different parts of the body. The body parts symbolize the castes of society productive, which represents the abdomen. (Workers) -?? the laborers, carpenters, plumbers, masons, merchants, farmers, ranchers, etc. These correspond to the "appetite" part of the soul. Protective, which represents the chest. (Warriors or Guardians) those who are adventurous, strong and brave; in the armed forces.

These correspond to the "spirit" part of the soul. Governing, which represents the head. Rulers or philosopher Kings) -?? those who are intelligent, rational, self-controlled, in love with wisdom, well suited to make decisions for the community. These correspond to the "reason" part of the soul and are very few. According to this model, the principles of Athenian democracy (as it existed in his day) are rejected as only a few are fit to rule. Instead of rhetoric and persuasion, Plato says reason and wisdom should govern.

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As Plato puts it: ' Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophies, hat is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils,... Nor, think, will the human race. "

(Republic chic-d) Plato describes these " philosopher kings" as " those who love the sight of truth" (Republic chic) and supports the idea with the analogy of a captain and his ship or a doctor and his medicine.

According to him, sailing and health are not things that everyone is qualified to practice by nature. A large part of the Republic then addresses how the educational system should be set up to produce these philosopher kings. However, it must be taken into account that the ideal city outlined in the Republic is qualified by Socrates as the ideal luxurious city, examined to determine how it is that injustice and justice grow in a city (Republic IEEEE).

According to Socrates, the " true" and " healthy" city is instead the one first outlined in book II of the Republic, chic-37th, containing farmers, craftsmen, merchants, and wage-earners, but lacking the guardian class of philosopher-kings as well as delicacies such as " perfumed oils, incense, prostitutes, and pastries", in addition to paintings, gold, ivory, couches, a multitude of occupations such as poets and hunters, and war. In addition, the ideal city is used as an image to illuminate the state of one's soul, or the will, reason, and desires combined in the human body.

Socrates is attempting to make an image of a rightly ordered human, and then later goes on to describe the different kinds of humans that can be

observed, from tyrants to lovers of money in various kinds of cities. The ideal city is not promoted, but only used to magnify the different kinds of individual humans and the state of their soul. However, the philosopher king image was used by many after Plato to justify their personal political beliefs. The philosophic soul according to Socrates has reason, will, and desires united in virtuous harmony.

A philosopher has the moderate love for wisdom and the courage to act according to wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge about the Good or the right relations between all that exists. Wherein it concerns states and rulers, Plato has made interesting arguments. For instance he asks which is better?? a bad democracy or a country reigned by a tyrant. He argues that it is better to be led by a bad tyrant, than be a bad democracy (since here all the people are now responsible for such actions, rather than one individual committing many bad deeds.) This is emphasized within the Republic as Plato describes the event of mutiny onboard a ship.

Plato suggests the ships crew to be in line with the democratic rule of many and the captain, although inhibited through ailments, the tyrant. Plat's description of this event is parallel to that of democracy within the state and the inherent problems that arise. According to Plato, a state made up of different kinds of souls will, overall, cline from an aristocracy (rule by the best) to a democracy (rule by the honorable), then to an oligarchy (rule by the few), then to a democracy (rule by the people), and finally to tyranny (rule by one person, rule by a tyrant).

Plato went on to study with Socrates. He learned to reason and debate through Socrates. Plato Was Very close to him, and when he watched Socrates' trial and murder in 399 BC, it disillusioned him greatly. He no longer trusted the government of Greece; so he decided to open a school in Athens instead of going into politics like everyone in his family had. Plat's school for philosophers was started so that he could train those who would some day be his leaders of cities. His most famous student was Aristotle who later tutored Alexander the Great.

Plato promoted ideas that would eventually effect even Thomas Aquinas who changed Catholic Doctrine to make it conform to the works of Aristotle. Plat's ideas have greatly influenced the thinking of modern governments such as in the founding of the American system. For example, Plato stated, " Unless philosophers bear kingly rule in cities or those who are now called kings and princes become genuine and adequate philosophers, and political power and philosophy are brought together ... Here will be no respite from evil for cities. " - Plato and " The price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men. " From these first democratic societies of the Greeks, Plat's teaching has not necessarily been proven over time. The political philosopher, Helter, for example, was democratically elected by an intelligent populace who were very concerned with public affairs. Plat's thoughts about perceptions of reality are still of interest today. One allegory went something like this:

Suppose a few men were captured when they were born, and made to live in a cave. They are chained by their neck and feet so that they cannot move at all. The men are facing a wall of stone. Behind them burns a fire. In front of

that is a wall along which their captors walk with puppets in their hands. The only truth they know is that Of what shadows kick like and muffled sound echoing throughout the hall. They know not what a true boat looks like, just the shadow of a boat. They make words for the objects they see.

