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PHI 801-52 Ethics in a Global Society

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100 Day – Essay Draft

Write a ten (10) page essay that analyses a topic in ethics relevant to your research interests, professional growth, and as an interdisciplinary faith -learning scholar. The essay must show scholarly work and cover the subject well.

1. Structure (paper Evaluation includes the following structure below)
2. Download the “OGS APA Course Assignment Template 7th ED 2021” template from the General Helps folder in the AA-101 The Gathering Place Course on DIAL. Using the template, create the following pages.
3. Title page (not including in the page count)
4. Copy and paste the assignment instructions from the syllabus starting on a new page after the title page, adhering to APA 7th edition style (APA 7 Workshop, Formatting, and Style Guide, APA 7 Quick Guide).
5. Start the introduction on a new page after the copied assignment instructions.
6. Be sure to meet the following expectations.
7. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.
8. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.
9. End with a conclusion that reaffirms the thesis.
10. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA Quick Guide)
11. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA 7 style.
12. Using a minimum of 20 scholarly research sources (3 -4 books and the remainder in scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).
13. Submit the completed paper in DIAL.

The Democratic Republic: The Tension Between Power, Morality, Justice and Happiness

Recently, I heard a friend of mine explaining to another friend that the United States of America is not a “democracy” but a “republic”. The other person responded by asking the question, “What does it mean to say that America is a republic?” She then explained that a “republic” is a form of government in which the citizens either nominate or elect an individual or a small group of people to govern them. Neither of the two friends saw the need to discuss whether a “democracy” could, or could not be, a “republic”. In my research, the earliest use of the word, “republic” appears as the title of the famous book written sometime between 380 BC and 375 BC by Plato. Its original title, written in classical Greek, was sounded out in Plato’s native tongue as, “*Politea.*” As such, the title conveyed the meaning of, “government,” or “constitution”. When translated directly from the classical Greek alphabet to English, however, it morphs into the tri-syllabic transliterated form, “*Republic.*” Professor Rubin Gil of Columbia University, History Department, summarizes the book as a dramatic compilation of thirty-six dialogues that “. . . discusses the meaning of justice and the structure of an ideal society and soul” (Rubin, n.d.). Clearly, the fact that the “Republic” is a representative government does not necessarily make it a democracy. The USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic) was a republic, but never a democracy. Although the word, “republic,” is nowhere mentioned in its name, the USA (United States of America) is described in Section 4, Article IV of the Constitution as “. . .a republican form of government”. So far, the USA, like the ancient “state” of Athens, has been functionally a democratic republic. So, what, then, is meant by “democracy”? Etymologically, the word, “democracy,” springs from the Greek word, “demos,” which is defined as “the common people of an ancient Greek state” (Random House, 2005). The democratic republic is a government which, by deriving its power solely from the people, is committed to the singular task of providing the highest possible quality of life to all numbers of its citizenry within a moral circuit of justice where, “Everyone is equal before the law!”.

Philip Allot (2011) suggests that, quite outside of any direct assistance from

society, the concept of “government” in Plato’s *Republic*, is hatched out and comes to form entirely within the minds of humans (Allot, pp. 1166-1173). If such is the case, the minds of a vast number of people would, all at once, be actively given to the shaping of the nature and workings of government. Implicitly, then, if this is one tranche of the stack of philosophies we are wont to build up in our minds, every member of society would, at some point, have philosophize of himself as ruler of the people. Given the probability that there could be some truth to the Hobbesian claim that there is a dark disturbing egotistical side to the nature of man (Saetra, 2022, p.66), the thought is that, at any moment, an inordinately large number of people, each of whom has formulated his own unique philosophy of what government should be, could suddenly reach out and violently grab the seat of power. That is something that could very likely become chaotic and anarchical—a frightening prospect, indeed.

What we can say, based upon the actual history of human behavior, in respect to the

way man conceives of government, is that usually only a precious few of the members of any community is ever sufficiently motivated to assume power and wield it to control the rest of society. The question to be asked is what, then, would be the motivating force that would drive any individual to want to assume the right to determine the rules under which others should live (Allott, p. 1170)?

The human mind, Allott tells us, based on Socrates arguments in the *Republic*, is

continually being regaled with a rich, sumptuous diet of ideas (Allott, p. 1166) that may, or may not be generated by anything, or any action outside of itself (the mind). He says that the constant feast of “ideas” that feeds the mind, at every nano second, serves as raw material from which it (the mind) is able to manufacture fresh new philosophical thoughts on an ongoing basis (p. 1165). If we accept that proposition, we should also accept the proposition that any political philosophy created in the mind of an individual who wishes to govern others, must begin in answer to two questions about the governed and those who wish to govern them. The questions are: Why is there a need for a government at all (Allott, pp. 1172-‘73)? And what form of government is best suited to the conditions of the particular population that the would-be rulerwishes to govern? One would think that most of those seeking to govern others would probably take an altruistic approach to the two questions by mentally tabling the argument that the purpose of government is to bring *positive* changes to the lives of the majority of people living in the community (Allott, p. 1173).

Philip Allott (2011) theorizes that government, like society, is not something concrete. It is created as a pure philosophical abstraction within the mind (Allott, pp. 1169-1170). To me, it seems that whether government is an abstraction or not, it is a product of the shared interactions among people who are thrown together in living situations, or in situations that involve work, recreation, business or cultural. And, as soon as the group recognizes that the potential bottled up in it is being properly organized, one or more leaders will automatically emerge. Most of us are inclined to concede to the notion that government, good or bad, is a far more palpable thing than philosophers, such as Philip Allott, suggest, not because it is a tangible thing, in itself, but because a large percentage of what it does is fashioned to serve the interests of those who are being governed in tangible ways.

Regardless of what a person who is preoccupied with the idea of government thinks of governing, “morality” and “power” will inevitably pop up (Allott, p. 1172) and will proceed to wrestle with each other throughout the course of any mental quibble in the individual’s mind over the concept of government (Allott, p. 1173).

