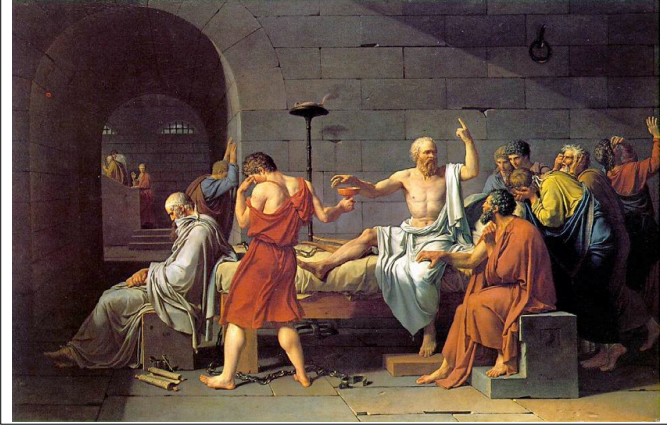


Ancient Philosophy

Plato
The *Phaedo*

Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Socrates* (1787)



Pythagorean Connections

- Dramatic Connections
 - Phlius & Thebes as the cities to which the Pythagoreans fled when driven from Southern Italy.
 - Simmias & Cebes as disciples of Philolaus.
- Philosophical Connections
 - The Pythagorean interest in purification.
 - This connection is also made by Inghirami & Rafael.
 - The Pythagorean interest in metempsychosis (reincarnation).

I. Outline of the *Phaedo*

Dramatic Introduction	57a - 61e
Socrates on Body & Soul	62a - 70c
The Immortality of the Soul: Socrates' Three Arguments The Alternation of Opposites The Recollection Theory of Learning (preexistence) The Two-Realms Ontology (eternal existence)	70c - 84b
Objections of Simmias & Cebes The Harmony of the Lyre (the soul as a relation) The Weaver & the Cloak (the soul as subsistent, but not incorruptible)	84c - 88b
Warning against Misology	88c - 91c
Socrates' Reply to Simmias	91c - 95a
Socrates' Reply to Cebes	95a - 107b
A Myth	107b - 114e
Death of Socrates	114e - 118a

The Central Ideas

- Two central ethical theses
 - The true philosopher should welcome death when it comes (63e).
 - The true philosopher should not seek death by suicide (61d).
- Two Underlying Doctrines
 - The Immortality of the Soul
 - The Theory of Forms (or Ideas)

II. The Philosophical Arguments on Death 1. The true philosopher is nearly dead [64b - 65a]

(1) Anyone who has nearly separated body & soul is nearly dead	Applying the definition of death
(2) The true philosopher has nearly separated body & soul	Defended by P3 & P4
(3) Anyone concerned not with bodily pleasures, but with the soul, has nearly separated body & soul. [65a]	
(4) The true philosopher is concerned not with bodily pleasures, but with the soul. [64d-e]	An observation about philosophers

Argument for “The true philosopher is deserving of death.”		
Argument for thesis	(2) Death is the separation of body & soul. (3) The separation of body & soul is deserved by philosophers.	Definition of death
Defense of the minor (P3)	(4) Anything deserved by those who seek to acquire knowledge is deserved by philosophers. (5) The separation of body & soul is deserved by those who seek to acquire knowledge.	Definition of philosopher
Defense of P5	(6) The separation of body & soul is a good thing for people who seek to acquire knowledge.	
	(7) Anything that is a good thing for people who seek to acquire knowledge is deserved by those who seek to acquire knowledge.	Definition
Defense of P6	(8) The separation of body & soul is the removal of an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge.	PREMISE
	(9) The removal of an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge is a good thing for people who seek to acquire knowledge.	

Argument for Thesis #2: That the true philosopher is deserving of death.		
Defense of P9	(9) The removal of an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge is a good thing for people who seek to acquire knowledge. = The body is an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge	
	(10) The body contributes to knowledge through a faculty that is unreliable and that impedes the soul.	
	(11) Anything that contributes to knowledge through a faculty that is unreliable and that impedes the soul is an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge.	PREMISE
Defense of P10	(12) The body contributes to knowledge through the senses.	PREMISE
	(13) Anything that contributes to knowledge through the senses contributes to knowledge through a faculty that is unreliable and that impedes the soul.	PREMISE

III. Plato's Anthropology
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Man as composed of body (σώμα) & soul (ψυχή) 2. Theory of the Soul 3. Theory of the Body 4. Theory of Death

1. Man as Composed of Body & Soul
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body & Soul are two different kinds of substance. 2. Body (σώμα) 3. Soul (ψυχή) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greek word ψυχή means “the principle of life.” • It is what makes living things alive.

