

# Platopia: The Republic and why it isn't Socrates' Eden

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Man as a species is a perfectionist. As a species seeking perfection humanity is often its harshest critic. It criticizes society, interspecies relationships, the use of natural resources, and of course how the society it creates should run and maintain itself. Man's perfectionist behavior has always been so and in Plato's work *The Republic*, his characters and the famous Socrates set out to theorize the perfect society, the perfect city. They strive for perfection, for utopia. However, once one reads the dialogue it is obvious that this dream city is just that, a dream. In fact it is a pipe dream, and if enacted in reality the results would be absolutely disastrous. This is so because while man will always strive for perfection, man will also always fail.

In the *Republic* a heavy big brother type approach is used in the laying out of the city and its citizens from the very beginning. Socrates and company go over each and every painstaking detail of a person's personal and communal life from birth to death, from love to education, from war and politics to beauty and music. Their method is precise and controlled to procure perfection. Perfection itself is even defined as philosophy in its purest form. Throughout the *Republic* the theory of this perfect city is a model for the perfect soul of the perfect person. Through this essay I will explore how this mission of Plato's is not for the perfection of society but to show how striving for perfection will be the downfall of humanity. He uses a dystopian society to parody the utopian dream and expose the faults in such thinking to his audience. While Plato encourages his students to study philosophy he knows they need understanding of the flaws of man as well. In fact this essay determines that the so-called perfection of the *Republic* is a smoke screen for Plato's true message of the failure of the Republic as a city-state and what Plato's reduction

argument means for the people who read the dialogue. Instead the dialogue encourages people to question themselves in a different way to discover personal justice.

This essay moves step by step through five examples from the dialogue that are components of the dystopic nature of the reality Socrates' city realized would be. These five attributes are the caste system in place for the citizens, a specialized army, censorship of literature and the arts and education, communal child rearing, and gender equality. These examples pulled from the text to summarize their compound effects on a society. The compound effects will then be analyzed through the lens of three perspectives; the impracticality of putting a perfect theory into reality, the impossibility of Socrates himself as a character fitting into such a society, and the true reason and purpose Plato held for this dialogue. And so, In the *Republic* a dystopic society Plato builds on five main pillars; caste systems, censorship, specialized army, equality for women, and communal child rearing in order to push the theoretical vision of a utopic society through the lens of reality- he creates a dystopia from which Justice is the lesson gleaned.

#### Caste System

In Plato's *Republic* one of the first rules set out is that of allotment of jobs to the citizens of this fictional city. When Plato sets out the jobs of craftsmen and guards, merchants, for instance he makes it know that only certain people will have such jobs, thus creating a caste system among the people. In this progression Socrates lays it out as follows, "And each of the others, too, was to work all his life at a single trade for which he had a natural aptitude and keep away from all the others, so as

not to miss the right moment to practice his own work well” (Plato 374c). This caste system extends to more than the jobs of the citizens of the Republic but also what virtues and vices they hold in their personal lives. Socrates uses the vice of falsehood and virtue of truth as an example of this. Socrates delegates that only doctors and rulers may lie and only for the good of the city, he says, “Then if it is appropriate for anyone to use falsehoods for the good of the city, because of the actions of either enemies or citizens, it is the rulers. But everyone else must keep away from them...” (Plato 389b-c). Limiting one set of people’s thoughts and therefore actions is a way of creating classes and a caste system, a symptom of dystopia.

The castes created by Socrates are clearly within a hierarchy according to their jobs. He speaks of this in terms of the caste system level of the guardians discussed in more depth later. Socrates says of the guardian class versus the craftsmen, “Then if we’re to preserve our first argument, that our guardians must be kept away from all other crafts so as to be the craftsmen of the city’s freedom and exclusively that, and do nothing at all except what contributes to it, they must neither do nor imitate anything else” (Plato 395c). Keeping the guardians from learning of other crafts creates a standard. From this we can conclude that other craftsmen cannot also veer from their craft. Everyone has a path and to keep the structure of the community in tact there is no diverting from the path. This limits the populace, threatens destruction if someone steps out of line. It keeps the people separate, for impassable lines are in this class system.

