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Composition

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The Great American Anarchy (According to Socrates)

The vast majority of history books, urban legends, and all folklore and cautionary tales have warned generation after generation about the challenging, irreversible, and repetitive characteristics inhabited by human nature. From Homer's *The Odyssey* to Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, between these two heroes journey's, the structure of a hero's journey has aged three-hundred-ninety-one years, with both books including the basics to be considered heroes journeys. Yet, two novels, next to each other seem as though they had been written in different languages, for different audiences, in different centuries, are considered the same. With that being said, what is it about *Plato's Republic* that makes everything Socrates claims to be a democracy, under his a couple of hundred years old perspective, true? And even further, if people can claim that Homer's 1614 Odysseus is the same as Riordan's twelve-year-old, ADHD-ridden, dyslexic, summer camp-going, capture-the-flag-playing, Percy Jackson, just because they are both the protagonists of heroes journeys, then who is to say, although just because the claim doesn't make Odyesues and Percy Jackson any similar, that Socrates could have done the same on his view on what democracy is by using a loosely strung together definition based on little to no knowledge and experience living in a democracy, and why should we apply outdated perspectives centuries later.

Democracy is far from perfect, as is any form of government. It is as simple as humans are so diverse, and the sheer overwhelming amount of people in the world, makes it nearly, if

not, impossible, to create a form of government that allows everyone to live happily. So, to argue that any form of government is perfect is an endless argument of circles and loopholes. However, the idea of democracy may be liberating, the concept of free will and the selfish habits of human nature inherently prevent it from being the utopic form of government, or the free, loving, and self-expressive society that everyone expects it to be.

Yet, the key word there is expect, or expectations, which a lot of people confuse with their reality until they are met with disappointment, and find out that just because they expected one thing, that does not mean that what they looked for, would be what they were given. Part of the cost of democracy, and all it entails, such as freedom of speech and having a say in one's everyday life, comes at the cost of discomfort and disagreement.

When speaking with Adeimantus, Socrates states, "It is when a democratic city, a thirst for freedom, happens to get bad cupbearers for its leaders and gets drunk by drinking more than it should of unmixed wine, Then, if the rulers are not very gentle and do not provide plenty of freedom, it punishes them and accuses them of being filthy oligarchs" (*Socrates, Plato's Republic*). Just because one is met with accusation, does not warrant punishment or scolding, as I could point to a squirrel and accuse it of being part alien. However, squirrels are not part alien, and I would appear nothing more than a fool, so therefore, not meeting the needs of every spoiled, self-proclaimed genius, and selfish human who happens to be born into a democratic society does not create oligarchs.

Instead, it creates butthurt spoiled brats, or uneducated conspiracists who are for once forced to deal with a reality they could not pay their way out of with their parent's money, or fabricate their false realities into truth.

According to Socrates, driving a car anywhere will lead to a deadly car accident.

Although those were not his exact words, Socrates was convinced that any form of “democracy” would lead to tyranny. Socrates quotes, “And in addition, I suppose so that if there are some free-thinking people he suspects of rejecting his rule, he can find a pretext for putting them at the mercy of the enemy and destroying them? For all these reasons, isn’t a tyrant bound to be always stirring up war?” (*Socrates, Plato’s Republic*). In short, any remaining person, with a mind of their own, living in a former democracy, will be killed or forced to pay for their crimes. Blood will stain the streets of every democratic society, war will break out faster than a middle school boy, and right there sparks world war, yet again.

Now, there hadn’t been what we currently know as the World Wars at Socrates’ time, but war itself is something that has traveled through genetics, and every bloodstream in human nature, from the beginning to the inevitable end. However, any form of government is prone to taking part in a war of any kind.

From The Great Roman Civil War to The American Civil War, war itself is a lengthy concept, rather it’s a plague that no form of government, tyranny, anarchy, or democracy, are safe from. It is entirely naive of Socrates to assume that any single form of government is safe from breaking out into war and bloodshed or to use that as an excuse as to why one form of government would not work when every single form of government in recorded history has at least once been a victim or an instigator of the war.

Furthermore, to blame the evolution of tyranny on a singular form of government, when multiple different governments have erupted into, and descended from, tyranny is beyond foolish. As Socrates claims, “So, isn’t the way democracy evolves from oligarchy much the same as that in which tyranny evolves from democracy” (*Socrates, Plato’s Republic*). Oligarchy is

similar to the modern-day American government, with one leader, and a democratic election, based on the voice of the people, which led the modern-day American government to be one of the most democratic societies in modern-day history. Whilst anarchy is the absence of leadership, which Socrates seems to believe is a democracy, as it is known that due to anarchy, some of the most prominent historical dictators were born, such as the Roman tyrant, Julius Caesar.

However, Caesar lived after Socrates, yet it still brings light to the issue of whether or not we should base our views of government on a man who was unable to bear witness to one of the most famous dictators, to whom we reference today. How is it that in American history classes, we are to mention the backstabbing betrayal of the brutal tyrant that was Julius Caesar, only to be told that the anarchy in which Caesar was able to manipulate, then take over Rome because of, was the foundation of the democratic society in which we live in?

The same society allows students to learn about the multiple forms of government and the positives and negatives of each one. The democratic society of America, comes with free speech, with teachers who are influencing the next generation of leaders, can express their bias, or teach politics in a way that allows the students to think for themselves. Some teachers instruct their classes with both, weeding out the followers, and allowing those who will always think for themselves to radiate their independence in a dull and underfunded public school classroom.

Pointing the finger at democracy and claiming that it is at fault for tyranny, or therefore only leads to it, and then further arguing it is an unreliable form of government because of this, and not discussing anarchy in this discussion only proves that Socrates views on democracy is not only biased but outdated as well. From Odysseus to Persues Jackson, they are both Greek heroes, though hundreds of years apart. One living in Ancient Greece, the other in Manhattan, New York.

One struggles to fathom that technology could ever expand as far as it has, whilst the other lives in a society surrounded by television screens, yet still uses Iris messages, instead of Snapchat because monsters have upgraded their senses to smell out demigods who use technology. Yet, even with the two being so far from each other, with one existing post The Trojan War, and one existing post The Cold War, some may still argue they're the same, they're both Greek heroes after all. As an apple is a fruit and so is an orange, the two are commonly compared to be the same, but as well as they couldn't be more different than the other. In the same way Socrates' take on democracy, couldn't be closer to the modern definition of anarchy, and further from what democracy truly means.