

# Carl Sagan's Cosmos Episode Seven "Backbone of the Night" - Good Summary of Problems with Plato

Post by "Cassius" of January 24, 2023 at 7:16 PM

Time stamps:

25:00 - Anaximander and evolution (positive)

26:27 - Empedocles discovers air; discussion of "water thief" (positive)

28:36 - Democritus and atoms (positive)

33:30 - Anaxagoras advances in astronomy but was persecuted (positive)

34:13 - Pythagoras "The mystics were beginning to win" - continuity between him and Christianity. Mathematical harmony underlies all of nature - "music of the spheres" - "cosmos means 'ordered.'" Pythagoras said laws of nature deduced by PURE THOUGHT - they were mathematicians and thoroughgoing mystics- the dodecahedron - ordinary people to be kept ignorant of the dodecahedron - they suppressed knowledge of the square root of two as "irrational" Pythagoreans ignored "experiment" (highly negative)

39:07 Plato -- Followed in steps of Pythagoras and extended them - ideas are more real than the natural world - advised ignoring astronomy in favor of thinking - taught contempt for the real world - he and his followers extinguished the light of science and experiment. Unease with the world of the senses and dominated and stifled western philosophy.

40:44 - Pythagoras and Plato "provided an intellectually respectable justification for a corrupt social order."

41:13 - "Plato and Aristotle were comfortable in a slave society. They offered justifications for oppression. They served tyrants. They taught the alienation of the body from the mind - a natural enough idea I suppose in a slave society. They separated thought from matter. They divorced the earth from the heavens. Divisions which were to dominate western thinking for more than 20 centuries. The Pythagoreans had won. ... The books of the Ionian scientists are entirely lost. Their views were suppressed, ridiculed and forgotten by the Platonists and by the Christians who adopted much of the science of Plato.