



SAMPLE B

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: PHILOSOPHY
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: IS SOCRATES' IDEA OF EQUALITY RELEVANT
TODAY?

Candidate's declaration

If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

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A: 44734

B:

Supervisor's report

The supervisor must complete the report below and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

The supervisor has added no comments.
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This is NOT enough

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

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I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

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International Baccalaureate Program

Extended Essay

Is Socrates' Idea of Equality Relevant Today?

(Philosophy)

Number of words: 3827



October 2008

ABSTRACT

In this essay, I investigated Socrates' idea of equality. I looked at the Socratic dialogues by Plato because Socrates' beliefs are most directly revealed through these dialogues. I focused on The Republic as a source for Socrates' conception of equality. I also used sources contextualizing his ideas and explaining his allusions to religion and the Procession to Eleusis. After looking at the idea of equality in the moral philosophy of Socrates, I analysed its relevance today to answer my research question: Is Socrates' idea of equality relevant today? I concluded that although aspects of his idea of equality continue to be relevant today, inequality is inherent in his beliefs about equality, which would end up being detrimental today.

Word Count: 121

does not contain
references to the
irrelevant material at
the end (human rights,
religion etc).

TOPIC IDENTIFIED - SCOPE AND
UNKNOWN SOMEHOW PRESENT BUT
NOT CLEARLY STATED.

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SOME INFORMATION

IS PROVIDED.



evidence for this radical view of Ct Athens?

Introduction

In 399 B.C., Socrates was put on trial for charges of impiety and corruption of the youth. (Great Dialogues of Plato 423) In his defense, Socrates claimed that his wisdom lay in his recognition of his ignorance. (429) He challenged many of the values and beliefs in Classical Athens and believed it was his duty to reveal the ignorance of those who were perceived as wise. This attitude created many enemies of Socrates. In a culture dominated by Homeric values, Socrates' beliefs were radical and his ideas on equality differed greatly from the conventional views on equality in Classical Athens. The meaning and significance of the concept of equality for Socrates is most directly revealed in the Socratic dialogues written by Plato. Socrates' conception of equality is revealed through his discussions on women, the natures and capabilities of the citizens, the Guardians, war, and religion. Although his ideas on equality were radical for his time, his ideas may not continue to be radical today. In this essay, I will examine the idea of equality in the moral philosophy of Socrates and I will analyze its relevance to modern society. *RQ lacks focus*



Women

Socrates' views on the equality of women were radical for his time. In Classical Athens, "even freeborn native females who could satisfy the two conditions of parentage and age were not citizens in the full sense." (City of Sokrates 22) Women could not participate in jury service, vote, address the Assembly, or take part in any of the other political rights given to male citizens. The only women who worked did so out of economic necessity. Women were permitted to attend certain festivals, but were

i.e. they did not have the same rights as men.

excluded from others. They could attend funerals of close relatives and they could do their personal shopping, but rarely left their homes without an excuse. Women generally stayed at home and managed the household. (The Republic of Plato 23) "The main areas of achievement open to a respectable Athenian girl were three- marriage, management of her husband's oikos, and motherhood." (25) Women received little, if any, education. They were considered to have a "voracious sexual appetite" (26) and thus needed to be secluded. However, Socrates opposed the subordination of women.

?

reference to what?



Women are to take their full share with men in education, in the care of children, and in the guardianship of the other citizens; whether they stay at home or go out to war, they will be like watch-dogs which take their part either in guarding the fold or in hunting and share in every task so far as their strength allows. Such conduct will not be unwomanly, but all for the best and in accordance with the natural partnership of the sexes. (168)

Socrates believed that women should take part in the same tasks as men. (149) In order for women to do this, they must be raised with the same opportunities as men and must have equal encouragement and education. In addition to receiving equal training for mind and body, they must also have equal training in the art of war. Socrates acknowledged how strange this might seem, especially when women, young and old, would exercise naked next to men. However, he responded to this hypothetical objection by pointing out that it had not been long since the Greeks found it absurd and shameful for men to be naked in public. He mentioned that when gymnastic exercises were done naked at first, they were ridiculed, but when people realized the advantages of exercising naked, exercising naked was no longer viewed as ludicrous, but became normal. Socrates



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thought that it was "idle... to think anything ludicrous but what is base." Thus, ridiculing the idea of breaking certain customs by giving women the same upbringing as men is a waste of time.

