

Mind Body Soul

In general, **Plato** contends that the soul is distinct from the body and is capable of maintaining a separate existence from it. **Aristotle**, in contrast, feels that body and soul are two aspects of the same underlying substance (form and matter).

Plato Plato's thinking about the soul ties in with his other ideas about forms. He believed that a human has three distinct parts, mind, body and soul. The Body is in a state of change and, as such, can never reflect the true form of the man. The soul, however, is immortal and unchanging it can know and be known. Our body is our physical form which can touch and be touched, see and be seen etc. We are separate and distinct from the bodies that we inhabit. (I have a body = I have a cat we would not say I am a body) The mind can become aware of eternal truths beyond the



physical world in the realms of ideas and forms. For Plato the mind and body are often in opposition, the body with desires for food and sex etc and the mind seeking knowledge and understanding of the world. The Soul, for Plato, is the directing force of the body. Plato uses the analogy of a charioteer in charge of two horses the mind and the body. Some people never control their minds and bodies then give into their desires and allow the mind to be lead by the body. The philosopher controls his mind and body. The soul is immortal and unchanging, it pre-exists the body that holds it. Plato thought that all knowledge can from a recollection of the world of the forms, everything

is a past memory of a previous existence in this world.

The soul can grasp pure knowledge as apposed to the confused knowledge of the senses. Plato uses the metaphor of sight. We need 3 things to see; an eye, the object and light. It is the light (compared to the form of the good) provides the true knowledge of things.

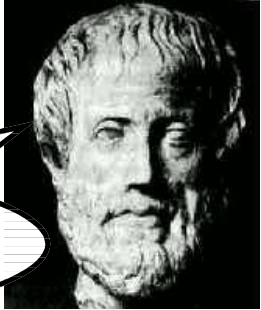


Plato believed that death separates the soul from the body. In his later writings Plato says that the soul has three different parts, reason, emotion and desire.



Γαμ Πλατο ανδ Ι τηικ της σουλ
ισ διστινχτ φρομ μινδ ανδ βοδψ!

Γαμ Αριστοτλε ανδ Ι τηικ της σο
υλ ανδ βοδψ αρε ινσεπεραβλε!



Aristotle For Aristotle the body and soul could not be separated. His thinking on the soul ties in with his ideas about Cause. The body is the material of a thing and the soul it's form. He used the word *psyche* to describe the soul which has a wider meaning than mind and soul have for us. The soul represents the body's structure and will be different from thing to thing. A plant has a simple soul which contains the powers of reproduction, growth and nutrition. Animals have more complex souls with basic desires and feelings. The human soul also has the power to reason. (Perhaps Aristotle's idea of the soul is really a the same as the 'nature' of a thing).

He uses an example of an axe. The 'body' is the wood and the metal, the soul is that which makes it an axe, i.e. the ability to chop wood (it's nature?) He also uses the example of an eye. A dead animal is therefore not an animal for it has no soul. For Aristotle the body and

soul are not two separate elements but one thing. For Aristotle the idea of the soul living on after death can't be possible for without a body how can there be a soul?

- Questions**
1. What is the soul?
 2. What did Plato say that the soul was?
 3. What did Aristotle say that the soul was?
 4. Draw and label the analogy that Plato uses to describe the soul.
 5. Aristotle uses two analogies to explain his ideas. Draw and label them.
 6. What evidence is there for a soul?

7. Why do you think it is important for Religious People to believe in the existence of a soul?
8. What do you think? Give reasons for your answer.