

Notes: Allegory of the Cave

A breakdown of the symbolism behind a few of the objects and aspects of the Allegory.

Allegory- is a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas as charity, greed, or envy.

The Cave = A Society trapped by ignorance (uneducated, unknowing)

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 Chains = Whatever holds a person back from gaining knowledge

On a personal level CHAINS could be emotional, intellectual, physical, financial, motivational, etc. On a societal level CHAINS could be oppression, censorship, discrimination, communism, etc.

The Fire = Manufactured Light = Manufactured/Fabricated Truth

This light is small in comparison to the ultimate firelight (the sun) and it is manmade, therefore it only reaches a small area. It does not shine its light (truth) all over the world.

The Shadows = "Truths & Beliefs" people are "fed" by Government/Media/"Others"

If you believe that what you see should be taken as truth, then you are merely seeing a shadow of the truth. If shadows are the only thing they know to be true, then they have no idea that a shadow is not real. You cannot hold it or use it for anything.

The Game = The false knowledge of a "master" of none.

The Game represents how people believe that one person can be a 'master' when they have knowledge of the empirical world. This master does not actually know any truth, and it is ridiculous to admire someone like this. ***He will become the antagonist at some point when he confronts the Truth-Seeker or Knowledge-Seeker.

The Escape = The Awakening when (s)he realizes or senses there is more to the world.

The escaped prisoner represents the Philosopher or anyone who seeks knowledge outside of the "cave" and outside of the borders placed on us by the "puppet masters" and the powers that be.

The Rough Ascent = The process of letting go of old beliefs and accepting new ones.

This is the hardest part of the journey because LEARNING IS NOT EASY! It involves trial and error, pain and confusion, success and failure.

The Sun = The philosophical, intellectual, spiritual truth and knowledge

His intellectual journey represents a philosopher's journey when finding truth, wisdom, and spirituality. The sun reaches every part of the earth and can nurture and warm it as well as "enLIGHTen" it!

The Return = The desire and obligation to return to bring the others out of the darkness.

The new philosopher (smarty pants) has an obligation to share his experiences, knowledge and correct information with the other prisoners. BUT, their reaction to the escapee returning in such a state of excitement and INSISTANCE, is rarely a welcoming one. They will often resist and sometimes get hostile because change scares people. This step represents the people who are scared of knowing philosophical/intellectual truths and do not trust philosophers/scholars.

FINAL THOUGHT: THE JOURNEY OUT OF THE CAVE IS A ONE-WAY TRIP. YOU CAN'T UNSEE THINGS AND YOU CAN'T UNENLIGHTEN YOURSELF. **YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR POWER.**