

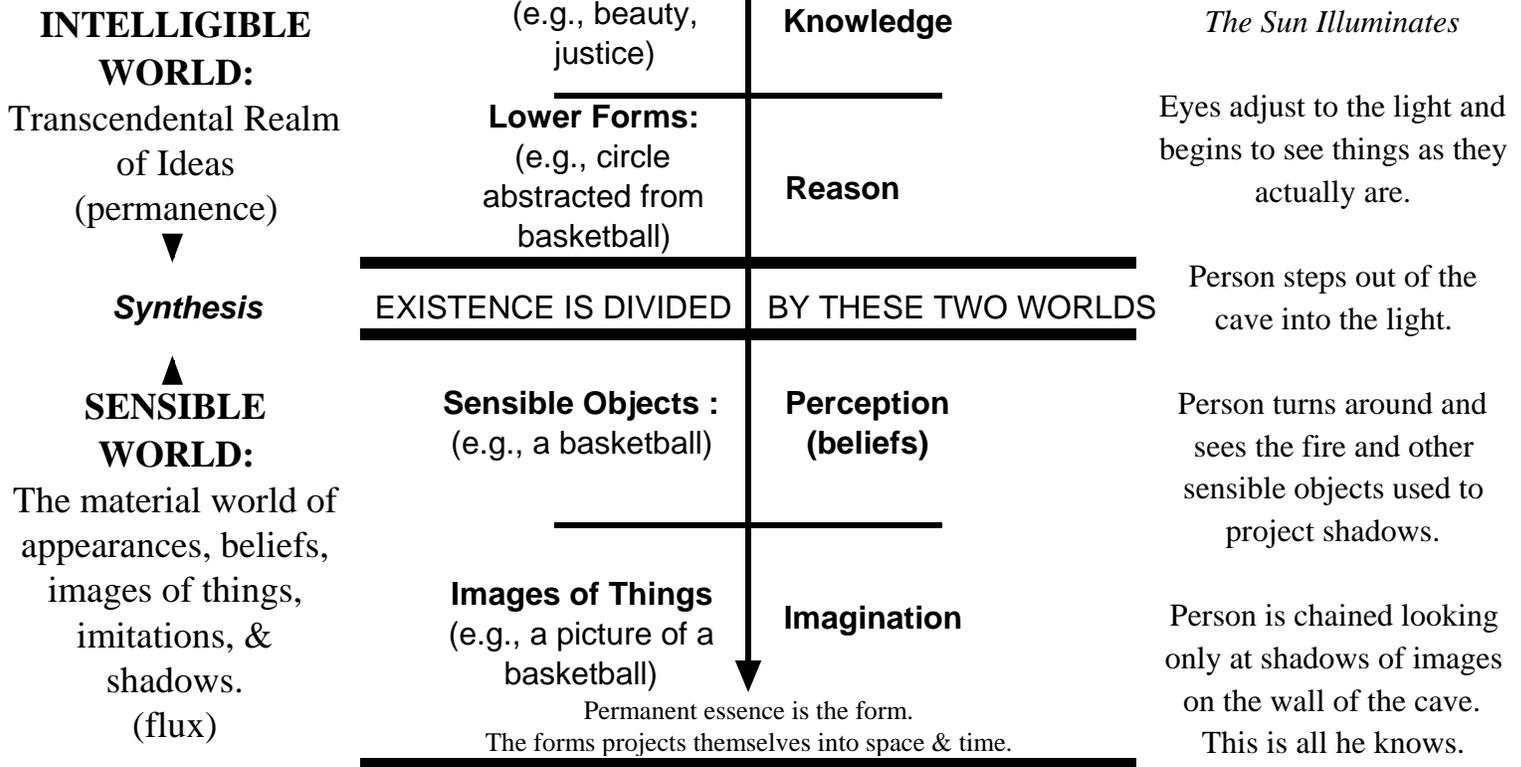
# PLATO'S METAPHYSICS & EPISTEMOLOGY:

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## “The Form of the Good”

Metaphysics:

Epistemology:



Plato's *Republic*, Book VII

A. Plato sought to answer two critical questions:

1. **“How can we account for change (Heraclitus, “all things are in flux”) & permanence (Parmenides, “Whatever is, simply is”).** Interestingly, the clash between Heraclitus & Parmenides is often cited as birth of the battle between empiricism & rationalism.
2. **“How can we have a fulfilling, meaningful, happy life if we in a world where every thing is contingent-for everything we attaches ourselves to can be taken from us?”**

B. All images, knowledge, lower forms, & higher forms are systematically interconnected. The permanent essence is the form. There is only one form, but many copies. The form can be analogized to the moon that is reflected in the in a dozen different lakes.

C. **What are Forms? Forms are abstract qualities or properties.** They are non-sensible archetypical entities that are eternal, non-temporal, pure, transcendental, ultimately real, unchanging, & universally absolute; they are objects of knowledge (examples of ideal knowledge are available in geometry & math). For example, take a basketball & consider its “roundness” (its form). Abstract the “roundness” from the basketball (its color, weight, texture, smell, etc). The form is not just the idea of “roundness.” It exists independently of a basketball & independently of whether someone thinks of it. All round objects, not just the basketball, participate or copy in the same form of roundness. The permanent essence is the form & they project themselves into space & time. Moreover, they are causes of all things, explaining why any object is the way it is & why they are the source or origin of the being of all things.

D. **The higher realm is more real for Plato than physical world** in as much as the particular things that exist in the world of bodies are copies of the form. Only the transcendental realm or world of ideas can produce true knowledge whereas the sensible world are only images and beliefs.