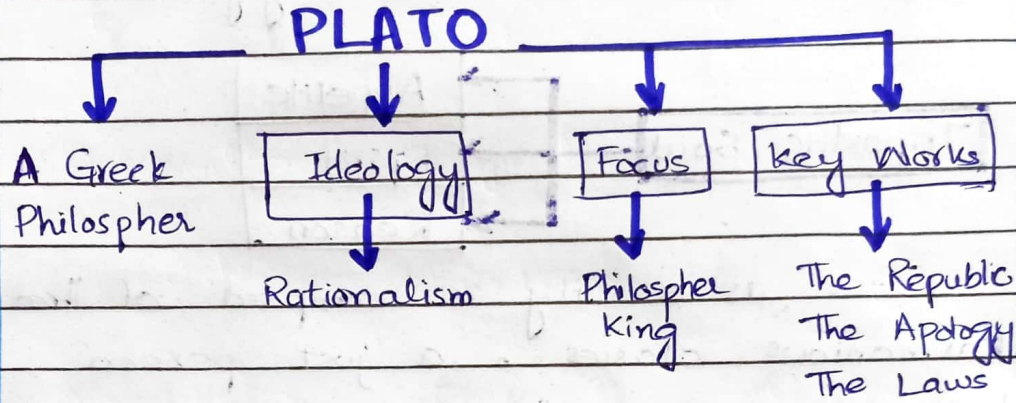


PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE



A. Introduction:

Plato laid the foundation of the Greek political theory. Plato's theory of justice suggests that justice is achieved both in the state and within the individual through a harmonious structure where each part fulfills its appropriate role.

**"Justice is a kind of health,
a harmonious condition of
the soul."**

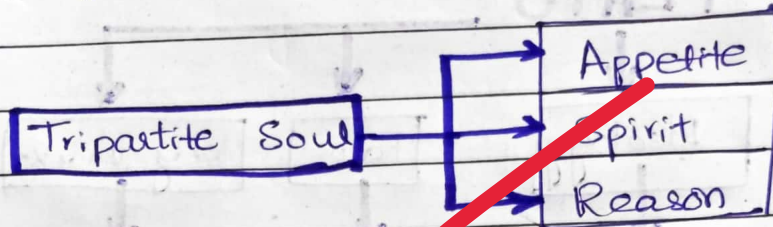
(The Republic)

Plato's conception of justice is deeply tied to his ideas about the ideal society and the role of different classes within it.

Discuss the background on which
Plato founded his theory

B. Individual Justice:

Plato stated that every human being has three components (Tripartite soul), and works accordingly



Just as a city is composed of three harmonious classes, a just person has a soul with these three parts which are working in harmony, guided by reason.

(The Republic)

i. Rational Part:

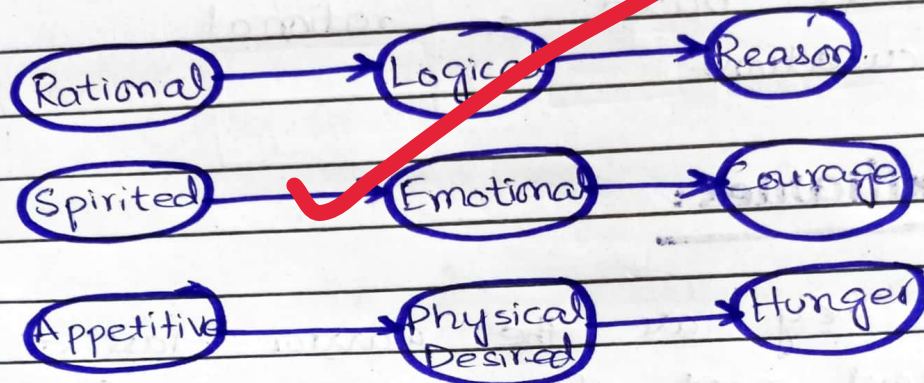
As name suggests, is part of human mind or soul that attempts to answer intellectual questions. This enhances reasoning and makes human decide between right or wrong. This is responsible for philosophical inclinations.

ii. Spirited Part:

This deals with emotions and is not related to cold rational calculations. It is also responsible for feelings of anger and indignation. These are the feelings that fuel action.

iii. Appetitive Part:

It is responsible for primitive and base desires such as desire for acquisition of material goods, food and sexual desires.



