

A coherent account of plato's concept of the body soul distinction essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A: Plato believed that humans could be broken down into 3 parts: the body, the mind and the soul. The body is the physical part of the body that is only concerned with the material world, and through which we are able to experience the world we live in. it wants to experience self-gratification.

It is mortal, and when it dies, it is truly dead. The mind is directed towards the heavenly realm of Ideas, and is immortal. It is with our minds that we are able to understand the eternal world of the Forms. When it 'dies' it returns to the realm of Ideas.

The soul is the driving force of the body, that it is what gives us our identity. Plato likens the soul as a chariot rider, guiding and guided by two horses, courage (representing the transcendent dignity of the mind) and desire (representing the physical body which drags us down). He says that the soul is 'trapped' between the body and the mind, and is only after death that it becomes 'freed' to rejoin the eternal world of Ideas. Plato said that the soul too is tripartite, and can be broken down to the intellect, the body and the inclinations. The body and the inclinations are mortal but transmigrate into animals, but the intellect is immortal.

He believes that the intellect represents the most divine part of the soul, and so after death it leaves the inferior physical body to join the world of Ideas.

B: Plato's dualism was a combination of the key ideas from both Materialism and Idealism. His theory that we had both a physical body, and a soul/mind and that the soul/mind is a thinking being, complete in itself, and capable of living without the body. A strength of Plato's Dualism is that it says there is

more to living than just what we are always aware of, as just because the physical world seems hard, there are other ways of living.

Another strength is that he doesn't deny the existence of the physical world as an idealist might, but just says that the physical world isn't as important, that we should be seeking to understand the world of Forms. Neither does he deny the spiritual world, and says that it's important, so if we can understand the world of Ideas then we can understand Good. Aristotle, Plato's pupil, was one of the sources of his greatest opposition. He argues that Plato's definition of the soul is wrong, that it isn't immortal, but rather it is just the life force of the body. Ergo, when the body dies, so does the soul. One of Plato's claims is that the body doesn't have any impact on the mind, but sensory experience can prove this wrong, as alcohol for example can affect the mind, altering reactions and response times.

Plato also says that the soul/mind is superior, different and separate to the body, however it has been scientifically proven that the mind and body are linked, that the mind can't exist without the brain, and so the soul must die when the body dies. Modern neuroscience can show the dependence of the mind on the body empirically, which Plato's theory of a simple immortal soul cannot be verified. If, as Plato claims, the mind is a non-material body that cannot affect the body, then there is no explanation for why footballers chase after a ball. The body has no reason to do this, except that it is told to do so by the mind. The body is not entirely dependant on the mind, as after death the body can continue to work for a few seconds, until the muscles etc stop receiving electrical impulses.