

Analysis of Illusions and Imagery in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the signs, symbols and images of Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave" and discusses the difference between the inner and outer worlds and power politics. It also analyses the images and symbols of this text from political as well as philosophical points of view. The inside and outside of the cave signify the human's reality and prospects. The findings show the cave's shadows, which the prisoners observe daily from inside the cave. And when one prisoner comes out and sees the outer world, he gets disillusioned by the sunlight, the ultimate truth. The cave symbolizes the two worlds: the dark and bright sides of a human world. There has not been sufficient research work in semiotics and allegorical presentation. The study's main objective is to interpret the underlying meanings of the images and symbols of the text and attempts to see the intended meanings to enhance academia as all the scholars may not be able to comprehend the allegorical meanings. The symbolic interpretation can go into the depth of meanings, whereas surficial interpretation may educate the masses superficially. The research is based on these questions: What is the difference between symbolic interpretation and superficial explanation? How is a symbolic interpretation more authentic than a general interpretation? The study employs Chandler's (2017) semiotic theory and allegorical interpretations.

Keywords: allegory, illusion, images, semiotics, symbols

INTRODUCTION

Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave" is a philosophical essay. The author has presented the cave symbolically, showing that man's inner reality is always dark, which other people can never predict. This is an extended metaphor which suggests human perception. Plato begins the essay with a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, Plato's brother, about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge. The dialogue is about human perceptions. The cave symbolizes the human perception and his inner reality. This shows that everyone is in the cave as a prisoner lives. His legs and neck are chained. John Maharjan (2024) forwards Rousseau's saying, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains (p. 34)." This quote is universal. "Chains of society such as human responsibilities like doing jobs properly, following social and cultural norms, being attached with family members and society etc. enslave man; some chains hurt this soul, and few chains prevent him from proceeding towards destruction" (Maharjan, 2024). Some chains, such as being associated with friends who drink alcohol and are not according to the social status, hurt a person's interest. There is no alternative to the social chains. These chains of laws are for betterment, reformation and correction, though some hurt the soul. "The chain of laws prevents man from becoming a beast and destructive. "Without the implementation of laws, human society could present the picture of a jungle where the rule of might is right prevails" (Maharjan, 2024). The chain represents the law, and it does not always connote a negative impact; it helps one come on the track. Chain means a controlling factor. In the absence of this controlling factor,

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one may go to bestiality at any time, which is instilled in every individual. The chains of the prisoners also indicate both pains and gains simultaneously. Thus, a chain has double meanings and several benefits.

The chained prisoners symbolize the philosophers and thinkers, too. Chained means disciplined and well-controlled, too. The well-disciplined and controlled person can do far better than an uncontrolled or unchained person. The chained prisoners have been enlightened because of suffering living in the cave for a long time. Being chained may indicate a kind of yoga. It is their unwanted meditation yoga which sharpens their understanding unknowingly and reluctantly. Therefore, the chains stand for positive meanings like being disciplined and cultured. Several social bars and bonds help a man be enlightened, accustomed, philosophic, academic, thoughtful, and idea-oriented. Every society has its rules and regulations that prevent man from being undisciplined, chaotic, anarchic and blasphemous. The symbolic meanings are much more worth having than the general meanings. Symbols and images speak more than mere words. Chandler (2017) forwards the semiotic interpretation of images to discover a depth of meaning. He clarifies that “semiotics is far more than a method of textual analysis” (p. xvi). In several interpretive writings of all genres, the authors use semiotics as a method of textual analysis.

The chained prisoners have been put in an underground cave since childhood. Their offences are not mentioned here, but they are put into the cave. The pains of prey are never felt by the predator. Socrates asks Glaucon to imagine their lives not to experience. They cannot move their heads or turn around. What a pathetic life they are in. They just see the shadows of objects and people cast on the cave wall by a fire behind them. The fire is also symbolic of life and destruction. Fire can destroy anything at any time. The danger is always on standby, like a watchdog behind us. On the other hand, fire indicates life, too. They believe that the shadows they see and the echoes they hear are the only reality to them. They have been used to with this reality. Glaucon’s dialogue is, “all their lives, with their heads facing forward only” (Plato, 2024, p. 2), which indicates that man is never hopeless and disappointed even if he is in the vault of difficulties. It is hope by which a man survives. For example, if you ask a physics teacher what makes a man survive? He answers that it is air; if you ask a chemistry teacher, he says oxygen, but if you ask a literature teacher, he says it is hope. Thus, hope makes a man survive. This is what the prisoners who always face forward symbolize.