Individual justice demands that these 3 should be present in synchronization. Since the rational part makes best decisions, it should be more superior faculty in humans. Spirited and appetitive part should be subordinate to his rational part. The same should be the case for society.

c. Political Justice:

Plato's political justice mirrored his concept of political justice. Just like the soul, he believed that society is divided into three natural components:

i. Guardians:

The guardian class or ruler class are the ones who are dominated by **Rational Part** of the soul. Hence, they can make the best decisions based on rational calculations.

ii. Auxiliaries:

They are the warrior class or militant part of society that fight and protect the city against foreign invasions. Since they have a desire for glory and honor, they have **Spirited Part** most dominant in them. Hence, they can use their emotions to defend their country.

iii. Producers:

People who are producers work as farmers, craftsmen and so on. In these people, **Appetitive Part** is the most predominant one and their spirited and rational part is subordinate to it. Hence, they constitute the producers.

Justice in the city, then, consists in each of the three classes in it doing its own work.

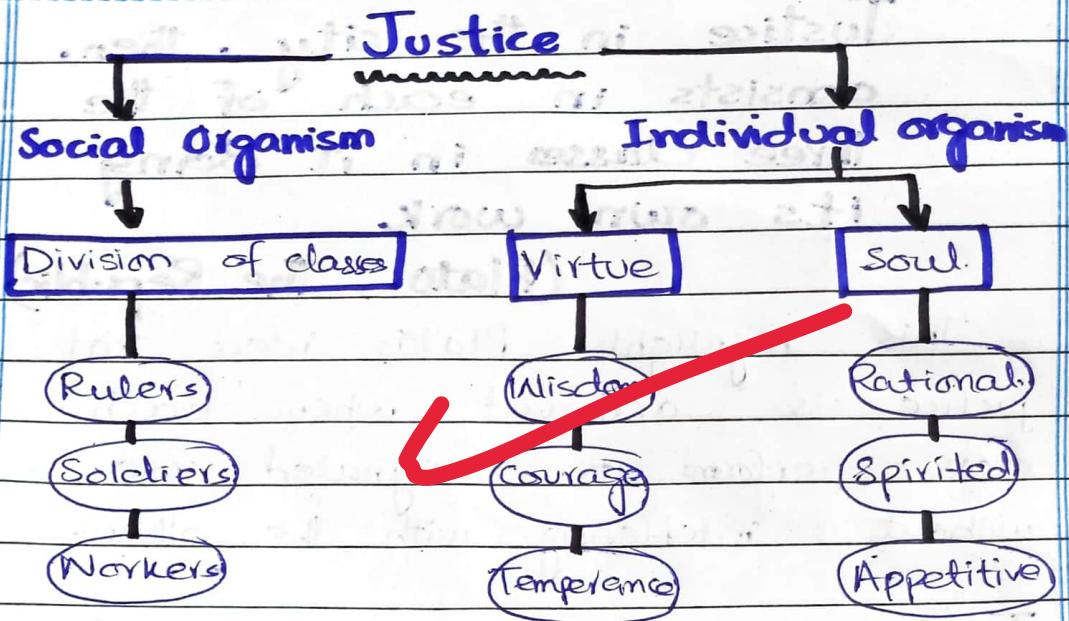
(Plato, The Republic)

This highlights Plato's idea that justice is achieved when each class performs its designated role without interfering with the others.

D. Justice as the Principle of Specialization :

Since the philosophers are the only people who have their spirited and appetitive parts submissive to their rational parts, they should be the only rulers and only then country will prosper.

In the eyes of Plato, Justice is the principle of specialization. Each person is required to fulfill the societal role to which nature fitted him and not to interfere in any other business. Plato tried to justify the rule of Philosopher Kings.



E. Allegory of the Cave: This part is not really required

To further justify his argument of Philosopher kings, he puts forth the allegory of the cave.

i. The Cave:

Plato pictures a cave of 3 prisoners. They are tied to rocks and can only look at a stone wall in front of them. They have never seen what lies outside. They can only see the shadow of people walking on a walkway.

Meaning:

The cave in Plato's story represents conventional view that true knowledge comes from our senses, known as empiricism, which Plato opposes as he was a Rationalist.

ii. The Shadows:

Since the prisoners have only ever seen the shadow of objects, they have come to believe that these shadows are the only 'real' objects in world.

Meaning:

These people rely exclusively on what they see. They witness a shadow of truth and not complete truth.

iii. The Escape:

One prisoner escapes the cave. He is surprised to see real objects. His previous view of reality was wrong. He look at sun as a source of illumination for all life and grasps true nature of reality.

Meaning:

The escaped prisoner represent the philosopher whose rational part of soul has now dominated the other two parts.

iv. The Return:

He comes back to cave and inform other prisoners but they don't believe him and threaten to kill him if he attempts to set them free.

