

Title of Thesis: PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

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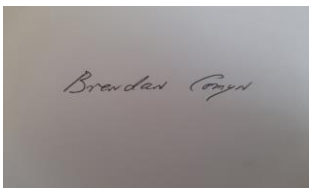
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A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brendan Comyn".

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ABSTRACT

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Title of Thesis: Plato's Theory of Justice

The aim of the thesis is to carry out a forensic analysis of the subject 'justice' in the Platonic dialogues and consider the relevant academic commentaries so as to reach a conclusion on what is Plato's Theory of Justice. In order to arrive at a comprehensive viewpoint on this topic, the thesis had to consider the ontology and metaphysics of Plato as well as the principal social and political institutions existing in ancient Athens during the 5th Century B.C. The introduction commences with an examination of the values of Homeric Greece and the influence of the warrior on societies sense of justice. This evaluation then leads to an analysis of the Sophistic teachers at that period in ancient Athens which was in total contrast to the prospective adopted by Plato. Thus, the thesis discusses the dialogues between Socrates, Gorgias and Callicles in the Book Gorgias, and Thrasymachus and Glaucon and other Sophists in the Republic; the purpose is to tease out the finer nuances and differences between the Sophists and Plato's Socrates. In the chapter, Investigations on Notions of Justice in the Platonic dialogues, the nature of justice is fully discussed and analysed. This chapter includes a comprehensive appraisal of the differences between the Sophists and Plato when considering the subject of nature and convention. A core difference between them was their respective approach to ontology and this point is thoroughly investigated in this chapter and in the chapter specifically focussed on the Sophists. The use of myth and allegories by Plato in his works is explored and in particular, the myth of the Ring of Gyges and the allegory of the cave in the Republic are comprehensively discussed. A further chapter in the thesis concentrates on a Summary of Plato's thought and his core concepts are fully articulated and appraised. 6“pre examination copy” 2021 In order to place Plato's thought and ideas in context with later thinkers, there are separate chapters on the works of Thomas Hobbes and Frederic Nietzsche. The penultimate chapter is called Plato Conclusion and the purpose of the chapter is to show the key

findings of Plato's thought and ideas. Finally, the last chapter endeavours to show the key elements of Plato's Theory of Justice and its relevance in a contemporary era. In summation, Plato believed that justice is classified as one of the four virtues and integrity, rule of law, and a civic sense of prudence have a crucial role to play at arriving at a just act. The use of prudence and the knowledge of how weak a person is that a social contract with others is reached, thus establishing what is right and enabling that justice is valued. This forms the bond of cohesion in the community: this is the essence of Plato's Theory of Justice.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the thesis is to carry out a forensic analysis of the subject 'justice' in the Platonic dialogues and consider the relevant academic commentaries so as to reach a conclusion on what is Plato's Theory of Justice.

In order to arrive at a comprehensive viewpoint on this topic, the thesis had to consider the ontology and metaphysics of Plato as well as the principal social and political institutions existing in ancient Athens during the 5th Century B.C.

Chapter one commences with an examination of the values of Homeric Greece and the influence of the warrior on societies sense of justice. This evaluation then leads to an analysis of the Sophistic teachers at that period in ancient Athens which was in total contrast to the prospective adopted by Plato. Thus, the thesis discusses the dialogues between Socrates, Gorgias and Callicles in the Book *Gorgias*, and Thrasymachus and Glaucon and other Sophists in the *Republic*; the purpose is to tease out the finer nuances and differences between the Sophists and Plato's Socrates.

In the chapter, Investigations on Notions of Justice in the Platonic dialogues, the nature of justice is fully discussed and analysed. This chapter includes a comprehensive appraisal of the differences between the Sophists and Plato when considering the subject of nature and convention. A core difference between them was their respective approach to ontology and this point is thoroughly investigated in this chapter and in the chapter specifically focussed on the Sophists. The use of myth and allegories by Plato in his works is explored and in particular, the myth of the Ring of Gyges and the allegory of the cave in the *Republic* are comprehensively discussed.

A further chapter in the thesis concentrates on a Summary of Plato's thought and his core concepts are fully articulated and appraised.

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Chapter 1

The Sophists and Plato's Socrates

When Plato was born in Athens in 428 B.C., the city was in a state of flux both politically and militarily. The city had been engaged in a war with Sparta and their allies for the preceding three years and a plague had decimated a quarter of her population in 430 – 429 BC. The hegemony of Philip of Macedon was about to reach its zenith and the development of democracy in the ancient Greek world was under attack from various sources. It was not until 387 BC that Plato opened the Academy in Athens with the principal aim to train students to engage with the city affairs. The Academy is widely regarded as the first school of philosophy.

Prior to Plato, there was a long line of ancient Greek thinkers extending from Homer to Socrates. Further, it is now more widely accepted that the formulation of ancient Greek thought owes a debt to the Eastern thinkers particularly from Egypt. Thus, Plato was the first philosopher to put it forward a distinct subject in its own right although credit for this is also due to the teachings of Socrates. Benjamin Jowett in his introduction to the translation of the *Republic* states:

“He (Plato) did so by taking over from Socrates two elements: argument is crucial for understanding and positive views on a variety of matters. Plato added three other important elements. One is system, a variety of ideas seen as holding together. A

second is seeing philosophy as self-consciously demarcated from other ways of thinking. And a third is the institutionalization of philosophy as a subject for study”.

While the author further states:

“Though the Greek state Plato reveals to us his own thoughts about divine perfection, which is the idea of good – like the sun in the visible world; - about perfection, which is justice...” (ibid, p. 31).

Thus, Plato was the first to view philosophy consisting of a system of ideas divided into three components made up of logic, ethics and physics. The theme of what is justice and injustice runs through many of Plato’s works from the *Gorgias*, the *Republic* and then reaching refinement of these concepts in *The Statesman*, *Crito*, *Timaes* and the *Laws* with the ultimate development of the ideal state.

Even though it is recognised that Socrates wrote nothing, his assiduous student, Plato, has recorded ‘that Socrates indentified wisdom first with self-control and then with justice and the rest of virtue’. Taylor, P.33. This is not say that we have to accept everything that Plato states as correct and his student, Aristotle, did not agree with all of Socrates’ views and this is outlined in his work *Nicomachean Ethics 1145 26-7*.

It is important to note that Plato’s writings are by way of dialogues between individuals and he uses a series of ‘Socratic Questions’ to tease out the true meaning

of a concept. This method can ultimately lead to confusion about Plato's views and detecting the underlying message of the poetic statement made. Therefore, it is crucial that Plato's texts are taken in the round and not literally. Further, the political and military situation at the time in ancient Greece does have a bearing on our understanding of the viewpoint held in ancient Athens. Otherwise the texts would seem to be purely anachronistic and irrelevant to-day. Therefore, nature and convention have a bearing on our analysis of Plato's works.

In the matters of equality and the role of women in society, Plato does display some progressive views. These elements will be examined in greater detail later in the thesis.

After an in-depth examination of Plato's Theory of Justice, it is intended to investigate the views adopted by later philosophical thinking such as Thomas Hobbes, Kant's social and political philosophy, John Locke's Theory of Natural Law, the utilitarianisms of John Stuart Mill, the influence of Karl Marx, Spinoza, and finally the egalitarianisms of John Rawls and Robert Nozick.

The conclusion will then assess the applicability of Plato's thinking on the Theory of Justice and the ideal state.

Two Crucial characters, Callicles and Glaucon, played an important part in developing the concept and the theory of justice in the Platonic literature.

In particular, this occurred in Plato's *Gorgias* and in *Book 2*, the *Republic*. The views expressed by Calicles on its face bear a close resemblance to those Thrasymachus. Further, there is a semblance of similarity between Calicles and Glaucon although there are also stark differences between them. Therefore, in this paper it is proposed to elaborate on the views of Calicles and Glaucon regarding their respective theories of justice and then out a comparative analysis on their theories in the context of the development of Plato's theory of justice through the medium of Socrates. Then there will be a critical discussion on their approaches to nature and convention. Subsequently, the paper will examine the role played by virtues in ancient Greek philosophy and an account whether Calicles or Glaucon considered this as a factor. Finally, the paper proposes to assess the views expressed by these two characters especially in the context of formulating Plato's theory of justice.

Conclusion

It was found that Socrates and Calicles were the antitheses of each other. This point was elaborated on in great detail in Plato's *Gorgias* and it adheres to the contention of Calicles that the better and wiser rule over and hold more than the less fortunate. He endorses the position of just 'according to nature' and denounces conventional justice. Although, in the *Republic*, Plato agrees with Calicles that 'the many should be ruled by a superior few' and this view resonates with Plato's vision of the ideal state.

Glaucon was a sophisticated interlocutor with Socrates in Plato's dialogue in the *Republic* and he adapts the tenets of Thrasymachus by stating that 'justice is valued only for its consequences and not in its own right' *Republic* 357 aff. Further, Glaucon advances the theory that justice is a social contract and justice is not valued in its own right. It is contended that justice is a necessity and that it is not a good in itself. Thus, Glaucon favours unfairness over justice, similar to the Sophist position. According to Glaucon, to be unjust is perfectly rational behaviour. Thus, the stance taken by Callicles and Glaucon on justice repeats those advanced by Thrasymachus. The Caecilian route to defining justice is elaborated by Glaucon's speech in the *Republic*, *Book 1*. Both of the above characters are concerned with the nature of justice, categorising it as an instrumental good, with a foundation in a social contract. They contend that justice is a matter of convention and it 'conflicts with our nature'. This is the immoralist challenge and it poses the question, why should we be just? Comparison between Callicles and Glaucon in the *Republic*, the route formulated by Callicles finds expression in Glaucon's speech in *Book 11*. The attack on justice by Glaucon is a reconstitution of Thrasymachus' position (358c), but the argument presented exhibits advancement in thought and brings it closer to that of Callicles. Similar to Callicles, Glaucon focuses on the nature of justice, categorising it simply as an instrumental good or alternatively a necessary evil with its origins found in the social contract. This position is based on the premise that we are all pleonectic by nature. Thus, we stand to lose more than we gain from unfettered pleonexia due to the compact neither to execute nor permit injustice. Therefore, Glaucon is in agreement

with Callicles in viewing justice as one of convention and contending that this concept is in conflict with our nature. So, his position puts forward the immoralist challenge and following the conventional character of justice and our own pleonetic nature, this raises the fundamental question of why should any of us be just? In summation, Callicles in the *Gorgias* and Glaucon in the *Republic*, endeavour to adopt the nature-convention difference to undermine morality. Finally, the core contention held by Thasymachus and Callicles is that justice (the state of being just) is a barrier to the acquirement of eudaimonia (happiness or welfare) as conventional morality requires compliance and control. This results in us living with un-satiated desires. The aforesaid viewpoint is reflected in Glaucon's argument in *Book 11*, the *Republic*. This provides a platform for Plato to refute this claim in the *Republic* by illustrating that the virtue of justice is essential for eudaimonia.

Chapter 2

Callicles and Glaucon's Theories of Justice

Introduction

Two crucial characters, Callicles and Glaucon, each represent aspects of the Sophistic view that Plato opposes. Callicles may have been fictional; and Glaucon was Plato's brother and possibly acting as devil's advocate in the Platonic literature.

In particular, this featured in Plato's *Gorgias* and in *Book 2, the Republic*. The views expressed by Callicles bear a close resemblance to those of Thrasymachus. Further, there is a semblance of similarity between Callicles and Glaucon although there are also stark differences between them. Therefore, it is proposed to elaborate on the views of Callicles and Glaucon regarding their respective theories of justice and then outline a comparative analysis on their theories in the context of the development of Plato's theory of justice through the medium of Socrates. Their approaches to nature and convention are central for understanding their views on justice. Subsequently, the paper will examine the role played by virtues in ancient Greek philosophy and account whether Callicles or Glaucon considered this as a factor. Finally, the paper proposes to assess the views expressed by these two characters especially in the context of formulating Plato's theory of justice.

The Sophists were itinerant professional teachers and intellectuals who populated Athens and other Greek cities in the second half of the 5th century B.C. On payment

of a fee, the Sophists provided young wealthy men an education in arête (virtue or excellence). Few sophistic texts have survived and the information about them is derived from secondary sources including Plato's negative depiction of them.

Rhetoric was a core subject of the sophistic education although they did cover a broad range of other areas of study. The most famous sophists were Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, Prodicus and Thrasymachus. Their model of business believed that arête could be taught to all citizens. They contended that there was a dichotomy between physis and nomos; Antiphon applies this distinction in his fragment *On Truth* and the notions of justice and injustice. He argued that the majority of things considered just per nomos conflict with nature and thus are not really or naturally just (*DK 87 A44*). Plato did not agree with the Sophists thinking about their over calculation of the power of speech and especially in their reliance on relativism about knowledge and /or truth which finds expression in Protagoras' famous quote:

“A human being is the measure of all things, of these things that are, that they are, and of those things that are not, that they are not. *DK, 80b1*.

It is widely accepted that *Gorgias*, was written before the *Republic* and the character Callicles appears in the dialogue of the former discussing with Socrates the contention that the stronger should rule over the weak; often described as “might makes right”. This view was adopted by the tyrants in 5th century B.C. Athens to support their claim for Oligarchic rule especially during the period of the Thirty Tyrants.

The extant ancient sources do not record that there was an actual philosopher called Callicles and the character's name may be purely an invention of Plato to act as an antithesis to Socrates during the dialogue. Some academics, such as E.R. Dodds, have speculated that Callicles represents the developing views of Plato. Although nothing survives of any historical Callicles, the evidence of the *Gorgias* itself states that he was an Athenian aristocrat with close alignment with Gorgias. E.R. Dodds elaborates on this point when he states:

“the probabilities are strongly against Callicles being simply a literary invention”.

Further, Dodds observes “it is tempting to see in Callicles a fragment of Plato himself—a frightening vision, perhaps of what he might have become without Socrates”. (1959, 14).

Callicles makes clear that he was not a sophist and this is evident from *Gorgias 520a*. He holds similar views to Plato. The views expressed by Thrasymachus in Plato's dialogues epitomize sophistry and ultimately, his views are hugely different from Plato's. As we will see, he rejected the virtue of justice (*dikaiscime*) in that it went against self-interest and intelligent people can detect the fraud involved. The rejection by Socrates of Callicles' positions acts as a prelude for the *Republic*.

From the long history analysing the positions taken by Homer, Hesiod, and Antiphon on the role of nature and convention, Callicles held that some people are naturally superior and this fact should be used advantageously. In contrast, the weak use human

laws (nomos) to gain more. Further, he did not believe that there was a divine basis for human laws and this is contrary to the laws of nature (physis); the belief that the stronger rule over the weak as the stronger holds all the power. This contention is based on Callicles' observation that the majority of people are weak and they organise themselves to establish governments and promulgate laws; this then allows them to gain more. It follows that justice is pronounced with the proviso that this involves observance to their laws. But those who are naturally superior look beyond this smoke and mirrors by seeking the route to their own advantage (physis). According to Callicles, this destination is true justice. This viewpoint resonates with the beliefs of Nietzsche, who was a student of Greek philosophy, in the 19th century.

In the Gorgias 488e – 499e, Callicles expounds the view that justice is natural. He believes that the more powerful control the weaker by way of force and the better rule over the downtrodden. To counter weight Callicles' definition of justice, Socrates introduces the example of a slave of great strength who is therefore better than his owner. This example leads Callicles to adjust his definition of natural justice by stating that the better and wiser rule over and hold more than the less fortunate. The natural right of the stronger flows from Callicles' grounding in the concepts held by Gorgianic rhetoric and sophistic tenets put forward by Gorgias. It therefore appears that the concept of justice presented by Callicles coincides with the recognised definition of justice holding sway in Athenian society at that time and the rise of the thirty tyrants who held all the power.

This sets the scene for Socrates to state that justice equates to temperance of the soul and its desires. This statement was not in Callicles lexicon of justice and he viewed temperance only as weakness.

The debate between Callicles with Socrates took another turn when the former rejected Socrates' argument that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit injustice. Callicles feels that raises an ambiguity when describing the term justice. This leads to a discussion on conventional justice and Callicles argues that this is a sort of slave morality implemented by the many as to hinder the desires of the superior few. He then contends by way of contrast that what is just according to nature is exhibited by observing animals in nature and the political communities relationship; this shows the "strong prevail over the weak".

Interestingly, in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates argues:

"that the lawful [nomimon] and the just [dikaion] are the same" (1v4).

