

Healthy unhealthy soul essay examples

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



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Introduction

Socrates and his student Plato are distinguished philosophers of all times. Their philosophical studies have immeasurably contributed to the today's philosophical works such as justice, ethics and knowledge. The two philosophers have shown great similarities in almost all their pursuits. They both hold tightly to the value that moral values are of utmost priority in any civilized society. They both cling to the old saying that " virtue is its own reward." Also they both have a common propelling force in this area of study. Their idea behind this subject matter is an interesting concept that " virtue is the health of the soul."

According to Socrates and Plato, soul is that part of us that is enhanced by just actions and debilitated by unjust actions. " Why Virtue?" Thomas White, *Discovering Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991)] pg 5. They also believed that soul's health is determined by what we do. Unjust actions harm more the one who does them than the one it is aimed at.

Plato's and Socrates' study's on virtues, vice and the soul has contributed a great deal in the development of philosophical ethics. This gives an in-depth understanding on the controversial question of right and wrong from a rational point of view. That is by examining the outcome of an action or by examining the action itself. For ages, the question of morality and ethics in the general society has been based on religious teachings. This contradicted with many and diverse opinions held by the many people in any organized society.

In his early work the republic, Socrates clearly illustrates why we should be virtuous in all our actions so as to strive to do the right thing. In this work he also covered a great deal of ethics, knowledge, justice, nature of reality and the ideal society. On this study, Socrates emphasizes on how we ought to live in a civilized society. He clearly criticizes the idea of living right for our self interests. He considers it foolishness to do what's right with an aim of getting any tangible rewards. Ethical norms should come willingly from within us. This is because it is unhidden that many people in the society use dishonest and selfish means to get what they want and yet many of them go uncaught or unpunished. This doesn't mean we should emulate them in any whatsoever. " Why be ethical?" (Stone 179)

According to Socrates, being virtuous calls for self sacrifice. In our society, it is normal to see unethical person being crowned with virtues of goodness as a result of force, power and wealth he has kept for himself. A highly ethical person as noble and noble as he may be will be seen crowned with reputations for injustice. This calls for any person who wants to be virtuous,

it must be as a result of the moral virtue itself and not as a result of good reputation associated with being upright.

Plato: virtue as the health of the soul

According to Plato, moral virtue is to the soul the same way health is to the body. The main questions which Plato asks are; how will a healthy soul be? And is there a difference between unhealthy and healthy souls?

Healthy souls, healthy bodies

In order to answer the above questions we must first understand the difference between unhealthy and healthy bodies. According to Plato, a healthy body is one that is in good shape and free from illness. When individuals are healthy they barely experience any physical distress and eumphoria, they only feel contented and calm. And as a result of been healthy, the body can perform any task within its capability at ease. On the other hand when we are sick, our body is too weak to perform any task that it usually does.

Unhealthy individuals show signs of weakness and discomfort, which if not solved can worsen the health condition. What Plato is trying to analyze in the above paragraph is that, as long as people stay healthy they can choose what they want to do without any hindrance. But at the same time ill health can limit/hinder what an individual can do. Being healthy is important to people since it enables them to have control of their lives and freedom. Good health enables people to attain what they want in life and it makes our lives happier and inherently enjoyable.

Plato uses the idea of a healthy body to explain how it is important for an

individual to have a healthy soul as well. The benefits of having a healthy soul are enormous. When the soul is free from any disease, the mind will also be clear and an individual will be able to see things as they are supposed to be seen (Englewood 60). The virtue about the health of the soul is a critical philosophical element which should be adopted by all people.

When all the souls of our societies are healthy, then people in our society will be able to make sound decisions in their life without any internal or external influence. People will be able to do what is morally and ethically good to their lives and the society as well. They will be able to differentiate what is good and what is wrong. They will also understand the fruits of doing good things are sweet while the fruits of doing wrong things are bitter and painful. The views of people regarding the world will not be blinded by self interest and greed. Even insecurities, fears, overpowering desires and irrational anxieties will not stand in way of clear minded people who know what they want to attain in life.

Individual with healthy souls are associated with the good virtues because they use their knowledge wisely to bring positive changes in the society and their moral vision cannot be interfered with. People with healthy mind have control and freedom over their lives and the decisions they make are independent. Healthy souls give people the strength of will whereby individuals are in a position to decide what to do and they have the capacity of doing the right things.

