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Introduction to Philosophy

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Reading Question Week 3

Plato, “Allegory of the Cave” (Republic)- pp. 69-75

1. I believe Plato’s statement about ‘the good’ reflects the fact that we who know the knower is indeed a good thing and we will see even better because of who made sight and the good that comes with it. He explains that without light we are unable to see but with light, we are able to see even clearer. Therefore “the good” is the mental light that shines into our minds with truth.
2. Plato explains to us that prisoners trapped inside a cave may only see shadows and reflections on the cave wall; there is no other “hope or reality” but, a prisoner would see “truth” if they were able to escape and gradually emerge from the cave into a “higher” world. His theory about knowledge states that it is hard for a person to adjust to the truth. Whenever the truth is discovered not everyone will accept it or find it easy to accept. The reality of our senses is like the cave he spoke about in his text.
3. Plato’s divided line has two realms: the “Visible Realm”- ‘Ordinary Objects’- are basically more realistic than ‘Shadows and Reflections’ - this is because without us being present, there is no reflection. There are different levels within ‘Visible Realms’. The “Intelligible Realms”- ‘Forms’ does not come and go, because it is permanent which our minds are connected to. Just like the idea of something, it is permanent and it is already conceived in the mind.

Aristotle, “ Individual Substance” (Categories)- pp. 76-79

1. Aristotle explains to us that substance is a particular thing that you can point to. I.e “ this or that,” or “you are the substance.” This cannot describe anything whatsoever and it also cannot be a quality or attribute. The substance also does not have a level of degree. For example, if there is a group of male students on a volleyball team and I point out the captain of that team, now he will become the substance.
2. Based on the definition of a predicate, it contains a verb and states something about the subject which is basically an adjective. Pato’s theory of “ Substance” is similar to this because he stated that a substance cannot describe something. His meaning of Substance is used to point out a particular thing or individualize someone.
3. I believe that Aristotle uses Substance as the building block of reality because a Substance is an individual that exists and it does not describe that individual, it points toward that particular thing. Aristotle believes that if the chair is in his sight it exists however, he believes if the chair is destroyed it no longer exists. While Plato believes that if the chair gets destroyed it still remains to be a chair because it already exists as an idea in the mind.

Aristotle, “ Four Types of Explanation” (Physics)- pp. 413-415

1. Aristotle believes that there are four causes for why a substance is what it is. The causes are as follows: ‘Material Cause’- This is a physical thing that makes something what it is. ‘Formal Cause’- It is an organizer of Substance. It is also the essence of something. ‘Efficient Cause’- This is the cause of being efficient; it is a dynamic source. ‘Final Cause’-(Telos) It is the final goal of something. This defines the substance or the final production or build of that substance. Telos exist in something whether it is in use or not.
2. A table is what it is according to Aristotle because of the four causes that it goes through. First is wood and metal which makes the table. Then secondly the table will have four legs and a large flat top which makes it a table. Thirdly a carpenter makes this a table by putting the parts together. Finally, the table exists and performs its purpose. It is made to eat off, put things on, use for support, etc... this makes it a finished product of a table.
3. Aristotle states that the ‘Final Cause’is also called the “Telos” which is the final goal or purpose of something. Aristotle also stated that this can be found in nature or even humans because everything on earth has a purpose and even if it does not fulfill its purpose Telos still exists in that individual or substance. I believe this theory about purpose exists because I know that I have a purpose on earth based on what I was made to do in my lifetime.