

The 'Allegory Of The Cave' is a theory put forward by [Plato](#), concerning human perception. Plato claimed that knowledge gained through the senses is no more than opinion and that, in order to have real knowledge, we must gain it through philosophical reasoning.

'The Allegory of the Cave' by Plato

In the Allegory of the Cave, [Plato](#) distinguishes between people who mistake sensory knowledge for the truth and people who really do see the truth. It goes like this:

The Cave

- Imagine a cave, in which there are three prisoners. The prisoners are tied to some rocks, their arms and legs are bound and their head is tied so that they cannot look at anything but the stonewall in front of them.
- These prisoners have been here since birth and have never seen outside of the cave.
- Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between them is a raised walkway.
- People outside the cave walk along this walkway carrying things on their head including; animals, plants, wood and stone.

The Shadows

- So, imagine that you are one of the prisoners. You cannot look at anything behind or to the side of you – you must look at the wall in front of you.
- When people walk along the walkway, you can see shadows of the objects they are carrying cast on to the wall.
- If you had never seen the real objects ever before, you would believe that the shadows of objects were 'real.'

The Game

- [Plato](#) suggests that the prisoners would begin a 'game' of guessing which shadow would appear next.
- If one of the prisoners were to correctly guess, the others would praise him as clever and say that he were a master of nature.

The Escape

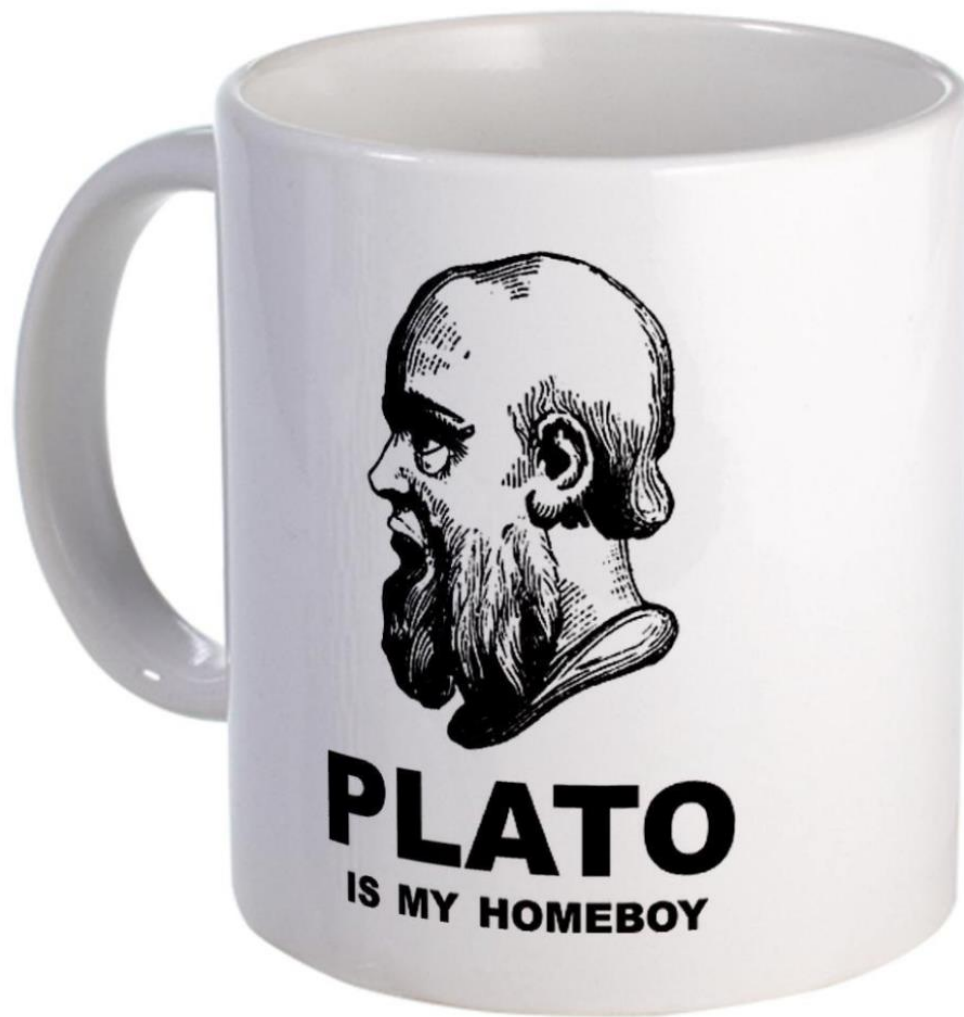
- One of the prisoners then escapes from their bindings and leaves the cave.
- He is shocked at the world he discovers outside the cave and does not believe it can be real.
- As he becomes used to his new surroundings, he realizes that his former view of reality was wrong.
- He begins to understand his new world, and sees that the Sun is the source of life and goes on an intellectual journey where he discovers beauty and meaning
- He see's that his former life, and the guessing game they played is useless.

The Return

- The prisoner returns to the cave, to inform the other prisoners of his findings.
- They do not believe him and threaten to kill him if he tries to set them free.

‘ The Allegory of The Cave’ by Plato – The Meaning

The Allegory of the cave by Plato should not be taken at face value. In essays and exams, whoever is marking it expects you to have a deeper understanding of the meaning of the theory. You can then use these to think about criticisms and then to form your own opinion.



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The Cave

- In Plato's theory, the cave represents people who believe that knowledge comes from what we see and hear in the world – empirical evidence. The cave shows that believers of empirical knowledge are trapped in a 'cave' of misunderstanding.

The Shadows

- The Shadows represent the perceptions of those who believe empirical evidence ensures knowledge. If you believe that what you see should be taken as truth, then you are merely seeing a shadow of the truth. In Plato's opinion you are a 'pleb' if you believe this (their insult for those who are not Philosophers)!

The Game

- The Game represents how people believe that one person can be a 'master' when they have knowledge of the empirical world. Plato is demonstrating

that this master does not actually know any truth, and suggesting that it is ridiculous to admire someone like this.

The Escape

- The escaped prisoner represents the Philosopher, who seeks knowledge outside of the cave and outside of the senses.
- The Sun represents philosophical truth and knowledge
- His intellectual journey represents a philosophers journey when finding truth and wisdom

The Return

- The other prisoners reaction to the escapee returning represents that people are scared of knowing philosophical truths and do not trust philosophers.

It is always recommended that you read the original text by Plato to reach the top grades. If you would like to purchase 'The Republic' by Plato, [click here!](#)

In Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, he describes a world where prisoners live chained in a cave. The puppeteers cast shadows on the wall and these shadows construct reality for the prisoners. One of the prisoners breaks free and leaves the cave. At first, he is blinded by the sun and apprehensive about the new world. The shadows in the cave had always seemed so real to him. After he has spent some time in this new world, he realizes that his entire existence has been controlled by others and he now knows the truth. Thousands of years later, is this allegory relevant to our lives today? Do we live in a cave where reality is constructed by someone else? Conversely, is this allegory outdated? Has the internet, public education, and improvements in transportation metaphorically killed the puppeteer? Is our world more transparent than it ever has been?

1. Ian Beamer says:

September 1, 2011 at 11:24 PM

In the allegory of the cave, Socrates is explaining to the student how we are blinded by what we are only allowed to see. If we were to see the truth, then we would return to tell the others, but they would not believe you.

If you put that into today, you could compare it to the conspiracy theorists. They think that the government is hiding us from the truth, and that the only way to learn is to go beyond the boundaries set by the law. If you saw the report about the Roswell (http://l.yimg.com/a/i/ww/news/2011/04/11/fbi_memo3.jpg) incident, you would see that they describe the spacecraft as circular, 50 feet in diameter, and held three bodies of human shape, three feet tall, dressed in metallic cloth of a fine texture. I think that that proves the existence of aliens, or midgets going around in a circular spacecraft through New Mexico.

Needless to say, some people try to limit themselves from these, by not watching news,

just fictional movies and cartoons. The freedom of press keeps things flowing, but some ignore that, and try to stay in the world of fantasy. Others would rather stay informed on what every celebrity is doing (TMZ) and post it on the Internet.

Then there are the people who just go with whatever happens. If something happens, react, wait until it's over, and go back to normal.

The allegory still very well exists, and in some places, it doesn't. People will either see too much, or too little.

[Reply](#)



2. **Ana Barnaby** says:

[September 1, 2011 at 11:39 PM](#)

Plato describes this scary like cave in Allegory of the Cave. He describes the world as if there are tons and tons of unknown things out there. From the day we were born we were told so many things whether they are true or not. We are so occupied into day's society that we can't see what truly is right and wrong. Today there is the media, military, government, school, work, shops, food, and so many other things that keep us occupied from the truth. We are even more hidden from the truth today than they were thousands of years ago. We the people are almost like the prisoners and the government, media or the military play the shadows and puppeteers. They control our life and how we act unless we break free and walk out of the cave. Once we break free and see the government's truth or even more lies depending on how well they are controlling us. If we live our lives as if everything appears to be the truth were going to be locked in the cave until we die. From the day we entered this cave we were locked with chains, to be controlled by our puppeteers. Every day we grow older and see the shadows go by us. If we work together as a team, we could break free of the chains and walk into the light. Like Plato said the light is very blinding but this is because the truth is very shocking to us. We then see truth and we could eventually bury that cave and let everyone see the clear truth. In order to bury the cave of lies, we have to work together and have hope.

[Reply](#)



3. **Justin Alvarado** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 12:18 AM](#)

The allegory DOES still apply to our world today, we are held down by media, government, technologies, and yes even religion. There's always someone "above" us, in

authority that is, much like the military. Those people think they can fly above the rest of us, the ones they “control” or as Plato has it, the ones they keep chained. The government controls the military and media, that right there gives them ability to truly control our minds. The military are the shackles that hold us against the cave wall and the media are the shadows shown on the other wall. Once one of us can ever leave the shadows of the cave and finally come out to see the world as it REALLY is, thats when we reach our own elightement of our lives. When can see things for ourselves and make judgement on what is right or wrong without being told what is and isnt in this world. After so long of realizing the world of what it is you want to go back and tell everyone “HEY THIS ISNT WHATS REAL!”. Though they never want to believe it even though its whats truly outside the cave. Its like finding the truth that god never existed, that it was really just like the shadows someone else made for us to believe. You could go back and try to tell the ones left in the cave but they would choose not to believe what they werent told. Thats just one example I can think of. So yes the allegory still lives in our world today, only thing that has changed is who the pupeteer is.

[Reply](#)



4. **Ben Anderson** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 12:48 AM](#)

In the Allegory of the Cave, Socrates explains to his friend(I forget his name) that people are oblivious to the truth, and when one finally see's the truth, others would not believe this one being. In todays society, I think this relates to False Advertising. This is seen on the television, on billboards, magazines etc. People believe what they see, but when one does research, they would find out that this “Advertising” is actually a lie. Many types of companies use False Advertising. Types such as food distributors, make-up companies and also Diet Companies. They use this to make people believe that their product is amazing, and then they profit off of their lies. Many people already know this, but many are still oblivious. There are the types of people that know this, and then the type who will sit back, believe the commercial and buy the product. I think that these types of people relate directly to the Prisoners who just watch shadows in the cave, and those who research the topic relate directly to the Prisoner who was set free. The Allegory obviously still exists in our society, whether it is seen or not.

