Liv Hurley

Mr. Walters

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Plato vs. Edwards

Both Plato and Edwards had an intention to share what they believed social nature was about. They also believed that they, along with other men of higher philosophy, were the only ones that know the truth of reality. Plato takes a melancholy approach to what he suspects is the true form of reality only few can see. Edwards, on the other hand, uses the approach of pathos to scare his congregation into trusting him and his belief.

Plato creates the Allegory of the Cave in order to share what he understands as his place in the world. He relates society to the prisoners watching the wall while he is the one outside knowing more than the rest, but lonely in his knowledge. Plato uses his new allegory to explain what he is going through, and to hopefully teach these people about what is really out there rather than to forcibly persuade them to agree. Plato’s Cave is a guide, not a demand or a challenge: “Anyone who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light” (215). He expresses his loneliness in his life and the tough endeavor of gaining insight.

In 1741, John Edwards held an infamous sermon to the colonists of Connecticut. His theory was that having a strong use of pathos and ethos will sway his audience into following him full-heartedly. Edward uses techniques to alarm his listeners: “Thus it is natural men are held in the man of God, over the pit of Hell; they deserved the fiery pit” (198). Edward believes he is relaying God’s words to the people for he is a man of God. He uses these techniques to impose a requirement of listening to his preaches and following his words.

Although these men have identical theories they want to convey, they go about it in dissimilar ways. Whether using a panicky tone or just conveying a meaningful message, they have both created longstanding theories that will leave an impact for all writing to come.