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Allegory of the Cave Adaptation

I have never realized that there is anything different beyond what I have known all of my life. I find myself blinded by light. I was just standing there living my life, maybe I was getting a little bored but I was comfortable and I knew my place. Now I find myself totally overwhelmed. My eyes are burning and I can’t see anything. When before I was safe in my limits: not having to move or look at anything surprising or shocking. I couldn’t move very much but really who cares? I was content to live my life as I was. Suddenly I felt like I was free, it’s hard to why I never knew I was chained where I stood. Suddenly though I found I could move like I never could before. I was taken by the arm and lead to the place I now find myself. I can’t see anything, I don’t know what going on. All I feel is pain. My fists are pressed into my eye-sockets trying to force out the searing, blinding heat. I feel the brightness is consuming me.

I passed out. When I woke up, the light was a little more tolerable. I am beginning to be able to see the dim outlines of objects on the ground through the glare. I feel relieved to find that I’m not the only one here, the one that freed me is standing by me, I can tell because I can make out his feet. I asked him where we were and he said to just wait and I will see things that will “shake my worldview to its very foundation,” whatever that means.

There is something strange about where we are standing. The ground is much softer and is not nearly as smooth as it was in the place I was before. I ask the one who brought me out of the darkness and he says that what I am seeing is called grass. I am amazed that such things even exist in the world. He said that as my sight gradually returns I will see more things like it and that it is the lowliest of the things to see.

I spent hours staring at the ground, gradually my sight is returning. There are so many curiosities where I am. So many things are different. As I am able to raise my eyes farther and farther there are so many different things to see: trees, a river, birds, flowers. (I found out what they are called from the one who freed me) I finally understood what he had meant, what I had though was reality and was real is nothing compared to what I now see. In the light of the sun, such a wonderful thing, there are so many discoveries to be made. I wish I could describe each and every thing I see.

I looked back to where I had come forth into the light. I see that it is simply a hole in a rock wall, such a strange thing to hold all of humanity. I resolve that I will go back into the cave and rescue more of my brethren and show them all of the wonder that is to be seen outside. The one that freed me, seeing that I can see clearly has left back into the cave to free more. I wish to follow his example.

I now find that since I am so used to the light and seeing everything so clearly in the light of the sun I can’t see anything clearly in the cave. Inside there is very little light and everything is in shadow. I made my way back to the spot I had occupied in the past. I realized that what I had looked at all my life, thinking it was real, was just shadows of real things passing in front of a fire. All I had ever seen was just a shadow of what was really existent. Here I was thinking I saw truth, how things really were, and all they were was shadows on a wall.

I try to tell those still shackled what they had seen outside but they don’t believe me. They all think me mad because I cannot clearly see the shadows they believe to be reality. My eyes are still too used to the light. I try to argue with them and show them with reason what they are seeing and what I now know but they refuse to listen. I must not give up. I must keep trying for their sake.

I have not had much of a chance to help those still chained. They refuse to leave their place of comfort. One by one I am able to convince some of them to come with me and they also help to convert others. I have made many different trips back to the mouth of the cave to once again see the wonders of the world and talk to others who have the same knowledge that I do. Every time it is the same. Whenever I first arrive and when I first leave I am blinded. I will continue my toil. I will have more see the truth.