

Validity of Plato's Allegory of the Cave

Developing Argumentation

My thoughts after second read:

Possible Argumentation	Arguments	Evidence	quotes
Introduction	<p>My essay covers three aspects relevant to the assignment question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality: What is reality? (As Morpheus asked in <i>Matrix</i>) External or internal? Natural or constructed? True or simulated? Simulacra, transcendental or immanent? Space of reality experience • Perception: Through our senses and as cognitive processes, mental images and representational frameworks as well as signs and deferred signification. • Power: to have power <i>of</i> or to have power <i>over</i>, to be in control or be controlled, manipulated. Also as empowerment and education, one of Plato's intention. <p>And around this is the question, an uncertainty and an interrogation of reality. Not as a possessor of but as a seeker in Plato sense, a subjective discerning through questioning. Being a 'lover of wisdom'</p> <p>My essay does address these aspects in the framework of knowledge and meaning, based on three qualities in a holistic perspective:</p>		<p>Bennett ed al, 2005; Buckle, 2007; Losin, 1996; Murphy, 1934</p> <p>Mitchell, 1986</p> <p>Deleuze, 1983</p> <p>Plato, 2007</p> <p>---</p> <p>'The real is that which resists symbolization absolutely' – Jacques Lacan</p> <p>Dreaming: 'isn't dreaming simply the confusion</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External means for knowledge: human mind, technologies (e.g. photography, film), language, signs as representational knowledge (stand for, speak for), concepts and theories • Internal and embodied conditions of knowledge: Reasoning, dialectic, knowledge as knowing, understanding (<i>nous</i>), embodied experience, movement ('turning head and mind') • Context of knowledge: Historical and social constructs, prevailing conditions, power of knowledge (e.g. Foucault); space of experience e.g. cinema, puppet theater <p>What would open the question of purpose and aim of knowledge: enlightenment, meaningful life, balanced psyche, or satisfaction and pleasure and ignorance?</p> <p>An understanding of today's conditions of knowledge, reality perceptions and a consciousness of representation and reproduction related to film, documentary, internet and social interaction helps to obtain a critical perspective in a world of difference and divergent opinions. To avoid ignorance and a fall back into dreams.</p>	<p>between a resemblance and the reality which it resembles, whether the dreamer be asleep or awake?' - Plato (p.324) (Plato, 2007, p.198)</p> <p>"the type of man commonly called bad but clever... have small minds, but their sight is sharp and piercing enough in matters that concern them; it's not that their sight is weak, but that they are forces to serve the evil." – Plato (Plato, 2007, p.246)</p>	
<p>Knowledge of reality depends on external means of representation as signs and technologies</p> <p>Imprisoned</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human mind, technologies (e.g. photography, film), • Language as arbitrary signs relating to external meaningve • Signs as representational knowledge (stand for, speak for) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meaning derived from divergent viewpoints, and constructed significations and interpretations. 	<p>Baudrillard conception of hyper-reality and simulacrum <i>Simulacra and Simulation</i></p> <p>Plato <i>Allegory of the Cave</i></p> <p>Deleuze <i>Plato and Simulacrum</i></p>	<p>"The world exists independently of our representations of it. Every representation has an aspectual shape. Ontologically objective reality does not have a point of view." - J.R. Searle (1996)</p>

<p>Shadows</p> <p>Resemblance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Perception in the intelligible realm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Objects in puppet theatre</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Prevented from turning head – released and turning heads</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Turning minds</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>- Representation through images (verbal and mental images), shadows and reflections</p> <p>- Verbal and visual images can only be a partial representation of reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts and theories human mind • Technologies (e.g. photography, film, internet, AR, VR) • Cave as technological simulacrum? • Inaccessibility of objective truth and reality, a transcendent idea (Plato). • Difference between explanation and interpretation, signification and meaningful. <p>The shadows on the wall can be seen in context of Peirce's semiotics as indexical signs (the point to the model in location and presence) as well as iconic signs of objects (the resemble as images somehow the objects, even if only flattened and monochrome)</p>	<p>Semiotics (Saussure, Peirce)</p>	<p>---</p> <p>Plato</p> <p>'the actual figures they draw cast shadows and reflections in water' (p.239)</p> <p>'Behind every cave there is, and must necessarily be, a still deeper cave' - F. Nietzsche</p> <p>'An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would (without)' - S. Sontag (2013, p.534)</p> <p>'What is repeated can never be represented in the present, but is always disguised in the roles and masks it produces' – G Deleuze (Smith, 2012. p.21)</p> <p>--</p> <p>"There is no objective observation of truth but always an interested</p>
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<p>Objects, more real</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Confusion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>			<p>participation in its construction.</p> <p>Documentary can lead to an awareness of the condition under which it is possible to intervene in the political and cultural construction of truths which, while not guaranteed, nevertheless matter as the narratives by which we live." - Linda Williams</p> <p>---</p>
<p>Knowledge of reality depends on internal means of perception and conception, reasoning, and a spatial temporal embodied experience</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Confusion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning & dialectic • Dualism of the sight and reason • Knowledge as knowing understanding (<i>nous</i>) • Knowledge as understanding, crossing a line of theory and practice, • Subjective interrogation and inference in the presence • Human conditions of satisfaction and desire for pleasure keeps people ignorant and relying on appearances, they are happy with that. 	<p>Plato <i>Allegory of the Cave</i></p> <p><i>Pure Land AR</i></p> <p>Mark Johnson <i>Meaning of the Body</i></p> <p><i>Ladder of Inference</i></p>	<p>"Imagination is the faculty of delusion." - Gilles Deleuze (1983)</p> <p>Plato:</p> <p>'The capacity of knowledge is innate in each man's mind' (p.245)</p> <p>'careless acceptance of appearances', 'too ignorant and weak to</p>

