

Plato's cave: still current in mass media assignment

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Plato describes a group of stupefied people who have been trapped in a cave their entire lives. These prisoners are chained facing a wall; they cannot see anything except the shadows on that wall, which are being cast by men carrying unknown objects in front of a glowing fire. They never see the actual carriers or items, and they hear nothing but the echoes of these obscure men, yet are still entranced by these illogical sounds and images.

Plato's Cave illustrates how people solely base their perception of the world on their experiences of physical objects, and by doing so, they limit themselves to the confined notions prescribed by their fear of change. The purpose of this essay is to prove how and why the stubborn ignorance present in Plato's Allegory of the Cave can still be found in many aspects of today's mass media, including television, news broadcasting channels, and advertising. Today, most people have been chained to their television since childhood. These attached viewers can be seen as prisoners in their own cave.

The television screen plays the role of the wall with shadows, and the television speakers replace the echoes. Instead of the men carrying objects, the creators of the television shows broadcasted are now projecting their desired images. The oblivious prisoners absorb these relentlessly exposed illusions, and expect to encounter them in reality, which differs greatly from their own "reality," which is composed of the images. This intertwining and disorientation of realities becomes even more abstract when the transmitted images are that of "reality" television shows.

Since these series are presumed to be “ real”, the captives are forced to believe that such scornful people rule exist and such outrageous events have actually occurred. However, in true reality, the people starring in the television shows are merely creating images of Images to entertain the prisoners, and are trapped inside their own caves. If the prisoners were to open their minds and escape the cave (building/room with the television and interact with others outside the dark cave, they will soon come to the realization that the world is made up of deep human beings.

At first, this comprehension will appear as unfathomable and “ distress [them]” (Plato, “ Allegory of the Cave,” p. 2), since the captives have been taught these false “ realities” their whole lives, but as these personal relations continue, the prisoners will be enlightened “ towards [a] more real existence a clearer vision” (Plato, “ Allegory of the Cave,” p. 52), and into a broader view of life and the people living in it. Similarly, news channels tend to perform the same “ puppet-shows”.

People watch the news in order to retrieve information on current events; however, the news broadcasting channels may be feeding them distorted facts. Humans cannot personally experience all of the occurrences of the world, and as a result, they upend on news channels, Like Fox News, to remain informed. These viewers are also trapped in their own caves. The prisoners expect the information to be true, yet they 1 OFF can never truly control Its accuracy, or Decode enlightened, unless teen were to go and take part in the actual event themselves.

Due to this, the “ puppet-masters”, Fox News, can slyly manipulate their facts, in order to manipulate their viewers into a system of false beliefs. However, as Plato stated: “ better to be the poor servant of a poor master, and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner” (Plato, “ Allegory of the Cave,” p. 53); it is better to be exceedingly informed by upsetting facts, than to be ignorant and satisfied from false information. Just like the chained prisoners, “ the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images” (Plato, “ Allegory of the Cave,” p. 2), and the television viewers regard the news from Fox News to be truthful as well. This use of manipulation can also be found in advertising. The media has transmitted harmful messages through advertising. These ads and can be seen in every public area, however it is the commercials on television that array the most detrimental results. The companies, or the “ Carr[risers of] all sorts of vessels” (Plato, “ Allegory of the Cave,” p. 52), that create these commercials, succeed in enticing their consumers, by creating buried messages behind their deceptive use of striking images.

They plant seeds of insecurity into the prisoners, who now forcefully believe that purchasing the companies’ products will results in the instant deposition of their haunting anxieties. Not only this, but the corporations will alter the images prior to showing them to their audiences. Being oblivious to this, the consumers are comforted that such people/objects appear to be so attractive, yet they/their possessions do not. It is this discomfort that transforms into an obsession to become/ own such unattainable images, and it is this failure to achieve such a state that deteriorates the self-worth of the buyers.

The clouded truth is being so distorted that the majority of world bears no knowledge of what reality truly is. The captives are consumed by their necessity to conform to the impossible expectations of the media, and stop at nothing until they reach them. It is only by the recognition of the infeasible qualities of such standards, that they can crack open their shackles, and continue the path towards illumination through the acceptance of themselves. However, numerous captives may never be able to see the light outside of the cave, and remain surrounded by these projected “truths”.

Many prisoners still trapped in the caves may argue that Plat's Allegory of the Cave is irrelevant to today's society and media. They consider their beliefs and “realities” to be true, and will distrust others that do not share such principles. Even though no one is completely free from the endless number of caves and walls being lived in/ gazed at, the first step to being set free, or freeing others, is to accept the fact that everyone is being held captive.

Not everyone is raised to have the same puppet- masters or images, therefore, not everyone shares the same “false beliefs”. However, by allowing themselves to consider others' “realities” and recognizing why “personal realities” differ so greatly from one person to another, a common ground will be established. It is this mutual understanding that may spark the enlightenment of the outside, where true reality forms beliefs, unlike the cave, where it is the beliefs that arm “realities”.