

# The republic of plato essays example

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



## **Philosophy**

Plato's greatest and most enduring work remains 'The Republic.' Plato called this work as paideia; where the physical, spiritual and mental development of an individual was of utmost importance in constructive, societal development. Plato was a man filled with faith in human nature. Plato's philosophy of human nature doing evil was that a person only does evil in ignorance, for he believed everyone, just as himself wanted only what was good. The source of someone doing evil is brought about by unlimited desire. In Book 3, part 405a to 406e, Socrates yearns for an honest and disciplined society, and lectures Glaucon on justice, telling him that today's society was like a sickness. Quoting Asclepiads, Socrates says that it was a miracle if people in the days belonging to Asclepiads era, lived to see old age. According to Socrates, heroes were those who were courageous and opportunists. They disliked the idea of surrendering to their enemies and preferred death rather than live as slaves. Stories that depicted such heroes were what were needed to motivate the young generation of guardians. They must be made to be bold and not fear death at any cost. History has seen numerous heroes sacrifice their lives in battle, and this is what needs to be emulated by the young guardians. Never in their dreams should Hades, the place where dead souls go, be presented as a frightening place. For, Hades must be presented as paradise. They must portray god-like characteristics and not get carried away by emotions; as such emotions could hurt them mentally. Glaucon tries to interrupt Socrates by citing the common man, but Socrates quickly cuts him off and says that many poets instigate wrong thoughts in the minds of these young guardians by saying

that instead of being honest, it is those who follow unethical practices who often succeed in life and not those who are just. They write ballads in praise of these unjust people, calling them wise, and even go to the extent of telling the readers that it would be profitable for them if they too followed this without getting caught. This was not a good trend and it was up to people like them to change this outlook. However, this was not the time or place to outlaw such poems as; these stories had to be proved wrong before they could be proclaimed as false propaganda.

Socrates believes that it is people of prominence who were misguiding the young guardians. The prominent people, who could be poets, artists and sculptors, seem to thrive on such propaganda that creates a negative influence on young minds. Continuing with his lecture, Socrates suggests that such poems that demean society must be removed, and in its place, either a dramatic or lyric form of poetry must be introduced to enthrall the pervasive minds. Be it in poetry, painting or architecture, such artists who invent vicious, unrestrained and sleazy characters, must be stopped from further practices. Once negative propaganda is removed, society should look to educating the future guardians. There should be an affectionate bonding between the teacher and his/her student; not the sexual kind, he reiterates. The affection should be something that encourages the two to support and develop happy learning practices. Besides education, guardians must be the guardians should be encouraged to resort to physical training. Training not only enhances physical development, but mental development as well, but must not be pushed to the limit of making them savages. Finally, proper medical treatment must be augmented through medical training. Time

should not be wasted on those who are chronically ill, and all effort must be put to treat those who though healthy, suffer from acute, curable diseases. Those who are chronically ill should be given the chance to die without suffering.

In talking about the influence external forces can have on an individual, Penner in, ' Socratic Ethics and the Socratic Psychology of Action: a Philosophical Framework,' reiterates that Socrates' belief that in order to achieve happiness, one is motivated to act, and that act may not be morally correct. In the process to achieve happiness, that person might act in such a way that it belies his true virtue, and err by default, causing irreparable damage. He quotes the example of a tyrant who will kill his opponent for his own good, but in the process only damages his happiness (Gray, 2012).

According to Jowett (2012), The State, as Socrates sees, " is holier than father and mother, for they beget father and mother and all generations. It is because of the State that humanity exists, and it is also with the State that human nature is best exemplified as dichotomized. The State and humanity are good and bad, capable of very evil and wicked deeds as well as adhering to moral laws. Socrates placed his faith in not the masses but the one ' man' that was full of wisdom; that is, the State. Plato writes:

" Are we to rest assured, in spite of the opinion of the many, and in spite of consequences whether better or worse, of the truth of what was then said, that injustice is always an evil and dishonour to him who acts unjustly? Shall we affirm that?" (Jowett, 2012)

An acclaimed historian and biographer, Johnson, wrote a short report on the life and influence of the Athenian philosopher, Socrates. In the course of the

writing, Johnson highlighted a number of his principles, most noticeably, that of “ the separation of the body and soul, Socrates’ devotion to escape law, even if it meant danger to his own safety, the immorality of revenge, the need to educate women and the corrosive desire to possess things” (Kirkus Reviews, 2011). Johnson shows how Socrates dearly loved the state and enjoyed walking around its streets in the hope of meeting common people with whom he would have lengthy discussions on those subjects he enjoyed discussing.

### **Works Cited**

Gray, V, (2012), The Cambridge Companion to Socrates, Journal, Cambridge University Press, The Classic Review, Volume 62(1), ISSN 0009840X, p. 64-66

Jowett, B, (2012), Plato: The Republic, Retrieved February 18, 2014, from <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/p/plato/p71r>

Kirkus Reviews, (2011), Socrates: A Man for Our Times, Kirkus Media LLC, Volume LXXIX(14), ISSN 19487428