2. Theory of the Soul
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ontology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The soul is a non-material thing. (b) The soul is capable of independent existence and functioning: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) pre-existing the body (cf. doctrine of recollection) (ii) surviving the body (cf. doctrine of immortality) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – though Cebes forces distinction between survivability & immortality 2. Epistemology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (c) The soul is the part whereby real knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the Forms) is possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the central function of the soul in the <i>Phaedo</i>. • The <i>Republic</i> acknowledges more functions of the soul. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The tripartite soul—rational, spirited, appetitive 3. Anthropology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (d) The soul is the real person.

3. Theory of the Body
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ontology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The body is a material thing. (b) The body is capable of independent existence, but not independent functioning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It exists after death, but first as inert, then as decomposing. 2. Epistemology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (c) The body is an impediment to attainment of real knowledge. 3. Anthropology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (d) The body is not the real person. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeed, the body is a prison (τὸ σῶμα σῆμα) [62b].

4. Theory of Death

1. Death is the separation of body & soul (by definition)
 - but that does not cause either to cease to exist (cf. 2b & 3b)
 - it does not even cause the soul to cease functioning
2. Death is not end of personal existence [64c] (from 2b & 2d)
 - Survival after death
 - Transmigration of souls
3. Death is a good thing (from 2b & 3c)

Objection to the Foregoing Argument

- All this assumes that the soul survives the death of the body.
- Otherwise the soul's lot is not improved by separation.
 - See 8: "The separation of body & soul is the removal of an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge."
 - But the implication does not in fact hold (unless the soul survives death).

IV. Three arguments for the immortality of the soul [70a-84b]

1. The argument from the alternation-of-opposites theory of change [70a-72e]
 - for Cebes
2. The argument from the recollection theory of learning [72e-77e]
 - for Simmias
3. The argument from the two-realms ontology [77e-84b]

1. The Argument from the Alternation-of-Opposites Theory of Change: Background

- An ancient account
 - Theses
 - At death, souls move from the world to the underworld.
 - At birth, souls move from there to here.
 - Implication of the theory
 - Souls continue to exist after death.

The Alternation-of-Opposites: The Argument Itself

- (1) All things come to be from their opposites [70e-71]
a generalization from larger & smaller, weaker & stronger, worse & better
- (2) Between opposites, there are two processes [71a ff.]
a generalization from increase & decrease, separation & combination, cooling & heating

Application

- (3) Living & being dead are opposites (as are sleeping & being awake)
- (4) So, they come to be from one another.
- (5) Dying & coming to life are the corresponding processes.
- (6) So, There is dying and coming to life.
- (7) If there is dying and coming to life, then what is alive comes from what is dead.
- (8) If what is alive comes from what is dead, then our soul must exist "in the underworld" (i.e., even when we are not alive) [71e]
- (9) Our soul must exist "in the underworld".

The Alternation-of-Opposites: Evaluation

- On the positive side, this is an attempt to ground the account of immortality in general ontology
- On the other hand, many questions can be raised
 - Are the generalizations legitimate?
 - What do the cases have in common?
 - Are all changes like the examples?
 - Are living and dead really opposites?
 - What is it to be "living" or "dead"?
 - Must something be one or the other?
 - What about the principle "all living things come from other living things?"
 - Is it absurd? Just false? Or neither?
 - Perhaps this theory of change applies to some changes only
 - To changes in size or other properties (accidental change)
 - But not to coming to be or passing away (substantial change)

2. The Argument from the Recollection Theory of Learning: The Argument Itself

- (1) We have knowledge of equality & the like.
- (2) Anyone who has such knowledge must have knowledge of the standards implicit in such judgments.
- (3) So, We have knowledge of such standards.
- (4) No one who has such knowledge acquires it through sense experience.
- (5) So, We did not acquire it through sense experience.
- (6) Anyone who did not acquire such knowledge through sense experience did not gain it in this life.
- (7) So, We did not gain it in this life.
- (8) Anyone who has knowledge not gained in this life must have existed before this life.
- (9) So, We must have existed before this life.
- (10) Our bodies did not exist before this life.
- (11) If we must have existed before this life & our bodies did not exist before this life, then there must be another part of us that existed before this life.
- (12) So, there must be another part of us that existed before this life.

2. The Argument from the Recollection Theory of Learning: Evaluation

- What does the argument presuppose?
- Where does the argument get us?
 - By itself, this argument gets us only to pre-existence before birth, not to survival of death (much less to immortality)

The Argument from the Two-Realms Ontology

- the connection between this argument and the previous one
 - why this one is necessary?
 - the previous only proves pre-existence, not immortality
 - how it is related?
 - both focus on soul as agent of knowledge
- “what kind of thing is likely to be scattered?”

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS ARE THERE?	mutable & corruptible composites— corruptible things must be composite mutability is a sign of composition	immutable & incorruptible non-composites
EXAMPLES	particular beautiful or equal things	Beauty, Equality
OUR ACCESS TO THESE THINGS	by sense perception	by reason only
THE TWO REALMS	the visible	the intelligible (invisible)
CORRELATION TO THE TWO PARTS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE	the body, by which we see the visible	the soul, by which we know the invisible

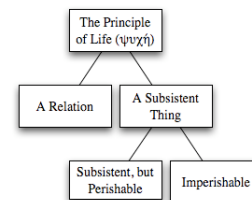
The Argument from the Two-Realms Ontology (cont'd.)

