Adjudication of Plato and Russell’s Theory of Knowledge

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**Plato’s Divided Line and Allegory of the Cave**

Plato uses the divided line metaphor and allegory of the cave in discussing how knowledge is achieved by the human mind (Randolph and Sekuler, 2006). In the divided line metaphor, Plato states that there are four development stages of true knowledge discovery that the mind goes through. Each stage is made up of a parallel line between the kind of a presented object and the thought made possible by the object. The divided line is made up of the larger upper part that acts as a representation of the intelligible world, while the lower smaller part acts as a representation of the visible world. On the other hand, truth and reality of a lower and higher degree in the intelligible world are symbolized by the unequal division. In relation to this, belief is placed a notch above images because of the possibility of having a higher relationship with reality. Therefore, according to Plato, believing is still an opinion despite its basis on seeing.

According to Randolph and Sekuler (2006), in the allegory of the cave Plato uses the imagination of people who have been living in a cave since childhood with chains by their necks and legs that were restricting their movement and turning of their heads as well. The prisoners have been chained in such a way that they were only able to look forward and all they could see was the cave’s back wall that was before them. Also, the two prisoners could not look at each other or moving persons behind them, and shadows were all they ever saw. The cave has been used by Plato in illustrating that the dark cave is the dwelling place for the majority of humanity that have focused their imaginations on the shadows of the world. It is for this reason that educators are used in leading humans from the cave into the light.

**Russell’s Distinction between Appearance and Reality**
The distinction between appearance and reality has been made by the use of observation of immediate surroundings. When looking at a table, Russell can determine that the color, shape and texture of the table are enough to raise doubt on its existence. This is because the reality does not fix the perception of these attributes, and since they are obvious possibilities with each depending on the observation condition, individuals lose sense confidence as stated by Robert, MacLin and MacLin (2005). The relevance of this observation in relation to appearance and reality distinction is that the real table is not known, but an assumption from what is known immediately. Its reality is dependent on the assumption of knowing part of what is real and referred to as sense data. Sense data are not similar to sensations, but impressions that our senses get the offer of appearance reality. According to Russell, sense data are sensations immediately known to us. For instance, we perceive the greenness sensation whenever we see green. This means we have color sensation, but the color is not a sensation.

**Critical Comparison of the Two Distinctions**

In Robert, MacLin and MacLin (2005), there are distinctions between Plato’s realm of being and realm of becoming with Russell’s appearance and reality. Similarities in the two philosophies are evident where the philosophy of Plato expresses universal worlds, while Russell accounts for Plato’s theory of ideas. Universal understanding of Plato’s idea helps in understanding the discussion of Russell. Russell stated that relations are not made up of mental, physical or like senses, while Plato addresses an understanding of relations. In doing this, Plato considers the justice concept and knowing what it means required looking into just acts to discover what is shared, and this is justice in itself.

**Conclusion**
Plato uses the divided line metaphor and allegory of the cave in discussing how knowledge is achieved by the human mind. In the divided line metaphor, Plato states that there are four development stages of true knowledge discovery that the mind goes through. Each stage is made up of a parallel line between the kind of a presented object and the thought made possible by the object. The divided line is made up of the larger upper part that acts as a representation of the intelligible world, while the lower smaller part acts as a representation of the visible world. In the allegory of the cave, he uses the imagination of people who have been living in a cave since childhood with chains by their necks and legs restricting their movement and turning of their heads as well. The prisoners have been chained in such a way that they were only able to look forward and all they could see was the cave’s back wall that was before them. The distinction between appearance and reality has been made by the use of an observation of immediate surroundings. When looking at a table, Russell can determine that the color, shape and texture of the table are enough to raise doubt on its existence. This is because the reality does not fix the perception of these attributes, and since they are obvious possibilities with each depending on the observation condition, individuals lose sense confidence. The relevance of this observation in relation to appearance and reality distinction is that the real table is not known but an assumption from what is known immediately.
References