At another point in the *Republic* Socrates is speaking on medicine and when it is acceptable to require a physician. However, within this conversation he once again refers to the levels of his caste system within the republic he is building. Socrates says to Glaucon, "Yet how could you find a greater sign of bad and shameful education in a city than that the need for skilled doctors and lawyers is felt not only by inferior people and craftsmen but by those who claim to have been brought up in the manner of free men?" (Plato 405b). Despite at this point the conversation being focused on another aspect of the construction of the city, Socrates at this point shows the levels of the caste system with clarity. The hierarchy that we can construct from this quote is the following: at the top: free men, then doctors and lawyers, then inferior peoples such as craftsmen. Guardians exist up with the free men as far as one can tell.

Perhaps the most apparent point where Socrates lays out the structure of the caste system to be implemented is with his bronze and gold analogy. Within this analogy Socrates classifies the people who will inhabit the republic by their being more or less. Craftsmen and farmers and the like are of bronze and iron. Guardians and rulers of the city are of silver and gold (Plato 415b). This ranking is the essence of a person, it is almost unchangeable and thus determines their place in society (Plato 415b). Socrates does allow for a few deviations. For instance parents of gold could have a bronze child or bronze parents could bear a silver child (Plato 415b-c). In these circumstances children will join the class of gold, bronze, silver, etc. and abandon their parents and their parents' class and so must their parents abandon

them (415c). The borders of the castes are strictly kept. This passage also alludes to the group child rearing practice discussed later.

### Censorship

As Socrates and Glaucon go through their building of a city they also consider the building of their citizens or their education. They especially consider the pop culture the citizens take in in the form of legends and stories told to children. Glaucon and Socrates speak of how men first are educated by the stories they hear as children (Plato 377a). However Socrates notes that such stories hold more falsehood in them than they do truth and thus teach a vice to children (Plato 377b). Socrates also notes that during these childhood years is when a person is most malleable and impressionable by the society in which they exist (Plato 377b). Glaucon agrees to this so Socrates suggests the following censorship;

“Then we must first of all, it seems, supervise the storytellers. We’ll select their stories whenever they are fine or beautiful and reject them when they aren’t. And we’ll persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children the ones we have selected, since they will shape their children’s souls with stories much more than they shape their bodies by handling them” (Plato 377c).

The censoring of stories, of all kinds, is perhaps the biggest undertaking Socrates undertakes when building the republic. Constant vigilance would be kept on the storytellers and other mere citizens. He would need to devise a way to monitor each story told from the theater to the nursery. Such measures insinuate a high level of surveillance taken as nothing other than an invasion of privacy. The implementation of extreme surveillance must be construed as nothing but a dystopian propensity.

Socrates then notes that much work will determine the stories currently told to children are suitable to be kept in the culture of the society (Plato 377c). His main

reason for such censoring is that he considers that some stories encourage criminal behavior the children who hear stories of carousing gods and selfish heroes. The children can grow up and imitate such acts, therefore, harming the society that Socrates is building. Socrates then proceeds to outline the gods and their legends and censures any debauchery or fighting amongst the gods (Plato 378b). Socrates' argument is that such beings worshiped as gods must be perfect and if they are perfect they will not do these horrible things so that the tales lie (Plato 379b). He goes on to say,

“Therefore, since a god is good, he is not – as most people claim – the cause for everything that happens to human beings but of only a few things, for good things are fewer than bad ones in our lives. He [a god] alone is responsible for the good things, but we must find some other cause for the bad ones, not a god” (Plato 379c).

