

Philosophy of Religion

1. Philosophical Language and Thought

Ancient philosophical influences & Soul, mind and body



Name:

Teacher:

Contents

Section 1:

Ancient philosophical influences:

The philosophical views of Plato, in relation to:

- understanding of reality
- the Forms
- the analogy of the cave

The philosophical views of Aristotle, in relation to:

- understanding of reality
- the four causes
- the Prime Mover

Section 2:

Soul, Mind and Body:

The philosophical language of soul, mind and body in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle

Metaphysics of consciousness, including:

- substance dualism
- materialism

Section 1: Learning Intentions

Key Knowledge:

Plato:

- Plato's reliance on reason as opposed to the senses
- The nature of the Forms; hierarchy of the Forms
- Details of the analogy, its purpose and relation to the theory of the Forms

Aristotle:

- Material, formal, efficient and final causes
- Aristotle's use of teleology
- The nature of Aristotle's Prime Mover and connections between this and the final cause

Key Skills:

- Examine and explain the key ideas associated with Plato and Aristotle (A01)
- Compare and evaluate Plato's Form of the Good and Aristotle's Prime Mover. (A02)
- Compare and evaluate Plato's reliance on reason (rationalism) and Aristotle's use of the senses (empiricism) in their attempts to make sense of reality. (A02)

Key Concepts / Technical Terms

Metaphysics	A major branch of philosophy. It concerns existence and the nature of things that exist. Altogether it is a theory of reality.
A priori	Relating to what can be known through an understanding of how certain things work rather than by observation
Logical Reasoning	The process of using a rational, systematic series of steps to arrive at a conclusion.
Theory of the Forms	Plato's theory that everything on earth is an inferior copy of Ideal Forms in a permanent spiritual reality. Thus there are forms not only of objects such as tables and chairs, but also of concepts such as number or beauty. The highest form is the Form of the Good.
Form of the Good	The Form of the Good is the ultimate object of knowledge; it is only once one grasps the Form of the Good that one reaches the highest grade of understanding.
Analogy of the Cave	An analogy put forward by Plato to help people understand the theory of the forms.
Empiricism	The theory that all knowledge is based on experience derived from the senses.
Four Causes	Aristotle's that all things within the universe centred on the four causes of being. They are the material, formal, efficient, and final cause.
Teleology	From the Greek <i>telos</i> , meaning end or purpose is the philosophical study of nature by attempting to describe things in terms of their apparent purpose or goal
Unmoved Mover	The unmoved mover or prime mover is a concept advanced by Aristotle as a primary cause or "mover" of all the motion in the universe.
Eternal	Lasting or existing forever; without end
Actuality	The state of existing in reality
Potentiality	The ability to develop or come into existence

Plato: An Introduction

Plato was an Ancient Greek philosopher who lived from 427 – 347 BCE, and a former student of the great philosopher Socrates. Plato is perhaps one of the most influential and well-known philosophers in history. His work influenced the development of philosophy throughout the Western world. His early works are about Socrates' philosophy and most of Plato's books feature Socrates as the leading character.



In his later works, Plato wrote about many issues; including the existence of the soul, the nature of beauty and theories of governance. Plato founded his own school of philosophy called the Academia (from which we get the word 'academy' in English).

Plato's reliance on reason as opposed to the senses

Plato believed that *empirical knowledge* (gained from the senses) cannot be accepted as fact; it does not show reality.

This knowledge of reality based entirely on reasoning is called *a priori* – gained wholly from **logical reasoning** and independent of sensory experience.

Logical reasoning is the process of using a rational, systematic series of steps based on sound mathematical procedures and given statements to arrive at a conclusion.

Plato's argument is *absolutist*; it is fixed. He believed his argument to be true for all people in all places at all times. It is universal. (We will look at this idea in more detail when we study Plato's theory).

Plato's theory of the Forms

Plato saw a very important distinction here: the world of appearances and the real world. He proposed that the world we live in is a world of appearances, but the real world is the world of Forms. Forms are the idea of what a thing is, like the idea of a cat.

In your head, imagine a cat. It might be white, black, ginger, tabby...the list goes on. Was your idea of a cat exactly the same as your neighbour? Probably not, but there are a set of characteristics that you will both have imagined: a tail, whiskers, four legs, paws. These characteristics resemble the idea of what a cat is. You would both be able to recognise a cat if one walked past you, even if it didn't look exactly the same as the cat you imagined.



All cats that exist in our world, the *material world*, conform to the idea, or the **Form**, of a cat. A Form does not change, it is a concept that is everlasting. Plato argued that the true Form of everything (including cats!) must exist somewhere, in a different reality; he called this the world of Forms.

Plato believed that everything that had a physical existence (something you can see and touch) changes or in his own words "everything tangible flows". Everything in our world is made of material that time can erode. Plato was interested in establishing an idea that behind everything with a physical existence was a timeless mould from which something comes. He said that there are a limited number of moulds of forms behind everything that we see. He came to the conclusion that there must be a reality behind the material world.



The world we live in is a world of imitations (copies). This is represented by the gingerbread men. The world of reality is perfect and contains the original forms. This is represented by the mould.



As a great philosopher, Plato wasn't all that interested in discussing the Form of a cat. He focused more on concepts like beauty, truth and justice. He saw that concepts like beauty can be applied to all sorts of different things. Both a person and a piece of music can be beautiful, and so reveal some characteristic of beauty. But neither clearly define beauty, because they are different, and other different things can be beautiful too (like a painting or a landscape). This led Plato to suggest that there was a Form of beauty, to which all these things correspond to some extent.

In our world, there are only the shadows and images of the Forms. Material things in our world imitate a form. As our understanding is limited to the objects that exist in our material world, the Forms go beyond human comprehension. So how do we recognise the Form of beauty in a beautiful person?

Plato argued that the reason we recognise the Forms is because when we are born we have a dim recollection of them. He said that there is an inner part of us, that most people call the soul, which is immortal and unchanging. Before the soul became tied down to the body, it was connected to the real world of Forms. The reason that we can all recognise beautiful things or kind acts is because we have all seen the Forms before. Plato's evidence for this claim was the fact that a person can instinctively know that something is beautiful, even if we haven't been taught it.

Therefore, Plato concluded, it must be true that we have an immortal soul which was once part of the world of the Forms.

Task: Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the difference between empirical evidence and 'a priori' evidence.
2. Describe the difference between the world of appearances and the real world according to Plato.
3. Explain what Plato means by the phrase '*everything tangible flows*'
4. Why was Plato more interested in the forms of beauty, truth and goodness than the forms of things like cats?
5. Explain how Plato argues that humans can recognise the true forms.

Analogy of the Cave

The Analogy of the Cave is one of the most famous passages from Plato's *Republic*. Plato uses this analogy, to illustrate his theory of Forms. The Cave is often said to be allegorical, which means that different elements of the story are symbolic of the situation in which people find themselves.

Imagine people sitting on chairs in a cave. They are all facing the wall of the cave. They are chained to chairs. The only light in the cave comes from a fire. There is a wall behind the prisoners and there is a fire located behind the wall. Behind this wall, other people are walking up and down and carrying statues on their heads. What the prisoners chained to the chairs see is the shadows cast by the statues on the wall in front of them.

The prisoners believe that the shadows are reality because that is all they see. If they hear people behind the wall speaking they assume that these voices come from the shadows.

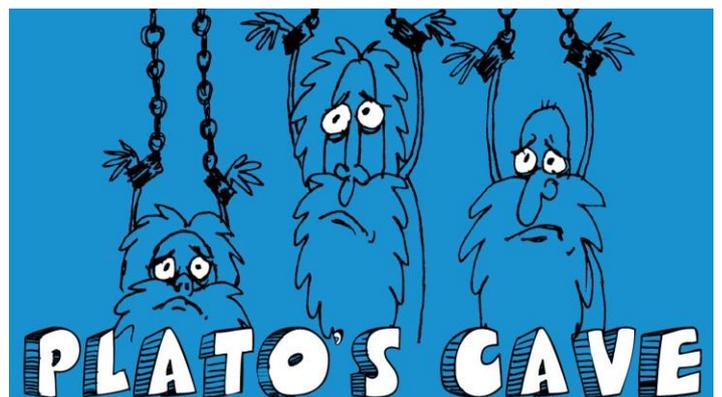
Imagine if one of the prisoners is freed. At first when he is turned around, he is confused. He doesn't understand what he sees. Slowly, his eyes become accustomed to the firelight and he can see the statues. He is confused still – he believes the shadows are reality.

Then, the released prisoner is dragged up a long ramp at the back of the cave, and emerges into sunlight. The sunlight is blinding, and so he tries to flee back into the cave. Imagine that someone prevents him from fleeing, and slowly his eyes adjust. He is able to see the world around him. Finally, he looks up and realises the importance of the sun. He sees that it supports life and the seasons. Now, he doesn't want to go back underground.

