

QUESTION No 1

Discuss in detail Plato's concept of justice? (CSS-2022)

PLATO

Ideology

↳ Rationalism

Focus

↳ Philosopher King

Influenced By

↳ Socrates, Homer, Pythagoras

Influenced

↳ Hobbes, Mill, Marx, Hegel

Key Works

↳ The Apology, The Republic

Introduction:

Idea of justice holds a prominent position in Plato's philosophy. When Plato gave his theory of justice Athens was on the verge of chaos and destruction and he considered

the democratic patterns of Athens responsible for the chaos. So, he gave the ideal concept of state and philosopher king will be the ideal ruler. His theory of Justice is the footprint for the justification of the rule by the philosopher King. His 'Theory of Justice' demands from every social class to specialize in a specific field allotted to it by birth. Justice, therefore, to Plato requires each person and each social class to fulfill their role to which nature has fitted them and not to interfere in any other business. For Plato, justice is more about fulfillment of duties.

"Justice is the hinge
of Plato's thought"

(Dr. Barker)

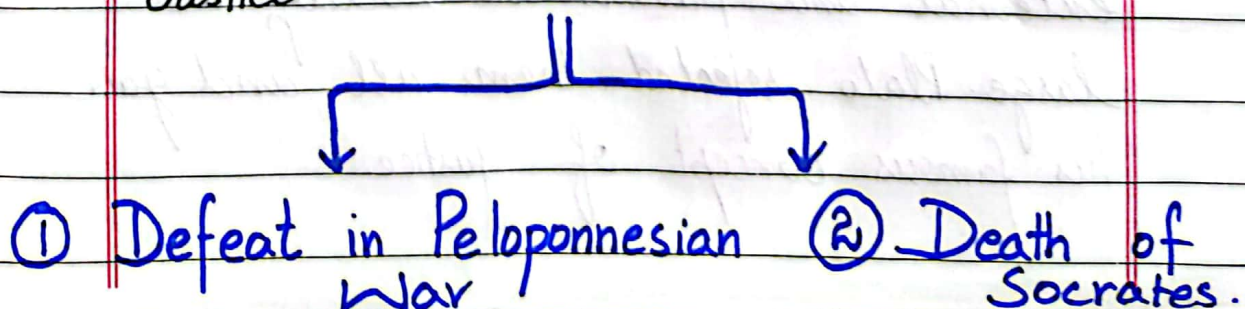
Political Content of Plato's Theory of Justice

- Plato was averse to democracy as was practiced in Athens, Greece because of two major reasons.

1. During his adulthood, Athens lost 'The Peloponnesian war' against Sparta and eventually, democracy failed to protect the nation from foreign invasions.

2. Socrates was condemned to death by a jury for 'corrupting the youth' of Athens and questioning the basic beliefs and foundations of Athenian society.

Consequently, Plato gives his 'Theory of Justice':



Concept of Justice Before Plato

In Plato's book 'The Republic' Plato speaks through the mouthpiece of Socrates and asks questions from the philosophers of his time about the concept of justice.

Cephalus: "Justice is telling truth and paying debts."

Polyarchus: "Justice is to give everyone what is his due."

Thrasymachus: "Justice is the interest of the strongest."

They all considered justice "that is external and prevails in society that is large. Plato rejected them all and gave his famous concept of justice."

Plato's Theory of Justice

According to Plato, justice is related to the soul and resides in the heart of individual and state.

He explained his concept of justice on two levels.

a- Individual Justice

b- Political Justice

INDIVIDUAL Justice

↳ Tripartite Soul.

Plato stated that every human being has three components i.e. appetite, spirit and reason. According to Plato all three parts don't work in coordination and one part always dominates.

Rational Part:

- i- It is logical part
- ii- It seeks truth
- iii- It is swayed by facts and arguments
- iv- It decides between right and wrong.

Spirited Part:

- i- It deals with emotions
- ii- It is responsible for all sort of feelings
- iii- These feelings fuel action

Appetitive Part:

- i- It is responsible for primate desires
- ii- For example: acquisition of material goods, food and sexual desires.

Individual justice demands that these three parts of human soul must work in synchronization. Since the rational part makes best decision, it should be most superior faculty in humans. Other two parts should be subordinate to rational part.

The same should be the case of a society.

Political Justice

Just like individual justice ^{concept of} Plato's political justice divides the society into three components.

Guardians: (Ruling Class)

↳ who are dominated by the rational part of their soul. They can make best decisions based on rational calculations.

Auxiliaries: (Warrior Class)

↳ who are dominated by the spirited part of their soul. They can fight and protect the city against foreign invasions.

Producers: (Working Class)

↳ They are dominated by the appetitive part of their soul. They constitute the lowest class of the society. They work as farmers, craftsmen etc.