After coming to these conclusions, Socrates examined the nature of women, and whether women are fit to participate in the same activities as men. Socrates believed that the nature of women is very different from the nature of men, and that people of different natures should have different occupations. (151) However, he believed that the difference in nature should be relevant to the occupation if different people are to be directed into different occupations. For example, if the only difference in nature between a specific man and a specific woman is that the woman gives birth, this difference in nature is not relevant to occupations in civic life. Although Socrates viewed women as the weaker gender, he believed that natural talent was found in both men and women, so both men and women should be able to participate in all occupations. (153) Both men and women who have a natural talent for something have like natures, and should therefore share in the same occupations. Socrates opposed separate education for men and women. He believed that if men and women are to share the same occupations, they must be educated together. Although Socrates did not view men and women as physically equal or equal in terms of skill, he believed that they should be raised the same and given the same opportunities. *anachronistic concept*

✓
distribution of talent is the key point

Socrates' beliefs on the equality of men and women were radical for his time and opposed Homeric values and traditional Greek culture. However, his beliefs on gender equality are not radical today. Although throughout the world, men and women are still not given the same opportunities, in many countries women legally have the same rights

largely irrelevant by this time

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as men and are equally eligible for the same opportunities. Also, Socrates did not believe that men and women are equal. He only believed that they should be given the same opportunities. While most people would agree that men and women are not physically equal, many would disagree with Socrates' beliefs that women and men are not only physically unequal, but unequal in terms of skill as well. Although Socrates argued for giving men and women the same opportunities, it is impossible to give them the same opportunities if it is accepted in society that men and women are unequal in terms of skill. Therefore, in a world where women are still struggling for equal rights, Socrates' belief that women and men should be given the same opportunities as men continues to be relevant today. However, his belief that men and women are not equal in terms of skill or potential could be detrimental to women striving for equal opportunities today and seems to make it impossible for men and women to have equal opportunities if society adopted this attitude.



The Natures and Capabilities of the Citizens

Socrates' views on the natures and capabilities of the citizens also reveal his ideas on equality. Socrates believed that "no two people are born exactly alike" (56) and "there are innate differences which fit them for different occupations." He believed that people should specialize and learn one trade, rather than many. (57) Because people are born with different natures, they should pursue different occupations. Socrates did not believe that everyone is equally capable of pursuing the same occupations. "...More things will be produced and the work be more easily and better done, when every man is set free from all other occupations to do, at the right time, the one thing for which he is naturally



Πραγματικώς ἡ ἐκπαίδευσις
is a fundamentally ~~anti-egalitarian~~
concept

fitted." (57) Everyone must pursue the occupation that his/her nature is suited for, and must not engage in any other occupations.

Socrates believed that a group of people called the Guardians should be the rulers.

(103) "And as among farmers the best are those with a natural turn for farming, so, if we want the best among our Guardians, we must take those naturally fitted to watch over a commonwealth." (103) Just as some people's natures cause them to be better farmers than others, some people's natures better suit them to be Guardians. Socrates proposed telling all citizens a myth to ensure that people of the right nature would rule. (106) ✓

According to this myth, everyone was molded inside the earth, and after the earth finished, they were sent above ground. Thus, the land everyone lives on is their "mother and nurse." Since everyone has the same mother, all citizens are brothers and sisters.

This myth would inspire loyalty not only to the land they live on, but also to all citizens, regardless of their social status, because all citizens are "brothers born of the same soil."

Everyone would have equal status in terms of their ancestry. However, the myth would also state that gold was mixed into the souls of those most fit to rule, silver was mixed into the souls of those fit to be warriors, and iron and brass were mixed into the souls of those fit to be farmers and craftsmen. The type of metal mixed into each person's soul would correspond to his/her nature. Although Socrates believed that children generally would have the same nature as their parents, "sometimes a golden parent may have a silver child or a silver parent a golden one, and so on with all the other combinations."

