

# Plato's Concept of Soul

A Transcendental Thesis of Mind

## Nature of Soul

- **Subject of knowledge/ cognitive activity**
- **Principle of Movement**
  
- Greek Philosophy defines soul as **vital force**
- **Intelligence, subject that performs mental activities**

# Plato on Soul

- Motion
- **Cognition**
- **Modes of action,**
- Recognition of cognitive action or thought is an important activity of soul

# World

- Things in the world
- Particulars
  
- **Particulars** are different from **Ideas**.

# Plato's Epistemology

- Knowledge as unchanging reality
- Knowledge as ceaseless flow of particulars in the world
- **Knowing through senses**
- **Knowing through intuition**

## **Doxa Vs episteme**

- Doxa/ opinion is based on sense experience
- **‘the changing objects in perception are relatively unreal.’**
- Knowledge about the forms/ ideas are eternal.
- They are universal knowledge

**Visible Vs intelligible**

## On Soul

- The soul is ‘akin’ to Ideas or forms. This relationship is defined as affinity.”
- “Affinity is a condition by virtue of which the soul contemplates or apprehends true being”
  - (Eric J. Roberts 1995:373)

# Ontological and Ethical Consideration

- **Truth and Good are one.**
- **Knowledge is identical with virtue.**
  
- *The Parable of Cave.*

# Soul

- The cognitive activity of soul is to contemplate on Ideas/ forms.
- Knowledge about the good/ truth is dialectical
  - It is purely conceptual knowledge.
- Soul is neither divisible substance nor concrete

# Nature of cognitive activity

- Cognitive activity / Knowing
- **Epistemological**
- Not psychological
  
- Soul's aspiration to know the eternal reality is an epistemic concern - *love of wisdom*

# Soul as source of Cognition

- Power of performing cognitive act
- Source of intentional action
  
- Soul is not absolutely merged with the world. *The kinship is not predictable if there is no differentiation.*

## Relationship between forms and particulars

- **Contemplation**/ apprehension as such is self-moving or spontaneous.
- **Soul is an intermediary between two realm of existence**
- **Eternal IDEAS/ Forms & Mundane PARTICULARS**

## Theory of soul

- **Unexamined presupposition** for living an examined life.
- **An unexamined life is not worth living.**
- The ethical aspect of ontology speaks about living **a virtuous life**.
- **Soul is a metaphysical reality**

# Transcendence

- “The ideas by degrees vacate their position of transcendence and are seen to be dependent upon soul.”  
(Roberts 1995: 376)
- Soul is the centre of gravity in Platonic system
- *However, it does not eliminate Plato’s Dualism.*

# Dualism Reconstructed

- Soul as the subjective factor of knowledge
- And **antithetically** related to the object.
  
- IDEAS (Forms)
- World (PARTICULARS)

- “In some what similar fashion (referring to Kant) Plato, having postulated soul as that in which mind and wisdom are contained, argues from the soul which acts as organizing principle in the individual to a supreme soul in the universe, from which the souls of individuals derive their being.”
- **(Roberts 1995: 380)**

## Motion of the soul

- Motion of the soul is rational
- Knowledge → movement
- **Soul's affinity with the body**
- Mortal soul → trunk of the body
- **Immortal soul → Reason, spirit and appetite**
- **Three forms of activity (chariot)**

# Thinking

- **Thinking as an intellectual activity is journey**
- From imperfection to perfection
- The charioteer undertakes the journey
- **Ascetic intellectualism**
- **Body is an hindrance to the soul reaching out to the pure truth.**

# Soul

- Immortal
- Indestructible
- Divinity and eternity
- **Personal being**
- **Principle of personality**
- **Principle of Reason**