The dilemma Socrates is working through is that citizens will always worship gods and view them as the peak of perfection. However, the Greek gods are far from perfection in Socrates' eyes. He sees the cruelty in their legends, the horrors the gods have no qualms in committing and knows the citizens in his perfect republic cannot imitate such gods. Therefore all tales about them must create the picture of good and morally perfect gods who only ever cause good in the world. The tales can shape the citizen's view of the highest deities they could imitate. Socrates then moves on to speak on the people who write and tell about the gods, the poets. Socrates and Adeimantus consider the style of a poet's work and conclude that what makes a poem, specifically an epic poem, is a combination of narrative and imitation (Plato 392d-e). They also conclude that imitative works yield one of two products, that of tragedy or comedy (Plato 394c). After discussing which poets' works and

characters were suitable to imitate, from slaves to heroes, the men decide that while imitation is acceptable in the art of poetry in a long work such as an epic, it should be only in a small portion of the work, and only about good men as dictated by the city (Plato 396d-e).

As Socrates censures the epic poem and conducts discussion on imitation he also censures works telling of the gods. He allows only morally right stories through claiming the rest must be lies. Socrates's main reason is that "The young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't, and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable. For these reasons, then, we should probably take care to insure that the first stories they hear about virtue are the best ones for them to hear" (Plato 378d-e). In order for Socrates to censure these stories that the children hear he must apply rules to those telling the tales and perpetuating them. He does this with poets most notably by making it wrong for poets to blame anything bad or wrong on the gods (Plato 380b). The justification at the end of the day according to Socrates is that the best things won't even need altering (Plato 380e). This keeps the gods as morally upstanding role models for not only the guardians of the republic but for all the other citizens as well.

In this discussion Socrates even goes as far as to censure the modes of harmonies and rhythm allowed in music for this republic. First Socrates, Adeimantus, and Glaucon set out the three elements of song, namely words, harmonic mode, and rhythm, and come to the conclusion that for restricting the words of a song the same rules apply from the restriction of epic poetry (Plato 398d). From there they take on how to censor the harmonies and rhythm, and begin

this investigation by examining the effect of harmonies. Glaucon and Socrates list the inappropriate modes for the Republic as modes of lamentation, modes used at drinking parties, and Ionian and Lydian modes for relaxation because these modes promote activities unbecoming to all in the city (Plato 398e-399a). Socrates tells Glaucon that he does not know all of the modes but simply requires modes that successfully imitate “a courageous person who is active in battle or doing other violent deeds, or who is failing and facing wounds, death, or some other misfortune, and who, in all these circumstances, is fighting off his fate steadily and with self-control” (Plato 399b). Again the goal of the censoring achieved by Socrates is for a republic with only upstanding role models and feelings perpetuated in the culture. Therefore, he must endeavor to find even musical harmonies to inspire such feelings in the breasts of his citizens. The second type of mode Socrates thinks will do this job sufficiently is a mode that is “of someone engaged in a peaceful, unforced, voluntary action,” in other words a student eagerly learning (Plato 399b-c). Glaucon reaffirms that such modes are the Dorian and Phrygian modes (Plato 399a,c). The men accept this as right for the republic and move on to the type of instruments capable of making music solely of these modes.

Socrates and Glaucon then conclude the following for the type of instruments allowed in the city in order to produce the approved modes, “Well, then, we’ll have no need for polyharmonic or multistringed instruments to accompany our odes and songs” (Plato 399c). The purpose behind censoring musical instruments is that if an instrument produces any harmony or rhythm that is anything other than the approved Dorian and Phrygian modes, it is unnecessary. For if it has the ability to

produce anything other than such modes it creates a hazard to the republic.

Socrates and Glaucon then rule out triangular lutes, harps, and flutes and also the craftsmen with the ability to make such instruments as unnecessary and unwanted in the city (Plato 399d). The men agree upon having lyres, citharas, and a pipe for shepherds as the instruments allowed to accompany singers in their republic (Plato 399d). This is how music is censored for the Republic.