However, he might remember his friends in the cave, and want to go back and teach them about reality. When he gets back in the cave, his eyes cannot adjust to the darkness and he cannot see clearly. When he tells the other prisoners his story, and they see he cannot see in the darkness, they decide it is better not to go above ground and wish to put to death anyone who tries to free another prisoner.

Plato's analogy of the Cave demonstrates the importance of questioning everything in order to distinguish between the material world and the real world. In the analogy, the prisoner who is freed is representative of a philosopher. He breaks away and makes the journey out of the cave to find out what is really going on. In the outside world he discovers the sun and realises it gives life to everything.

In the analogy of the Cave, the prisoner returns to those still inside the cave. This journey is representative of a philosopher educating others about the real world. Once they have learned the truth, they have a duty to return to the Cave and challenge the ideas of reality. However, upon his return the other prisoners want to kill him. This can be seen as representing society's unwillingness to question what they are told, something that Socrates did. Plato undoubtedly had in mind the fate of Socrates, who challenges the ideas of his day and was condemned to death.



Task: Create a table that identifies the following aspects of the analogy of the cave (use words and images):

- **The Cave**
- **The Shadows**
- **The Prisoners**
- **The Escape from the Cave**
- **The Sun**
- **The Outside World**
- **Return to the Cave**

Task: Answer the following questions:

1. **Explain the link between Plato's forms and the Cave analogy.**
2. **'If the cave dwellers are happy in their ignorance, it is better to leave them to it'. Do you agree?**
3. **Make a list of the pros and cons of having philosophers as the leaders of society.**

Strengths and Weaknesses of Plato's theory of the forms

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Theologian, Brian Davies argued that the analogy of the cave helps to illustrate Plato's theory of the Forms. It has been a powerful analogy throughout history to help people understand the relationship between the divine (God) and human.</p>	<p>David Hume and Richard Dawkins would argue that Plato's ideas about the physical world are counterintuitive. This means that it flies in the face of common sense to say that the world around us is an illusion – it seems so real! In fact the physical realm has empirical evidence to back up its existence. Dawkins would argue that any talk of the 'transcendent' (a world beyond the physical) is meaningless.</p>
<p>Philosopher, Stephen Evans argues that Plato offers a rational argument for the existence of another reality / world. This provides people with hope that the material world isn't all that exists and we can then look toward the world of forms as a more perfect form of existence.</p>	<p>If you have a Form of a Form, or an ideal Form of Forms (like the Form of the Good), then what's stopping you from having an ideal Form of that ideal Form? And an ideal Form of the ideal Form of that ideal Form? This argument is called infinite regression – it goes on forever backwards. Plato acknowledged this problem in one of his dialogues. If everything is a copy of some previous ideal then it to must have a copy.</p>
<p>Plato's theory is appealing as it offers a logical and reasonable theory concerned with the idea that there are universal concepts. Scholars such as Immanuel Kant acknowledged the existence of absolutes. This is the belief that certain actions are intrinsically good or bad. For example, Plato uses beauty, truth and justice as ideas that everyone has knowledge of independent of experiencing these things physically. In addition, Plato is arguing that there are universal absolute truths that just exist and have always existed. Mathematical concepts such as addition ($2+2=4$) seem to be true irrelevant of any empirical evidence.</p>	<p>Empiricists such as the Logical Positivists would question: what about opinion? Some people argue there is no such absolute value as 'Good', 'Beauty' or 'Justice' as it is subjective; people have their own opinion as to what is good. Therefore, it is unlikely that two people will always come to the same conclusion about what is good. Therefore, Plato seems to be incorrect in suggesting that there is an ideal form of goodness, beauty and justice.</p>
<p>Bryan Magee argues that Plato's theory of the forms and his analogy of the cave encourages people to seek enlightenment rather than being caught up with the material world. He says <i>"The theory that there is another world than this...gives value and meaning to our present world..."</i></p>	<p>Empiricists such as John Locke and Bertrand Russell argue that it is not logical to say there is a world we cannot see. Therefore, the theory may not be an obvious conclusion of logical reasoning. Plato argued that we use our reason (human intellect to work out what is real). They would argue that reality is based on sensory evidence not reason. Mel Thompson argues that the world presented in the analogy of the cave is not reflective of the world we inhabit. In this sense both the analogy and theory are ineffective.</p>
<p>Some scholars have argued that Plato offers an effective argument as to why evil and suffering exist in the world. The material world is not the perfect world therefore, it is the actions of material beings that cause evil and suffering. Thus Plato's ultimate reality is not responsible for evil and suffering.</p>	<p>Plato says that the senses are inferior, and that we should not rely on them. Yet people have been relying on their senses for survival for thousands of years. For example, our five senses are vital in helping us to gain a fuller and better understanding of the world in which we live. Evolutionary</p>
	<p>Plato is not clear how the world of Forms relates directly to our world. Do the Forms have to relate to a specific variety of material object? For example, does the Form of a cat have to relate to a specific breed of cat? Is there a particular Form for each breed? Furthermore, it is unlikely that everything in existence has an ideal form. Is there an ideal slug or type of cancer? As Plato does not fully explain his theory of the forms it is difficult to accept the value of the theory.</p>

Assessment: Assess the effectiveness of Plato's theory of the forms in explaining the world. [40]

Success Criteria

- Plato believed that we could not rely on our senses and had to look beyond our world to find some explanation for it.
- Plato put forward the theory of the forms that focused on the idea of there being two distinct worlds. The perfect world (forms) and the real world (copies).
- Plato used the analogy of the cave to explain the different features of his theory of the forms.

Arguments suggesting it is effective:

- Plato offers a logical and reasonable theory concerned with the idea that there are universal concepts that exist independent of our experience.
- It helps us understand that concepts of beauty, justice and love are universal and absolute. We have not invented these concepts, we discover them within ourselves.
- Mathematics can be looked at as a universal truth. We have not invented maths but we have discovered it.
- Plato's analogy of the cave provides a clear and coherent way in which he explains his theory – the different features of the analogy help his followers to understand more difficult concepts.

Arguments suggesting it is not effective:

- Refer to at least 3 of the weaknesses of Plato's theory of the forms. Do not simply list the arguments, develop them and link them together.
- Do you think we can base an explanation of the world on the idea that some form of transcendent reality exists

Use the table on the previous page to help you construct and write this essay

Aristotle: An Introduction

Aristotle was born in Macedonia in 384 BCE. Aged 17 he moved to Athens where he joined Plato's Academy. He studied there for twenty years and was recognised as a brilliant student. In 347 BCE he moved to Turkey due to growing political tensions between Athens and Macedonia. He spent his time there investigating science, in particular biology. He moved back to Macedonia in 341 to become Alexander the Great's tutor. Once Alexander became King, Aristotle moved back to Athens and founded his own school: *the Lyceum*.



Aristotle and Plato

Aristotle was taught by Plato, and many areas of study that interested him were first worked on by Plato. However, Aristotle approached topics of study in a very different way to Plato, which leads to some of his philosophy being very different from Plato's.

The two are often thought to represent two different approaches to philosophy:

1. Plato: Emphasising the world of ideas and reason as the source of knowledge.
2. Aristotle: Emphasising the physical world and experience as the basis of knowledge.

Aristotle's philosophy is different from Plato's in a number of important ways:

1. Aristotle emphasises the value of studying the physical world. His approach is empirical, and he is not as concerned with the world of the Forms.
2. Aristotle rejected Plato's theory of Forms, partly because the relationship between Forms and objects in the material world was never explained.

The Four Causes

Aristotle was interested in why things exist in the way they do. He rejected the idea that things which exist imitate an ideal Form, and instead turned to the world around him in order to reason why anything exists at all. For example, a car is made of matter, but all the bits of matter have a particular structure and arrangement as part of the car. They have a particular 'form' (*NOT a copy of an ideal 'Form' of car, like Plato said*). Aristotle identified four causes that explain why a thing or object exists as it does. These are known as '**the Four Causes**'.

1. **The Material Cause.** The first cause refers to the matter or substance that something is made of – e.g. a book is made of paper. Aristotle said that materials always have the potential for change. Just imagine you left a table outside for years in all types of weather. When you came back to it, the material of the table would have changed. The materials represent the impermanence of our world.
An important question for this cause: What is it made of?
2. **The Efficient Cause.** This cause refers to the cause of an object existing. A table exists because someone chose to make it, similarly a book exists because someone wrote it. However, the Efficient Cause does not necessarily have to be a person. A gust of wind might be the Efficient Cause of a tree falling over. An object might even have more than one efficient cause – for example, a cake's efficient cause is not only the baker, but the mixing and cooking process too.
An important question for this cause: How does it happen?

3. **The Formal Cause.** This refers to what gives the matter its form or structure. A table is not just random pieces of wood, but wood cut and arranged in a certain way. We can recognise a table because it has four legs, a flat surface and belongs to a group we know as 'furniture'. What we are doing is mentally fitting the object into a category we already know.