From the analysis provided by the Stanford Encyclopaedia, 2006, the immoralist view put forward by Callicles can be encapsulated in a few main components:

- (1) Conventional Justice [nomos]

Polus in the *Gorgias* 483a said that the act of doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it neatly leads to Callicles' identification of the origins of the convention when he states:

“The people who institute our laws are the weak and the many... they assign praise and blame with themselves and their own advantage in mind.” (*Gorgias* 483b).

Further he comments on the many by saying:

“Mold the best and the most powerful among us ... and with charms and incantations we subdue them with slavery, telling them that one is supposed to get more than his fair share”. (483e – 484a)

The above statement resonates with the philosophers Nietzsche and Foucault and they were influenced by Callicles views in their views on power.

(2) Natural Justice

By denouncing conventional justice, Callicles endorses the position of just ‘according to nature’. In contrast to the Sophists, Kerferd remarked as follows:

“What is nature, by contrast, is a kind of ethical and political ‘given’, outrunning our wishes or beliefs; and the contrast involves at least an implicit privileging of nature as inherently authoritative.” (Kerferd, 1981a, Ch. 10).

For Callicles, justice of nature can be distilled as follows:

“it is for the superior man to appropriate the power and possessions of the inferior (484c).

Similar to Glaucon’s statement on morals in *Republic II*, Callicles puts forward *pleonescia* as a primary principle of humans and places its nature as a positive norm.

Although, Socrates thinks that Callicles gets nature wrong. Further, Callicles does so by purposing *pleonescia* in his theory. Socrates says that he ‘neglects geometry’ (508a): “instead of predatory animals, we should observe and emulate the orderly structure of the cosmos as a whole”. Predatory animals follow the rules of nature and the strongest overcome the weakest while the cosmos follow the laws of science and fairness.

3. Callicles’ theory of the virtues

It appears that Callicles does not assign the virtue of justice [dikaisune] to the ‘superior’ man thus he does not hold that justice is a virtue. Callicles prizes the virtues of strength and intelligence. Socrates points out that this leads to a fundamental inconsistency in his position: if there are not qualitative differences between pleasures then the hierarchy that Callicles proposes is invalidated. Also, temperance or moderation is rejected as a virtue which is in total contrast to the view taken by Plato in the. According to Mark LeBar and

Michael Slote in 'Justice as a Virtue', (Stanford Encyclopaedia, 2016), "Plato in the *Republic* treats justice as an overarching virtue of both individuals and societies, so that almost every issue he (or we) would regard as ethical comes in under the notion of justice". Thus, in the "discussion of justice as an individual virtue often centres on questions, therefore, about property and other distributable goods, though the broader sense broached by Plato never entirely disappears".

4. Hedonism

Callicles is vague about what pleasures that he had in mind. The appetites seem to be a matter of personal choice as this seems to be all that he divined by the following comment in *Gorgias* about the 'superior' man:

"allow his own appetite to get as large as possible and not restrain them. And when they are as large as possible, he ought to be competent to devote himself to them by virtue of his courage and intelligence, and to fill him whatever he may have an appetite for at the time (*491e – 492a*).

So it appears that he endorses hedonism and rejects the virtue of temperance.

In summation, the position adopted by Callicles could be described as shifting suggestions instead of a coherent set of philosophical principles. He was the first voice to raise the doubt that philosophy did not hold all the truths when he commented to Socrates:

“This is the truth of the matter, as you will know if you abandon philosophy and move on to more important things” (484c).

Even though Socrates and Callicles are the antitheses of each other, Plato in the *Republic* agrees with Callicles that ‘the many should be ruled by a superior few’ particularly in light of Plato’s creation of the ideal state. Of course, there are many profound differences between them especially Callicles’ views on nature and his more positive theory. The representations of immoralism by Callicles as a new morality is dependent on the contrast between nature and convention: this mirrors the contrast between the strong and the weak.

Finally, the subject of legal and social rights in Plato’s *Republic* illustrates a further glaring contrast where the dominant view is that Plato’s principle of justice is about social duties and natural human abilities and talents, rather than about individual rights.

Glaucon’s Notion on Justice

The historical sources record that Glaucon (c445 B.C. -4th Century B.C.) was the older brother of Plato. He was born in Callytus, close to Athens. Glaucon fought for the Athenian army during the battle of Megara in 424 B.C. while the Peloponnesian war against Sparta and its allies was at its zenith. According to Plato’s *Republic* (398e), Socrates describes Glaucon as a musician. Principally, Glaucon was an

interlocutor in Plato's dialogues of Socrates in the *Republic* and he featured during the allegory of the cave. There is also a brief mention of him at the beginning of two dialogues of Plato, the *Parmenides* and *Symposium*. It appears that Glaucon died in or around Athens sometimes after the demise of Socrates in 399 B.C.

In the *Republic* (3270a-328c), the conversation turns to its primary object when Socrates discusses the definition of justice and he rejects the various proceeding accounts. In particular, the view of Thrasymachus that justice is "the advantage of the stronger" and that those in authority in each city formulate the laws; this is called "just". Glaucon adopts Thrasymachus's argument in a more forceful way with Socrates and states "justice is valued only for its consequences and not in its own right", *Republic* 357*aff*. Further, he expounds the theory that justice is a social contract consisting of individuals who are roughly equal in power, based on the premise that neither party to the contract has the ability to oppress the other party as "the pain of suffering injustice out weights the benefit of committing it".

Therefore, justice is not valued in its own right and thus everyone seeks opportunities to out flank his compatriots. To emphasise the point, Glaucon uses the story of a ring of invisibility found by an ancestor of Gyges to illustrate the use of power to pursue his own benefit, *Republic* 11, 359*b* – 360*b*. "According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock.

Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, having nothing on but a gold ring: this he took from the finger of the dead and re-ascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his figure, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet (decorative front of the ring) of the ring inside his hand, where became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring and always with the same result- when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible and when outwards he re-appeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom". He uses this story to say that if there were two such rings, one was provided to an individual who acts unjustly and the other to an individual who acts justly, both individuals behaves exactly the same. This story describes the downward slide of a man in search in the laws of nature as a way to escape responsibility in social life. The story of Gyges contrasts with Plato's allegory of the cave where the ascending movement is depicted. Thus, this story may be divided in three parts: initially it deals with *phusis*, nature, then with *logos*, the rationale, and finally with *krisis*, judgment. The story has still relevance to-day as it

concerns what we can expect individuals to do when holding power over others. Thus anyone who gains power without any accountability could be prone to use it unjustly. This resonates with the Social Contract Theory as advanced by Hobbes, Locke or Rousseau which contends that people in a society implicitly agree to follow unwritten or written agreements between themselves as it is in their interests to do so.

In the *Republic*, during the discussion on justice, Glaucon contends that the propositions put forward by both Thrasymachus and Socrates does not provide an adequate answer. He challenged Socrates to critically analyse justice itself and Glaucon acted like a devils advocate in that regard. An examination of justice would involve delving into the origin of justice and the fundamental question about the necessity of justice.

Glaucon states that those who practice justice often do so unwillingly. Further, he asserts that justice is a necessity and that it is not a good in itself. He then contended that the life of the unjust excels that of the just one.

To commence the discussion on justice, Glaucon firstly asks Socrates to illustrate what kind of good does justice belong. To provide a semblance of clarity in the quest for the identification of goodness, The main categories were the outlined:

1. Instrumental Goods

Those which are sought after because of their consequences, e.g.

wealth

2. Intrinsic Goods

This is a good is valuable which to its inherent properties, such as

harmless pleasure

3. Consists of a combination of instrumental and intrinsic good

Socrates holds that justice is good in itself and that it produces good consequences. So, the possession of both intrinsic and instrumental good is deemed as the highest kind of good.

Alternatively, Glaucon views justice as a concept that exists because of its necessity and he favours unfairness over justice. This position finds expression in his use of the social contract; in order to survive; man enters into a compact and creates a covenant to prevent hurting and the action of being hurt. This is the reason for laws and the adherence to lawful deeds. Thus, he adopts the Sophist position.

Glaucon states that most people class justice among the first category. Justice is viewed as a necessary evil. It derives from human weakness and frailty. We know that without justice we would suffer more and that it is not valued for its own sake but engaged in out of fear and weakness.

Not only do people opt to be unjust rather than just but Glaucon also contends that it perfect rational behaviour. To support this conjecture, he argues that the perfectly unjust life is more pleasant than the perfectly just life. He supports this belief by providing a comparison between the just and unjust man where the former indulges in all his urges and is then rewarded with honours. In total contrast, the completely just man is ignored and miserable.

Thus, in *Book 11*, the *Republic*, Glaucon elaborates on his attack on justice as a repeat of Thrasymachus stance (358c); but the position adopted poses a considerable advancement in elucidation and the differences class matches that of Callicles. For instance, Glaucon's views on the nature and origin of justice in a social contract; if there is no barrier for someone to commit injustice undetected then there is no reason not to do so. A central premise for both of them is the contention that it conflicts with our nature although Glaucon is similar to Thrasymachus in not advocating any alternative norm but he diverges when he does not rely on the artificial division of mankind into 'strong' and 'weak'.

Finally, Callicles puts forwards immoralism as a new morality. This contention depends on what he takes 'nature' to be and consequently how he regards justice as a mere convention. Glaucon shows that the immoralist challenge does not rely on the latter nor for Thrasymachus' ideal of the real ruler. In effect, immoralism is for everybody due to the premise that we are all complicit in the terms of the social contract.

Conclusion

It was established that Socrates and Callicles were the antitheses of each other. This point was elaborated on in great detail in Plato's *Gorgias* and it adheres to the contention of Callicles that the better and wiser rule over and hold more than the less fortunate. He endorses the position of just 'according to nature' and denounces conventional justice. Although, in the *Republic*, Plato agrees with Callicles that 'the many should be ruled by a superior few' and this view resonates with Plato's vision of the ideal state.

Glaucon was a sophisticated interlocutor with Socrates in Plato's dialogue in the *Republic* and he adapts the tenets of Thrasymachus by stating that 'justice is valued only for its consequences and not in its own right' *Republic 357 aff.* Further, Glaucon advances the theory that justice is a social contract and justice is not valued in its own right. It is contended that justice is a necessity and that it is not a good in itself. Thus, Glaucon favours unfairness over justice, similar to the Sophist position. According to Glaucon, to be unjust is perfectly rational behaviour. Thus, the stance taken by Callicles and Glaucon on justice repeats those advanced by Thrasymachus. The Calliclean route to defining justice is elaborated by Glaucon's speech in the *Republic, Book II*. Both of the above characters are concerned with the nature of justice, categorising it as an instrumental good, with a foundation in a social contract. They contend that justice is a matter of convention and it 'conflicts with our nature'. This is

the immoralist challenge and it poses the question, why should we be just?

Comparison between Callicles and Glaucon in the *Republic*, the route formulated by Callicles finds expression in Glaucon's speech in *Book II*. The attack on justice by Glaucon is a reconstitution of Thrasymachus' position (358c), but the argument presented exhibits advancement in thought and brings it closer to that of Callicles. Similar to Callicles, Glaucon focuses on the nature of justice, categorising it simply as an instrumental good or alternatively a necessary evil with its origins found in the social contract. This position is based on the premise that we are all pleonectic by nature. Thus, we stand to lose more than we gain from unfettered pleonexia due to the compact neither to execute nor permit injustice. Therefore, Glaucon is in agreement with Callicles in viewing justice as one of convention and contending that this concept is in conflict with our nature. So, his position puts forward the immoralist challenge and following the conventional character of justice and our own pleonectic nature, this raises the fundamental question of why should any of us be just? In summation, Callicles in the *Gorgias* and Glaucon in the *Republic*, endeavour to adopt the nature-convention difference to undermine morality. Finally, the core contention held by Thrasymachus and Callicles is that justice (the state of being just) is a barrier to the acquirement of eudaimonia (happiness or welfare) as conventional morality requires compliance and control. This results in us living with un-satiated desires. The aforesaid viewpoint is reflected in Glaucon's argument in *Book II*, the *Republic*. This provides a platform for Plato to refute this claim in the *Republic* by illustrating that

the virtue of justice is essential for eudaimonia. Callicles and Glaucon ontological commitments are hugely different from Plato's.

Chapter 3

The Sophists

This chapter discusses the sophists who were travelling professional teachers and intellectuals in the ancient world, particularly Athens. For a fee, they offered an education in *arête* and the power of rhetorical persuasion. We will examine the differences between Plato and the sophists from perspective of the Platonic texts and academic commentary. Plato's principal concern with the sophists was based on the premise that their rhetoric does not provide a convincing view of justice. In this chapter, I propose to outline Plato's position on justice in distinction to the sophistic reliance on context (*kairos*).

In the Homeric epics, *arête* (excellence or virtue) was generally associated with the strength and courage of the real man during the second half of the 5th century B.C. This feature became linked in public affairs through the mechanism of rhetorical persuasion. The Sophists were travelling professional teachers and intellectuals present in Athens and other Greek cities at that time. For a fee, the Sophists offered young wealthy Greek men and education in *arête* and the power of rhetorical persuasion. In particular, the Sophists were focussed on the human discourse in the shaping of reality.

In distinction to Plato's foundationalism, the Sophists contended that there was no definite proof of anything and even if anything does exist, it was not within the reach

of man. A further point of contrast to Plato, “the Sophists were not concerned with the truth, more important than truth value was the insight offered into the inherent ambiguity and relativity of which we can know”, *Carter 307*. So, the distinction between Plato and the Sophists consists of the difference between absolutism (The Forms) and relativism. According to James Duban, “The effectiveness of the sophistic movement involved a cycle of disruption of commonplace thought followed by a reordering of values that created a more ordered democracy. When a democracy is disordered, it conflicts with its people, either because of underrepresentation or because its laws conflict with the wishes of its people”, and he further adds, “The sophists questioned concepts of Nomos and physis to stabilise the disordered Athenian democracy”, and “To the sophists, Nomos and physis was not simply about the boundaries between man-made law and nature, but also how these concepts applied to human practices”, (-Duban p. 1 – 4). In the Protagoras, the sophist view that there are no objective values and values are a matter of convention, not nature. Further, they believed that objective knowledge is unattainable and the goal in life and arguing is victory, not virtue or truth. Antiphon, an Athenian, was born c480 B.C. also introduced his views about nature and convention in morality. He believes that ‘we should reject traditions and laws, and satisfy our nature. Further, he contends that ‘our nature is to seek our own advantage and self-preservation’. A.C. Grayling sums up Antiphon’s views as follows: “He said that when in society one should obey the conventional laws, but when in alone one should obey the laws of nature. He thought that conventional laws often contradict natural laws, making ‘people suffer more pain

when less is possible, have less pleasure when more is possible, and receive less injury when it is not necessary'. Nevertheless he took the view that the power of rhetoric can make the worse the better in an argument, when presumably means that one could defend conventional morality against the claim of nature when this makes people suffer more", (-Grayling p. 56). Further Grayling continues the discussion about Critias, an aristocratic and an associate of Socrates, stating, "He took the opposite view in the convention-nature debate, defending convention: 'Human life was once without order, on the level of the beasts, subject to force; there was no reward for the good or punishment for the bad. Then people established laws as punishers, so that justice could be the mighty ruler of all equally, and make violence its slave'. For him, as for Hobbes many centuries later, the state of nature was the source not of good but of ill, and it took the application of reason to bring justice into the world". In summation, Grayling comments "...the antipathy felt by Plato for the sophists is highly consequential. The key point for Socrates and Plato is that philosophy is the pursuit of truth, and it cannot be constrained by the necessity of winning a case or earning a fee", (-Grayling p. 57). In essence, the sophists contend that the reality is 'nature is a grim war against all', in which each of us is driven by self interest. Accordingly, justice is merely a conventional device which society has invented to control matters.

The outcome of the *Gorgias* reinforces Plato's position in concluding that 'rhetoric is a simple knack for language without the backing of truth, virtue or justice'. In

contrast, Gorgias supported rhetoric as the most expedient of any virtue to possess. Thus, Plato believes that the Sophists overconcentration on the power of human speech ignores the limits on human knowledge and our position as seekers instead of possessors of knowledge, Sophist 233 d. This links to a distinction between appearance and reality. The Sophists believed that reality ('nature') is a grim 'war of all against all', in which each of us is driven by self-interest. So, they postulate that justice is merely a conventional device which we have invented to keep society in order. Plato holds a contrary position with the possibility that reality includes an ideal aspect to it, and it isn't simply a huge battle. Therefore, justice isn't merely a conventional device that we invent: 'natural justice' in contrast to the law of the jungle exists and is open to intellectual apprehension.

In response to Socratic questioning, *Gorgias* favours 'the use of rhetoric and it was concerned with the greatest good of man. These speeches that permit one to attain freedom and rule over others, especially in the political arena' was illustrated by Plato, (-Gorgias 452 d). The Socratic position is 'that power without knowledge of the good is not genuinely good' and this was made clear in the discussion with Polus, (-Gorgias 466 d-e).

