

# Phaedo

PLATO



# The Soul

- ▶ It reasons
- ▶ It senses
- ▶ It separates us from non-living things

# The Nature of Personal Identity

- ▶ Identity has conditions that go beyond material composition
- ▶ There is never a separation (past and present and future)
  - ▶ Replacing rotten wood on a ship means we could say the ship is physically constantly changing, yet we're the same person
  - ▶ But which stage of the ship is the owner's ship?

# Our Constancy

- ▶ The practical problem of ownership does not apply to whether I exist through time
  - ▶ I am my future self
  - ▶ Own self in all cases (physical and soul-wise)
    - ▶ Practical problem doesn't apply to identity

# Death of Body

- ▶ Death of body does not mean death of self
- ▶ Ceres thinks that the soul may disperse in the air when we die—either into breath or smoke
- ▶ Immortal soul means that the soul and the body are separate

# Physical World

- ▶ Reality is not really as we see it
- ▶ Everything's material makeup is always changing
- ▶ My physical constitution is different from yesterday or childhood

# Forms

- ▶ Knowing about the world means its properties are constant
- ▶ This permanent world is the world of Forms or realities
- ▶ Forms are perfect and unchanging and real
  - ▶ Beauty, justice, truth, love

# Forms

- ▶ All things have forms
- ▶ The blue sky and a blue flower are both blue, but they are clearly different
  - ▶ They both participate in the Form of Blueness
- ▶ We don't really know any perfect square, but we know it exists since we know all the qualities that make it up

# Confusing Part of Forms

- ▶ Those things can go away
- ▶ Forms can be temporary to an object because we live in a temporary world

# Our Body

- ▶ Our body hinders us
- ▶ Objective view v. Subjective view
- ▶ It has so many needs/distractions
  - ▶ Food
  - ▶ Sickness
  - ▶ Feelings
- ▶ The only method of separating from the body is through death
  - ▶ Death brings wisdom
  - ▶ Dead body is empty vessel

# Cyclical Argument

- ▶ Any quality of something arises from participation in its opposite form
  - ▶ Sleeping and Waking
  - ▶ Getting bigger means you were once smaller
- ▶ Life is death's opposite form
- ▶ The soul brings life, and therefore can't die

# Argument from Recollection

- ▶ Seeing one thing, but thinking of another
- ▶ Things aren't equal
- ▶ We don't learn everything starting with tabula rasa
- ▶ Soul existed before birth to carry that knowledge
  - ▶ Our soul does not grow

# Argument from Affinity

- ▶ Nonphysical immortal things are different from visible mortal things
- ▶ Soul is former, body is latter
- ▶ Soul will continue to live

# Argument from Exclusion



- ▶ Static entities are the cause of all things in the world
  - ▶ The big cannot be the small
- ▶ The soul participates in the Form of Life
  - ▶ Can't participate in Form of Death simultaneously

# Question

- ▶ Is philosophy basically preparing us for death, as Plato implies?