

# PLATO

(427 - 347 B.C)

Plato's political philosophy especially his views on an ideal state as expressed within "The Republic" portrays an image of a society that strives for justice, harmony and the greater good. Plato, a student of Socrates and a mentor to Aristotle, stands a colossal figure in the realm of philosophy. Plato's perception regarding politics, ethics and knowledge left an undeniable mark on western political philosophy.

## CONTEXT:

Plato's political philosophy unfolds within the context of tumultuous political landscape of Athens.

- The remarkable devastation faced by the Athens after Peloponnesian War's defeat.
- ~~(The irony of democratic defeat to democracy)~~
- The irony of Athens's defeat to <sup>a</sup> monarchial system questioned the credibility of direct democracy.
- Execution of Socrates as a result of his criticism

upon the credibility of the system of direct democracy working within Athens buried the seeds of aversion towards the already existing system within Athens.

## IDEAL STATE

The idea of the "Ideal State" embodied within the magnum opus of Plato's known as "The Republic" outlines the characteristics of the ideal state. Plato envisioned a society governed by Philosopher-Kings, a society led by the rulers ingrained within the wisdom and understanding of the Form of the Good. This elite group of guardians educated and shaped from youth to embody the virtues of wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation will ensure the ~~smooth~~ functioning of the state as well as the well being of the citizens.

## TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF THE STATE & SOUL

Plato's Republic embarks on a journey to define justice and its manifestation within an individual.

and state. The tripartite structure of the state and soul is the cornerstone of Plato's ideal state. The tripartite structure of the soul can be observed in the reflection of a state. Plato divides the soul into three parts as following:

- rational
- spirited
- appetitive

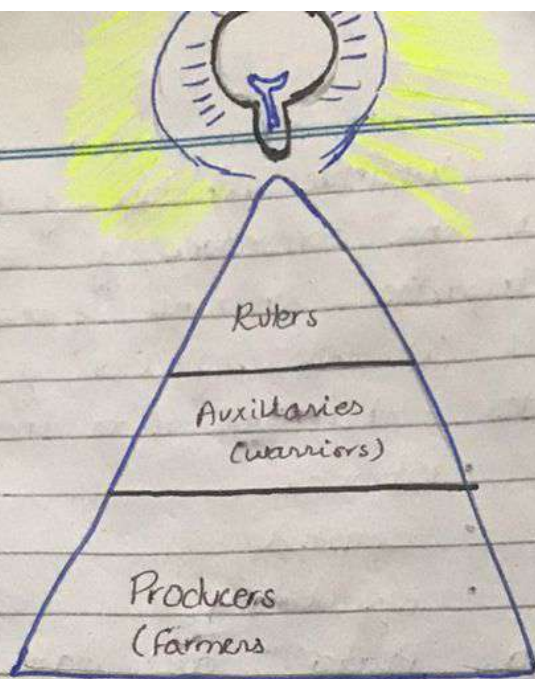
According to Plato a state can be divided into three part as well. The ideal state envisioned by Plato was composed of following three classes

- Rulers (Philosopher-kings)
- Auxiliaries (warriors)
- Producers (farmers)