### Specialized Army: The Guardians

As Socrates goes through the other characteristics of dystopia I have listed, he consistently defers to how such rules will affect a certain class of people, the guardians of the republic. This group of people has the strictest of restrictions impressed upon them so they mold to a perfect soldier in the eyes of the perfect Republic. The discussion of the necessity for such guardians is brought up as Socrates and the other participants in the dialogue identify the causes of war and that its presence is inevitable (Plato 373e). The men begin to describe a perfect guardian who has to desire to crush the enemy but love the people and have love of knowledge, philosophy, spirit, speed, and strength (Plato 376c). Next certain measures are decided upon and included in the life of a guardian as the rules and censures of the Republic. One such instance is when Socrates and Adeimantus discuss the proper educational stories about the gods for both citizens and guardians. For example Socrates says, "Indeed, if we want the guardians of our city to think that it's shameful to be easily provoked into hating one another, we mustn't allow any stories about gods warring, fighting, or plotting against one another, for they aren't true" (Plato 378b).

Socrates and company further censure the stories told to the guardians, not wanting them to lose courage in battle against the enemy. They must not fear death (Plato 386b). Thus Socrates and Adeimantus determine that any and all stories about Hades have to be of praise, so as the guardians will not fear death in battle (Plato 386b-c). Socrates and Adeimantus then explore such craftsmen involved in storytelling such as rhapsodes, writers, and actors through the lens of what a poet does and relate it to the other crafts. This brings into question the relation of craft and the guardians. Here again is what Socrates has said in relation to crafts and the “craft” of being a guardian as I have pointed out before,

“Then, if we’re to preserve our first argument, that our guardians must be kept away from all other crafts so as to be the craftsmen of the city’s freedom, and be exclusively that, and do nothing at all except what contribute to it, they must neither do or imitate anything else” (Plato 395c).

As in the other caste systems, the guardians are separated from their fellow citizens by trade. Here their trade is clearly to be above the simple crafts and the guardians shelter themselves from other experiences in the city in order to keep a pure republic and stable guardians. Sheltering makes the guardians strangers to the people they are protecting and vice versa. Plato lays out the guardians’ living arrangements to Glaucon and Adeimantus,

“First, none of them should possess any private property beyond what is wholly necessary. Second, none of them should have a house or storeroom that isn’t open for all to enter at will. Third, whatever sustenance moderate and courageous warrior-athletes require in order to have neither shortfall nor surplus in a given year they’ll receive by taxation on the other citizens as a salary for their guardianship. Fourth, they’ll have common messes and live together like soldier in a camp” (Plato 416 d-e).

Socrates is trying to eliminate feelings of coveting from his superior men by encouraging brotherhood. Not only is he enforcing brotherhood but enforcing no

privacy for no secrecy. The citizens are exchanging safety for their crop, sustaining the guardians. The guardians return this “tax” with their duty to serve. And camaraderie is encouraged. The problem here is that another key characteristic of the guardians is that they must feel an extreme allegiance to the city, but how can this be when they know not their fellow citizens but only each other and their king?

Out of every class of people in the caste system Socrates sets up in *The Republic*, the regime surrounding the raising of the guardians is the most rigid. Through their conversation Glaucon and Socrates detail the guardian as perfect in body and soul. They describe guardians as those who are in harmony with physical might and education in music and poetry (Plato 410d-e). This combination includes both a rigorous physical training and great attention to their education before any other attribute bestowed upon the guardians. In this caste, place is not determined solely by birth, as Socrates is quick to illustrate. He says that if a child of a guardian is inferior- not naturally suited to being a guardian, he will be put where he fits (Plato 423d). So it is true with citizens, who can advance to become guardians if they are superior to their parents, and then they will leave the rest behind them (Plato 423d). Of course every city and its army needs a ruler and who among them is better than the best of the guardians, the wisest, the strongest, the most virtuous, as king. Socrates gives the logic seamlessly; the ruler of farmers is naturally the best farmer, so the leader of city comes from the group of its best citizens, and has to be the best among even them (Plato 412c). Thus one man gains complete control of a secluded warrior class held above the rest of the city in honor and respect.

