

The University of Hong Kong

香 港 大 學



Department of Politics and Public Administration

Presents

The Pacifism in Plato

This paper argues that Plato's Republic contains a distinctive brand of pacifist political theory. Against the prevailing Greek view that honor and competitive striving through war are indicative of human excellence, the Republic associates war with vice, excessive material desires and injustice. The dialogue suggests that the nature, education and courage of the philosopher are incompatible with the character, education and virtue of warriors. Furthermore, the principal method of philosophic inquiry, dialectics, is contrasted with eristics, or inquiry based on the desire to dominate and prevail over others. Finally, the Republic describes justice as helping the weak, doing no harm (even to one's enemies) and instantiating cooperative endeavors, which form the basis for a pacifist theory of justice critical of the just war tradition. We argue that this description of justice is consistent with Platonic justice. For all of these reasons, we find a portrait of a just political! Order that does not engage in violence and warfare even in the context of a culture of violence. [*co-authored with Dustin Howes (Louisiana State University)]

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Amy L. Shuster is an Honorary Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. She works at the intersection of ancient political thought and contemporary theory, especially how the political ideas of Plato and Aristotle found a deep tradition of reflection on the value and place of democracy and political judgment, and thus how their work inflects and criticizes our theory and practice today. She also writes on Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, feminist theory, Frankfurt School cultural criticism, rhetoric, literature and politics, neo-republicanism, and normative theories of global governance, and has published articles on Aristotle in *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* and *PS: Political Science and Politics*. She has been Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Assistant Professor of Political Science at University of Minnesota Duluth, and Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Princeton Writing Program. She received her Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University.

Date: May 6, 2013 (Mon)

Time: 4:30 pm

Venue: Room 9.66, The Jockey Club Tower

(Tea & coffee will be served at 4:15 pm)

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