

Phaedo III 84c–105c¹

Introduction. Socrates is satisfied he has now proved the immortality of the soul, giving three arguments (opposites, recollection, and similarity). Now, Cebes and Simmias raise objections.

Questions.

1. What is Simmias's objection (85e–86d)?
- 2.★ While Cebes disagrees with Simmias, he thinks Socrates has yet to show the immortality of the soul. What is his main thought (87a–88b, see also 91d and 95c–d)?
3. Echecrates breaks in with support for Simmias. This begins reflections on misanthropy and 'misologic'. (The Greek verb *μισέω* [miseô] means 'to hate'.) In your view, what is the central message of this passage (89d–91c)?
- 4.★ Socrates gives three replies to Simmias (91e–95a). Identify them.
- 5.★ Select one reply (previous question): explain and criticise it briefly.
6. The reply to Cebes requires an indirect approach, which Socrates begins with some autobiographical reflections. Briefly explain what he thinks is wrong with Anaxagoras's approach to explanation (96b–100a).

Background. (a) For 'attunement' (85e), the Greek has *ἁρμονία*, i.e. harmony. It can also mean connection, which relates neatly to a contemporary idea that seems closely related to Simmias's objection: *supervenience*. The basic idea is that variation of one kind is linked to variation of another kind: 'There *could* be no difference of one sort without difference of another sort' (David Lewis). Suppose that the aesthetic properties of a painting supervene on its physical features. Hence, if any of its aesthetic properties changes, then one or the other of its physical features changes too. And if any of its aesthetic features change, then its physical features cannot remain the same: a difference in its aesthetic properties excludes sameness in its physical properties. The physical traces on the canvas fix the picture's aesthetic features. (b) Note that the Greek word for 'cause' is *αἰτία*, which also means 'reason' (e.g., 100c). (c) Beginning at 100b, Socrates refines and develops the theory of Forms. Something is *F* (e.g., hot) because of something that is *F* essentially (e.g., fire) (see 102d ff.). Forms are interrelated: some Forms *entail* others (e.g., Three implies Odd; 104d), which yields a hierarchy of Ideas based on logical or conceptual connections; some Forms are *incompatible* ('will not admit', 104b), such Three and Even (in other words, such properties cannot be co-instantiated); and some Forms are *compatible*, e.g., Three and Cold. (d) The *Phaedo* continues with a fourth argument for the soul's immortality based on the soul's essence, which is to confer life to a body. Then, Socrates reflects on the afterlife with a myth. Eventually, he drinks the hemlock and dies. (We discuss these issues in our final meeting.)

¹ *The Last Days of Socrates*, pp. 154–83.