In my mind, government simply does not exist in the absence of power, nor does it exist without the counteracting effect of morality, acting in a manner that adulterates the fiery nature of power. Wherever there is morality, there must either be, at least, a tincture of personal power, as needed, or a sufficiently heavy dose of power to bring about community governance. In my thinking, where no one has the power to take action, morality is merely an expression of “passive sympathy”. Perhaps it is better stated in Kant’s “Categorical Imperative” (CI) in which he “argued that the supreme principle of morality is a principle of practical rationality” (Kant, n.d.). While at the same time, power exercised in the absence of morality is absolute despotism. So, wherever morality comes from, be it *a priori* (Cord, 2022, pp. 501-503) or *post priori*, it is that imperative which impels the individual as well as government to serve the interest of those who are being governed. These two elements alone that make governing possible, are bound together in an ever-tightening tension that, while, out of the necessity of preventing man’s relapse into wholesale savagery, turning the inharmonious energies into something productive, “good leaders” in the community emerge and manage to keep power and morality from treading upon each other’s toes, so that government can take shape. For, it is entirely up to those who put themselves in place to manage the tension between morality and power that governing occurs. Whenever those who are trying to govern manage to govern well, they do so only because they are able to weaken that tension between the two by creating some slack between “morality” and “power”. If not that, morality may become merely the submissive ward of religion—an acolyte of theocracy (Hobbs,*Wikipedia*). Or power, in its excesses, could become the hand maiden of autocracy (a sycophant of dictatorship). So, anyone who chooses to wield the scepter, must thus, be ready to distribute the weight of governing proportionately, between morality and power, putting the proper stress in the appropriate places, in accordance with whatever the emerging political philosophy requires, or on the rudimentary principles that determine how a government, coming into being, becomes a substantially “good” or “bad” thing, however abstract that might seem. By the standard of Kant’s CI, everyone must be treated humanely, regardless of our superficial differences (Kant, n.d.).

As far back as 1297 A.D., the word, “govern,” which had been tossed around in common English usage a bit, conveyed roughly the same meaning, then, as now. It denoted the action of one or more individuals who choose “[t]o direct and control the actions and affairs of (a people, etc.), whether despotically or constitutionally” (OED, 1971, p. 818). Logically, then, the noun-form, “government,” having made its way through various stages of its evolution, would carry a related meaning, from 1553 forward, and so, be rendered a “[f]orm or kind of polity” (OED, 1971, p. 818). Perhaps the more appropriate choice of word instead of “polity” may have been, “politics,” since “polity” is usually more commonly associated with a sacral type of government rather than a secular one (OED, 1971, p. 1076). Although a much older Merriam Webster Dictionary traces the word “politics” back to its Greek forebear *politika*, I find no angles that one may use to frame an etymological entry of the word, “politics” into contemporary English. Along with that, a citation from Jerome Bentham tells us that “The business of government is to promote the happiness of society by punishing and rewarding” (Cecilio del Valle, 2022; Bentham, *OED*, p. 816; *Wikipedia*).

Further, in Allott’s (2011) discussion ofPlato’s *Republic*, he surmises that man’s mind is wired to produce a constant fiber optic surge of newly formed philosophies, and that politics and morality are essentially nothing more than philosophical constructs. Even if we were to accept that and Allott’s claim that the mind creates its philosophies from the profusion of raw ideas it ingests (pp. 1166-1168), it does not preclude the possibility that the sources from which these ideas come could either be internal, external, or both. Therefore, if it is true that the individual’s mind uses ideas to create an immense bank of philosophical databases, there is nothing to say that the “politics” that is plotted when the human mind reflects upon how it might be possible to manipulate the socio-economic and environmental conditions of a group of people to help them find happiness and fulfilment, is not also possible. To my thinking, Allott’s argument that politics has its root solely in how we philosophize about government (Allott, p.1169) without there first being a group of people to be governed, would fail to accomplish the real purpose of governing.

What is certain is that everyone who seeks to govern, does so primarily because

he or she has an unquenchable desire to wield that kind of “power” that he or she would be able to exercise over others. In my mind, all those who seek political power fall within one of three categories. One such category is that in which the person who seeks power is also conscientiously driven by a desire to help improve the conditions of others. In this case, the desire for power would be happily balanced against moral considerations. The second group involves those who seek to promote a partisan (bigoted) or sectarian ideal, or a belief-system that is just as overwhelming to him or her as the power he or she desires. The third category is that group which possesses the same unquenchable desire for power as the others, but, is just as driven by the realization that the power will permit him to elevate or enrich himself and those close to him. Ideally, the first group comes closest to that which generally meets the need-criteria for what we expect good government to do in any human society.

In Dobbs’ (1994) analysis of Plato’s *Republic,* the protagonist (Socrates) is said to be making the point that an ideal citizen cannot be one who is given to “partisan” behavior— bigoted acts—in the way that he or she interacts with fellow citizens because of their cultural, ethnic, or other qualities that are different from his or her own. Dobbs indicates that in Socrates view, the persons living in the republic (the state) who entertains bigoted attitudes to others, carry in themselves an extremely dangerous *Hamartia—*tragic flaw—(Kirby, 1991) that could have a virulent delimiting effect upon the rest of the state’s effort to meet the needs of its other people. Dobbs points out that the treatment prescribed by Socrates for citizens afflicted with such sectarianism (bigotry) was that they seek relief by working overtime to recalibrate their moral compass toward fairness when placed in situations which require that they dispense justice, regardless of perceived differences between themselves and those subjected to their judgment (Dobbs, p. 670).

According to Dobbs (2010), the tenor of the language of the *Republic,* shows no reticence in the dialogues of scorn and disdain coming out of the mouths of Socrates as written by Plato, in respect to their negative perception of the workings of democracy. To them, a democracy was a laughable dramatization of a political comedy. And, specifically, they felt that democracy tended to put those who are least qualified at the helm of government (Dobbs, 2010, p. 818).