(107) Because children do not necessarily have the same nature as their parents, there would be no hereditary class system. Although Socrates supported a limited class system, this class system would be based on the capabilities a person is born with, rather

but this is still anti-egalitarian

page numbers
in
Campbell's
translation

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than the social status or power of the person's family, and would not create differences in wealth.

If a child of [guardians] is born with an alloy of iron or brass, they must, without the smallest pity, assign him the station proper to his nature and thrust him out among the craftsmen or the farmers.

The occupation that an individual must pursue strictly depends on that individual's nature. The occupation of the parents would have no influence on the occupation of that individual. In the myth Socrates proposed, there would be a "prophecy that ruin will come upon the state when it passes into the keeping of a man of iron and brass." For the good of the commonwealth, a person with a nature unfit for the position of Guardian must not become a Guardian.

Women Guardian?

Socrates' belief that everyone is hereditarily equal continues to be relevant today.

In a world where the parents' income is the best indicator of their child's future income, (Hurst) hereditary status and wealth continues to be a relevant issue today. However, Socrates' explanation of the natures and capabilities of humans may be an over simplification. Is it really fair to claim that every human is born with a specific nature, with the potential to pursue a specific occupation better than the others? For example, a certain person may be very talented at writing and painting. Should we tell that person that he/she can only pursue one of these occupations, and not the other? Is it fair to tell this person that pursuing both is wasting time and potential? Perhaps by pursuing both occupations, the person can become better in both in a way that he/she cannot by only pursuing one. This person may become a better painter through being intellectually challenged as a writer. Also, it is impossible to know what career would be best suited

Referenced
paraphrasing
explained

totalitarianism
of the Republic

S. was talking of states / professions not careers as such.

for each individual. Although it could have been easier when Socrates was alive because there were fewer professions, today's plethora of careers makes it impossible for us to tell what career a child would best excel in. In addition, Socrates' belief that each individual is born with a specific nature would create inequality in modern society because the path each individual would follow would be set from the time he/she was born. People deemed to have different natures would be given very different opportunities in life.

The Guardians

Socrates' beliefs on how to prevent corruption among the Guardians further reveal his ideas on equality. He believed that the Guardians must not "possess any private property beyond the barest necessities. Next, no one is to have any dwelling or store-house that is not open for all to enter at will." (The Republic of Plato 108) The Guardians must receive just enough food to sustain themselves, and nothing more. They must be the only citizens who are not be permitted to possess or handle money or use or wear anything made of gold or silver.

This manner of life will be their salvation and make them the saviors of the commonwealth. If ever they should come to possess land of their own and houses and money, they will give up their guardianship for the management of their farms and households and become tyrants at enmity with their fellow citizens instead of allies. (109)

Socrates believed that the Guardians should rule in the interest of the community, rather than in the interest of themselves or an elite group. By forbidding the Guardians to own any private property or any money, the Guardians cannot rule in the interest of amassing

✓ / an unusual kind of equality

wealth. This solution would promote equality by encouraging the Guardians to rule in the interest of all citizens rather than a select group. Also, the Guardians would own even less than the farmers and craftsmen, so there would be greater equality in terms of possessions. "...our aim in founding the commonwealth was not to make any one class specially happy, but to secure the greatest possible happiness for the community as a whole." (110) Due to the lack of luxury, the life of the Guardians may not seem appealing. However, the Guardians must sacrifice luxury for the good of the entire community.

Socrates also believed that abolishing the family among the Guardians would encourage the Guardians to rule in the best interest of all citizens.

...of these Guardians, no one man and one woman are to set up house together privately: wives are to be held in common by all; so too are the children, and no parent is to know his own child, nor any child his parent.

(156)

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The parents must not know which child is theirs. All of the Guardians' children must be raised to view each other as brothers and sister and to view everyone a generation older than them as their parents. This would prevent the Guardians from acting in the interest of their family instead of in the interest of all citizens. Every Guardian would view his/herself as equally related to every other Guardian. Also, every Guardian would be equal in terms of ancestry because no Guardians would know who their actual parents were. All members of a generation of Guardians would have the same set of parents, so heredity would play no role in status or power among the Guardians. All Guardians would be hereditarily equal.

a and the 'myths'

perhaps this page needs more comment & analysis

✓

Socrates also asserted that unity is created among a community when all citizens share the same “pleasures and pains.” (163) This unity is broken when these feelings are not universal among all citizens.