[Reply](#)



5. **Jenni Scott** says:

September 2, 2011 at 1:24 AM

Today we're chained to a wall, a wall called stereotypes. We believe that the stereotypes in the media are exactly the same in real life, which isn't true. A lot of (ignorant) people believe that all Muslims are terrorists. Common stereotypes today might be: American girls are full figured airheads, Asians are REALLY smart, the Irish drink Guinness all day, Jamaicans are always high, Canadians live in igloos, all Mexicans are field workers, French are rude snail eating people, British people have really bad teeth, anyway you get the point . But the one most Americans think ok of today is that anyone from the Middle East is a Muslim terrorist or a suicide bomber. The fire behind us, aka the media, is depicting these stereotypes, and ignorance is fueling the fire.

We really need to break away from the wall (stereotypes) and get past the fire and out of the cave to see things as they really are. We need to reteach ourselves on what to believe about the different cultures and nationalities around us. We shouldn't allow stereotypes to pull us back to the wall and stereotypical thinking. If we break free from this wall, I think we'll be able to see people for their individual personalities instead of said stereotypes. We'll be able to learn new knowledge.

A good example of the person who walked out of the cave to enlightenment would be the author of the book Three Cups of Tea, Greg Mortenson. Here's a quote from him: "If we try to resolve terrorism with military might and nothing else, then we will be no safer than we were before 9/11. If we truly want a legacy of peace for our children, we need to understand that this is a war that will ultimately be won with books, not with bombs." He defiantly didn't have a problem with stereotypes considering the fact that he sold all his belongings and wrote to 580 celebrities, businessmen and other Americans to help build schools and bridges in northern Pakistan. So far he's built about 78 schools so far. (Sorry I wrote so much)

[Reply](#)



6. **Merai Dandouch** says:

September 2, 2011 at 1:39 AM

In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, Socrates states that these humans were trapped their whole life in a cave. There was no life but the only the life that existed through their eyes, at least from our point of view. To their naked eye, puppets and intellectual nose were their only inspiring views of the universe. A man was set free to be on his own, to him this was a powerful opportunity but maybe a little too powerful. He attempted to go

back to where he belonged but no one trusted him or even understood.

Now In my opinion, this Allegory does relate to life as we know it now. Why? Well, I believe that were being lied to every second of our life. We “the people” are the prisoners, amazed at our technology and knowledge but what if everything we’ve been taught doesn’t even exist. Where does our money go? Why is the military concealing the fact that they are killing many innocent life’s. Are scientists even in progress of curing the sick? Is the media holding secrets that they just won’t let go. Now what if the human race, went out of the cave for a day? Holding the future of generations and what was to become, would that person be able to undertake it or would s/he want to go back into the peaceful cave they call home. Maybe these so called “puppets” are our technology, distracting us from the truth which could be right near us. Who is controlling us, who is telling us these lies and why are they trying to keep it from us? The government can make us believe anything, for example take the swine flew. The made us believe it was a deadly flew that can kill a human being, yes maybe an infant or and elder but any flew would be certain to do that job also. My point, we believed it, before even analyzing the possibilities.

So Plato’s Allegory can be very related to our life’s now or maybe he’s using a mind trick on us, turning our trust for this world into hatred.

[Reply](#)



7. **Ciena Newlan** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 2:10 AM](#)

In Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, he describes how prisoners are chained in cave and can only see right in front of them. They have a fire burning behind them, and they see shadows of people walking by carrying odd shaped objects. These shadows were all he knew, they even seemed to be real. A prisoner breaks free and leaves the cave. When he first walked outside the cave he was blinded by the bight light, but then he realizes it was reality he was facing. He had concluded that his entire life was a lie. Staring at the shadows and hearing the voices he thought were coming from them, had now been proven a great big lie.

Yes, it is still relevant to our lives today. As life goes on, times change. Life in a “cave” has been constructed by someone else. Media has taken a huge part in putting people in a “cave”. A great example would be media making young girls/boys uncomfortable in their bodies. By using models and computer editing media can easily make girls/boys

taller, thinner, look more muscular, and even increasing breast sizes. Almost everything we have heard/seen on television our entire lives have been a lie. "Reality TV" how much more fake can it get? Yes, internet, public education, and improvements in transportation have metaphorically killed the puppeteer. Maybe these "puppeteers" are our generations version of explaining our loss of self esteem, and self progress. Nobody will come clean about being insecure, embarrassed of their body, or even using make-up and intense clothing to cover up anything that you don't want people to see. Making a fake image of yourself is not the way to show the world who the real you is. Don't be afraid of being yourself, be the person you want to be.

[Reply](#)



8. **Lidia Vences** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 2:22 AM](#)

Platos Allegory of the cave still applies to us today. In my own interpretation he is saying that the people in the cave were so oblivious so reality and since they were just seeing the shadows that made them think that, that was their reality. This day in society we are still blinded. Whether it be by watching t.v or magazines. We are all easily influenced. Another thing we are easily fooled by is reality TV We want to believe that it's real but in reality we all know that it isn't. We have producers that set everything up and most likely provoke the so called "reality stars" so that unnecessary drama can start. The internet is a major component because anyone can post anything now a days. Anyone can publish their own writing or write about all of their opinions and post them online where millions of people can see their opinions. We have full access to anything we want to know about. Celebrities and social networking sites make us go into this other world and let us sort of "escape" reality. Which can be a good thing for some people but definitely not for me. The internet can also lie. It can make up rumors and there are so many false advertisements that sometimes you don't even know what to think. Plato was trying to say that sometimes we are just so blinded by reality and some of us don't even know what to think or want to think a different way because we are so accustomed to our way of thinking.

[Reply](#)



9. **Ryan Seemiller** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 3:19 AM](#)

The Cave, the world we only see what the puppeteers want us to see, is it still true today, well with all the modern information today, we can find almost any type of information on the internet that is said to be true (of course infinite amounts of consipracys can be made about how all things in history could be a lie) but generally information can get around, but does modern education and technology rid of this cave allegory in our society? I think it all depends on what you think being out of the cave is, because personally there is restrictions to all types of information, is this being held in a cave, or just people protecting there privacy, overall I think truly being out of the cave and free is a impossible idea that no one could ever reach no matter how hard they tried. But I think how society is run today with our idea of democracy is about as close as we will ever be to getting out of the cave.

[Reply](#)



10. **Jeff Longo** says:

September 2, 2011 at 3:35 AM

Plato's allegory, I feel, is even truer day than it was back then. We today are being controlled by the media. Advertisements for one control us. Advertisements are set up to make the consumer want to buy the product. Propaganda is used everywhere and is a direct example of this allegory. The companies use celebrities, false advertising, glittering generalities, and many other techniques to brainwash people into buying these products.

These advertisements also tell people what people should and should not wear. Back in ancient times, people would wear whatever they could find. Now only certain clothes are acceptable for fear of being ridiculed by society.

Another point would be models in magazines and in other forms of media. The pictures are often edited to make the models skinnier, make the models more tan, and other illusions to who the people really are. This makes people today uncomfortable who with who they are and make them feel as if they need to look like these models, even though they are not pictures of the true person.

In modern time, people even go as far as to wear make up to mask their faces. In ancient times this was probably unheard of. The media has completely controlled how people dress and look.

We are still in this cave deeper now than ever and we are all puppets to modern society and we are waiting for that person to step out into the light and bring us out of this rut we call society.

[Reply](#)



11. **Carolina Canosa** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 4:31 PM](#)

The Allegory of the Cave is about prisoners living in a cave and being controlled by the puppeteer but one day one of the prisoners leaves the cave and discovers a world he never knew about before. He returns to the cave and tries to tell the others about this new world but they are unable to understand him. Our puppeteer is many things but what's mostly out there is probably the media. The media is everywhere on television, magazines, books, billboards, internet and radios too. Messages in the media have an effect on everyone especially teenager and kids. Television effects the younger generation I should know, my little brother was affected by a reality TV show I was watching in my room. My mom went out to do some errands and my little brother had to stay in the same room as me. I didn't think it would do any harm, there wasn't even any cussing. The next day my mom got a call from the principal saying that my brother had called a girl hot. My mom was surprised and asked me how my little brother learned that kind of language.

I had to admit to my mom that he was watching one of my shows with me last night and that's where he probably learned that accursed word. That's one example of how media is affecting us kids and teenagers. My brother didn't know he wasn't supposed to say that but since he saw people on the TV say that to each other he thought that is how you expressed to someone that you have a crush on them. But in reality you don't do that when you are in kindergarten and now he knows he can't say that word but the media still continues to influence him and everyone else too.

[Reply](#)



12. **Tom Kindred** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 10:00 PM](#)

In Plato's allegory of a cave he talks about prisoners that are chained up are a forced to watch shadows on a wall of different objects and animals. The prisoners have never seen real life so there thought is only based on the shadows that they have seen. I believe that this is true in today's society. Many people all most all of them are trapped in this cave and can not see what's really going on. For example our government keeps a lot of secrets from us and those who don't know those secrets are technically in the cave.

Although that's not always a bad thing. I believe that in some cases there needs to be caves that people are stuck in. Going back to the governments secrets; they need to keep those secrets because if they gave those secrets to the media it would be all over TV and the internet. And if we were at war with other countries which right now we kind of are they could maybe use those secrets against us. So there are defiantly some caves in our society but we need those caves to stay safe.

[Reply](#)



13. **Amanda Brown** says:

[September 2, 2011 at 11:41 PM](#)

I personally feel that Plato's allegory is, for the most part, pretty relevant to the lives of society today. People's lives today are being controlled by the advertising industries. Our lives are not only being controlled by advertisements, but magazines, the internet, and just the media in general is controlling just about everyone in modern day society. The media uses propaganda to try to get us to do what they want and to try to portray everything they are trying to sell us as being what we need in order to be cool, to fit in, or to become the most popular kid in school. These companies use celebrities, glittering generalities, false advertising, and anything else that they can think of just to make sure that we buy their products.

The media is not only telling us what we want to hear, it is also starting to brainwash people. Almost all of the magazines that are out there are all about how to become super skinny so that you can become a size zero just like the models, what to wear and not wear so that people will like you, and how to look and do things just so that we can fit into the way the media wants everyone to look like. In ancient times, no one cared how they looked or dressed like because there was not much of a variety when it came to clothing, you pretty much just wore whatever you could find, but nowadays, you have to shop at the most expensive stores and buy the most expensive things just to get peoples attention.

To be completely honest, I seriously think that we are in this cave deeper than humanity ever would have thought we could be in. We are all puppets to what to modern society, and right now, we are just sitting around waiting for someone to step out of this cave and step into the light and bring us out of this disaster that we call "modern day society."