#### Equality for Women

As time goes on in the city new generations is born and must find their place in this republic. Therefore, Socrates and his companions must tackle the intricacies of the home and of the place of the woman, including the method of proper child rearing. Before delving into child rearing, first the role of the woman, traditionally viewed as the bearer and responsible for children must be explored. Socrates challenges this age-old view of a woman's place in society and therefore he challenges how children are raised in the society. Every citizen in the current society Socrates and company live in has been raised following the same basic dogma. The mother while up keeping the home tends to the needs of the children. For male children once they reach a certain age they leave the presence of their mothers and the home in order to be educated in the manner of living their father undertakes or can afford. In the Republic children will be raised together in a sort of camp. Their basic needs will be met and as they come of age they will be educated alongside other children who will go into the same careers. Growing up is more of an apprenticeship in this society. Here Socrates makes his wildest claim. What if women were on equal standing with man? Would a truly different society challenge and change ideas? Socrates doesn't have to push his companions too hard for them to agree to women sharing political offices in common with men- but they are adamant that women are the weaker sex Socrates brings up an example in nature to contradict such views (Plato 451e). He asks the men gathered if a female animal can do the same task as its male counterpart. When they agree Socrates reasons that no differently can the females of humanity be seen and treated (452a). Equality in political office is not all Socrates grants; he includes equal education, physical

training, craft training. Socrates admits to some aspects of this extreme equality as ludicrous, such as men and women being both naked in the gymnasium, but ultimately they agree upon the following,

“But if it is apparent that they differ only in this respect, that the females bear children while males beget them, we’ll say that there has been no kind of proof that women are different from men with respect to what we’re talking about, and we’ll continue to believe that our guardians and their wives must have the same way of life” (Plato 454e).

From this quote then Socrates lays out the differences in a society when it includes women equally in physical training, education, and trade to men. Arguing for physical equality is somewhat of an uphill battle for Socrates, as the natural limited state of women in a society is rooted deeply in the Greek tradition at this point in history. None of these men will have experienced a woman treated the same as a man in their society in the way Socrates is proposing on a wide scale. And it is not surprising that because of they haven’t experienced such equality among the sexes it seems impossible and improbable.

Socrates begins by describing attributes and natures of society that the common Grecian of the time easily understands. He compares how in current society man is better naturally at certain things than women but how the reverse is also true and gives examples of baking and weaving etc. (Plato 455c). The men have no trouble following this line of thought. Socrates then brings in how some men are more suited to hunting, some to farming, and others for philosophy and that given the equal opportunity to such trades, so the same would be for women (Plato 456a). Socrates then applies the same logic to the trades given to the citizens of the Republic, specifically that certain men and women are suited and not suited to the

task of guardianship (Plato 456b). At this point it is natural for men of this Grecian society to then question if men and women are doing the same jobs, jobs that before are classified as the man's jobs, who would then be doing the jobs previously classified as women's work, that of raising the children. Socrates knows his proposal will bring up these questions and addresses the issue immediately.

### Communal Child Rearing

Socrates introduces his idea of communal living and communal child rearing. It is the literal precedent of the phrase it takes a village to raise a child. Socrates lays out his idea to Glaucon and the others as follows; "That all these women are to belong in common to all men, that none are to live privately with any man, and that children, too are to be possessed in common, so that no parent will know his own offspring or any child his parent" (Plato 457d). The inability to know one's birth parents accomplishes removing the notion of having a birthright by putting the citizens on equal footing at birth. Their future is decided by their natures, and thus their familial unit. Socrates lays out that claim as well by claiming that only the best men and women should mate and often and that the unfit men and women should not ever do so, this keeps the so-called herd of civilians at their best (Plato 459e). The only caveat Socrates allows is that the guardians and other civilians cannot know that this is how mating and child bearing is controlled, it should only be known by the leaders to keep people from dissenting (Plato 459e). These genetically selected children will then be raised according to their natures by those whose job in the society it is to raise them, "And then, as the children are born, they'll be taken over by the officials appointed for the purpose, who may be either men or women or

both, since our offices are open to both sexes” (Plato 460b). The manner of even raising the infants shows how controlled every aspect of an individual in this society is from conception to death. The citizen is part of an organized tapestry with no room for loose threads.

