

4: The Philosopher-King

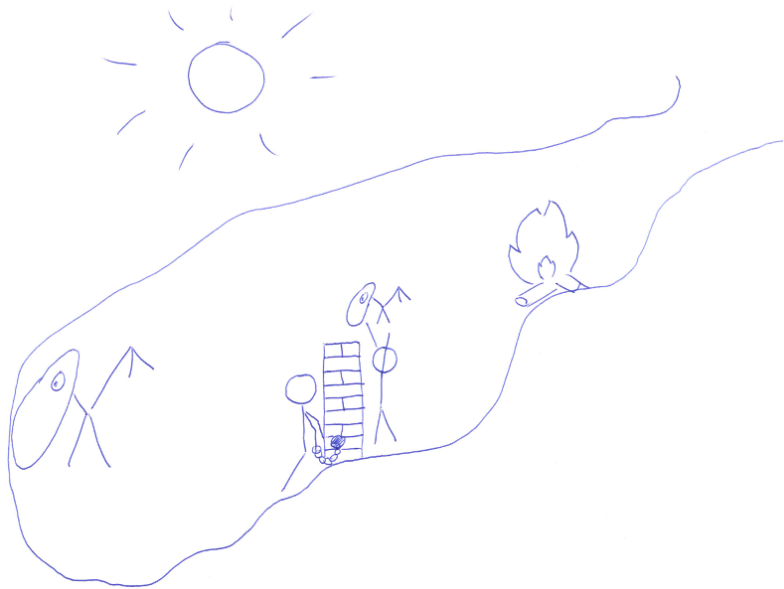


Figure: Plato's allegory of the cave

“ [W]e must reject the conception of education professed by those who say that they can put into the mind knowledge that was not there before — rather as if they could put sight into blind eyes. (Lee, *Republic*, 518c) ”

“ But our argument indicates that the capacity for knowledge is innate in each man’s mind, and that the organ by which he learns is like an eye which cannot be turned from darkness to light unless the whole body is turned; in the same way the mind as a whole must be turned away from the world of change until its eye can bear to look straight at reality, and at the brightest of all realities which is what we call the good. (Lee, *Republic*, 518c) ”

“ [T]he state whose prospective rulers come to their duties with least enthusiasm is bound to have the best and most tranquil government, and the state whose rulers are eager to rule the worst. *(Lee, Republic, 520d)* ”

“ If you get, in public affairs, men whose life is impoverished and destitute of personal satisfactions, but who hope to snatch some compensation for their own inadequacy from a political career, there can never be good government. They start fighting for power, and the consequent internal and domestic conflicts ruin both them and society. *(Lee, Republic, 521a)* ”

“ My personal view is that Alfred did not ‘write’ anything. The preface and text of the *Pastoral Care* were done by another and issued with his authorization. The translations of the *Consolation* and *Soliloquies* probably had no direct connection with the king at all but were attributed to him after his lifetime. The law-code, like all other early medieval law-codes, was written by others in the king’s name and with his authority. On the Psalms there is no real evidence for authorship. None of these things is yet provable. But we should at least stop assuming that the king wrote them all, or even authorized them all. (Godden, “Did King Alfred Write Anything?,” 18) ”

Bibliography

Godden, Malcolm R. "Did King Alfred Write Anything?" *Medium Ævum* 76, no. 1 (2007): 1–23.

Lee, Desmond, trans. *Plato: The Republic*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 1987.



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