An important question for this cause: What are its characteristics?

4. **The Final Cause.** The final cause is concerned with the reason why something is the way it is. It is concerned with the function of anything or object. The Final Cause is teleological – it is to do with the function of an object or the reason an action is done. This cause examines the purpose of the object; the reason it exists at all.

An important question for this cause: What's it for?

Task: Take five contrasting objects (for example a pencil case, a sunflower, a horse, the sun and a statue) and apply Aristotle's Four Causes to each one:

1. **Material**
2. **Efficient**
3. **Formal**
4. **Final**

Stretch and Challenge: Why do you think Aristotle is interested in the question of what causes something to exist?

Aristotle's use of teleology

Aristotle developed his thinking into explaining the final cause for living things as well, that is, their purpose. It is not obvious what the final cause of a natural object is. The final cause of a non-living object such as a bridge is much easier to see than that of a living object because its purpose can be seen through the senses or determined by asking the person that created the object.

Teleology or Telos – the end or purpose of something or its function; for Aristotle, the telos of a human being was to be rational and moral.

Aristotle sees the final cause in terms of the function it performs. Objects in nature seemed to be driven towards a goal to obtain a certain form proper to them, and their actions are all directed towards this goal. Aristotle referred to this as 'telos'.

The Prime Mover or Unmoved Mover

Aristotle recognised that everything in life is changing, and that everything that exists is in a permanent state of 'movement' or 'motion'. By motion, we don't mean moving around, we mean a state of change (*motion comes from the Greek **motus** – which refers to change*).

Aristotle observed four things:

1. The physical world was constantly in a state of motion and change.
2. The planets seemed to be moving eternally.
3. Change or motion is always caused by something.
4. Objects in the physical world were in a state of actuality and potentiality.

From these four things, Aristotle concluded that something must exist which causes the motion and change, without being moved and that is eternal. He called this being the *Prime Mover or Unmoved Mover*.

Using his argument about Causes, Aristotle reasoned that everything must have a Final Cause, or a purpose. Nothing comes from nothing, so it follows that when there is a chain of events, there must be an ultimate cause. The Prime Mover is the Final Cause.

The Nature of Aristotle's Prime Mover

So what is the Prime Mover like? Aristotle's Prime Mover has to be outside the universe and outside time; otherwise we could just ask the questions "What caused the Prime Mover?" and "What happened before it existed?" – this ends up as infinite regression. Therefore the Prime Mover has to be eternal and really exist, but not in a bodily form like us. If it had a bodily form like us then it would be subject to change just like we are.

In his book *Metaphysics* Aristotle also links the Prime Mover with God, and concludes that God is '*a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this is God*' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*). For Aristotle, something which is eternal must necessarily be good; things which change are bad. Change means impermanence, which is bad because there is always room for improvement. Although the Prime Mover cannot move, things are attracted to it. Humans move towards the Prime Mover, like moths to a flame, because that is all we can do.

And because Aristotle's God is perfection, it is unable to think about anything other than itself. If God thought about the universe, his knowledge would constantly be changing as the universe does, so therefore his thoughts would be imperfect. Therefore, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is totally outside our world in terms of time and space. It knows nothing about it, has no plan and never intervenes in it.

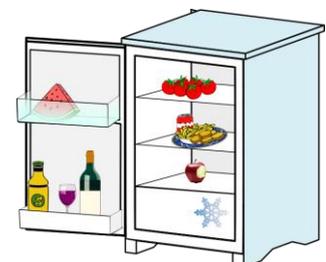
Aristotle suggested that the Unmoved Mover relates to the universe in two ways:

1. As a leader
2. In the order of the universe

For Aristotle, the Prime mover as a final cause does not start off movement by giving it some kind of push but is the end or 'telos' of the movement. It is desire and attraction that causes movement in other things. Like a cat to a saucer of milk.....the milk is static and unchanging but causes movement in the cat.



What causes the person to move?



In this sense the Aristotelean God is redundant;

everything depends upon God but God has no interest in the universe. The universe

and the temporal order depend upon the unmoved mover but Aristotle's God is outside space and time.

God does not sustain or act in the universe. As you will see in the following pages, Aquinas' idea of The Unmoved Mover, although similar in reasoning to Aristotle is a direct opposite in that Aquinas argues for an efficient cause unlike Aristotle's final cause argument.

Task: Create a mind map outlining the following beliefs about Aristotle's Unmoved Mover:

- Immune from change
- Final Cause
- Eternal
- Immaterial
- Good
- Attraction through desire
- Transcendent
- Perfect
- Actuality with no potentiality
- Pure thought or theoria
- Leader

Task: Answer the following questions:

1. *Think of the domino effect. At the very beginning, someone has to push the first domino over then stand back and let things happen. This is an example of an efficient cause, not a final cause. Explain why this analogy could be misleading when considering Aristotle's Prime Mover.*
2. **"Aristotle's Prime Mover is completely different to the Christian concept of God". Do you agree?**
3. **Stretch and Challenge: Is Aristotle's God one you can pray to?**

Strengths and Weaknesses of Aristotle

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Aristotle's theory of the four causes seems effective due to his belief in a Prime or Unmoved Mover. It provides a clear reason as to why movement and change happen. Aristotle suggests everything within the physical world is drawn toward the Unmoved Mover through a desire to reach our telos. Aristotle recognised that everything in life is changing, and that everything that exists is in a permanent state of 'movement' or 'motion'. Using his argument about the four causes, Aristotle reasoned that everything must have a Final Cause, or a purpose. Nothing comes from nothing, so it follows that when there is a chain of events, there must be an ultimate cause.</p>	<p>Plato and Descartes would argue that the senses are unreliable and can deceive us, with the example of how in dreams we are often convinced that everything is real, only to discover we are wrong when we awaken. Instead, rationalists would argue for a more 'a priori' approach to knowledge.</p>
<p>Aristotle's theory of the four causes is supported by clear empirical evidence. The four causes can be observed in all things within the universe which supports Aristotle's belief that there is a final cause to all things. The causes were material, formal, efficient and final. The material first cause refers to the matter or substance that something is made of, the formal is the shape in which the object takes, the efficient is what brought the object into existence and the final is the objects telos (Greek term for purpose).</p>	<p>There is no clear evidence that everything does have a final cause. Some philosophers deny that there is any purpose to the universe. Such philosophers claim that the universe has no intrinsic purpose other than existing. In addition there is no empirical evidence to support the existence of the Unmoved Mover. Yes, we experience movement and change but this does not prove there is a being causing movement and change.</p>
<p>Some scholars argue that the main strength of Aristotle is that he adopts the 'a posteriori' approach to evidence as opposed to Plato's 'a priori' approach. 'A posteriori' focuses on empirical evidence which is based on observation and experience. Plato argues that we cannot trust our senses, however, much of what we learn and experience comes through our senses so we should trust them.</p>	<p>The concept of an Unmoved Mover or Prime Mover depends upon the argument that everything must have a cause. The argument makes a logical contradiction by claiming that the Unmoved Mover does exactly what it claims is impossible i.e. everything is caused by something else, the Unmoved Mover does not have a cause.</p>
<p>Aristotle is supported by the Christian community. His theory of the four causes and the unmoved mover has been adopted by the Christian faith to help them understand the nature of God.</p>	<p>Bertrand Russell and David Hume would argue that the universe is just brute fact: "I would say that the universe is just there, and that's all.", whereas Aristotle argued that there is a purpose or goal behind the universe as a whole, which was God or the Prime Mover.</p>
	<p>Modern physics seems to suggest that the universe has a definite beginning. The Big Bang theory suggests that the universe had a definite starting point rather than existing in an eternal and continuous state. This would indicate that the universe and matter are not eternal. Therefore, Aristotle makes an assumption that matter is eternal and does not explain where it comes from. In addition, Aristotle's theory is not consistent with the religious belief that the universe was God's creation.</p>

Assessment: Assess the effectiveness of Aristotle's four causes in explaining the world. [40]

Success Criteria

- Reference to Aristotle's reliance on knowledge gained by observation and experience of the world around us.
- Explanation of each cause as a different explanation for the existence of something: material, efficient, formal and final.
- Aristotle's use of teleology – the most important cause is the final cause. Aristotle argues for the existence of an unmoved mover that causes all movement/change without being moved/changed itself.
- The nature of the unmoved mover – now this is the cause of all movement and change within the universe without being moved or changed itself.

Arguments suggesting it is effective:

- Aristotle's empirical approach is based on the observation of the real world. This seems stronger than Plato who did not rely on sense experience.
- Understanding of the Prime Mover as final cause of nature might be used to provide some kind of argument in favour of theism as an explanation of the world.
- Aristotle offers some form of meaning or purpose for our lives. We are constantly moving toward our telos/goal.