Socrates argued that if the politician sought personal benefits in his exercise of power, it would be impossible for such a thing as the “good state” to exist. He argued that if it is somehow possible for there to be a happy marriage between morality and wisdom, whereby the ruler was both wise and moral, so that he or she would possess and exercise the higher virtues of *nobles oblige*, the state could be a “good state”. But the good state, as such, cannot be possible if morality and justice arise solely out of the mechanism of law, and are thus, not generated by a divine or psychical force, but by the political leaders of the state. At length, Socrates submitted that the good state can only be possible if morality is a quality given to man by God (Dobbs, 2010, p. 818).

Dobbs points out that in anticipation of the Hobbesian theory, about the inherent egocentric nature of man, Socrates argued that since the person who extends justice to another provides benefit to the other but receives no benefit from that act for himself, mankind has the tendency to be unjust. And, therefore, people tend not to act justly to others because they tend to do only what is beneficial to themselves. Yet, the fact that one man may extend justice to another does not necessarily mean that the man is a good man—that he is a moral man. Socrates explained that It could mean that in the one man’s extension of justice to the other, he may be forced to be just to his neighbor by the constraint of law. In which case, this one man’s extension of justice to the other would not be an act of goodness, but an act based on legal compulsion. Socrates continued by saying that since the ones who rule are those who make the laws, the rulers are likely to make laws that benefit themselves, and are thus, unjust to those who are being ruled (Dobbs, 2010, p.819).

Socrates suggested that in light of such state of things, morality would be the product of law, and law would be the product of politics, therefore, morality is the product of politics. The difficulty in this, is that in order for the conclusion of this “chain rule” to be valid, the premise, “morality is a function of law,” would have to be true, or we would run the risk of “sophistry”. In Socrates final analysis, morality is a function of a divine aspect of the human psyche. And, in that respect, the noble virtue of justice in the man who demonstrates that he has a sufficiently high level of morality in his bloodstream, may benefit from the tendency of morality to dilute his natural propensity to egocentrism. Socrates argued that if this latter is the case, it might well be possible to have a “good political community” in which the ruler rules for the benefit of the ruled. In that case, the “good man” like the “good state” must be both just and wise. And so, a “good state” is possible only if the *pen ultimo* is true (Dobbs, 2010, pp. 818-827).

The question that remains, then, is where does democracy fit in all this? What if the greater measure of the power needed to rule were invested in those who are to be ruled? Would the guardian class (ruling class), theoretically, be forced to rule in a manner that is more beneficial to those who were being ruled than to itself?

Through Rackmann’s (1929) translation of Aristotle’s *The Nicomachean Ethics*,

the point is made that all humans, whether consciously or unconsciously, share a common view about what they hope their life could be. Everyone hopes to have a “happy fulfilled” life—the personal achievement side of the so-called “good life”. But in order to have that good life, Aristotle suggested that we must first reach down deep inside of ourselves and disinter the single, or several gifts that are naturally best suited to us, individually. Once unearthed, we could begin to feel fired-up by it until our spirits begin to soar. If, and when, we have selected our innate gift, or gifts, and we have gone full-throttle in our indulgence with it, we might be able to develop a passionate intensity that could elevate us to our own unique mental or spiritual plateau of pleasure. This pleasure, Aristotle further suggested, is that which, while being a possible experience for the majority of us, is generated through the one or the several gifts that are special to us (Rackmann, p. 32).

Through Rackmann’s translation it is suggested, for instance, that one person might be able to trigger such pleasure by creating works in the plastic arts. Another might feel that pleasure of achievement when he or she is hearing and feeling the rhythm of his or her feet tap-dancing on a floor. Others might feel it in the writing of fiction. While others might find that form of pleasure in any number of other human activities (Matthews, 2020, pp. 55-56; Rackmann, 1929, p. 31).

His translation suggests that when each of us becomes so thoroughly engrossed in that certain gift to which we are perfectly attuned, it is possible for us to experience an immeasurable feeling of ecstatic joy (a high). Throughout the process, we are, at the same time, fine tuning the very same skills we are utilizing in the performance of the act, until our execution of it becomes so acutely elevated to (*ar*ê*te*) the highest possible level of excellence we achieve as we perform our gift (Rackmann,1929, pp. 6).

Here, it is clear that in this translation of Aristotle, Rachmann is informing us that each time the individual exercises this special skill of his, he is also polishing it to an extremely high gloss, an unbelievably shimmering level of excellence toward his personal best. During these times, he is experiencing a special type of pleasure that leads to a subliminal feeling and a state of euphoria (Rackmann, pp. 35-‘7).

This is probably something similar to what Michelangelo must have felt when, after forty years of chiseling away at a huge chunk of stone, he gently taps the chisel with his mallet for the last couple of times. And, as he did so, he could see that “Moses” had finally broken completely free out of the slab of marble. Even though historians do not say it, one can imagine Michelangelo walking around the statue of the lawgiver, while staring at it. Then, all of a sudden, he lifts his iron mallet and strikes the right knee of the sculpture as he said, “Now speak!”

I have actually been to the Sistine Chapel and seen the crack on the right knee of “Moses”. And, as a sculptor myself, I understand what Michelangelo was feeling and what Aristotle must have meant by that feeling of euphoria that results from such a high level of excellence. It is apparently that kind of feeling of which Rackmann is speaking in his translation of Aristotle’s use of the term, “good man,” in the context of the type of pleasure and happiness one feels from one’s excellent performance(*ar*ê*te*) in something one has done.

Mandelbaum (1968) writes that as this type of excellence increases, the pleasure that the “good man” begins to feel, becomes more like a Hedonistic kind of pleasure, angling toward the Jeremy Bentham’s type of utilitarianist concept of sensual pleasure—one of which addresses what Stuart Mills refers to as the “*highest virtues”* (Mandelbaum, 1968, p. 35). In the meantime, the greater level of excellence that an individual could achieve each time he puts his personal gift, or gifts, on the line, the greater the increase of personal happiness that the individual is able to derive. All this is occurring incremental as the level of excellence of the gift of the good man brings him closer is toward virtuosity (Rackmann,1929, pp. 6-7;1 Hobbs; Allott, p. 610; Bentham).