And this disunion comes about when the words ‘mine’ and ‘not mine,’ ‘another’s’ and ‘not another’s’ are not applied to the same things throughout the community. The best ordered state will be the one in which the largest number of persons use these terms in the same sense, and which accordingly most nearly resembles a single person.

Therefore, the Guardians must not be allowed to own anything beyond the basic necessities, as private property would cause disunity. Without private property or family loyalties, the Guardians would be much more likely to rule in the interest of all citizens. (166) The Guardians would receive their sustenance from the other citizens, so their loyalty would lie in what is best for the entire community. (164) Without private property, there would be much less disunity. Also, the elimination of private property would solve issues of equality, such as “the poor man’s flattery of the rich, and all the embarrassments and vexations of rearing a family and earning just enough to maintain a household.” (167) Every citizen would be equally able to “have every need of life supplied for them and their children.” Every citizen would be honored and would receive a “worthy burial.” There would be no poor citizens who would have to sacrifice their honor to sustain themselves. The Guardians would mould the “commonwealth with a view to the greatest happiness, not of one section of it, but of the whole.” Even though the Guardians would receive only the basic necessities, the honor they would receive

again, to such
~~extent~~
exquisite, not enough
convent

from working for the greatest happiness would be greater than "that of any Olympic victor."

However, this plan for government may be too idealistic. Although Socrates' ideas for government promote equality and discourage corruption through the abolition of private property and family, it may be unrealistic to assume that people would live without having any possessions of their own. Also, Socrates supported a class structure, which today would probably end up creating inequality between the classes, where the different classes would receive different services. Furthermore, someone would have to be in charge of distributing goods, which would be a position that could be easily corrupted.

*This is a key point
War
Socrates' concept of equality is limited by modern rights*

In the case of war between Greek states, Socrates believed the victorious state should not sell Greeks of the losing state into slavery. (171) He also believed that the corpses should be respected and should not be pillaged. The inhabitants of the losing state should be allowed to bury their corpses. Only the weapons of the corpses should be allowed to be taken. Socrates alleged that it is unnecessary to destroy the land and houses of innocent people, which only creates bitterness towards the conqueror and more enemies than there were originally. (172) The inhabitants of the state being attacked are not enemies. The only enemies are those who start and continue the quarrel. (174) Socrates opposed war, except in self-defense. He believed that Greeks should not engage in war with other Greeks and should only oppose the enemy until the enemy stops its destructive behavior. Socrates' beliefs on war between Greek states would encourage

irrelevant to main thesis

much more humane actions toward all Greeks. However, these beliefs did not extend to non-Greeks. Socrates did not believe that Greeks and non-Greeks were equal. Today, this attitude is dangerous and creates inequality between different groups.

Religion

What do you mean by this

Socrates' beliefs on religion challenged Homeric religion and supported equality. Homeric values were widely accepted and permeated the culture of Classical Athens.

(Preface to Plato 119) There is evidence of people in Classical Greece memorizing the entire works of Homer, which combined are over 25,000 lines of poetry. School boys were expected to memorize Homeric poems, and there was even a law in Athens that the works of Homer must be recited at every festival of the Panathenaea. The works of Homer formed the foundation for a cultural tradition accepted as the morality and religion of ancient Greece. (135) An important Homeric value was the superiority of the family and clan over other ethnic groups. Loyalty to Greece was central, and men were viewed as superior to women because men were warriors conquering other groups.

Women were merely there to support the men, who had to be prepared for an imminent war or battle. Revenge was significant because enemies needed to know that they would face consequences for their actions. *and other reasons*

However, Socrates went through the initiation in the procession to Eleusis, which was a tradition predating Homer and contains values opposed to Homeric values. (Greek Religion 285-90) The values associated with the traditions at Eleusis respected the humanity of all ethnic groups, all ages, and both men and women. The initiation at Eleusis was about learning how to be human. People came from all over the ancient

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*this is mostly speculation.
v. little is known abt
the E. Mysteries*

