

Platos' theory of forms



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State Of Thesis: Knowledge is power. Without knowledge a person is nothing. One has nothing to talk about or argue if a person has knowledge with him. And knowledge should be about something or nothing.

Introduction: It took 40 years of his career to write about this theory. The theory was re-written various times in this time of span but the theory was never written in a proper manner and the arguments never came to a conclusion. According to Plato knowledge exists and knowledge exists for something or nothing. But if knowledge was about nothing then it would not be knowledge. Knowledge is always about something because one cannot argue about something which has no worth or is nothing for someone.

Always a person argues or talk about something which is worth of something or has some background to talk on. Plato also argued about what knowledge is all about, it should be physical or non physical. For physical things there is no knowledge because physical things change where as knowledge never changes. Knowledge never changes where as the ways to deliver can change. So the nature of knowledge should be non physical and long lasting because knowledge never fades away. So knowledge exists and because knowledge exists so do Plato's forms of theory exist, because the forms are the only thing which justify and have knowledge about.

Reincarnation And The Theory Of Recollection

It is not frequently observed in this connection, but Plato has come up with another argument related to the existence of the forms. The existence of the forms (and the preexistence of the soul) offer the best way out of the dilemma of the Meno and the best explanation of how an uneducated farm boy could solve a difficult problem in geometry.

In this scenario called Meno, there are two statements and the statements are as following.

To search for knowledge is futile because either:

A. You know what you are looking for (so you already know).

B. You don't know what you are looking for (so you can't know if you have found it).

In the above scenarios, in scenario A it's useless to find knowledge because you know about it and in scenario B it's useless to find knowledge because the search of knowledge is useless because knowledge is wide and vast that a person will never stop searching about it. So the search for knowledge is totally pointless.

Plato's answer to this scenario is to say that knowledge is all about remembering things, keepin things in mind. That is to say we do already know things but they are like being on the tip of your tongue. You won't search forever because you will remember it explicitly when you come across it or your memory is aided by a few hints.

Arguments On Plato's Theory Of Forms.

There are many arguments on the forms and they are stated as following.

The argument from Trivial or Unworthy Forms. This is the disagreement from Trivial or Unworthy Forms. The fundamental principle is " for every predicate there is a corresponding form". Plato's clarification of why something is a dog, say, is because it participates in the form of dog or doges. This would

seem to imply that whatever we have a general term there must be a corresponding form for it in Platonic heaven. But there is a worse problem deriving from self-predication. For Plato the good should be good and the truth should be true and things like that.

The One Over Many Argument.

Parmenides then zeroes in on the relation between particulars and forms. “The One over Many Arguments”

If a form is “in” each particular, then:

A: The whole of the form is contained in each of the parts (The form of dog is in each dog)

B: Only part of the form is in each particular. (Only part of the dog is contained in each dog)

If A, then no harmony of the structure, it is many not one.

If B, then it becomes many by division, therefore there will be no unity again.

“The Third Man Argument”. The objection arises on the basis of the following principal. If two objects have a particular property, then they are so in virtue of their participating in a form (a third form for example a man).

Socrates then suggests that the relation between forms to particulars is like patterns (models, archetypes) to copies. It is a relation of likeness.

Parmenides:

The relation of A to B (likeness) is symmetrical, i. e. A to B to A

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But the third man is reinstated.

If object A is like B due to its likeness to form, then the likeness of B to form \emptyset must be explained by its likeness to some third, so on ad infinitum.

Objections to the theory: The objections to the forms are that they are moral and use words like just beautiful and goo. Another objection is on natural things such “ as human being” and natural stuffs and undignified things like hair, mud and dirt.

Plato’s respond to objections: To the mud criticism–He might maintain that mud is made up of other forms (earth, fire, water, air, etc.). If he did this, he would have to abandon the every predicate has a form principle. To the “ one over the many” criticism there doesn’t seem to be a reply. Plato describes this relation as largely a metaphor, but this will not do. It leaves things unexplained.

Conclusion: Knowledge is everything. One should have enough knowledge to know about things. Knowing everything is not possible. Every person knows different things it’s just the matter of fact to remember those things the right time and one needs some hints to remember things. If we don’t know the forms, we know nothing. But we do know something, therefore we know the forms.