

Good essay on rhetoric: dialogue

Life



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Gorgias: Socrates, let me ask you, are you aware of darkness?

Socrates: Yes, indeed. I am.

Gorgias: You should be. Let me pose another question to you

Socrates: Go ahead, pray do.

Gor: Is darkness the equivalence of nothingness?

Soc: Not at all. Darkness is something intangible but it has existence.

Darkness has its own value without which there would be no light.

Gor: I beg to differ. Darkness is the absence of light, making it the lack of value. This is what I would call nothingness.

Soc: That is where I would suppose you go wrong in your assumptions.

Gor: I make no assumptions but only truths.

Soc: Darkness is not the absence of light. I would use the same argument for light and say that it is the absence of darkness.

Gor: How so?

Soc: I very well would say that light cannot exist without darkness. They are both necessities for the existence of the other. If darkness were to be equal to nothingness, then it would not affect other elements. It would not affect the light. Consequently, there would be no concept of light as we would not know a world without it. There would be no shadows of darkness to shine light into or stars against a contrasting background. Do you want another illustration?

Gor: Well, before you go on to that, let me correct you.

Soc: Please do.

Gor: Your reasoning is fundamentally wrong.

Soc: How so?

Gor: You assign existence and numerical value to something we cannot touch or feel.

Soc: No, I would beg to differ. This is because light, just like darkness comes in varying degrees. In the morning it has less strength and intensity but this changes as the sun aligns itself more directly on the surface of the earth. At noon, the sun is hottest, giving off the brightest rays of light. If we were to assign a value to the amount of light in the morning, it would not be the same value to the value we assign to the light present at noon. The same applies to the intensity of light just before dark.

Gor: Make your point

Soc: My point is that light has a value based on the concept of arbitrary values assigned to its varying intensities.

Gor: I see. What about darkness.

Soc: The same reasoning applies for darkness. The intensity of darkness in a shadow cannot be of the same value as the intensity of darkness during a cloudy night.

Gor: You have proved me right.

Soc: How so?

Gor: Consider a weak shadow.

Soc: Yes

Gor: At that point in time, which has value between light and dark?

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Soc: Both

Gor: No way. Darkness may be found when there is no light.

Soc: No, that is incorrect. Darkness and light may exist but not in their fullness but in partiality. This is why your initial argument is wrong. This is because at the utmost strength of light, the value of darkness is zero. At the utmost strength of darkness, the value of light is also zero. However, the presence of a weak shadow shows that both darkness and light have a value because they are present together at partial intensities. If either of them did not have a value, then the other would exist at its utmost strength. See?