Plato, *Why Call it Plato’s Cave,* https://uvu.instructure.com/courses/519617/files/103419516/download?wrap=1

Ignorance, the shackles of the common man and the hubris of the enlightened

After reading Plato’s cave there was one thing that really stuck out to me. And that was the amount of ignorance that is taking place in the lives of us humans. It seems that people as a whole are doomed to be ignorant in some fashion no matter how enlightened we come to be. I feel like this was a subtle message that Plato’s cave gave but I also feel like it is a very important one that not many people notice.

In the analogy a man is forced to look at the light and it hurts his eyes so much that he wants to turn his eyes away from it as to save him from the pain of the fire. In this story the fire are the fallacies that the people get their sense of truth from. The fire was what was causing the shadows to appear and creating that false sense of reality that was confusing the minds of the ignorant man. The man is ignorant because he believes the shadows of objects to be the actual objects themselves, and when offered the truth he turns away because he can’t handle the pain that comes with it. This is a common occurrence throughout the little story, it is not until the man is dragged out of the cave and he has time to adjust to the real world that he finally comes to accept the truth and he loses his ignorance from before. What most people don’t realize is that he gains a new kind of ignorance in the process.

It is this point in the story that the man decides that he is going to go back to the cave to teach others about the truth. Now that his eyes have been opened, he couldn’t even imagine living in the darkness again. And it is this that causes the ignorance that is the hubris of those that are enlightened. When the man heads back into the cave his eyes are not adjusted for the darkness and when he tries to teach and explain to the other people in the cave, they merely see him stumbling in the darkness and think of him as a fool. They are more willing to try and kill him than listen to what he has to say.

Most people after reading this far into the story all think the same thing, in fact it is the same thing that the man in the story thinks. They all can’t believe that others, those in the cave would react like that when someone is trying to teach them. They can’t seem to understand why someone would reject him like that. It seems ridiculous to them and they think the people in the cave must be all but evil for not listening to what is obviously so blatantly the truth. The man thinks all of the people in the cave are fools and likely will end up thinking of them as less “intelligent” than himself, he fails to see the ignorance is not only in those he is trying to teach but in himself as well.

The man so quickly forgets that not so long ago he was no different than the rest of the people in the cave. He to was willing to kill someone who tried to do the things that he is currently doing. Even though he himself should have a perfect understanding what the cave people are doing and why he seems to have forgotten about his own experiences in the cave. He acts like he has always been enlightened and the others are fools for not choosing to become enlightened as well. But the truth is at one point he wasn’t enlightened, he should know how to deal with the cave people because he was once them. He should be able to use his past experiences as a way to connect with them so that he can teach them in a way that they would understand. But his newfound enlightenment acts as his own hubris in providing a pathway to others.