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Q Discuss in Detail Plato's concept of Justice.

Answer:

Introduction:

Justice is a central theme of Plato's "The Republic". According to Plato, justice arises from the division of society into classes and the assignment of specialized functions to each class. Similar to the state, he also divides the soul in parts in order for justice to realize. However, before expounding his own philosophy, he first refutes the conventional definitions of justice.

Plato's Critique of conventional views of Justice:

Plato presents the conventional views of justice through

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characters such as Cephalus, Polymarchus, and Thrasymachus and then he refutes them one by one.

1- Cephalus's View: Truth and Returning Debt

Justice is telling truth, and returning one's debts.

Plato, through the character of Socrates, objects saying it can be problematic in extreme cases. For instance, returning to a person who has gone mad would be harmful for him.

2- Polymarchus's Definition: Giving Everyone his Due

Justice is giving every man his due—meaning doing good to friends and harm to enemies. Plato refutes him asserting that Justice being a virtue can never involve

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harming anyone.

3-Thrasymachus's claim: Interest of the stronger

Justice is the interest of the stronger. Might is right. Not just ruler, but every man, when given opportunity will serve his own interest. Therefore, justice is doing good for one's self and injustice to others.

Plato rejects his view by saying that true self-interest aligns with the interests of the community. He further adds that a just ruler knows that his rule depends on the welfare of the state, not personal gain or power.

Plato's own Doctrine: Justice in the soul and in the city

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A- The Tripartite Soul:

Plato divided the soul into three parts:

1- Reason:

It is the ruling faculty which seeks justice and virtue.

2- Spirit or Courage:

It is the honor-seeking courageous part. It supports reason and resists desires.

3- Desire or Appetite:

This part craves pleasures, wealth, and have sexual desires.

How a man Becomes Just?

A man becomes just when the parts of his soul are in harmony and order: the reason rules, the spirit obeys, and desires

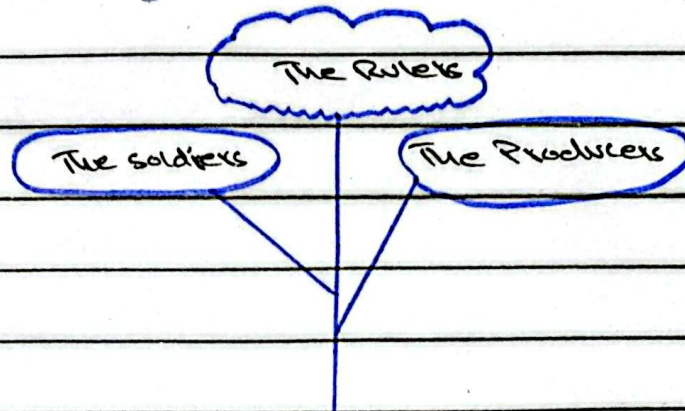
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are restrained - not eradicated
but regulated.

Plato's Division of Society:

To see justice on a
larger scale, Plato divided
society into three classes:



1-The Rulers: Philosophers Kings

These are the people
governed by reason. They
are wise and virtuous. They
are the brain of the state.

2-Auxiliaries or the Soldiers:

These are the people
driven by courage, and
they seek honor. They are
the heart of the state.

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3-The Producers: Stomach of the State

There are the farmers, artisans, and craftsmen. They provide food and fulfil other needs of the state. They are the stomach of the state.

How a state Becomes Just?

A state becomes just when each class performs its own function and does not interfere with the other classes. The rulers rule, the soldiers enforce laws and protect the state, and the producers provide for the state.

Strength and Weaknesses of Plato's Philosophy of Justice:

a-Strength of the Philosophy:

1-Rule by the knowledgeable:

The wise and prudent

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class of the society rules. This will ensure improved governance and policy-making.

2-Harmony and stability:

Each part of the soul and the state work in a proper order, fostering harmony and stability.

b-Criticism and Weaknesses of the Philosophy:

1-Lack of Practicability:

Plato's idea of justice is not practical. Finding people who are governed perfectly by a single emotion is remarkably difficult.

2-Psychological Unrealism:

Plato's doctrine of justice is psychologically unrealistic. It overlooks the complexity

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of human emotions. The human intellect is often overpowered by desires and cravings.

3- Authoritarian Tendency:

The idea of non-interference is problematic. If there are no checks and balances on each class, it will lead to authoritarianism and monopoly. For a healthy state, checks and balances are vital.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, although the notion behind Plato's philosophy of justice is ethical, in real life, it is impractical. The rigid division of soul and the state make his doctrine highly ideal and susceptible to criticism even by his own students.