

Phaedo

A compendium of unsatisfying proofs for the soul

The Story

- ✿ Recounts the death of Socrates
- ✿ After being arrested under unjust charges, Socrates accepts his fate.
- ✿ Socrates attempts to demonstrate to his pupils how his death is not an unhappy one.
- ✿ Death is the beginning of purity and truth.
- ✿ *Phaedo* concludes with the death of Socrates



Arguments for the Soul

✿ Cyclical Argument



- ✿ Any quality must be generated from their opposites (i.e. sleeping is generated from waking and vice versa).
- ✿ Living and dead are opposites. The dead are generated from the living (dying), therefore, the living are generated from the dying. Thus, the soul must preexist the living body.

✿ Argument from Affinity

- ✿ The unseen things are not subject to change and are indissoluble. The body participates in the physical world and is imperfect.
- ✿ The soul is unseen, and thus, eternal, unchanging, and pure. When the body dies, the soul endures.

Arguments Continued



☼ Argument from Exclusion

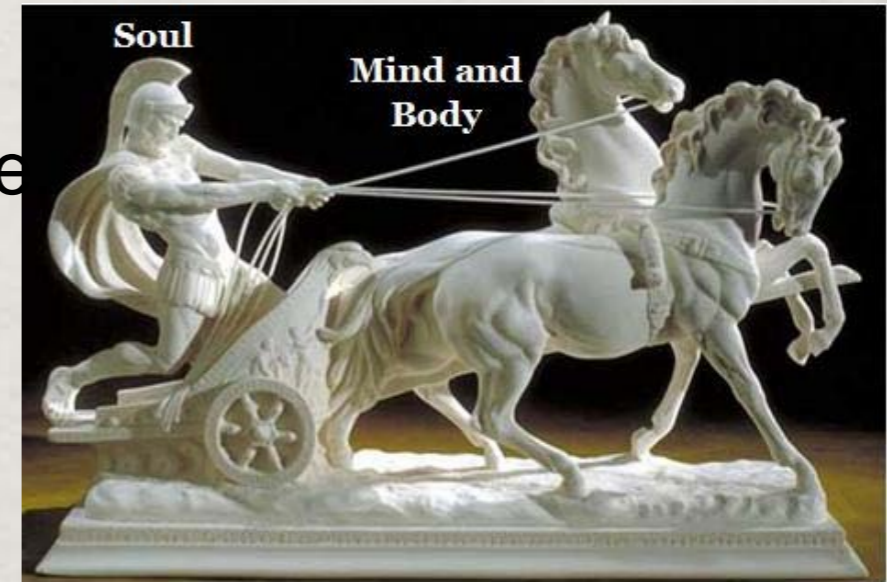
- ☼ Socrates explains that the soul, like the forms, cannot participate in any of its opposite characteristics. (e.g. the number three, which has the form of oddness, cannot be even)
- ☼ The soul is the bearer of life, therefore it cannot participate in death.

☼ Argument from Recollection*

- ☼ I cannot compare the equality of two things without knowledge of equality, and yet, equality is never found in the world (because we do not see forms).
- ☼ I must have a previous knowledge of equality; the soul must preexist the body.

The Soul and the Self

- ✿ The soul is intelligence and life.
- ✿ The soul is eternal, unchanging, and pure.
- ✿ The soul is superior to the body.
- ✿ The soul is, in fact, the self!
- ✿ This is why Socrates can console his friends before death. The self cannot die. The death of the body is not the death of the self.
- ✿ This theory is the opposite of the body theory.



The Soul and the Body

- ✿ The soul is in opposition to the body.
- ✿ The body is visible, changing, and its senses deceive. The soul is eternal, constant, and perceives in true thought.
- ✿ The soul is incarcerated by the body, it is subject to the torture of deceit.
 - ✿ The body is a source of countless distractions by reason of the mere requirement of food, and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the pursuit of truth: it fills us full of loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in very truth, as men say, takes us away from the power of thinking at all (Phaedo 25-6).
- ✿ The body is a distraction from truth and pure thought. It is the imperfect vessel through which the soul perceives. With the body included, truth cannot be obtained. One who seeks truth is seeking the separation of soul and body.
- ✿ Death is the separation of soul and body. Thus, death is always the pursuit of the philosopher. In death, the liberated soul exists among the forms which cannot be found in the mundane world.



The Self

- ✿ The soul is the true self.
- ✿ It is both intelligence and life.
- ✿ This perception of the self avoids the complication of ideas such as Theseus' Ship and the Soma Cube. The soul is unchanging despite any change in the physical world.
- ✿ The self is an invisible form that finds its true identity in separation from the body.