[Reply](#)



o **Ian McMillan** says:

September 3, 2011 at 1:28 AM

the allegory of the cave is a really righteous idea, but you can never really tell if you are in a cave. being inside a cave would mean that your not thinking about if your in the cave, because none of the “puppeteers” would tell you that you are in a cave. then again, if you werent in a cave, you still wouldnt know if you actually were in a cave, but i personally think that we are in a cave, but this cave is a lot easier to get out of.

with all of the new technology and advertising, being in the cave can go a lot of ways. you can be brainwashed by advertisements and just live in a cave all your life, or you can go on the internet and try and find things out about government to find a way out of the cave. and in modern society, people who exit the cave can actually contact those who are still in the cave, so the people in the cave can see the beauties, and horrors, of life outside of the cave. the only downside to all of this technology is that it is a lot easier to hide things from people even when those people are outside of the cave. what i think about the cave is, you might as well be optimistic with what you have, because it is human nature to always want more. the truth is though, we really dont need more here in ventura. if we were in a cave right now, i wouldnt be complaining at all, because this is one very nice cave.

Reply



14. **Ryan Landeros** says:

September 3, 2011 at 12:58 AM

I think that the Allegory of the Cave, is very relevant to the times today. Everywhere we look there are advertisements for virtually everything. We have commercials that have good causes like that one play outside for an hour a day thing but, we also have commercials that get people to buy things that are bad for you or commercials that even make people feel like they're less than they are, just for them to buy their product. Not only commercial push ideas into the minds of everyday people, there's also channels that have their own perspectives over issues in the world today, for example channels like FOX, that let the public know what they want to and how they want to. Many people believe almost anything they hear and take it in as truth. We need more people to question what they are following. The internet and tv have created the illusion to SOME people that what they see or hear is true, just because they saw it on tv or on the internet. Back to the idea of commercials that are out there, people are in a way being controlled by these people that make them. These commercials make people think what

the person who made the commercial wants them to, being in a way puppeteers to humanity. The thing about human nature is that so many of us care too much about what other people think of us. Commercials take advantage of people like this and put them down even more so that they feel that they NEED to do whatever it takes to be accepted by everyone. People have to try to be themselves more even if it seems hard.

[Reply](#)



15. **Tyler Bransfield** *says:*

[September 3, 2011 at 6:23 AM](#)

The Allegory of the Cave is definitely relevant to modern life, but not as much as one would think. The area where it can best be compared to today is the 'selective reality(or so I call it)' that surrounds so many people in first world countries, especially America. For those who are well off enough, one could really see or know any issue one wanted to, the internet and mass media have made this easier than ever, but the instant availability of all of this information and the vast amount of it seems to make people block certain things out. Perhaps it has always been this way, but with the huge amount of information, opinions, and charismatic personalities on the internet, or television, it is easier than ever before for one to surround oneself with only the facts and opinions that suits you. In a way, the American people have become their own puppeteers, and were they to be freed, it would be against their wishes, and most would invariably go back into the dark after some time. Media of course is partly responsible, but only in allowing people to do so, the media in no way forces this upon p[people, it merely gives them the opportunity to do so. But what about education today? Consider that when the Allegory of the Cave was written, higher education, even beyond what we consider Grade School was quite rare. Of course, this continues today, in certain parts of the world, but for America, many people take their education for granted. The true impact of this is that were they to truly consider what knowledge they had, and what they knew others did, they would realize that their understanding of the world is quite limited, and the knowledge they received through public education they likely cared little for is largely irrelevant in the greater scheme of things By this, I mean that people stay in the dark, and take in only the information that is given to them, or they choose to take; simply put, people are truly not that intelligent, even with a higher education, unless they want to consider the greater breadth of knowledge for knowledge's sake.

Note: that second portion was largely me ranting, the first part actually matters.

[Reply](#)

16.  **Janelle Calderon** says:

September 3, 2011 at 4:08 PM

In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, Socrates describes a group of prisoners being chained to a wall watching these shadows which are really people walking behind them, making them think them to be whatever they want them to be. They do not know anything else except what they think is their own reality. Once one of the prisoners is released he realizes that what he thought was reality, was really just his own mind going on with ideas.

Is this not what our society does also? We believe in what we already know. Such as in politics. Politicians create this atmosphere so we hear what we want to hear, not necessarily the truth in the government. In politics politicians and congressmen give us a hand full of information that makes us believe or sort of manipulates us into thinking there word is true. But when in reality they are hypocritical wanting to win only for themselves and not for the good of the people. We are basically the prisoners chained to a wall of ideas that politicians are doing their job correctly to help us as the people. We see us being trapped in a cave also with " the American Dream." Most people do not live this American Dream lifestyle, but others perhaps may live it. But then again what is the American Dream, it's a dream that Americans want to live. Something that can be reality but is not. Not only are we tied down into political beliefs but also the in the media. The media has created a false view on how people act or portray themselves. They advertise on how people should be just in general such as in dressing, body image, and in behavior. Many young adolescents , as myself watch this type of media tear down certain people into making themselves believe that they are like these celebrities or try to be like them, when in reality they are not. Media targets adolescents most of the time, in advertising and in magazines to make things look "cool", but they are not. They play mind tricks with our brain that is still slowly developing, into thinking that we can do what they say. But what they say or advertise is a false view on our society.

This cave in the Allegory of the Cave, is still here in today's society, and it will probably never go away. It is all we know about our own society and government. Making it our own, "reality," we live in.

[Reply](#)

17.  **Cameron Ellis** says:

September 3, 2011 at 7:33 PM

The allegory of the cave was about all these people in a cave being fed fake realities and in turn if they ever saw the real world then to them it would probably turn their world upside down. I believe that the allegory is still present because, I'm sure that some of the conspiracies that people talk about that the government is hiding are true so we are almost like the people in the cave being taught something much different than what is actually real. Also, to consider that for the most part our government does a pretty good job of keeping us in the loop, either that or they are just very good at hiding things from the public. So basically some people think we are the people chained up being starved of the reality and the government is the puppeteer tricking us into thinking what's right and what's wrong. Most people think that government is just doing its job and not tricking us. I think that it consists in other parts of our lives as well though; the marketing and advertising companies also want us to believe that their products are better or better for you. For the most part the marketing ads just use buzz words to stimulate your mind and trick it into thinking that chocolate is healthier than carrots, and trick you into buying something unhealthy instead of something that is actually healthy for you. So, yes I do believe that the allegory still exists though not quite as harsh as Socrates put it.

[Reply](#)



18. **Talia Aharon-Ezer** says:

[September 3, 2011 at 8:06 PM](#)

In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, he portrays prisoners chained in a cave where they have lived their whole life. Shadows are casted onto a wall in front of the prisoners and they make out what the shadows are and start to believe different things. One prisoner is set free and looks outside to find out that the world that he thought was reality, was not reality at all. Today, T.V serves as entertainment to everyone. I believe that the saying "People believe what they see," is true. Advertisements try to get as many people to believe that the product they are selling is useful. They will do whatever it takes to get people to buy their products. Some people have learned about this and ignore commercials, because they know that the product most likely does not work, but many people do believe the advertising world. Many commercials are pointed toward children, and children are naive so when they see commercials, they want that product because the companys try and make it look cool, when in reality you can not fly into the sky when you put on a pair of light up sketchers, and your barbies usually dont come to life when you pick them up. So many children are glued to the T.V presently, so that

becomes their own little world that they are trapped in. In the Allegory of the cave, Plato describes the prisoners having their necks and arms chained. That is a more violent way of saying that in the world today, we are all being controlled. I do not think that we are entirely controlled, but the main “ruler” would be the Government. The Government controls education, companies, recreational places, laws, and people. No one can be completely free in the real world today, because we have things that tell us what we can do and what we can’t do. It may not be portrayed as much as it was in The Allegory of the Cave, but I do believe that the allegory still exists in the world today and it will always take place.

[Reply](#)



19. **brandon chandler** says:

[September 3, 2011 at 9:21 PM](#)

in the story “Allegory of the Cave” it describes people who have lived their whole life chained up and could only see shadows. when the prisoners were born they were chained up and could only see shadows of people and animals that walk by on a low wall that had a fire reflect their shadow out into the cave for the prisoners to see. and then once in a blue moon a prisoner was set free and dragged out side to a new reality that he has never experienced ever in his life. the life he now possesses is something he never thought was real and so at first he did not believe that it was reality at all but it was some trick. so he tried to get back to the reality he truly knew and trusted but was not allowed to and was dragged up to the top of a hill and was forced to be blinded by the sun. so after he became blinded he realized that it was a true reality that he was in and his whole life prior to the life outside of the cave was a lie and he went back to tell them. but when he did they could now hear him and they lived their life thinking that their reality was the true and only reality. that is what I got from reading “Allegory of the Cave”.

[Reply](#)



20. **Jotham Nicolas** says:

[September 3, 2011 at 9:43 PM](#)

In the story “Allegory of the Cave” Socrates describes a group of prisoners being chained to a wall watching these shadows which are really people walking behind them, making them think them to be whatever they want them to be. This is somewhat in real life but not really. How it is in real life is people don’t really change their minds from

something they know all their life's to believe something that they never seen. For example when they describe the shadows and then saw the thing they describe outside of the cave they wouldn't believe.

The prisoners could not move their heads because their heads were chained so they couldn't see the people behind them. They didn't know what they were or where the shadows were coming from all they knew was they seen them and wanted to describe on how they look to them. In our world we are being controlled by the media and we think what the media tells us to think because we don't know the truth. I think the real world is our cave because of the media but the cave we are in is easier to get out of and also you can get out whenever you want to.

The internet is a major component because anyone can post anything nowadays like a book or blogs etc. Anyone can publish their own writing or write about all of their opinions and post them online where millions of people can see their opinions.

[Reply](#)



21. **Sage Fazzone** says:

[September 3, 2011 at 10:29 PM](#)

Plato, author of The Allegory of the Cave, describes experiences of slaves who only the world of darkness and the shadows that pass by. When Socrates gets out into the real world he wants to go back into the cave. But he soon learns about the goodness in the world and does not want to go back into the cave. The Allegory of the Cave is relevant to today because the media always puts beautiful people in movies and advertisement. They make you feel like you have to look like this person with tons of makeup and loads of computer touch ups or you will not be liked in the world. Or if you drink this brand or smoke this brand you will get everyone to like you. Like the beer brand Dos Equis, it shows an older gentleman getting all the girls, skydiving, doing impossible things just because he drinks that beer. The cave we live in is created by the media or even the girls/boys at school who make fun of others. The allegory is outdated but not the meaning of the story. The meaning of the story, do not let others control you, goes with the media trying to control how everyone should look and act. Sometimes the caves we live in are controlled by no one other than our parents. Our parents have the power to control what we buy, where we hang out, what time we go to bed, and even what we are allowed to watch on television.