It is at the height of this special mental-emotional excitement—in the evolution of *ar*ê*te* in the “good man”—that we find the individual, shaping and reshaping himself, and his world while experiencing the pleasure and happiness one feels from excelling at something. This demonstrates that the “good man” has the ability to improve himself to a more perfect state. And, as such, man’s extraordinary ability to excel at something can scale the walls of creativity and excellence to the “nth” degree.

My belief is that in this Aristotelian theory of man’s limitless ability to excel at whatever he does, man showcases an infinite possibility to evolve to a state closer to that of a more Godlike perfection, or to mirror the “creative” God-nature, the *Imago Dai*, in him (Gen 1:27). In the Bible, we find God coming down to check out the evidence of man’s work toward building a tower to heaven. God then acknowledges man’s Godlike creativity: “. . .[N]othing they (men) plan to do will be impossible for them” (Gen. 11: 6 KJV).

Vernon Yian (2021) points to a completely different context, in which the Aristotelian “good man” comes to life. He says that, here, Aristotle speaks of “good men” as the miniature plurality of men come together collectively to make up the “good state” (the good “Republic”), as a whole. And, in reciprocal manner, the good *polis* (city/state) is a highly magnified dilation of a typical “good man” (Yian, 2024). For, while it is true that because of good government, the utilitarian *telos* unfolds in a manner that supports the higher virtues in the “good” individual, it is the collection of these “good people” that constitutes the “good state”. Still, in this respect the relationship between the individual and the state is *Gestalt,* because the state, as a whole, remains greater than the sum of the individuals of which it is composed. So, by that fact, then, if the “good state” is destroyed, the “good men”, living in it, would lose that life-sustaining umbilicus that supports their individual efforts to minimize the probable life of pain that works as an impediment to *eudaimonia*—happiness (Yian, 2021).

According to Yian, Aristotle, like Plato, postulated that a good state is a state in which its citizens are treated justly. The evidence that such justice prevails should be visible in the fact that the citizens are flourishing. Yian goes on to say that the position taken by Aristotle was that if power is to be distributed justly, among the citizen, it should be distributed proportionately based on the class of the individual or group, in relation to their respective estates. And it is only by so doing that the *polis* (the state) be able to accomplish its objective of being “good” (Yian, 2021). If the good state is mirrored by the good man, what should we expect the good man to look like? Is the good man equal to the good citizen?

Yian paraphrases Aristotle as saying that the “good citizen” is one who acts in a manner that upholds the good of the state within the girders of its laws and constitution. But since “good citizens” vary from state to state as predicated upon differences that exist from constitution to constitution, there can be no absolute certainty that a “good citizen” will always turn out to be a “good man”. For, the “good citizen” could be a law-abiding person but not a person whose actions are driven by moral considerations as they would, in the case of the “good man”. Yian notes that in Aristotle’s view, as in the view of Plato, the good man, by default would also be a “good citizen” even though the converse equation would not be “commutative” (Yian, 2021).

From Allott and others, we learn that the *telos,* or the ultimate goal of the state, is to facilitate the efforts of the greatest possible number of its citizens to find happiness (Allott, 2011; Hobbs, *Wikipedia*; and Dobbs, 2010). According to Jeremy Bentham (Wikipedia) there is a certain flagitious selfishness in the human DNA that makes for a highly belligerent climate whenever people are thrown together into a large social unity or a state (a Republic). Because of the vile aspect of human nature, the government becomes a necessary restraining force to contain man’s tendency toward violence against one another by putting laws in place in order to curb the inevitable chaos and violence that would otherwise erupt (Allott, 2021; 2011; Hobbs, *Wikipedia Commons*; and Dobbs, 2010).

Today, in many of the larger, more industrialized modern societies, the

government is saddled with the immense burden of having to restrain the natural inclination of its citizens to discriminate unfairly among one another. Although the problem of unfair discrimination is not new, it has shown a manifold increase in countries such as the United States of America in recent years.

In Rackmann’s translation of *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle is shown to condemn “sectarian” behavior as one of the most damnable ills of society. The treatment prescribed by Aristotle is that those who have practised sectarianism should be exemplary by exercising fairness whenever they are placed in positions that require justice to “others” (Rackmann, p. 35). But the shade of meaning in twenty-first century parlance tends to connote situations in which one of more persons entertain principles that lead them to take action out of negative stereotypings attached to one or more persons who have a political or religious affiliation that they abhor. Clearly, there is a one-to-one correspondence between injustices and incidents of unfair discrimination implied in Aristotle’s prescription that may not fit when there is a whole class of people who are being treated unjustly.

When we contextualize the Socratic and Aristotelian application of the word, “sectarian,” into contemporary thinking, we obtain something closer to the denotation of the word, “bigoted,” in a not quite so political or religious sense. As such, it would appear that Aristotle was much less bothered by the type of “bigotry” we find occurring more commonly in reference to political parties and denominations of a particular faiths, than that involving people’s injustices in their specific acts of hostility to others who have been thrown into a melting-pot that some think ought not to be. Today’s application of what the Aristotelian idea of “sectarianism” meant would include jingoism, racism, or those forms of discriminatory acts that are not only generated by the mere dislike for people belonging to different sects within the same faith, but rather, against those with ethnically based religious affiliations like Judaism, Mohammedanism, and so forth.

David Johnson (2017) calls attention to the identical problem of unfair

discrimination that appeared to have been widespread in the immigrant saturated city of Athens. This kind of “sectarianism” was claimed to have been just as unhealthy for dissidents who opposed what they claimed to have been the unjust treatment of foreigners living in the *Republic* (Johnson, n.p.n.).

Johnson tells us that when Socrates was later indicted, his crime was said to have something to do with blasphemy together with suspected subversive instruction to the dissidents. Johnson writes that Socrates was known to openly oppose the democratic system of government in Athens, and was also said to have famously spoken out against the city’s alleged acts of injustice rumored to have been carried out against legal immigrants (Johnson, n. p. n.).