Arguments suggesting it is not effective:

- Refer to the apparent weaknesses in his theory
- Aristotle's view of the eternity of the world might be criticised, either from a theological or scientific standpoint; the world as initiated by God's creation, or using scientific views which identify the universe as finite (for example having a beginning with the Big Bang)
- Aristotle's assertion of natural things possessing a final cause were criticised, the argument might be supported by evolutionary theory.

Use the table on the previous page to help you construct this essay

Discussion Point 1: Comparison and evaluation of Plato's Form of the Good and Aristotle's Prime Mover.

Form of the Good	Prime Mover (Unmoved Mover)
<p>Plato called the Form of Good, 'the Form of the Forms' or the ultimate Form. In the hierarchy of Forms, the Form of Good was the most important of all and illuminates all of the other Forms and gives them their value. For example, Justice, Wisdom and Courage are all aspects of goodness.</p> <p>As with the other Forms, goodness is something we have never seen perfectly exemplified in the physical world, but we have all seen actions and role models that we recognise to be 'good'.</p> <p>We recognise their goodness because we understand how they correspond to our intuitive knowledge of the Form of Good, and we can identify what it is about the actions or the people that is good – we can also recognise the respects in which they fall short of perfection.</p> <p>True knowledge, for Plato, is knowledge of goodness. A philosopher is someone who loves (<i>philos</i>) wisdom (<i>sophia</i>), and who recognises the nature of true goodness. A real philosopher will want to put that wisdom into practice by teaching others and by setting an example, and this, for Plato, was the reason why countries should be ruled by philosopher kings.</p>	<p>The Prime Mover causes movement in all other things by attracting other things towards itself, as the object of desire and love. It does nothing; but it is the object of everything.</p> <p>The final cause of movement is a desire for God. The Prime Mover is perfection and everything wants to imitate perfection and is drawn towards it.</p> <p>Following logical reasoning, Aristotle concluded, the Prime Mover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does not depend on anything else for his existence; if he did he would be capable of change; but the Prime Mover is 100% actuality (no potentiality – no movement). ➤ Is Eternal (no potential, no movement) ➤ Is perfectly good (P.M is pure actuality). ➤ Is Immaterial and beyond time and space (it has substance and form but no matter). Since it cannot perform any kind of physical, bodily action, its activity must be purely spiritual and intellection. ➤ The Prime Mover's activity is thought. It must think about itself only, because thinking about anything else could cause it to change. It must think only about perfect things: i.e. thought and himself.

Both Plato and Aristotle believed that people want to reach some form of ultimate reality. For Plato, he believed people want to reach the Form of the Good to gain true knowledge and understanding. Aristotle believed people were moving toward the Unmoved Mover due to a desire for perfection.

Discussion Point 2: Compare and evaluate of Plato’s reliance on reason (rationalism) and Aristotle’s use of the senses (empiricism) in their attempts to make sense of reality.

Task: Who do you think offers the best theory regarding our sense of reality?

Plato was a **rationalist**: this is the belief that the mind is the source of knowledge, and truth can be inferred (deduced or concluded) using the powers of reason. A rationalist would hold that all data gained through the senses is fallible (capable of making mistakes or being wrong); the only certainties come through the mind.

On the other hand, **empiricists** follow in the tradition of Aristotle: this is the belief that knowledge is gained through the senses, through evidence which can be tested.

Plato – Rationalism	Aristotle – Empiricism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utopian, idealistic and otherworldly. ➤ His guiding model is maths – this is because his theory is ‘a priori’ which means we gain understanding through logical reasoning e.g. $2+2 = 4$. This is knowledge that is independent of experience. ➤ Focuses on reason and the idea that there are absolutes to reach conclusions. Plato argues that the universe contains absolute conclusions. We do not have to arrive at these conclusions through sense experience. These conclusions are self-evident. ➤ Two worlds – a real one (perfect world) and a material world (imperfect world). The real world is the world of the forms to which our souls belong. The material world is the world of shadows or copies of the original forms. ➤ True knowledge comes from recollection of the true forms from the world of forms. Our soul is what connects us to this world. ➤ We need the Form of the Good to gain true understanding of reality. The Form of the Good is like the sun in that it provides us with the means to see things clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Realistic, Practical and this worldly. ➤ His guiding model is biology – this is because his theory is ‘a posteriori’ which means we gain understanding through empirical (observable) evidence. ➤ Focuses on the use of our senses and empirical evidence to reach conclusions. We can only come to conclusions based on the strength of the evidence that our senses provide. ➤ One world – things made of form and matter. Everything within the world is explainable in terms of 4 causes (efficient, formal, material and final). ➤ All knowledge is based on sense experience. The senses provide us with the ability to gain an understanding of our cause and purpose. ➤ We are caused to move by an ultimate being known as the Unmoved Mover. This movement (change) is because the Unmoved Mover is a Final Cause that we hope to reach (Telos = purpose). ➤ Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover is nearer the Christian concept of God than Plato’s Form of the Good. Although the Unmoved does not interact with the world it helps Christians understand the perfect nature of God.

Extended Reading – Complete a close reading of the following Dialogue Articles:

How to do a close reading:

Read with a pencil or highlighter in hand, and annotate the text. "Annotating" means underlining or highlighting key words and phrases—anything that strikes you as surprising or significant, or that raises questions—as well as making notes in the margins.

Plato's Analogy of the Cave and the Theory of the Forms

Roy Jackson

As one of the founding fathers of modern philosophy and best known of the thinkers of Ancient Greece, Plato has had a huge impact on the history of Western thought. He lived from around 427BC - 347BC in the city-state of Athens.

Although there were many outstanding Greek philosophers before him, Plato stands out because of his approach to philosophy. What he did was to formulate the method and terminology of philosophising that is still used today. By introducing analysis, cogent argument and a rational approach to thought, Plato laid the foundations for all philosophers who came after him.

The Analogy of the Cave

One reason why Plato has remained so popular after all these years is that he was aware of his audience. He appreciated the importance of explaining often-difficult concepts in a way that could be more readily understood. To achieve this, Plato often made use of analogy. An analogy is when you make a relationship between two or more entities to bring out their similarity; for example, to make an analogy (though not a very good one) between the structure of an atom and the solar system. To explain his Theory of the Forms, Plato used the now well-known Analogy of the Cave.

Deep down at the very bottom of the cave are a group of prisoners. The prisoners are firmly shackled so that they cannot move, or even turn their heads. They all face only one direction, the wall of the cave. These prisoners have been in this condition since they were young children.

Behind the prisoners a fire burns away, and between this fire and the prisoners there are many people who are walking by, talking and carrying artificial objects such as figures of men and animals made of wood and stone. The people walking by are hidden by a screen, so that only the artificial objects appear above the top of the screen

The fire casts a shadow of these artificial objects upon the wall of the cave. It is this wall that the prisoners can see. The prisoners are not aware of what is happening behind them and so, for them, the whole of their reality consists of shadows on the wall. They can only see shadows of the artificial objects, which, of course, are also, in a way, 'shadows' of their makers. When they hear talking or other sounds they believe it comes from the shadows.

One day, one of these prisoners is let loose from his chains and is forced to turn around, look and walk towards the fire. The released prisoner finds all of these actions painful and is dazzled by the light, having spent his life in almost complete darkness and unable to move. He is told that the objects he now sees are the real objects and that what he had experienced all his life were mere shadows.

Confused and frightened, the prisoner wants to return to the bottom of the cave, but he is dragged further away and up towards the entrance. Faced by the daylight he is unable to see a single object. Only over time can he gradually grow used to it, first by perceiving the lights of the night sky, then the shadows of objects cast by the sun and finally the objects themselves in broad daylight.

Finally, after a period of getting used to the light of day, the released prisoner is even able to gaze at the sun itself.

A more modern analogy today would be the cinema, where the audience would watch the play of shadows thrown by the film coming from a light behind them. The audience would believe that the events in the film are 'real' to them as opposed to the events outside the cinema.

As Socrates recounts this analogy he also describes what the released prisoner must have thought and felt throughout the experience; the initial reaction of fear and confusion and the desire to return to the comfort and security of his previous life. However, he gradually experiences an awakening, 'enlightenment', as he becomes aware of a more beautiful and real world than the dark world he has been used to. The chained prisoners would, amongst themselves, gain status and honour by attempting to determine the sequence of events that would occur amongst the shadows. The released prisoner, however, realises that this quest for glory, honour and status is an illusion.

What would happen if the prisoner were to return to the bottom of the cave? Would the other prisoners welcome him with open arms and wish to see this new world for themselves? Quite the opposite, Socrates thought. The released prisoner, having grown used to the light of the outside world, would fumble in the darkness and look a fool amongst his colleagues. At best they would laugh at him for his inability to define the motion of the shadows, at worst they would threaten to kill him if he questioned their cherished beliefs. Yet the released prisoner, knowing this, still has a duty to return to the cave and attempt to convince his colleagues that they live a life of wasted illusions.