[Reply](#)



22. **Taylor barnes** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 12:08 AM](#)

In the story “Allegory of the Cave”, Plato describes a world where people have been kept since childhood chained to a wall and forced to look at shadows and only shadows for most of their existence. They know nothing but these shadows and truly do believe they are real. One of the prisoners finally escapes and is blinded by the light of the upper world. As he ventures through this new world his vision slowly clears and he is able to see the truth. This story applied very much to the world of Plato and still applies to the world today. People are still kept in the dark by the government, Television and the media. Most people don’t even know their are limitations to freedom of speech and press as well as many other ammendments. To be honest with you, I don’t think we will ever learn the truth. Today, Tommorow or a 100 years from now. The electronic world has become our prison, the government have become our puppeteers and the lovely shadows are the only truth we will ever see. I believe the people living under a rock have a better grasp on what reality is than we do. But in all fairness, The media does help (somewhat) in revealing the truth as well. Their are actually people out there that still publish the truth (even if it is risky). There are still people who try to keep us in the light.

[Reply](#)



23. **Makaylah Morrison** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 1:16 AM](#)

Plato’s Alegory of the Cave is about prisoners chained to the inside of a cave. They have lived there since their childhood. They have a fire burning above and behind them. Above them is a long walk way that men cross to bring strange objects to the cave. Shadows of the men are potraied on the ground by the prisoners because of the fire. The prisoners do not know what the shadows are and give them names. The prisoners are being treated like puppets by the men with the strange objects. One of the prisoners escapes the cave and is blinded by the sunlight. He realizes that the life he knew before was all a lie and wants to tell his friends back at the cave. He goes to tell them that all they have known was a lie but they do not understand.

This alegory is relevent in our world today. We are all living in a cave and being treated like “puppets” with the media being the “puppeteer”. For example, today’s society

potrays models, actors, and actresses as being beautiful putting pressure on the rest of us to look just as beautiful. "If the deffinition of beauty gets any thinner, no one will fit". Magazines try to show us that thinner is better, but we are being blinded by the truth. We are all beautiful the way we are and we should not let the media get in our heads and lie to us. People should be themselves not what others tell them to be.

[Reply](#)



24. **Jennifer Castillo** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 1:29 AM](#)

In Plato's, "Allegory of the Cave", Socrates explains to his student how when we see too much of something and believe that it is reality when it is truly not. Socrates describes a group of prisoner forced to look at a wall, chained down, and without being able to see around them. Behind them was a big fire but in between the fire and them was a passage way were people from the town would walk through the cave. The prisoners would see a shadow and would name it, not knowing what it was and believing that the shadow was real. One day one of the prisoners was released and let out into the REAL world, not what he believed was the real world. He experienced many different things like the sun light that burned his eyes, as he finally got his sight back it became clear to him that what he believed was the real world was only his imagination. He finally went to his friends to try and tell them what the real was like, but their reality was no longer his reality and they could not even recognize him anymore because he was now only a shadow. I believe that the real world thinks like those prisoners. By watching TV or just by playing video games or even people that read a lot start to believe that that is their new reality when it is not. They may do that to get out of reality but soon enough if they pay more attention to their "reality" then to the outside reality. No one ever knows why we start to believe that that is our reality when it is not but I believe that humans will never change their way of thinking even if we try each person has their own way of thinking.

[Reply](#)



25. **Madison Schmitt** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 2:12 AM](#)

In Plato's Allegory of the cave is a metaphor Socrates talks about how when you see too much of something and believe that it is reality when it is really not. This talks about

how the prisoners are chained up there arms and legs and cant move there heads so they don't know reality all they know is what they see in the cave. Behind them was a fire and in the middle of the prisoners and the fire was a walk away. They see shadows for most of there existence. Which people and animals would walk through the cave and they would call it what they thought it was. They didn't know anything different. One day one of the prisoners was let out into the real world outside of the cave and went out and explored and found out things he thought were animals or something were really not. He explored things like the sunlight that burned his eyes. When you are playing video games or watching T.V or even on the computer you are sucked into a world that is not the real reality. There are so many kids glued to the T.V. sometimes because the commercials are calling them into a fake reality saying sweets are better then healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. Most of the time advertising is actually a lie. I believe that is fake reality of the allegory does exist today we are always seeing false things around such as on T.V. video games, the internet, magazines and advertisements you are being sucked into a world that you are forced to believe is real.

[Reply](#)



26. **Kalin Moore** says:

September 4, 2011 at 4:25 AM

In the “Allegory of a Cave” by Plato, he wirtes about men who are slaves in a cave, and are held captive by the chains that bind to the cave itself, only able to observe the fire that flames before them. When people and animals pass by the cave, the slaves can see only the shadows of the people and animals. When finally one of the slaves breaks free of the cave and for the first time, sees and feels the sun. The slave sees that what he had once thought was the truth was all a lie, and that reality is goodness and warm. He tries to tell the others, but they cannot comprehend him and are shocked by the news.

The story is relevent to today's everyday life, for example technology, advertisements, and family. Technology can control you and hold you back like chains, you become limited to a certian capacity of what you can do, like being allowed to look up certian things, and doing things for you. Today technology is used everyday and does everything for us like, cash registers, computers, phones, garage doors, and cars. Another factor is advertisements that are everywhere, magizines, internet, T.V., malls, radio, billboards, and newspaper. Advertisements goals are to entise you into buying their products by saying that thier product is “the best” , and that you sould only buy what they tell you to

buy. The other factor is family, yes everyone should love their family and yes everyone and then you argue with them, but they can also control what you do. If you want to do something different or independent your family might not agree with you and not let you do what you want to. They can control and tell you what to do sometimes and not let you know the truth or reality, especially when you are young. Sometimes are best not to know until you are older, but a portion of it is not knowing the truth about things.

Overall, I think that "Allegory of the Cave" definitely relates to today and it is amazing that a story that was created so long ago, and yet it relates perfectly for today.

[Reply](#)



27. **Ana Bello** says:

September 4, 2011 at 6:12 AM

In Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" prisoners are secluded from reality and made to believe in this world that is being portrayed to them. The story of these prisoners being chained in a cave may seem to be just another far fetched folk tale. But if we examine the society we live in today are we perhaps just as ignorant to what reality is just as they were? I personally feel that we do have puppeteers forming shadows on our walls, they are more commonly known as the media. They feed Americans stories everyday and we usually for the most part believe them to always be true. But I strongly do feel that just as the chained prisoner walked out into the light and was blinded by the truth anyone in today's society can choose to as well and certainly in a much less drastic way. Internet access and T.V has created more transparency in our world then ever before, from blogs to the news; reality has become much less blinding and more apparent. Anyone is capable of searching for their own little piece of enlightenment, but the question is, are they willing to?

Certainly there are plenty of individuals that will and do choose to stay in the cave and continue to watch television programs that are not realistic at all, but there are those who do choose to not live in this blissful state of ignorance and watch the news and become more politically and socially aware through it. We can all choose to accept the realities given to us and foolishly believe in the shadows created. But just as the prisoner walked into the light, all those in our society can also detest the fallacies presented to them and realize reality for what it truly is. I am not agreeing in the total opposition that the allegory does not exist and that it is always so easy to see our world for what it really is. It is hard to always see the truth when living in a society that

portrays things in so many different ways that it becomes a world filled with contradictions. But our allegory is much more transparent and we are entirely capable and have the tools to become enlightened and we no longer have to be chained prisoners living in the darkness.

[Reply](#)



28. **Alejandro Robles** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 6:20 AM](#)

The Allegory of the Cave plays a major role in society today. Living in our world would be exactly like living in the cave, as Plato explained. We don't see it but we are the slaves and the puppets being controlled by puppeteers. We have the media, the government, markets, and businesses, even us. Shadows walk around us every day as if we were to be watching a movie. For example, the government hides a bunch of their information away from their citizens. We have the right to know but until we know, we'll be stranded in a cave inside of a cave and so forth. Nobody really knows the truth and even if we knew we wouldn't really know if it's the truth. Plato explained prisoners being chained up, being controlled by puppeteers, in our society, we rely on other people to make us food, to teach us, to provide us with information, and to invent new things. We are being fed with all of this but though we can't do it ourselves. That's what makes us slaves of life. When people start to open their eyes, it would be much harder for them to live on their own since they'll be relying on themselves. In my point of view, the cave still exists and it getting more and more difficult to get out of. All of the transportation that we see in our society today is actually making the puppeteer stronger because they transfer us from a starting to the finish point. As much as we try to get out of the cave, we'll end up in various caves, because these caves are really tough to get out of.

[Reply](#)



29. **Andrew Green** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 2:18 PM](#)

I think that Plato's Allegory of the Cave, even today knowledge is kept from the minds of the ones that want to know. How I think about this is, the cave is a metaphor for the mind, the opening is/ are the ears or mouth, and the prisoners are the people in this world who do not have the knowledge that they are fully capable of knowing. I personally do not think that the allegory is out dated today, because it is about human

nature, and human nature will go on for as long as the human race survives. Something that has changed slightly is the puppeteer, today the 'puppeteer' sometimes does not show themselves always, but regulates on what can be put on to the internet, TV, and books. But because of this, people are still blinded from the truth, they do not have all of the knowledge that they need to be able to participate truthfully in our society and government today. People today are able to live their lives how they want to live them to the most part. But in today's society, it is very easily to be able to see past the shroud of false and misleading knowledge, at some points in time, but at times the people of the world are not able to see past the shroud of false and misleading knowledge. That is why we study and go to school, to learn some of the knowledge that is still enshrouded, and truthful.

[Reply](#)



30. **Kevin Holst** says:

[September 4, 2011 at 5:17 PM](#)

I think that what the allegory of the cave is trying to say is that if one were to live their life in a world where everything was a lie and not knowing what was really there, just beyond their reach, they would seem very unintelligent to the rest of society. Then if they were to suddenly be forced to accept that everything that they had known for their entire lives had been false, even the constant darkness compared to the sun, then they would want to run back and tell everyone else who had been kept in the cave. But of course, the prisoners wouldn't believe him. I think that this is still very prevalent in today's world, because even though we believe more than we should off of television and the internet and online gaming, most of that information is either a rumor that is lacking in evidence, or it is something made up by someone who wants to see the reactions that it gets from other people. But there is still the possibility that our government wants us to believe that they are lying to us so that they can control us even more when we are in our search for the truth. Even though this probably isn't true, it shouldn't be ignored just because it is far fetched. If one likes to think about our world as a cave that is dark and void of truth, then that works. But I believe that it is more like a boiling kettle of water that we are slowly drowning ourselves in because of our inability to choose representatives that actually tell us the truth instead of the ones that lie so that they can get more money or so that they can stay in office longer.