For Plato, the philosopher adopts rational speech to strive for a genuine comprehension of being or nature. In contrast, the Sophist was contained within 'the realm of falsity, exploring the difficulty of dialectic by producing discursive

semblances, or phantasms, of true being’, (-Sophist 234 c). Thus, the Sophist uses the power of persuasive speech to create images of the world which is an imitator. This viewpoint chimes with Gorgias account that states that there is non knowledge of nature and our apprehension of reality consistently involved a discursive interpretation implying that truth cannot be dissected from human interests and power claims. Therefore, human ignorance about ‘non-existent truth’ can be used by rhetorical persuasion due to the human desire for certainty derived from the spoken word.

In the *Republic* Book 1, Plato introduces the interlocutor Glaucon who “is a ambitious, energetic, ‘manly’ young man, much interested in public affairs and drawn to the life of politics. An intelligent and argumentative person, he scorns ordinary pleasures and aspires to ‘higher’ things. Always especially attracted by such people, it was with him that Socrates had gone down to Piraeus in the first place”, (-Cooper p. 971). “Glaucon renews Thrasymachus argument to challenge Socrates to defend justice by itself without consideration of what comes from it (-Republic 358b ff). He gives a speech defending injustice: (1) justice originates as a compromise between weak people who are afraid that suffering injustice is worse than doing it (-Republic 358e-359a), (2) people act justly because it is necessary and unavoidable, so justice is good only for its consequences (Ref. Story of Ring of Gyges, Republic 360d – 362c)”, (-Courmoundouros p.4). In addition, “Glaucon sees justice as something that exists due its necessity. He argues in favour of unfairness over justice. Thus, when he tries to prove his point, he shows that is mainly a mean between harm/wrong and being

wrong/harmed. This concept was elaborated on when he established a connection that makes use of the social contract. Glaucon explains that justice is a social contract that emerges between people who are roughly equal in power so no one is able to oppress the others since the pain of suffering injustice outweighs the benefits of committing it”, (-Lawaspect. Com p. 2). In *Republic* Book 11, Plato introduced the story of the Ring of Gyges and Glaucon was discussing the nature of justice. According to John Dorbolo, “the story he tells acts as a thought-experiment. The question at issue being: do humans beings naturally tend to justice naturally or injustice?, (-Dorbolo p. 1). Further, Bernard Suzanne observed, “The man-made horse that surrounds a dead body in the story of Gyges gives way to a celestial spheres that surround our world and Gyges’ gives way to the lot that sets the time each one has to face his responsibility in choosing is ‘model’ of life. Eventually, when comes the time of death and judgment, we will raise or fall according to our own behaviour in life”, (-Suzanne p. 6). Dorbolo sums the relevance of the story by stating, “This story remains important to us today because it concerns what we can expect humans to do with power over others”, (-Dorbolo p. 3).

Due to the Sophist Protagoras’s (490-420 B.C.), man was originally created by the gods into a violent state of nature (similar to Hobbs viewpoint), Protagoras 320c – 328d. The human condition improved when Zeus conferred us with shame and justice; this allowed us to ‘develop the skill of politics and hence civilised communal relations and virtue’. In effect, this account provides a defence of *nomos* by saying

that nature alone is inadequate for the betterment of man being described as a political animal. This leads to the conclusion of Protagoras's relativism where he states, 'Whatever in any particular city is considered just and admirable is just and admirable in that city, for so long as the convention remains in place', (-Theatetus 1670). In addition, it was suggested by Plato that Protagoras differentiated from other Sophists such as Hippias by focussing upon instruction in *arête* in the area of political virtue rather than the narrow focus of astronomy and mathematics, (-Protagoras 318e).

Further, the Sophists used eristic and antilogical techniques of argument. Plato adopts the term eristic to exhibit the practice of striving for victory in argument without having due concern for the truth. These techniques were illustrated in the Platonic dialogue between Euthydemus and Dionysiodorus in the Book Euthydemus. Most of the Sophists, including Protagoras and Antiphon, utilised antilogic as a method towards the finding of a contrary or contradictory argument. Thus, Plato shows that Protagoras was fully aware of the antagonism towards the Sophists, (-Protagoras 316c-e).

Meanwhile to re-enforce the Sophistic position on *arête*, Meno, a pupil of Gorgias, stated that the 'function of a man is to rule over people, that is, manage his public affairs so as to benefit his friends and harm his enemies, (-Meno 73c-d).

Protagoras stated that ‘there are two mutually opposed arguments on any subject’. Thus, it was possible to successfully argue either side of the same case and make the weaker the stronger argument. In the *Theaetetus*, Plato quotes a more controversial view of Protagoras by saying, ‘man is the measure of all things, of things that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not’. Apparently, this quote was said to be the opening to relativism and allows for two people to hold opposing views with equal personal justification.

In contrast to Plato, the Sophist main area of focus was on the problem about non-being. This problem also appears in the *Republic* during a discussion on the distinction, between knowledge (episteme) and belief or opinion (doxa). He states that something that “is not” could not be known, (-*Republic* 476e - 477a. He further adds, “That which is not is what ‘ignorance’ (agnoia) deals with, (-*Republic* 476e – 477c). He then concludes that, “Belief has to do with what is between that which is and that is not, (-*Republic* 477a, 478d), or what simultaneously is and is not”, (-*Republic* 478d). Therefore, for Plato, to believe was just to accept a certain statement, (-*Sophist* 263c-264a). Further, he postulated that there were objective facts in the world that it was possible to be right or wrong about and that a Sophist was a deceiver on the facts, (-*Sophist* 232a – 233d). Against Parmenides, Plato engages in a discussion on non-being and states that false beliefs were possible and that non-being can be considered, (-*Sophist* 236d).

Plato acknowledged that there were noted differences between the Sophists but in respect, he does not regard them as philosophers with the principle aim, the pursuit of knowledge in the objective sense. In many respects, Plato was the original metaphysician and he was the first to elaborate on the existence of non-physical objects, commonly called the Forms (*eide*), to argue for the existence of an immortal soul and one of the first thinkers to minimise the value of ‘sense-experience as a source of information about how things really are’. Quite a few twentieth-century scholars have adopted the view that the *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, the *Parmenides*, and some later works illustrated Plato’s criticism of some of his earlier metaphysical views.

Plato’s main concern with the Sophists was based on the premise that their rhetoric does not give a convincing picture of justice. The sophistic twisted use of *doxa* (public opinion) was aimed at persuasion only while Plato’s target was beyond persuasion and the discovering of epistemic truth. Thus rhetoric was described by him as a ‘sham art’ not positioned to find the truth of justice but instead to assist to generate an “agenised” “good” linked to the desires of the stronger speaker. The Sophists say that they teach about justice but Plato claims that they possess no real knowledge of justice itself. Justice is a knowledge that requires deep study and thought/virtue instead of composing a convenient definition depending on context (*kairos*). Plato concludes that one who the truly knows justice will be incapable of injustice.

According to Lee Trepanier, “The sophists in the *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Sophist* treats them as corrupters of youth, slaves to conventional virtue, flatterers devoted to pleasure and misologist makers of images and imitations. For Socrates, the sophists served a pedagogical purpose in awaking in his students a philosophical wonder that is prompted by the sophist’s questioning. Thus, the sophists are not to be feared by Socrates but rather engaged to serve his pedagogical and philosophical ends...to search for truth beyond a world of unstable physical and intellectual appearances”, (-Trepanier p. 3).

It was clearly shown that there was a radical distinction between Plato’s foundationalism and the sophistic focus on the role of human discourse in the shaping of reality. In effect, it was the distinction between Plato’s absolutism (The Forms) and the sophistic relativism. For Plato, the sophists were not concerned with the truth and this point was extensively detailed in his works *Gorgias*, *The Republic*, and *Sophist*. Through the use of eristic and antilogical techniques, the sophists adopted a discursive interpretation. Also, this was evident from their views on nature and convention which fundamentally differed from that of Plato. Finally, Plato claims that the sophists possess no real knowledge of justice itself. Justice is a knowledge that requires deep study and thought/virtue not the sophistic reliance on context (kairos). According to Wayne P. Pomerleau, in Plato’s defence of justice, he states “In defending justice against the Sophist critique, Plato has Socrates construct his own

positive theory. This is set up by means of an analogy comparing justice, on the large scale, as it applies to an individual soul. Thus justice is seen as an essential virtue of both a good political state and a good personal character. He further comments, “His (Plato) conception of justice reduces it to order. Plato’s theory is far more impressive than the impressionistic view of the Sophists; and it would prove extremely influential in advocating justice as an objective, disinterested value”, (-Pomerleau pp 6-8).

Chapter 4

Principles of Plato's Thought

From the extant historical and literary sources, it is possible to establish the core elements of Plato's thought and the principles that can be derived from them. This chapter will cover his views of reality, the ontology, Plato's theory of Forms (ideas) and knowledge, analysis of the myth of the cavern, his views on the nature of women, his treatment of the Sophists, an analysis of the soul, the nature of democracy, an examination of the importance of justice in society, the virtues and ethics, the formation of the ideal State lead by a philosopher King, and finally the five different regimes of government.

Reality

In the Platonic dialogues, he outlines the theory that there are three different levels of reality:

1. The first level of reality consists of the forms (ideas) which are beyond time and never changes. It is not possible to perceive this level of reality by the senses but only through thinking philosophically and acquiring knowledge. This occurs in the perfect world where objects and ideas remain in an ideal state possibly not within the perception of humans. According to Plato, the real goal for philosophers is to acquire knowledge of these forms. In the *Republic Book VI*, Plato states that these forms 'can only be seen with the eye of the mind, (-Anchustegui 245).

2. Moving on to the second level of reality which consists of our perceived world as of to-day. Things are changing all around us. The objects and ideas around us are imperfect. Further, due to the practical world in which humans live means that they will never be perfect. Therefore the only way to perceive perfection is to harness the other reality, the forms.

Finally, the third level of reality is nothingness which has a patently obvious meaning.

Thus, the forms as devised by Plato feeds into his epistemology and the differentiation between material and immaterial entities. So, if anything can be known then the answer can be found in the forms.

The forms are deemed to be pure ideas with the role to unify and fix the many changing beings in the world that is material. They are the ultimate reality and Plato uses the allegory of the cave to illustrate the point. He uses the sun as a symbol of the form of the good which brings life to all beings and in turn allows us to know all beings.

In later works, Plato criticises the concept of the concept of the forms in the book Parmenides and he has become tentative about one of his core theories. This point finds further credence in his Seventh Letter where Plato casts further doubt about the forms, (-Seventh Letter 343). Although despite Plato's later reservations about the forms, he still firmly contends that in the event that knowledge is to be acquired then there must be unchanging

eternal beings.

Ontology

This concept is described as a branch of metaphysics and it is concerned with the nature of being. In *Book X* of the *Republic*, Plato through Socrates, raises some arguments against mimesis. In particular, he argues against representations especially those depicted in art and literature. A key element of the argument consists of the ontological aspects of reality and art. During the course of the conversation with Glaucon, Socrates contended that there are three levels of reality:

- (a) The idea or real created by God
- (b) The type of bed constructed by a carpenter or manufacturer
- (c) The representation made by a painter or poet

Thus, Socrates is of the view that poetry should be banned as its only a representation of the physical world and that imitation is detrimental to society when a person cannot differentiate them apart from reality. It should be stated that Socrates does not have any qualms against artists themselves but he believes mimesis to be an imitation of the physical world and its too removed from truth. His ontological arguments encompass what is real and in turn, this formulates Socrates quest for the truth.

In summation, the contention of Plato that fiction is untruth and unworthy of a philosopher and in the *Republic Book II* he expresses his concerns about the ramifications of these fictions on the young. Plato strongly believed that only good forms of art are suitable for consumption although the question still remains whether

Plato is correct about art's downfall of the moral fabric of society and the role of censorship?

The Nature of Women

Plato has been labelled as the first feminist and this argument has some validity due to the views expressed in the Republic where Plato puts forward the premise that women should have the same roles equally with men in his ideal state. He accepted that men were the stronger sex and contends that both men and women can achieve to be guardians of the State, except the one is stronger (male) and the other weaker (female). Plato did not deny that there are differences between the sexes and his ideas on equality rests in the nature of humans. With training, education, and opportunities some of these differences are eliminated and suitable women could equally be suited as men for the role of guardian. This comes with the proviso when Plato does state that women are physically weaker than men especially in the matter of warfare. Further, he believes that women would never be men's equal. Of course, Plato's views of women in the Republic need to chime with his theory of justice and it was necessary for him to adjust his ideas about women in society.

The traditional role of women in ancient Athens and the division of labour between the sexes at that period is reflected in Plato's later works, namely, *Apology*, *Phaedon* and *Timaeus*. While in the Laws, he reverted to the more traditional view of women where women were seen to be somewhat inferior to men. Thus, this change of

approach regarding women is probably due to the progression of Plato's thought of the ideal state in the *Republic* to the more realistic approach taken by him in the *Laws*.

In contrast with Aristotle, Plato believed that the soul was sexless.

In summation, Plato believed that females have something to offer the state and in many ways his thoughts of equality between the sexes were ahead of its time.

Plato's Criticisms of Democracy

Gerasimos Santos in his article for the Social and Policy Foundation in July 2007 states that:

"Plato's theory of social justice in the *Republic* is antidemocratic, by his own lights as well as by historical and contemporary consensus".

Broadly speaking, Plato believes that democracy values freedom to a high degree and knowledge to a lesser degree. This is due in a large part to Plato's theory of social justice and not just on his ethical theory in the soul as well as the good person. Santos places part of the blame on Plato's dialogue style of writing that tends to conceal the true meaning of the passage of text. When discussing the Athenian constitution, Plato identifies the underlying concepts of freedom and equality. Santos claims that Plato uses irony and sarcasm in his description, calling it "most beautiful", (-*Republic* V111.557c). Further, Plato focuses on an attack on his core principle of social justice, stating that "it is a delightful form of government, anarchic and motley, assigning a kind of equality to equals and unequal's alike", (-*Republic* V111, 558c 4-6).

The Theory of Ideas

This forms the basis of Plato's philosophy. Ontologically speaking, the ideas are real objects but they are also authentic objects of knowledge when considering epistemology. In terms of ethics and politics, they form the basis for right behaviour. Also, when discussing anthropology, the theory of ideas lays the foundation for Plato's dualism and allows him demonstrate the immortality of the soul, Ontological dualism, Demiurge, and the Idea of Rightness.

Plato's Case made for the Theory of Ideas

Separate from the sensible world, the theory contends that there are certain universal, independent and absolute beings.

- (a) Sensible knowledge
- (b) Language and the use of universal terms
- (c) Scientific knowledge

Myth of the Cavern and Plato's Philosophy

Plato introduces the myth of the cavern in *Book VII* of the *Republic* and this incorporates the key points of his philosophy. It acts as a metaphor for our nature and its education. Also, the myth has important consequences for the theory knowledge and other braches of philosophy such as ontology, anthropology and ethics. Simply, the myth of the cavern covers our level of knowledge by using the simile that we are like prisoners with only a limited ability to see shades of the objects as this is only what our senses can detect. Philosophy provides us the mechanism to release us from

this situation, exit the cavern and enter the true world by means of the world of the ideas. This process occurs by degrees and the final object that we meet is the idea of rightness. Plato uses the symbol of the sun and in the sensible and visible world and represents “the reason of truth and understanding in the intelligible world; is the reality we need to see to live with wisdom”, (-Javier Echegoven Olleta p.1).

Discussion on Plato’s Theory of Ideas and his Epistemology

As the world is constantly in flux, Plato believed that knowledge must be eternal and unchanging. Only with the forms can we have true knowledge.

Plato addresses the problem of acquiring knowledge in the book *Meno* and “*Meno’s Paradox*”. The answer is provided by Socrates where he elaborates on the theory of recollection, (-*Meno* 81a). This theory is based on the assumption that the human soul is considered to be immortal and that soul has seen and knows all things since eternity. Without any explanation provided in the text, the soul can no longer remember these things. On the soul’s incarnation, knowledge has the mission to recollect them, *81b-e*. This task is executed by an act of divinity.

In the *Republic 509d-511e*, Plato puts forward an alternative viewpoint, in order of precedent, of knowing, namely:

(a) *Noesis*

This declares that the forms equate to true understanding.

(b) *Dianoia*

The term consists of the thought process in which we think about things such as mathematics and geometry.

(c) *Pistis*

This is belief that a person can use reason about things sensed in the world.

