

Portugal, Nicholas  
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### “Allegory of the Cave” OPR

Plato’s parable on the concept of enlightenment captioned *Allegory of the Cave*, holds relevance to the dire problem humanity is faced with, as the world continues to advance in terms of technology. When culture begins to be abandoned and the natural world is vanishing due to human development, societies only become concerned with what occurs in their limited artificial environment. Plato offers a mythological example of what “naturally follows” when one of the prisoners restrained to the den is released, and how his epiphanic yet uncomfortable experiences cause him to attain enlightenment and understand a greater significance of life. In comparison, in the book *Siddhartha*, the protagonist Siddhartha was spiritually displeased with himself and his community, deciding to join the Samana ascetics, who impart upon him the wisdom associated with pain and hunger to flee the body’s limitations. Essentially, those who are inclined to venture beyond the boundaries of their comfort zone try to gain valuable insight about the peripheries, or the areas the society consider subordinate and gather awareness of the benefits and detriments involved in all sorts of adventures, whether physical and mental.

“Better to be the poor servant of a poor master and to endure anything rather than think as they do and live after their manner.” Plato asserted near the end of the parable that to live with integrity as a member of the lowest social caste is superior to enjoying an ostentatious lifestyle under a false “illusion.” As the ‘prisoners’ in the den, so called due to their immersion in viewing silhouettes of an array of manmade articles, never stirred from their locations since childhood, they were substantially unenlightened to the complexities and beauty of the upper world. Plato tends to address their oblivion in interrogative forms, such as: “Would they be not sure to think when one of the passersby spoke that the voice came from the passing shadows?” It suggests everything appears readily discernable to a bystander, and assuredly being already enlightened, would be wont to question such circumstances. Furthermore, the general structure of the parable appears to portray distinct images, culminating in a vivid representation of what Plato desires the readers to “envision;” from objects as small as flowers to expansive as the conception of the sun being the cause of the seasons; at the same time, from illusions as deceptive as shadow puppets, to realities as reinvigorating as the sights of graceful birds and water ripples. The enlightened individual would pity the oblivious society from which he/she originated, and communicate their troubles and honors from experiences; however, he/she isn’t always welcomed back. During the period in which Plato composed the parable, during the zenith of classical Greece (5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BC), individuals who defied the established forms of community and knowledge would be typically castigated by figures of authority and either exiled or executed.

In conclusion, the definition of an allegory is a figurative element in which abstractions are exemplified through characters, figures, and events, meant to convey a moral lesson. Plato demonstrated how if society is ignorant, consumed by artificial achievement, and the relationship between humans and the natural world is further marginalized, then enlightenment couldn’t be achieved. In other words, those who don’t experience suffering and nature’s gifts and obstacles cannot recognize the deeper significances of life and humanity. They would only be living in false illusions, and only have a keen appreciation for entertainment and silhouettes. In today’s generation, technology is quickly becoming the center of people’s lives, and it demonstrates a need for individuals to occasionally immerse themselves in nature to prevent ignorance.