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Dr. Robert Ford confides to Dolores that his father would not agree with his creation of robots for the enjoyment of humans. “My father told me to be satisfied with my lot in life. That the world owed me nothing. And so, I make my own world” (“Contrapasso”). This tells us at once that Dr. Ford’s father had a Platonic notion of justice.

We ask whether Dr. Ford is just or whether his Platonic father is just. Looking through the lens of Plato’s notion of justice, as seen in his *Republic*, we ask whether Dr. Ford’s Westworld is a just world. A common reply will be that justice shouldn’t stop a person finding their own way in the world, one that is truly theirs to find without hindrance. The Delos Corporation offers a relaxed moral experience to its vacationing customers, where the individual can gratify every whim or fancy.

We might well ask what’s wrong with this liberal way of living your life. What’s wrong with individuals finding pleasure or even finding their real selves?

Plato’s World of Justice

Plato held an ideal of justice that for many is out of this world. Justice is virtue held by the state as well as the individual. For Glaucon, Socrates’s intellectual sparring partner in *The Republic*, justice is not this abstract view of virtue, but is more like a sucker’s guide to not having much fun in this world. We can see Glaucon’s vision play out in the movie *Westworld* (1973)

where Martin who is a Guest at Westworld, enjoys an escape from his ex-wife's cutthroat lawyers. He acts in a just way and gets played. Glaucon says to Socrates, that justice is doing what someone else tells you to do; justice is for the uptight. As Glaucon says of those who commit injustices, "they are quite happy to congratulate the wicked, if they possess wealth and exercise power, and to pay them respect in both public and private life" (*Republic*, line 364b).

Plato might well have been disgusted with this fantasy world of would-be gunslingers, just as William's friend Logan clearly disgusts Dolores with his foul language in the later HBO series, but has Glaucon made a good point? William might give the impression that he is the epitome of just action, but Glaucon sees justice as doing what others think you should do. It's a mug's game! So, who's right? Is it Plato or is it Glaucon?

What's Plato's notion of justice? In the *Republic*, Socrates discusses this with Glaucon. Socrates says that an act is just "where the just man is happy and the unjust man is miserable" (354a). Socrates says that justice is an act that is enjoyable, but most of all it is doing well to others. This ideal will guide the person to be virtuous in doing well to others, just as it will guide the state to do well to its people. We do this act for its own sake even though we might get some pleasure from doing it.

We see this with William remembering that he is engaged to be married and not having sex with Dolores ("Trompe L'Oeil"). When people want to do something wrong, they will do so if they can get away with it. In the actual world, virtue is a question of choice. It might be said that Glaucon is introducing a rather liberal social contract view that allows for free individual choice.

With this in mind, Glaucon introduces the Golden Ring of Gyges as a thought experiment (359c–360). When you put on the ring, and turn the insignia to your palm, you become invisible, allowing you to do as you wish. Glaucon says that the invisible person's actions will not be guided by Plato's notion of justice. Self-interest will be their guide. Socrates is asked to imagine if given this ring, would he act virtuously? This forces us to think whether we could resist the temptation of having sex with our neighbor's wife without anyone knowing. According to Glaucon, such acts can be done with no regret or remorse. No one can see you to blame or shame you.

We might see the visitors to Westworld who have sex with robots in a similar way. Those back home who might cast shame do not know. If the straying fiancé or husband wants to find some action at Westworld, then he can do so without any recriminations. If he can get away with it, then he'll do it. In fact, argues Glaucon, he who is unjust gets what he wants. We might say that this is a form of self-discovery and the finding of one's new self. For Plato, such a life devoted to pleasure is not a satisfying life, and not a life worth having.

What is Glaucon's point? We can be certain that he is saying that the value of being moral lies in the intrinsic good of our action and not its consequences. We do good things because they are good and not because we should try to please others as a consequence.

Let's see whether Socrates can make Glaucon see justice more clearly by using the analogy of the individual. Philosophers often use the analogy by showing a similar thing of a more obvious nature to make clear the other thing that is not as obvious. Similar to writing in large print that later can be seen more clearly in small print; Plato uses the individual person as analogous to the state (435b).

The individual has three major characteristic with the *Rational* ruling the body, the *Spirit* consisting of anger and pride, and *Appetites* motivating production. Through Plato's use of the analogy of the body, Glaucon can view the best possible organized state. We can see that the appetite might draw us to go to Westworld. This is an appetite that is ever-present. It is reason that needs to control the appetite. We, like Glaucon, might be skeptical about this need to control our urges to be a gunslinger or womanizer. Why can't we just go to Westworld and have a good time? Why do we think that Plato's notion of the state gives us a view of justice worth following?

