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Philosophy

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### Reading Question Week 3

#### Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" (Republic) - pp. 69-75

1. Why do you think the Form of the "Good" is considered by Plato to be the ultimate illuminating idea that helps understand truth and reality?

**Among Plato's ideas of illuminating one's understanding of reality is that the sun represented the ultimate idea of illumination because it enabled one to comprehend the reality around one while in prison. In order for us to make our way out of the cave, or to say the darkness, what we must have understanding is what opens up a path of truth that we could not have known in the beginning.**

2. Recount and explain Plato's Allegory of the Cave. How does it relate to knowledge? How does it relate to levels of reality?

**An Allegory of the Cave tells the metaphor of jailed prisoners being chained in a pit depth within a cave, set within a metaphor of prison. It is limited to the point that no one is able to see anything but forward in this cave. This is because they are only able to see forward. It appears as though there is a fire behind a wall. It seems as if there is a wall behind a fire. Statues are manipulated out of sight by people over that wall. Due to the fact that this is their only visual, the prisoners perceive these interactions to be the most authentic aspect of their lives. Since this perception relies only on what they see and perceive, this level is referred to as imagination. It is later revealed that a prisoner has been freed from their chains and he becomes forced to look at the fire and the figures themselves in front of it. As a result of this, the prisoner is able to realize how the two coexist and in reality, they are more real than what they had ever seen before. Having made contact with reality, this line becomes belief. Upon being dragged out of the cave and brought out into the outside world, the prisoner is introduced to a broader vision of the outside world as trees, flowers and the sun are introduced to them. All of these points come together to make up the final line of understanding of one's surroundings and circumstances as a whole. In a way, this reinforces the idea that the more we gain knowledge, the more we rise above those places of ignorance that we have settled into. Nevertheless, the aspects that we understand depend on the approach we take to understand them.**

3. Explain in your own words the levels of reality represented by Plato's divided line.

**It is shown by Plato that there are three levels of reality which can be divided into imagination, belief, and understanding. In the imagination, we create a perspective by combining the information we receive with aspects of our experience that the mind creates without having any context for the information. During the process of belief, we come into contact with aspects of our perception that contain a deeper context and a greater depth which make them all the more real and tangible. Ultimately, understanding occurs when we are able to recognize the connection between our imaginations and beliefs, then connecting them to the ultimate truth that is all around us, and understanding how they are all connected.**

**Aristotle, "Individual Substance" (Categories) – pp. 76-79**

1. In your own words and referencing the reading, explain the main point Aristotle makes in describing a primary, basic, "substance" as the fundamental basis of reality.

**It is important to note that according to Aristotle, substance is the foundation for all of the counterparts of reality that are a derivative of it. He states, "All the other things are either said of the primary substances as subjects or in them as subjects." He explains that the coexistence of our reality and the substances is what makes our complex systems possible. In other words, the coexistence of our reality and the substances is the basis for the complex systems that emerge from them.**

2. What does Aristotle mean when he says that a substance cannot be "said of" or "said in" a subject? Look up the concept of a "predicate" online. How might you rephrase Aristotle's point by saying a substance can never be a predicate?

**The difference between something which is said of and something which is said in is that the former is all-inclusive, essential to its subject, whereas the latter is dependent on said substance and cannot be seen as separate from it. In this sense, while the subject specifies what something is about, the predicate denotes what it is about, and the subject denotes the subject's property. Due to this, a substance cannot be a predicate since it is the precursor to everything that follows, so starting cannot lead to ending.**

3. Why do you think Aristotle picks out primary substance as the basic building block of reality, and not the parts, or atoms, or matter, or any other smaller thing that might make up a substance?

**As the fundamental blocks, Aristotle designates primary substances since without them, tangible things like sight, sound, and touch would not be possible. Whenever something is broken down, it is formed from small counterparts that make up its entirety.**

Aristotle, "Four Types of Explanation" (Physics) – pp. 413-415

1. List and explain in your own words the four main reasons (sometimes called "causes") for why a substance is what it is according to Aristotle.

**One of the aspects of an object that gives it substance is its material aspect, it is composed of the things that give it its form. A second thing to consider when looking at a product is its efficiency or the force or power that allows it to come into existence. A third aspect of the product is its formation or its overall being, and this involves how the product is perceived in its full capacity, and the fourth aspect is its reasoning for being, or why it exists in the first place.**

2. Take the example of a table. How would you explain why a table is what it is, in terms of the four main types of explanation according to Aristotle.

**Tables are what they are based on their material aspect, which is the fact that they are made from wood, their efficiency which is obtained as the builder pushes it, their formal reason, which is that it consists of a platform to place things on and legs to stand on, and their final reason, which is that it was used to dine and study on. and study on.**

3. What does Aristotle say about the fourth cause of things, and how it even exists in nature? How does nature show this cause? Do you agree or disagree that there is a true purposefulness in nature? Why?

**It should be noted that the fourth cause can be understood as the reasoning behind something being done, that is to say, it involves a relationship between man and nature and that this relates to a belief that nature works intelligently in order to carry out its functions for the world to function. My opinion is that nature is the greatest example of finality since it gives us the opportunity to see how our whole world serves as a support system for our own purpose as well as the purpose of the creatures around us.**