(d) *Eikasia*

The lowest rung on the scale and it is represented by imagination. The mind consists of shadows within the physical world.

The Soul

Plato outlines his theory of the tri-parite soul mostly in the Republic both logically and ontologically speaking. This is formulated as follows:

(a) Reason (*logos*)

This part is in charge of rational thought and oversees the ordered soul.

(b) Spirit (*thumos*)

It is in charge of spirited emotions such as anger.

(c) Appetite or desire (*epithumia*)

These are in charge of natural appetite, for example hunger, thirst, and sex as well as for desire of too much in them or other appetites.

The principles of contradiction lie at the heart of the differentiation between a tri-parite soul. The three parts are interconnected in that the rational part of the soul monitors desires by keeping them in check. While the use of reason, with the

assistance of spirit, will be adopted in the best souls. Thus, Plato concludes that the life of philosophy is the promotion of reason and its adoption.

For Plato, the human soul is immortal and it is a necessary pre-requisite that souls must always exist in order to be immortal. He follows the Pythagorean belief for the transmigration of souls. Further, he believes that the Philosopher's soul is closest to divinity and an existence with the gods.

Plato's view of the Sophists

The issues about rhetoric, as used by the Sophists, concern the use of power, manipulation, and relationship to truth. Plato believed that rhetoric has potential for harm and good. His main complaint with the Sophists is their manipulation of doxa (public opinion) which is aimed at persuasion only and their rhetoric does not provide a satisfactory view of justice. In contrast, Plato's aim is to go beyond persuasion and discover epistemic truth. The Sophists are only concerned with beliefs and opinions about and not with justice itself. Therefore, through Socrates, Plato considers rhetoric as a knack and a skill that comes naturally rather through study of truth.

Rhetoric can function as the restorative effect for Sophism when a persuasive approach to gain personal power fails and it becomes necessary to start over again. This rhetoric is false and it will not find the truth of justice but instead pampers to "good relation to the desires of the strongest speaker".

So, the principal difference between Plato and the Sophists can be defined as the difference between absolutism and relativism. For instance, in the Republic, Callicles

is unable to tackle the moral validity of sophism and his also applied to most of the Sophists who concluded that truth and morality were in essence only matters of opinion. Further, one of the foremost Sophists was Gorgias who thought rhetoric as a straight forward procedure for language without the support of truth, virtue, or justice. According to Plato, the practice of this kind of rhetoric will lead to an unjust society. In contrast to Plato's foundationalism, the Sophists held a distinctly different belief of reality and truth; they believed that there was no absolute proof of anything and this derives from languages' limited ability to make statements in it. This contention was expressed by the Sophist Protagoras who said:

“ Man is the measure of all things, of existing things that they exist, and of non-existing things that they exist not”, (-Gibson 286).

Therefore, the Sophists were not followers of truth and “more important than truth value was the insight offered into the inherent ambiguity and relativity of what we can know”, (-Carter 307).

Their belief in the power of rhetoric and the absence of fundamental truth led to varied unusual and paradoxical statements. This was due to the Sophist way of toying with knowledge and the ambiguity of language. Ironically, Plato in his attack of the Sophists used their major tool, rhetoric, and this is clearly evidenced in the Platonic dialogue, *Gorgias*.

Plato differentiates between pistis (mere belief) and episteme (true knowledge).

Furthermore, he believes that the Sophists are concerned only in beliefs and opinions about justice and not justice per se.

In effect, Plato's principle objections about the *Sophists* (56) are:

(1) They put themselves forward as teachers about justice without any knowledge about justice itself. Plato believes that justice is a knowledge that needs in depth study found through deep thought and scholarship/virtue. It is not to be found through a simple definition that is relative to context (*kairos*). Therefore, a person who really knows justice is incapable of injustice. This leads to the corollary conclusion that the practicing of this kind of rhetoric by the Sophists will in turn lead to an unjust society. So, the education of young people in this sort of rhetoric will just repeat the problem. That is the reason that many of the Sophists were labelled as moral and epistemological relativists. Hence, Plato later accused the Sophists of adopting "rhetorical methods to make the weaker argument the stronger".

Of course, the similarities between Socrates and the Sophists are highlighted in Plato's work. In particular, this is evident in *Apology 18c* where in Socrates' Court room speech, we have the exposition of his defence against accusations of sophistry. The rhetorical skill of Socrates was recognised by both Xenophon and Plato when he used his skills in discussions for truth or in argumentation with various interlocutors in the Platonic dialogues. This was achieved through the Socratic method of argumentation, or elenchus, where he formed a series of questions posed by Socrates to the interlocutor was the way he carried out his philosophical practice. They arise in many Platonic dialogues and they end in *aporia* (an impasse in thought), where a thoughtful person can create a fresh start on the road to seeking truth.

Discussion on Plato's Theory of Ideas and ethics and Politics

(a) Virtue

In *Republic iv*, Plato outlines many of his key concepts of a virtue theory which consist of actions to create the right state of soul, executed to maintain this state enabling a person to act morally. So, it is clear that Plato has a well thought out moral theory. It is argued by *Iakovos Vasilliou* that "Socrates claims to know an answer to the central question, namely that virtue must be supreme". Virtue has a dual function of having an explicit end but always a limiting one with the imprimatur that we must never do wrong. This statement is based on the premise that wrong actions damage the soul although all of Socrates' attempts to arrive a definition of virtue and which actions are virtuous all finish in *aporia* (impasse or perplexity) and failure. Plato contends that the philosopher Kings will be in the position to answer the determining question due to their knowledge of the forms. Thus, the use of prudential considerations could well be the factors in determining what the virtuous action consists of. From the Platonic dialogues, it therefore appears that 'virtue is the natural disposition for rightness of our souls' made up of three elements with a particular virtue for each of them: self control, strength or braveness, and wisdom and prudence. The defining virtue of the soul is justice and this has the crucial role in creating order and harmony between those three elements. To encapsulate Plato's views of virtue he argues that it is knowledge of rightness, which is a absolutist viewpoint, and this is closely connected with wisdom and prudence.

Can virtue be taught? Socrates raises this question in the Platonic book *Meno* although he makes it perfectly clear that he was seeking the ultimate essence (*ousia*) of virtue, 72d. Due to his sophistic training, Socrates falls in the similar mistakes in attempting to reach the essence of virtue and its true definition. This dialogue ultimately ends up with the bigger question of Meno's paradox in that how can a person seek something that the person doesn't recognise at all? The ancient Greek word for virtue is *arête* although this also may have the broader meaning of "excellence". For Socrates, it was necessary to identify the common core or essence of a concept to find its definition. He does not believe that virtue can be taught or that he can define it. It was established that "virtue is knowledge" and on the flip side of the argument "all wrongdoing is ignorance". This viewpoint is spelt out and justified by Plato in his dialogues such as the *Gorgias*.

(a) The Philosopher King

Plato followed the Grecian tradition by thinking that man is a social being and that was why States (*Polis*) were created. He believed that the individual can reach their best in the perfect State. Following his reasoning on the tri-partite soul and his contention that the State is a major organism similar to the material / immaterial and ethical focus as man, Plato divides the State or society into three classes in order of importance:

(a) The Governors

This class consists of the philosophers and they represent the rational aspect of the soul. They are the only ones capable for government, possessing the particular virtue

of wisdom and prudence. Plato feels that it is only natural that philosophers are in this position due to their superior knowledge. Thus, Governors should be philosophers and they only promote the interests of the community. They are burdened with neither private property nor family as their main focus is wisdom; this allows them to carry out their role of government.

(b) Soldiers

Their virtue is strength with the remit to defend and keep the polis safe.

(c) Craftsmen

Their virtue is self-control and they provide the commodities required in the State.

Only the craftsmen are permitted families which is limited and controlled by the State.

Plato believes that the three social classes are required and each class benefits from a different position and dignity. There is a form of social mobility in the system as devised and this is controlled by stipulated conditions. The core aim of the State is justice which envisages the common welfare of every citizen. This aim is only achievable if every class abides by its role.

Therefore, Plato's ideal State is clearly an aristocratic one.

Plato's Forms of Government

Plato identifies five political systems of government in the *Republic* and he rates them in order of preference ranging from good to worst. They consist of the following:

Aristocracy

Plato is of the view that this is the best type of government ruled over by a king who also must be a philosopher, wise and a man of reason. There are three classes of people in the aristocracy: philosopher king, soldiers, and craftsmen. Plato has identified that the philosopher is a man who is good and that quality leads to happiness in society.

Timocracy

Plato believes that this system has both positive and negative qualities. This system of government occurs when aristocracy transmute into timocracy and there is a change in the constitution allowing leaders to follow their own personal interests. The guardians and producers commence to include people of lower nature pursuing wealth while no longer cultivating only virtues. They value power and in turn, strive to acquire it by force and no longer using their intellectual abilities.

Oligarchy

On the further demise of the timocratic system into an oligarchy, the regime of government consists of two classes; the rich govern the poor. This change occurs when the governors adapt the constitution of the State providing power to the rich only. Property and money is accumulated by Timocrats, provides them with pleasures. Ultimately it becomes more valued than virtue.

Democracy

Plato believes the continued decline of oligarchy leads to democracy and freedom is all persuasive. The lower class increases and there is freedom to act as desired. The democratic man is both aimless and lacks any priorities. He is only interested in consumerism.

Tyranny

There is no discipline in society and chaos reigns supreme. Tyranny arises when the democratic system lacks control due to an abundance of freedom. Plato believes that eventually a leader, disguised as liberator, who later becomes a tyrant, acquires power and rules. The people turn against the tyrant but it too late to remove him.

Plato believes that the tyrant is the most unjust and lawless. He only wishes to satisfy his own desires as he has no wisdom or reason. Although, his lawlessness catches up with him with the result of leading him to the end and self-imprisonment by an unjust life.

Plato has concluded that true reality is only to be found through his theory of forms and finding wisdom with the study of philosophy. In his analysis of his ontology, he established that there person uses reason in seeking the truth. Women received an enlightened approach by Plato in the *Republic* although his views were more in keeping with the ancient Greeks in his latter works. He was scathing in his attacks on

the rhetorical techniques adopted by the Sophists and their faulty conclusions as evidenced in the *Republic* and *Gorgias*, Plato's theory of the tri-partite soul in the end concluded that the soul is immortal but relies on the concept of divinity. The Theory of Forms is the cornerstone of Plato's principles of knowledge and epistemology, finding its ultimate expression in the ideal State and the philosopher king. From his examination of the cardinal virtues, he concludes that justice is the most important one although without a clear definition despite much critical discussion between Socrates and various interlocutors in the *Republic* and *Gorgias*. Finally, Plato carried out an analysis of five different regimes of government and his preference was for an aristocratic one headed by a philosopher king.

Chapter 5

Investigation on Notions of Justice in Plato's Dialogues

This chapter investigates the various positions taken on justice in the Platonic dialogues. It is clear that Plato's thinking developed from the early dialogues to the middle period. In the *Republic*, Socrates was engaged with a series of interlocutors to arrive at a definition of justice. We will examine the stances utilised by Polemarchus, Thrasymachus and Glaucon in the *Republic*.

The viewpoint taken by Thrasymachus in the *Republic Book 1* was similar to that argued by Calicles in the *Gorgias* and this approach is explored in the chapter. The Sophist Antiphon argument on justice is considered and the Platonic dialogues states that the sophistic rhetoric 'does not provide an adequate view of justice itself', *Sophist* 56. Socrates responds by stating 'that it is always in an individual's interest to be just, rather than unjust', (-*Republic 1*, 567a - 580a).

Finally, I will consider the critique and defence of Plato's description of the notion of justice.

The ethical positions advanced in the early Platonic dialogues was an advancement on earlier viewpoints, (-*Crito* 48b-c, 49c-d, *Republic Book 1*. 335a-e). In addition, the claim that doing injustice harms one's soul and therefore that it is better to suffer

injustice than to create it, (-*Crito* 47d-48a, *Gorgias* 478c-e, 511e-512b, *Republic* 1). 353d-354a. Further, the view that the citizen who consents to live in a state should obey the laws of the state or else encourage the state to adjust its laws, or should depart the state, (-*Crito* 51b-c, 52a-d).

There has been much academic discussion about the chronological order of the works of Plato and the development of his thought. It appears that the definitive edition of Plato's works was arranged by Thrasyllus who was an astrologer and Platonist philosopher from the Greek city of Alexandria in Egypt. By following earlier precedent, Thrasyllus arranged the works of Plato into thirty five dialogues and a set of thirteen letters consisting of a thirty sixth composition. These works were divided in nine 'tetralogies', in effect, consisting of four works each.

"Related interpretative issues concern the relationship among Plato's thirty-five dialogues, and whether the interpreter's emphasis should be on Plato's intention, or rather on his biographical and historical milieu, or his relevance for contemporary controversies", *Blitz and Hoffpauir, P. 1*. Alternatively, scholars such as Klosko (2006) adopt a development approach "which attributes inconsistencies or anomalies in the thought of Plato in his progress, experience, or both", (*ibid. p. 1*). Other scholars such as Lewis (1998) take a unitary approach which identifies a consistency in Plato's thought. Although, Klein (1965) was among those scholars who take a literary approach "which connects an assessment of the drama of a dialogue to its assessment of the argument", (-*ibid. p.1*). To add further to the intricacies of

understanding Plato's thought, other scholars such as Vlastos (1978) adopt an analytic approach which assesses a dialogue with little or no regard 'to its dramatic element'. To provide elucidation on this conundrum in approach, George Klasko in his book, "*The Development of Plato's Political Theory*" - (2006), offers a detailed account of Plato's political theory in terms of its development and evaluation. The author provides a 'clear statements on Plato's perhaps shifting understanding of politics and the soul'.

John M. Cooper has observed, "For the most part, the terminology encapsulates a certain interpretative thesis about the evolving character of Plato's authorship, linked to the development of his philosophical thought. This authorship began after 399 B.C - Socrates death – and continued until his own death some fifty years later. According to this thesis, Plato began as an author of dialogues setting forth his 'teacher' conversing much as we presume he typically did when discussing his favourite philosophical topics – morality, virtue, the best human life. These, then, would constitute the 'early' dialogues, sometimes thematically described as the 'Socratic' dialogues", (-Cooper p. XII). In the early dialogues, Plato's Socrates was presented as an intellectualist. He claims that people always act in the way that is advantageous for them at the time of the action. Thus, all wrongdoing mirrors some cognitive error on their part.

It is clearly apparent that there are “clear differences in style and philosophical content from the early dialogues to the middle dialogues. This is illustrated by the change in which Plato characterises Socrates. In the early dialogues, we find Socrates simply asking questions, exposing his interlocutor’s confusions; all the while professing his own inability to shed any positive light on the subject...In the early dialogues, moreover, Socrates discusses mainly ethical subjects with his interlocutors ... whereas in the middle period dialogues, Socrates suddenly emerges as a kind of positive expert, willing to affirm and defend his own theories about many important subjects”, (-Brickhouse and Smith, p. 16). The authors continue with their analysis of the Platonic dialogues, saying, “In the middle period, Plato’s Socrates interests expand outward into nearly every area of inquiry known to humankind. The philosophical positions Socrates advances in these dialogues are vastly more systematically, including broad theoretical inquiries into the connections between language and reality (*Cratylus*), knowledge and explanation (*Phaedo* and *Republic*, Books V-VII)... The Socrates of the middle period acknowledges the possibility of infallible human knowledge (simile of the divided line in Book VI and the parable of the cave in Book VII of the *Republic*) and this becomes possible in virtue of a special sort of cognitive contact with the Forms or Ideas (*eide*), which exist in a supra-sensible realm available only to thought. This theory of Forms introduced and explained in various contexts in each of the middle period dialogues...”, (-Brickhouse and Smith, p. 17).

Adopting the interpretative view, Plato gradually developed to be a fully independent philosopher with his own ideas which supplemented his 'Socratic' heritage. This occurs in the 'middle' dialogues and the development of his Theory of Forms. The 'middle' dialogues include the following Platonic works, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*. Also, it is thought that *Parmenides*, 'with its critical reflections on the Theory of Forms', and *Theaetetus* belong to this particular grouping. By the time of the middle period, Plato's thinking has developed to the extent that he conceives of the soul having three parts: a rational part, a spirited part, and an appetitive part. Justice is the function of the soul where each of these three parts "does its own work" and does not interfere in the mechanisms of the other parts, (-*Republic Iv. 435b-445b*). In his analysis, Plato maps out what can go wrong in a soul and this occurs when the appetitive part of the soul can bluntly override reason's judgments.

