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Phi101:Introduction to Philosophy

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### **Reading Questions Lesson 3**

**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? According to Plato's idea of forms, the material world is merely a reflection of the world of forms, which holds the absolute reality and truth. Since it is the origin of all other Forms and the pinnacle of knowledge, the Form of the Good is the highest and most significant Form. We can only get deep comprehension and comprehend the essence of reality by comprehending the Form of the Good.

2. Recount and explain Plato's Allegory of the Cave. How does it relate to knowledge? How does it relate to levels of reality? The metaphorical tale of Plato's Allegory of the Cave depicts a philosopher's journey from ignorance to enlightenment. It shows a group of individuals who have spent their entire lives trapped inside a cave and who mistake reality for the shadows. The narrative follows one of the captives as he is set free and transported into society, where he starts to recognize the actual things that produce the shadows. The inmates in the cave are imprisoned in a world of shadows and illusions; the outside world, where genuine items exist; and the Forms themselves represent the highest level of reality, according to the allegory, which also connects to the idea of stages of reality.

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

The division in Plato's divided line represents the various levels of reality and knowledge. The line is divided into two halves, the top part symbolizing the world that can be understood and the bottom part representing the world that can be seen.

**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.

According to Aristotle, reality's most fundamental and elementary building block is substance. He thinks that substances, the fundamental constituents of existence, make up everything in the universe. Aristotle believed that substances were distinct beings with different traits and qualities. They may be researched and assessed separately because they exist independently. Substances are essential for understanding the fundamental basis of reality.

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?,

I think he is making a line between substances and mishaps. According to Aristotle, a substance is a fundamental thing that may exist on its own and is unrelated to everything else. Predicate is a word or phrase used to express an attribute or action. A substance is not something that can be predicated of anything else, hence it cannot be the predicate in a proposition.

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?

According to Aristotle, the primary substance is the most fundamental component of existence and is crucial to comprehending the nature of everything else in the universe.

**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.

The four major explanations or reasons Aristotle provided for why a substance is what it is are the material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. The physical or material components that make up an object or substance are known as the material cause. Formal cause is the shape, pattern, or organization that something assumes. The force or action that causes a change or creates a substance is known as the effective cause. The ultimate reason, end, or aim for which a material exists is known as the final cause.

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. According to Aristotle, there are four main ways to explain why a substance is the way it is. The material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause are a few of them. The wood and other materials used to make a table are its material cause, the design or blueprint used to make it is its formal cause, the carpenter and tools used in the construction process are its efficient cause, and the purpose or function of the table is its ultimate cause.

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?

The "final cause," or fourth cause according to Aristotle, is the reason something exists. According to him, behavior and interrelationships between objects demonstrate that everything in nature strives toward a purpose or goal. For instance, an acorn's ultimate cause is to grow into an oak tree, and every aspect of its development and growth works towards that end.