Socrates replies by saying that the three human characteristics need to be known for us to accept our lot in life. This will allow for the harmonious functioning of the soul. Dr. Ford questioned his father's instruction to accept his lot in life by creating his own might go against this harmony. As with Glaucon, Dr. Ford seems to have doubts about his father's Platonic view of justice and accepting his lot in life.

Like the just individual, we have the just city-state. The city has its individual parts that co-operate to create harmony. For Plato the best possible organized society is made up of three

strictly stratified classes, each minding their own business: the *Guardians* are in charge of justice and have justice as their motivation, the *Auxiliaries* enforce justice and have honor as their motivation, and the *Business and Tradespeople* obey the rules and have money as their motivation.

In no way whatsoever are any of the members of any class to think of moving to another class (421a). The auxiliary general might think he had done well and get above himself and think of joining the guardian class, but this is not his place, just as it is not the place of the business person to be a soldier and certainly not his role to be a guardian. His skills lie in business and not government. Here is where we find Dr. Ford's father's command for his son to know his lot in the world. Plato talks of the unhealthy city (373a–e).

This is much like how Socrates might see *Westworld*. There is excessive wealth made by those in political power, and rampant pleasure-seeking by those in the military. As is true in Plato's ideal state, the business people make money for the good of the state. Too much money leads to war. In *Westworld*, we can see that maybe too much money leads to freedom of choice and chaos.

We might ask whether Glaucon is just in imagining that Plato's ideal state is fit for pigs (372d). Plato views injustice as a contradiction to justice. It's clear to Plato that his notion of justice is best. The guardians are enlightened and see justice as a reality. Through their education they are led to see what is essentially just. They see reality as independent of our appetites or spirit and they use reason to find a clear notion of justice. This is where, according to Roger Trigg, "Plato based his moral and political philosophy on his metaphysics." To be unjust for the Guardians is to do bad to their citizens. As we might say, a square necessarily needs four right angles and four equal sides to be a square, but this is geometry. Like Plato's ideal state, it exists nowhere other than in abstraction. There is no basic notion of justice for a state to be a state. There is no grounding or place in the actual world.

Is This the Start of a Just World of Pleasure?

Back in 1973, the movie *Westworld* hit the big screens. Cinema-goers saw Roman world, Medieval world, and *Westworld*. The

film's focus is on the wild west of the 1880s. John Blaine takes his friend Peter Martin on a vacation. Almost instantly, Peter is euphoric. He just had sex with a sex robot and is eager to see what other experiences he can enjoy. Later we see John in a gun fight with a 406 gunslinger robot. The robot is killed, but comes back to get John. There is a malfunction resulting in the robot chasing him through the desert.

In the sequel *Futureworld* (1976), we're dropped into the moral frenzy following Westworld's destruction. Here we see the two reporters, Chuck Browning and Tracy Ballard, reporting on Delos and its new Westworld. Browning and Ballard stumble upon Delos creating copy-robots. These will replace the vacationing oil ministers, rocket experts, and other members of the world Guardians. Democracy does not work for Delos. Humans are "very unstable, irrational and violent"—not ideal for what Delos sees as an ideal state. Chuck Browning says, "To err is to be human," which is too irrational for Delos. To replace human leaders with copy-robots, who will think first about the welfare of Delos is justice in action. Just as Plato had the good of the state in mind, Delos also has the good of the state in mind.

As in *Westworld* (1973), *Futureworld* has sex robots, gunslingers, and adventurers. As a vacationer says to Tracy Ballard, "once you make it with a sex robot chick, that's it, you don't never want nothing else." Appetites are fulfilled with the "lusty treat for the senses."

Is Simon Quaid a Guardian?

In TV's *Westworld* (1980), Simon Quaid is the main protagonist. We see him as part of an oligarchy. He is rational and considers his methods of leadership as just. He sees Delos as good for humanity. The problem is the meddling Special Agent Pam Williams and the technical expert John Moore. They think he is a tyrant and want to put a stop to him taking over Delos ("Westworld Destroyed").

Is Simon Quaid virtuous? He attempts to take over Delos, which is exploiting "man's meaner nature by amusing him with playthings" ("My Brother's Keeper"). These playthings can be used to serve mankind. Quaid has the ideal state in mind and perceives the finest technology being debased for the appetites of man.