- The implications for immortality
 - again, “what kind of thing is likely to be scattered?”
- Defense of the thesis:
 - (1) The soul is not likely to be split up (= cease to exist), since...
 - (2) Those things in the realm of the invisible & immutable are not likely to be split up.
 - (3) The soul is in the realm of the invisible & immutable.
- Defense of the major (P2):
 - (4) What is non-composite is not likely to be split up.
 - (5) Things in the realm of the invisible & immutable are non-composite.

The Objections: Metaphorically

- Simmias—The Harmony of the Lyre
 - harmony—“blending in a particular proportion”
 - cf. medical doctrines of the time
 - incorporeal, &c., but dependent on the physical existence of the instrument
- Cebes—The Weaver & the Cloak [84c-88b]
 - what Socrates showed
 - the pre-existence of the soul
 - possibly the survivability of the soul
 - what he was supposed to show—the immortality of the soul
 - survival of death is not equivalent to immortality

The Objections: Systematically



Christianity & Platonist Anthropology: Its Appeal

Platonism insists on the spiritual aspect of human existence.

1. They share a concern for a life characterized by moral virtue.
2. Both see life on earth as part (& not the best part) of human existence.
 - (cf. the doctrine that the Beatific Vision is the ultimate human good)
3. Both see the body as an impediment to the good life.
 - “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”
4. They share a positive attitude towards death
cf. St. Ambrose (next slide)

St. Ambrose on Death

“We see that death is a gain, life a loss. ... What does Christ mean but to die in the body and receive the breath of life? Let us then die with Christ, to live with Christ. We should have a daily familiarity with death, a daily desire for death. By this kind of detachment, our soul must learn to free itself from the desires of the body. It must soar above earthly lusts to a place where they cannot come near, to hold it fast. It must take on the likeness of death to avoid the punishment of death. The law of our fallen nature is at war with the law of our reason and subjects the law of reason to the law of error. What is the remedy? “Who will set me free from this dead body? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.”

(on the death of his brother Satyrus)



Christianity & Platonist Anthropology: Differences

1. The similarities on the first two points is compatible with real and significant differences—we have a common enemy, but not a common doctrine
 - St. Augustine wrote (*Confessions* 7.9):
 - “I found [in some books of the Platonists] [something similar to a Christian doctrine] but I did not find [this particular important element]” with respect to a number of Christian doctrines.”
2. The New Testament passages are not matters of body vs. soul
 - Cf. C. S. Lewis (next slide)

C. S. Lewis

- “You are always dragging me down,” said I to my Body.
- “Dragging you down!” replied my Body. “Well I like that! Who taught me to like tobacco and alcohol: You, of course, with your idiotic adolescent idea of being ‘grown-up’. My palate loathed both at first: but you would have your way. Who put an end to all those angry thoughts last night? Me, of course, by insisting on going to sleep. Who does his best to keep you from talking too much and eating too much by giving you dry throats and headaches and indigestion? Eh?”
- “And what about sex?” said I.
- “Yes, what about it?” retorted the Body. “If you and your wretched imagination would leave me alone, I’d give you no trouble. That’s Soul all over; you give me orders and then blame me for carrying them out.”

From: In Walter Hooper, ed.,
God in the Dock, p. 216.

Christianity & Platonist Anthropology: Differences (cont’d.)

3. The account of death is different
 - a. For Platonism, death is a liberation from the prison of the body
 - Cf. continuation of St. Ambrose passage (next slide)
 - For Christianity, death is
 - the penalty for (“the wages of”) sin
 - » (Since penalties are bad things, death is seen as a bad thing, even if it has good aspects)
 - at best a remedy good only because, having sinned, we need it
 - b. Platonism’s doctrines of pre-existence and reincarnation are inconsistent with Christian anthropology

St. Ambrose

“Death was not a part of nature; it became part of nature. God did not decree death from the beginning; he prescribed it as a remedy. Human life was condemned because of sin to unremitting labor and unbearable sorrow and so began to experience this burden of wretchedness. There had to be a limit of evils; death had to restore what life had forfeited.”

Christianity & Platonist Anthropology:
Differences (cont'd.)

4. There are real differences on relation of body, soul, and person.
 - a. Two features of Platonist doctrine, insufficient unity of body & soul (& identification of soul & man) ...
 - i. make Incarnation unnecessary
 - Why assume a human body if the body did not need to be saved?
 - ii. make the general resurrection (of the body) bad, not good
 - Christian doctrine is that every human being will get his body back on the last day.
 - b. Platonism's doctrine of pre-existence and reincarnation are inconsistent with Christianity.