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Write a note on the biography of Plato and his philosophy.

Plato was born in one of the wealthiest and politically active families in Athens around 428 BC and grew up, thus, during the Peloponnesian war (431-404). A conflict between Sparta and Athens, this involved almost all the known civilized world. A number of revolutions and counter-revolutions ensued from the war. Oligarchy (government by a minority), the characteristics of Spartan government alternated democracy (government by the majority) the main characteristic form of the Athenian government.

The involvement of Plato's family in the oligarchial regime which took power in 404 BC may well have dissuaded from pursuing a career in politics, and he devoted his study of philosophy.

He joined the circle surrounding Socrates around the age of twenty and left Athens after Socrates execution in 399, travelling to the Mediterranean world-teaching and learning. Plato returned to Athens sometime around 388 BC and established the first institution of higher learning in western world- the academy. He laid the foundation of western philosophy and science along with his student Aristotle, who was the other exceptional classical philosopher:

Plato travelled extensively. He had taken over the mission of Socrates- to combat immorality and selfishness. His early dialogues are a portrayal of what might have been Socrates philosophy. Plato wrote over twenty philosophical dialogues and thirteen letters. His dialogues have been used to teach a wide range of subjects including philosophy, ethics, rhetoric, mathematics, religion and logic. Platonic love, the theory of forms the five regimes and innate knowledge are some of his lasting themes. His theory of forms proposes that there is another realm of reality in addition to the physical world we see around us. Launching a unique perspective on abstract objects, this theory led to a school of thought called Platonism.

Proven to be one of the most influential works of political theory and philosophy, the republic is Plato's best-known work. Written around 380 BC. it is by far the best introduction to his thought and contains many of the most important platonic doctrines. Socrates and a number of other people - Athenians and foreigners-discuss the meaning of justice, examining whether or not the just man is happier than the unjust man. Dealing with a range of ideas and thoughts, it particularly focuses on what makes a well-balanced individual and society.

Plato became entangled with the politics of the city of Syracuse in his last life. He almost faced with death when Diow of Syracuse, who had become one of his disciples turned against him. Plato was sold into slavery. Anniceris bought his freedom and sent him home. There are various accounts of his death. He died in sleep according to Tertullian. That he died at a wedding feast is suggested by another tradition.

Platonic influence can be found in the works of many philosophers. His works continue to be translated and reprinted.