Socrates continues to go into detail of the organizing of the process of just how pregnancy and infants will fit into the society of the republic. The correct range for the age of childbearing women are set at between the age of twenty to that of forty, and men can only bear seed from the peak of their athletic abilities to the age of fifty-five (Plato 460e). Before or after these windows will not be acceptable. Further, a contingency plan is in place for the children of inferior parents or with defects, “I think they’ll take the children of good parents to the nurses in charge of the rearing pen situated in a separate part of the city, but the children of inferior parents, or any child of the others that is born defective, they’ll hide in secret and unknown place, as is appropriate” (Plato 460c). In this way Socrates plans for even the inevitable mistakes and unwanted pregnancies- or even poor results from wanted pregnancies. The imperfect are cast out, even treated as if they never should have existed in the first place.

#### Theory Versus Practice: Analysis

Five attributes of Plato’s *Republic* serve as evidence of a dystopian culture and society within the republic; caste systems, censorship, specialized armies, equality for women, and communal child rearing. Each attribute and what it means for the construction of the republic is laid bare. These five attributes are building blocks of a perfect city, in theory. In theory with none of the citizens of such a city

rebellious or questioning the status quo thus built, nothing could go wrong. Such obedience is not the way of man. Socrates in building this republic is aware of this difficulty and he asks the question, "Is it possible to do anything in practice the same as in theory? Or is it in the nature of practice to grasp truth less well than theory does, even if some people don't think so?" (Plato 473a). Socrates recognizes that the way the world plays out in reality rarely mirrors the theories man lays out. The reason for the discrepancies between man's theories and realities is man's corruption of power. When a man rises above another man, the equilibrium of a society is not kept because the apparent superior always abuses his station and the apparent inferior will always rebel. That is in the nature of man.

Socrates himself is not immune to this part of the nature of man. In many a Platonic dialogue the person questioning the status quo of the Grecian people is Socrates. His method of questioning power, of questioning religion, of questioning how to think and learn is what eventually got him imprisoned and put to death. Socrates as a character would not be permitted in his own Republic. In order to elaborate on how I can say he would not be permitted one needs to see examples of how Socrates rebelled in his own reality. This rebellion appears in dialogues like *The Phaedo*, *The Apology*, and *The Crito*. In these dialogues Socrates is accused of corrupting the youth and several other offences against the city of Athens. He is then put on trial and must make his own speech of self-defense. During the trial he is found guilty by the Athenian Jury, sentenced to death, and then imprisoned before being poisoned to death. Throughout these dialogues Socrates' apparent aggressions are discussed among himself and his followers. Socrates' ultimate

crimes are offending the gods of the city, corrupting the youth, and plotting to destroy the city. It is held in common opinion that he accomplishes this corruption through his many discussions in the agora of Athens where the youth listen and debate with him on philosophy, morality, and ethics, etc. At the core of Socrates' enquiring discussions is a personality trait of Socrates that would get him in trouble not only in his reality but the theorized society he created in the Republic. Socrates questions.

Socrates questions the law and those who create it; he challenges reality with an impossible ideal. In the Republic Socrates is of the notion that for the city to work, no one must question how it is being run, and must simply assume that the society will be run for the good. However, a man such as Socrates himself in this society would have such questions. He might never outright accuse a philosopher king of corrupt practice but he'd feel it his right to ask and know for certain that the king is indeed a true philosopher.