[Reply](#)



31. **Nick Alexander** says:

September 4, 2011 at 6:46 PM

I believe that Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" still very much applies to the world today. In this so-called "world of information" you may think this would not be the case, but take a closer look. The vast majority of this "information" has little to no relevance to the big picture. Charlie Sheen's drug abuse? Hats at the royal wedding? Outfits to awards events? What do those have to do with anything, what impact do they have on the world? The answer is nothing. Not that all news and news media is just a wash of nothing, they should just leave trivial nonsense to other outlets. But along with the barrage of irrelevance, there comes the lies and misinformation. Not even large scale cover-ups or grand schemes to control the public, and it may not be the news media itself. But subtle lies and misinformation to steer the general public in the direction that the big companies want. Have you ever heard that vitamins could be potentially harmful to you? Chances are you probably have. This is a lie given to you from your friends, the pharmaceutical companies. Much money is to be made with a pill for every ill. But vitamins? Not so much money there. But the pharmaceutical companies know full well that vitamins do a mighty good job at fighting disease, and they are afraid of that. The National Library of Medicine is the largest medical library in the world, and yet no documentation on vitamins. This is the work of the pharmaceutical companies, with their workers in the system, they block the vitamin research and results from the records. The documentary "Food Matters" talks about this, and one of the doctors they interviewed told a story of a patient who was a mother suffering from a chronic deep depression and some suicidal thoughts. He put her on daily mega-doses on niacin, and before long she became her normal self. When the family decided to see another doctor, the other doctor decided that the niacin may be harmful to her, and gave her a prescription for an antidepressant. Within a week she was just as depressed as ever. This is just one of the certainly many other cover-ups and lies and controls set on the population by the big companies and other players to benefit from veiling the public with misinformation, and only allowing them to see the shadows.

Reply



32. **Miztli Tinajero** says:

September 4, 2011 at 7:36 PM

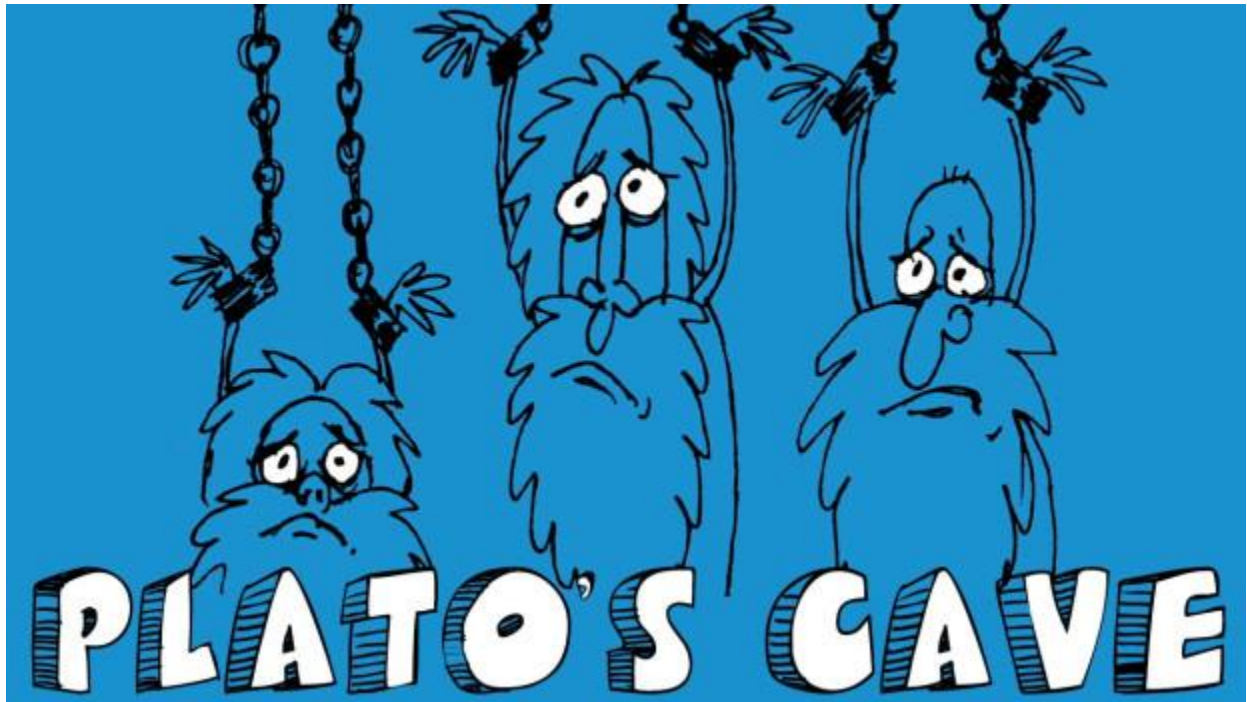
In Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" prisoners are kept from reality and unable to see the real world. I believe our world is like similar to allegory of the cave because we are always kept from the truth. The government covers a lot of information from us to "protect" us. I think our government should not keep things from us because we need to know the truth. They expect us to pay taxes without telling us what they are going to use the money for. Now the government can butt into our phone conversations and texts. In a way I could understand why they do that but at the same time that is an invasion of privacy. Also, on television they show us beautiful people without any imperfection or also called models. And they wonder why teens are so self conscious. They make these commercials and show us women in their 20's with flawless skin and beautiful smiles. They lie to us because when you see the actual person, they look super different than in television. They make us believe that we have to look like them to be beautiful which makes us insecure and want to be just like them. I remember seeing a show where they show this model her pictures and she says, "I don't even look like that". They show us false advertisements. They also pass these commercials of people that lose weight because they took these dangerous diet pills. They show the person very happy and also the before and after pictures. They think being skinny and acne free, loaded with tons of make up is the new beautiful. We are being lied to every single day by society. I think it is almost the same thing as being locked up in a cave for all our life's. The government tries to hide everything they can from us. We were talking in class how they tried to make an accidental death as he died fighting for his country but in reality he died from a friendly fire. But they were saying how he was such a great hero and all this other lies. That is why I think we are kept from all the truth and we should be told the truth no matter how extreme it may be.

WHAT CAN PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE TELL US ABOUT KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION?

The allegory of the cave is a famous passage in the history of philosophy. It is a short excerpt from the beginning of Plato's book, *The Republic* (1). There are a number of different interpretations of the allegory, but the one that I would like to present is within the context of education, specifically knowledge translation and the content, style and manner of its delivery. I would like to conclude with relating this to how we, as health care professionals, present knowledge within a professional dialogue.

Plato's Cave

Imagine a group of prisoners who have been chained since they were children in an underground cave. Their hands, feet, and necks are chained so that they are unable to move. All they can see in front of them, for their entire lives, is the back wall of the cave.



"Some way off, behind and higher up, a fire is burning, and between the fire and the prisoners above them runs a road, in front of which a curtain wall has been built, like a screen at puppet shows between the operators and their audience, above which they show their puppets"(1)



REPORT THIS AD

So, there are people who are passing by the walkway, carrying objects made of stone, behind a curtain-wall, and they make sounds to go along with the objects. These objects are projected onto the back wall of the cave for the prisoners to see. The prisoners talk and discuss these projections and come up with names for them; they are interpreting the view of the world, as it is intelligible to them. It is almost as though the prisoners are watching a puppet show for their entire lives. This is what the prisoners think is real because this is all they have ever experienced; reality for them is an interpretive existence viewing the world as a type of puppet show on the wall of a cave, created by shadows of objects and figures. In a way, this is not dissimilar to our understanding of evidence-based practice, we have a version of truth interpreted through the views of others and we, as clinicians, have to make sense of it and also interpret it ourselves, for others.

Research evidence is still testimony of evidence in that we must trust the rigor, process and presentation of it. We may not have completed and interpreted the research ourselves and therefore careful scrutiny through peer review and individual critical analysis is of utmost importance. The prisoners also co-construct the world between them, sharing a dialogue surrounding the images cast in front of them. As physiotherapists, we also share dialogue

surrounding professional practice, or own values and preferences as well as what we think “works” for patients from many different perspectives. Back to the story:

One of the prisoners has help and breaks free from his chains. Then he is forced to turn around and look at the fire. The light of the fire hurts his eyes and makes him immediately want to turn back around and

“retreat to the things which he could see properly, which he would think really clearer than the things being shown him.”(2)

In other words, the prisoner initially finds the light (representing the truth, an alternative truth or reality) very challenging to see and so does not want to pursue it. It would be easier to look away back into the shadows.

However, after his eyes adjust to the firelight, reluctantly and with great difficulty he is forced to progress out of the cave and into the sunlight, which is a painful process. This represents a journey of greater understanding and the challenges that come with it. We have all found the journey of gaining knowledge, interpreting it and applying it a challenge in one way or another in our personal and professional lives. The story continues:

So the prisoner progressed past the realm of the firelight, and now into the realm of sunlight. The first thing he would find easiest to look at is the shadows, and then reflections of men and objects in the water, and then finally the prisoner is able to look at the sun itself which he realises is the source of the reflections. For me, this represents the way in which knowledge can be delivered may be best understood within the context of previous experience including socially acceptable constructs. This allows connections to be made between our prior views of the world and the formation of new information or knowledge that we have perceived and interpreted. When these connections relate to prior experience or conceptualised within familiar paradigms, they become easier to digest, absorb and interpret successfully. Simply being told new information in an abstract way or delivered in a style and manner that is out of keeping of social norms may not be a successful strategy.

HOW DO WE LEARN?

So, you want to understand the world, and/or help others understand the world. Sadly, there are a lot of misconceptions about how people learn. Thankfully, **COGNITIVE SCIENCE** is showing us what really works! And the first, core idea to get is...

It's all about CONNECTIONS

MYTH: new ideas can just be "stored" like files in a filing cabinet

TRUTH: new ideas have to **CONNECT** with what's already there, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle

Study after study has shown that just throwing facts & figures at people doesn't work. Instead, you have to **CONNECT** ideas, via...

METAPHORS: connect ideas to other ideas and everyday things

MULTI-MODAL (multimedia) presentation, to connect multiple ways of understanding a topic. (e.g. words & pics)

dispelling MISCONCEPTIONS: make room for new connections

ONCE you make connections, how do you maintain 'em? Well, you have to...

references: Metaphors We Live By (1980), Piaget's constructivism, Papert's constructionism (2001)

USE IT OR LOSE IT!

MYTHS: re-reading is effective → cramming is effective

TRUTHS: recall (hard) > re-read (easy) → it's better to **SPACE OUT** your learning!

One of the best-replicated findings from cognitive science is the **SPACING EFFECT**

which shows that we forget things quickly the first time we see it, but if you exert effort to **RECALL** things, spaced over **INCREASING** intervals of time, you retain a lot more than studying by "cramming".

now, we know how to make & keep connections – but not all connections are equal! finally, we have to make sure that we...

references: The Spacing Effect (Dempster, 1988) What Works, What Doesn't (SciAmMag, 2013)

CONNECT DEEP.

MYTH: highlighting and memorizing keywords are good ways to learn

TRUTH: you have to process ideas on a **DEEP** level to make them stick

In a classic 1969 experiment, subjects were shown a list of words. Half were asked to say whether each word had the letter "E" (shallow processing) or was a "pleasant" word (deep processing). When asked later to recall the words, the **DEEP** processors recalled far more – **WHETHER OR NOT** they were forewarned about the recall test in advance!