The prisoner, who is blinded by the sunlight outside the cave, believes that the shadows of objects and people cast on the wall of the cave are real. But when he comes out of the cave, he realizes that the shadows are mere illusions. This reflects that human life is always guided by illusions and confusion. The prisoner represents the philosopher who has achieved enlightenment and understands the limitations of human perception. This process represents how humans traverse and transcend into one world from another. This is the regular process of humans. Plato claims that one can obtain true knowledge only through philosophical inquiry. Living in the cave is a kind of process of enquiry. The Cave, as a lonely place, helps a man to gain the philosophy of life as Buddha had chosen the Gaya for meditation. This suggests that humans must strive to escape the limitations of their perceptions to achieve true knowledge. Living in the cave symbolizes a high meditation, without which acquiring something is impossible. For meditation, it requires a lonely place like a cave as it is the appropriate place. Similarly, Buddha meditated while sitting beneath the Pipal tree in Bodh Gaya of India, a lonely place. So is the cave. This is how the cave explores the nature of reality, human knowledge, and the power of philosophical inquiry. It also suggests that a man is always in pursuit of knowledge, but it is the most challenging work. The chains are symbolic of the no pain, no gain philosophy.

Both *Allegory of the Cave* by Plato and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell explore themes of ignorance, enlightenment, and the manipulation of truth, with the cave dwellers and the farm animals representing societies kept in the dark by those in power. Plato’s cave uses a philosophical metaphor

to depict the journey from illusion to reality, that is, the prisoner's journey from inner cave to outer cave. Orwell's animal analogy employs a satirical fable to critique political corruption and the abuse of power. While Plato's allegory suggests that enlightenment is possible through philosophical reasoning, Orwell's novel highlights the dangers of political corruption, showing how even those who seek freedom can become oppressors themselves. In Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, the prisoner goes out of the cave and inspects the outer world, symbolizing his innocence to experience and ignorance to knowledge or awareness. The prisoners in the cave and the animals in the animal farm are similar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chandler's (2017) semiotic theory interprets semiotics as the study of signs, symbols and signification that the writers use to make their literary texts rhetoric. Symbolic interpretation is one of the most powerful tools to analyze the images, symbols and signs of any text. The study attempts to interpret the images used by Plato. The paper interprets the images and symbols of "The Allegory of the Cave by Plato." Allegorical presentation is one of the most comfortable and powerful tools for several writers in English literature. It is easier and more comfortable for them to tell the most philosophical things through allegory and signs as well as symbols. Highly philosophical thing is often presented indirectly, for which allegory is an easy way. Moreover, symbolic interpretation helps the readers understand the deeper meanings of a text. On the other hand, allegorical presentation has a significant role in exploring the real picture of the society through literary devices, such as satire. Allegory and fable are powerful tools for satirizing the human world. The cave image represents the human mind, whereas the animal image projects the human behaviours. Daneil Lea opines:

Most prominent amongst those are the allegory and the fable - two very traditional modes of writing which are conventionally invested with moralistic or didactic significance, but in Orwell's case are utilized as a means of making political comment about the immanent will to power of human beings. (Lea, 2001, p. 47)

Like semiotic interpretation, allegory and fable are the most convenient and traditional modes or methods of explanation. This method entertains the readers and helps them understand the highly philosophical idea easily.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This research is qualitative, and it uses the document analysis method as a tool to conclude the argument. However, the study is fully based on library study and employs Chandler's (2017) semiotic interpretation theory and Mead's symbol interactionism theory. The images which we find in the text are symbolically presented. Signs, symbols and images have a deeper meaning than the explanation of mere words. The cave semiotics is a powerful tool to Plato by which he reflects the entire human world. Or "semiotics is concerned with everything" (p. 2). Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols in general, but it stands for deeper meanings. The language of images and symbols is beyond one's prediction. The meanings of words can be limited, whereas symbolic meanings are unlimited. Chandler (2017) claims that "Semiotics is perhaps best thought of as a way of looking at the production of meaning from a particular critical perspective" (p. 3). After all, meaning is the product or creation of a philosopher and scholar. Meaning deviates from time to time. Therefore, "semiotics is unavoidably a form of philosophy. Nothing can be known outside semiosis" (Chandler, 2017, p. 69). The most powerful literary tools, like semiotic and allegorical presentations, are the most powerful theoretical tools that they analyze Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave." Moreover, Lea (2001) opines:

The stance of allegory recognizes that the external world exists outwith the control of human beings. It exercises a rhetoric or a persuasion that is positive because of its willingness to step outside often restrictive and isolating man-made definitions in order to recognize the external. (p. 53)

Even if an allegorical interpretation is not a proper theory to analyze the texts, it entertains the readers well. It exists outwith the control of human beings, and man defines it to recognize the external world that is much more different from the inner world. The prisoner's illusion is no more when he comes out of the cave. Allegory like fantasy is a rhetorical stance. As such, it is not a theory of knowledge nor a specific generic mode of expression (Lea, 2001, p. 53), but it is effective, didactic, and philosophical.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave" serves as a metaphor that suggests the human condition. Several prisoners have been living in the cave for a long time. The torture of the prisoners is beyond prediction or at the extreme point. This extreme torture is not only deteriorating them, it is ameliorating them, too. They cannot walk even a yard or so because they are tied with the chains so inhumanely. Their legs and necks are chained. The chained legs and necks symbolize the human's troubles, which never release him or her. Tension-free life is just a Utopian thought that is never possible as "when one of the prisoners is freed from the chains of the cave, stands up, turns his neck, turns round and sees the light, which, as he ascends towards it, almost blinds him, because 'his eyes [are] so full of its radiance'" (Ursic and Louth, 1998, p. 99). The prisoner finds the outer world is different from what he has been habituated to. When he is freed from the symbolic prison, a chain, he is still in another kind of chain. He was not happy in the cave, nor was he happy coming out of it. He is terrified of the outer world, which is full of sunlight and cannot see properly because of it. Though he is close to reality, the world of material objects is not the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality is always dark, like a cave. Once it is seen again, it disappears. Reality is always different from what we observe that the cave allegory represents. In real, allegory' is one-to-one use of representational emblems, similarities: hardly a subtle genre (Lea, 2001, p. 108) rather than a fully theoretical tool, although it functions like semiotic and symbol theories and several writers use it as their literary device.

Glaucou's, which, Millions of symbols stand for millions of meanings. For example, Ganesh, the Hindu God, stands for several things. "Ganesh is typically associated with a variety of symbolic items and figures. Ganesh can be seen holding a hatchet, which symbolizes the cutting away of illusions and false notions, as well as the cutting away of past deeds and karma when one achieves enlightenment" (Miller, 2015, p. 57). Ganesh is the symbol of the starting point of anything. The hatchet which Ganesh carries in his one hand symbolizes the cutting away of illusions and false notions. Man is trapped in illusions and false notions most of the time. The reality and truth are rarely available in this world of falsehood. Likewise, the prisoner who has lived in the cave for a long time has one kind of illusion about reality and truth. The shadow is the reality for him. He has been disillusioned in such a way that he cannot believe the reality when he comes out of the cave. This process denotes the whole world. Several metaphorical presentations denote several meanings.

The meaning varies according to the scholar's field and area of interest. Meaning does not remain the same for a long time. It changes according to space and time. The meaning the prisoner understands while he is in the cave and the meaning he gets out of the cave differs. The prisoner who has been living in a cave almost his entire life is allowed to come out of it. He is released and forced to stand up and turn around. Initially, the released prisoner is blinded by the sunlight outside the cave. He sees the world for what it truly is, and he understands the limitations of his previous perceptions. However, as his eyes adjust, he begins to see the real objects that cast shadows on the wall. He realizes that the shadows were mere illusions and that the true forms of the objects are outside the cave. He was overwhelmed by this newfound knowledge. Now, he has been enlightened. The freed prisoner returns to the cave to share the truth with the other prisoners. However, they reject his claims and ridicule him, believing that he has been blinded by going outside. They are resistant to accepting a reality that contradicts their familiar world of shadows. Geography matters in everything, as those who are used to living outside the cave have one understanding, and those prisoners who are used to living in the cave

have another understanding. For example, the daytime in the Netherlands is much longer than in the rest of the world. The definitions of the Netherlands people about daytime and other people differ.