Therefore, in reading Plato's *Republic* Plato intends to show that as a practical plan this republic is impossible and not only that but unneeded, unwanted, and undeniably flawed. Plato shows that Socrates too must know this as he sets out the theory. Socrates states as much to Glaucon within the dialogue,

"Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think, will the human race. And, until this happens, the constitution we've been describing in theory will never be born to the fullest extent possible or see the light of the sun. It's because I saw how very paradoxical this statement would be that I hesitated to make it for so long, for it's hard to face up to the fact that there can be no happiness, either public or private, in any other city" (Plato 473d-e).

So Socrates understands that each of his methods toward utopia can never be fruitful, for a city of men, flawed men, will always have corruption. These flaws are the root of what makes the Republic a dystopia. For it is through the corruption of man and the greed of power that a caste system would fail. The ideas of superiority and inferiority blossom in such environments and thus does not to lead equality but to a separation of man and creation of prejudice. The ability to control what ideas influence a society leads to corrupt propaganda usage in censorship. Communal raising of children takes away the individual and creates citizens as cogs in the machine. The guardians of the city, those raised to believe they are the best, can turn on the citizens they are protecting. And in a time where a woman as an equal was as shocking as a pig with wings, it surely seemed impossible that such equality could ever be achieved, accepted, and remain unchallenged. Thus the injustice of the republic would be in no other place than in the very laws that are its structure.

The perfect ruler is an impossible balancing act. Laws that don't marginalize, inconvenience, or endanger someone among the diverse lot of citizens in a city-state isn't even worth trying to comprehend. Therefore, the most reasonable goal for a ruling party's laws is to prevent civil war and the absolute decimation of said city-state. Socrates, too, understood this and elaborated on the two extremes of law, "A city whose prospective rulers are least eager to rule must of necessity be most free from civil war, whereas a city with the opposite kind of rulers is governed in the opposite way" (Plato 520d).

Freedom is the heart's true wish of every man on the planet. Oftentimes man

puts the government he is under as the opposition to such freedom. However second to freedom is also security. And in this instance government is the tool. Hence the balancing act. Too much leeway means citizens are not secure, do not feel safe, are not protected. Too much control over their lives means they cannot breathe, are stifled, are not free. Socrates recognizes the need for freedom. However when looking at the Guardian class in the Republic and the philosopher king combined with the castes and censorship, one does sense a lot of freedom but an over abundance of control. Socrates knows this will not keep his city together, the people will rebel, there will be civil war.

In the Republic this control has a purpose, Socrates says to Glaucon “The law produces such people in the city, not in order to allow them to turn in whatever direction they want, but to make use of them to bind the city together” (Plato 520). The laws here dictate the five attributes discussed as dystopic previously. The control the laws manifest is to keep the city as a cohesive unit. For this individuality is sacrificed, as is choice or pleasure which are parts of life that Socrates in part condemns in man anyway. But all these aspects he himself historically enjoyed. Therefore the Republic he builds is not only a dystopia, but a paradox. It is striving for perfection realizable only in theory but to be modeled for the individual soul- a paradox. That is the hand of Plato at work.

Plato wrote out *The Republic* knowing its paradoxical nature and not only the improbability of its realization but that it was important for the readers to realize the republic’s dystopic nature in their reading of the text. For Plato wants his audience to think on Justice, justice of the physical world, of education, of

philosophy, and of the soul; for it is in the pure form of justice within different modes of life that a life is built. In the Republic's later books it is written, "And haven't we found that justice itself is the best thing for the soul itself, and that the soul- whether it has the ring of Gyges or even it together with the cap of Hades- should do just things" (Plato 612b). So there is the end goal for Plato- a sense of Justice for his followers. And it is with this sense in mind that he crafts *The Republic* to pull out the extremes. And from there have the individual create a model that contrasts the flawed reality they live in and hopefully in creating it they begin philosophizing mankind striving for The Good.

It may seem as though, this task Plato has set for building a city is a strange one. However, he did it purposefully. Just so in today's culture our world is parodied in late night comedy to teach a lesson or point out a flaw in society- parody is Plato's tool here. Plato is parodying the construction and methods of maintaining a city to point out actual worthy goals in an individual's makeup. Take a look at the five attributes of the dystopic republic. When one takes away the ridiculousness of the extreme caste system placed in Plato's republic another lesson can be had. Be happy with who you are, put your talents to work, do not envy others for their place is not yours and vice versa. It is a message of self-acceptance.