In addition healthy souls, grants people freedom which enables them to live according to their own moral insights. “ Once you decide what the right thing to do is, you can do it. You have the power to live according to your sense of

right and wrong” (Stone 163). For instance, if a person is in a dilemma on whether to cheat in a relationship or not, the first step to take is think whether the act you are about to do is ethically or not, and then analyze whether the act is of personal interest or of the interest of all parties involved. After answering the above questions a person with a healthy soul will abandon his cheating motives since they are unethical and of selfish interest.

Plato’s Idea of the Healthy Soul: Balance and Control

Just like the body, the soul is made up of three important parts; the spirited, the intellectual and the physical part. All the above parts of the soul and the body are properly balanced and perform important functions. These parts influence the way we make our decisions, “ As we make decisions about how to live, our minds give due regard to our emotional and physical needs, and each of the three parts performs its proper role” (Englewood 63). Plato emphasize that the mind is in charge when we make decision while the soul follows the decision that has already been made by the mind.

But in unhealthy souls the three parts do not balance causing a conflict of interest resulting to poor decision making. This is the main reason why people with unhealthy souls do weird things like raping. Rape occur when the spiritual and emotional part are unable to balance the poor decision that has already been made by the mind. Plato advices people to obtain a healthy soul that will give them self-control, freedom and clear mind. Plato states that “ the healthy soul possesses the classic four cardinal virtues of antiquity: wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice” (Englewood 64). All this virtues helps an individual to overcome fear and to use knowledge to tackle

problems by thinking critically. Hence, the rewards of healthy souls are good unlike the rewards of unhealthy souls.

Effects of lack of moral virtues according to Socrates

Why are moral virtues important to human beings? How would life be if ethical issues are not formulated by various organizations that exist in human society? These are important questions that we need to question our selves before looking at the various rewards that accompany those who have unhealthy soul hence being unethical. Socrates is actually regarded as the philosopher who invented this important concept that is, ethics which guide human beings in their relation with each other as no one exists alone. Unlike other philosophers who concentrated on natural philosophy, Socrates concentrated on issues related to human life as he made people ask themselves about life and rights and wrongs. This is evident in the words of Roman Philosopher Cicero as quoted, " Socrates was the first one to call philosophy down from the heavens and put it into the cities with people and made it ask questions about life and about right and wrong"(Stone 166). He believed that he had a call from Apollo the god to go round telling people to live a moral life.

In his ethical beliefs he argues that for a human being to be happy he or she needs to live a moral life. Therefore we can argue from his belief that unhealthy soul brings unhappiness to a human being. He says that poverty, illness, injustice together with other misfortunes that make us unhappy can be overcome by moral virtue that guarantees our happiness. Hence it is evident that unethical acts are sources of our unhappiness. Religious teachers pass a message that is similar to that of Socrates of being ethical

and doing to others what we would like to be done to us.

Socrates in his teachings argues that moral virtue is our greatest protection.

Our virtues according to him are important as they make it impossible for anyone to harm us although someone may kill us. So we can see that the reward of lack of moral virtue makes someone to lack protection against harms that comes his way. For instance, those who commit vices such as rape, murder among others face the greatest risk of being hurt unlike those who are morally upright.

In his teachings, it is evident that whoever does a vice to the other is hurt by that vice him-self. This is evident in the book ' Why Do The Right Thing' on page 10 as he says, " Wrongdoing is in every way harmful and shameful to the wrongdoer." It's so harmful that even if somebody else hurts us first, we should never do wrong in return, nor injure any man, whatever injury we have suffered at his hands" Therefore, part of who we are is improved by actions that are just and destroyed by those actions that are unjust.

Being unethical in our actions to get something that we want hurts us more than we hurt those who we wrong even if we escape unpunished. This is what Socrates believed and when we look at it we see the sense in it. For example, when a person harms the other one the anger caused by him to that other person makes him not to progress in any way

When we lack moral virtues according to Socrates we face the risk of being changed by the vices that result from lack of these values. For instance, a lie is a vice that starts when a person is still young (Stone 166). Given that this person will not transform, when he or she becomes mature he or she will be a completely different person.

In conclusion, from the above illustrations, we should all ought to be virtuous. Unethical person lacks self-control, personal freedom and the intellectual capacity to lead a life worth living. Moral values help to develop a balance between our intellectual and emotional desires. Lack of the above is seen in an unhealthy soul. This makes a person to be controlled with physical and emotional desires and thus they cannot base their decisions on right or wrong. Such people are not concerned with morality of their actions. It is evident that the healthier, happier and stronger people in the society are those who are ethical.

Work cited

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