Cooper continues with his analysis and says, "Finally, the 'late' period comprises a new series of investigations into logic, metaphysics, the philosophy of physics, and ethics and political theory, from which these 'Forms' either are absent altogether or else at least the principal theoretical work is accomplished without direct and simple appeal to their authoritative status", The following works belong to this period, *Timaeus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*.

Cooper further elaborates by stating, "Along with these philosophical developments, Plato's manner of writing dialogues was evolving too. In the 'middle' dialogues,

where Socrates continues to be the principal speaker, he is no longer limited to questioning and commenting upon the views of his fellow discussants, as in the ‘early’ dialogues, but branches out into the development of elaborate, positive philosophical theses of his own. In the ‘late’ dialogues, however, (with the understandable exception of *Philebus*), Socrates ceases altogether to be an active participant in the discussion. Moreover, the conversation takes on the character of a dogmatic exposition of the doctrine by the main speaker to an audience”, (-Cooper p. X III).

In the ‘early’ dialogues, including *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias*, “Socrates does philosophise in the way the historical Socrates did, according to the rest of our evidence,” (-Cooper p. XV). Cooper further comments, “But, by contrast with dialogues such as *Phaedo* and *Republic*, he (Socrates) does not engage here in elaborate positive philosophical construction, putting forward ambitious philosophical theses of his own and offering independent philosophical argument and other considerations in their favour. In particular, Socrates says nothing about the Theory of Forms. There is a sign that in these dialogues Plato intends not to depart, as he does elsewhere, from Socrates methods of reasoning or from the topics to which Socrates devoted his attention, and no doubt he carried over into these portraits much of the substance of Socrates’ own philosophising, as Plato himself understood it”, (-Cooper p. XVI.) In addition, Cooper says, “Thus *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides*, and *Theaetetus* all have clear forward connections to the late dialogues. On the other hand, *Phaedrus*,

despite Socrates' use of the classical theory in his second speech on eros, foreshadows the revised conception of a Form as some sort of divided whole – no longer as simple unity- known about by the method of 'collection and division' that the 'late' dialogues *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus* set out and employ at length", (-Cooper p. X V11). Therefore it is clearly 'not safe to rule out some chronological overlapping in composition' within the dialogues of the second group. That is why Cooper noted the following warning by stating, "Accordingly, even though readers always and understandably speak of the theories adumbrated by Socrates here as Plato's theories, one ought not to speak of them so without some compunction – the writing itself, and also Plato the author, present these always in a spirit of open –ended exploration, and sometimes there are contextual clues indicating that Socrates exaggerates or goes beyond what the argument truly justifies, and so on", (-Cooper p. XXII).

In the *Gorgias*, in response to Callicles, Socrates champions the philosophical life and he is "committed to the objective existence of justice and the other virtues and devoted to learning about and living in accordance with them, (-Cooper p. 791). Further, Cooper comments, "In giving vent to strongly worded assertions of his own moral commitments, he (Socrates) seems to adopt a conception of 'irrational' desires like that of *Republic IV*, incompatible with the views he works with in the other 'Socratic' dialogues, (-Cooper p. 792). In addition, the author says, "In *Gorgias* Socrates is on the verge of becoming the take-charge, independent philosophical theorist that he is in such dialogues as *Phaedo* and *Republic*".

The discussion on the nature of justice is explored in detail in the Republic and ‘Socrates’ conviction that justice is a pre-eminent good for the just person’. Cooper continues his commentary, saying, “Though in *Books II – X*, Socrates no longer searches for the truth by criticising his interlocutors, he proceeds nonetheless in a spirit of exploration and discovery, proposing bold hypotheses and seeking their consequences. Quite different is the main speaker in the ‘late’ dialogues ...we get confident reasoned delivery of philosophical results assumed by the speaker (Socrates or a visitor from Elea or Athens) to be well established”. Cooper further states, “In *Book II*, he will say what justice really is and show that people who are truly and fully just thereby lead a better, happier life than any unjust person could. Socrates presents his views on the original purposes for which political communities –cities were founded, the basic principles of just, social and political organisation, refer to Books II, III, and V. He decides that a truly just society requires philosophical ruler with a larger community. He discusses the precise nature of justice and other virtues, refer to Books IV, VI, VII, IX”, (-Cooper p. 971).

In *Phaedo*, “Socrates makes much of the human intellect’s affinity to eternal Forms of Beauty, Justice, and other normative notions, and of mathematical properties and objects, such as oddness and evenness and the integers two, three, and all the rest, as well as physical forces such as hot and cold, all existing in a nonphysical realm accessible only to abstract thought”, (-Cooper p. 49). The use of myth in the *Phaedo*

compares with those myths featuring in *Gorgias* and *Republic*. Cooper observes that “It should also be compared with the myth in Socrates’ second speech in the *Phaedrus*”, (ibid.).

According to J. M. Cooper, “*Phaedrus* is commonly paired on the one hand with *Gorgias* and on the other *Symposium*”. Cooper continues with the following remarks about *Phaedrus*, “ In his great second speech, Socrates draws upon the psychological theory of the *Republic* and the metaphysics of resplendent Forms common to that dialogue and several others (notably *Phaedo* and *Symposium*) to inspire *Phaedrus* a love for philosophy. By contrast, the philosophy drawn upon in the second, dialectical, half of the dialogue is linked closely to the much more austere, logically oriented investigations via the ‘method of divisions’ that we find in *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus* – where the grasp of any important philosophical idea (any Form) proceeds by patient, detailed mapping of its relations to other concepts and to its own sub varieties, not through awe-inspiring vision of a self-confined, single brilliant entity. One of Socrates’ central claims in the second part of the dialogue is that rhetorical composition, of which his second speech is a paragon, must construct in words mere resemblances of the real truth, ones selected to appeal to the specific type of ‘soul’ that its hearers possess, so as to draw them on towards knowledge of the truth – or else disguise it!”, (-Cooper p. 506).

Plato was very influenced by Parmenides and Zeno in the development of his theory of Forms “which are plainly intended to satisfy the Parmenidean requirement of

metaphysical unity and stability in knowable reality”, (-Brickhouse and Smith, p. 6).

Also, Diogenes Laertius identified other key influences of Plato by stating:

“He mixed together in his works the arguments of Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans, and Socrates. Regarding the sensibles, he borrows from Heraclitus; regarding the intelligibles, from Pythagoras; and regarding politics, from Socrates”, D.L. 3.8.

The earlier theory of Forms underwent a change in the dialogues and it first appears in the *Parmenides*. According to Brickhouse and Smith...”Plato did not regard the objection to the Theory of Forms raised in the *Parmenides* as in any way decisive. In any event, it is agreed on all sides that Plato’s interest in the Theory shifted in the *Sophist* and *Statesman* to the exploration of the logical relations that hold between abstract entities. In the *Laws*, the Theory of Forms appears to have dropped out altogether. Whatever value Plato believed that knowledge of abstract entities has for the proper conduct of philosophy, he no longer seems to have believed that such knowledge is necessary for the proper running of a political community”, (-Brickhouse and Smith, p. 21).

As a principal character in several of the late dialogues, Socrates is sidelined in the *Sophist* and *Statesman* or is even totally absent from dialogues such as *Critias* or his final work, *Laws*. Although, Socrates does feature as a main character in both the *Theaetetus* and *Philebus*.

The Ontology of the Sophists and Plato

The Sophists took the place that was once occupied by the poets and instead of dogmatism or fundamentalism, their thought was radical scepticism and critical both in terms of knowledge and morality. From the perspective of ontology, they held that reality was constantly changing while from an epistemological viewpoint, the Sophists believed that it was not possible to know anything absolutely due to the fact that the only knowledge available came from the senses, and this could not be trusted. In terms of morality, they were relativists. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that if the Sophists thought that human knowledge was limited then that meant reality itself was chaotic.

It is safe to understand Socrates' and Plato's philosophy as a response to the Sophist scepticism. For instance, "Socrates argues whether it is possible to be truly moral and at the same time believe that all moral codes are relative. Philosophy, for him, was not a matter of learning a skill that would make you successful, but of being uncertain about oneself in the feeling is that one was not what one ought to be. The definition of philosophy is the love of wisdom, and one cannot begin this path until one feels this lack", (-Large p.4).

Further, Plato returns to Parmenides and he contends that the Sophist ontological and epistemological scepticism misapprehends both human nature and reality itself.

Though an examination of the ontology of Socratic questioning in Plato's early dialogues by Kirkland and the review carried out by J.M. Magrini, "...- opinions and

appearances are never reducible to “mere” opinions or “mere” appearances; they are taken seriously and interrogated, interpreted, and clarified. In this way Kirkland rescues Plato from the idealist critique found in doctrinal readings. This move also serves Plato’s ties to Cartesian metaphysics. This is because the elenchus brings us into an experience that is both excessive and distant, and as such as it is possible to read this in terms of ontological finitude”, (-Magrini p. 1).

Thus, “Plato defends a clear ontological dualism in which there are two types of reality or worlds: the sensible world and the intelligible world, or as he calls it, the world of ideas. Those beings, which match universal concepts, are called Ideas or Forms”, (-Bartleby p.1). In the *Theaetetus* Plato introduces a dialogue concerning the nature and/or limits of human knowledge, and “Plato is primarily interested in establishing that something exists, e.g. Justice, and then understanding what that something is and why it is what it is”, (-Bartleby p. 2).

In the Allegory of the Cave in Book V.II of the *Republic*, Plato presents his ontology and he believes men live in illusion. Only through reasoning and philosophy can man free from opinions and then access Ideas. For him, the real is not homogeneous. Plato believes that ‘the horse’ is not the truth, only the idea of a horse is true’. As pertinently observed by an author in an article in Philosophy.com, stating, that “Plato was an idealist insofar as he posits the primacy of ideas over matter. The world of ideas, eternal and still, prevails over the sensible world, world of illusion, temporary.

Intelligible reality is the true reality. The objects of the world are only reflections”, (-The – Philosophy. Com, p. 3).

In summation, the question whether there was an ontological re-orientation in Plato by the time he composed the *Parmenides* was addressed in a journal in 2019 by Jens Kristian Larsen. He contends “What the three dialogues (*Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*) encourages us to do is rather to set common opinions about the relative worth to set common opinions about the relative worth and value of things when conducting ontological inquiries; and this attitude demonstrates a relationship rather than a significant difference between Plato’s Socrates and his Eleatic philosophers”, (-Larsen, p. 1). The author continues to state, “That it is the activity performed by the *Sophist* and the philosopher themselves that the interlocutors undertake to define in the *Sophist*, correctly emphasized in Oberhammer 2016, 125-126”, (-Larsen, p. 20 note 36).

The ongoing debate on the difference between the nature and convention was a live discussion between the Sophists and Socrates. In ancient Greece, each state had its conventions and there was “no criterion of justice as such, apart from the dominant practice of each particular city”, (-Shiavault p. 1). This doctrine of moral relativism which links with a general relativism in the theory of knowledge is outlined by Plato in the *Theaetetus* and the remarks of the Sophist Protagoras. In effect, there was no criteria for determining what is just or unjust, only the particular convention of each

city. Shiavault further comments, “So what the Sophist has to teach is what is held to be just in each different state. You cannot ask or answer the question, what is justice? for an individual is offered no criteria by which to guide his own actions if he is merely asked to note that the prevailing criteria vary from state to state”. This analysis forms the basis for the difference between nature and convention; Shiavault explains by saying, “A man who lives in a given state and conforms to its required standards is a creature of convention; a man who is equally at home in any state or none, depending upon his own personal and private purposes, is a creature of nature. The natural man has no moral standards of his own. He is therefore free from all constraints upon him by others. The natural man, conceived thus by the Sophist...He is always going to be aggressive and lustful...the character (of natural man) who appears in the guise of man devoid of social conventions ...of the fifth century city-state”, (-Shiavault p.1). The author then perceptively quotes Adkins by commenting, “Scratch Thrasymachus and you find Agamemnon” (showing the social attitudes of the Homeric hero), and Shiavault adds, give him more of a veneer, we find Alcibiades. Natural man portrayed in Thrasymachean guise has two main characteristics. His psychological make up is simple: he is out to get what he wants. Power and pleasure are his exclusive interests. Thus the *arete* of such a man is to learn the craft of moulding people by rhetoric. It is to this doctrine that Socrates seeks to present an alternative”, (-Shiavault p. 3). This gradually transpired in the Gorgias when Socrates says to Polus “that he will have achieved nothing unless he convinces him”, (-Shiavault p. 4). During Socrates’ discussion with Cephalus at the start of

Republic Book 1, Socrates arrived at a crucial conclusion by stating, “So the discovery of one’s own ignorance survives as the one well-founded moral aim”, Shiavault adds, Socrates breaks with the Sophists in not allowing that rhetoric can have the status of a craft or skill, but his loosely allied use of knowledge and craft make it clear that to acquire virtue is to acquire some craft, even if not rhetoric. Rhetoric is non-rational. The knowledge that constitutes virtue involves not only beliefs that such and such are the case, but also a capacity for recognising relevant distinctions and an ability to act”. The author continues by noting that Socrates said “virtue is knowledge”, namely “no one errs willingly”. No one willingly goes wrong, for no one voluntarily chooses other than what is good for himself. The Sophist sees no good that is not simply getting by some man of what he wants”, (-Shiavault p. 5).

In conclusion, the author observes that “Plato accepts the fact that moral concepts are only intelligible against the background of a certain sort of social order; he then tries to delineate it, providing or attempting to provide at the same time a justification in terms of the order of the universe”, (-Shiavault p. 6).

In the *Republic*, Socrates was engaged with a series of interlocutors to arrive at a position on justice and its relationship to *eudaimonia* (happiness). This question was addressed both in terms of political communities and the individual person (soul). Socrates and his interlocutors create a just city (the Kallipolis) during the discussion in order to explain what justice is.

In *Book 1*, 332c of the *Republic*, Polemarchus claims that 'justice is helping one's friends and harming one's enemies and that this is what one owes people'. Then Thrasymachus becomes engaged as an interlocutor in the discussion and taking the sophistic approach, he defines 'justice as the advantage or what is beneficial to the stronger'. For him, 'justice is different under different political regimes according to the laws which are made to serve the interests of the strong (the ruling class in each regime), (-338e-339a). Further, Thrasymachus claims that 'injustice is in every way better than justice and that the unjust person who commits injustice undetected is always happier than the just person, (-343e-344c). It was at this point in the discussion that Socrates notes that injustice produces internal disharmony which prevents effective actions, (-351b).

Then Glaucon takes up Thrasymachus' argument and he makes a speech in defence of injustice, saying:

1. 'Justice originates as a compromise between weak people who are afraid that suffering injustice is worse than doing it, 358e-359a.'
2. 'People act justly because this necessary and unavoidable, so justice is good only for its consequences, 359c-360d.' "The *Republic Book 11* begins with Glaucon arguing against Socrates' position of justice. Glaucon argued that by

nature humans are selfish and unjust, and that justice is not good in itself; instead justice is a consequential good (it is only valued for the beneficial consequences). Glaucon told the story of the Ring of Gyges to illustrate his point that justice is always self-interested. Socrates believed that justice is good intrinsically and instrumentally. Glaucon was challenging the intrinsic value of justice. He claimed that anybody would do the same as Gyges if they had the chance saying: “Now if a just man came into possession of such a ring, he would use it to do exactly what the unjust man does- kill his enemies, have sex with anyone he fancied, get his friends out of danger, and all with impunity”. Glaucon told the story of the Ring of Gyges in an attempt to illustrate his point that justice has a “relative value due to our inability to do wrong”. The story tells us that if we had this sort of power no one would be able to be trusted and therefore, it shows us that justice is always self-interested and thus really not justice but a form of injustice. Glaucon concluded his speech by saying that the unjust man will be rewarded and respected, whereas the just man will be wretched. The only real reason people praise justice is not because they actually believe in it, they praise just people to keep up a pretence. While engaged in a discussion on justice with Socrates in the *Republic*, Glaucon states, “ And this, then, is the genesis and being of justice, it is a mean between what is best-doing injustice without paying the penalty – and what is worst- suffering injustice without being able to avenge oneself”, (-359a). He continues by saying, “...no one is willingly just but only

when compelled to be so”, (-360c). In conclusion, it is clear that the story of the Ring of Gyges is significant ... as the ring is connected with injustice because it tempted Gyges and gave him the power to do as he pleased. The ring takes away consequences for you and Glaucon seemed to be arguing that if we took away all the consequences for our actions then people would satisfy every desire; if we could break the rules and get away with it, we would. The story of the Ring of Gyges raises the point that people will most likely act unjustly when unobserved, as this seems to be a rational choice. Glaucon believes that justice is something like an arrangement we come to. It is only valuable because it keeps a certain order and security. The reason why we have systems of justice is only because we want to keep people who would commit injustice, and also abuse the rules, out. Glaucon also stated that by nature people are unjust”, (-Lodhi p. 1ff). The myth of the ring of Gyges is apposite to this position and it is the ‘exact antithesis of the ascending movement depicted in the allegory of the cave, in that it describes the downward movement of a man seeking the laws of nature an excuse to escape responsibility in social life’, (-Suzanne p. 7). The position that was expressed by Glaucon reflects an ethical viewpoint known as egoism that was espoused by the Sophist Antiphon which was founded on the ‘belief that everyone acts only from the motive of self interest’. This myth remains relevant for contemporary thinkers as Dorbolo says, “The Story remains important to us to-day, because it concerns what we can expect humans to do with power over

others”, (-Dorbolo p. 3). In addition, Nietzsche in the book *Antichrist*, he opposed the ‘slave morality’ introduced by the Judaeo-Christian tradition and asked ‘what is good? The answer was ‘everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power’. He blames the lost of metaphysical values, losing their faith in themselves and becoming nihilists.