Gomme (2023) writes that the year 404 BC was a critical one in Athenian democracy because it was the year in which Athens had been brought to its knees by Sparta (Gomme, 2023, n.p.n.). And, it was thus, forced to sign a treaty that marked the official end to the twenty-seven years of armed conflict known, historically, as the Peloponnesian War. The events of the war are lumped together, sequentially, in two parts. The second of the two wars, ranging from 415 to 404 BC (duckster.com), definitely had a direct impact on the political direction and evolution of Athens. Gomme continues by saying that the fact that Athens had suffered defeat solely at the hands of Sparta, rather than from the combined strength of Sparta and its allies was a good thing. For, instead of Athens having to yield to the implorations of Corinth and Thebes, urging that the City of Athens be utterly destroyed, the Spartans restricted the condition of the treaty to the requirement that Athens break down the 22 miles of wall around the city and its ports, while also opening itself up to a new anti-democratic type government (Gomme, 2023, p. 221).

Gomme and others state that because of the fragile condition within the power-base created by the closing chapter of the conflict between Athens and Sparta, and the gathering storm the sense of loyalty among a growing number of political malcontents, during the period 404 BC and 403 BC, when Athenian democracy became ripe for its second overthrow. The Athenian government, in a near state of interregnum, easily succumbed to the anti-democratic coup that was launched by thirty insurrectionists. But, although this attempt at setting up an anti-democratic government in Athens outlasted the previous one, between 411 BC and 410 BC, by a few months, its hold on power was similarly short-lived. The new strain of injustice wrapped around the ineffectual anti-democratic form of governance that had taken root was once again crushed and swept out of the way as soon as the remnants of the legitimate democratic government was quietly reconstituted (Gomme, p. 223; Johnson, 2017; Linder, 2023).

Robert J. Bonner (1940) cites Lipsisus’ (quoted in German) description of the injudicious carefree exercise of power by the “Thirty” in their use of hemlock as a means of executing someone. Bonner says that in the quote from Lipsisus, it is brought out that the first use of hemlock as the Athenian “electric chair” began during the rule of the Thirty, in 404 BC. Still, while it may be true that the Thirty had popularized the use of hemlock as the means by which to execute citizens found guilty of the capital crime or crimes against the republic of Athens, the record shows that in 405 BC, Aristophanes had staged a play which dramatized the use of hemlock for suicide and executions (Bonner, 1940). We cannot say for sure whether this was a case in which “fact followed art”, but Bonner remarks that Lipsisus tried to support his claim that the Thirty were the ones who had pioneered the use of this method of execution by acquiring support from a passage in the *Orators.* Bonner calls our attention to an exemplary case described by Lipsisus(Bonner, 1940, p.266).

This case had to do with someone named Lysias, apparently one of the Thirty, who prosecuted Eratosthenes—also a member of the Thirty—because he (Lysias) suspected that Eratosthenes was responsible for his brother’s death. This method of forced suicide appeared to have been the standard method of execution in Athens, even after the overthrow of the Thirty. During the brief months of anti-democratic rule by the Thirty, many of the executions carried out were not ordered because of guilty verdicts from juries, but from summary judgement by the powerful. During these few short months of terror, the Thirty exiled 5,000 people and executed 1,500 from Athens (Bonner, 1940, p.266).

Douglas Linder (2023) writes that Polemarchus, a friend of Socrates, was forced to drink the deadly cup in 404 BC (Linder, 2023). Bonner points out, however, that the case of Eratosthenes’ execution mentioned earlier, illustrates the inhumane undemocratic attitude of the Thirty in regard to the taking of life. In fact, Bonner informs us that there was never any explanation as to why Polemarchus was executed in 404 BC, nor was there any reason given as to why he was never given a trial that would allow him to defend himself (Linder, 2023; Bonner,1940; Johnson, 2017). Obviously the Thirty was hitting par for the course; their system of government was meant to be non-democratic and was succeeding as such.

According to Johnson (2017), five years after the execution of Polemarchus (in 399 BC), Socrates was charged and executed in similar fashion. Johnson and others tell us that, like Polemarchus, Socrates was indicted on the charge of teaching ideas that were anathema to the teachings of Athenian religious beliefs (Johnson, 2017). At the same time, a larger number of researchers agree that Socrates was indicted for “corrupting the youth” (Johnson, 2017; Edman,1953, p. 49; Dobbs,1994, p. 668), but in my view, no real proof ever surfaced other than weak circumstantial evidence that implied guilt by association.

Douglas O. Linder (2023) puts together quite an intricate collage of telling images, events, and circumstances in his attempt to bring more clarity to the vagueness of the three-word phrase that comprises what is said to have been the charge against Socrates—“corrupting the youth.” Linder’s presentation of the cast of characters and the drama surrounding the trial brings into sharp focus a more well reasoned argument for looking at the Socrates charge as an actual indictment for cause. To that end, Linder takes us back to the first successful coup against the democratic “Republic” of Athens, effected by a gang of one hundred insurrectionists (411 BC and 410 BC). The chief architect of that coup, back then, was Alcibades, a student of Socrates (Linder, 2023, n. p. n).

In 416 BC, four years before that first coup, Alcibades fled prosecution in Athens for vandalistic attacks on religious icons. Even worse, was the fact that Alcibades had fled to Sparta while Athens and Sparta were at war. Within four months after he and his group had effected the coup, the people of Athens were able to reconstitute the democratic government itself and remove the insurrectionists from power (Linder, 2023). A more serious concern was, did Alcibades spy for the enemy while he was in asylum in Sparta? Even though the Athenian anti-democratic government, in 410 BC, was soon handily crushed, the stage was already set for the next internal strife that would result in a second successful *coup de état* against the democratic government of Athens, in 404 BC (Linder, 2023).