This curious tale works on many different levels. What is it meant to teach us? Plato's audience would have quickly realised that the released prisoner represents Socrates himself: the man who had no concern for the conventions of his time, who questioned their values and who, ultimately, paid the price for such questioning with his life. In a broader sense, the prisoner is every philosopher: the searcher for truth whose purpose in life is to share this truth with others, even if as a result they are mocked or their lives are threatened.

The Realm of the Forms

The Analogy of the Cave is not only about the quest of the philosopher, however. It is also a way of explaining Plato's Theory of the Forms. What are the Forms? In the story *The Little Prince* by the French poet and writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author recounts how, as a young boy, he lived in a house where there was supposed to be some buried treasure. The treasure was never found, but the possibility that it might exist gave the house a special quality and beauty. As Saint-Exupéry says, 'what is essential is invisible to the eye.' In other words, there is the everyday world and 'another' world that is hidden and more beautiful.

In *The Republic*, the character of Socrates points out that his Analogy of the Cave is a picture of the human condition. People are trapped by the illusory world of the senses; they are like the prisoners at the bottom of the cave. However, Plato believed that the ability to perceive the truth behind this illusion is contained within our very souls. The Forms are the world beyond the shadows. We take the shadows to be reality, but are really only appearance. For Plato, this is not the real world. The real world is invisible. It lies

beyond our senses of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing. But what led Plato to believe that there is such a world beyond this one?

Try and draw a circle. How does it look? No matter how steady your hand is, your circle will still be imperfect in some way or other; perhaps a little pear-shaped or bumpy. Yet how do we *know* it is imperfect? Where does our idea of a perfect circle originate? For Plato, it is because there is a *Form* of a circle. In fact, there is a Form for everything. As another example, you might be sitting on a chair right now that is a little uncomfortable, creaky, or even about to collapse and, you might think to yourself, there are *better* chairs than this. What is this 'better' that we are aware of? Again, for Plato, it is because there is a Form for a chair.

We perhaps have a clearer idea, therefore, of what these Forms are. They are *perfection*. We can see many beautiful things; a beautiful flower, a beautiful painting, and a beautiful person. But what is *beauty itself*? In other words, how do we know that so many different objects all share the attribute of beauty? One response to this might well be that we learn through experience. However, Plato believed that our knowledge of beauty is innate. That is, we are not born an 'empty slate' with no knowledge at all, but possess within our souls all knowledge already.

The trick, of course, is to be guided towards that knowledge. In the Analogy of the Cave, the prisoner's journey upwards is also an educational process. Through proper training – that is in becoming a true philosopher – he will attain knowledge of the Forms, and, as a philosopher, it is his *duty* to return to the cave and enlighten his fellow man. At the same time, the Forms cannot be taught. We know them already, but refuse to acknowledge them for, to do so, is a painful and confusing process; it takes us away from the security of our illusions.

The Form of the Good

In the Analogy of the Cave, the sun represents the Form of the Good. The sun is the source of all things; it gives light so you can perceive other objects, and it gives life to all other things. The sun is responsible for the changing of the seasons, for the weather, and for the food we eat. Plato believed that there is a hierarchy of Forms. Whereas there are particular Forms for beauty, for justice, for a chair, and a bed, there is one Form over and above all of these; the Form of the Good. All existence and perfection ultimately flows from the Form of the Good. The 'Good' here should not be understood in the moral sense of the word, but rather what gives everything else value and purpose. Like the sun, it gives light and life to all other things, including the other Forms. You may know what the Form for right behaviour is, but the Form of the Good reveals *why* you should behave rightly. Therefore, when you have awareness of the Form of the Good you have achieved true enlightenment. When the early Church Fathers developed Christian theology, they borrowed heavily from the works of Plato. In Christianity, the Form of the Good becomes God: the source of all things, immutable, eternal, perfect and invisible.

Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 BCE, and came from a well-off family from Macedonia, before going at the age of 17 to Athens, where he was to study and eventually to teach. His background influenced his fortunes throughout his life; when Macedonia was in favour as a nation, then Aristotle was popular among the Greeks, but when the political tide turned against Macedonia, Aristotle too was treated with suspicion and his career suffered.

Aristotle was a pupil of Plato, and Plato had in his time been tutored by Socrates, and so Aristotle must have had an education of a quality that is almost impossible to imagine. The tradition which Socrates had begun encouraged people to question everything, and to puzzle over the meanings of words and concepts we use all the time. Plato believed that concepts inhabited a level of existence of their own, a 'World of Forms' which could be understood through philosophy, but Aristotle, although he loved Plato and admired him enormously as a teacher, had always been trained not just to accept someone else's understanding of things but to use his own abilities and arrive at his own conclusions. In doing this, he rejected many of Plato's views, and provided his own alternative ways of looking at the world.

Most importantly, Aristotle rejected the view that there is a 'World of Forms' which is in many ways 'more real' than the world we experience through the use of our five senses – the empirical world. Aristotle thought that the concept of Forms was a starting point that could not lead anywhere. He thought that ideas, on their own, have no meaning, but have to relate to actual things which are within our experience, we have to be able to see examples of them to recognise them. We have to start where we are, here, in the concrete world, and Aristotle stressed that we gain knowledge through experience, not through ideas. For Aristotle, learning about the world through observation and experience was of major importance – so important that he began many of the sciences that we take for granted today. It was Aristotle who set the agenda for the study of physics, biology, meteorology, psychology and astronomy, as well as for many other disciplines. He was fired by a desire to understand the world that makes itself available to the senses, to see how things worked, the rules they obeyed, and the ways in which they could be classified. His thirst for knowledge, and his contribution to it, has never been surpassed.

The four causes

One of the issues which most interested Aristotle, and which has fascinated philosophers ever since, was the question of what causes things to exist, and to be the way that they are. What are something's defining characteristics, and why is it here at all?

He recognised that there are different levels of explanations for events, or for the existence of objects. For example, the chair on which I am sitting as I am writing about Aristotle has a number of different explanations, or causes, for its existence; there would be no chair without the wood it is made from, but also, there would be no chair without the activity of the person who made it. There would be no chair unless it had a seat and sturdy legs – otherwise it would not be a chair at all. There would also be no chair unless people wanted things to sit on – otherwise no-one would have bothered to make it. All of these statements give different answers to the question 'Why does this chair exist?' For Aristotle, there were four different types of cause, which could be identified as:

1 The material cause - this explains what something is made from, for example the wood of the chair, the glass of the window, the water of the raindrops falling outside. Physical things would not exist without being made of something, and so the material is one of the causes of their existence. It does not give the whole explanation, however.

2 The efficient cause – this is the name that Aristotle gave to the activity which makes something happen, for example, the work of the carpenter who made my chair, the work in the glass factory that made my window, and the movements of air, hydrogen and oxygen that made the raindrops form and fall outside.

3 The formal cause – this is what Aristotle used to describe the form, or shape, that something has, which give it its characteristics and enable it to be identified. The object on which I am sitting can be identified as a chair, because it has the shape and characteristics of a chair, and I would recognise other objects with similar characteristics as being chairs too. Something could be made from wood, and could have been the result of the activity of a carpenter, but it is only a chair if it has a certain recognisable form, otherwise it might be a fruit bowl or a bird table.

4 The final cause – For Aristotle, the final cause was the reason for something's existence at all. The chair exists because there are people in the world who like to have something stable on which to sit when they work or eat their meals, and this is why the wood was cut down, the carpenter did his stuff and the material was made into the shape that it has. It was all done in order to fulfil a purpose. When looking for the final cause, or the final explanation, of something's existence, the question needs to be asked, 'What is it for?'

Aristotle's ideas about causes and explanations are important, because he manages to show that there can be several different reasons for something, all operating at the same time, and often depending on each other as well. Today, there are some people who think that, because we can explain the different chemical components of a human being, this removes the need to look for any other explanations of life, such as that it comes from God. There are people who think that, because we can trace our moral behaviour back to the 'efficient cause' of our parents or our society, this removes the need to look any further and wonder what we are actually here for and how we should behave. Aristotle, however, believed that it is perfectly possible for explanations to work at different levels at the same time, all contributing in their own way to our understanding of the essence of existence. One explanation at one level does not cancel out another at a different level entirely.

The Prime Mover

One of the questions which troubled Aristotle was the existence of the universe as a whole. He had found a way of understanding the different kinds of cause of individual objects, but what about the whole thing in its entirety – what is the cause, or the explanation, of the universe? What is the universe for?

