

# The republic of plato book vii: a close analysis assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Then a prisoner is freed from the bonds and is forced to look at the fire and the statues that were used to cast the shadows on the walls. He is overwhelmed by the revelations and learns that the shadows were not the reality. Socrates says in Dodd, " Don't you suppose he'd be at a loss and believe that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown? " It is painful for him to learn and recalibrate his world. He wants to cling to the stability and simple nature of what he knew before, but he now understands the statues and fire as the new reality.

This would equate to the transition from childhood to adulthood, or from a basic laborer to a supervisory role of responsibility. Finally he is dragged out of the cave into the world. The sun is so brilliant he cannot look at it or anything on the surface of the world. He does not want to be dragged (forced to learn) and cannot comprehend everything he is being exposed to. He is initially overwhelmed by the intensity but eventually grows accustomed to the light and sees the real things - people, trees, sun, stars, etc.

He is enlightened (educated) and understands now that the statues were just representative of these real things, as the shadows were representative of the statues. His knowledge and understanding increases with each level he is raised up (from the cave, to the cave, to the surface). He can now even understand how these real things interact and draw conclusions from his observations; that the sun causes the seasons and years. He has been educated and has wisdom. Once he is educated, wise, and able to " divine what is going to come" he is honored and holds power.

He would not want to return to the cave. If he did return to their level he would not be understood or believed by the prisoners. They could not relate at all to what he knows and has seen. They think him crazy and be glad they were not pulled up out of the cave. Socrates then discusses the importance of the right kind of education and in 51 e says, “ but according to the way it is turned, it becomes useful and helpful, or, again, useless and harmful. ” Socrates is emphasizing the learning of good things, not just the learning (seeing).

So if a man is “ trimmed” from childhood of the “ refinements naturally attached to the soul and turn its vision downward” and is ‘ turned towards the true things”, he could become an adequate steward of a city. The man would think himself blessed and want to stay in this enlightened world. Glaucoma states that the educated man should be allowed to stay on the surface. Socrates rebuts saying that the man is obligated to return to the prisoners to care for and guard them. “... It’s not the concern of the law that any one class in the city to fare exceptionally well, but... O bring this about in the city as a whole, harmonize the citizens by persuasion and compulsion, making them share with one another the benefit that each is able to bring to the commonwealth. And it produces such men in the city not in order to let them turn whichever way each wants, but in order hat it may use them in binding the city together. ” (AAA) These stages are stages of life and development that few complete to the highest level to become the philosophers or guardians. And those that reach the highest level do so through the efforts of the society to educate them.

They, therefore, have an obligation to give back to the society. Socrates says that they would want to serve because they are wise enough to know that the city would suffer if someone less capable was placed in the role. Socrates substantiates this point in Bibb, " But the truth is surely this: that city in which those who are going to rule are least eager to rule is necessarily governed in the way that is best and freest from faction, while the one that gets the opposite kind of rulers is governed in the opposite way. The reluctant ruler is the best for the city because he is not there for his own interests, but to serve the people through obligation and gratitude. " If beggars, men hungering for want of private goods, go into public affairs supposing that in them they must seize the goods... Ruling becomes a thing fought over... Destroys these men ... And the rest of the city as well. " (521 a) Throughout history, and in present political environments of the world, the leaders - or guardians - have not always been raised up to rule with an attitude of gratitude or obligation to ensure the harmony of the commonwealth.