

Plato`s Analogy of the Cave



The Analogy

In the cave, prisoners are forced to look only in one direction at the shadows on the walls. Behind them and outside of the cave is a burning fire. Inbetween the prisoners and the fire is a road along which men are carrying carved wooden figures of people and animals. Silhouettes or shadows of these figures are reflected on the cave wall from the light of a fire. As the prisoners have never known anything else, they mistake these images for reality and think that this is all there is to life.

One prisoner, becoming free from his shackles, is able to turn and see first the objects casting the shadows and then the source of the light. He makes his way out of the cave, painfully blinded at first by the brightness of the sunlight beyond the entrance to the cave. He now sees reality, and recognises the shadows below for what they were.

Later, the escaped prisoner returns to the cave. Because he has come in out of the daylight, his eyes are temporarily blinded by the darkness. The prisoners in the cave argue that his visit beyond the cave has ruined his eyesight and that they would kill anyone who tried to release them and lead them out.

Why did Plato devise the analogy of the cave?

Explaining Plato`s analogy of the cave

Images from the analogy	What do they represent?
The prisoners in the cave	
The shadows on the wall	
The people walking past the cave	
The escaped prisoner	
The light of the sun	
The prisoners` hostility to the returned escapee	

***The Matrix* : A Modern Version of Plato`s Cave**