Aristotle, like many other philosophers, recognised that everything in the world is in a continual state of change; nothing stays the same from one moment to the next. He thought that this change must be dependent on something; there must be something causing the change, acting on different things to make them move in the ways that they do. The chain of cause and effect can be traced back, with each movement being caused by another movement before it, and perhaps this chain is eternal; but Aristotle thought that there must be a final cause, a final explanation, for all of this movement. It had to be something which is not itself moved, which remains unaffected while causing changes in everything else, and he called this the Prime Mover. The Prime Mover, for Aristotle, was not just the beginning of a series of causes and effects, like the push on the first domino which knocks all the others down in turn. It was not only an efficient cause, but also the Final Cause, the reason for being, the end result to which everything is aimed. Aristotle

Section 2: Learning Intentions

Key Knowledge:

Plato:

- Plato's view of the soul as the essential and immaterial part of a human temporarily united with the body

Aristotle:

- Aristotle's view of the soul as the form of the body including:
 - The way the body behaves and lives
 - Something which cannot be separated from the body

Descartes:

- Rene Descartes' proposal of material and spiritual substances as a solution to the mind/soul and body problem

Materialism:

- Richard Dawkins: The idea that the mind and consciousness can be fully explained by physical or material interactions
- Gilbert Ryle: The rejection of the soul as a spiritual substance

Key Skills:

- Examine and explain the key ideas associated with Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and the views of materialism (A01)
- Discuss materialist critiques of dualism, and dualist responses to materialism (A02)
- Discuss whether the concept of 'soul' is best understood metaphorically or as a reality (A02)
- Discuss the idea that the mind-body distinction is a category error (A02)

Key Concepts / Technical Terms

Soul	The spiritual or immaterial part of a human being or animal, regarded as immortal
Mind	The element of a person that enables them to be aware of the world and their experiences, to think, and to feel; the faculty of consciousness and thought
Body	The physical structure, including the bones, flesh, and organs, of a person or an animal
Dualism	The philosophical belief that there are two distinct parts to the human: a body and mind (soul).
Reason	The power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgements logically.
Monism	The idea that the mind/soul and body are united.
Hierarchy of the soul	Aristotle's idea that the soul has a variety of functions some which are more important than others
Nutritive Soul	Found in plants: it makes the plant alive and governs the process of growth, assimilation of foodstuffs, sunlight, and water, and, in the flourishing stage, the reproduction of the plant
Sensitive Soul	The capacity for perception, including pleasure and pain; closely associated with it is sense-related desire; the desire for pleasant things and the aversion to painful ones
Rational Soul	The soul that in the scholastic tradition has independent existence apart from the body and that is the characteristic animating principle of human life as distinguished from animal or vegetable life
Substance Dualism / Cartesian Dualism	Substance Dualism is a variety of dualism in the philosophy of mind which states that two sorts of substances exist: the mental and the physical. Substance dualism is a fundamentally ontological position: it states that the mental and the physical are separate substances with independent existence.
Hard Materialism	The theory or belief that nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications

The Nature and Existence of the Soul

A distinction is often drawn between the body and the soul of a human being. The body is normally seen as a physical object that lives, dies and then decomposes. The soul is generally associated with an individual's personality, decisions and free will and is often linked to the mind. The soul is the "essence" of the person.

The nature of the soul is much debated by philosophers. Some see the soul as a non-physical presence within the body, the inner self. Other philosophers identify the soul more closely with the physical body, suggesting that the body and soul are united and cannot be separated. Some philosophers, of course, believe that the soul does not exist in an objective form. They use the word "soul" to describe their experience of personal identity.

Plato's view of the soul as the essential and immaterial part of a human (temporarily united with the body)

Dualism is the philosophical belief that there are two distinct parts to the human: a body and mind (soul).

Plato was one of the earliest dualists, and the differentiation between the body and soul links closely to his differentiation between the world of Forms and the world of appearances. The soul has access to the world of Forms and has objective knowledge, thanks to our ability to reason.

The body, however, gains knowledge not through reason but through the senses. Plato said that since senses change, they cannot always be trusted. This leads to his overwhelmingly pessimistic view of the body, which he called:

"The prison of the soul"

For Plato the aim of the soul is to break free from the body and fly to the realm of ideas to spend an eternity contemplating truth, beauty and goodness. He calls the body weak because of its desires and flaws, and says that it gets in the way of who we truly are and detracts from our power of thinking. Plato believed that the body does not survive death but the soul - the real essence of the person - continues and this is our personal identity, what makes "you", "you".

Regarding the soul, Plato states that it has three distinct parts:

1. **REASON** - helps us work out right from wrong, helps us see the world of Forms and helps us gain knowledge
2. **EMOTION** - gives us the ability to love, be courageous - but can lead to recklessness
3. **APPETITE/DESIRE** - makes us look after the physical needs of our bodies - but can lead to **hedonism**

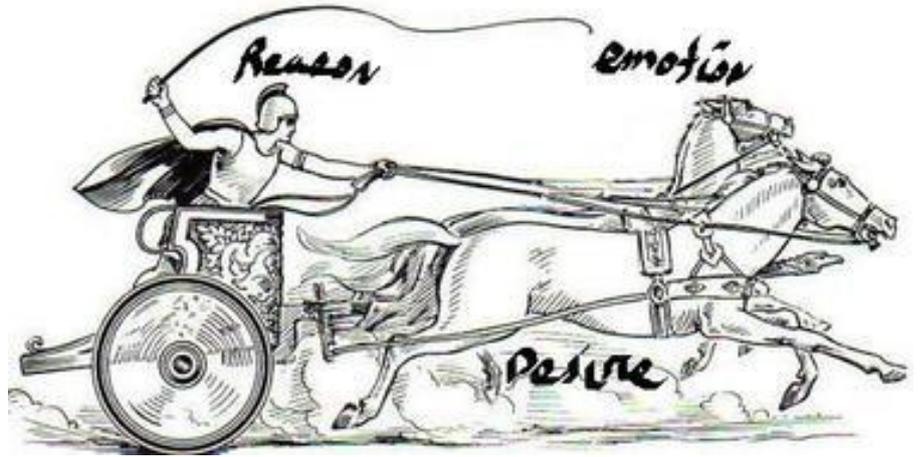
Hedonism: the pursuit of pleasure.

Plato said that the soul is both simple and complex, and is like a **diamond** - it is one thing but can be viewed from many different angles. We function correctly when we have all three parts of the soul in balance.

Stretch and Challenge: The Allegory of the Chariot

Plato used the allegory of the chariot to highlight the tripartite nature of the soul. The chariot is pulled by two winged horses, one mortal and the other immortal.

The mortal horse is deformed and obstinate. Plato describes the horse as a “crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow...of a dark color, with grey eyes and blood-red complexion; the mate of insolence and pride, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur.”



The immortal horse, on the other hand, is noble and game, “upright and cleanly made...his color is white, and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honor and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only.”

In the driver’s seat is the charioteer, tasked with reining in these disparate steeds, guiding and harnessing them to propel the vehicle with strength and efficiency. The charioteer’s destination? The ridge of heaven, beyond which he may behold the Forms: essences of things like Beauty, Wisdom, Courage, Justice, Goodness — everlasting Truth and absolute Knowledge. These essences nourish the horses’ wings, keeping the chariot in flight.

The charioteer joins a procession of gods, led by Zeus, on this trip into the heavens. Unlike human souls, the gods have two immortal horses to pull their chariots and are able to easily soar above. Mortals, on the other hand, have a much more turbulent ride. The white horse wishes to rise, but the dark horse attempts to pull the chariot back towards the earth. As the horses pull in opposing directions, and the charioteer attempts to get them into sync, his chariot bobs above the ridge of heaven then down again, and he catches glimpses of the great beyond before sinking once more.

Task – Outline what each of the different characters/parts of the allegory represent about the tripartite nature of the soul for Plato.

- The mortal horse
- The immortal horse
- The charioteer
- The charioteer’s destination

Stretch and Challenge: According to Plato, why would mortals (unlike the gods) have a more turbulent ride? What appetites and desires would prevent us from reaching the world of forms?

Task: Answer the following questions:

1. What does it mean to say that the soul is the *essence* of a person?
2. What are the three main philosophical views of the soul?
3. Explain how Plato's dualist view of the soul is linked to his theory of the forms.
4. Explode Plato's quote that the body is "*The prison of the soul*" (write out the quote and write ideas around it outlining what Plato means by the quote, what is his distinction between the soul and body and why is he so pessimistic about the body?)

Stretch and Challenge: Draw an outline of the body with a circle saying soul in the head. Describe, using examples, Plato's 3 distinct parts of the soul.

Aristotle's view of the soul as the form of the body

Aristotle uses his familiar matter/form distinction to answer the question "What is soul?" Aristotle was interested in the material world which he saw about him. He was interested in the nature of things and their substance. However, Aristotle was still interested in questions such as 'what is it about a table that gives it its tableness?' Aristotle differs to Plato as he rejects the idea of dualism as he believed that the form of an object was not some kind of abstract or separate ideal. He believed that the form of an object was contained within the object itself. To put it another way, its form was within the structure itself. This meant that the form of an object could be perceived using ones senses

Monism is the idea that the mind/soul and body are united.

