

# Good essay about analyze the argument for reincarnation in the phaedo

[Health & Medicine](#), [Body](#)



## Introduction

The Socratic argument for reincarnation arises out of a discussion amongst Socrates with Pythagorean philosophers who had gone to visit him while in incarceration. The discussion arose as Socrates faced death through execution. He reasoned that philosophers ought to look forward to death rather than fear it. The ultimate act of death meant that the philosopher would finally rid his soul of the body, which is a major distraction in the soul's quest for pure knowledge unaltered by the deception of our senses. Since our senses are imperfect and deceive us, Socrates advances the argument that the best wisdom is only attainable through pure thought (Philip, Ch 2). Philosophers strive in achieving pure thought by dissociating from the pleasures of the sense such as food and drink sex or even fancy clothing. Further, forms, such as beauty, equality justice and the rest are imperceptible through the senses. Socrates holds that the human soul understands the forms before it takes on human form. This is his evidence that the soul exists before birth, and continues in existing after death. The senses confuse this knowledge, with the soul having to recollect them in a bodily form. This stems from the recollection theory. The reincarnation theory develops under the premise of the soul being a whole rather than comprising of different components. As such, according to Socrates, the soul cannot disintegrate, as it is not composed of various parts. Death according to this argument is the separation of the body from the soul (Philip, Ch 2). The argument, however, is lacking in various parts of its composition. The assertion that the soul is a whole component is misleading. The explanation of the soul as being an intact thing should be preceded by the proof of what

the soul is, and that it is indeed a whole thing incapable of disintegration (Kessler, 54). Assuming that the soul present in person continues to exist, as an independent being free of its body should be supported by facts rather than an assertion. Further, Socrates argues that the death is the separation of the soul from the body. Again, the explanation of what the soul is should take precedence before the assertion of its separation from the body being advanced as the event marked by death (Kessler, 54). The soul, as understood by philosophers, is the mind; therefore, it would be logical to argue that the soul arises out of the body's ability to reason and think; unique thoughts and perceptions make the individual soul unique and separate from the other. Therefore, it would follow that death occurs by taking of thought and perception abilities from the body, thus terminating the soul, as well. The rationale used in determining the fate of the soul after death is not clear. It is not clear how Socrates arrives at the conclusion that good souls have a dignified existence after death in comparison to the wicked souls.

Socrates, through the advancement of this argument, is offering hope to people facing the possibility of their mortality rather than as an argument grounded in firm philosophical principles. He diverges from the strict deduction and induction criterion in advancing argument for the purpose of rebellion. By his stubbornness and an indication of his anticipation of death, Socrates advances this argument as a way to show defiance against authority in that he would persist on living despite his death. In this regard, therefore, his execution would not be a punishment to him, rather, a reprieve. Socrates could have used this argument for the purpose of self-

preservation. His failure to separate the mind from the soul is an indication of his willingness to preserve his thinking ability even with the absence of his mind.

## **Works Cited**

Kessler, Gary E. *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub, 1998. Print.

Philip A. Pecorino. "Introduction To Philosophy, 'Socrates\_Death3'." Queensborough Community College. Queens borough Community College, CUNY, 2000. Web. 27 Feb. 2014.