

Plato's view of justice in the republic assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Plat's View of Justice in the Republic BY CEO Discuss Plat's view of Justice in The Republic. Having lived an extraordinarily long life (for his time), with no consistent doctrine of belief, it has become customary to divide Plat's writings chronologically into three It is important to remember that Plat's time was an age of constant upheaval and it s this air of upheaval and constant change that led him to focus on his societies' failings and to put forward a structured society that puts his view of Justice into practice. The main theme of The Republic is to define Justice and other virtues and to put forward an idea for a Utopian city-state based on his beliefs on Justice and virtue to show how these ideals could be implemented. The text takes the form of a dramatists discourse between certain characters of differing backgrounds and beliefs.

The use of a dramatists debate is a useful way to demonstrate the way Plato (whose ideas are represented by the character of Socrates) would handle his skeptics. It also serves to show the development of his thought through discussion and to septic-proof his argument by foreseeing potential counter arguments. Plato starts demonstrating his definition by taking some popular conceptions of what justice means and whether it is better to live a Just life. In book one the debate starts with a statement made by Cephalic, an old, retired self-made manufacturer.

Cephalic puts forward the view that as people grow older they become more aware of religious teachings regarding retribution in the afterlife or living an unjust life and therefore monitor they're own behavior, in the past and present: ' And when he finds that the sum of his transgressions is great he will many a time like a child start up in his sleep for fear, and he is filled with

dark forebodings. ' He is saying that idea of Justice is something that is merely a doctrine enforced by the unproven premise of damnation.

If fear of an unproven afterlife is the reasoning for living a Just life then the argument for Justice is weak and reliant on blind faith. If an individual does not believe in ' Hades' or Hell then what stops him from acting unjustly?

Continuing on Cephalic states ' Wealth can do a lot to save from having to place in fear because we owe a sacrifice to a god or money to a person'. By this Cephalic means that by having ample wealth he never had the need to be unjust to anyone. He could afford to appease the Gods with sacrifice and to keep his debts paid.

This first presented description of Justice is flawed. Socrates gives the following example to prove this: Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposited arms with me and he asks for them when he is not in his right mind, ought I to give them back to him? No n?? e would say that I ought or that I should be right in doing so, any more than they would say that I ought always to speak the truth to one who is in his condition. ' Socrates, by Capsule's definition Just living, was acting in a Just way when he returned weapons to a maniacal friend (paying his debts).

The modern day equivalent of this scenario is the United Nations returning a previously confiscated nuclear weapon to an insane and potentially violent state in full knowledge that it will be used to wreak havoc (injustice). This demonstrates that Capsule's popular description of Justice is weak and potentially unjust! Later in book 1, When Socrates criticizes Polymerases' idea that man should spite his enemies, Treacherous puts his view forward; '

Since the established rule is surely stronger, anyone who reasons correctly will conclude that the Just is the same everywhere, namely the advantage of the stronger' .

Using this idea Treacherous has declared that Justice is the preserve of the strong and powerful. Justice is whatever the powerful dictate to the masses. He then goes on to state that it is the duty of the poor to rise up and take what they can from the rich. Socrates refutes all these ideas. He believes that the poor should accept the true Justice that is imposed on them by the government. This is an idea that is crucial to the utopia he will later describe. Treacherous demonstrates a sophistic belief that injustice is more profitable to the individual than Justice.

By restating his belief that only the powerful have control over Justice and successfully canvassing for a general consensus that rulers are fallible he shows that Justice (as administered by the powerful) is ' harmful to the one who obeys and serves' . This in itself makes a certain degree of sense since in our wan modern times we consistently see examples of ' Justice' (as administered by the powerful) being non-beneficial to the weak and subservient. The most recently highlighted example would be the recent focus on Taliban-governed Afghanistan.

Justice to the population of a Taliban controlled region meant harsh punishments and draconian, puritanical laws. This is what by European standards would be called unjust. If Treacherous had stopped his argument at this point then he would have contributed an important element to the definition of Justice that we assume in our use of the word today, that which

is morally correct. However as Treacherous is from a sophistic background (I. E. Teacher of economics less popular (by modern standards) potential consequence of his argument, injustice is more profitable than Justice.