Once again researchers tell us that the Thirty who carried out the bloody coup in 404 BC, including its ringleader, Critias, were all former students of Socrates. In addition, the people involved in both coups were said to have shared the same disdain for the Athenian constitution as did Socrates (Edman, 1953, p. 49; Linder, 2023).

So far, there is general consensus on much of the assumptions and inferences made about Socrates’ guilt or innocence in connection with the two coups that briefly toppled the Athenian democracy. Since much of the arguments about the charges is based on what is found in standard primary sources, such as the *Apology*, *The Phaedo*, *The Crito* and others, the conclusions made deserve to be respected*.* But it is also noteworthy that these and a number of other sources suggest that the words of Socrates may well have had some incendiary effect on the youth of the city. For it is quite reasonable to see how the words of a highly respected “teacher” as Socrates could have ignited the already raw emotions of a whole social stratum of hot-headed youth who looked up to him for inspiration (James 3:1 NAB). What was certain was that Socrates did not deny that he had, at least, “answered questions” posed to him by any member of either group of insurrectionists over those years. Or, in the worst case scenario, it may well have been that Socrates was more direct in cajoling and comforting of the insurrectionists in some form or fashion (Johnson, 2017; Edman, 1953; Byrnes, 2017; Burry).

Dobbs (2010) and other researchers write about the torrid political landscape of Athens in the fifth century BC wherein a considerable number of complaints was banded about concerning undemocratic acts of jingoism and other injustices by the government were said to have inspired the two rebellions against the city’s democracy. If these claims were true, it would probably have been reasonable for the people to rebel against the system of government (Edman, 1953, p. 49).

Edman (1953) informs us that, in addition to the two coups effected by the Thirty, the

group had previously acted in collusion with Sparta, the enemy of Athens, in the Peloponnesian War. A reasonable suspicion is that Socrates may well have been in a position to discourage the perfidious acts by the Thirty, but either did nothing, or perhaps did what he could to support the betrayal of his own state (Edman, p. 49).

Edman continues by saying that when asked whether he had taught the rebels, Socrates denied that he was the teacher of anyone. He went on to say that all he did was answer questions when asked. Yet, this is the characteristic equivocal double-speak that Darrell Dobbs identifies as being the typical Socratic irony. Dobbs goes on to demonstrate how Socrates often uses this kind of irony as a way of obfuscating, rather than being forthright with his audience. Even if an investigator were to put aside the claim that Socrates had “taught” the rebels, it is difficult to ignore the fact that Socrates also had a similar antipathy to democracy as the rebels did (Edman, 1953, p. 50; Dobbs, 2010, p. 814). Where did the antipathy to democracy come from?

Kristen E. Dodge (2016) notes that the Peloponnesian War actually sprung out of a long period of resistance by the Athenian elite and aristocracy to the emergence and growth of democracy. As far back as 508 BC, Cleisthenes had begun to institute reforms designed to extend political power to the common people. It meant that all citizens would, from thence, be extended certain civil rights and considerable power over matters involving governance. The proposition, however, proved to be quite unpalatable for the well-to-do and the aristocracy. Over a period of seventy-seven years, the quarrel expanded to include other issues, and blew up into clashes, treaties, and broken treaties among city-states and the two major powers in the region until it finally erupted into a full-scale regional conflict. Eventually, the two great powers, Athens and Sparta, together with their allies, stood on opposite sides of the divide between democracy and anti-democracy. The Peloponnesian War began in earnest in 431 BC and lasted for the next 27 years (Dodge, 2016, p. 5).

In Dodge’s research, it is brought out that the great Athenian historian, Thucydides, was the perfect documentarian because he had an eyewitness vantage point from the fact that he was a soldier with the rank of general during the Peloponnesian War (Dodge, 2016). In W. H. Auden’s poem, “1ST of September, 1939,” the poet speaks of Thucydides’ negative opinion of democracy the way it is documented in his (the historian’s) book, as being a highly flawed political system that amounts to not much more than lip service. Auden writes,

 Exiled Thucydides knew all that a

 Speech can say about democracy,

 The elderly rubbish they talk to an

 apathetic grave,

 Analyzed all in his book,

The enlightenment driven away,

Mismanagement and grief,

We must suffer them all again.

At this point, one is nodged to look back at the way the author of the *Republic* (Plato), his protagonist (Socrates), and a good many of the characters around them scoffed at the idea of “democracy” being the ruling political system that governs a state (Allott, 2011; Dobbs, 2010).

Dobbs tells us that Plato, one of the two who spoke in defense of Socrates, at the trial, was a member of an aristocratic family, and Socrates was his teacher. The men who interacted with Socrates in the dialogues, of the *Republic* appeared to be quite an elitist bunch. They were intellectuals, philosophers, and very wealthy men (Dobbs, p. 815), some of whom may well have been aristocrats as Plato was. In addition, the indications are that the insurrectionists who twice toppled the Athenian democracy, appeared to have been well-to-do, or elites who had the economic means to go back and forth between Athens and Sparta with the expectation of reasonable safety in doing so, while the two states were locked in the throes of a bloody conflict.

According to Auden’s poem, Thucydides’ wrote of the political climate in Athens, under democracy, as being an extremely flawed system of government which had completely failed to live up to its billing, and one that would certainly have been responsible for the kind of unjust political conditions that was rife with jingoism and other ills, as some of the researchers point out. Still, one must also consider that it was a time when the city-state of Athens was under siege, engaged in a long and bloody armed struggle for its survival, while also having to contend with a couple insurrections.

But, in the midst of this, Athens was also ideologically a “house divided against itself”. One can imagine that all this was occurring at a time when the social and intellectual elite, as well as the aristocracy, were having to live by rules they never had to prior to democracy. For, with democracy they were having to share power and other rights and benefits of living in their rich powerful city-state of Athens, with the common folk who had now been given equal rights with them. Would that have been reason enough for the elite and the aristocrats to support two coups as well as the enemy, Sparta? Perhaps! And, would Socrates have been one of them?