The other attributes can be seen similarly providing advice. Censorship- be careful of what is said, what is read, of the propaganda used. And think as an individual. The trend of advice to be gleaned continues with the Specialized army- be on guard for how one develops their identity, be pure, take care of

one's mind and body to live the best life. Equality for women- in today's society this one is pretty self-explanatory, do not be prejudiced to the opposite sex or any of those that are other from the status quo. And finally Communal child raising- A child will experience the world, they will have friends, mentors, teachers- let them. Do not coddle them so they cannot flourish once they leave the home. These are the messages to be learned, important hopeful messages wearing the costume of parody.

Plato gives this long complicated lesson, this treatise on justice within mankind, and puts it in a form so that a common man can follow and glean the lesson from it as a parody. Such is the form of all dystopic worlds and literary works, which parody the worst-case scenario on a wide scale playing field in order to push a message. It makes sense that Plato, a father of modern thought, would use parody to help teach Justice to his students as well. Parody through the dystopic has made a come back in the literary world several times throughout history of man. And while literary parody mostly takes the form of the novel today, it is always an effective way to use extremes to help teach hard lessons to a mass populace. And so through the worst nightmare of a city built by Socrates in the *Republic*, Plato uses parody and dystopia to give lessons on true Justice for the individual.

In essence, Plato's *Republic* is a Socratic dialogue in which a dystopic society is built in order for the characters to achieve the perfect city. As Socrates and his companions in the *Republic* go through the building of the city five major points of contention to the forefront; caste systems, censorship, specialized

armies, equality for women, and communal child raising. Socrates lays out the details for each. However, it is apparent that this is a farce and Plato reduces it to such. All the impossibilities of the republic built are the dystopian attributes brought forward to show how one shouldn't idealize such utopia.

In a society with the caste system in place each person is born to a place in society- a career and a status level. It is not a birthright passed down but instead according to the quality of the soul of the individual which determines the level of said individual in the caste system from artisan to Guardian. Through the censorship of music and education men will learn to be just, praise the gods, not to fear death, and live the best lives. Nothing impractical to the life and soul wanted in a citizen of this society is permitted. The best of the best of the citizens of this city will be the guardians. They are the most physically fit, the most learned, and the most philosophical. The best of these men and women will be rulers of the city. And to keep from tainting their pure souls they are raised and live separate from all other citizens of the city. Women in the city won't have traditional roles but fall equally in the caste system they are understood to be capable of all a man can do in a time where such thinking was more than revolutionary. And finally to give every child the same upbringing the children are not brought up by their parents but live together communally until it is determined by their souls into which level of the caste they belong. However, this message should not be taken at face value and is instead to be reduced to absurdity to find fault in this system is to find fault in the hearts of man.

To the eye of the reader or Socrates' audience the society is manifestly destined for failure. This failure is because of the nature of man, imperfect, corrupt, and power hungry vices of the human soul. Man will take the well meaning structures and push the limits and so become oppressive. Creating an overly controlled society, which breeds discontent and civil war. The balancing act is destroyed. Hence the republic built is only possible in theory and not a practical plan. Socrates throughout the dialogue is also aware of this impracticality. He expresses the paradoxical nature of and his trepidations about his Republic to Glaucon, one of the fellow participants in the dialogue. So it then becomes apparent that the purpose of the theoretical city is to be a model for the individual in order to teach himself the form of Justice. This lesson was the purpose Plato had in crafting the republic. Plato used the literary device of parody in order to get his audience to think. Such a device is used in many forms of literature in dystopic novels even in today's world. Lessons through the theoretical worst-case scenario can be the most motivating for mankind. Scare the lambs with the fires of hell to move them, instead of bringing them with heaven's honey.

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