Plato talks of Aristocracy as being the best type of government and Democracy and Tyranny as two of the worst types of government (545d). Pam Williams refers to Quaid as a “self-centered extremist,” and John Moore calls Quaid a tyrant with the “ego of Mussolini” (“Westworld Destroyed”). Both are intent on stopping Quaid from taking over Delos because as arms of the democratic state and the rule of society by one person is not seen as just.

But are we sure that they have understood Quaid? Quaid is capable of looking after himself, and others. Quaid has the duty to himself and duty to the wellbeing of others. He is clear about his responsibility to create an ideal state and he is not distracted by the trivial pursuits of Westworld. He says Moore “took my creation and turned them into toys; what could serve the needs of mankind, Delos used to fulfill superficial pleasures” (“Westworld Destroyed”).

We’re concerned that Moore as a computer technician and Williams as special agent are members of the auxiliary class and are not competent to say that Quaid should not rule. Williams agrees with Quaid on the use of robots for the good, but not with Quaid as the ruler. We might ask who should be in charge.

Plato assigned Guardians, Auxiliaries and Tradesmen quality of souls. Gold goes to the Guardian class, silver to the Auxiliary class, and bronze to the Tradesmen (414c). This is the Noble Lie, a lie with the deep moral purpose of having people know and carry out their lot in life. To not stray away from your lot in life creates good harmony for both the state as well as the individual.

Plato conceived a world in which bronze souls were not above trivial entertainment, but would hope that more moral entertainment would be provided by the Gold Souls and enforced by the Silver Souls. The Silver Souls are encouraged to drive their spirit to the protection of the state. It seems that Laura and John are not doing as Plato expected. Certainly, the Auxiliaries are discouraged from such frivolity, and the Guardians would see it as a distraction from the good. As Quaid says, “the ones in charge will make decisions without fear or hysteria” (“Westworld Destroyed”). Plato gives the auxiliary class spirit to give them energy to defend the state, but he does not see them as being necessarily free of hysteria.

We have the view that Quaid is certainly authoritarian, and that such authority is a sufficient quality of a Guardian. This does not lead us to say he is a tyrant. He is not self-absorbed and instead sees science as humanity's first priority. He does not want power for its own sake, which Plato saw as the definition of tyranny (344a). The noble lie is seen when Quaid remarks to Laura that correct action lies between "ethics and expediency." The truth needs to be bent occasionally to do good. The use of robots as espionage agents is allowed as part of the noble deception ("The Lion").

Moore and Williams talk of such devious action from a liberal rights standpoint where citizens should know everything the government is up to. For Quaid, being devious "merely implies a change, a different course, a move away from the norm" ("The Lion").

Quaid comprehends John Moore's technocratic democracy as plagued by "famine, disease, pollution, war, and prejudice" ("The Lion"). Quaid has to postpone his plan to establish a perfect Westworld. He concludes that "if we can control human emotions, we can make man into the perfect species he should have been" ("Take Over").

Will the Liberal World Shine a Light on Plato's View of Pleasure?

Hold on a minute! We have got a clear picture of Plato's ideal world as attempted by Simon Quaid in our mind, but what about freedom to enjoy pleasure? Glaucon is still whispering in our ear, saying that only suckers live a life of virtue according to Plato's notion of justice. For Glaucon, Plato's world is fit only for pigs. We see Plato later in his work the *Philebus* accepting a broader view of pleasure; giving us hope that pleasure might be allowed. Pleasure is seen as worthwhile and important in having a good life. We see a relaxing of "the pure, austere, but potentially arid intellectualism in the *Phaedo*," while still frowning on the Guardians being diverted by vice and avarice.

To help us understand how Plato's vision of pleasure can be reconciled in *Westworld*, as Thomas Nagel writes, we're going to bring in John Stuart Mill's view of pleasure. Mill rejects the lower pleasures: the brutish and crass pleasures that Plato also saw as base. Mill does not give up the notion of pleasure,

but introduces a higher notion of pleasure that Plato might agree upon, and might result in us seeing Quaid as too uptight.

