

Plato the allegory of the cave assignment

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The two main elements to the story are that of the fictional metaphor of the prisoners, and the philosophical tenet in which said story is supposed to represent, thus presenting us with the allegory itself. The multi-faceted meanings that can be perceived from the "Cave" can be seen in the beginning with the presence of our prisoners who are chained within the darkness of the aforementioned cave. The prisoners are bound to the floor and unable to turn their heads to see what goes on behind them.

To the back of the prisoners, under the protection of the parapet, lie the puppeteers whom are casting the shadows on the wall in which the prisoners are perceiving reality. The passage is actually told not from the perspective of the prisoners, but rather a conversation occurring between Socrates and Glaucoma (Plato's brother). While the allegory itself isn't the story, but rather the conversational dialogues between Glaucoma and Socrates (Plato often spoke his ideas through Socrates in his works), the two are not mutually exclusive and thus will not be treated so.

As Socrates is describing the cave and the situation of the prisoners, he conveys the point that the prisoners would be inherently mistaken as to what is reality. Because we as readers know that the puppeteers behind them are using wooden and iron objects to liken the shadows to reality based items and people, the prisoners (unable to turn their heads) would know nothing else but the shadows, and perceive this as their own reality. This is an important development to the story because it shows us that what we perceive as real from birth is completely false based on our imperfect interpretations of reality and Goodness.

The general point thus far of the allegory is that the general terms of our language are not “ names” of the physical objects that we can see. They are actually names of things that are to visible to us, things that we can only grasp with the mind. This line of thinking is said to be described as “ imagination,” by Plato. Once the prisoner is released, he is forced to look upon the fire and objects that once dictated his perception Of reality, and he thus realizes these new images in front of him are now the accepted forms of reality.

Plato describes the vision of the real truth to be “ aching” to the eyes of the prisoners, and how they would naturally be inclined to going back and viewing what they have always seen as a pleasant and painless acceptance of truth. This stage of thinking is noted as “ belief. ” The comfort of the aforementioned is contrasted with the fear of the unrecognized outside world and would result in the prisoner being forced to climb the steep ascent of the cave and step outside into the bright sun.

Once the prisoner climbs out of the cave and is fully immersed in the sun’s rays, Socrates continues to explain the prisoner’s bewilderment, fear, and blindness to the objects he was now being told were real. The natural reaction of the prisoner would be to recognize shadows and reflections. After is eyes adjust to the sunlight, he begins to see items and people in their own existence, outside of any medium. This recognizes the cognitive stage of the prisoner’s adaptation to the outside world.

When the prisoner looks up to the sky and looks into the Sun, and recognizes it as the cause of all that is around him-he has perceived the “ Form of the

Good! " This point in the passage marks the climax, as the prisoner, whom not long ago was blind to the " Form of the Good" (as well as the basic Forms in general), now is aware of reality and truth. When this has occurred, the ultimate stage of thought has been achieved, and that is " understanding. " Plato, through the conversation of Socrates, then discusses the prisoner's newfound awareness of his own knowledge and understanding.

He inquires, would the prisoner want to return to the formerly accepted reality of truth, or would his content only lie in following his newly understood perception of reality? Both Glaucoma and Socrates agree the prisoner would rather suffer any fate than returning to his previous life and understanding or lack thereof. Upon returning to the Cave, the prisoner would metaphorically and literally e entering a world of darkness yet again, and would be faced with the other unreleased prisoners.

The other prisoners laugh at the released prisoner, and ridicule him for taking the useless ascent out of the cave in the first place. The others cannot understand something they have yet to experience, so it's up to this prisoner to represent leadership, for it is him alone who is conscious of goodness. It's at this point that Plato describes the philosopher kings who have recognized the Forms of Goodness as having a duty to be responsible leaders and to not feel contempt for those whom don't share his enlightenment.