

Plato Test Organizer

Cave analogy

- Underground cave, chained group of prisoners
- Fire with parapet, men carrying objects that cast shadows outside of their view
- Makes the walls and shadows seem like reality to the prisoners who can only see shadows
- One of the prisoners escape the darkness of the cave
 - Blinded by light, he realizes that everything he's lived in was an illusion
 - Experienced pain
- Other prisoners kill the escapee who comes back to rescue them as they are so stuck in their reality
- Plato uses this analogy to say we are like prisoners of our world, perceiving the wrong things to be reality

Plato's Ethics

- Ancient greeks regarded agent evaluation (evaluating someone's moral character) is more important than act evaluation (evaluating particular actions)
- Ethical question they addressed is "What sort of person should I be?"
 - Eudaimonia is a central concept for the Greeks
 - Means living well or having a good soul
 - Is the goal of their ethics
 - Reason we should strive to attain eudaimonia is essentially self-interest
 - Those who attain eudaimonia live better, more desirable lives
- Plato believed that each human being is a combination of a physical body and a non physical soul
 - Believed our physical bodies were not really important
 - Therefore most of his analysis were based on the soul
- Soul has 3 parts
 - Reason, Spirit, Appetite

Reason

- The part capable of reasoning, and pursues truth and knowledge
- Weakest part of our soul, but the only part of governing us well

Spirit

- Part that is proud and concerned with one's status

- Pursues fame and power

Appetite

- Largest and most powerful part of the soul, pursues pleasure and avoids pain
 - In control of most people's souls, although this leads to many undesirable outcomes
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- According to ancient greeks, everything has a purpose
 - An object is better if it has characteristics that will help it fulfill its purpose well
 - Known as virtues
 - Purpose of the soul is to govern the body
 - Primary virtue is justice
 - Justice means a proper balance among the parts of the soul
 - Reason should be in control, with Spirit helping Reason to control Appetite