3. ‘The unjust person with the reputation for justice is happier than the just person with the reputation for injustice’, (-360d-362c).

In order to discover the meaning and origin of justice, Socrates observes, “If we should watch a city come into being in speech...would also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice?”, *Republic 369a*. Socrates argues ‘that humans enter political life since each is not self-sufficient by nature’, (-369b-372c). Meanwhile, in Book IV of the *Republic*, Socrates points out ‘that one is just when each of the three parts of the soul performs its function, (-442d). Socrates advancing his thoughts on justice, comments, “If we should watch a city come into being, get yourself an adequate light and look yourself ...whether we can somehow see where the justice [in the city] might be and where the injustice...”, (-427d). The principle behind the justice of doing your own thing is then imagined by Socrates when he comments, “Well, then my friend...the practice of minding one’s own business when it comes into being in a certain way, is probably justice”, (-433B). In addition, he adds, “Then the just man will not be any different from the just city

with respect to the form itself of justice, but will be like it”, (-435 B). Further, ‘justice is a natural balance of the soul’s part and injustice is an imbalance of the parts of the soul, (-444e). In Book V 111, on the assumption that the just could come into existence ...”Socrates hints that it would eventually change since everything which comes into being must decay, 546a-b. He reaches his conclusion by stressing, “Shall we hire a herald then...or shall I myself announce that...the best and most just man is happiest, (-580 B-C).

To support justice, Socrates utilises the image of the multi-headed beast to show the ‘consequences of justice and injustice in the soul’, (-588c ff).

In Book X of the *Republic*, the rewards of justice were described by Socrates and Glaucon agreed with the assessment, (-612b-d).

Similar to the viewpoint taken by Thrasmachus in Book 1 of the *Republic*, the standpoint argued for by Calicles in the Platonic dialogue *Gorgias* was ‘that conventional morality was by the weak to protect themselves against the strong, inhibiting the latter from doing by nature they have a right to do, which is to use their inferiors for their convenience. Thus, they both agree that a life of self-assertion is a supremely happy life because it is lived in accordance with nature’. This contention was reflected in the thinking of Hobbs and the state of nature was

an emanation of ill ‘and it took the application of reason to bring justice into the world’, (-Grayling p.56).

In the Platonic dialogue *Gorgias*, Duke observed the following, “The dramatic structure of Plato’s dialogue suggests that that the defence of injustice by Polus and the appeal to the natural right of the stronger by Calicles are partly grounded in the conceptual presuppositions of Gorgianic rhetoric, (-Duke p.8). Further, the dichotomy between *physis* and *nomos* was also pressed by the sophistic account provided by Antiphon’s fragment *On Truth*. He distinguished between the notions of justice and injustice. As Duke comments, “(Antiphon) argues that the majority of things which are considered just according to *nomos* are in direct conflict with nature and hence not truly or naturally just (-DK87A44). His argument is that laws and conventions are designed as a constraint upon our natural pursuit of pleasure. Antiphon also asserts that one should employ justice to one’s advantage by regarding the laws as important when witnesses are present, but disregarding them when one can get away with it”, (-Duke p.11). These views ‘on the relation between human nature and justice’ reflect those expressed by Calicles in the *Gorgias* and Thrasymachus in the Republic. According to the Platonic dialogues, it was abundantly clear that the sophistic rhetoric ‘does not provide an adequate view of justice’, possessing ‘no real knowledge of justice itself’, (-Sophist 56).

In both *Gorgias* and *The Republic*, Socrates seeks to respond to Callicles, Glaucon, and Thrasymachus 'that it is always in an individual's interest to be just, rather than unjust'. A more contemporary criticism of Plato's defence of justice was the article by David Sachs, "*A Fallacy in Plato's Republic*" in 1963. He argues that "Socrates fails to show why having a balanced soul will lead one to act justly or why psychic health amounts to justice. Thus, Plato presents Socrates defending psychic health rather than justice". To rescue Socrates defence of justice, there needs to be a logical and causal connection between having a balanced soul and the exercise of socially just actions, Singpurwalla has suggested an answer 'by showing that Socrates has a good reason to think that it is in everyone's interest to act justly. This is based on the human need to be unified with others', (-Singpurwalla 2006). The answer is partly answered by Socrates when he states, 'he can still be motivated to act justly since this is in his interests', (-*Republic 567a-580a, 462b-e, 463e-464d*).

In the Seventh Letter, Plato considered Socrates "the justest man alive", (-324e). The distinction between philosophy and sophistry was one of the central themes in the Platonic dialogues particularly in their respective ontology. The Sophists were engaged in the realm of opinion, pursuing pragmatic language games, and the pursuit of truth relegated to worldly success. For Plato, the sophist's rhetoric does not address or provide a convincing view of justice and justice is a knowledge that requires to be discovered through deep thought and dedication.

The chapter carried out an assessment of the notions of justice in the *Gorgias*, the *Republic*, *Sophist* and *Parmenides*. For Plato, the Sophist's rhetoric does not provide a convincing view of justice and he contends that justice is a knowledge requiring deep philosophical inquiry. The critique of Plato's development of the notion of justice in the *Republic* by David Sachs has been more than adequately defended by Singpurwalla.

Chapter 6

The Concepts and Ideas of Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)

Thomas Hobbes is a widely influential political philosopher and he adopted a secular approach to politics. He favours a materialistic metaphysics and he used a mechanistic view of science and knowledge. In his major work, *Leviathan*, Hobbes has a sceptical view of the human power of judgment and reasoning. Thus, he advocates that we should avoid the state of nature as this would lead to complete chaos.

He devised what he called the social contract in that every citizen in the community agrees to abide by the covenant entered into. Therein, what is right is found and true justice is located.

In this chapter, we carry out a comparison between Plato and Hobbes.

The conclusion consists of an assessment of Hobbes's thought and his contribution to the analysis of various theories of justice.

Hobbes is acknowledged as the 'father' of modern political philosophy. He examined politics as a secular subject separate from theology. The political happenings in England and Scotland heavily influenced his thinking and he was fearful of social and political collapse. As is evident from Hobbes major work, *Leviathan*, he disliked

scholastic philosophy and instead adopted with fervour materialistic metaphysics. This defined Hobbes's ideas. For him, it is the role of the sovereign to decide on the correct forms of religious worship and citizen's duty to abide by political authority supersedes any duty due to God. His disapproval of scholasticism formed his view that terms should be clearly defined and connected to real experience. In essence, Hobbes has a mechanistic view of science and knowledge.

From a Hobbes perspective, ethics is dealing with human nature and political philosophy arises when human beings come into contact. He felt that human judgment is unreliable and thus, requires the guidance of science. This is due to the fact that our judgments can be affected by self-interest or by the pleasures / pain at a given moment in time. Therefore, our feelings are prone to be used when calculating another person. Motivation holds great importance for Hobbes. He is also very sceptical of the human power of judgment and reasoning. In *Leviathan* v.7, he differentiates between science and many different form of belief. This bears a similarity to Plato who contrasted knowledge with opinion.

Hobbes also warned about the dangerous effects of mistaken political ideas and ideologies. Further, judgments can be tilted by rhetoric. Many judgments relates to future events and he noted a warning by saying "the future being but a fiction of the mind", (- *Leviathan* III.7), and therefore unreliable. For him, it is only science, "the knowledge of consequences", (- *Leviathan* v. 17), that bears reliable knowledge of the future and super cedes the errors of human judgment. On the face of it, Hobbes model

of science is porous as it does not take into account the complexities of human behaviour.

According to Hobbes, due to our human nature, we are lacking in many aspects and thus open to attack. Our reasoning abilities and our willingness to know is fragile because it relies on language which is subject to error and unwanted influence on proceeding to act. This may occur when we act selfishly, impulsively, or in ignorance by adopting faulty reasoning or incorrect theology or somebody else's emotive speech. He believes that little happiness can be hoped for from our existence together. Hobbes acknowledges 'that some of us are much stronger than others', (- *Leviathan* *xiii*, 1-2).

Concerning our duties in the state of nature, we have a right to do such actions to ensure our self-preservation and then make a judgment on that. Although in the state of nature, there is no arbiter to define what good judgment is and thus we all become judges in our own causes. As Hobbes declares, "To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place [in the state of nature], (-*Leviathan* *xiii*.13). Therefore, he believes that the state of nature should be avoided at all costs except in the case of our own self-preservation.

Similar to the ancient and medieval philosophers, Hobbes contends that human reason can extrapolate certain eternal principles to manage our conduct. This consists of laws provided by nature rather than by way of revelation by God. For Hobbes, nature does not have any provision for criticising or disobeying those laws made by government. To this end, he formulated nineteen laws of nature. Basically, Hobbes claims that we should behave in such a way that we have voluntarily engaged in a contract with the other members of society, the sovereign authority being the exception. This lays down his premise “right to all things”. So the key question for Hobbes in any moral and political matter is always: who is to judge? In the state of nature, the answer is that each of us is the judge on our own cause while in civil society, the sovereign is deemed to be the rightful judge. This is one of Hobbes’s key insights when he postulates that any right or entitlement is only has resonance when associated with a concrete judgment covering that particular case. Although, it would appear that Hobbes has failed to provide convincing proof that we owe a nearly unlimited duty to obey the sovereign.

Social Contract Theory

Hobbes developed this theory as a method of maintaining political principles adhering to the agreement made by certain rational, free, and equal persons. He concludes that we should follow the authority of an absolute sovereign power. In general, he aimed to show the mutual relationship between political observance and

tranquillity. The social covenant consists in both the forfeiting or passing over the right and the vindication of sovereign power; this avoids the chance of government failure and a return to the state of nature. As part of the contract, the subjects agree to abide with the principle “no wrong done to a consenting party, not to hold it liable for any errors in judgment it may make and not to treat any harms it does to them as actionable injustices”, (-*Leviathan x lii, 106*).

He regarded Monarchy as the best form of government. Hobbes is in favour of equality for all people, especially for women.

For Hobbes, the establishment of a sovereign ensures stability and justice for society. The alternative is living in chaos. Thus, the sovereign state is necessary for Hobbes’s theory of justice as the only option is ‘a miserable state of nature’. This is an example of ‘Positive Law Theory’ within the confines of his philosophy. Therefore, according to Hobbes, to question the law leads society back into ‘the brutish state of nature’.

At first, Hobbes postulates that justice is only located with a strong sovereign government and following all laws of that sovereign is deemed to be just and very reasonable. He does not believe justice is feasible under a state of nature, (-*Leviathan 15*). Therefore, in order for justice blossom, human beings need to escape from their state of nature and this can only occur through stability. This is achievable when all

human beings agree to follow the rules of social contract by adhering to the procedures that further the protection of the wider community.

In essence, justice is on firm foundation only by maintaining the covenants of the community. If the covenant is breached then no right has been passed under the social contract and every person right to everything (the state of nature) and therefore no action can be just as chaos disseminates widespread. Although, when a covenant is in place, then to break it offends the law. Under the commonwealth formed under the social contract, it is possible to judge and agree what is just or unjust. For Hobbes, it is the duty of the state to keep the peace and met out punishment commensurate with its breach. Perhaps a naively held view held by Hobbes is the belief that a sovereign power would not interfere detrimentally or breach their side of the covenant. This has not been borne out historically.

Comparison of -“*The Republic*” by Plato and - “*Leviathan*” by Hobbes

Both authors share similar opinions on the necessity for some form of government and the basic driving forces that sometimes envelope human beings. It is abundantly clear that Plato possesses a more positive view point on human nature in contrast to Hobbes’s bleak assessment. Despite that, there are certain cursory common themes between them. *The Leviathan* and *The Republic* are ad idem about the importance on

the form of government that without a hierarchy of some sort, society would disintegrate; then citizens would resort to their appetites and desires. Thus, the state functions as an invigilator for people's passions. Similar to the guardians in the *Republic 376c*, Hobbes believes that there is no supreme truth as the vast majority of our understanding of it emanates from individual perfections. For him, there is no elite class in society that possesses the truth and his political system differs from Plato. In an extremely pessimistic view of humanity, Hobbes believes that human beings live in "a state of continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short", (*Leviathan 123*).

Even though both Plato and Hobbes observe that human nature requires guidance from some sovereign body, they radically differ in their treatment of the ultimate nature of human beings. For instance, in Plato's *Republic* human beings seek the intrinsically good, (*Republic 505b*). He observes human beings as part of the natural order with the philosopher King at the pinnacle and the others below that receive guidance from their wisdom. The elite few (the guardians) are the sole possessors of ultimate truth. In contrast, Hobbes believes that a person is continuously at battle with his fellow man as he is never content with his possessions.

For Plato, the purpose of the political system is to support the hierarchy with the philosopher King at the top with the principle function to transfer down ideas about justice and keep the lower ranks in line. But Hobbes differs from this line of thought

and he believes that “no man is intrinsically better than another”, (-*Leviathan 183*). For him, no one body can recognise the ultimate truth and the true dividing line between the strongest and the weakest. Hobbes’s political system is founded on the precepts of law enforcement and not moral enforcement. The resulting government will be grounded on more regulatory principles that in turn seek to enforce instead of instructing.

Thomas Hobbes has made an immense contribution to the history of philosophy from a secular viewpoint. He utilised the sceptical approach, providing a succinct analysis on the human power of judgment and reasoning.

He adopted the use of political control instead of the state of nature as the foundation of his system. Hobbes firmly believed that this is the correct way to avoid social chaos. The social contract and the covenants made between citizens are necessary components for Hobbes to develop civil society. His analysis of justice forms a crucial element of his beliefs on government and their applicability to society.

Finally, in stark contrast to Plato, Hobbes maintains a pessimistic view of human nature and at times, some of the views expressed are naïve with the benefit of historical hindsight over the centuries.

Chapter 7

The Concepts and Ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

In this chapter, I will examine Nietzsche's thinking and influences. Instead of eternal absolutes, he advocated fleeting conventions. He believed that 'all truths are only interpretations and there are no moral phenomena, only moral interpretations'. This aspect of his thinking is elaborated on in this chapter. There will be piece that shows Nietzsche's perspective on justice finds resonance with that of Plato. It will be seen that Nietzsche and Plato differed on the nature of being and the nature of truth. Further, Nietzsche did not agree with Plato's Theory of Forms and the relevance of this point is examined. It will be noted in this chapter that Nietzsche "revalues all values" and he promoted a radical rethinking of the nature of human existence, knowledge and morality. The relevance of nihilism is discussed. Nietzsche's concept of 'will to power' is considered in detail. According to Nietzsche, the only truth existing in our lives is the agreement through language and this contention is analysed. I will consider the influences on Nietzsche's thinking through- out the chapter in order to put context on his postulations. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a succinct quotation from Sue Prideaux which captures the principal features of Nietzsche's thought.

Nietzsche was the professor of philology at the University of Basle, Switzerland, and he was conversant with the ancient Greek philosophers. In his book, *Beyond Good*

and Evil, there was an extensive analysis of Plato's thinking and he states, "We must call into question our notions of good and evil as eternal absolutes rather than fleeting conventions, The most protracted of all errors through the last two thousand years has been Plato's invention of pure spirit", (*Beyond Good and Evil, On the prejudices of philosophers*, Section 14, 1886). Further, Dale Wilkerson comments "According to Nietzsche, the conceptual framework known as western metaphysics was first articulated by Plato, who had pieced together remnants of a declining worldview, borrowing elements from predecessors such as Anaximander, Parmenides, and especially Socrates, in order to overturn a cosmology that has been in play from the days of Homer and which found its fullest and last expression in the thought of Heraclitus. Plato's framework was popularised by Christianity, which added egalitarian elements along with virtue of pity", (-Wilkerson p. 13).