One day one of the men breaks free and gets out of the cave into the world. He sees the fire and the puppets and knows that all he has known all his life was just a piece of all he knew. He got to the outdoors and was blinded by the sun. He had to re-learn what the world really was like. He learned what true boats looked like and found that they were not at all like their shadows. He decided that his friends in the cave should also know that what they saw was not real, but was just an image cast from a wavering fire.

When he went down and told them, they laughed at him and told him he was wrong. They said ' Look! Can you not see the wall? That on the wall is a boat. ' He persisted in his story of the light, and they eventually killed him. This great analogy can apply to what we know about heavens. As it is written in 1 Corinthians 13: 12, " For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall know even as also am known. " Plato sensed that there was a reality apart from his perception as many had sensed before him.

The wisest man that ever lived, Solomon, acknowledged in Ecclesiastic 1 that " there is nothing new under the sun". Indeed, centuries before Plato, it was recorded in Job 1 2: 22, " He [God] reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deep darkness into light. " The mysterious shadows of life can only be brought to the light of understanding by God as explained by the Apostle

in John 1: 5 " And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. " And they killed what they didn't understand as they were afraid of the reality of their sins and crucified the Light.

Plato knew of this human fear factor, " We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light. " -Plato Although Plato died in 347 BC, but his teaching continues to influence governments systems and even doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Most philosophers from antiquity up to today have stood on Plat's broad shoulders attempting to use what he offered and see beyond the cave's shadows. ARISTOTLE Aristotle (b. 384 - d. 322 BCC), was a Greek philosopher, logician, and scientist.

Along with his teacher Plato, Aristotle is generally regarded as one of the most influential ancient thinkers in a number of philosophical fields, including political theory. Aristotle was born in Stagier in northern Greece, and his father was a court physician to the king of Macedon. As a young man he studied in Plat's Academy in Athens. After Plat's death he left Athens to conduct philosophical and biological research in Asia Minor and Losses, and he was then invited by King Philip II of Macedon to tutor his young son, Alexander the Great.

Soon after Alexander succeeded his father, consolidated the conquest of the Greek city-states, and launched the invasion of the Persian Empire. Aristotle returned as a resident alien to Athens, and was a close friend of Antimatter, the Macedonian viceroy. At this time (335-?? 323 BCC) he wrote, or at least worked on, some of his major treatises, including the Politics. When

Alexander died suddenly, Aristotle had to flee from Athens because of his Macedonian connections, and he died soon after.

Aristotle's life seems to have influenced his political thought in various ways: his interest in biology seems to be expressed in the naturalism of his politics; his interest in comparative politics and his sympathies for democracy as well as monarchy may have been encouraged by his travels and experience of diverse political systems; he criticizes harshly, while borrowing extensively, from Plato's *Republic*, *Statesman*, and *Laws*; and his own *Politics* is intended to guide rulers and statesmen, reflecting the high political circles in which he moved.

Political Science in General The modern word 'political' derives from the Greek *politicos*, 'of, or pertaining to, the polis'. (The Greek term *polis* will be translated here as 'city-state'. It is also translated as 'city' or 'polis', or simply anglicized as 'polis'. City-states like Athens and Sparta were relatively small and cohesive units, in which political, religious, and cultural concerns were intertwined. The extent of their similarity to modern nation-states is controversial. Aristotle's word for politics is *politikos*, which is short for *politikos* or 'political science'. It belongs to one of the three main branches of science, which Aristotle distinguishes by their ends or objects. Contemplative science (including physics and metaphysics) is concerned with truth or knowledge for its own sake; practical science with good action; and productive science with making useful or beautiful.

Politics is a practical science, since it is concerned with the noble action or happiness of the citizens (although it resembles a productive science in that

it seeks to create, preserve, and reform political systems). Aristotle thus understands politics as a normative or prescriptive discipline rather than as a purely empirical or descriptive inquiry. In the *Mechanical Ethics* Aristotle describes his subject matter as political science, which he characterizes as the most authoritative science.

It prescribes which sciences are to be studied in the city-state, and the others such as military science, household management, and rhetoric fall under its authority. Since it governs the other practical sciences, their ends serve as means to its end, which is nothing less than the human good. “ Even if the end is the same for an individual and for a city-state, that of the city-state seems at any rate greater and more complete to attain and preserve.

For although it is worthy to attain it for only an individual, it is nobler and more divine to do so for a nation or city-state” (EN 1. 2. 1 Bibb-10). Aristotle political science encompasses the two fields which modern philosophers distinguish as ethics and political philosophy. Political philosophy in the narrow sense is roughly speaking the subject of his treatise called the *Politics*. For a further discussion of this topic, see the following supplementary document: