

PLATO

- * First philosopher w. large corpus: 35 dialogues, 13 ltrs; 1700 pp.
- * Early career as tragic poet (slide 3)
- * Socrates turns him away from poetry
- * Invents dramatic dialogue form, genre of imaginative fiction (s 4)
- * Rejects written prose (p 2-4)
- * No character speaks for Plato
- * Born 427 BC to noble family
- * Plato's tyrannical relatives
- * Athenian democracy executes Socrates 399 BC
- * Opens school in sacred grove of Academus, nr Athens, 385 bc (s 4-5)
- * Sign over door (s 6, p 5-7, s 7-9)
- * Geometrical form → Th of Forms
- * Is Form of Justice real?
- * Plato's psychology (s 2, 10).
- * Its source in Homer (p 9)
- * Cases: timocrat (p 10), oligarch (11)
- * Who has most pleasure? Rational person or honor-lover or money-lover?



Roman mosaic of philosophical dialogue

Passages

1. So we were right not to admit him [the tragic poet] into a city that is to be well-governed, for he arouses, nourishes, and strengthens the lamenting part of the soul, and so destroys the rational one, in just the way that someone destroys the better sort of citizens when he strengthens the vicious ones and surrenders the city to them. Similarly we'll say that an imitative poet puts a bad constitution in the soul of each individual by making images that are far removed from the truth
2. **Thamus.** You give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient

and by gratifying the irrational part (*Rep.* 605b).



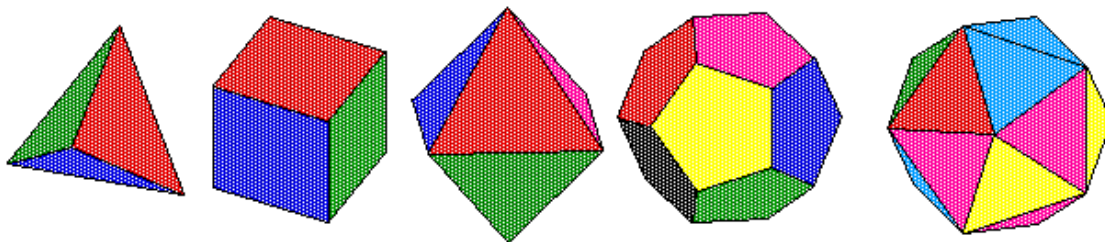
and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality. (Phaed 275a2-b3).

3. **Soc.** Writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speech always gives one unvarying answer. And when they have been once written down they are tumbled about anywhere among those who may or may not understand them, and know not to whom they should reply, to whom not: and, if they are maltreated or abused, they have no parent to protect them; and they cannot protect or defend themselves (Phaed 275d4-e6).
4. **Soc.** Is there not another kind of word or speech far better than this, and having far greater power—a son of the same family, but lawfully begotten?...I mean an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself, and knows when to speak and when to be silent. **Phaedr.** You mean the living word of knowledge which has a soul, and of which written word is properly no more than an image? **Soc.** Yes, that is what I mean (Phaed 276a1-9).
5. Let no one who does not know geometry enter (attributed to Plato by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*).



REGULAR POLYGONS: Triangle, Square, Pentagon.

The five Platonic solids



The Tetrahedron The Cube The Octahedron The Dodecahedron The Icosahedron

The five regular solids discovered by the Ancient Greek mathematicians are:

The Tetrahedron :	4 vertices	6 edges	4 faces	each with 3 sides
The Cube :	8 vertices	12 edges	6 faces	each with 4 sides
The Octahedron :	6 vertices	12 edges	8 faces	each with 3 sides
The Dodecahedron :	20 vertices	30 edges	12 faces	each with 5 sides
The Icosahedron :	12 vertices	30 edges	20 faces	each with 3 sides

The solids are regular because the same number of sides meet at the same angles at each vertex and identical polygons meet at the same angles at each edge.

These five are the only possible regular polyhedra.

