

**A Commentary on Plato's Divided line Theory by Ms. Jennifer Pelletier
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The line is divided into two major categories, and then each category is divided into two parts themselves. The two major categories are:

- 1. KNOWLEDGE**
- 2. OPINION**

And they are divided into two categories themselves:

KNOWLEDGE

1. Intelligence
(Reason, dialectic)
2. Thinking
(Understanding)

OPINION

1. Belief
(Faith, Conviction)
2. Imagining
(Perception)

The line looks like this:

KNOWLEDGE THINKING VS. BELIEF IMAGINING

You move along the line backwards from Imagining to Knowledge- it's the progression out of the cave- here's a better explanation (hopefully!)

1. **Imagining:** Being chained in the cave and believing everything you see to be true and only believing in things that you see- like you would believe in a tree, but not it having deepening roots because you can't see the roots- and even if you dug them up to look at them, you don't *see* them actually growing. There is sort of time when you move from one block to the next- like you are moving from the imagining side to the belief side- so, when you are closer to the belief, but still in the imagining, that is like seeing the reflections of things in water- like you are understanding that your perception is not always accurate. The Greek word for this time is called *Eikesia*- it just means imagining in Greek. This is not a good place to exist- we are all here when we are young (Santa Claus theory) and we are all here when we are just beginning to learn about things- no matter how old we are. For example, if I were to learn about football right now, you would have to show me the plays over and over so I could see- if I can have a picture in my head of the plays, then you could explain the theory behind the different plays and I would be able to see how to win a game- You can't teach me football simply by talking to me- you have to show me pictures.
2. **Belief:** Belief is being outside at night- it's common sense belief- for example, when you are sitting in the chair that you are in right now, you have "faith" that it won't fall out from underneath you. You have faith in that because you understand the basic construction of the chair, you have had numerous experiences with chairs not falling apart, and you can look at the chair and tell if it is shoddily constructed. It is belief without empirical evidence- BUT it is still reasonable to believe. You cannot empirically prove to me that this particular chair, at this particular moment is not going to fall apart, but it is reasonable to believe that it won't because of your experiences. The Greek word for this stage is *Pistis* and I think it means *belief* but I am not positive.

3. **Thinking:** Thinking is the implication of understanding- to be able to *think* about philosophy is to be able to understand it on some level- even to understand that you don't understand it all- that spurs you into action- it helps you to draw a conclusion- a correct conclusion. For example, you knew enough about Philosophy to know that you were having a hard time understanding the allegory of the line- it helped you to come to the conclusion that you needed to ask me for help- that is a reasonable conclusion based on your thinking about reasonable information. In the cave allegory, this would be the time that the guy (let's call him Bob) has adjusted his eyes to the sun, but before he has come to the conclusion that he has to make a choice to go back in, go back in and save others, stay outside, etc. The adjusting his eyes to the sun leads him to understand there are choices available to him. The Greek word for this time is *Dianoia* and I think it means to think (did you get how I was just funny there? I crack myself up!) The subjects that fit best here are Science (especially in the Hypothesis stage) and Pure math. This stage is the "bridge" from opinion to knowledge- it's like sitting in my class preparing for college- getting the tools to think on your own in order to think on your own without tools- if that makes sense. Basically, this whole progression from Imagining to Intelligence is the progression that I tried to mimic from Samurai's Garden to Beloved. (That was a good example- sometimes I am good at this!)

4. **Intelligence:** This is the end point- you can glimpse it on earth, but will not be fully able to grasp it until you are part of the forms- in other words, dead. This category is the forms- the sun, the Perfection of Truth. It is all about Rational Intuition- In other words, you learn about Santa Claus (Imagining) to be able to divine God more divinely- It is pure knowledge- the place that can only be gotten to through dialectic, but dialectic is only attainable if you have been taught through pictures and images. For example, we teach you the alphabet as a material, pictorial thing with a song- but, it is really just a tool to help you understand that communication is the key to a higher intellect- but, the higher your intellect the more you realize that words can never do anything but belittle the things they are trying to describe- you wouldn't be able to come to that conclusion without having first being taught the alphabet. You know how to spell GOD-, then you saw him as a Santa Claus figure- you had faith that He would answer your prayers so you prayed to Him, but now you know that even saying the word GOD belittles who He really is because he is not a "who". The Greek word for this is *Episteme* which I am sure you recognize as Epistemology and it means Knowledge.

Ok- that's it for the Divided Line Theory- I hope it makes sense to you- You can definitely call/email if you need more help.

The sun analogy is very simple- and if you have the text I used for Plato- the Bloom one, then turn to page 195- lines 516 b- Plato says

Then finally I suppose he would be able to make out the sun- not its appearance in water or some alien place, but the sun itself by itself in its own region- and see what it's like.... And after that he would already be in the position to conclude about it that this is the source of the seasons and the years, and is the steward of all things in the visible place, and is in a certain way the cause of all those things he and his companions had been seeing

Here's the explanation: There is a source of Good-the Perfection of Truth (forms, spheres, Sun, etc) and that perfection is the source of all knowable and visible things- for example, God created the earth and all the things on it, but he is also the Creator of the thought in my head and the love I have for my parents- in other words, the Source (beginning, creator of) and Steward (thing that keeps all things going) of all things (temporal and ethereal)