Through clever debate and reasoning with Treacherous, Plato (through his 'mouthpiece' character, Socrates) arrives at the following conclusion: 'Apparently, then, injustice has the power, first, to make whatever it arises in-whether it is a city, a family, an army, or anything else-incapable of achieving anything as a unit, because of civil wars and differences it creates, and second, it makes that unit an enemy to itself and to what is in every way its opposite, namely Justice.' This statement shows the Sophist's argument to be a contradiction.

It is impossible for a belief to be profitable if it simply leads to dissent amongst the parties seeking profit. It is impossible for injustice to serve anyone if it is an enemy to itself. Plato points out that for a collective of individuals to act out injustice and all profit from the act there must originally be some sort of Justice present to prevent them all betraying each other, an 'honor amongst thieves' of sorts. The argument for injustice does not ND with book one and returns briefly early in book two.

At the end of book one Plato is no longer refuting suggestions on the nature of Justice and is now speaking in a pro- active, positive manner. He begins to start to build his own ideas of Justice. He believes Justice to be more profitable than injustice describing the comparison like so; 'a Just person is happy and an unjust one is wretched'. This conclusion is reached in the preceding lines when Treacherous agrees that Justice is a virtue of the

soul and therefore that a soul cannot perform well if its particular virtue is loyalty.

There is another important argument that Plato addresses in book two, where Glaucoma, the youth, returns to Thrasymachus's argument with an amendment. Glaucoma asserts that it is profitable for the individual to pretend to be just but live their life in an unjust manner. The idea behind this being that the individual can appear to have the virtue of justice to others without having to be burdened with the responsibilities and constraints of living a just life.

To consider all of these arguments and how they are presented would take many theses and, although relevant to this say topic, I must move on to Plato's own decisions of what justice is and their implementation in his polis due to space and time constraints. Plato has argued that living justly is much more superior to living unjustly because justice breeds happiness and contentment. The next step for Plato, to state and demonstrate his own positive views on justice and why it is 'profitable', is to describe a city-state, a polis, which is an ideal Utopia where all citizens live in harmonious demonic.

By using the macrocosm of the state he will show how justice can be implemented in the individual. Plato believes in the immortality of the soul (a consequence of nouns) and its division into three parts, which in turn are affected by ordering powers. The three parts of the reason and logical thought and the appetitive, the basic appetites of the human soul such as

sex, acquisitions, praise etc. Which must be controlled. This is a fiercely rational and, I would argue, flawed break down of the human character.

It takes no account for the emotional aspect of mankind and it is this inhuman and extremely rational view of humanity that would lead to the immediate failure of the polis if it wherever established due to some of the constraints placed on the citizens of the polis as will be seen later on. The virtues (retreat) of the soul that Plato describes in book four are wisdom (Sophia), courage (Andreia), temperance (sophomores) and justice (diagnoses). It is this idea of the soul that Plato will use in to socially structure the polis .

The aim of this city is to make the soul is happy because all three parts of it are moderated, doing their own jobs and nothing else. This relates to Plat's view of justice in the following manner. To Plato Justice and injustice where to the body what lath and disease are in the body . This is a beautiful analogy and is very similar to basic facets of Chinese medicine were disturbance in the mind is viewed as a pivotal cause for ill physical health, one wonders were oriental factors an influence on Plato or vice versa at this time.

This correlation of classical Greek and ancient Chinese science is especially apparent in 44th of The Republic when ' Health is defined as the establishment of an order by nature among the parts of the body; disease as a disturbance of the natural order of rule and subordination among the parts (44th)' . This reading of Plato by Boggling makes more sense in the context of the polis, as the disease of injustice is the divisor of peoples and the cause

of discontent in society. The polis must be designed in such away that contentment is valued at a premium and corruption and vice made unnecessary and irrelevant.

This has parallels with the medieval belief in The Great Chain Of Being. The Great Chain Of Being was a description of the balance of power and harmony in the world that probably was inspired by Augustine and Platonic thought. At the top of the chain was God who as linked to the King who was linked to his Aristocracy. If any part of a the chain was broken then the natural order of the world was disrupted. An example of how this was believed to manifest would be the mysterious change of calm weather to storms and supernatural occurrences in Shakespearean Macbeth following the usurping of Duncan.