Aristotle believes the person is not one thing inside another; the soul and the body are an inseparable unit. A key question for the ancient Greeks is whether the soul can exist independently of the body. Plato certainly thought that the soul could exist separately. Aristotle disagreed and he said:

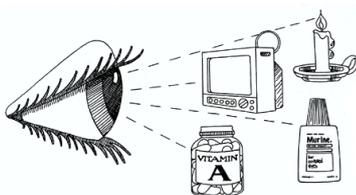
"The soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body"

Aristotle's view of the soul as the way the body behaves and lives

The soul is the form of a living thing. Not its shape, but its actuality, it is the kind of living thing that it is. The soul is the first actuality of a natural body which potentially has life. The soul distinguishes the living from the non-living.

Aristotle used these analogies to help us understand the how the body and soul are united:

- If the body were an axe, the soul will be its ability to chop
- If the body were an eye, the soul would be its ability to see



Souls are fulfillments of bodies hence souls cannot exist apart from bodies. The soul for Aristotle is not something which can be separated from the thing itself. Aristotle stated that we cannot separate the body and soul any more than we can separate wax from its shape or sight from an eye.



“We must no more ask whether the soul and body are one than ask whether the wax and the figure pressed on it are one”

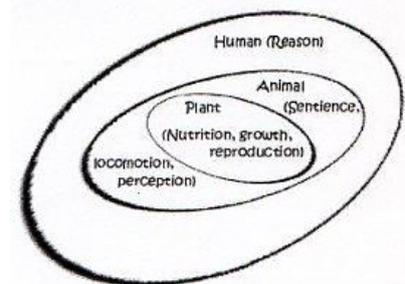
Task: Complete the following activities and answer the questions:

1. Create a table outlining the differences between Plato and Aristotle regarding the soul (use key terms associated with each philosopher)
2. Explode the following quote: *“The soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body”* (write out the quote and write ideas around it outlining what Aristotle means by the quote and what is his distinction between body/soul?)
3. Give 3-5 analogies (not including Aristotle’s to highlight how the body and soul are united.
4. Explain why Aristotle believes it is meaningless to ask whether the soul and body are one.

Aristotle’s view of the soul as something which cannot be separated from the body

Aristotle argued that there is a **hierarchy** of soul functions or activities. These functions/activities are:

1. **Growth, nutrition, (reproduction)**
2. **Locomotion (perception)**
3. **Intellect (thought)**



This gives us three corresponding degrees of soul:

- a) **Nutritive soul (plants)**
- b) **Sensitive soul (animals)**
- c) **Rational soul (human beings)**

Anything that has a higher degree of soul also has all of the properties of a lower soul. All living things grow, nourish themselves, and reproduce. Animals not only do that, but move and perceive. Humans do all of the above and reason, as well. All of these ‘abilities’ cannot exist without the body so it is absurd for Aristotle to suggest a separation of ‘soul’ and ‘body’.

Task: Create a pie chart to highlight and explain Aristotle’s hierarchy of the soul. When you section off the pie chart make sure to indicate which aspects he considers to be the most important.

The Mind/Soul and Body Problem

There is an age-old problem in philosophy known as the "mind-body problem." One quick way to state the problem is this:

What is the relationship between the mind and the body -- between the mental realm (the realm of thoughts, beliefs, pains, sensations, and emotions) and the physical realm (matter, atoms and neurons)?

Are your thoughts, feelings, perceptions, sensations, and wishes things that happen in addition to all the physical processes in your brain, or are they themselves just some of those physical processes?

Substance Dualism: Rene Descartes' proposal of material and spiritual substances as a solution to the mind/soul and body problem

Although the great philosophical distinction between mind and body can be traced to the Greeks it was the French mathematician and philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) who gave the first systematic account of the mind/body relationship. He claimed that minds and brains are substances of different kind.



Descartes' own thoughts made him certain that he existed, inspiring his famous saying, "*cogito ergo sum*", I think therefore I am. Even if we are dreaming, or under the control of an evil demon, we still have our own thoughts, known only to ourselves. Therefore the physical and non-physical are distinct substances with distinct properties. The physical body takes up space but the soul takes up no space as it is non-physical.

Substance Dualism is often referred to as **Cartesian Dualism**. It states that the mental and the physical are separate **substances** with independent existence.

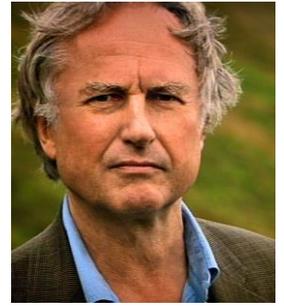
Descartes believed that the mind, or self is "*entirely and truly distinct from the body and may exist without it*". However the mind and body do interact. The mind can cause events to occur in the body and the body can cause events to occur in the mind.

Cartesian Dualism can be summarised as follows:

1. Each person is composed of two main parts: an immaterial mind and a physical body.
2. Only immaterial minds can have mental properties.
3. Only physical objects can have physical properties.
4. Mind and body are able to exist independently (and generally do so after death).
5. Mind and body enter into two-way causal interaction.

Task: Create a flow map outlining the 5 points above. Explain the meaning of each point on your flow map.

Hard Materialism: Richard Dawkins' argument that the mind and consciousness can be fully explained by physical/material interactions



Materialism is a form of philosophical monism which holds that matter is the fundamental substance in nature, and that all phenomena, including mental phenomena and consciousness, are results of material interactions. In other words

The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins is a materialist who believed that human beings are bytes of digital information. There is no soul or consciousness as we are the sum total of our genes. He concentrates on the idea that humans are merely carriers of information and DNA.

For Dawkins, the only conceivable theory is that of evolution.

We are as we are because of our genetic makeup, not the efforts of our soul to guide us towards the realm of ideas each change is due to evolution. There is no soul which continues, there is only the survival of DNA, the function of life.

He strongly rejects the notion of the soul in the Platonic sense but does suggest that there may be a place for talking about 'soul' in a metaphorical or symbolic way. He distinguishes between soul 1 and soul 2:

- **Soul 1** – traditional view of a principle of life, a real separate thing that is spiritual and contains personality. Dawkins rejects this
- **Soul 2** – as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary refers to '*intellectual or spiritual power. High development of the mental faculties. Deep feeling and sensitivity.*'

Dawkins argues that soul 2 is a meaningful way of describing ourselves provided we are clear that this does not refer to a separate thing and accept that the term soul is simply a metaphor for our intellect and feelings.

In his book '*The Selfish Gene*' (1976) he proposes that humans are nothing more than 'survival machines' – they are the vehicles of genes which are only interested in replicating themselves in order to survive into the next generation.

He deems that humans do not have immortal souls and instead are simply a mixture of chemicals – "*life is just bytes and bytes and bytes*". In Dawkins view, human self-awareness is not due to the soul but has developed because self-awareness has evolutionary advantages.

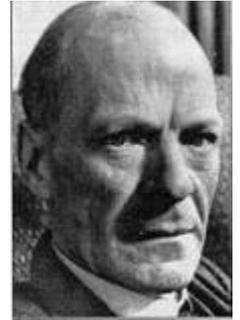
He argues, as Bertrand Russell did, that beliefs in ideas such as immortality of the soul has no sound basis as they are based on wish-fulfilment for those who lack courage or who fear death. Materialists believe that consciousness is no more than electro-chemical events within the brain and that no person is capable of surviving brain death. Therefore, physical death is the end and the soul does not exist in any other way than a metaphor.

Task: Answer the following questions:

1. What does Richard Dawkins mean by the phrase '*human beings are bytes of digital information*'?
2. How does self-awareness have evolutionary advantages?
3. What do Dawkins and Bertrand Russell mean by the soul being merely wish fulfilment?

Gilbert Ryle: The rejection of the soul as a spiritual substance

In "The Concept of Mind" (1949), Gilbert Ryle argued that the idea of the soul, which he described as "The ghost in the machine" was "A category mistake". He argued that it was a mistake in incorrect use of language. It resulted to people speaking of the mind and body as different phenomena as if the soul was something identifiably extra within a person. He used the example of someone watching a cricket game and asking where the team spirit was.



A person watching their first game of cricket learns the functions of the bowlers, the batsmen, the fielders, the umpires and the scorers. He then says 'But there is no one left on the field to contribute the famous element of team-spirit. I see who does the bowling, the batting and the wicket keeping; but I do not see whose role it is to exercise team spirit' Once more, it would have to be explained that he was looking for the wrong type of thing. Team-spirit is not another cricketing-operation supplementary to all of the other special tasks. It is, toughly, the keenness with which each of the special tasks is performed, and performing a task keenly is not performing two tasks. Certainly exhibiting team-spirit is not the same thing as bowling or catching, but nor is it a third thing such that we can say that the bowler first bowls and then exhibits team-spirit or that a fielder is at a given moment either catching or displaying team spirit.

In this way, Ryle argued that talk of the soul was talk about the way a person acted and integrated with others in the world. It was not separate and distinct. To describe someone as clever or happy did not require the existence of a separate thing called mind or soul.

