

Platos symposium analysis



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" Plato's Symposium"

Kaboom, that was the sound of Zeus's thunder crashing towards the Earth. During this time period the people in Greece believed in these gods. Also happening at the same time period was when the worlds most famous philosophers began to come out and teach. Most importantly the philosophers did what they were suppose to, and that was to question the world around them. One of the most famous philosophers in the Greek period around 416 B. C. was a man named Socrates. Socrates was student of the Diotima which taught him things about love, ignorance, wisdom and right opinion, which he rehearses to the people attending the dinner of Agathon's.

We will first start by analyzing what Diotima has said about the four cognitive functions, which are: wisdom, understanding, right opinion and ignorance. She asks Socrates " do you think what is not wise, then it is ignorant?" and she continues with " Do you not perceive that there is something between wisdom and ignorance?" In these first quotes Socrates only believes that if something is not wise then it has to be ignorant and that there is no in between. Diotima then points out that doesn't think see that there is an middle point between wisdom and ignorance. Diotima then replies " To have right opinion without being able to give a reason, is neither to understand (for how could an unreasoned thing be understanding?) nor is it ignorance (for how can ignorance hit the truth?). Right opinion is no doubt something between knowledge and ignorance." In the second quote what Diotima tells Socrates is that right opinion is in between wisdom and ignorance. She explains this by telling Socrates that being incapable of giving a reason something cannot be considered knowledge, because how

can knowledge be entirely lacking reason. She also points out that it can't be considered ignorance because you can't obtain the truth from ignorance, but then it is clearly something in between wisdom and ignorance which is called right opinion.

Diotima explains the four cognitive functions more in depth a couple of paragraphs later on starting with " The truth is this: no god seeks after wisdom or desires to become wise for wise he is already; nor does anyone else seek after wisdom, if he is wise already. And again, the ignorant do not seek after wisdom nor desire to become wise; for this is the worst of ignorance, that one who is neither beautiful and good nor intelligent should think himself good enough, so he does not desire it, because he does not think he is lacking in what he does not think he needs." What Diotima tells Socrates here is that no god is in search or in want of being wise for the gods are already wise, nor does any human who is already wise seek after wisdom. Neither do the ignorant search to be wise, and that is the evil of ignorance, a person that is satisfied with himself and is not good nor wise and is satisfied with himself, because he has no desire for that which he has no want.

Socrates then ask Diotima " Who then are the Philosophers? If those who seek after wisdom are neither wise nor the ignorant?" She answers with " They are between these two, as Love is. You see, wisdom is one of the most beautiful things, and Love is a love for the beautiful, so Love must necessarily be a philosopher, and, being a philosopher, he must be between wise and ignorant. His birth is the cause of this for he comes of a wise and resourceful father, but of a mother resource less and not wise." Diotima here

explains to Socrates that philosophers are in the center of wise and ignorant, and love is right in there between the two. Because wisdom is a very beautiful thing, and Love is of the beautiful; and therefore love is also a philosopher or another way of putting it a lover of wisdom. And being a lover of wisdom it too is in the center of wisdom and ignorance. This Love's birth was also the cause because dad was wealthy and wise, and his mom was poor and foolish.

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