

CA- 380_The_allegory_of_the_cave

第七卷

(English version is below)

让我们把受过教育的人与没受过教育的人的本质比作下述情形。想象一个洞穴式的地下室，有一条长长通道通向外面，可让和洞穴一样宽的一路亮光照进来。有一些人从小就住在这洞穴里，头颈和腿脚都绑着，不能走动也不能转头，只能向前看着洞穴后壁。再想象在他们背后远处高些的地方有东西燃烧着发出火光。在火光和这些被囚禁者之间，在洞外上面有一条路。沿着路边已筑有一带矮墙。矮墙的作用像傀儡戏演员在自己和观众之间设的一道屏障，他们把木偶举到屏障上头去表演。

我看见了。

接下来让我们想象有一些人拿着各种器物举过墙头，从墙后面走过，有的还举着用木料、石料或其他材料制作的假人和假兽。这些过路人中有的在说话，有的不在说话。

你说的是一个奇特的比喻和一些奇特的囚徒。

不，他们是一些和我们一样的人。你且说说看，你认为这些囚徒除了火光投射到他们对面洞壁上的阴影外，还能看到自己或

同伴们的什么呢？

如果他们一辈子头颈被限制了不能转动，又怎样能看到别的什么呢？

那么，后面路上人举着过去的东西，除了它们的阴影外，囚徒们能看到它们别的什么吗？

当然不能。

如果囚徒们能彼此交谈，他们会断定自己在讲所看到的阴影时是在讲真物本身吗？

必定如此。

又，如果一个过路人发出声音，引起囚徒对面洞壁的回声，你不认为，囚徒们会断定，这是他们对面洞壁上移动的阴影发出的吗？

他们一定会这样断定。

因此无疑，这种人不会想到上述事物除阴影外还有什么别的实在。

无疑的。

那么，请设想一下，如果他们被解除禁锢、矫正迷误，这时他们会怎样呢？如果真的发生如下的事情，其中一人被解除了桎梏，被迫突然站了起来，转头环视、走动、抬头看望火光，他在做这些动作时会感觉痛苦的，并且，由于眼花缭乱，他无法

看见那些原来只看见其阴影的实物。如果有人告诉他，说他过去惯常看到的全是虚假，如今他被扭向了比较真实的器物、接近了实在，所见更真实了，他听了这话会说什么呢？如果有人把墙头上的每一器物指给他看，并逼他说出那是什么，他会不知说什么是好，并认为过去所看到的阴影比现在所看到的实物更真实吗？

更真实得多呀！

如果他被迫看火光本身，他的眼睛会感到痛苦，他会转身走开，仍旧逃向那些他能够看清且确实认为比人家所指示的实物更清楚更实在的影像。不是吗？

会这样的。

再说，如果有人硬拉他走上一条陡峭崎岖的坡道，直到把他拉出洞穴见到外面的阳光，不让他中途退回去，他会觉得被强迫着走很痛苦并感到恼火；当他来到阳光下时，他会觉得眼前金星乱蹦金蛇乱窜，以致无法看见任何一个现在被称为真实的实物。你不认为会这样吗？

噢，的确不是一下子就能看得见的。

因此我认为，他要能在洞穴外面的高处看得见东西，大概需要一个逐渐习惯的过程。首先看阴影最容易，其次看人和其它东西在水中的倒影容易，再次是看东西本身；经过这些之后，他大概会觉得在夜里观察天象和天空本身，看月光和星光，比白天看太阳和太阳光容易。

当然啰。

这样一来，我认为，他大概终于就能直接观看太阳本身，看见它的真相了，就可以不必通过水中的倒影或影象，或任何其他媒介中显示出的影象看它，就可以在它本来的地方就其本身看见其本相了。

这是一定的。

接着他大概对此已经可以得出结论了：造成四季交替和年岁周期，主宰可见世界一切事物的正是这个太阳，也就是他们过去通过某种曲折看见的所有那些事物的原因。

显然，他大概会接着得出这样的结论。

如果他回想自己当初的穴居、那时的智力水平，以及禁锢中的伙伴们，你不认为，他会庆幸自己的这一变迁，而替伙伴们遗憾吗？

确实会的。

Book VII

Let us compare the nature of the educated person and the uneducated person to the following situation. Imagine an underground cave dwelling, which has a long entrance open to the light extending across the whole width of the cave. In it, there are people who have lived there since

childhood, with their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move and can only see straight ahead, unable to turn their heads because of the chains. Imagine further that far above and behind them a fire is burning. Between the fire and these prisoners, there is a raised path along the upper part of the cave. Along this path, a low wall has been built, like the screen puppet-show men have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

Next, imagine people passing along behind the wall carrying all sorts of artefacts which project above the wall, including statues of men and animals made of wood, stone, and other materials. As you would expect, some of the passers-by are talking, others are silent.

You are describing a strange image, and strange prisoners.

No, they are like ourselves. Consider this: do you think that these prisoners would see anything of themselves or their companions other than the shadows cast by the fire on the wall of the cave facing them?

How could they see anything else, if they were forced to keep their heads still their entire lives?

And what about the objects being carried along the path behind them? Would the prisoners see anything other than their shadows?

Of course not.

If the prisoners were able to talk to one another, wouldn't they surely conclude that the names they used applied to the shadows they were seeing?

Necessarily.

And what if a passer-by were to speak, causing an echo from the wall opposite the prisoners? Don't you think the prisoners would conclude that it was the shadow moving on the opposite wall that was speaking?

They certainly would.

Therefore, without doubt, such people would believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artefacts.

Without a doubt.

Now, consider what would happen if they were released from their bonds and cured of their delusion. If something like the following were to happen: one of them was freed from his fetters and suddenly forced to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up toward the firelight. Doing all this would cause him pain, and because of the dazzling glare, he would be unable to see the real objects whose shadows he used to see. What do you think he would say if someone told him that what he used to see was entirely illusion, but that now, turned towards more real things and closer to reality, he was seeing more truly? And if someone then pointed to each of the artefacts passing along the wall and forced him to say what it was, wouldn't he be at a loss

and believe that the shadows he saw before were truer than the real objects now being shown to him?

Much truer!

And if he were forced to look at the firelight itself, wouldn't his eyes ache? Wouldn't he turn away and flee back towards the things he could see clearly, believing that they were really clearer and more real than the objects being pointed out?

He would.

And suppose someone were to forcibly drag him up the steep and rugged ascent, not letting him go until he had been pulled out of the cave into the sunlight. Wouldn't he feel pain and be annoyed at being dragged along? And when he emerged into the sunlight, wouldn't his eyes be filled with its glare, making him unable to see even a single one of the things now called real? Don't you think so?

Oh, indeed, he wouldn't be able to see them right away.

Therefore, I think he would need a period of adjustment before he could see things in the world above. At first, it would be easiest to see shadows, then reflections of people and other things in water, and later the things themselves. After these, he would probably find it easier to gaze upon the heavenly bodies and the sky itself at night, looking at the light of the moon and stars, than to look at the sun and its light during the day.

Of course.

Finally, I think, he would be able to look directly at the sun itself and see its true nature—not its reflection in water or its image appearing in some other medium, but the sun itself, in its own place, as it is.

That is certain.

Then he would probably begin to conclude that it is this sun that produces the seasons and the cycles of the years, is the governor of all things in the visible world, and is, in a way, the cause of all the things that they had seen.

Clearly, he would likely reach that conclusion next.

And if he recalled his original cave dwelling, the level of wisdom there, and his fellow prisoners, don't you think he would feel happy about his transformation and feel sorry for them?

Indeed, he would.