

Question NO #01

Critically analyze the salient features of Plato's Republic. Do you think that some of its features are valid, even today? (css 2018)

IN CONTEXT

Born and died	428 - 348 (Greece Athens)
Era	Greek Philosophy
Notable ideas	Philosopher King, allegory of cave
Ideology	Rationalism, Idealism
Main interest	Politics, Justice, Rationalism
Influences by	Socrates, Pythagoras
Influences on	Al-Farabi, Aristotle, St Augustine
Key works	The Republic, The Laws, The Meno, The Apology, The Politicus
Political context	Rule of thirty oligarchy, Peloponnesian war, Death of Socrates

Before	After
594 BCE: Athenian Lawmaker Solon lays down the laws that act as the foundation for Greek democracy	333 BCE: Aristotle called the Polity (constitutional representative government) as the best practical way of government
450 BCE: Greek Philosopher gave his famous theory of tripartite soul	54-51 BCE: Roman statesman Cicero writes De-Rupic, advocating a more constitutional government than suggested by Plato's Republic

! INTRODUCTION

"Until Philosophers are kings, cities will never have rest from their vices - The Republic."

Plato was born in Athenian Greece. During his life time, Athenian

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democracy was declining because of the Peloponnesian wars. It was the period of chaos; therefore, he argued that democracy would be replaced by philosopher king. In this regard, he presented his theory in which ^{Justice} played an essential role. Moreover, he also introduced education system for the different classes of the society. Besides, he advocated communism of property and family to discourage nepotism in the ruling class. Plato's theory has multiple impacts on the contemporary world. For instance, he was the first who introduced specialization, compulsory education, and feminist ideas. So, his theory is still relevant in the modern world.

2) Political context

Plato's theory had influenced of following events. First, ~~Repten~~ Peloponnesian wars which had destroyed the Athenian city and its democracy. Second, the rule of thirty oligarchy had established in Athens when they lost war from sparta. Third, the death of his teacher socrates, which was the result of thirty oligarchies dictatorship, made him staunch opponent of democracy.

3) SALIENT FEATURES OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC

3.1) Justice

Justice is the important feature of Plato's Republic.

i) Justice at individual level

Plato has divided society into three parts, according to its humanistic nature.

He divided Human nature into three instincts which are rational spirit, courage spirit, and appetitive spirit.

Justice Plato argued that human's nature are driven from these three instinct. Therefore, justice is done when everyone gets its role, according to their instinct.

ii) Justice at state level

Similarly, Plato argued that justice at state level denotes that people must give jobs or role according to their instinct. He said ~~rational~~ people

who ^{are dominated by} ~~have~~ rational spirit should

be given rulership and those who

with courage spirit should be given

military role. Last, people who are

dominated by appetite should be given worker role or producer.

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iii) Justice is the principle of specialization

Plato argued that when everyone gets ~~their~~ ^{his} role according to his instinct then the justice will achieve in the society. For identifying persons which are dominated by rational, courageous, and appetitive part, he introduced education system.

3.2) Education

i) From birth to seven years

Plato argued that from birth to seven years, child should receive informal education from the state appointed mother. She will increase patriotism among children through story-telling.

ii) From 7 years to 20 years
(Music, literature and gymnastic)

After the age of seven, formal education of a child starts in which he learns music and literature for sound mind and gymnastic for sound body.

After that, an exam will be taken.

iii) From 20 years to 35 years
(Advance philosophy and mathematics education)

~~The~~ persons who passed these exams will get further education and will taught advance mathematics and philosophy.

iii) From 35 years to 50 years
(administrative education)

At the age of 35 years, the second exam will be taken and who pass the exam will get administrative role in the government.

iv) Rule of Philosopher King

At the age of 50, the final exam will be taken, the person who pass this exam will be the philosopher king.

He will run the government affairs and will retire at the age of 65. After that, he will teach at the academy till his death.

3.3) Plato's Communism

i) Communism in Property

Plato introduced communism in property for rulers and generals to decrease or prevent corruption among the guardians. Like other philosopher, Plato also believed that lust for property among guardian will affect their decision and administration.

ii) Communism in Family

Plato also introduced communism in family for upper-class guardians. He banned the marriages among the guardian class because he thought that it would increase nepotism and favoritism among the ruling class.

4) PLATO'S REPUBLIC SALIENT FEATURES VALIDITY IN MODERN WORLD

4.1) Specialization of tasks

Plato's Republic salient features are still valid in the modern world in the sense that it provides specialization of tasks. Modern world administration runs through specialization. For instance, if a person wants to be a doctor then he has to pass the Medical exam

4.2) Compulsory and state controlled education

Plato was the first person who introduced compulsory education for all the citizens. In this regard, contemporary world also supports Plato's idea of compulsory education. For instance, Article 25A of Pakistan guarantee compulsory education for all Pakistani citizens.

4.3) Feminist ideas and Gender Equality

Plato was the first feminist in the world. His ideas and vision about women have inspired many contemporary feminist. For instance, he discouraged gender biasness in education and promoted women education in Athenian society. Moreover, he give right to women to choose her partner.

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* (Legacy of PLATON)*

5) SUMMARY of PLATO'S REPUBLIC

The role of the ruler "to ensure people follow the "good life"

knowing what is "good life" requires intellectual ability and knowledge of ethics and morality

Only philosophers have that knowledge and ability

Therefore, political power should be given to philosophers

Until Philosophers are kings, the cities will never have rest from their vices

7) LEGACY OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC

7.1) Ancient world

Plato's Republic was influenced Ancient Rome Emperor Nero. Moreover, many people believed that Plato's writings had also influenced Chanakya when he wrote the treatise on the ruler.

7.2) Medieval world

In ^{the} medieval world, Plato was famous in both world: Islamic and christian world. In ^{the} Muslim world, Al-Farabi incorporated Plato's teachings into Islam and in the christian world St. Augustine was influenced by Plato.

7.3) Modern world

In ^{the} modern world, Iran political system is much influenced by Plato's Republic.

8 CRITICISM

8.1) Aristotle's criticism

Aristotle criticized Plato's communism. According to Aristotle, Plato's communism is not achievable and Plato's model is utopic.

8.2) Karl Popper criticism

Karl Popper in his book "Open Societies and their Enemies" called Plato's philosophy King a despotic and Plato's governance model an closed governance model.

8.3) Bertrand Russell criticism

Bertrand Russell criticized Plato's education system in which he argued that state should control the education. According to Russell, it will harm the curiosity among the children.

9) CONCLUSION

To sum up, Plato's Republic has many merits and demerits. However, its some merits is still widely recognized in the modern world. So, Plato's Republic has provided multiple new ideas which led to the development of political thought. Thus, one can't neglect the legacy of Plato's work in the contemporary world.