

Socrates' concepts in philosophy

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Socrates Answer to Question Socrates succeeded in showing the Sophists about the lack of validity of their theories of relativism and moral realism. In Book I of the Republic, after Thrasymachus says, “ I proclaim that justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger,” which confirms his stance on moral realism, Socrates then proceeds with his dialectic with Thrasymachus by making the latter finally agree that “ the arts are the superiors and rulers of their own subjects” (Plato, Republic I). Therefore, Socrates’ point is that it is not the person and his might that is in question but the values that he has. If, for example, one talks about justice, then it has to be defined according to its own nature and not according to the nature of the person who upholds it, for justice is the ruler of the person.

Similarly, in Gorgias, Socrates asks Polus “ if any one, whether he be a tyrant or a rhetorician, kills another...he may be said to do what seems best to him?” and to which the latter answers affirmatively (Plato, Gorgias). The dialectic then develops into the part where Socrates places himself in the position of a criminal but this time Polus refuses and claims that it is not good because there will be punishment. Moreover, when asked by Socrates what principle upon which his definitions of evil and good lie, Polus simply answers, “ I would rather, Socrates, that you should answer as well as ask that question (Plato, Gorgias). Thus, Socrates finally exposes the weakness of the arguments of the Sophists, both moral realism and relativism.

Answer to Question #2:

In Phaedo, Socrates successfully emphasized that the psyche is “ the essence of happiness” and a “ combination of what we think of as mind and soul,” which means that the psyche is the seat of both intellectual and moral personhood (“ Socrates”). In Phaedo, Socrates tells Simmias that the

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philosopher “ would like, as far as he can, to be quit of the body and turn to the soul” and that “ death” is the “ very separation and release of the soul from the body” (Plato, Phaedo). The way Socrates defended the soul and its immortality to Cebes and Simmias in Phaedo somehow convinced them of the validity of the existence of the psyche.

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Works Cited

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