Plato uses this allegory to convey his theory of forms, as an allegory, *Animal Farm* does provide a didactic element, but it is actively educative rather than authoritarian; it raises questions about itself and its processes at the same time as it questions its concerns (Lea, 2001, p. 55), which suggests that the physical world we perceive through our senses is merely a shadow or an illusion of the true reality. He argues that true knowledge can only be obtained through philosophical reasoning and intellectual enlightenment. The prisoners represent the unenlightened individuals who are bound by ignorance and innocence, while the released prisoner symbolizes the philosopher who has transcended the limitations of the material world to attain high knowledge from innocence and awareness from ignorance. In the cave, the prisoners are guided by ignorance as the bliss principle. This is a philosophical evaluation. So, “The Allegory of the Cave” is a philosophical essay written by the Ancient Greek philosopher Plato. The prisoners in the cave see only shadow-beings and think that these are all there are; they know nothing of being, of the understanding of being (Heidegger, 2013, p. 43). For them, shadow being is all in all. They know nothing but the shadow being. As being is to becoming, so is pure intellect to opinion. And as intellect is to opinion, so is science to belief, and understanding to the perception of shadows.

This is what the illusion is. This reflects the universality and every man’s reality. The essay presents an extended metaphor about human perception and knowledge:

The perception by *man* as human *comportment* (that from ψυχή and λόγος to the ὄν). This accords with the leading question of what knowledge is, namely, that over which we human beings are empowered. We ‘see’; ‘how’ do we see? *Who* sees? What is it *that* sees when we see? Who are ‘we’? It is clear that in human perception, thus in seeing, hearing, etc., the eyes and ears come into play. (Heidegger, 2013, p.135)

The human perception is through different sense organs, and the meanings humans create depends on their ways of understanding level. The understanding does not resemble to each other.

The essay presents a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge. The allegory describes a group of people who have lived in a dark cave, where they are bound and forced to face a wall, with only shadows of objects projected onto the wall as their reality. They are chained in such a way that they can only face the back wall. The wall symbolizes their huddles. They are willing to break the wall, though they are unable to do that at the moment. Behind them, a fire casts shadows on the wall, which the people mistake for reality. To them, the shadows are the only things that exist, and they believe that they represent the entirety of reality.

“Allegory” serves as a metaphor for the human condition. The prisoners in the cave represent humans who are ignorant of the true nature of reality, while the freed prisoner represents the philosopher who has achieved enlightenment and understands the limitations of human perception. Plato uses this allegory to argue that true knowledge can only be obtained through philosophical inquiry and that humans must strive to escape the limitations of their perceptions to achieve true understanding. Through the allegory, Plato suggests that the world of material objects is not the ultimate reality but a shadow of the true reality that can only be accessed through reason and intellect. The allegory also illustrates the limitations of human knowledge and the importance of philosophical inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the world. The cave is an allegory that explores the nature of reality, human knowledge, and the power of politics and philosophical inquiry. It invites the reader to question their assumptions and encourages them to seek a deeper understanding of the world beyond the surface level of appearances. Thus, the essay uses a metaphorical story to explore the limitations of human perception and the importance of philosophical inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge.

The Allegory illustrates the contrast between the world of appearances and the world of reality. The reality is never as good as the person's appearance and vice versa. The prophecy magnifies the tyrant and diminishes the reader; the allegory magnifies the reader and diminishes the tyrant (Lea, 2001, p. 106). Therefore, the role allegory is significant. Maybe ten percent of one's appearances match with his reality. The dark side of humans is unpredictable, though one cannot ignore it. In this allegory, prisoners, who are chained inside a dark cave, are only able to see shadows cast on the wall by objects behind them, illuminated by a fire. This represents how people perceive reality through limited and distorted perspectives. The prisoners are used to living with shadows as they symbolize the misconceptions and beliefs we hold based on sensory experiences. The prisoners mistake these shadows for reality, much like how people often accept societal norms and opinions without questioning them. So, they are under the shadows of illusions. This suggests that every man is under such shadows of illusions. And when one of the prisoners comes out of the cave and sees the outer world, his vision changes. This is what the journey of enlightenment is. One prisoner comes out of the cave and discovers the outside world. This represents the philosophical quest for knowledge and truth:

We know that a light is on here. Such knowing [*Wissen*] can only arise from knowledge [*Erkenntnis*], and knowledge grasps the true, for false knowledge is no knowledge at all. And what *is* the true? The true is *what is known*. It is just what corresponds with the facts. The proposition corresponds with what is known in knowledge; (Heidegger, 2013, p. 3)

The light symbolizes human knowledge. Grasping the knowledge for refining the truth is a lengthy process as the prisoners are lingering there in the cave. Their patience is the most exemplary as every man in the world has no patience. In that sense, this essay suggests that one should have patience by which he can succeed in several steps of life's journey. One of the prisoners who comes out of the cave has different views. His understanding has been changed. This process proves that no understanding is the final understanding. It goes on changing as time passes. Similarly, meanings also change as time passes. This journey signifies the struggle to understand deeper realities beyond the superficial appearances of either humans or other phenomena.

The sun, which the prisoner faces and nearly gets blinded by, represents the ultimate truth and knowledge, or the sun is a symbol of eternal truth. The escapee's realization of this truth signifies enlightenment and understanding, which can be painful and disorienting but ultimately liberating. After some time, he gets back to the cave, and he shares his experiences with his fellow prisoners, but they do not believe what he says. They are not ready to agree with the enlightened prisoner. Rather, he faces ridicule and disbelief. This reflects the challenge of conveying deeper insights to those who remain comfortable in their ignorance. Overall, the allegory serves as a commentary on education, the nature of reality, and the responsibilities of the philosopher to seek and share knowledge, emphasizing the transformative power of enlightenment.

Animal Farm by Orwell serves as a powerful allegory of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of the Soviet Union. Here are some key interpretations of Characters as Historical Figures: Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, symbolizing the tyrannical leadership and the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. Snowball stands for Leon Trotsky, representing the intellectual and moral opposition to Stalin's rule. Boxer, the hardworking horse, symbolizes the working class whose loyalty is exploited by the ruling elite. The Farm as the State: The farm itself symbolizes a state or society that begins with hopeful revolutionary ideals but devolves into totalitarianism. This is why the prisoners have hopeful revolutionary ideals. Daniel Moran (2000) states:

Orwell examined socialism in a number of his nonfiction works but was prompted to write *Animal Farm* by what he saw as a prevalent—and false—belief that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a step toward socialism for millions of poor and oppressed Russians. Orwell felt that

Stalin's brutal rise to power was not only barbaric but a betrayal of the socialist principles for which Lenin, Trotsky, and he had presumably revolted. (p. 22)

This quote is about power politics, which affects society because time gave birth to Lenin and Trotsky, who revolted against autocratic rule and put it to an end though the public was compelled to tolerate it. The brutal domination did not last a very long time. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was against the domination of the government to release the millions of poor and oppressed Russians from such adversities or unjust activities. The revolution was against Stalin's brutal governance and his reign. The chained prisoners are always looking at the wall with the hope of getting out of it. Their chained heads and legs do not make them disappointed. They are looking at the wall continuously, which means they are hoping to get success. Orwell states, "Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,/Beasts of every land and clime" (Orwell, 1996, p. 32), which means to say that there is animality in every man everywhere. Man is not free from bestiality. What we see in a man or woman is not his/her real ground.

Unlike Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the way of presenting the allegory is similar. In *The Allegory of the Cave*, Plato describes a group of prisoners who have been chained inside a dark cave for a long time. They are unable to move or turn their heads, only able to see the wall in front of them. Behind the prisoners, there is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners, there is a raised walkway. This raised walkway is also a symbol of human hope, which is what every man has. They have little hope for freedom and equality (Bloom, 2006, 25). Man's hope generally never dies. People walk along the walkway, carrying various objects, which cast shadows on the wall in front of the prisoners. The prisoners, having never seen anything beyond the shadows on the wall, believe that the shadows are the realities and that they represent the true forms of the objects. They give names to these shadows and consider them to be the actual objects themselves.

