

**Metaphysics** - What is real? How should we understand reality? What is most fundamental to “being”, or to the nature of existence?

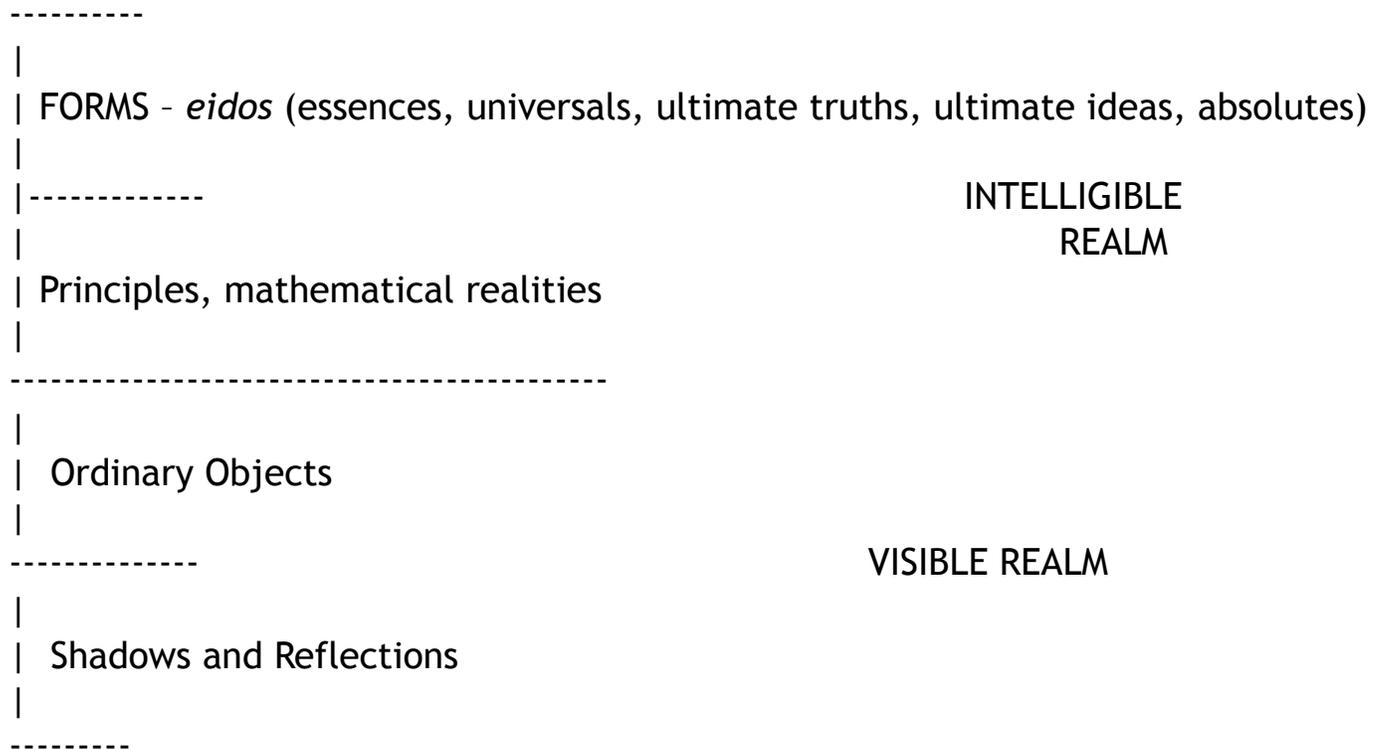
### Plato - *The Republic*

- After discussing how our knowledge seems illuminated and informed by some ultimate truth of “the good”, Plato presents two pictures of the nature of reality:
  - The Allegory of the Cave
  - The Divided Line

### The Allegory of the Cave...

- Prisoners chained in a cave, only see the cave wall with shadows and reflections... no other “reality”
- But, if a prisoner could get free, and gradually get out of the cave into a “higher” reality, they would see “truth
- It is difficult to get into the light... hard to adjust at first, but gradually you will “see” truth
- Gradually the higher reality becomes known
- A good person would go back into the cave to try and convince others about what’s true (even though they may be rejected or ridiculed)

## The Divided Line



## Aristotle's Metaphysics...

- What is fundamental to reality?
  - SUBSTANCE
- What is a substance?
  - Individual thing... a particular thing
  - You can point to it!
    - a “this” or a “that”
  - A substance cannot be a predicate
    - Cannot be said of or said in a subject
    - Substances aren't features, or attributes, or properties... they are the things that HAVE features, or properties, or attributes
  - A substance has nothing contrary to it... doesn't admit of levels or degrees in terms of it being what it is

- Substances have attributes or features that may be contraries (matters of degree, more and less), but they themselves have nothing contrary to them

Aristotle gives us FOUR main ways to think of why a substance is what it is...

- “Four Causes” for a substance being what it is

**Material Cause** - the physical stuff that makes something what it is...

- Wood and metal and plastic make this a table.

**Formal Cause** - defining essence that makes something what it is; definition; formula; essential properties (necessary and sufficient conditions; *genus differentiae*)

- Being a piece of furniture with legs and a large flat surface makes this a table (causes this to be a table)

**Efficient Cause** - dynamic source of change or motion that makes a substance what it is... a creative power

- A carpenter makes this a table

**Final Cause** - the defining purpose for which something is what it is; the “end” for which something exists

- Being something to eat upon or write upon makes this a table.
- *Telos* - the natural and defining purpose of something
- All of nature has *telos* in it... tigers are “meant” to kill and eat, run fast, make baby tigers... “circle of life”
- Teeth are the way they are so they can chew
- Rain falls on purpose... to water the earth
- Even humans have *telos*... to live rationally flourishing lives
- This is a “teleological” view of nature... that things happen on purpose
- Most scientists don’t think of nature being purposeful this way anymore