

Explain Plato's concept of the soul and its relationship to the body. (33)

Plato's concept of the body and soul can be linked to his theory of the cave in many ways. He thought of existence in terms of two levels. The body is like everything else physical; it is in a constant state of change and is never the same from one moment to the next. However the soul in contrast is immortal and unchanging and therefore can both know and be known.

Plato believes that the body is the physical component of each person, the part that other people can see and hear, and present an appearance. The body will only receive our sense experiences and our minds are able to achieve our opinion.

Plato also believed that the mind and body are often in opposition. The mind wants to understand things but the body is only interested in sense pleasures. The body is also blind and is not the real person whereas the soul is the directing force of the body which tries to guide us.

The body and mind are like the prisoners in the cave who do not think about the outside world and do not want to be released. All the prisoners value is the shadows and the noises and do not experience the true reality.

The soul however is immortal. It exists before during and after it is trapped in the human body, and therefore our soul has experienced the perfect and guiding our body towards the perfect. This is shown when the prisoner leaves the cave and opens his eyes to the outside world.

So therefore the prisoners inside the cave are our body and mind who don't want to experience the true perfect and the outside world and who don't want to be guided by the other prisoner who was set free, this symbolises our soul trying to guide our body and mind towards the perfect and true reality which only the soul has once experienced.

Plato described the body and soul as two separate things, and linked these to the allegory of the cave. The theory of forms showed differences between appearance and reality. Plato also believed that there were two realms.

Plato believed that the body is physical and constantly changing, as is not the true reality and not the perfect, as perfect does not change and the body is constantly changing.

However, in contrast the soul is immortal and unchanging and is always trying to guide us to the perfect. Plato believed that the soul is everlasting and it is the

body that traps the soul, just as in the allegory of the cave the cave traps the prisoners.

Our body is our senses that allow us to touch, taste, hear, see and smell and presents our appearances of everything. Through our bodies we are able to sense these experiences in order to gain knowledge and make our opinions.

Plato related body and soul to the cave in the way the cave traps the prisoners, the body traps the soul. The prisoners are just watching the shadows and listening to the people, but not questioning, and not trying to find out the true reality. In the same way we (our bodies) are just experiencing what we think to be the perfect, and staying blind to the true perfect and reality of life, we are not questioning and therefore not gaining knowledge.

When the prisoner is set free and walks out of the cave and into the outside world and the light, it is representing the soul guiding the body to the perfect. However the prisoner also goes back into the cave to get the other prisoners and take them out into the light also. However they shout at him telling him to go away and do not believe him. This represents us being blind and not letting our soul guide our body, as we are scared of knowing the true reality and might therefore ignore the soul and not question.

Plato argues that there is a material world and a perfect world and in the material world we do not experience the perfect. It can only present experiences, which leads us to opinion rather than knowledge. And in order for something to be real or perfect