By usurping the legitimate ruler the chain was broken and chaos and disorder in the natural world ensued. Such is the occurrence of injustice in the Polis that the natural harmony will fall apart. I will now summaries the structure of the polis and hopefully answer how the extinctive roles of State and the individual maintain a Just society. The state is divided into three classes, a producer class, a guardian (military/police) class and a ruling class. Later, Plato creates a new ruling class out of the guardians and calls the military/police class auxiliaries and this new ruling class guardians.

The main point of this is to have each class fulfilling a need in the city and not 'usurping' any other person/classes role. Again there are similarities with the great chain of being. Everybody minds their own business and keeps to the plan and demoniac will be intact. The city is based on various natural needs and recognizes that harmony starts with the satisfying of life

requirements. This idea is a nearly to a throw back to The development of a citizen starts with education.

Students are thought a wide range of subjects from the academic to physical. Children are taught philosophy so that there ' will be established within them, as in a polis, a politer' . In other words they will have the same balanced wisdom and discipline governing their souls in life with the demoniac of the state as a living example for the individual. The education also decided what class and profession the child would fit into. Classes could be transcended as children showed an aptitude for different and subjects abilities.

Once an individual was placed in his/her class they remained in it for the duration of their lives. This has distinct parallels with the education system of Ireland were an aptitude in school for the academic can raise points for a place in a college that would further train you for a position of relatively more power than the ' producer class'. The most apt at philosophy and reason were sidelined for the upper two lasses and had their education furthered accordingly. This begs the question of what would happen if the polis were sacked and all the ruling class slain.

How could the polis recover from such an event if the lower classes are conditioned and brain-washed into believing that all they can ever be or do is be the sheep at the bottom of the chain of command? Procreation was also a stage-mannered affair. Parents deemed fit to ' marry' (or mate) were coupled off by what they believed to be random selection. In fact, the couples were selected for their eugenic qualities and paired off like horses on

a stud. Children are taken from their parents at birth. The knowledge of their parent's identity is never revealed to them nor is the child's identity revealed to their parents.

This anonymity was meant to promote equality between young and older generations. The child, being in full knowledge that it is from a foster family, would not be subject to family pride and would have no particular loyalties to any family as its siblings and parents would be unknown. Every elder could be addressed as father or mother as every peer could be addressed as brother or sister. With no bias awards any particular individual the harmony of the polis is further maintained. As mentioned earlier, Plat's great failure from a modern standpoint is his inability to account for emotional aspects in the polis.

The idea of splitting families was doomed to failure in that likenesses between siblings and parents would be impossible to disguise and some people could find out their relatives in this way. However, it could be argued that the psychological effect of not knowing ones natural family could be a non-issue after generations of people living in this way. The eugenic selection of ratters makes a sense of sorts as families with undesirable inherited characteristics could be prevented from passing them on and those with desirable ones could be encouraged to mate.

This is reminiscent of a quasi-Nazi formula for the Aryan race of Third Reich. If one looks closer one can see Plato using injustice to keep Justice by lying about the random selection of couples. Summarizing the above. Plato essentially defines Justice in the state as the three classes staying strictly to

their individual roles in order to maintain a balance of responsibilities for the greater good of all. The state does this by ruling over every aspect of an individual's life from birth and plotting their destiny with the greater good of the polis to mind.

It does this through education, censorship and rigorous controls. Only those with a high knowledge of wisdom (philosophy) are fit to rule as they have enough knowledge to know that Justice is best for all as it is an essential virtue of the soul (diagnoses). Injustice is considered ignorance, as someone with a lot of wisdom could not possibly see injustice as profitable to anyone. The Justice in the soul is described as the virtues (reason) controlling the appetitive parts of the soul.

In this post world war two and post ' Brave New World' time, it is easy to take The Republic as a strange Nazi/Taliban-queue tyrannical state on a first glance. As a state the polis would most definitely have failed. As macrocosm for Justice in the individual it is unsurpassed. Its influence to this day was evident recently when it was voted best philosophical work ever by readers of the web page [http:// www. Philosophers. Co. UK](http://www.Philosophers.Co.UK). Whilst it has certain ideas that maybe questioned against the standards of modern western Europeans, it will certainly provide insight and debate on many philosophical issues for many years.