There are several allegorical presentations. Among them, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is the most powerful allegorical presentation. It is a rich allegory that critiques totalitarianism, particularly reflecting on the events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of Stalinism. Every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism (Moran, 2000, p. 22). Moran clarifies that he has been writing against tyrannical governance for freedom to all. Freedom is not only for those who can play power politics. Those who are unable to deal with the power politics are always the victims. The cave prisoners represent this reality. The U.S.S.R. was not progressing toward socialism but totalitarianism (Moran, 2000, p. 23). Moreover, whether or not the allegory of the cave reflects the totalitarianism of Russia or not, the punishment given to the prisoners is totalitarian political activity. The prisoners seem to have been put there for prejudices rather than progress.

Here's a breakdown of its key allegorical elements. They are the farm, animal characters, the rebellion, the commandments, and the windmill. The farm represents a society or nation, animal characters like Napoleon Joseph Stalin, Snowball Leon Trotsky, Boxer the working class, Squealer propaganda and the manipulation of language, and the rebellion the way of the overthrow of oppressive regimes. The story is very well-written, especially the Snowball episode, which suggests that the Communist 'Trotskyite' is a conception on much the same mental plane as the Nazi 'Jew,' and the vicious irony of the end of Boxer the workhorse is perhaps really great satire. (Lee, 2001, p. 22). The farm illustrates how power dynamics can shift and how ideals can be corrupted. Joseph Stalin's rise to power and authoritarian rule symbolize the dangers of unchecked leadership. Leon Trotsky is ousted from power and becomes a scapegoat for failures, embodying the struggle for ideological control. The hardworking class people are showing their dedication and eventual betrayal by those in power. Squealer distorts the truth to maintain control over the other animals. The initial rebellion against Mr. Jones signifies the overthrow of oppressive regimes. However, the animals' naive hope for equality and freedom is ultimately subverted. The changing commandments of Animalism represent the erosion of

ideals. As the pigs gain power, they alter the commandments to justify their actions, illustrating how revolutionary principles can be twisted for self-serving purposes. The windmill symbolizes the false promises of progress. Initially a symbol of hope and unity, it becomes a tool for exploitation, reflecting how ambitious projects can be used to manipulate and control the populace.

The transformation of the pigs into human-like figures at the story's conclusion represents the complete betrayal of the revolution. Can pigs ever be transformed into human-like figures? This is the author's imagination of a man who has a piggy nature. The animals can no longer distinguish between their former oppressors and their new rulers, highlighting the cyclical nature of tyranny. Similarly, man cannot distinguish good and bad leaders. They select the wrong persons as their leaders, and they suffer much. Overall, "Animal Farm" serves as a cautionary tale about the corrupting influence of power, the ease with which ideals can be compromised, and the importance of critical thought in society

CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to present the allegorical presentation that is not easy to understand the deeper meanings. The paper concludes that human understanding is just an illusion and that understanding does not remain the same forever. It proves that no understanding is the final understanding. Plato describes the pathetic condition of the prisoners whose heads and legs are tied with chains and who are placed in the dark cave. They have been living there for a long time. Their way of understanding is different from those who are living outside the cave. They have illusions, and when one of them comes out of it and sees the outer world, he finds a different scenario. He nearly gets blinded by the sunlight, though his eyes after some time. Then, he comes back to the cave and shares his experiences with his fellow prisoners, but they do not believe what he narrates. They are not ready to believe the outer world's realities, though their fellow narrators tell them. Rather, they ridicule him. This shows that everyone's understanding is determined by his/her mindset. What is set in his/her mind is the truth to him/her, not what other tells him/her. Plato calls this an illusion. In reality, both the worlds outside and inside of the cave are illusions. This entire world is full of illusions.

However, Plato says that the prisoners symbolize the philosophers. The cave image is an extended metaphor that represents human reality. He argues that true knowledge can only be obtained through philosophical reasoning and intellectual enlightenment. The prisoners' stay in the cave represents the process of transcendentalism for his enlightenment. What is this? Can you please explain it in one sentence? Their suffering denotes meditation like that of Buddha. The prisoners are far more talented and philosophical than ordinary people. Symbolic or allegorical presentation is much easier for the writers to express the heavy meaning. Words alone are not sufficient to disseminate the messages to the readers. Therefore, the use of allegories is a very powerful tool for writers. Symbols and images tell deeper and heavier meanings than mere words.

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