



Western Philosophy Assignment 2

Western Philosophy (University of South Africa)



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Philosophically, the questions of what can we know along with how we arrive at knowledge of the world can be interpreted through Epistemology. According to Oliver "Epistemology is the philosophical study that is mostly concerned with the theory of knowledge and 'the grounds upon which we believe something to be true'" (Oliver 2010:35). To begin with, Plato argues that knowledge is virtue, it can only be accepted if it is apart from suspicion and necessarily true (study guide 2023:p39). For that reason knowledge is justified as true belief. That is, to qualify as knowledge, a belief must be true, and we must be justified in believing that it is true. It must not be true just by coincidence. According to (DiRado Paul 2015) "sense perception and knowledge are completely a different tool in each and every instance, and no act perception will ever bring about an instance of knowledge". Thus (Mc Frede 1987a:5) has argued: that "Plato believed that our beliefs and knowledge of the real world necessitate a passive affection of the mind". Overall I agree with Plato's theory of knowledge in view of the fact that he quoted that in order for something to be taken as knowledge, it must be supported by a good reasoning and believed to be true.

With that, it is possible to say that Plato had two realities in which he adhered to. The first one is the world in which we live in and the second is one had to be a non-physical realm in which forms exist. For Plato, we can only construct sense of experience by generating objects of knowing through recognizing their form [Phaedo:75]. Opinion is the lowest form of knowledge, lying between knowledge and ignorance. Subsequently forms were meant to provide the foundation of what he calls episteme (knowledge). If people use the same word (e.g. courage) something must make it the same reality they are talking about. Instant people constantly use the same term to describe different objects or events. On that account there is a universal they actually referring to which is the "one" over many instances the form of courage. (Nehamas 1999:144) has argued: "a courageous action only accidentally participates in the form of courage, while courage itself is essentially what it is to be courage. Forms are the qualities that an object must have to be considered that type of object while Perception gives us only the appearance of the object. For example, there are countless chairs in the world but the Form of "chairness" is at the core of all chairs. Plato held that the world of Forms is transcendent to our own world, the world of substances, which is the essential basis of reality. Although no one has seen a straight line nor a good person or a perfect circle, everyone does notice what a straight line is or a circle. Plato uses such evidence to show that forms are indeed real. With this in mind, it constantly positive to say that knowledge cannot be established in the external world, however it can be internally located in the consciousness. This hypothesis declare that the soul of the person is indeed immortal and knows the truth before entering the body. Only by using reasoning, the soul can gain access to the world of forms, as it is able to remember this world prior to being incarnated in the body. With that being said this 'remembering' is called anamnesis (recollection). Recollection is the process of bringing to our attention this knowledge that we have forgotten. According to (sedley 2016:11) "examination to the nature of forms includes the intellect as contrary to senses which are the vehicles of investigation in the real world. In this case knowledge is valuable as it plays a role in evaluating the world and the mind".it is possible to say that we gain knowledge by observing the world around us and drawing conclusions based on what we observe, since truth is objective, our knowledge of true propositions must be of real things. (Zagzebski 2003a) argued "that we shall not view knowledge as a state consisting of known belief only, but we shall view it as a position in which both true belief and the source of from which that belief was acquired." According to (Lehrer and paxson:1969) justified true belief is knowledge, only if there are no existing defeaters of the belief. With this being said, it possible to say that Plato's theory really helps one to separate the truth from the lies, knowing the real truth will set us free from believing something

that is not right. Furthermore knowing is one of the best thing humans can do, paying attention mostly to our thinking, in turn we learn to think better. In knowledge we make a distinction between object and the state of mind. Knowledge is a certain kind of state that is in the head and it apprehends an original idea of the universe. The acceptance of knowledge as an ideal can also allow one to the recognition of the following things as features of knowledge, possibility and ability to teach it. Put simply, the possibility and ability to explain it.

To conclude, beliefs and knowledge are distinctly different, yet related. In other words, Belief is the next stage of developing knowledge. Knowledge is the philosophical study theorizing with the nature, atmosphere and its reliability in general. French philosopher (René Descartes:1596–1650) and German philosopher (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz:1646–1716) argued: “that if we brace the presence of innate ideas and their realization through reason, the truth will be revealed by such ideas as they are everlasting, obligatory and universal.

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