Meaning:

Ordinary people do not see reality the way philosophers do. Hence, they make wrong choices and are not fit to rule. Only the philosopher has skill and.

wisdom to rule an ideal society.

**"Until Philosophers are kings,
cities will never have rest
from their vices."**

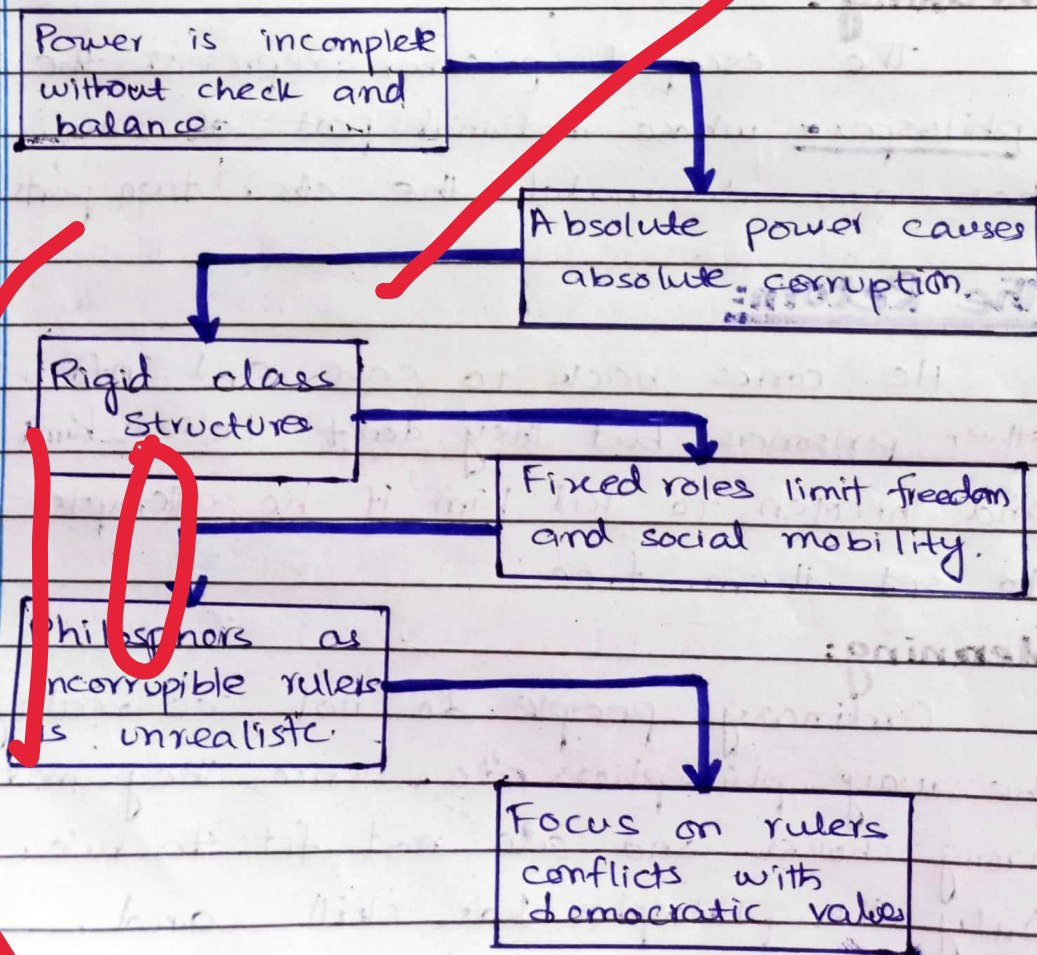
(Plato, The Republic)

F. Conclusion:

- Plato's theory connects justice in society and individuals through harmony.
- Philosopher-kings emphasize the need for wise and knowledgeable rulers.

G. Critical Analysis:

Plato talks about division of society into 3 classes without any interference.

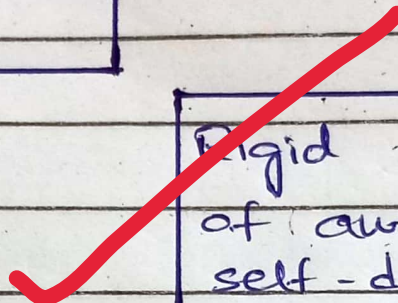


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Tripartite soul model
oversimplifies human
motivation



Rigid roles raise issue
of autonomy and
self-determination



Plato's ideas need adaptation for
contemporary values of justice,
freedom and equality.