Mill saw pleasure as not simply the hedonistic short-term pleasure that we might see many of the Westworld vacationers enjoying. We can take Mill's view and relate it to Glaucon who viewed Socrates's ideal city as only fit for pigs. William, we might say, is truly exploring a higher notion of pleasure. This might be seen as a Platonic view of pleasure where you find "your deepest self," as William tells Dolores ("Trompe L'Oeil"). This is a high form of pleasure, and can be seen as virtue. We see the likes of the Man in Black ruthlessly raping Dolores and killing her father. We will have to think about whether he has put any thought into his search. The Man in Black might be more like Plato's cave dwellers. Here Plato envisions people in a cave who only see shadows and hear echoes and view this as reality, but it's only a shadow world. We might have a feeling that William has put some sort of reason into creating this real higher level of pleasure.

Given this pursuit for self-discovery, we can look at Mill's view of higher pleasure that Plato might see as distinguished from base appetites. John Blaine and Peter Martin might go for the thrills but William is chasing high pleasures. Mill says that some pleasures have higher importance and their superiority can be measured. William might well have put thought into his pleasure. We might say that Martin's romp with a sex robot might measure low on a scale of pleasure. William's higher pleasure seen in his self-discovery with Dolores will measure high on the scale. This is a spirited and maybe even rational activity. Such a pleasure might last a whole life time.

Humans might have a more sophisticated view of pleasure than viewed in Plato's *Republic*. We're sympathetic to Glaucon's view that the Republic is fit only for pigs. But is it ill founded? Mill's view is that, "Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites." These higher appetites are favored more than lower appetites. Here the love of liberty is one of the pleasures pursued. He craves the higher form as seen by him not succumbing to a sexual relationship with Dolores. We might see the eventual sexual encounter on the train as a higher romantic love for Dolores, if we see their union as a higher love. This is a sympathetic view considering that Dolores is a robot.

As Mill says, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates than a fool." Simon Quaid and Dr. Ford may be genius Guardians who contribute to the greater good by exercising their individual liberty. We allow such liberty if the benefit is maximized and prohibit the liberty if their action minimizes the benefit.

Pleasure, Justice, or Both?

You get the impression that the fulfilling of appetites is why people go to Westworld. The late twentieth-century political philosopher John Rawls understood pleasure as something that attempts to "arrive at the carrying through of a dominant-end conception of deliberation" (*A Theory of Justice*, p. 486). This means that different people have a more or less similar view of pleasure and how to strike up an agreement about this pleasure. William tells Dolores that the common conception of pleasure "doesn't cater to your lowest self, it reveals your deepest self" ("Trompe L'Oeil"). If we're not able to reconcile our different pleasures, we set up a world where individuals can as much as possible conceive their own view of pleasure.

Rawls set up a thought experiment where in an Original Position we are placed behind a Veil of Ignorance. The Original Position is a hypothetical state of equality set up by Rawls, which is an impartial point of view that allows us to distribute justice in a fair way. We do not know our intelligence, sex, race, or any attribute that may help us be successful once the veil is raised. The would-be gun-slingers and womanizers have a general idea about pleasure. This is not a specific notion of pleasure. This Rawls calls a "plurality of ends."

This means that, as Mill said, not all people want simple pleasures or the same pleasures. People are capable of setting up an agreement where justice as seen by Plato is now seen as relevant to people. It is now fairness. Thinking of Glaucon, we can say that Plato's "real" view of justice excludes pleasure as conceived in such a varied and personal way. Here in Westworld, we have William conceiving a general notion of justice of revealing your deepest self. This notion may apply to the Man in Black as well as William; it may even be considered as a Platonic rational conception of who you are.

Is Glaucon's rejection of Plato's "state fit for pigs" still more convincing than Plato's view of justice? Is Plato's view, once moderated in the actual world, as seen in *Westworld*, acceptable? We still get the impression that many go to Westworld to just shoot Native Americans and have sex with saloon robot whores. But, are they simply finding their low pleasures, or can we say that some are finding their deepest selves? Logan says to William, "I told you this place would show you who you really are." Logan says that William pretends to be a weak moralizing person, but he is really a "piece of work!" ("The Bicameral Mind"). Logan then declares that he will buy more shares in Westworld. Is Westworld the future for humankind?

By entering the Maze as an intellectual existential exploration, will we then find out who we really are? This is where we start to break out of the loops of consciousness. Is that the starting point of one's journey? If it is, then we may have a world that even Plato would see as revealing your deepest self as a rational exploration; an existential explanation of who you are?

We just might see the Gold Souls going to Westworld. We might also see the Silver and Bronze being elevated as we see the Man in Black revealing his rational capability. ("The Bicameral Mind").

Maybe Glaucon is still whispering in our ears, but we might now see visiting Westworld in a more virtuous light.