

Different views on the philosophical concept of the nature of reality

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What's the problem? Isn't it enough that things are as they are? No, because we are sometimes deceived. We need to tell the difference between hard ground and marsh that only looks hard. We need to know whether something is a bear or only a child with a bearskin rug over its head. We have evolved to tell the real from the false. Injure the brain and the victim may lose their sense of reality. When you have flu the familiar world can seem unreal. And one of the most important hallmarks of philosophical thought is that you should never take things at face value. You should always be willing to accept that there's more than meet the eye. Because whatever truth seems obvious today, might turn out to be not so true at all.

It's one of the more daunting pursuits in philosophy-pondering what's really real, as opposed to what you think is real, and how you could ever know the difference. Fortunately, there are some guides who can help you on a journey, when you're exploring the nature of reality. One example is Don Cobb in inception because in the movie he is a thief who steals ideas from people by invading their dreams. He has the ability to steal corporate secrets from a CEO, or military plans from the head of state. But after a while, it becomes hard for some member of his team to tell the difference between one dream and another, or discern dreams of reality. The whole movie is populated with people who live in a dream world, convinced they're living real life. To them, the dream is all there is' it had become their reality. But from the perspective of those outside the dream, which see their sleeping bodies the reality they're chasing is simply false. And the fact is, it has the same concept that has been around for thousands of years.

The basic question that inception ask has vexed philosophers all the way back to the very roots of western philosophy, “ is it possible that my current reality isn’t real at all?”. Like around 2400 years ago, Plato wrote his famous book, The Republic, which he describes probably better than before in which he describes reality. He does by telling stories like prisoners who have been chained since birth in a dark cave, facing a blank wall. All kinds of people, objects pass behind the prisoners, and the fire cast the shadows of those things onto the wall in front of the prisoners. The shadow images are all the prisoners can see, and they come to understand the shadows as reality.

Now imagine what your view of the world would be like if all you’ve ever seen are just shadows. You wouldn’t know that there was anything more. But the conversation doesn’t go the way he thinks it will. He expects them to be amazed by his discovery and figured that they’ll join him in his new found discovery. But they all think he’s crazy as far as they are concerned.

Because he’s talking about a higher reality that they have never seen, heard or have any evidence for. To make it worse he goes back to the cave after being in the sunlight making him temporarily blind again. So from his friends perspective, his discovery into the outside world has actually damaged him.

Because now he can’t even see the shadow images that were once his whole world. Sometimes you might experience a diluted version of this kind of reality-shock for yourself. Now an example one when you’re a teenager and you felt romantic attraction from one of your classmates. You try to explain it to them but they think you’re crazy because they think the feeling is mutual. this happened to the man who when outside the cave and when back and

tried to explain it to his friends. And why does Plato what tell these stories because he wants us to believe that right now we are also prisoners trap in a cave.

Everything in our world is just a mere shadow of a higher reality. Just like the man who mistook shadows as a real thing, we are currently prisoners of a cave of our own. But rather than believing the shadows for the material objects of the ordinary world, our mistake is thinking that the material objects of the ordinary world are the most real things. In fact, Plato said that “ the physical world that we think is the most real, is actually a mere shadow of a higher truth”. If this surprised you think about how many beliefs were once accepted as absolute fact. Then only later that it turns out to be completely false. Like the belief that the earth is the center of the universe. Those so-called facts turned out to be far from the truth. So there is a lot more to this story than just a story. Plato is urging us to consider that the world is not really as it seems. And also he is making a statement about philosophy.

But doing philosophy is hard because accepting that much of what you’ve always believed might not actually be false and it can make you uncomfortable. And maybe you might feel temporarily blinded you may learn just enough to know that your old beliefs aren’t that reliable. But you don’t know well enough to feel comfortable with these new ideas. And also your friends might think you’ve lost your mind because you believed in the new ideas. But philosophy can bring you to new ways and see the world from a different perspective. And Plato also thinks that philosophy is like going from

the darkness and into the light. It can be both disorienting and rewarding at the same time.