
An Analysis of a Community's Morality in the Republic, a Book by Plato

Plato's Republic is searching for morality, justice and the just state while raising moral questions and examining them from different angles via educational conversations. Socrates claimed that the ideal way to teach philosophy is to have a one to one conversation,[1] so one can raise and discuss questions. The book is written in Socratic dialogue, that makes the reader become part of the conversation and it contributes to the understanding of the arguments. This essay will examine a passage in Book IV, in which a question was raised about what the morality of the community is. In doing this, the essay will demonstrate the definition of immorality of the community as well. Socrates uncovered the parallel of the three parts of the soul with the three classes of the city through rational enquiry, which contributes to logically conclude that morality makes the community a moral one.

The passage is taken from Book IV, in which Socrates discusses the importance of the three main classes of the city and the education. The mass of the civil society belongs to the business class, where individuals can have property and economic interest while doing their job. Even though their ambition to accumulate wealth is acceptable, and ideally they have the required virtue of self-discipline, this calls for the need of the guardians, who have to avoid the social degeneracy according to the imbalanced possession of material goods. The auxiliaries and the philosopher rulers belong to the guardian class. They are the executives of the society and their first main difference from the workers lies in education. Education of Plato's Kallipolis orders its citizens to their most suitable class. Education up to the age of 18 is compulsory, the individuals who leave the school at this age become workers. People who wish to stay longer at school undergo the physical and military education and become auxiliaries. The auxiliaries have to possess the virtue of courage to be able to fight with the enemies and protect their own people. People who stay longest in education and dedicate themselves to their studies have the best aptitude to philosophical knowledge and have the wisdom to become the philosopher ruler of the city at the age of 50. The philosopher rulers are the elite class of the city, they have the acquired wisdom to know what is the best for the city and citizens. Despite belonging to the elite class, the guardians cannot have property, nor belongings, avoiding the temptation to think about personal interest and placing the demos to a higher level than themselves. Plato's wish is that the guardians should live in public properties where everything is being shared, so that there is no place for personal fulfilment. The guardians' purpose is the care of the city and their objective is the happiness of the demos. By putting their objectives into realization, it allows them to live in a happy and ordered community, so that the guardians would be happy as well. The reasoning is convincing as the balance of the classes let the city function in its best form and today's modern world also including the attitude of the guardian class, when talking about charity workers. However, the idea of contemporary politicians living in public properties without thinking about personal interest in any way, seems to be quite a utopian assumption.

Although finding the three qualities; wisdom, courage and self-discipline is essential, the community needs a principle which makes the three qualities of the city able to flourish in safety and this missing type of goodness is morality. Morality of the community is when all of the three classes and every individual does his own job that he is best qualified for without intruding on the roles of the others. It suggests that all part of the demos are equally important, there needs

to be a balance between the classes to make the society complex. According to the educational system of the classes and the natural aptitudes of individuals, which was previously addressed in the essay, every citizen has the one job relevant to the community for which he is best equipped. This allows the demos to function effectively, as it seems that all of the tasks are sorted out the best way its possible. To have a better understanding of what morality is, uncovering its contrariness is important. Immorality is 'when someone commits the worst crimes against his own community'. The worst crime is when the individual or class intrudes on another person's or class's job. For example, imagining someone who is working in the business class but accumulated a huge amount of money so he believes he has the relevant quality to enter the ruling class and to take part in legislature, it would be a crime towards the community. Neither the working class, nor the auxiliaries do not have the wisdom to decide what is the best for the city and how it can continue to flourish. Any interference with other classes' jobs would harm the city, destroy the balance and might cause civil wars. In Plato's strictly regulated Kallipolis the argument of morality appears to be the most effective and valid contribution towards the community's goodness. In contemporary analysis of the argument, the people are indeed doing the worst crimes against their countries. The modern government uses the words 'freedom' and 'democracy' to soften the regulations in the so-called classes. This allows people to have the chance to swap tools and statuses and doing more jobs of other classes simultaneously, not just the only one their nature has best equipped for. Taking a relevant example of the current US presidential elections, it appears that people from the business class can enter the ruling class and occupy the highest position in governance. Comparing Plato's politics with today's politics is impossible, having the thousands' years difference and the modernized world, but understanding the history of political thoughts and knowing about classical thinking might be the key reducing today's wars and inequalities.

The parallel which reinforces the reasoning of the moral community is the three elements of the soul that keeps the individual balanced. In Book IV, Plato's famous theory of the tripartite soul consist of the appetites, spirit and wisdom and he states that the justice is the rational harmony of these three elements. The appetite is the element of the soul which provides drive and gives motivation and is a parallel with the business class as it requires self-discipline. The reason and the spirit have to keep the appetites in check, such as the guardian class avoids the social degeneracy of the business class. The spirit provides the force to the individual to keep going and requires the attribute of strength and courage, like the personal attribute of the auxiliaries. The reason requires wisdom and it is the parallel with rulers. However, reason is the only part of the soul which can be obtained by education, the other two elements are born with the person. The reasoning appears to be transferable to the state as people always have overall conflict in the soul which requires the three elements to operate effectively; as well as the community requires the balance between classes and requires the individuals to do their own job for the effective and moral functioning of the community.

Examining how the passage contributes to the overall argument of the Republic, it is possible to say that defining the morality and immorality of the community has a major impact on developing Plato's just state and tends to make it easier to uncover justice and morality in particular situations. This means, when justice is specific to the context, such as the argument if the unjust man is happier than the just man, it is possible to transfer the reasoning to the state. Immoral community has imbalance between the classes, status and tools which allows riot and civil wars and the lack of effectiveness in the community. Conversely, the unjust man has internal conflicts that will render him ineffective and will harm his own soul, so that the unjust man cannot be happier than the just man. Talking about the overall argument of the Republic, it

is fair to say that each argument contributes to the major issue, to define the just and moral state.

In conclusion, this essay's main task was to point out the accurate definition of morality, which contributes towards the community's goodness; as well as the immorality which is able to harm and destroy the community. The essay discussed how the passage contributed to Book IV, by showing the parallels between the three elements of the soul and the three classes of the city, expressing the importance that individuals and classes have to do the job they are best equipped without intruding to someone else's in order to keep the system balanced. The utopian perfection and order of Plato's Kallipolis, where every individual does just the one job he is best qualified to do, allows the demos to be happy and to flourish safely.

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