As written by Plato in Republic, book V

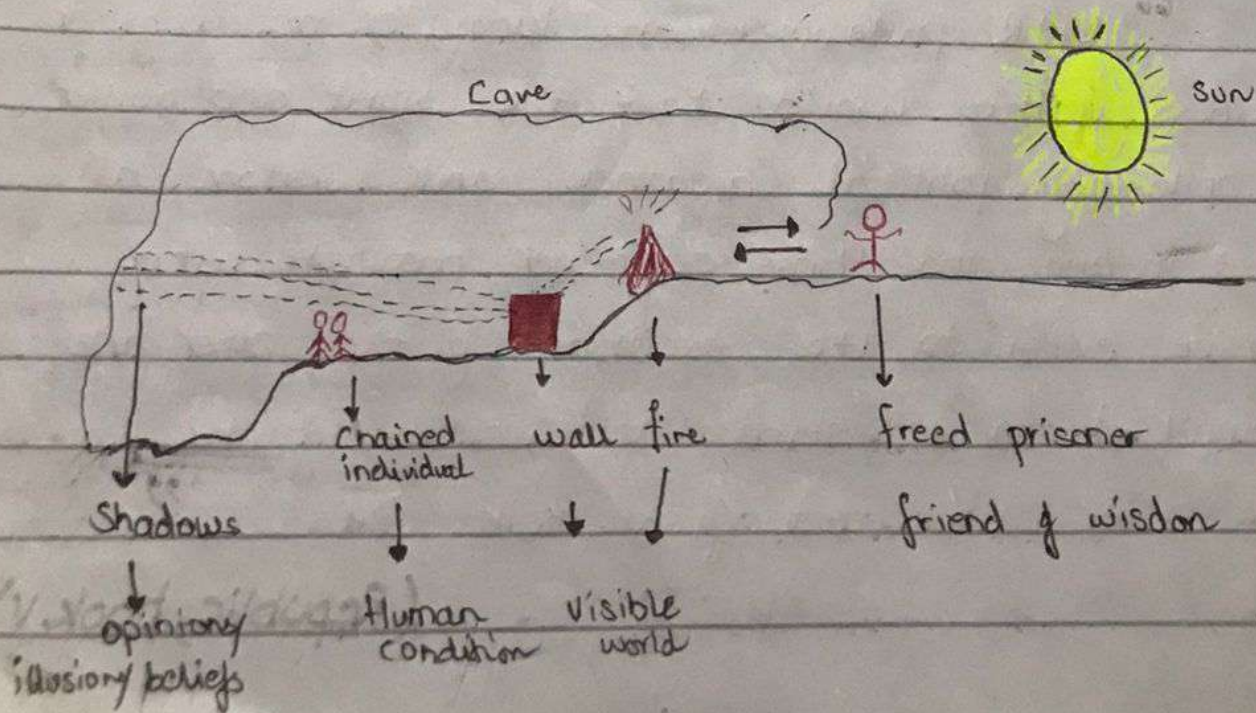
“ Until philosophers are kings, or the kings or princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, political greatness and wisdom all meet in one, and those commoner natures who persue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to set/stand aside, cities of the world will never have rest from their evils. ”

(Republic, book V)

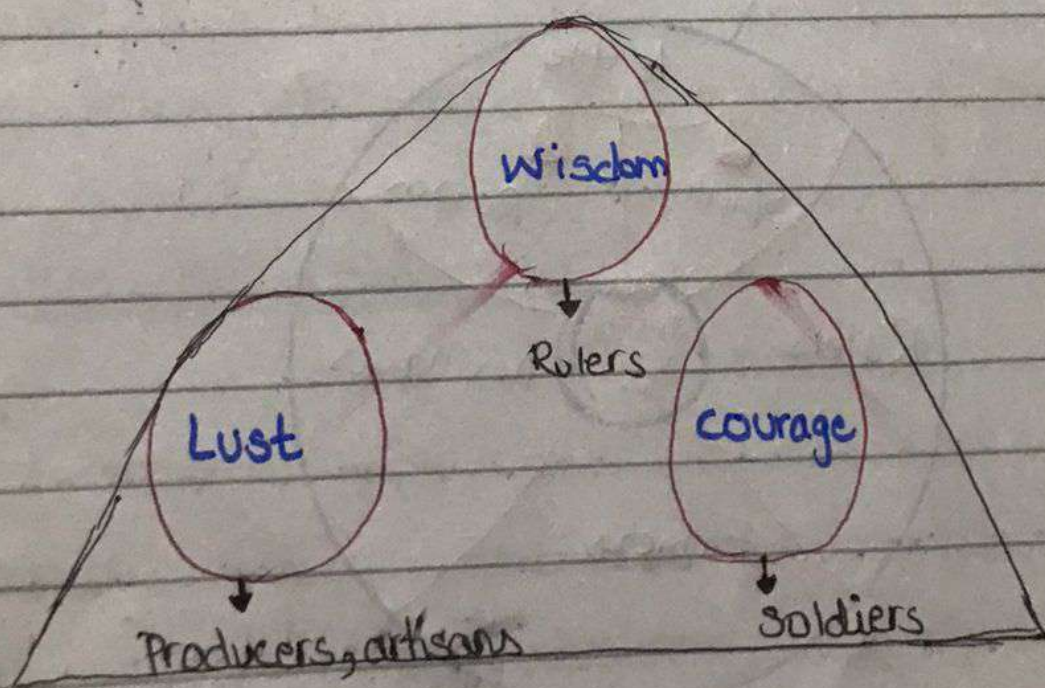


At the apex of an ideal state is the Philosopher-kings, a ruler not by birth right but by the virtue of wisdom and knowledge of the forms of the Good.