So – GO DEEP. And one of the deepest ways to process an idea is to **EXPLAIN IT** to someone else. That's why I draw this zine – so we can **BOTH** learn how we learn. ❤️

references: Hyde & Jenkins, 1969 | drawn by Naily Case

Copied from @michael_rowe twitter feed 28th March 2018

Back to the escapee: When the prisoner finally looks at the sun he sees the world and everything surrounding him and begins to feel sorry for his fellow prisoner's who are still stuck in the cave. So, he goes back into the cave and tries to tell his fellow prisoners the truth outside. But the prisoners think that he is dangerous because the information that he tells them is so abstract and opposed to what they know. The prisoners choose not to be free because they are comfortable in their own world of ignorance, and they are hostile to people who want to give them an alternative view of the world. My interpretation is that there is a natural tendency to resist certain forms of knowledge, particularly if the subject area has been around

for a while. Ignorance is bliss! The prisoner that escaped from the cave questioned all his beliefs as he **experienced** a change in his view of the world rather than just being told an alternative. Being a **passive observer**, as the prisoners who wish to stay in the cave, would generally prefer to keep things as they are. This says something to me about the experience of knowledge translation; the impact will depend on a number of variables that effect an individual's perception.

According to Plato, education is seeing things differently. Therefore, as our conception of truth changes, so will our engagement with education. He believed that we all have the capacity to learn but not everyone has the desire to learn; desire and resistance are important in education because we have to be willing to learn alternative paradigms even though it may be hard to accept at times. Creating the desire to learn through the style and manner of motivational interviewing (3) makes even more sense here, particularly with regards to the 'righting reflex'. The 'righting reflex' is the natural tendency that well-intended people have to fix what seems wrong or incorrect and to set them on to the 'proper' course. This often results in telling people what to do in a very directive manner that frequently ends up putting people off or stifling change rather than steering people on an alternative path.

The people who were carrying the objects across the walkway, which projected shadows on the wall, represent the authority of today. Within the physiotherapy profession, they may be our union leaders, educators, researchers, course providers, cultural influencers, social media icons as well as clinical and professional leads; they influence the opinions of people and help determine the beliefs and attitudes of people within our professional society. The person who helped the prisoner out of the cave could be seen as a teacher. Socrates compares his work as a teacher like that of a midwife. A midwife does not give birth for a person, however a midwife has seen a lot of people give birth and coached a lot of people through it, similarly, a teacher does not get an education for the student, but can guide students towards it. Similarly, professional dialogue appears best suited towards **guiding** people towards alternative "truths" or perspectives. The style and manner of its delivery is clearly important and it appears to have the greatest effect if it is surrounded by within and between each other's experiences that create **connections** with other previous understanding. Using a direct style and manner that is out of keeping with professional dialogue is unlikely to facilitate learning or behavioural change, in fact, it is more likely to make people resist it. Much like, if the escaped prisoner returned to the other prisoners brandishing a torch lit by the flame and put it close to them to see an alternative perspective. This would likely cause the imprisoned prisoners flinch and close their eyes from the light, therefore representing stifling learning and behavioural change. An alternative method would be to introduce the light and demonstrate how it changed the shape and position of the shadows while talking them through the process allowing the prisoners to change the perspective through cognitive and perceptive dissonance, therefore representing a challenge in the experience with brand new alternatives presented. Then the attention could be drawn to the firelight and then to the outside and show alternative possibilities.

I hope this blog highlights how we might communicate with each other and helps to reflect on not only **what** we say, but perhaps more importantly, **how** we say it! More specifically, the experience of knowledge translation can be transformative if the learner has a direct personal experience. The least effective means of communication of knowledge may be about giving information in a style and manner that is outside of social norms. This is most likely to be polarising, rather than inviting people along with you. A level above this might be information giving that is lacking context or information provided in a style and manner that is hierarchical or top-down. The greatest impact may be that which directly engages with its audience in a way that relates to their previous experiences with the learners making connections themselves during a sense-making process.

How Does this Apply to Your Life?

The best way to learn from Plato's Allegory of the Cave, is to think of the people trapped in the cave as majority of people in the world.

The cave people believed that the shadows they saw were the "truth," just like majority of the world who believe in and pursue shadows based on money, education, fame, love and so on.

These are generally the ideas and social norms that we've been told to stick to from childhood because of the majority consensus.

Unfortunately, thinking like this often leads to a life of missed opportunities and mediocrity because you'd never realise how much more of reality actually existed outside the "cave."

What about the person who escaped the cave?

This represents the small handful of people who dare to think and act in a different way from the crowd.

They don't have an imagined "shadow" reality because they've stepped outside their comfort zone into the "sunshine" to uncover the true reality of life.

These people live a life with limitless possibilities and often change the course of history (think Martin Luther King, Steve Jobs, Isaac Newton and so on).

It's not because they're better than everyone else that they've "escaped the cave". It's simply because they've made a decision to consistently step outside their comfort zone, [face their fears](#) and think in a unique way.

So, how can you escape this "cave"?

The key life lesson from Plato's Allegory of the Cave is to question every assumption you have about the reality you call "real."

This is a powerful way to develop the skill of thinking for yourself and discovering your own unique solutions to any problem.

I've covered one method of doing this based on [Elon musk's First principles way of thinking](#).

The more assumptions you question, the less likely you'll make [bad decisions and errors](#) that could significantly cost you.

It takes courage to step outside of your comfort zone and think differently than you've previously done. But, the rewards are always worth it (see my testimonial on [experimenting with intermittent fasting](#)).

Finally, remember that it's not enough to leave the cave. It's much more important that you stay outside of the cave.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave is a reminder that not everyone will understand or be happy for you, when you decide to [change your habits](#) and outlook on life.

Just like how the people in the cave responded to the escaped prisoner who returned—you can expect friends and family to laugh at your “stupid” ideas.

It's normal to [face criticism](#) once you leave the cave.

In the end, if you can't convince them through your words, convince them through your actions—because actions speak louder than words.

The Matrix vs. The Allegory of the Cave

Posted on [November 9, 2012](#) by [hcodesmith](#)

The Matrix and Plato's Allegory of the Cave both revolve around the same metaphysical question, “what is real?” Both works share more similarities than differences.

In the Matrix, the main character, Neo, is trapped in a false reality created by a computer program. The program was created by machines that took over the planet. While in Plato's Allegory of the Cave, a prisoner is able to comprehend the reality of the cave and the real one outside the cave.

There are many similarities that these stories share. The main similarity is the acceptance of truth about themselves that Neo and the freed prisoner must face. They must accept this truth before they can acquire deeper knowledge about fundamental truths. To achieve this knowledge, both the freed prisoner and Neo need to experience the shocking demonstration that the senses are inadequate and that they can be systematically deceived. They both share a similar story about the epistemological unreliability of the senses and the need to abstract from the senses in order to gain genuine knowledge. Another similarity that these stories both share is the fact that both worlds are controlled by a greater power. For example, Neo lives in a world which is controlled by the matrix while Plato's prisoner lives in a world, or cave, controlled by the form holders. They both also manage to escape from the world as they know it and come to know the world as it really is. Neo comes to realize that the life he has been leading so far is nothing but the life of a slave, shaped under the control of the Matrix, protected by the agents. Plato's prisoner comes to realize first that the shadows he is looking at are not the truth, they are just shadows cast on the wall by the form holders. He sees the fire and as he follows the path which leads outside the cave, he sees the sun and everything else illuminated by it. The characters in both stories realize that they are prisoners and are completely unaware the reality they think they know is false. Both stories also share the gift of learning new feats. Neo, in the Matrix, is able to perform physically impossible feats once he learns to manipulate the matrix. The prisoner in the Allegory of the Cave learns infinite wisdom once he breaks free from the cave.

The very few differences between these two works include the fact that the Matrix has no forms while the Allegory of the Cave does. Also, unlike Plato's prisoner, who manages to find his way out of the cave without any help from others, Neo is helped out by Morpheus.

In my opinion, the Matrix movie most effectively challenged me to reconsider my answer to the question "what is real?" I find the movie to not be as straight forward as the Allegory of the Cave. Reality is not as obvious in the Matrix which forces me to question my assumption about the concreteness of reality that surrounds me. I think this movie really makes people question their own reality and what it is to them. The Allegory of the Cave helped me reach a new understanding of external reality because it made me realize that you never know what reality is until you are faced with what is not reality. The prisoner lived his life thinking that reality was what he knew in the cave, but when he left the cave, the prisoner realized that true reality was what was outside the cave.

"The Matrix" modernizes the original allegory and adds a more humanistic appeal. It also focuses more on human emotion and feelings. These two works have many similarities and revolve around the same metaphysical question.

Compare the film 'the matrix' with Plato's allegory of the cave.

The Allegory of the Cave is one of Greek philosopher Plato's most well known works. It is an extended allegory, where humans are depicted as being imprisoned by their bodies and what they perceive by sight only. In the allegory of the cave Plato wanted to show how true reality is not always what it seems. A group of prisoners were chained up in a cave since their childhood, each prisoner was chained to each other by their heads. The prisoners were forced to face a blank wall while they were in the cave. Behind the prisoners there was a fire however the prisoners could not see the fire but between the prisoners and the fire there would be a puppet show where people would walk, talk and carry objects to keep the prisoners amused. The prisoners perceive only shadows of the people and things passing on the walkway; the prisoners hear echoes of the talk coming from the shadows. They perceive the shadows and echoes as reality.

Whilst in the cave one prisoner is set free. He stands up and turns around and is forced to look at the fire, after the pain in his eyes from the fire he struggles to see anything. The prisoner is dragged out of the cave and into the world above. At first, the prisoner is so dazzled by the light that he can only look at shadows, then at reflections, then finally at the real objects like trees, flowers and houses. He sees that these are even more real than the shadows were, and that those were only copies of reality. The prisoner has now reached the cognitive stage of thought. He has caught his first glimpse of the most real thing, which is the Forms.

In the film The Matrix, the humans trapped in the Matrix are like the people in the cave. They see only what the machines want them to see, but they believe they see reality as it really is. They accept what their senses tell them all that exists. Neo suspects that this is

all a lie, but he's not sure how the Matrix works. Morpheus, who runs the resistance to the Matrix, brings Neo into the Resistance, believing that Neo is the person who has been foreseen by the Oracle to be able to defeat the Matrix

In The Allegory of the Cave the people creating the shadows represent the powerful people in society. In The Matrix the puppet-handlers are the machines controlled by Artificial Intelligence. The puppet-handlers use fake surroundings as a way to manipulate the information that the prisoners receive. While the prisoners are being fooled and influenced by the fake reality, the puppet-handlers are too because they are also living inside the artificial world they have created as well.