<p>Perception in the intelligible realm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Return</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Confusion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embodied experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition between darkness and light a zone of confusion - Human experience and knowledge is an embodied experience that cannot be channel to an intelligible mind of reasoning only. • Movement ('turning head and mind'): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge a process of moving from the world of sight to the world of knowledge • Human intelligence consists of emotional intelligence, <i>nous</i>, Intellectus, 'gestimmtheit' (mood) (Spiekermann ed al, 2017) <p>The ascent to enlightenment, to see the 'form of the good' as Plato expressed it, is a way of reasoning, critical thinking and investigation of underlying assumptions and beliefs, an abstraction from appearances towards the essence and a 'first principle'. This transcendental conception, criticised by Deleuze for its lack of possible experience, is a model of dualistic explanation of knowledge. It enforces a model-copy viewpoint (shadow-reflections-objects) as well as a superiority of logic above experience. A</p>		<p>establish harmonious order governing their indignation and their appetites' (p.xxvi)</p> <p>'to be responsible for whatever is right and valuable in anything' (p.244)</p> <p>'dazzled to see properly', dazzled by the glare', 'blinded by darkness' (p.242-3)</p> <p>'with unsighted eye' (p.244)</p> <p>--</p> <p>'real what one is experiencing' – S. Sontag (2013, p. 534)</p> <p>'having an experience becomes identical with taking a photograph' - S Sontag, 2013, p. 545),</p> <p>--</p>
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	<p>conception challenged by Lyotard and Deleuze with a focus on divergent perspectives.</p>		<p>‘Meaning is always the effect of the trace of the other in the selfsame’ – J. Derrida (Butler, 2002, p.21)</p>
<p>Knowledge is context dependent of historical and social assumptions, beliefs and agreements. The dualistic nature of power as having power of or power over challenges an authentic self-reflexive life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and social constructs • prevailing conditions, power of knowledge (e.g. Foucault); • space of obtaining e.g. cinema • Reality mediated through our representational frameworks (history, culture, society, memory fragments) • Living in the cave and shadows as normal life for ordinary people (Plato) • Power relationship, leaders as knowledgeable and educated versus ordinary, uneducated • Cave: ‘Puppet show’ - Theater, simulation, controlled by cavemen (see cinema) • Knowledge a question of Education: People need 'dragging up the steep' • Mass media (see Reality TV) and documentary, different from empirical reality, it works of a perception of ‘convincingly real’ • Feeding the appetite and desire for pleasure 	<p>Plato <i>Allegory of the Cave</i></p> <p>Reality TV and documentary film (L Williams, 1993; Howell and Negreiros, 2015)</p> <p>Google (new article?)</p> <p>Ads on social media</p> <p>YouTube</p> <p>Freeland <i>Art Theory</i></p>	<p>Plato</p> <p>‘get used to seeing in the dark’ (p.247)</p> <p>--</p> <p>‘The ordinary man knows the difference between substance and shadow in the physical world, ... [but there] moral and intellectual opinions often bear as little relations to the truth as the average film or television programme does to real life’ (p. 240)</p> <p>‘most ordinary people think that pleasure is the good, while the more sophisticated think it is knowledge’ (p.229)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New media and technology as democratic medium, user as producer • Google, Facebook and customized reality • Advertisement on all channels • Postmodern Documentary film • Home and familiarity <p>The question of power of knowledge or power of representation is a twofold question: to have power of or to have power over (Bennett, 2005, pp.306-309). Another question is how knowledge is perceived as I explored partly in previous post on the Allegory: knowledge as a database to behold, or knowledge as verb in the sense of to understand (episteme) To lay claim on knowledge is comparable with to lay claim on truth or reality. As Foucault argued, an episteme describes the way of an inquiry into truth as a dominant mode within an historical framework (Bennett, 2005, pp.195-197).</p> <p>Plato considered the cave as the real world of life in Athens, the ascent to the sun just an analogy of the intelligible approach of reasoning, thus never literally, what brings it down to the shadows and the puppet show, a mere dualism of model and copy as indirect experience. Thus, I can take it literally as a kind of simulacrum and remove from reality, or metaphorical as a suppression of knowledge gain, or seeing the truth in a political</p>		<p>‘to sit in his old seat in the cave’ (ibid, p.243).</p> <p>‘careless acceptance of appearances’, ‘too ignorant and weak to establish harmonious order governing their indignation and their appetites’ (p.xxvi)</p> <p>‘he were forcibly dragged up the steep and rugged ascent’, ‘the process would be painful one’ (p.242)</p> <p>‘to sit in his old seat in the cave’ (p.243)</p> <p>‘we must reject the conception of education professed by those who say they can put into the mind knowledge that was not there before -rather as if they could out sight into</p>
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	<p>sense. Information is power, e.g. the power of multinational corporations e.g. Alphabet company (irony of the name itself, mainly Google) as knowledge 'beholder' and provider of 'customized' information through algorithms and surveillance of consumer behaviour, a restrictive access to versus wide diversity.</p> <p>Power of representation and perception of reality seems to cumulate in media consumption, television, reality tv, documentary, gaming, and social media alongside 'big data knowledge' .</p> <p>One scenario that of a passive immobile spectator, a 'discarnate man' in front of the screen as McLuhan expressed it (Freeland, 2003, p. 137), seduced and absorbed by simulated realities, and 'forced to serve evil' as Plato stated about the weakness of the ordinary (Plato, 2007, p. 246).</p> <p>The other scenario that of a user and producer (e.g making own YouTube videos) fully aware of a disconnect between representational frameworks, aware of the bodily temporal-spatial movement that can create meaning through presence and taking ownership of self-experience and social interactions.</p>		<p>blind eyes' (Plato, 2007, p.245)</p> <p>'the mind as a whole must be turned away from the world of change until its eye can bear to look straight at reality' – Plato (p.316, in Plato, 2007, p.245)</p> <p>'the horrible seem more ordinary – making it familiar, remote, inevitable' – S. Sontag (2013, p.542)</p> <p>images make 'us feel that the world is more available than it really is' - S Sontag, 2013, p. 545)</p> <p>--</p> <p>"Surveillance with a commercial face" - Mark Andrejevic, 2009</p> <p>--</p> <p>"The increasingly democratic system of viewer choice and</p>
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			<p>participation seems also to require increasing silliness" - John Hartley, 2009</p> <p>---</p> <p>'Culture is the arts elevated to a set of beliefs' – Thomas Wolfe</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>My essay was covering the aspects of reality, perception and power as a diverse perspective on how we can make meaning in a 'cave', a space as a familiar environment of life and home.</p> <p>There is no objective truth or reality accessible to experience. The essence of truth is a transcendent idea (Plato). Verbal and visual images can only be a partial representation of reality that gets more meaningful through divergent viewpoints, subjective interrogation in the presence, and constructed significations and interpretations. Representation through signs and figure of speeches are means for interpretation and explanation.</p> <p>Our perception of the world and others constitutes of a balanced and a meaningful life built on a critical interrogation of signifiers and underlying assumptions and beliefs.</p> <p>Technology are means with a purpose, not an end in itself. It can control us or we can take control. But we need to stay awake. The internet, a vast cloud often seen as an expansive knowledge database, is a network of interactivity of divergent opinions. Knowledge cannot be stored, it has to be experienced with full bodily awareness.</p> <p>Plato's Allegory can stand as a reminder that an uncritical attitude and satisfying our appetites and desires would take us back to a dreamland, a world of ignorance and simulacrum.</p>		

Assignment 3 - Development of argumentation

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