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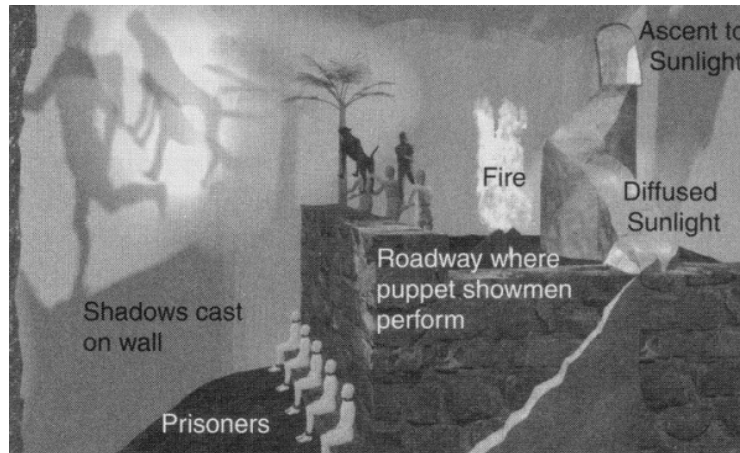
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"The Allegory of the Cave"

The Republic | Plato | Discussion Questions

Directions: After reading this short piece from Plato's *The Republic*, answer the following questions independently or with a partner. Be sure to answer all parts of the question and use complete sentences.



Question No. 1: Now that you have read "The Allegory of the Cave," read the following excerpts from Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*. "For it is a false assertion that the sense of man is the measure of things. On the contrary, all perceptions as well as the sense as of the mind are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe." What does this mean? What is Francis Bacon saying that aligns with the point (or main idea) present in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave?"

Hint: Here is the rest of the excerpt: "And the human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it... For everyone (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolors the light of nature, owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature, or to his education and conversation with others, or to the reading of books, and the authority of those whom he esteems and admires; or to the difference of impressions, accordingly as they take place in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or in a mind indifferent and settled, or the like."

Question No. 2: An allegory is a story composed of symbols or representations that strive to elicit a greater lesson, main idea, or moral to the story. What does the cave symbolize in Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave?" What do the chains symbolize?

Question No. 3: In your opinion, why do the men reject the man who escapes and has a new perspective? What feelings or thoughts do you believe the men in the cave have?

Question No. 4: Why do you think these excerpts are significant (important) as we begin to study pluralistic literature and diverse texts?