

*A CLASS EXERCISE FOR WESTERN HERITAGE*

by Sheila Hanes

**THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE**

**MATERIALS:** Slide projector, screen, chairs

**TO SET:** 2 or 3 rows of chairs are to be arranged across the room with an aisle in the center, the chairs are placed near the screen and facing it, the projector is set up across the room well behind the chairs and focused on the screen.

**THE PLAY:** Students are asked to sit in the chairs and face forward looking at the screen. They are not turn around. With the projector on, place familiar and unfamiliar objects in front of it, one at a time. AS the indistinct shadow of each object is projected on the screen, ask the class questions? What is it? What is it made of (wood, metal, paper, etc.)? or, 'What color is it? etc. After you have done this 2 or 3 times, talk about how this is similar to the "Allegory of the Cave" (having no or only partial knowledge of the shadowy/unclear object/idea in the darkened room/world). Then, asked the students to play by having each put a cryptic object in front of the projector so the rest of the class can guess what it is. AS the students leave their chairs to walk down the center aisle, caution them not to look at the blinding light of the sun/knowledge (projector) because the intensity might be too much for them all at once. It helps a lot to ham it up.