## EDUCATION & ALLEGORY OF CAVE



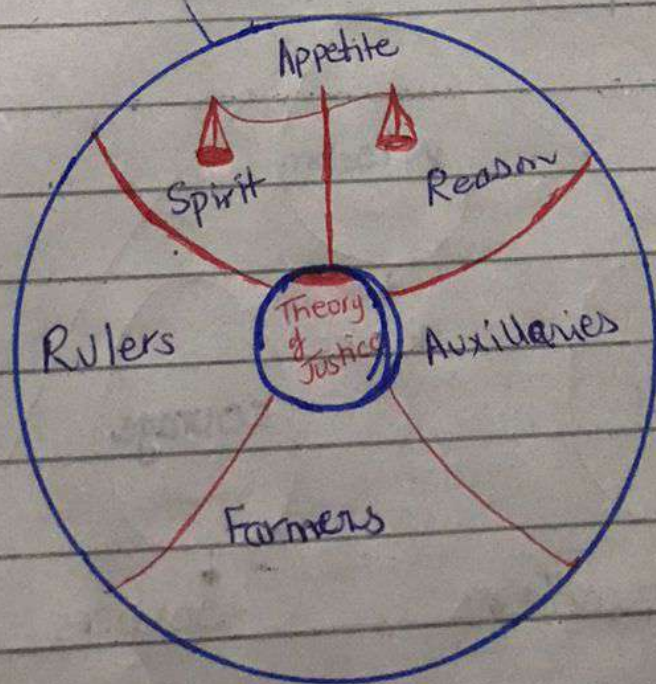
According to Plato's Republic the society is formed by three class the producers or artisans, the auxiliaries or soldiers and the rulers. In each human there are three basic instincts Lust, courage and wisdom. Those who have the dominance of lust within them must fulfill the role of producers or artisans in the society. Similarly those individuals, with an overpowering shadow of the instinct of courage must take up the role of auxiliaries or soldiers in society. Lastly those who have the essence of wisdom & reasoning dominant within them must serve the state as rulers.

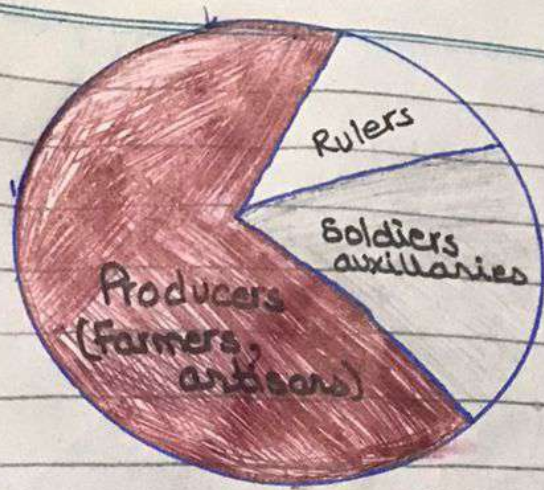


Education plays vital role in Plato's Republic. According to Plato it is only through rigorous education and learning that Philosopher kings are prepared. He used the profound picture of allegory of cave to depict the picture journey from ignorance to education and knowledge.

## THEORY OF JUSTICE

According to The Republic, Plato's ideal world is built upon the "theory of justice". In Plato's Ideal state, justice is not merely a social contract or set of laws but an intrinsic harmony in which each class of the society performs its role within its bounds.





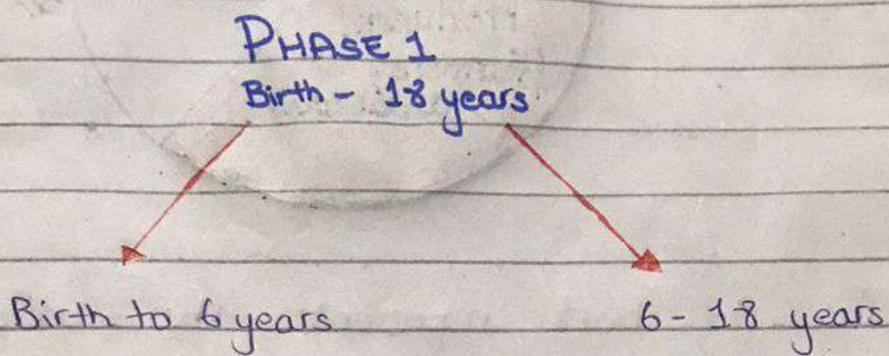
The pie chart represents the ratio of the three classes in a society. Producers are the most abundant class in a society and rulers are the least abundant and rare class.

