

Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" (*Republic*) - pp. 69-75

1. Why do you think the Form of the "Good" is considered by Plato to be the ultimate illuminating idea that helps understand truth and reality?

Plato believed that there is an ultimate reality that exists beyond the physical world that we can see and experience known as the Form of the Good. According to Plato, this is the ultimate illuminating ideas that help us understand truth and reality because it is the source of all other Forms or ideas. It is the basis for all knowledge and ideas.

2. Recount and explain Plato's Allegory of the Cave. How does it relate to knowledge? How does it relate to levels of reality? In the story the cave symbolizes human knowledge and understanding. In the story, there are people trapped in a dark cave and can only see shadows of things projected on the wall. They believe the shadows are real and have no knowledge of the world outside the cave. The story shows that people often make mistakes about what they think is real based on what they see and experience. Plato believed that there were higher levels of reality beyond what our senses can perceive. He believed that true knowledge and understanding could only be achieved by looking beyond the illusions of the physical world and exploring the realm of our ideas. True knowledge requires us to look beyond our limited senses, beyond the surface of things. It suggests that there are different levels of reality as well as different levels of understanding and perception. The highest level of reality is in ideas which provide us with the basis for knowledge and understanding,

3. Explain in your own words the levels of reality represented by Plato's divided line.

Plato's divided line is a line broken into 4 sections:

- The bottom section represents the world of shadows and illusions which are things we perceive with our senses
- The second section is the world of physical objects, which are things we can touch and interact with in the physical world.
- The third section shows us the world of concepts and ideas, where things we can think about and understand through reason exist.
- The top section represents the ultimate reality, where the world of Forms or Ideas exists. This is the highest level of reality where the basis for all other levels of reality exists

Aristotle, "Individual Substance" (*Categories*) – pp. 76-79

1. In your own words and referencing the reading, explain the main point Aristotle makes in describing a primary, basic, "substance" as the fundamental basis of reality.

Aristotle believed that everything was made up of substances and that these substances were the most basic and fundamental parts of reality. He defined a substance as something that exists on its own without needing anything else to exist. Therefore, they are the most important part of reality because they are its building blocks. As such they provide the foundations for everything else that exists.

2. What does Aristotle mean when he says that a substance cannot be "said of" or "said in" a subject? Look up the concept of a "predicate" online. How might you rephrase Aristotle's point by saying a substance can never be a predicate?

In other words, a substance can never be a predicate, it can't be used as something that is said of in a subject. Instead, a substance is an ultimate part of reality that exists independently and has its own unique characteristics.

3. Why do you think Aristotle picks out primary substance as the basic building block of reality, and not the parts, or atoms, or matter, or any other smaller thing that might make up a substance?

Based upon my research, the concept of atoms and matter didn't exist during Aristotle's times in the first place. Also, his philosophy was based on his observations and analyses of the natural world and were the foundations of his ideas about substances. Furthermore, if they did have knowledge about them, he would argue that they aren't substances themselves but rather parts of substances.

Aristotle, "Four Types of Explanation" (*Physics*) – pp. 413-415

1. List and explain in your own words the four main reasons (sometimes called "causes") for why a substance is what it is according to Aristotle.

- Material cause-the physical matter that makes up a substance.
- Formal cause-the shape or form of a substance.
- Efficient cause-the process or action that brings a substance into existence or cause it to change.
- Final cause-the purpose or end goal of a substance.

2. Take the example of a table. How would you explain why a table is what it is, in terms of the four main types of explanation according to Aristotle.

- Material cause-if a wooden table it would be the wood its made of

- Formal cause-the shape of the table is flat on top and has 4 legs to hold it up.
- Efficient cause-the table is made by cutting and shaping the wood and putting the pieces together using nails or glue.
- Final cause-the purpose of the table is to provide people with a flat surface to put objects on or use for eating, studying or working on.

3. What does Aristotle say about the fourth cause of things, and how it even exists in nature?

How does nature show this cause? Do you agree or disagree that there is a true purposefulness in nature? Why?

Aristotle says that fourth cause of things is important part of understanding how things exist in nature and what gives them purpose or meaning. Nature shows cause in many different ways. Essentially, through cause-and-effect relationships between various organisms; for example, seeds go into the soil, it rains and penetrates the soil, The sun shines on the soil and grows crops. The crops feed animals and humans. I agree that there is a true purposefulness in nature, particularly from a religious perspective. The bible teaches the purposefulness of nature is a reflection of God's design and plan. Everything in nature was created with a purpose. For example, in Psalm 104 it says that God created the earth with great wisdom and that everything in nature serves a purpose.