Nietzsche's early influences were Richard Wagner and Arthur Schopenhauer. Particularly during the early period (1868-1876), much of Schopenhauer's thought remained fixed in Nietzsche's philosophy. Further, he adopted the 'primordial aesthetic drives presented by the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus'. The middle period (1877-1882) reflects his 'struggle for self-realisation and meaning'. He focussed on the problems related to metaphysics, religion, knowledge, aesthetic and morality'. He was now writing in an aphoristic style. The period post 1882 is considered the later period and the eventual onset of his severe mental illness. It was during this period that Nietzsche advanced a cosmological theory of "will to power".

Nietzsche believed that ‘All truths are only interpretations and there are no moral phenomena, only moral interpretations of phenomena’, (-Beyond Good and Evil, ‘Epigrams and Entreaties’, S, 108, 1886). As late as the 1888’s, Nietzsche criticises philosophers who would make a “fetish” out of reason and retreat into the illusion of a “de-historicised” world. Such a philosopher is “decadent”, symptomatic of a “declining life”. Opposed this type, Nietzsche valorises the “Dionysian” artist whose sense of history affirms “all that is questionable and terrible in existence”, (-Twilight of the Idols, Reason in Philosophy, 1888, Wilkerson p. 12).

Sue Prideaux observed that “Nietzsche had a wide range of views and his perspective of justice finds resonance with Plato’s analysis of the subject when he states, “What is needed is not a forcible redistribution but a gradual transformation of mind: the sense of justice must grow greater in everyone, the instinct for violence weaker”, (-Human, All Too Human, A Glance at the State, Section 452, 1878), In addition, Prideaux astutely remarked about Nietzsche, saying, “His chief intellectual exploration: how to find value and meaning in an uncertain universe in which neither the ideal nor the divine existed”, (-Prideaux p. 367). In effect, Nietzsche did not agree with Plato’s Theory of Forms when he stated, “by grasping Voltaire’s bright torch of reason and casting its dazzling light onto the shadowy walls of the cave”, (-*Human, All Too Human, Section 1, 1878*). For Nietzsche, according to Dale Wilkerson, “the highest values devalues themselves”, as modernity’s striving for honesty, probity and courage

in the search for truth, those all-important virtues inhibiting the core of scientific progress, strike a fatal blow against a foundational idea of absolutes”, (Wilkerson p. 13).

Further, A.C. Grayling remarks that Nietzsche “revalues all values”. He attacked both nihilism and pessimism as outcomes of the loss of faith in traditional theism-based morality when nothing is put in its place. The higher species is lacking, i.e. those who in exhaustible fertility and power keep up the faith in man, the lower species (“herd”, “mass”, “society”) unlearns modesty and blows up its needs into cosmic and metaphysical values. In this way the whole of existence is vulgarised: insofar as the mass is dominant it bullies the exceptions, so they lose their faith in themselves and become nihilists”, (-Grayling p. 320). The solution proposed by Nietzsche “requires that we be autonomous individuals, free spirits, rejecting the restrictions that society and conventional morality seek to impose”, (-Grayling p. 319). Thus Dale Wilkerson commented that “... other interpreters of Nietzsche say in attempting to counteract the positive rise of nihilism, he was engaged in a positive program to reaffirm life, and he called for a radical, naturalistic rethinking of the nature of human existence, knowledge, and morality. It is agreed that he suggested a plan for “becoming what one is” through the cultivation of instincts and various cognitive faculties, a plan that requires constant struggle with one’s psychological and intellectual inheritances”, (-Wilkerson p.1). Further, it was observed that “Nietzsche claimed that the exemplary human being must craft his own identity through self-realisation and do so without relying on anything transcending that life – such as God

or a soul. This way of living should be affirmed – one suggesting the “eternal recurrence” of all events”, (-Wilkerson P.1).

In contrast to Plato, Nietzsche questioned the nature of self and objective truth to be an impossibility when he postulated, ‘Become what you are’, (-The Gay Science, Book 111, Section 270). As pertinently observed by Sue Prideaux, she states that for Nietzsche “Awareness of ourselves and awareness of the world around us both depend on the conception that we ultimately do not understand either ourselves or the world”, (-Prideaux p. 275). She continues with her analysis by saying, “In answer to the slave morality of man, Nietzsche devised the morality of the *Urbemensch*, translating as the free, affirmative, independent spirit. This is driven by man’s ‘will to power’ and for Nietzsche this acts as both a symbol of man’s potential and a parable of the importance of self-overcoming. This viewpoint is reached by the assumption that ‘All organic life is constantly in a dynamic and chaotic condition of creation and decay:- of overpowering and being overpowered”, (-Prideaux p. 274). She continues by stating that, “The will to power is never still. It is the ever – shifting dynamic of every personal relationship and all relationships between groups and between countries. The will to power is an emotion, the emotion to command. The man who has mastered himself is able to withstand the uncertainty sown by the multiple perspectives of ‘perhaps’ “. As Nietzsche himself remarked, “Life itself is will to power”, (-Beyond Good and Evil, ‘On the Prejudices of Philosophers’, Section 13, 1886) and in addition he further commented, “He who has a why? in life can tolerate almost any how?, (-Twilight of the Idols, ‘Epigrams and Maxims’, Section 12, 1888).

Sue Prideaux noted Nietzsche's observation that "Awareness of ourselves and awareness of the world around us depend on the conception that we ultimately do not understand either ourselves or the world", (-Prideaux p. 275). Both Plato and Nietzsche discussed reality and appearance, similarly arguing "that humans live in an illusory world of our own that we think is reality when we actually are not", (-*PHDEssay.com p. 1*). On the same page, the author continues by saying, although they can be differentiated in "their concepts of what is reality and what is truth. Plato adopts the allegory of the cave and he believes that "shadows" to be what's keeping us from utilising our knowledge to its fullest value. The "shadows are metaphors that represent our acts of relying on our senses to identify objects in life. They are only the appearances of the actual objects, meaning that we are not getting the genuine concept that is concealed by the appearances. The author explains that the objects humans see in the visible world are far from the truth and their true form. In terms of truth in objects, Plato in objects, Plato believes that once humans are out of the cave, we will be able to see the truth in things and know logic and reasoning. He argues that the only way to grasp the real meaning of objects is to rationalise everything and not rely on our senses. If all humans use logic to define everything and not guess what they would represent then we would all be in the intelligible realm".

"On the contrary, Nietzsche does not believe that the "shadows" are actually what Plato says they are. Although Nietzsche does believe that there are illusions in the world that humans are commonly deceived by, he argues that what deceive us in the world is our language and not the appearance of objects. He explains that concepts are

the main cause that deceives human beings because ‘a concept is produced by overlooking what is individual and real’. On the subject of truth, Nietzsche adopts a different position to Plato, PHD essay states “In fact, he argues that there are nothing more real than things that visibly and physically exist in the world: This is why he does not believe in the intelligible realm or the real reality. He believes that we are already in reality. His main case is that those things that exist in the world ‘know neither forms nor concept; and therefore there is no reality, meanings, concepts or even truth within those objects. Nietzsche believes that the only truth existing in our lives is the agreement through language. We have put labels and titles on objects so that we would be able to agree upon identifying those objects without any conflicts and disagreements”.

So, Nietzsche does not believe that we are in the cave and he contends that certain things are accurate while other things are false. Thus, PHD essay contends, “In Nietzsche’s allegory, there is a group of men freely standing outside in nature. They will see the same objects but different distorted shadows. We have different perceptions. However in reality, the shadows of the objects will flawlessly match the shapes of the objects”, (-PHD essay p.4).

Therefore, it is clear that both Plato and Nietzsche believed that there are deceptions and illusions in the world, Nietzsche deviated from the Platonic allegory of the cave by focussing on man ‘freely standing outside in nature’ holding different perceptions.

In *Twilight of Idols*, Nietzsche seems ‘to reject the concept of being as an “empty fiction” and he agrees with Heraclitus in that point of view. Dale Wilkerson comments that “Nietzsche’s political sympathies have been called “aristocratic”- keep in mind the original Greek meaning of the term, “*aristos*”, which meant “The good man, the man with power”, and he further says, “The Greeks are one of Nietzsche’s best exemplars of hope against a meaningless existence...the Greeks deified “the animal in man” and thereby kept “bad conscious at bay”, (-Wilkerson p. 18-19), On the *Genealogy of Morality*, 11.23, 1887. Wilkerson also comments, “What is important for Nietzsche, throughout his career, is the quick evaluation of social order and hierarchies, made possible for the first time in the Nineteenth Century by the newly developed “historical sense”, *Beyond and Good and Evil*, 224, 1886, Wilkerson p. 19). In addition, Wilkerson remarks that “He (Nietzsche) is interested, rather, in measuring the value of what is taken as true, if such a thing can be measured. Thus, the philosophical exemplar of the future stands in contrast, once again, to the uncritical man of the Nineteenth Century whose hidden metaphysical principles of utility and comfort fail to complete the overcoming of nihilism”, (-*Ecce Homo*, *Why I am Destiny* 4, 1908), Wilkerson p. 22). Further, Wilkerson continues, “No otherworldly measures exist for Nietzsche “apart from will to power and Nietzsche locates the most important aspect of “overcoming resistance” in self-mastery and self –commanding”, (-Wilkerson p. 25). This point is further elaborated upon by Wilkerson when he states, “The will to power is now described in terms of eternal and world encompassing creativity and destructiveness, thought over the

expanse of “tremendous years” and in terms of “recurrence”. In some respects, Nietzsche has indeed rediscovered the temporal structure of Heraclitus child at play, arranging toys in fanciful construction of what merely seems like everything great and noble, before tearing down this structure and building again on the precipice of new mishap”, (-Wilkerson p. 27-28). The author continues with his analysis of Nietzsche by saying, “The philosopher of the future will possess a level of critical awareness hitherto unimagined, given that his interpretative gestures will be recognised as such”.

Sue Prideaux has encapsulated Nietzsche’s thought when she observed, “Nietzsche’s rejection of all systems of philosophy that reduced the world to a single system, the revolutionary opposition to certainty that led him to describe himself as the philosopher of ‘perhaps’, the idea that truth had no single definition but might fruitfully be examined as a question of perspectives, his idea that there existed no eternal reason but merely accidents on the dance floor of life, and that existence was no less meaningful for that. His chief intellectual exploration: how to find value and meaning in an uncertain universe in which neither the ideal nor the divine existed”, (-Prideaux p. 367).

It is abundantly clear that Nietzsche had a well developed philosophy over a lifetime of deep thought about many pertinent issues. He described himself as the philosopher of ‘perhaps’ in a world where there is no certainty. In that world, there was no room for neither the ideal or the divine. All matters are a matter of interpretation. Instead of

the 'slave morality' in society which was due to the lack of metaphysical values, Nietzsche introduced the concept of 'will to power' as an answer. He rejects Plato's analysis of objective truth and reason as expressed in the Theory of Forms and illustrated by the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*. Further, Nietzsche rejects the idea of the true philosopher as the possessor of the ideal as depicted by Plato in the *Republic* and instead, he focused on man 'freely standing outside in nature holding different perceptions'. Nietzsche in his interpretation of the world could be charged with a reductive approach but that criticism aside, he has made many valuable philosophical insights. In summation, both Nietzsche and Plato share some common opinions, in particular in their analysis on the nature of justice in society.

Chapter 8

Plato Conclusion

The use by Plato of Parmenidean philosophy of being is considered in this chapter. A constant theme running through all the Platonic works was that the nature of a Greek man was indelibly linked to the community and this feature affected the construction of the Platonic dialogues.

I will explore Plato's use of irony in his texts. His expertise from a literary and poetic respect, particularly the use of mythology in his construction of the world is discussed. This is illustrated in the *Timaeus* and these factors are examined in the chapter. As Paul Friedlander observed, "he (Plato) had a complete understanding of the function of law as an agency of social control", (-Friedlander p. 312), and in this context, Plato's opinion on Athenian justice is analysed.

I will then consider the commentary provided by Eric Voegelin and Hans Georg Gadamer on Plato's thinking on justice. In turn, this leads to a discussion on Plato's thinking on the immortal soul and his theory of recollection. The relevance of the myth of the ring of Gyges and this is also considered.

Plato's assessment of justice is a running theme throughout a considerable proportion of his work and this point is extensively appraised. Finally, the true purpose of Plato's Academy is assessed.

Heraclitus (540 BC) believed in the proposition of eternal flux and that change renders knowledge impossible to achieve. Plato agreed with that view. Plato used Parmenidean philosophy of being within which to found his intuition in perceptive thoughts and words. So, he adopted the view from Parmenides (515 BC) that the senses and what information that they inform us of regarding the world of appearances, provides us with a mistaken view of the true nature of reality.

A theme running through all of the Platonic works is that the nature of a Greek man is indelibly linked to the community. This therefore impacts on how the individual relates to the city state (polis) and to each other. As stated by Xenophon, he analysed any assertion by “bringing the whole discourse back to its basic foundations”, (-Xenophon, *Memorabilia IV 613*). Thus, Friedlander appropriately remarked on Plato’s approach to his work by stating, “The tension between intuition and construction, theoria and theory, mania and dialectic, in Plato exists as a creative tension from the beginning and runs through all his work”, (-Friedlander p. 213).

In contrast to sophistic instruction, Plato used philosophical discourse to transmit his teaching. Often the dialogue in his works exhibited his use of irony as illustrated by Thrasymachas’ conversation about justice, (-Republic 336e). Further, Socratic irony expressing the ‘tension between ignorance’ and the answer only becomes evident in the vision of the eternal forms with the realisation that this is beyond being.

As a canon of literary and poetic mastery, Plato's works shows many fine examples. This is clearly illustrated by his use of mythology in the construction of the world. It penetrates more deeply incrementally in his work through Socrates, after travelling the dialectical way. In the myth of the ring of Gyges, Plato uses this myth to answer the argument over the contention that law observance depends only on force, (-Republic 359 D). For Plato, it is the ideal that is the crucial ingredient where he states, "Unless private affairs in a state are rightly managed, it is vain to suppose that any stable code of laws can exist for public affairs", (-Republic 790 B).

Athenian justice was not held in high regard by Plato and this thought was principally due to his failed Sicilian visit, the Athenian empire was imploding, the large jury Courts of Athens had judges ignore precedent and were influenced by the populace, and the unfair trial and conviction of Socrates. For Plato, the courts were mainly locations of punishment and not instruction, (-*Apology* 26 A, *Republic* 492 B-D). He believed that a true judge should state the reasons for his decision. For Plato, the Court should reach an individual virtue and this contention forms the basis of punishment. According to Friedlander, "He (Plato) had a complete understanding of the function of law as an agency of social control", (-Friedlander p.312.)

In the *Republic*, Plato discusses the universe and its spheres. The fate of man is illustrated in terms of necessity and this implies the freedom of the individual. From a Pythagorean concept, Plato recognised the importance of the unity and relationship

between the individual sciences. Their methods have a destination with a final goal to reach close to the highest type of knowledge. The structure of the *Republic* is founded 'upon the homology between soul and state'. Friedlander sums up this approach by stating, "... fulfilment of the entire construction: human, soul, state, and cosmos conceived as three forms symmetrically placed around the same centre... and he never leaves any doubt that the truth is a mixture of truth and poetic fancy", (-Friedlander p.189). Therefore, the use of myth allows Plato to reach a new philosophical level.

According to Voegelin in his analysis of Plato and the soul, he remarks, "The establishment of an order by nature in the soul in such a manner that of the various parts of the soul, each fulfil its own function and does not interfere with the function of the other parts, is called justice, (-Republic 444 D, Voegelin p.64). The role played by philosophy in the state as envisaged by Plato is encapsulated by Gadamer when he comments, "The state constructed in which philosophy would govern, in which justice, i.e. the complete unity of all the individual and the universal, would be the reality everywhere and whose politics would depend on men all of whom were like Socrates, (-Gadamer p. 4).

In effect, Plato proposes the following fundamental questions:

- 1 "What is the right kind of life, and the best kind of society?"

- 2 “What is knowledge and how do we get it?”
- 3 “What is the fundamental nature of reality?”

(-Grayling p. 67)

He addresses the above questions through the medium of the dialogue, first through by use of Socratic aporia (inclusiveness) and then towards Plato’s presentation of positive answers in the later works. This is clearly illustrated in the *Meno* where Plato discusses the Realm of Being (perfect and unchanging things) and the Realm of Becoming (imperfect temporary things). Plato thus introduces the Forms and they are the real reality. They are eternal, perfect and fixed. While the Realm of Becoming is a world relying on the senses is ‘merely a shadow’. Plato uses the Allegory of the Cave to illustrate this proposition and the ‘Good is represented by the sun’, *Republic* Book V11. The allegory represents most people who are like prisoners watching shadows. The ultimate goal is to move out of the cave and reach the sunlight in order to see the truth fully.