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world to take part in the initiation. Anyone was allowed to participate, except murderers and those who had cast others into slavery. Several ancient authors, including Aristotle and Seneca, testified to the power and importance of the initiation. (Eleusis 45) Seneca tells us about the power and value of the initiation: "There are holy things that are not communicated all at once: Eleusis always keeps something back to show those who come again." (Quaestiones naturales VII 30 6)

Thesis I doubt

Human equality was the lesson taught at Eleusis. Socrates thought that the Homeric religion and values were irrational and foolish. Several times in the Socratic dialogues, Socrates made fun of Homeric religion and values. Socrates opposed the education of Homeric poems to children. He felt that Homer made up stories about what is admirable, and that these stories were false and should not be repeated as if they are what the gods want done. Socrates questioned whether Homer knew anything about human conduct or religion. Homer was good at describing what he saw, but he was not in touch with reality. Socrates described Homer's works as "at the third remove from reality, nothing more than semblances, easy to produce with no knowledge of the truth." (The Republic of Plato 329) Socrates believed that people should only admire poetry that celebrates the gods and human beings, not poetry that celebrates values destructive to human equality, such as revenge and fighting.

|| news on art
in general
(poetry)

Conclusion

Socrates' views on equality contrasted with the traditional values and beliefs in Classical Athens. He believed that everyone is equal in terms of ancestry, and that family background should not impact the social standing of the citizens or the opportunities they receive. Socrates argued that every citizen should pursue a career based on his/her nature

again this is not relevant to main thesis 15

and capabilities, not based on social status, family background, or wealth. He even believed that the family should be abolished and wealth and possessions forbidden among the Guardians to encourage rule based on the interests of all of the citizens, rather than a small elite. The Guardians must act in the interests of the community as a whole.

Despite the strict gender roles in Classical Athens and the Homeric tradition, Socrates believed that equal opportunities and education based on each person's capabilities should be extended to females as well. His views on war emphasized the humanity of all Greeks (although his arguments did not necessarily apply to non-Greeks) and promoted equality through actions that would promote cooperation between all Greeks. Socrates' connection to the Procession at Eleusis as well as his dissent for Homeric religion and values also reveal his beliefs on equality. Socrates' idea of equality was not only radical for his time, but continues to be radical today. In a world where women are still fighting for equal opportunities, where many people struggle against their economic and family background to pursue careers that match their capabilities, and where many political leaders are corrupted by wealth and possessions, Socrates' conception of equality continues to be pertinent. However, although these aspects of Socrates' idea of equality continue to be relevant today, his idea of equality is too rigid and would be impossible to enforce. It is over simplified in that it assumes that there are a fixed number of human natures. Although Socrates encouraged equality in many ways, his belief that people are unequal and should only pursue one thing in life would increase inequality today.

Mere summary of ~~possibility~~ previous statements

v. few modern egalitarians would be happy with living in S's ideal state!

SOME CONCLUSION ATTEMPTED

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NICE IDEA EXPRESSED AS RP. HOWEVER ONLY
A VERY PARTIAL RESUMPTION AS ARGUMENT.
Presentation of ideas in a

naïve way.

Serious lack of ~~ref~~ correct
referencing which affects the
whole research.

Unclear use of many texts.

PRESENTATION OF THEM. SERIOUS LACK OF
CORRECT REFERENCING WHICH AFFECTS THE whole
ESSAY. UNCLEAR USE OF SOURCE TEXTS,
MORE EXPOSITION THAN ANALYSIS,

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number	0	0	
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Assessment criteria		Achievement level		
		First examiner	maximum	Second examiner
A	research question	2	2	2
B	introduction	2	2	2
C	investigation	2	4	2
D	knowledge and understanding	2	4	2
E	reasoned argument	3	4	3
F	analysis and evaluation	1	4	1
G	use of subject language	3	4	2
H	conclusion	0	2	1
I	formal presentation	2	4	2
J	abstract	1	2	1
K	holistic judgment	2	4	2

Total out of 36 20 ✓ 20 ✓

*A good idea which lost its way!
 Too much exposition of the content of the Republic, and not enough analysis of the Socratic conception of equality, such as it is.
 Most of the material at the end is irrelevant.
 No awareness that equality itself is not a simple concept.*

Name of first examiner: _____
 (CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of second examiner: _____
 (CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____