

James A. Blatt
2/14/2019
PHIL-201

REACTION #4

In Plato's Phaedo, Socrates, who was condemned to death by judgment of his peers, ends up dead. After having not seized his chance to escape, Socrates reasons his way into "foolish confidence" about the nature of an afterlife, ultimately concluding the soul is immortal before "cheerfully" drinking lethal poison. My reaction is simply what I believe: I believe in Christian terms the soul originates at conception, and in the empiricists' sense of knowing it learns everything it knows from that moment forward.

In Phaedo the analogy of Plato's Cave states that if man is trapped on Earth beneath the heavens, which form a tangible, physical layer above, and also therein the Earth is the center of the universe, then all souls exist in their otherworldly form trapped in this geocentric universe, in the Cave on Earth.

Phaedo bored me where it revolved around the soul inhabiting different living animal forms, such as bees, ants, wolves, and kites, after separation from the body at death and guided by careful watch of the "genius" gods. I reject the idea that the soul exists before its first conception, and also reject the idea that human souls re-emerge as any living creature except possibly another human, such as in the case of reincarnation, or more likely, possession.

I also reject the single mind and body theory that states there is no soul independent of the body. Even if somebody with a traumatic brain injury like a coma patient, or an alzheimer's patient, or schizophrenic were studied through the lens of the monists it would be seen the organic or inorganic brain injury is the source of the disruption of the consciousness known to the objective observer as the mind.

Under the heliocentric view of the solar system, outside of Plato's Cave, and within my monotheistic view where we know the universe is infinitely expanding within the conception of God as overflowing the universe, it's my conclusion (consistent with Socrates) that God, the "genius" of the universe, has a plan for the soul after it has been polluted by its temporal, earthly body, which has died, but God's plan for us in eternity is actually unknowable. Like Socrates, and as a Roman Catholic I believe in the concepts of heaven, hell and purgatory. I also believe God wants health, happiness, peace and prosperity for all people, and that basically good people, however fallible, aren't endlessly punished by God¹ in eternity.

¹ I use the term "God" as a neutral entity that is omniscient, omnipresent, almighty, all-being and eternal.