Linked to Plato’s theory of Realm of Being is the Plato’s assessment of justice and as Friedlander eloquently expressed, “The *Republic* transforms the simple structure of the *Gorgias* – the contrast between justice and injustice – into a new grand design. The eschatological myth at the end of the *Gorgias* is rebuilt in a new medium: as justice and injustice are built into the structure of the state, as the fate of the soul is

built into the universe”, (- Friedlander p.184). Therefore, Plato viewed injustice as disordered and the cosmos appears to represent the just, well ordered life.

In the *Republic*, Socrates poses the core question, ‘what is justice?’ Through Plato, he pursues the answer by means of a concept and ultimately it was provided by the life and death of Socrates. This, in turn, allowed Plato to see the idea from darkness into light, achieved by him as a ‘dialectical journey’, (-Republic 532B). Thus, for Plato, the mechanism by which this is constructed depends on justice. Further, in Plato’s works, justice and the state are intricately linked. This point finds resonance in Gadamer’s observation where he states, “Thus in Plato justice of the state is not found negatively on the weakness of individuals whose prudence lead them into a contract. Instead the human being is political in a positive sense because he is capable of rising above his insistence on himself; capable of being for others”, (-Gadamer p. 57). He continues to elaborate about the place of justice in the new reality as envisioned by Plato when he remarked, “For when justice remains only as an inner certitude in the soul and is no longer to be clearly identified with any given reality, and when knowledge of it must be defended against the arguments of a new “enlightened” consciousness, a philosophical discussion about the true state becomes the only true praise of justice”, (-Gadamer p.p. 66-67).

The Greek word for justice, *Dikaiosyne*, is described as the true political virtue that integrates in its meaning, justice, integrity, rule of law, and a civic sense. Gadamer

sums up Plato's approach when he comments, "Only justice can bring about a solid and enduring state and only he who is a friend to himself is able to win the solid friendship of others", (-Gadamer p.p. 75-76). These two statements contain the whole of Plato's political philosophy. "They establish the essential correlation between state and soul, on the one hand, and politics and philosophy on the other... he unifies *arête* and *eudaimonia*, virtue and happiness. Precisely in unifying these two Plato proves to be the authentic heir of Socrates", (-Gadamer p.p. 75-76). But how is justice to be achieved? Gadamer provides an answer to that question and he identifies Plato's theory of justice by saying, "Thus out prudence and the knowledge of how weak he is by himself each individual may enter into an agreement or contract with others which will establish what is right and assure that justice is valued", (-*Republic*, Book 2, 358 E, ,Gadamer p. 82). This is all premised on the conditionality of the process and Gadamer elucidates on this point by saying, "But the positive evaluation of justice need be only conditional, for it obviously depends on correctly assessing how the conflict between powers will be resolved. It must be

Thus, Plato proceeds in his analysis of justice by seeking its particularity just as Voegelin pertinently observed, "Justice is not defined in the abstract but in opposition to the concrete forms which justice means", (-Voegelin p. 63). Therefore demonstrated that injustice is always bad and justice always good", (-Gadamer p. 82),. "Since the concept of justice is developed for the purpose of criticising the sophistic disorder", (- Voegelin p. 64), Plato examines the views of Thrasymachus, Callicles,

Glaukon and Adeimantus and adopts a contrary perspective, saying, “The soul ought to do what is just, whether it possesses the ring of Gyges or not”, (-Republic 612 B). So, Voegelin has identified the reason of the *Republic* when he remarked, “In the Republic the psyche furnishes the model for the polis, in opposition to Thrasymachus who conceives social order materialistically as the successful imposition of the interest of the stronger on the weaker natures”, (-Voegelin p. 183). He expands further by saying “what Glauckon and Adeimantus want is a polis with the amenities of civilization to which they are accustomed, and in which they can play a social role comparable to their present one”, (- Voegelin p. 99). There fore, justice should be obtained in human life ‘for its own sake’ and Plato recognised the difficulties in reaching that point by stating, “Great is the struggle that determines whether a man will become good or bad; Justice and Arete must be continuously guarded against the lure of honour, wealth, and even poetry; that is an end in itself”, (-Republic 608 B). The scene is set for a radical change when the philosopher dominates in the polis and there is ‘an inquiry of the justice and injustice in his own soul...’ (-Voegelin p.p. 145-146). The true polis is ruled according to the wisdom and justice of the ruler, Plato uses the rich symbolism of the Atlantis story in the *Timaeus* as representing the becoming in “historical order’. According to Voegelin, for Plato, “the fall of Atlantis (as a simile) is the fall of Athens from true being”, (-Voegelin p.208). All is not lost as there is hope of regeneration just like the true polis. It is a basic requirement for an order to be just that there is ‘proportionate equality’ and equity to allow for perfect justice. This acts “as the bond of cohesion in the community”, (-Voegelin p. 249).

Plato had developed a highly sophisticated model of education in the ideal state and Voegelin comments, “Plato’s insight into nature and some of cultural disintegration has determined his concept of education. Children must be trained to associate pleasure with what is good”, (-Voegelin p. 261). This neatly connects with the education of the guardians of the ideal state by receiving education in the virtues of wisdom, temperance, justice and courage. Although Plato’s thinking on the separation of children from their natural parents is a version of eugenics not in line with contemporary approaches to child welfare or education.

Plato noticed the difference of Attic law which divided causes of action into private and public suits, (-Republic 767 B). He believed that a popular court featuring a large number of citizens ensured justice. Under the Platonic system, he “allowed recovery for failure to carry out the terms of an agreement, unless the agreement were contrary to law, or made under duress, or frustrated by unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the parties”, (-Republic 920 D, Friedlander p. 303). Further,” he knew that the proper distribution of property was vital to the welfare of the state”, (-Republic 736 E.) On Plato’s view of the penal code, Friedlander observed, “His general view was that punishment was warranted only on the assumption that virtue can and must be taught”, (-Friedlander p.307). In effect, Plato surmises “that all wrongdoing is involuntary and arises from ignorance since right conduct is happiness and wrong conduct is unhappiness, and no one therefore would willingly choose wrong conduct

which would lead to unhappiness”, (-Apology 26 A, Gorgias 466 A, Hippias Minor 376 B, Laws 731 C, Meno 77-78, Protagoras 345 D, Republic 589 C, Timaeus 86 E). Thus, Plato concludes that the solution is “...the Court must teach him virtue, which for Plato is the basis of punishment”, (-Friedlander p. 309).

The true purpose of Plato’s academy is revealed by the comment by Gadamer when he observed, “This ideal state in the *Republic* exemplifies the purpose of the community of Plato’s academy- it is intended to lead to a new discovery of justice in one’s own soul and thus to the shaping of the political human being”, (-Gadamer p. 52). The star pupil of the academy was Aristotle who was initially highly influenced by Plato but gradually began to move his thinking more independently. “Aristotle described Plato’s theory (requiring transcendental Forms) as merely a poetic metaphor”, (-Grayling p. 88). Although the history of philosophy have taken a different viewpoint to Aristotle’s and this is reinforced by the remark of Friedlander whose says, “Nietzsche’s view is correct in that Plato actual idea extends far beyond the realm of art”,(- Friedlander p. 219).

Alfred North Whitehead captured the true essence and importance of Plato’s thought by the astute observation, “Philosophy is footnotes to Plato”.

As is evident, Parmenidean philosophy had an important role to play in Plato’s thinking regarding reality. This leads Plato to develop his Theory of Forms with the

realisation that is beyond being. Plato expended a high degree of his thinking on the nature of justice he rejected the sophistic rhetoric, persuasive techniques as 'knacks'. Thus, the concept of justice is developed and the "soul ought to do what is just, whether it possesses the ring of Gyges or not", (-Republic 612b). Plato in turn puts forward his Theory of Justice.

Chapter 9

Conclusion of thesis

Plato raises fundamental philosophical questions in his works and they are often presented by means of dialogue. Initially Socrates is the principal instigator of the conversation and then it proceeds beyond *aporia* towards Plato's arrival at positive answers through dialectic. After the work *Republic*, his thinking continued to develop and he came to ponder over his key ideas. Plato's academy was an important forum for discussing and appraising his many theories and it was a considerable influence on Aristotle. Some scholars attached to the Tübingen School of Platonic studies have claimed that Plato had a unwritten doctrine and 'reserved' his opinions for his pupils at the academy, although this claim is open to debate among philosophers.

His significant ideas include those concerning the nature of reality, what is knowledge, the Forms, our immortal souls, the composition of the state, the virtues, justice, and the creation of the ideal state embracing the four virtues and philosophic guardians at the pinnacle. Some of his ideas have stood the test of time for their deep philosophical thinking while those ideas concerning the family and their eugenics in the ideal state have proved to be controversial.

Plato has shown that he can be a progressive thinker and this is illustrated by his views on women and their equality. Antisthenes (445-365 BC) accused Plato of pride and conceit. This accusation needs to be examined in the historical context of ancient

Athens and the fact that Plato was a member of one of the leading families there. In 5th century BC, Athens was in a tumultuous state and after losing the Peloponnesian war, she lost its hegemony and power in the Aegean region. Sparta took a more prominent role in affairs and it heralded the arrival of the thirty tyrants in Athens. These events undoubtedly coloured Plato's perspective on the best form of government for society. This would explain why Plato gravitated towards Socrates who lead a simple life and sought the ultimate truth through philosophy.

Instead of sophistic disorder, Plato developed the concept of justice principally in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*. The meaning of justice equates to the right order of the soul and the polis. In the ideal state there is a division of labour and on the level of crafts, is only a "shadow of justice", (-*Republic* 443 C-D). The Guardians, the philosopher Kings, meanwhile represents true wisdom and knowledge through their expertise in philosophy; thus assuring that justice is valued. This is confirmed by Plato when he states, "So I was compelled, praising true philosophy, to declare that she alone enables men to discern what is justice in the state and in the lives of the individuals", (-*Letter VIII* 324 B-326 B).

Friedlander makes the perceptive comment when he says, "Though and in Socrates he (Plato) envisaged the form of justice", (-Friedlander p.169). Thus Plato uses the life and death of Socrates as the paradigm for his theory of justice which is, "Thus out of prudence and the knowledge of how weak he is himself, each individual may enter

into an agreement or contract with others which will establish what is right and assure that justice is valued, (-Republic, Book 2, 358 E).

Aristotle believed that the disposition peculiar to justice is an attitude disposed to others. He made a distinction between “commutative justice” and “distributive justice”. He defined justice as friendship. Aristotle did not agree with the Socratic belief ‘that knowing what is right always results in doing it’. Based on Aristotle’s empiricism and his views on justice, he took a different approach to justice than Plato.

In contrast to Plato, Cicero valued the use of rhetoric in his arguments. He claimed that any valid law is grounded in nature and this notion feeds into his principles of justice.

Due to Augustine’s pluralistic philosophical views, he believed that only true justice can be found through Christ and in the city of God. Even though Platonism informs much of his thinking, love, especially of God, is an important ingredient in his thinking on justice.

While Aquinas believes that the perfection of nature incorporates the virtue of justice. The principle of justice equates to a system of equality or rightness but only God can provide true justice.

Meanwhile, Hobbes advocated his version of the social contract and in order for justice to blossom, human beings need to escape from their state of nature and that this can only happen through stability. Justice is on firm foundations only by maintaining the covenants of the community; this is achieved through the social contract. In contrast to Plato, he holds a pessimistic view of human nature. Some of his thoughts on the nature of the state and the social contract bear some similarities to Plato's concepts.

In the further development of the history of philosophy, Locke is a leading example of enlightenment values and ideals. Reason is the bedrock of his views. He believed that justice is not being subject to the arbitrary will of another man and Locke therefore concluded that justice is liberty.

Taking a different view than the empiricists, Kant relied on the human use of reason and the development of universal principles. Similar to Hobbes, he adopted the precepts of the social contract and its involuntary nature. For Kant, the rules of justice are only concerned with external actions and not with human impulses or appetites. Justice respects the equal freedom of others and interpersonal relationships are a key component. He differentiates between Right and virtue. Kant believed that Right is all important especially in the area of the social contract.

In contrast, Bentham's theory of utilitarianism rejected the notions of natural rights and the social contract. He takes an egoistic or self-regarding view and his theory is a

consequential one of morality. For Bentham, happiness is the greatest good. A subsequent utilitarian, John Stuart Mill, is considered the 'classical liberal' and he believed that people should be free to live as they wish as long as they do not harm others. For Mill, the essence of justice consists of 'a right residing in an individual'. It is further contended that this is only achievable where there is just and free social arrangements.

A more contemporary and radical perspective on justice is offered by Karl Marx and by his utopia vision of communism. He puts forward a materialistic view of history and envisages how true community between people develops once the political and economic conditions in society have been rectified. The communist state is premised on friendship, sharing and true freedom where the normal rules of morality and justice no longer are required. Rawls thinks that Marx did not consider systematically about justice.

Finally, we turn to more recent philosophical analysis of justice as presented by John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Both of these authors adopt a libertarian perspective on society. Rawls concept of justice derives from the social contract and he states that justice essentially depends on how fundamental rights and duties are assigned in the various sectors of society. He concludes that liberty and equality are the main principles. Thus, Rawls main idea, that justice as fairness, envisages a society that has a 'basic structure' that provides for a distribution of social goods and burdens that

'reflective citizens' will fully engage and cooperate. This principle relies on the usage of the 'maximum rule' and taking the conditions of our life into account. In contrast, Nozick pursued a further right of politics approach to act as a counter weight to the views of Rawls and he states, "Individuals have rights, and there things no person or group may do to them without violating their rights". Nozick believes that the 'strong rights' arise from the state of nature and people's separateness provides "the reason for the inviolability of their fundamental rights". He aligns himself with earlier political theorists "about people having property in themselves and their labour". The minimalist theories of the state make no allowance for redistributive justice and Nozick proposes a solution called 'justice in holding'.

Gadamer quotes a well known passage in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1004 B, 22 B and comments, "Aristotle declares that the difference between dialectic and sophism consists only in the choice or commitment in life i.e. only the dialectician takes seriously those things which the sophist uses solely as the material for his game of winning arguments and proving himself right", (-Gadamer p. 6). He further remarks, "As opposed to sophism, his dialectic cultivates the ability to hold unerringly to that which one sees before ones eyes as true" (ibid. p.11). Thus, by the use of dialectic in his works, Plato arrives at the truth through the Socratic dialogue and his later dialogues. He seeks harmony and balance between the three orders of people in the state and the three parts of the soul though philosophical discussion about the true

state. This is reflected in the purpose of Plato's academy and 'to a new discovery of justice in one's soul. This moulds the political human being and justice in him.

Plato shares many similarities with the series of philosophers quoted above and this includes the need for an agreement or contract with others on what is right to assure that justice is valued. He firmly believed that "only justice can bring about a solid and enduring state" and this perspective finds resonance in the views of Hobbes and Rawls. The themes of equality and fairness liberally pepper Plato's works even though his views on the role of women in the ideal state and their eugenics appear to be anachronistic.

As Friedlander commented, "To lead to a vision of the idea and a hint of the highest good is Plato's task, (-Friedlander p.64). He further adds, "In his final position, he (Plato) regarded law as the art of adjusting human conduct to the circumstances of the external world", (-ibid. p 290). Therefore, it is evident that human beings are exposed to all the human foibles that life produces and to the shifting dynamic of societal affairs. This assessment bears an uncanny resemblance to a Marxist critique of society but crucially, Plato vehemently believed that there is a higher power or truth perceived through the eternal Forms and philosophical discourse. The *Republic* concluded that the true rulers and true philosophers are identical.

Through the use of Parmenidean philosophy, dialectic, Socratic dialogues, allegory and myths, poetic and literary form, and philosophy, Plato has provided a sophisticated body of work. He is a realist regarding the Forms. There is an essential correlation between state and soul, and politics and philosophy. In turn, he unifies *arête* (virtue) and *eudaimonia* (happiness). By overwhelming consensus, Plato is the true heir of Socrates.

Dikaisyne represents the real political virtue and it embraces what justice means, Justice is classified as one of the four virtues and integrity, rule of law, and a civic sense have crucial roles to play at arriving at a just act. The use of prudence and the knowledge of how weak a person is that a social contract with others is reached, thus establishing what is right and enabling that justice is valued. This forms the bond of cohesion in the community.

Therefore, it is contended that Plato's Theory of Justice and his analysis of justice has stood the test of time for its relevance in society and the sets of questions posed by him has engaged philosophic discussion for the past two and a half thousand years.

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