Task: Complete a table outlining the different views of the following philosophers/thinkers regarding the soul:

Plato's view of the soul (Dualism)	Aristotle's view of the soul (Monism)	Descartes view of the soul (Dualism)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain Plato's view of the soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain Aristotle's view of the soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain Descartes' view of the soul
Dawkin's view of the soul (Materialism)	Ryle's view of the soul (Monism)	Your view of the soul (??)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain Dawkin's view of the soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain Ryle's view of the soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain your own view of the soul. Use evidence from the different scholars to support your beliefs.

Discussion Point 1: Materialist critiques of dualism and dualist responses to materialism

Rational and scientific evidence for dualism:

One argument is that the mental and physical realms have very different properties. Mental events have subjective qualities such as what does it feel like, what it looks like or what does it sound like. Sensations like these really cannot be reduced to something physical.

The existence of the science of psychology implies the existence of the mind. The psychology of materials is not rational. Likewise the existence of the science of meteorology presupposes a mind that cares about the weather.

There is no place in the brain where electric stimulation can cause a person to believe or decide. Although our thoughts can be true or false our brain states cannot be true or false. Nobody can tell what we are thinking by measuring brain waves. We must be asked what we are thinking.

Rational and scientific evidence against dualism:

One argument is the lack of any rational understanding of how any possible interaction could possibly take place between the brain and the mind. This argument depends upon the presumption that the supernatural or another realm or dimension does not exist that could account for the interaction.

Another argument is based upon what happens when the brain is damaged. When damage occurs from physical trauma, drug abuse, or pathological diseases our mental powers are always compromised. The argument holds that if the brain and the mind were actually separate, our mental powers would not be comprised. This is a pretty good argument. However, it also depends upon the presumption that the supernatural does not exist and that God does not have a reason for letting our brain limit our mental function while we are living.

Discussion Point 2: The concept of 'soul' is best understood metaphorically or as a reality

- *Plato, Descartes and Aristotle would all argue that the soul is best understood as a reality.*
- *Richard Dawkins would argue that the soul (Soul 2) is best understood as metaphorically or symbolically.*

Discussion Point 3: the idea that any discussion about the mind-body distinction is a category error

- *Plato and Descartes would argue that the mind/soul and body are best understood as two distinct entities*
- *Gilbert Ryle argued talk of the soul was a 'category error'. He argued that talk of the soul was an error in language where we speak of the mind/soul and body as two phenomena.*

Assessment: Critically assess dualist ideas about the soul (40 marks)

Success Criteria

- Plato was one of the earliest dualists – explain what is meant by dualism and how Plato distinguishes between the soul/mind and the body
- Explain what Plato means when he states that the body is a ‘prison for the soul’
- Examine the functions of the soul for Plato

- Descartes put forward the idea of substance dualism – this was inspired by his famous quote ‘I think therefore I am’
- The soul/mind and body are completely distinct and may exist without each other
- Descartes also suggest that the soul/mind and body do interact with one another (look at the summary of Cartesian Dualism).

Challenges to Dualism:

- Aristotle – he would argue against Dualism as he believes that the soul and body are one. They are combined and when the body dies the soul dies to.
- Richard Dawkins – he takes a hard materialist approach and argues that the concept of dualism is completely false. He distinguishes between ‘Soul 1’ and ‘Soul 2’
- Gilbert Ryle – he argues that the idea of a separate soul to the body is a category mistake. He rejects the soul as a spiritual substance.
- Rational and scientific arguments against the soul

Support for Dualism:

- Descartes argues using his quote ‘I think therefore I am’ that the thinking itself supports the idea of dualism.
- Plato’s theory of the forms and his analogy of the cave provide a clear and coherent theory into the possibility of two forms of reality. The analogy helps us to understand the possibility of there being two worlds and the concept of dualism being realistic.
- The religious argument can be used – Christians believe in the spiritual part of a person. The spirit or the soul is what remains after we die. Christianity would accept the ideas of Plato and Descartes in that the body and soul are separate.

Extended Reading – Complete a close reading of the following Richard Dawkins Lecture and Gilbert Ryle’s ‘Concept of the Mind’:

How to do a close reading:

Read with a pencil or highlighter in hand, and annotate the text. "Annotating" means underlining or highlighting key words and phrases—anything that strikes you as surprising or significant, or that raises questions—as well as making notes in the margins.

IS SCIENCE KILLING THE SOUL?

Richard Dawkins (4/7/99)

Is science killing the soul? This is a cunning title, because it cunningly mixes two different meanings of soul. The first and oldest meaning of soul, which I'm going to call Soul One, takes off from one set of definitions. I'm going to quote several related definitions from the Oxford dictionary:

1. "The principle of life in man or animals -- animate existence."
2. "The principle of thought and action in man commonly regarded as an entity distinct from the body, the spiritual part of man in contrast to the purely physical."
3. "The spiritual part of man regarded as surviving after death, and as susceptible of happiness or misery in a future state."
4. "The disembodied spirit of a deceased person regarded as a separate entity and as invested with some amount of form and personality."

So Soul One refers to a particular theory of life. It's the theory that there is something non-material about life, some non-physical vital principle. It's the theory according to which a body has to be animated by some anima. Vitalized by a vital force. Energized by some mysterious energy. Spiritualized by some mysterious spirit. Made conscious by some mysterious thing or substance called consciousness.

But there is a second sense of soul, Soul Two, which takes off from another one of the Oxford dictionary's definitions:

1. "Intellectual or spiritual power. High development of the mental faculties. Also, in somewhat weakened sense, deep feeling, sensitivity."

In this sense, our question tonight means, Is science killing soulfulness? Is it killing sensitivity, artistic sensibility, creativity? The answer to this question, Is science killing Soul Two? Is a resounding No. I've written a book which is one long reply to that particular kind of anti-scientific attitude. In the sense of Soul Two, science doesn't kill the soul, it gives the soul constant and exhilarating re-birth.

Turning back to Soul One -- in the first chapter of Steve Pinker's book *How the Mind Works* he says, "I want to convince you that our minds are not animated by some godly vapor or single wonder-principle. The mind, like the Apollo spacecraft, is designed to solve many engineering problems, and thus is packed with high-tech systems, each contrived to overcome its own obstacles." In the same paragraph, he moves on to Soul Two when he says, ". . . I believe that the discovery by cognitive science and artificial intelligence of the technical challenges overcome by our mundane mental activity is one of the great revelations of science, an awakening of the imagination comparable to learning that the universe is made up of billions of galaxies or that a drop of pond water teems with microscopic

Gilbert Ryle: The Ghost in the Machine
1949 – The Concept of the Mind

Gilbert Ryle was best known for his criticism of what he called the "Official Doctrine" of "Cartesian Dualism" as a theory of mind. He thought René Descartes had naturalized the theological idea of a soul as a separate non-material substance called "mind."

The mind-body problem asks how a non-material mental substance can causally influence the material body. Ryle's 1949 book *The Concept of Mind* is regarded by many thinkers as having eliminated the *immaterial* mind and "dis-solved" the mind-body problem, which Ryle saw as the result of what he called a "category mistake."

In some ways influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who thought many philosophical problems were caused by misuse of language, Ryle said the category mistake was applying properties to a non-material thing that are logically and grammatically appropriate only for a category including material things. With his remarkable ability to turn a phrase, what Ryle even more famously did was to stigmatize "mind" as the "Ghost in the Machine."

'The Category Mistake'

I must first indicate what is meant by the phrase 'Category-mistake'. This I do in a series of illustrations.

A foreigner visiting Oxford or Cambridge for the first time is shown a number of colleges, libraries, playing fields, museums, scientific departments and administrative offices. He then asks 'But' where is the University? I have seen where the members of the Colleges live, where the Registrar works, where the scientists experiment and the rest. But I have not yet seen the University in which reside and work the members of your University.' It has then to be explained to him that the University is not another collateral institution, some ulterior counterpart to the colleges, laboratories and offices which he has seen. The University is just the way in which all that he has already seen is organized. When they are seen and when their co-ordination is understood, the University has been seen. His mistake lay in his innocent assumption that it was correct to speak of Christ Church, the Bodleian Library, the Ashmolean Museum *and* the University, to speak, that is, as if 'the University' stood for an extra member of the class of which these other units are members. He was mistakenly allocating the University to the same category as that to which the other institutions belong.

The same mistake would be made by a child witnessing the march-past of a division, who, having had pointed out to him such and such battalions, batteries, squadrons, etc., asked when the division was going to appear. He would be supposing that a division was a counterpart to the units already seen, partly similar to them and partly unlike them. He would be shown his mistake by being told that in watching the battalions, batteries and squadrons marching past he had been watching the division marching past. The march-past was not a parade of battalions, batteries, squadrons *and* a division; it was a parade of the battalions, batteries and squadrons of a division.

One more illustration. A foreigner watching his first game of cricket learns what are the functions of the bowlers, the batsmen, the fielders, the umpires and the scorers. He then says 'But there is no one left on the

