

Free essay on utopia in philosophy and literature

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Many scientists, philosophers, and writers dreamed about an absolutely perfect life. Nowadays not everyone knows the definition of the word "utopia", and even more so, not everyone will be able to talk about the basics of this philosophy.

The word "utopia" from Greek means "a place that does not exist." Means the perfect place and the perfect society in which there are no disadvantages.

As soon as people began to realize themselves and their existence, they began to think of an ideal society and world without drawbacks. This philosophical movement has started with works of ancient Greek philosophers. The most famous work of Plato called «The Republic», among other things, also narrated about the ideal state. According to Plato's ideal state was to be created in the likeness of Sparta, but without corruption and the threat of rebellion. (Wells)

His views on the origin of society and the state, Plato justifies by the fact that single person is not able to meet all his needs for food, shelter, clothing, etc. In consideration of the problems of society and the state, he relied on his favorite theory of ideas and ideals. "Ideal state" is a community of farmers, artisans, producing everything needed for sustaining life of citizens, soldiers guarding the safety and philosophers governors that implement wise and fair administration of the state. This "ideal state" Plato opposed to ancient democracy, that allows people to participate in political life, in public administration. According to Plato, the state is designed to be controlled only the aristocracy as the best and wisest citizens. Farmers and artisans, according to Plato, should conscientiously carry out their work, and they do not belong to the government. The State must protect law enforcement

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officers forming the power structure, and the guards should not have personal property, and are obliged to live in isolation from the other citizens . " Ideal state", according to Plato, should fully protect religion, educate citizens in piety, to fight against all kinds of wicked. The same purposes should pursue the entire system of education.

Plato allocated:

- a) " ideal state" (or approaching to ideal) - the aristocracy, including the aristocratic republic and aristocratic monarchy;
- b) top-down hierarchy of state forms, which are timocracy oligarchy, democracy and tyranny.

According to Plato, tyranny is the worst form of government, and that democracy was for him the object of sharp criticism. The worst form of government - the result of " spoiling" the ideal state. Timocracy (also the worst) - is a state of honor and the census: it is closer to the ideal, but worse, for example, than an aristocratic monarchy.

Most perfect state, according to Plato, has the four main valors: 1) wisdom 2) the courage 3) restraining measure 4) justice.

The term " wisdom" according to Plato can be understood not as technical knowledge or skills, but higher knowledge, or the ability to give good advice when it comes to the state as a whole. Such knowledge is " protective" and having this knowledge rulers of the state are " perfect guards." " Wisdom" - valor inherent to small amount of philosophers - and it's less a specialty for the management of the state than the contemplation of place beyond the heavens eternal and perfect " ideas" - valor, fundamentally moral.

The second major step in the study was the utopia of the Renaissance. It was then that Thomas Moore introduced the concept of " utopia", calling his book on the ideal state in this way. Works of Thomas Moore became popular.

People from 15-16 centuries were about to think of an ideal society. And all because, the Renaissance led to the technical and cultural breakthrough, but at the same time people began to lose their morals. For example, in Renaissance Florence was legalized prostitution.

All contents of Thomas More " Utopia" somehow basically refers to two themes: author's critique of contemporary European society and description of the ideal state on the island of Utopia. This basically corresponds to the division of composition in two books.

Utopia is a republic governed by elected officials who are called « fathers» by the citizens. The whole life in this country is regulated by the state. There is no private property and money. The basis of the economy is a labor conscription. And above all, for everyone (or almost everyone) it is required to work for a certain period in agriculture:

Those citizens who reached a certain age are sent to work in the village, and after they have worked there for 2 years, they are allowed to live in cities. In addition, everyone has to learn any craft, in which he will be engaged. Work takes place under the supervision of officials.

The uniform distribution of the population is also regulated by the state through mass migration.

Narrator sympathetically emphasizes uniformity, standardization thus produced following lifestyle:

Everybody on the island had to wear the same cloths that had to be

unchanging and constant at all times: “ how can anyone be silly enough to think himself better than other people, because his clothes are made of finer woolen thread than theirs. After all, those fine clothes were once worn by a sheep, and they never turned it into anything better than a sheep.” (More)

Although all the places on the island were made basically similar one to another so citizens could not escape the confines of their lives: « There are 54 cities on the island, all spacious and magnificent, identical in language, customs, constitution and laws. So far as the location permits, all of them are built on the same plan and have the same appearance » (More)

The cities are so alike that if you have seen one of them you will certainly recognize other cities on the island.

In Utopia citizens are engaged in individual monogamous marriage, but the story does not say whether it is an initiative of the bride and groom to get married or it is decided by parents or officials. The state strictly enforces chastity before marriage and mutual fidelity of the spouses. The guilty are punished by being sold into slavery.

In modern literature, utopia is considered among the genres of science fiction. In utopias a kind of « second reality» is constructed which is opposed to the surrounding reality and contains sharp criticism of the present. The heyday of utopian literature coincides with cultural crisis and radical changes in society. The roots of utopian literature lay in archaic myths about the visit of the underworld and the genre of folk tales. In the process of historical development of the literature a number of sustainable plot moves to ensure the movement of the hero from ordinary world into a fantastic reality of utopia have been developed: dreams, visions, traveling to unknown distant lands or on other planets.(Ludlow)

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Nowadays people think of utopia as a free society. Where everyone would find something for himself according to his ability and where there would be no crime, etc. For the majority the utopia is perceived as a combination of freedom, wealth and self-expression.

Incarnation of Utopia in life is possible, but only within certain limits , by its external " organizational " design : designing a certain social order , a certain way of regulating the life of the individual and the communication state of the education system . However, playing a direct connection of external and internal , postulated in Utopia , in practice does not occur ; " Incarnation " of utopia in life actually becomes its negation.

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