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Metaphysical (ontological) dualism: there are two different types of being, there are two different types of substance: eg. matter and spirit, body and soul., God and the created world. Main (only selected) representatives: Plato, Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz.

Plato`s (427-347 BC) dualism

Plato was a student of Socrates. There are three ideas which are typical of Socrates: opinion that only human life is an object of philosophical reflection; moralism; ethical intellectualism.

Plato

The cave

“Imagine a cave. Prisoners are chained facing its far wall. They’ve been kept there all their lives and their heads are held fixed so that they can’t see anything except the wall of the cave. Behind them there is a fire and between the fire and their backs a road. Along the road various people walk casting their shadows on the cave wall; some of them carry models of animals which also cast shadows. The prisoners inside the cave only ever see shadows. They believe the shadows are the real things because they don’t know any better. But in fact they never see real people. Then one day one of the prisoners is released and allowed to look towards the fire. At first he is completely dazzled by the flames, but gradually he starts to discern the world around him. Then he is taken out of the cave into the full light of the sun, which again dazzles him. He slowly begins to realise the poverty of his former life: he had always been satisfied with the world of shadows when behind him lay the brightly lit real world in all its richness. Now as his eyes acclimatise to the daylight he sees what his fellow prisoners have missed and feels sorry for them. Eventually he becomes so used to the light that he can even look directly at the sun. Then he is taken back to his seat in the cave. His eyes are no longer used to this shadowy existence. He can no longer make the fine discriminations between shadows that his fellow prisoners find easy. From their point of view his eyesight has been ruined by his journey out of the cave. He has seen the real world; they remain content with the world of superficial appearances and wouldn’t leave the cave even if they could”.

[Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: the classics*, p. 36-37]

The structure of the cave describes the real position of human being in the world. We have senses and we must use them. But we have reason as well and it is the proper tool to cognise what is true.

Being as a whole is composed of two kinds of being: real being and ideal being (the world of pure forms)

The real being is only shadow of the idea; it is temporal, changing and individual; it may be observed in sensual cognition; it may be seen like coloured thing, it may be heard like physical sound, it may be touched like material table. But it is not only being. It is rather a picture of the real being produced by our senses. So shadows on the wall are symbols of our image of the world only. Real physical things are objects which are discovered and explored in sciences like physics or biology.

The coloured thing is an element of the world of our senses. The objectively real thing possesses some objective features which are experienced by our senses as a colour, taste or smell.

The ideal being is eternal, constant, permanent, invariable; it is also general and available for our reason only. Any idea can be seen, each idea may be thought only. The ideal being is cognised rationally only. It is impossible to see

Examples of the ideal being: men as such, beauty as such, good as such. But also geometrical objects like square, rectangle or ring.

“Many beds exist. Some are double, some single, some four-posted, and so on. Yet there is something they share which makes them all beds. What they share is a relation to an ideal bed, the Form of the bed. This Form actually exists: it is the only real bed. All other beds are imperfect copies of the Form of the bed. They belong to the world of appearance, not of reality. Consequently we can only have genuine knowledge of the Form of the bed: any information about actual beds is opinion, not knowledge. The everyday world we inhabit is constantly changing; the world of Forms is timeless and unchanging. Philosophers, with their love of wisdom, gain access to the world of Forms, and thus the possibility of knowledge, through thought; perception restricts us to the flux of the world of appearance”. [p. 47]

It is impossible to see men, square or fruit. What may be seen is John Smith, this concrete square with a concrete length of a side, this concrete apple or orange only,

Are you able to think that a square starts to exist or that rectangle is changing?

There are two different worlds but they are not equal. Ideal being is perfect, the real being is a shadow only. That is why Plato criticised a mimetic art (it is a shadow of the shadow, and it enlarges the distance between us and true being (ideal being)).

Argument:

- 1) We use many very general terms in order to describe the world we live in. Eg. man, square, political state, political or social system, capitalist system, liberal system, war, peace, beauty, knowledge, rain.
- 2) The question is: what are objects we mean using such general notion.
- 3) Plato's arguments are based on geometric notions especially.
- 4) So what is an object we mean while talking about square or Pythagoras theorem (the square of the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle) is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides)
- 5) It is impossible to think those notions are referred to some real objects because of the temporal and individual nature of the reality.
- 6) We have two possibilities in front of us. Geometric notions are referred to nothing and the geometry does not have its object, it is empty. Or geometric notions are referred to some objects but they have to be different from real objects which may be observed in a sensual cognition.
- 7) And they must be also different from the objects existing in our thinking only. Mental objects (objects existing in human thinking) exist only if they are thought – objects of

dreaming exist only if we are dreaming about them, objects of our phantasy lasts as long as our phantasy lasts.

- 8) So if we do not want to say that geometry is a science without object, we have to accept on the one hand that there is a world which really exists but on the other hand that it is different from the mental or physical being. It must exist beyond the matter and mind.

Plato's idealism is of dualistic nature. The matter is not a kind of illusion (it was an opinion of Parmenides). The matter exists but it is not a perfect being. The really perfect being is an ideal.

Platonism proposes the dualistic idealism as an metaphysical description of being. Based on this description one can talk about new meaning of this term; that is why we talk about something like ideal love, ideal life, ideal social system.

The term "ideal" means, firstly, "everlasting", constant, general; and than, secondly, it means "perfect", super, the best.

Many Plato's concepts seem to exist in everyday language; eg. so called platonic love. But it is not identical with real Plato's understanding of love. Plato's love has to contain three stages (or levels): 1) at the very beginning I love someone's beautiful body; 2) than I love beautiful mind (soul, beautiful mind, beautiful character, beautiful person); 3) and than I love beauty as such, in general, a concret form of its realisation is not important).

Platonic love means love that is directed to mental or spiritual aspects only; physical aspects of human body are not inspired for platonic lovers at all.

A very important element of Plato's legacy is also his concept of the ideal state. There is a lot of interpretations which try to demonstrate an utopian character of this concept. But at the some time there are also interpretations which show that Plato's idea of the ideal social system is still alive.

"The three parts of the soul he identifies are Reason, Spirit and Desire. Reason corresponds to the role of the Rulers in the ideal state. Like the Rulers, Reason can plan for the good of the whole entity: unlike the other parts of the soul, it is not self-interested. Reason has the capacity to make plans about how best to achieve certain ends; but it also involves the love of truth.

Spirit is that part of the personality which provides emotional motivation for action in the form of anger, indignation and the like. When subject to the proper training Spirit is the source of bravery and courage. Spirit corresponds to the role of the Auxiliaries. Desire is the pure appetite for particular things such as food, drink or sex. Desire can persist in direct opposition to Reason. Indeed the occurrence of conflicts between what people want and what they know is best for them is evidence Plato uses to support his distinction between the three parts of the soul. Desire corresponds to the role of the Workers". [p. 44-45]

There are four virtues of wisdom, courage, self-discipline and justice that can all be found in individuals as well as in state