Plato's Justice as a Principle of Specialization

For Plato, Justice is the principle of specialization. Since, there is only one part dominant in 3 part classification of soul, hence, the people should be divided into social class and only then the society, will be just.

↳ Ruling Class:

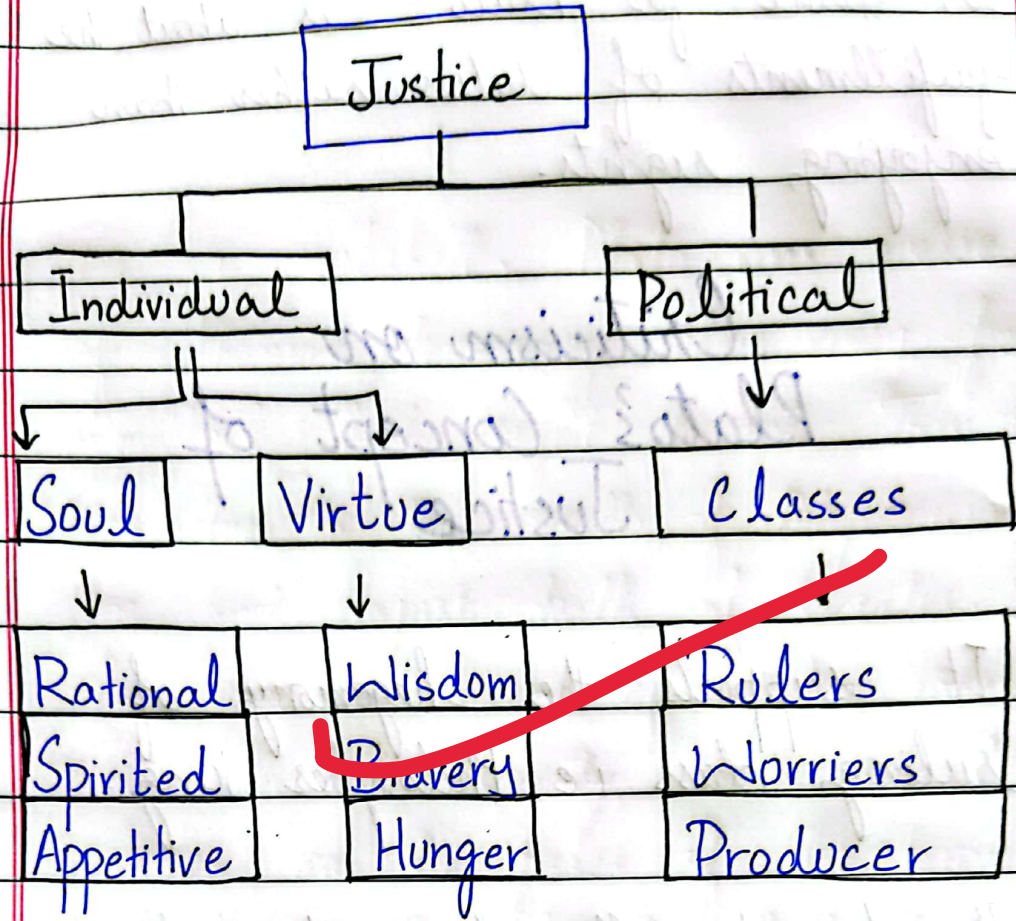
↳ Those having dominant rational part should be the ruling class and since the philosophers are the only people who work with reason, they should be the only rulers.

Warrior Class:

↳ Consists of those whose spirited part is dominant over other two.

Working Class:

↳ Consists of those whose appetitive part is dominant over other two.



Critical Analysis:

The above discussion elucidates Plato's belief that each person in a society is required to fulfill the societal roles to which nature fitted him and not to interfere in any other business. Justice is not the right of the stronger, but the harmonious and effective harmony of the whole.

So, justice, for Plato, is about the fulfillments of duties rather than enjoying rights.

Criticism on Plato's Concept of Justice

- 1- It supports the hegemony of ruling class i.e. Philosopher King.
- 2- It doesnot allow the individuals to think freely as a member of society.
- 3- It believes on the principle of 'Non-Interference' that no social class will interfere in the matters of others.
- 4- It is Utopic in nature, has no basis in reality.

"The Justice of whom Plato speaks is no justice at all"
(Dr. Barker)

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, Plato was averse of Athenian democracy where every free individual had right to vote. This aversion was due to the result of Peloponnesian war and unjust death of Socrates. So, he gave a concept of justice where he divided society into social classes on the basis of the tripartite soul division. He advocates that the society and individuals will only be just when every social class performs its duties rightfully, without interference to ~~any~~ other classes. Only then, the justice will prevail.

X — X Good attempt!