Edman tells us that as the trial progressed, Socrates gave an expansive verbal dissertation he entitled the *Apology*. In it, he stated very strongly that he had a moral responsibility to demonstrate that the law, in its function as an instrument of government, must be upheld in order for there to be justice*.* Although Socrates’ delivery emphasized that justice is predicated on morality, which comes from God, his *Apology* did, indeed, appear more like something of a literal “apology” to the City/State of Athens, in a secular rather than sacral sense. Neither were his last words sad and elegiac as one would have expected. If anything, it was an “apology” in which he justified the state’s right to execute him, and why he needed to accept it, even though he had the alternative option to choose exile in lieu of the death penalty (Edman, 1953, pp. 50-51).

In both the *Apology* and the *Crito*, Socrates is cited as saying that,

Athenian law might be unjust, but the observance of law itself seemed to Socrates a corollary of ideal justice and of universal reason. For unless there is respect for law, a carrying out of the tacit contract a citizen has with the state, there is the beginning of tyranny and anarchy in the community (Edman, p. 51).

Edman (1953) informs us that in the *Phaedo*, Socrates is paraphrased to have said that in the same way that he must differ to the law for the sake of justice, and thus, for the good of society and the state, the state also has an obligation to do justice to its citizens before the law. And, as such, he continued by saying that by submitting himself to the law, he had elected to sacrifice his life so that “justice can prevail” (Edman, p. 51). And so, what he requests of the state is that subsequent to his demise, the state should do its part in completing the cycle of justice by returning, in kind, a proportionate measure of justice to his children (Edman, p.51).

Edman tells us that Socrates went on to address his five-hundred person jury by saying that, in the fact that he was submitting himself to capital punishment, he was not only doing his part in stimulating the divinity to direct the forces of morality toward universal justice, but that he was also demonstrating, at one level, that “No one is above the law” of the land. And, at another level, he was exemplifying to the citizens of Athens exactly what was meant to come full circle, from birth to the end of life, and in that process be able to get to know that his was “A life lived in the interest of sacrifice and [an example of] how a life should be lived” (Edman, p. 51).

From Johnson’s (2022) viewpoint, it is clear that if Socrates was an exemplary member of society, as suggested in Plato’s and Xenophon’s defense of him, he would certainly have exhibited the tendency to treat “others” fairly, regardless of superficial differences such as race, immigrant status, or whatever. In this way, Socrates was in the end, a “good man” and would have been exemplary of what the “good state” ought to have been. In putting himself up as the sacrificial lamb, Socrates was suggesting to the City of Athens to distinguish itself as the “good state” by emphasizing “equal justice for all” (Johnson, 2017; Linder, Johnson, 2022).

 For since, the single most important task of the “good state” is to ensure that the greatest level of happiness is dispense to the largest number of citizens possible, the most important ingredient to that end is that the state continue to act within the circumscription of a moral imperative that guarantees “equal justice for all” (Exodus 23:3; Leviticus 19:15). To describe the ultimate purpose for which the state exists, in the most succinct manner, would probably be best done anachronistically by use of the modern Benthamian term of “utilitarianism” (Fieser and Dowden, n.d.). So, the utilitarian ideal, then, as coined by Jeremy Bentham and used today, is as much a Socratic thing, in practice, as it ever was.

In general, utilitarianism, is that ultimate responsibility of government to lift up the majority of its people to the highest level of happiness (Fieser and Dowden, n.d.). This school of thought, at its most basic level, is functionally Socratic, and, at the full ripeness of that level, in its most mature form of application, it exhibits ever so slight a difference from one form of utilitarianism to another, although these are differences nevertheless, it comes under the broad label of the Stuart-Millsian and Benthamian type of utilitarianism (Fieser and Dowden).

In Socratic utilitarianism, the individual who achieves this ultimate good (happiness) for himself is the one who has come extremely close to living his life on the opposite side of the natural propensity for evil that is imbedded in man’s postlapsarian nature. Hence, by that fact, such a man would also be living on the opposite side of pain. This individual is spoken of as the “good man”, and as shown before, he is the epitome of what the “good state” would be, collectively (Fieser and Dowden).

In this case, the good man, like the good state, is driven by such a moral force as to cause him to want to help others to find their way to the “good life”, too. This is a man who has been transformed by “Grace” to the point where he has regained his pre-Adamic nature (Matt 5: 48: Ephesians 2:8). And so, like this “good man”, the “good state” will not rest in its effort to help everyone find some measure of the “good life”, at whatever level is possible for the individual and the society (Bentham, Free Encyclopedia,*Wikipedia*; Rose, 2021, p. 66). Bentham places a moral burden upon all citizens of the state to contribute to the general good of all other members of society. At the same time, the Stuart-Mill’s utilitarianism has a more democratic slant to it, even though it is equally “consequentialist” as Bentham’s. They both saw the “good man” as one whose interactions with others are characterized by moral guardrails. Because of such moral restraint, the good man will find himself in circumstance that are blessed. His life is filled with happiness. Unlike the good man, the immoral man has a life of evil and pain (Tamunosiki, 2018, p. 67).

In Stuart Mill’s and Bentham’s type of utilitarianism, the state does permit itself to write off “hard-to-help” members of society in order to concentrate its effort and resources on helping the majority of citizen to find happiness. The burden that the government must bear is distributed differently from state to state, depending upon what is fitting for the unique social, economic and environmental structures of the particular state (Tamunosiki, p. 68).

Based on Tamunosiki’s (2023) notes, one would think that in very diverse societies, it is imperative for there to be laws tailored specifically to provide equal protection for all citizens, despite the multitude of ethnicities and other differences that may abound. Further, in respect to contemporary civilized societies, the common way to look at it is to say simply that the main objective of government is to ensure that most of its citizens are given the means by which they will be able to procure the highest “quality of life” possible (Tamunosiki, p. 69).