The theory of Justice proclaims the idea of justice in an ideal state through the ~~in~~ intrinsic harmony through which each individual serves a specific purpose according to his/her ability and inclinations. It forms an ideal state that mirrors the tripartite structure of the soul.

## SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Plato's Republic provided the framework for an educational system by the state. A system that focused in developing moral, intellectual and physical qualities in a balanced manner.

This educational system comprised of 3 phases.  
Phase 1 is further divided into two phases.



In the phase a of phase I, that starts with the birth of an individual. A child is handed over to the care of a state appointed mother. A state appointed mother is to narrate the stories of Greek mythology to the child for 6 years.

After the age of 6, a child is enrolled in a public school owned by the state. In school a child is taught literature, gymnastics, poetry and music. The music and literature is censored in a way to stimulate patriotic sentiments within the individual.

By the age of ~~18~~<sup>18-20</sup>, the adult is supposed



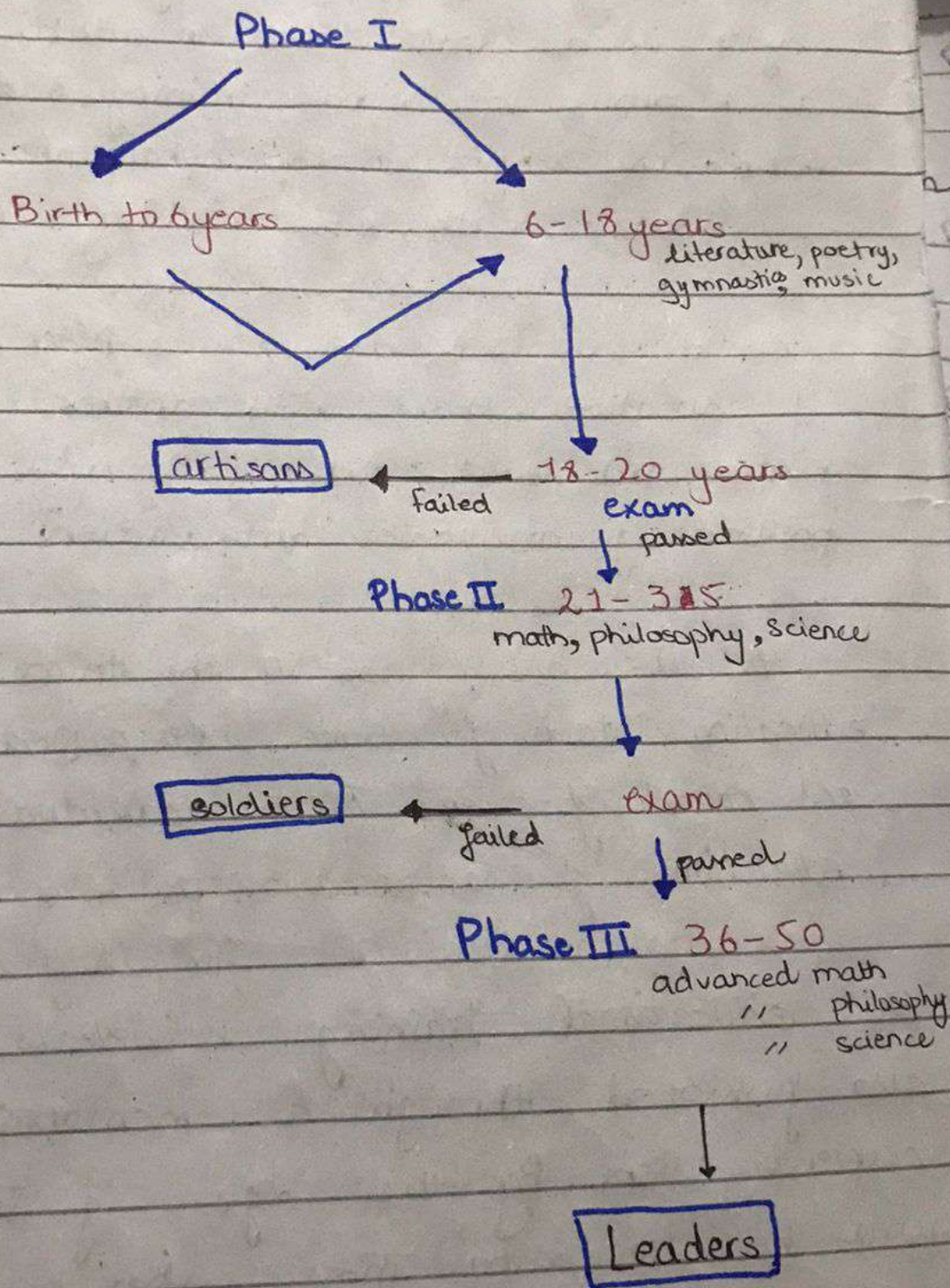
to appear in an exam. Those who fail this exam will secure the position of artisans in the state.