Neo lives in world which is controlled by the matrix agents just like Plato's prisoner lives in a world (cave) controlled by the form holders. They both manage to escape from the world as they know it and come to know the world as it really is. Neo, with some help from Morpheus, comes to realize that the life he as been leading so far is nothing but the life of a slave, shaped under the control of the Matrix, protected by the agents. Plato's prisoner comes to realize first that the shadows he is looking at are not the truth, they are just shadows cast on the wall by the form holders. He sees the fire and as he follows the path which leads him outside of the cave, he sees the sun and everything else illuminated by it. The characters, simultaneously experience shock and then a feeling of fear when they first perceive what is real. Neo is able to see how humans are "grown", hooked on wires, an element which symbolizes control just like the chains which tie the prisoners in Plato's cave. In the movie as Morpheus and the group decided to leave the matrix they get attacked by the agents, the agents in the movie are just like the government in the allegory. Morpheus decided to flight against the agents will the rest of the group including Neo decided to get out of the matrix but what they don't know is that they were set up by one of there own Cypher. Cypher hates knowing the truth he wants to go back to his normal comfortable life in the matrix he doesn't want to be part of the experience anymore, so he makes a deal with the agents to get his normal life back he tricks Morpheus. The agents and the government are the same they are like the puppets in the allegory fooling the society to make them believe what they want me to believe not allowing them to see what is the truth.

Unlike Plato's prisoner, who managed to find his way out of the cave without any help from others, Neo is helped out by Morpheus. Neo is then faced with a moment of choice would he take the blue pill and stay in the world of the matrix which is the world of the senses or take the red pill, and come to know reality as it objectively exists. He chooses the red pill therefore giving himself the opportunity to experience the world of the mind, the real world and finds it as mind-blowing as Plato's prisoner finds the enlighten world outside of the cave.

The Mirror right after Neo took the red pill and the distorted spoon illusion before Neo went to the Oracle are simply products of the mind. It is in Plato's Allegory of the cave where this illusion is happening. It is the mind that makes the spoon and the mirror distorted. It is the mind that makes the spoon inexistent, which is considered to be the

truth. This spoon is the copy of the spoon of perfection in the world of forms. The spoon does not move by itself but Neo makes it move.

In the Allegory Plato says that the freed prisoner would be confused at what he saw. When Neo is finally confronted with the real world, he is in a state of uncertainty. The realization of the truth is so overwhelming that he throws up and passes out. In "The Allegory of the Cave," the Freed prisoner might even feel that what he was seeing now was the illusion and the shadows on the wall were actually more real. The freed prisoner's first reaction would be to turn around and return to the false reality because it is less painful and more familiar to him.

According to Plato, the freed prisoner must have started to question what he saw in front of him and wondered about where the shadows came from. He must have sensed that something was wrong and he wanted to know the truth. This theme is also found in the movie, Neo is very much like the freed prisoner. As Morpheus tells Neo, "You're here because you know something." Morpheus realizes that Neo has a place in society and is there because of what he knows. For Neo to realise this Morpheus says 'free your mind, let go of doubt'.

In conclusion, Plato's story of the cave brings up many philosophical points; and, most importantly, it addresses the issue of society's role in our lives. Trinity tells Neo 'The Matrix can not tell you who you are.' It seems that the differences between "The Allegory of the Cave" and "The Matrix" do not prevent them from telling a similar story about the unreliability of the senses. We find Neo, at the end of the film, doing more than simply bending the laws of physics with the Matrix. It seems like he has stepped almost entirely out of that very world. He does not, however, appear in two places at once, but his destruction of one of the agents, and his ability to fly, says that the laws of physics are bent.

The Allegory of the Cave," and "The Matrix," are stories that entail two realities; one real and one falsely perceived. The prisoners and the Matrix are given false images as they accept what their senses are telling them. They believe what they are experiencing is all that truly exists. "The Allegory of the Cave" displays how a chained man released from his bondage is let out into the real world. "The Matrix," is an alternative computer reality that we perceive as being real. "The Allegory of the Cave" and "The Matrix" questions the fundamental basis of reality; it clarifies the difference between perception and what is indefinite.

In both of the contexts, there are various similarities. In "The Allegory of the Cave," the author implies how humans are often blind, not physically, but rather mentally. The reality that we see surrounding us is undefined. We tend to avoid the reality standing right before us. Our world is dark with

nothing to be seen which relates to the overall atmosphere of Plato's cave. In the story, Plato refers to the other people in the cave as the puppet-handlers since they are the ones holding the prisoners in the cave captive. Something that we must keep in mind is that these prisoners do not realize that they are being held captive since their captivity is the only existence that they know. The puppet-handlers represent prominent members of the society who live inside a program that is created to control everyone. This idea is a metaphor as we could be in fact prisoners locked in a world where we do not know what is real. In the Allegory, the prisoners can only see what the puppet holders decide to show them. This is similar to the Matrix because they can only see what the programmers choose to show them. This can perhaps mean that our reality is limited as people also control what we see. "The Allegory of the Cave" and "The Matrix," does not sense what the true world is. In the story, the only true understanding and explanation of the real world is what they see in the shadows and in the movie, this is brought to them by the machines. As well, some similarities pertain to truth and confusion. In the Matrix, Neo is finally confronted with the surrounding of the real world as he becomes so overwhelmed that he passes out. Similar to the Allegory, the freed prisoner questions the illusions and the shadows on the wall as he becomes confused; he thinks if the things he saw were actually real. For example, in the movie Cypher tells Trinity, "I think the matrix can be more real than this world." This relates to the prisoners instant reaction as he would want to return to the false reality since he is more accustomed to it. According to Plato, the freed prisoner questioned where and how the shadows came from; he sensed that something was wrong. This theme is also found in "The Matrix" as Neo is similar to the freed prisoner.

The Allegory and The Matrix also have their differences. The change that the occupants of Plato's Cave go through is drastic at a metaphysical level. At first, they know of only of a plain two-dimensional flat surface, representing the only reality that exists. But soon they face the three-dimensional surroundings, the textured unfamiliar world. In contrast, the differences that Neo goes through are not at a metaphysical level, but it is rather a political level. This meaning that the mode inside the Matrix is the basic mode of existence outside of the Matrix as well. Plato's cave is

virtuously philosophical, whereas the Matrix is more of a modern paranoia. As well, both societies differ in their amounts of knowledge known. In an earth environment individuals are able to perceive more information and interact with more individuals but in a cave environment, those individuals are only subjected to a limited amount of people and also knowledge.

Both of these works make me reconsider the existence and reality of our world. I think that they both have their own ways of how people interpret what is real. We can think that the world is like the Matrix, an illusionary simulated reality or maybe even like the Allegory, where the prisoners think that the shadows they see are the only true reality. There are multiple different choices in what people think is the pure reality of this world- it will always remain undefined. Even though both of these works make me reconsider “what is real?” the Allegory of the Cave has more of an impact on me as many people can relate to the meaning of the story. It is about one man’s ability to understand and grow in knowledge. If he fails to complete this, then he will be trapped in his own narrow thinking. Many people in the world today can overcome these narrow views of life and knowledge by examining their own interpretations. Both works do a great job in making me think about what type of world I am in which is why I would never add anything to make it better. They already consist of philosophical insight. They make me reconsider everything that I see surrounding me like the movement of others, the things I smell, and the feelings I sense. Both works have also taught me that people cannot believe everything that they see; external reality is full with misconceptions. In order to pass these misconceptions, we must overcome our narrow views.

Humans, to some degree, are all influenced by the actions of others, but at the same time, we have the ability to question, and conclude to our own opinions. Both “The Allegory of the Cave” and “The Matrix” questions the fundamental basis of reality; it clarifies the difference between perception and what is indefinite. In the movie we find that Neo bends the laws of physics, almost like he has stepped into a whole other world. Throughout both these works, we identify that Neo and the freed man, are making their first steps towards independence.

Neo is pulled from a kind of cave in the first *Matrix* film, when he sees the real world for the first time. Everything he thought was real is only an illusion—much like the shadows on the cave walls and the statues that made the shadows were only copies of things in the real world. Plato insists that those who free themselves and come to perceive reality have a duty to return and teach others, and this holds true in the *Matrix* films as well, as Neo takes it upon himself to save humanity from widespread ignorance and acceptance of a false reality.

The main theme of Plato's allegory of the cave is that we humans tend not to understand the true reality of our world. We think that we understand what we are looking at and sensing in our world, but we really just perceive shadows of the true forms of the things that make up the world.

Understanding Allegory of the Cave

Humans are Prisoners in a Cave

According to Plato's allegory of the cave, the way we perceive things around us and the way we lead our lives, is actually not the "truth". We human beings are leading ignorant, incomplete lives, following the paths, rules, norms, ethics, set by the previous generations, without questioning them. Plato brings up this plight of humans by depicting them as prisoners in a cave. These prisoners are sitting facing a wall, tied in chains, with a fire between them and the wall, which makes shadows on the wall. The prisoners mistakenly think that these shadows on the walls are the "reality", cause that is what the fellow prisoners or the ones before them conveyed.

Questioner Escapes to Explore the "Truth"

Generations come and generations go and the prisoners lead the same unaware and ignorant lives in the dark caves, until one of the prisoners starts questioning. This prisoner breaks the chains that bind him and in order to know the real truth, escapes the caves into the unknown world. In the outside world, this questioner faces lots of challenges as he is not used to the sunlight, to the presence of nature and all its elements around him. The questioner, in spite of these obstacles, starts exploring this new world to seek reality. He treads on a lonely, unknown path to discover the truth, but does not give up his questioning spirit.

Philosopher Returns to Guide

At some point, this questioner, thinks of going back to the caves to tell the other prisoners about the reality. To tell them that there is a beautiful world out there, waiting for them, and that there is more to life than just the cave and its "imaginary reality" as depicted by the shadows. When the questioner, now a philosopher, shares this newfound knowledge with the other captives of the cave, he is met with disbelief.

People think of him as a pariah who should be removed from the society, to preserve its belief systems. People are averse to any kind of change, which the philosopher tries

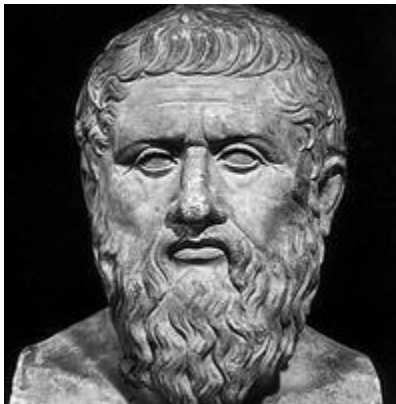
to bring about with his knowledge of the real truth, as they have become used to and dependent on the norms and ethics, handed over to them by their predecessors.

Through this, one can conclude that most of the human beings would rather live a comfortable, happy and familiar life, than a life full of challenges and pain, which would ultimately lead them to the "larger truths of life". Most human beings are contented with the "consensus reality", i.e. the reality agreed by all, even if it is as imaginary and as unreal as the shadows on the walls of the cave.

Humans are contented that they have the security of a family, of a society, of religion around them. However, according to Plato, there will come one questioner, one philosopher, from time to time, who will critically look at himself and the world around him, who will wonder why things are the way they are and then will make his own decisions regarding how things should be.

Brief Summary on The Allegory of the Cave

Plato considers that the human life on this earth is like an ignorant and miserable life in a deep cave. People have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move from their places or cannot see around them. There is fire above and behind them and they can see only the shadows falling over the walls, as in a puppet show.



