

Briana Garvin-Chapter 5: The quest for the good political life

Classical Greek Thought: The search for political excellence

Plato: Justice as the harmony of classes and rule by Philosopher-Kings

Plato's problem presented in *The Republic*: what is justice and what is the ideal life for the polis, the greek city-state?

Modern ex: people want a political candidate w/ these qualities:

wisdom

unbiased

honest

confident

charismatic etc.

Plato's solution: Philosopher-King

The philosopher-king should order the life of the city-state to be in accordance w/ a vision of good that their superior intellect allows them to perceive

Plato believes that people ignorant to politics shouldn't be elected b/c they'll make poor decisions

Classic greek thought: Key questions

What ideas did Plato and Aristotle agree on and what ideas did they disagree on?

What are the most important contributions that Aristotle and Plato made to political thought?

How relevant is their thinking today?

Plato believes that we can decipher what is good and that gov't should better us.

Wrong! people have their own opinions of what is good

Plato's deficient forms of gov't

Aristocracy: only the most qualified regulate the gov't (but it can get worse)

Timocracy: gov't ruled by the honorable and ambitious

Oligarchy: gov't by the wealthy

Democracy: gov't by the poor

Tyranny: gov't by lawless rule of one individual (worse form of gov't)

Aristotle: Constitutional gov't and rule by the Middle Class

Aristotle's problem: Which form of gov't provides the best practicable good life?

Aristotle's answer: a polity that would rest most securely on the well-educated, reasonably virtuous, sufficiently wealthy, moderate middle class

middle class represents "golden mean" between the poor and the rich

Aristotle personally favors monarchy, but acknowledges the practicality of polity

Christianity and the good political life: key questions

How does the concept of *The City of God* help us to understand the good political life on earth?

How do the works of Augustine and Aquinas square with the American doctrine of separation of church and state?

Augustine: Incomplete Worldly Peace, Order, and Justice

Augustine- imperfect, earthly city vs peaceful, just and ordered heavenly city of the *City of God*

Thomas Aquinas: Constitution, law, common good, and reason

all of society must prosper

sees human beings as imperfect

Renaissance key questions:

In what fundamental way does Machiavelli's thinking differ from Aristotle?

The Renaissance

Niccolo Machiavelli: wanted a quest for virtuous republic

good and bad exist

to become a great political leader and understand the circumstance: sacrifice yourself

there are times when force should and shouldn't be used

economize violence

Modern political thought

Thomas Hobbes felt the need for a supreme sovereign leader in the *Leviathan*

John Locke: social contract for a gov't that is popular, limited, and responsible

gov't that guarantees life, liberty, and property

Jean Jacques Rousseau: popular sovereignty through general will

classical ex: locke & plato's religious beliefs

modern ex: our rights listed in the Bill of rights

Edmund Burke: prescriptive constitutional gov't

basically " the greatest good for the greatest number"

John Stuart-Mill: utilitarianism & liberty

Karl Marx: universal human emancipation through the use of communism

Briana Garvin-Chapter 6: liberal democracy

Liberal Democracy

gov't on the basis of the constitution characterized by popular rule, protection of our basic rights and economic competition

Ideals of liberal democracy

popular gov't: citizens make political decisions

rights-respecting gov't: Bill of rights

constitutional gov't: limited power in gov't

representative gov't: when citizens elect officials

responsible gov't: gov't respecting & responding to what we say

general welfare gov't: the good of all people

Sources of liberal democracy

Greek heritage of democracy: demos "the people" & krateia "rule" or "gov't"

Christian theology & Roman republicanism: emphasize equality & popular sovereignty

Medieval Europe: declared political rule should be in interest of people

Protestant reformation: Luther & Calvin believed in higher law

American Republic: brought about world's first language in modern politics

French Rev. of 1789 & Liberal Dem. in Europe: challenged political authority & popularized

democratic ideas

American liberals

favor greater concern for the needy, women, working class, small business owners etc.

seek to expand popular power

employ gov't power to seek changes on behalf of equal treatment to least powerful & free

American conservatives

concerned about society's needy, but skeptical of gov't solving problems pertaining to poverty

opposed to gov't interference in political, social, & economic affairs
favorable of military & balanced budget

In defense of liberal democracy

guiding vision & ideals lead to greater measure of healthy growth, civilized life, & creative fulfillment

ability to adapt to changing circumstances

ex. United States

effective response to power abuse & tyranny

realistic about politics

Attacks from the left

American liberal dem. failed to fulfill promise

individuals not really "free" ; confined to exploitive economic & social system of inequality, racism & sexism

Attacks from the right

degenerated into mobocracy, serfdom and socialism

threat to representative democracy and equality of opportunity

fearful of state's bureaucratic power to regulate economic affairs/ undermine private property & free enterprise

General criticisms

faulty ethical vision

Am. sense of responsibility for least free, environment, and future are weak

deficient empirical understanding

focuses too much on status quo & neglects weak, poor, and oppressed

timid prudential assessment

wrongly conservative rather than rightly conservative

ex. preserving racism & sexism and preferring property rights to human rights

-Sorry these are so late

Chapter Five: Political Philosophy And Ideology

Classical Greek Thought: The Search For Political Excellence

Arete:Excellence

Polis: A Greek city state

Justice (According to Plato): The harmonious ordering of the functional classes in the polis:

- Philosophers ruling
- Soldiers defending
- Farmers and artisans providing food, clothing, and utensils

Aristocracy: Government by the best

Timocracy: Government by people of honor and ambition

Oligarchy: Government by the rich and lovers of money

Democracy: Government by the many poor

Democracy is based on everyone having an equal share of freedom and power

Tyranny: Emerges when democratic people, preoccupied with liberty and equality, lose a sense of law and order, and turn to a champion to protect them. The lawless rule of one individual.