In the second phase of educational system in a ideal state, an adult goes through a rigorous educational training. The subjects taught in this phase are following

- basic math, basic philosophy and basics of science. The gymnastics training continue in this phase as well. After 15 years of education there will another round of exam and those who fail will secure the position of auxiliaries and soldiers in state.

At the age of 36-50, the third phase of education starts for those who passed 1st and 2nd round of exams. These individuals get education of advanced math, advanced philosophy and advanced science for 15 years. Within this educational training individuals are also fashioned through a mentorship of the current rulers. By the age of 50 there will be no exam. Those who have passed so far will be eligible and perfectly crafted leaders for the ideal state. These

Leaders can choose the philosopher-kings among themselves.

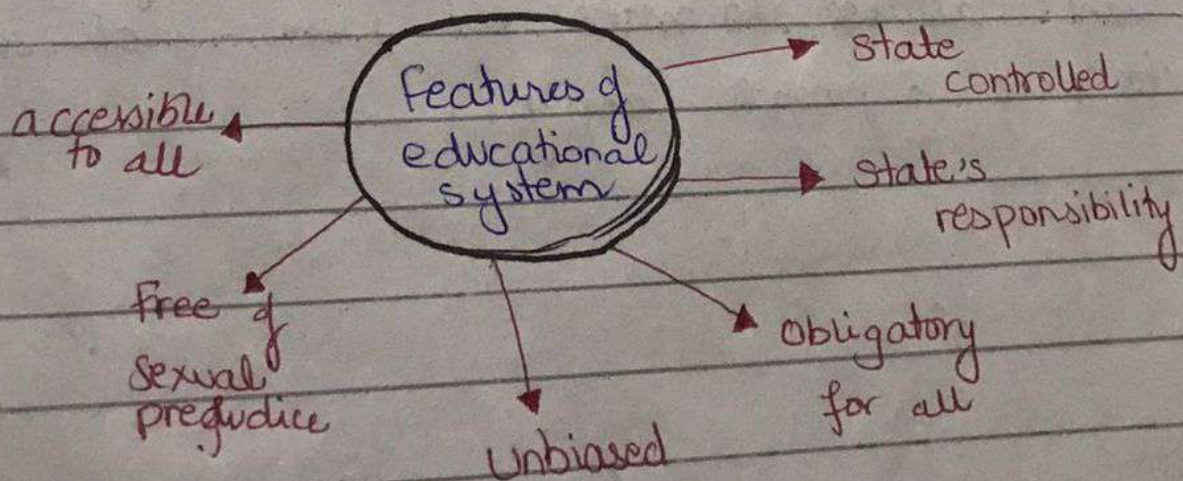


## FEATURES OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The features of the educational system in the ideal state proposed by Plato are following

- In an ideal state of the Republic state controlled the educational system.
- State ensured that the provision of education is obligatory.
- Education compulsory for all individual and regardless of sex Unbiased educational system for men and women.

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## COMMUNISM OF PLATO

Plato can be explained through the laws that applied evenly to the classes introduced in an ideal state within the Plato's Republic.

- Communism of property is the rule that restricted the upper two classes within an ideal state from property ownership. In an ideal state those who were involved in auxiliaries and rulers were not ~~allowed to~~ given the right to own property.
- Communism of family is the rule that restricted the upper two classes in an ideal state from private family. The individuals belonging to auxiliaries and ruling class were allowed to mate but were not allowed to have a private family.

## CRITICISM

The ideal state proposed by the Plato's Republic treated humans as the means and not end product. The end product in this system was the interest of the state.

