

SUN	LINE	CAVE		INTERPRETATION		
		<i>Static imagery</i>	<i>Freed prisoner's journey</i>	<i>Outside a just city</i>	<i>Inside a just city</i>	
		C₅	Back in the cave, so C ₁ and C ₂	Returning to the cave	Practicing philosophy in an unjust city	Fifteen years of experience, then rule
The sun Bright light Visibles lit by the sun Clear sight	L₄ <i>Noēsis</i>	C₄	Sun-lit world, and the sun itself	Looking at the sun-lit world and sun itself	?	Five years of dialectic
	L₃ <i>Dianoia</i>	C₃	Reflections and shadows in sun-lit world	Looking at sun-lit world through images	Maybe Socrates? Through fortune (496A)	Ten years of mathematics
'Night lights' Dim light Visibles poorly lit Strained sight	L₂ <i>Pistis</i>	C₂	Models & puppeteers	Freed prisoner turns to look at models	Those good by 'divine fortune' [ethical <i>pistis</i>]	Gymnastics & poetry [ethical <i>pistis</i>]
	L₁ <i>Eikasia</i>	C₁	Shadows on & echoes from cave wall	Chained prisoners	Lack of education; most people [ethical <i>eikasia</i>]	Lack of education; infants? [ethical <i>eikasia</i>]

SOME NOTES

THE PRISONER'S PREDICAMENT

The prisoners are bound so that they can 'only see in front of them'. Behind them is a fire, and between them and the fire is a wall behind which puppeteers [a] carry models and [b] sometimes speak. The prisoners see the models' shadows and hear the puppeteers' echoes, and make two errors:

[a] They believe 'the names they use' apply to the shadows of the models.

[b] They believe the shadows are talking whenever a puppeteer speaks.

PARALLELISM

The above parallel between the Sun, Line, & Cave is an *interpretation*. One problem, of many, that it faces arises from the combination of L₁ = C₁ and the claim that the prisoners are 'like us'—this seems to imply that we consistently mistake, e.g., shadows for what casts shadows, which is false.

ETHICAL EIKASIA AND PISTIS

Ethical *eikasia* (C₁): mistaking 'shadows of justice' for real justice. But that's still too vague, so it's open to two readings: the 'second-hand belief reading' (uncritically accepting others' beliefs) and the 'evaluative images' reading (uncritically accepting sensory evaluative images).

Ethical *pistis* (C₂): largely accurate ethical beliefs; e.g. recognising genuinely just acts. Plato doesn't tell us what education gets one here, or what it is. One suggestion: the gymnastics and music/poetry of books 2 and 3, which train one's non-rational parts to feel pleasure/pain at the right things, giving one a pre-rational ethical sense (see 401A–402C).

THE PUPPETEERS

Notice how odd the puppeteers are: Who are they? And does Plato have them speak? One suggestion: they represent 'image-makers'—sophists, orators, and poets.

EDUCATION

- * Turning the whole body (C₂) = 'turning the whole soul' in education: the rational part cannot be educated without the appetitive and spirited part.
- * Plato intended two readings of the Cave: a less explicit one that applies to the current state of education and an explicit one representing the guardians' education.
- * Why do the Guardians require ten whole years of mathematics?
- * What do they gain from the fifteen years of practical experience?

RETURN TO THE CAVE

The return to the cave (C₅) represents the guardians' return to practical life in the city: first, as apprentice rulers and, then, at age fifty, as philosopher kings. But apparently the guardians don't want to go and would be happier just philosophising, so they must be 'compelled'. This is puzzling, since returning is said to be just and the aim of the *Republic* is to show that justice is always in one's interest. Thus, we have this inconsistent triad:

1. Justice always coincides with happiness
2. It is just for the guardians to rule and unjust for them to refuse
3. The guardians would be happier if they didn't rule—so they must be compelled