6. [S]ome things summon thought, while others do not. Those that strike the relevant sense at the same time as their opposites, I call summoners, those that don't do this do not awaken understanding (*Rep.* 524d).
7. What we need to consider is whether the greater and more advanced part of geometry tends to make it easier to see the form of the good. And we say that anything has that tendency if it compels the soul to turn itself around towards the region in which lies the happiest of the things that are, the one the soul must see at all costs (*Rep.* 526e2-4).
8. I suspect that if Aristotle were to read *The Grand Design* he might suggest that Hawking has concentrated on the material and efficient explanations of the cosmos, and simply not fully understood the force of questions about possible formal and final explanations. To say that the law of gravity allows the universe to create itself from nothing won't do: is the law of gravity supposed to be 'nothing'? Why is there a law of gravity and not no law of gravity? Appeals to M-theory will not satisfy either. (Angela Hobbs, U of Warwick).



Note: *epithumia* = physical appetites for sex, food, drink, often expressed as desire for money. Spirit = passions of social relations: pride, envy, anger, but also friendship, gentleness, humility.

9. But the spirit (*thumos*) deep in the heart of Odysseus was stirred by this, and much he pondered in the division of mind (*phrena*) and spirit (*thumos*), whether to spring on them and kill each one, or rather to let them lie this one more time with the insolent suitor...So, Odysseus' heart (*kradiē*) was growling inside him as he looked on these wicked actions. He struck himself on the chest and spoke to his heart and scolded it: "Bear up my heart. You have had worse to endure before this on that day when the irresistible Cyclops ate up my strong companions, but you endured it until intelligence (*mētis*) got you out of the cave, though you expect to perish." So, he spoke addressing his own dear heart within him; and the heart in great obedience endured and stood it without complaint...(Homer, *Odyssey*, xx.9-24)
10. The result is that the young man, hearing and seeing all these thing --hearing too, the words of his father, and having a nearer view of his way of life, and making comparisons of him and others --is drawn opposite ways: while his father is watering and nourishing the rational principle in his soul, the others are encouraging the passionate and appetitive; and he being not originally of a bad nature, but having kept bad company, is at last brought by their joint influence to a middle point, and gives up the kingdom which is within him to the middle principle of spirit and passion, and becomes arrogant and ambitious (550b1-6).
11. And the son has seen and known all this --he is a ruined man, and his fear has taught him to knock ambition and passion head-foremost from his bosom's throne; humbled by poverty he takes to money-making and by mean and miserly savings and hard work gets a fortune together. Is not such an one likely to seat the

- concupiscent and covetous element on the vacant throne and to suffer it to play the great king within him, girt with tiara and chain and scimitar? Most true, he replied. And when he has made reason and spirit sit down on the ground obediently on either side of their sovereign, and taught them to know their place, he compels the one to think only of how lesser sums may be turned into larger ones, and will not allow the other to worship and admire anything but riches and rich men, or to be ambitious of anything so much as the acquisition of wealth and the means of acquiring it (553b6-d6).
12. I really know not how to look you in the face, or in what words to utter the audacious fiction, which I propose to communicate gradually, first to the rulers, then to the soldiers, and lastly to the people... Citizens, we shall say to them in our tale, you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently. Some of you have the power of command, and in the composition of these he has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honour; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries [soldiers]; others again who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron (*Rep* iii.415).
13. He saw the soul that had once been Orpheus choose the life of a swan... The soul of Thamyris chose the life of a Nightengale, and he saw a swan and other singing birds choose the life of a man. The twentieth soul to choose chose a lion's life; it was the soul of Ajax... It was followed by Agamemnon who... chose to be an eagle.... He saw Epeius, son of Panopeus, taking on the role of a skilled craftswoman... And there were many other changes from beast to man and beast to beast (*Rep*. 620a-b).
14. Whenever a number of individuals have a common name, we assume them to have also a corresponding idea or form. Do you understand me? I do. Let us take any common instance; there are beds and tables in the world --plenty of them, are there not? Yes. But there are only two ideas or forms of them --one the form of a bed, the other of a table. True. And the maker of either of them makes a bed or he makes a table for our use, in accordance with the form --that is our way of speaking in this and similar instances --but no craftsman makes the form or idea itself: how could he? (*Rep*. 596a4-b9)

- Questions** 1) Which part of soul rules in each metal? (cf. passage 12)
 2) Plato's dualism: Are we human? (cf. passage 13) vs. Aristotle
 3) Do we look to Forms or form concepts? (cf. p. 14) Political implications (p. 12) vs. Aristotle
 4) Does Penelope 'look to' the Form of Wisdom?

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