

## PLATONIC VERSUS ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY

	PLATO	ARISTOTLE
BEING	<p>Idealist Ontology: P. explains the things of this world as imperfect reflections of ideal forms or essences not of this world</p> <p>Idealist Cosmology: The imperfect physical world is a pale or imperfect imitation of an ideal world beyond this which is the true reality</p>	<p>Materialist Ontology: A. attributes the existence of all the things of this world to a combination of four worldly causes: material, efficient, final, formal</p> <p>Materialist cosmology: A. Does not hazard a guess as to whether there is another world beyond this one; focuses on what is at hand in an effort to comprehend the world we live in</p>
KNOWLEDGE	<p>Proto-rationalist: Our most important ideas are innate (there are certain things which we simply and indisputably know e.g. mathematical or geometrical facts)</p> <p>Knowledge is a priori: knowledge derived from sense-perception is not reliable; sense-impressions must be weighed against what our reason tells us is true</p> <p>Objectivity is possible: it is possible to know the absolute truth</p> <p>Dialectical model of reasoning (thesis, antithesis, synthesis): by weighing competing propositions against each other, some of our assumptions may be confirmed</p> <p>Rhetoric is inferior to logic in that it misuses both logic and the seductive wiles of language to prove simply any point of view, whether true or false</p>	<p>Proto-empiricist: all our ideas are acquired (there is no proof that any of our ideas are derived from anything other than our perceptions which derive from our sensual interaction with the physical world)</p> <p>Knowledge is a posteriori: sense-perception is the basis of all knowledge but must be supplemented by the careful cultivation of one's reason</p> <p>Objectivity is possible but in a more provisional sense: it is possible to know the truth about certain contingent states of affairs, but whether such claims hold universally is subject to further investigation</p> <p>Analytical model of reasoning (the syllogism): from empirically intuited (or 'necessary') premisses, conclusions may be inferred through a process of induction</p> <p>Rhetoric is to be distinguished from logic in terms of its objectives (the production of practical knowledge [phronesis] rather than theoretical knowledge [episteme]), its techniques (the use of tropes and schemes in addition to logical processes), its emotional (rather than solely intellectual) appeal, and its locale (it has its uses in the law courts and political assemblies as opposed to the academies)</p>
COMMUNICATION	<p>Linguistic realism: our ideas pre-exist the words which we use to communicate with others</p> <p>Referential model of meaning: words mean by virtue of referring or corresponding to or naming real objects which we have in common with others</p> <p>Inadequacy of words: language is ultimately inadequate in that words correspond merely to things, rather than the ideal forms of which the things are a reflection and to which words can never do justice</p> <p>Interpretation: the meaning of written, more so than spoken, words is liable to misinterpretation because the writer is most often absent, for which reason the true meaning of a text should be rigorously policed; figurative language is especially slippery and should be excised or at least used with extreme caution</p>	<p>Linguistic nominalism: our ideas have no independent existence apart from the words by which we grasp them</p> <p>Referential &amp; instrumental model of meaning: words manifest outwardly for purposes of communication the ideas which users have within their mind and which are in turn reflections of real objects</p> <p>Adequacy of words: language serves to label the things of this world and to communicate our ideas to others</p> <p>Understanding: misinterpretation can be avoided through a better grasp of the precise workings of language and the role of the various parts of speech</p>

HUMAN NATURE	<p>Dualist model of the mind: the mind (or soul) is made of a distinct substance from the body which it accordingly precedes and postdates (the soul is conceived as a 'prisoner in the dungeon of the flesh,' yearning to return to its natural element, the World of Ideal Forms)</p> <p>P. offers a tripartite theory of the soul which consists of the reason (corresponding to the head), the passions (the heart), and the appetites (the lower extremities); the reason should hold sway over the other parts</p>	<p>Physicalist model of the mind: the mind is inseparable from the body with which it rises (in youth) and decays (in old age). The soul is the formal cause of the human being as opposed to the body (the material cause) in that it consists in certain properties (or has a certain form) which distinguish it from both animate (e.g. animals) and inanimate (e.g. rocks) entities</p>
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