

Philosophy: "explain
the differences
between plato and
aristotle's view of
realit..."

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Plato imagined that there existed an ideal or perfect world beyond our own physical earth. Our earthly world is full of unevenness, imperfections, and impurities which have been copied from the true ideal world which is beyond us. Plato further believed that our physical world and its Forms participate or imitate the real Forms in a disorderly way. He claimed that there was a relationship between the realm of Forms and our world. This relationship revealed to us mortals the forms and brought order to life. Aristotle objected to Plato's view, arguing that one cannot know the type of interaction which is occurring between the two Forms.

If the "real or ideal forms" are eternal, pure and unchanging then how do they relate to the material objects or Forms on earth with all their physical imperfections? This participation or imitation link between the real and the imaginary (which Plato claimed existed) is erroneous thinking as no one can/has established such a link - real or otherwise. And even if a link is established it fails to explain all the Forms in the material world. At some point Plato fails to explain how this greater Form was controlled- how can Form control things?

Was there energy in "Forms"? Aristotle's assumption of the Theory of Forms was intimately integrated with his belief that we develop some type of biological and scientific wisdom of a primary substance (be it plant, animal, rock, etc) only when we know what are usually called its "causes." The Greek word, *aitia*, which is translated as "causes," is probably better rendered as "that which explains." What that means is that our knowledge

of something only occurs once we have ascertained why the "thing" is there and what its uses are (the primitive scientific method).

Thus, if the essence of being a humanoid includes being a biped, we are able to explain our two legs by appeal to the form of humanness which is in us. So knowledge of the form or essence is in effect knowledge of the thing's causes, of what explains why it is what it is. In this way Aristotle's theory of knowledge was integrated with his metaphysics or scientific method. Thus, if the essence of being a humanoid includes being a biped, we are able to explain our two legs by appeal to the form of humanness which is in us. So knowledge of the form or essence is in effect knowledge of the thing's causes, of what explains why it is what it is.

In this way Aristotle's theory of knowledge was integrated with his metaphysics or scientific method. Plato postulated that once the humans rose above their physical environment, they would understand the Forms which were present in the invisible world. Whether he meant this would occur after death or during life remains a mystery. Aristotle on the other hand believed that everything was right here on earth and one could find the Form if one developed a scientific method to apprehend it. I believe the Forms which Plato believed in were not real.

He claims that what we see on earth are mimics of the real thing, only with a lot of imperfections. In his Allegory of the Cave, outlined in *The Republic*, he called mimics artificial replicas of the real thing. In real life all that is seen is an illusion (smoke) of the real thing. On the other hand, Aristotle believed that our natural world itself was real and physical. Aristotle, having studied

some biological and physical phenomenon during his work as a teacher, came to understand that our world was made up of many natural Forms, even though not all of the Forms were ideal, pure or perfect.

He argued that with our sense(s) we could identify all the natural Forms on earth. The big question which Aristotle and everyone else asked about Plato's theory of Forms was ' what are the two separate realms and what do they mean and how do they explain life as it is? ' No matter how one analyses Plato's theory, I would argue it simply fails to explain our physical world, its evolution and the order of things. Why some things are permanent remains a central question in his philosophy. How was the knowledge about our own world derived from the " ideal Forms"?

One can understand that genetic traits can be passed on to future generations of humans and animals, but how does this information pass on to inanimate objects like the stone, rock, sand or water? How could these physical properties with no " Brain" understand the ideal world? I can understand that perhaps some humans may have ESP and perceive (with a lot of good luck) the past or the future, but how can a rock know that it was a rock in the ideal world first and now is a manifestation of the rock in our world?