Plato (427-347 BC)

Due to this limited condition, whatever they see on the wall is taken to be the truth. As they have been living with this condition for ages, they have no knowledge of the real world outside their cave. Thus, the images on the wall and the echo of various voices are the ultimate truth for them.

When any one of them is set free and dragged up to the mouth of the cave, he suffers sharp pains. First, his freed limbs give him pain, and then the toil of climbing upward gives him pain, and then the daylight of the outside real world dazzles his eyes. He has to habituate himself to the new surroundings and new objects. As his eyes get adjusted, he begins to see the real truth. Thus, he considers himself fortunate for having this opportunity to see the truth, and pities his fellow prisoners who are still living in that dark ignorant world.

Thus, according to Plato, the cave is the world of the senses, which prevents our upward journey to the world of reality. The upward journey is the rise of the soul into the intellectual world. In this world of knowledge, the idea of good comes at the end. Once this good is achieved, man gains all things beautiful and right ethically, and reason and truth intellectually.

Plato is of the opinion that it is the duty of the legislators to use such intellectuals in the management of the public affairs. At present, only the selfish and ambitious people are interested in administration. Such people are more interested in their self-gratification than in public service. That is why a state which is governed by many selfish people is always experiencing unrest. Those intellectuals, if pulled into public services, will govern the state jointly and therefore there will be peace, order and progress in such a state.

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Socrates then adds to the scenario, proposing that one of the prisoners is released and may now look around and move freely about the cave. Suddenly, he would be able to look at the fire that had been behind him his whole life. The light of it would hurt his eyes as they are accustomed only to the shadows and, squinting, he would not be able to perceive the puppets clearly. If he was told at this point that the puppets—which for him are blurred and obscured in his painful vision—are reality, he would not believe it, and he would retreat back to what is familiar and comfortable: the shadows that do not strain his eyes and so appear clearest and most real to him.

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According to Plato (518b-c):

We 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...Capacity for knowledge is innate in each man's mind... 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 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.

Here, he means that education is not as simple as just telling students information. As said above, educators must conduct themselves in a certain manner. An uninformed mind simply cannot process complex and outlandish information. The teacher must hold the capacities of students in high regard. When Plato uses the word 'turning', Losin (1996) points out the significance of this word, 'this notion of orientation [or turning] is central to Plato's idea of education: he later describes real education as the art of orientation.' This turning, according to Plato, requires the use of force or coercion. 'Our job as lawgivers [or educators] is to compel the best minds to attain what we called the highest forms of knowledge, and to ascend to the vision of the good as we have described, and when they have achieved this and see well enough, prevent them behaving as they are not allowed to' (Plato, *Rep.* 519c-d). This demonstrates another key part of Plato's philosophy of education, which is that education requires an authority figure who must force content on

students in a top-down manner. Just as the prisoner was physically forced out of the cave, the educator must compel the student to learn for the greater good. Today, this view seems somewhat outdated and illiberal. Although compulsory education does still exist, the use of physical force in schools is strictly outlawed. According to liberal philosopher Karl Popper (1957), Plato's utopia is more of a totalitarian dystopia due to the approval of coercion and the lacking of democracy that Plato endorses, ultimately to a degree being responsible for the fascist and communist regimes of modern times.

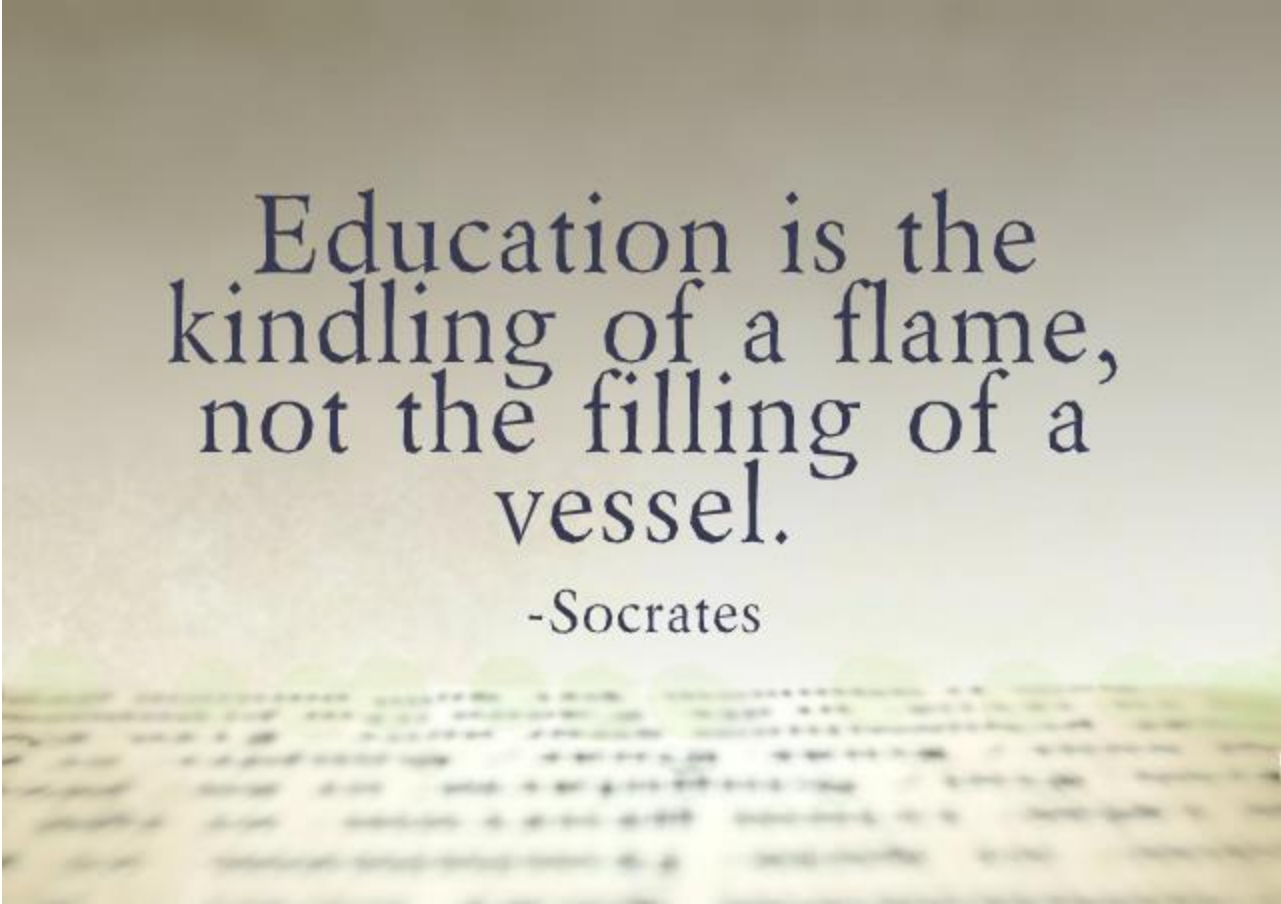
The allegory of the cave seeks to explain the fact that what we experience is not reality but merely shadows of it. The British empiricists Locke and Berkeley both take up this view that all that we have in consciousness are the impressions or ideas that reality prints upon it. We do not see reality as it really is, only the shadows or impressions that it makes on our minds. For these empiricists there was nothing more to say about the reality which causes us to experience the world in certain ways. They were primarily interested in the experiences themselves and what we did with them.

Plato however wanted to go back from the experiences to the source, suggesting that the experiences were merely shadows, a very limited representation of reality. But what was Plato's reality and how was it to be accessed? Plato's argument was that reason was the source of understanding, that the concepts and ideas that we think we form from experience were in fact already there from previous experience, waiting to be uncovered by the philosophers who kept their reasoning minds firmly focused on the dialectic and the truths that it revealed.

Plato says that philosophical education requires a reorientation of the whole self; it is a transformative experience. He believed that education is not just a matter of changing ideas or changing some practices, it is a process that transforms one's entire life because it involves the turning around of the soul. Education is the movement of the self, the transformation of the self. For example, in order for the prisoners to learn they had to not only turn their head around, but also turn their whole body around which included their soul, and passions in their mind, to educate themselves.

Therefore, education is a complete transformation of ones value system; “it requires a ‘turning around’ and ‘ascent’ of the soul — what we might call a spiritual awakening, or the finding and following of a spiritual path.”[\[10\]](#) By this, Plato means seeing the world in a different way, in the correct way.





Education is the
kindling of a flame,
not the filling of a
vessel.

-Socrates

In conclusion, Plato appears to be suggesting that we need to force ourselves to want to learn about the truth. Seeking knowledge is not an easy journey; it is a struggle, and once you see the world differently you cannot go back. For example, when the prisoner turned around he realised that the shadows on the wall were less real than the objects in the back that were casting the shadows; what he thought was real all his life was merely an illusion. If the prisoner did not question his beliefs about the shadows on the wall, he would never have discovered the truth. Hence, Plato believes that critical thinking is vital in education. When you try to tell others about the truth, they will not always accept it, as people are often happy in their ignorance. In the allegory of the cave the prisoner had to be forced to learn at times; for Plato, education in any form requires resistance, and with resistance comes force.

In a way Plato manipulates the reader as he implies that we are prisoners, however we believe that we are not prisoners — this makes us want to learn and search for the truth. It is easier not to challenge ourselves, and not be challenged by others. It is easier to just sit there and watch the puppet show, and not question your beliefs. It is difficult to turn around, however the rewards of making that journey are great, as the allegory of the cave tells us.

For Plato, education is personal and it is the transition from darkness to light, where light represents knowledge and truth. He believed that everyone is capable of learning, but it is down to whether the person desires to learn or not. The people in the cave needed to desire an education with their whole body and soul; thus, education is the formation of character, which involves the turning around of the soul.

The allegory begins with Plato's Socrates describing a group of humans held in a deep, dark cave. They have been imprisoned there since childhood, their necks and legs bound so they cannot turn to see themselves, each other, or the rest of the cave. All they can do is stare ahead at the cave wall in front of them. Behind them, unseen, is a walkway with a low barrier on it, and behind that is a large, bright fire. A group of puppeteers moves along the walkway, with puppets raised above their heads. While the puppeteers' own shadows are obscured by the barrier, the light of the fire casts the silhouettes of their puppets onto the far cave wall so that the prisoners see the shadow-shapes of humans, animals, and various objects flickering before them. When the puppeteers' voices echo around the cave, they appear to the prisoners to be coming from these shadow creatures, not from the unseen humans speaking behind them. Having presented this strange scenario, Socrates suggests that, for the prisoners, the shadow display, which is all they can see, would be "reality." They would not know that what they are seeing is an impression of an impression of a real thing—the shadow cast by a puppet that is inspired by a horse or the silhouette of mannequin in the shape of a human. As far as they are aware, the shadows are themselves the real object, the real horse, or the real human.

Socrates then adds to the scenario, proposing that one of the prisoners is released and may now look around and move freely about the cave. Suddenly, he would be able to look at the fire that had