So, if the republic hopes to meet its ultimate obligation (its telos) to its citizens, it must ensure that it has in place a system of universal (equal) justice. Hord (2009) informs us that while morality constrains man to be his brother’s keeper, it is worrisome that Hobbs may yet be right in his conviction that, buried deep in human nature is the instinctive desire to protect his self-interest, above all else, even at the point where what he fears is most threaten to him, or to his interests, might merely be unjustified paranoia. Therefore, rather than relying upon the uncertainty of there being a few “good men” who might demonstrate moral uprightness, the “Republic” is compelled to make laws that will bend the collective will of its citizens away from immorality toward the formulation of a “good” viable society (Hord, 2009, pp.41-2). But the law, by itself, could be more harmful than good, if they are unjust or enforced unequally. One way that our contemporary “Republics” have chosen to provide the good life while satisfying the condition of equal protection for all is in its effort to provide education to all its citizens throughout childhood.

Over the past century, the governments that have been most successful in meeting such *telos* have done so through the passage of laws aimed at equal education. While, to that end, they have made it a priority to maintain financial support of schools and to provide human resources without interfering with subject matter or content area, along with the recognition of “academic freedom”. Today, there is a new understanding among educators that the time has come for them to educate the whole child in a “constructivist” classroom in order to meet all the criteria of *eudaimonia* through public education.

The non-teacher dominated classroom, by sheer design, is not only crafted to contribute heavily to the child’s social development, as some think, but to the development of skills in all the basic facets of development related to the wholistic growth of the human child. A quiet productive classroom, or what is more commonly referred to as a “teacher centered” classroom, is opposite to what many non-educators refer to as the “noisy classroom”. In popular educator jargon, the so-called noisy productive classroom, operating strictly under the guidance of the teacher, and his or her well-seasoned classroom management system, is normally referred to as the “student centered” classroom (Thompson, 2005; p. 36).

Thompson (2005) writes that a typical “student centered” classroom, operating in its pink of form, is an ideal showcase for the modeling of the development of socialization skill and the development of all the other four basic areas of developmental skills, at once. At its very best, the “student-centered” classroom tends to look more like a beehive of children at work, which, when active in a culturally integrated learning setting, opens up a multiple dimension of creativity, and a far more finely perfected humanity toward the nurturing of that natural unconscious guilelessness in children’s attitude to phenotypic, and other superficial differences (Thompson, 2005 , n.p.n.).

Most of the time, during the moments of teacher-guided student-interactive learning, designed to promote social development, along with the development of the other four basic facets of being, students will be seen working head-to-head, with one another in the classroom. On such occasions, more able students are often seen attempting to help unravel complex processes for others. One student might be working with another to help him or her understand how to “concretize” a particular “abstraction”, or the other way around. Or, at other times, there might be small clusters of pee-wee, mock think-tank-like executives huddled together, thoroughly absorbed in fertile discussions over a string of questions posed by the teacher (Thompson, 2005).

A well-seasoned teacher can often spot those instances when his or her pupils are being *transformed* by a specific, unique learning experience that is occurring as part of a highly socialized interactive process, in a diverse “student-centered” classroom. In such situations, the students’ cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and psychical skills are all being honed and developed at once. Sometimes, in those special moments, the teacher himself or herself may have failed to transmit the specific “concept” that the class would not have been able to grasp, had it not been for that one or two “other children”, who just so happen to have caught it through his or her slightly different cultured lens, or, by his or her ability to see from a slightly different angle, at a certain precise moment in time. At other times, the main point of the lesson, which was supposed to grab the classroom’s attention and change its perception, still manages to get through only because the larger bulk of students has come to the knowledge that this “other child”, in the room, is just as able as they (Thompson, 2005).

In those situations, Thompson (2005) and others contend that students begin to develop a higher level of empathy that leads the way to a more advanced level of moral growth. In support of this, Decety and Cowell (2015) write that by “Assuming the perspective of another brings about changes in the way we see the “other”, notably, members of the same social groups to which they belong” (Kidd and Castano). Thompson states, like Decety and Cowell, that such social interactions often foster children’s adaptability to the kind of differences that help them prune out the dead weeds of acculturated hate to make room for positive new growth (Decerty and Cowell, 2015, p. 8). Having done so, those who have, at length, chosen to take up the role of teacher will eventually grow to appreciate the wonderful multi-pronged development of children who are placed in a symbiotic “constructivist” classroom. This almost always helps to advance the *telos* of the “Republic” in its effort to deliver something in the semblance of equal education for all, closer to the fulfilment of the utilitarianist dream that should be the ultimate objective of a true democrat republic (Thompson, 2005; Decety and Cowell, 2015).

In the end, the “Democratic Republic” must prove itself to be a political system in which those who govern will be picked by common citizens for the purpose of providing the greatest possible happiness to the largest number of the people, who are bound together within the moral circuit of justice, with the full guarantee that “everyone is equal before the law”. Throughout the history of America there has been ever-present, the stain of slavery, Jim Crow, or the continued opening up of the wound in the aftermath (Alexander and West, n.d.). This is an America whose three great acts of sustained moral turpitude, have long been at the heart of the political philosophy that props up the American *telos* for a select community. Surely, if the Christian doctrine of causality (Galatians 6:7), or the classical theories about justice mean anything, great democratic “Republics”, such as the United States of America, must be ready to resign themselves to the inevitable divine repercussions that will come, in response to these acts of evil, as “consequentialists” insist. For, the nation, like the citizen who does injury to others, will not only inflict deep wounds that may never heal in those to whom the harm is done, but because of what transpires during the strife and the scuffle, it, too, will depart from the fray with some of its own national scar-tissue that may never heal. To purge itself, the “good Republic”, like the “good man”, must submit to the sword of justice under the law, as Socrates, himself, did in the dramatization of his *Apology* (Edman, 1953; Burry, n.d.). And, in spite of all such causal parrying and reparteé, the “good Republic” must still labor to meet its obligation to uplift all its citizens, wherever possible. And so, if former child-slaves are allowed to sit together in classrooms with the children of former slave “owners”, while they are still only being taught by siblings of former slave owners, and their children, how, then, can the democratic republic ever be able to utilize education as the means by which to meet its obligation of providing “the good life” for all?

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