A Commentary on Plato's *Phaedo*

Dennis K. House

Prologue (57a-59c7)

Phaedo begins with Socrates already dead and buried. What remains is to comprehend his death and final words. Plato internalizes the audience to the dialogue by having the prison conversation reported to a Pythagorean at Phlius which affords Plato the opportunity to give the reader some perspective on how the dialogue is to be understood.[1]

Nothing is revealed about Echecrates in *Phaedo* except that he shares with Simmias and Cebes a common interest in Socrates and holds the same view as Simmias on the nature of the soul.[2] It is mentioned in *Phaedo* that Cebes and Simmias have studied under the Pythagorean Philolaus.[3] The ancient reader of the dialogue would know Echecrates as a pupil of Philolaus.[4] Plato, by having the argument presented to Echecrates, informs the reader that the dialogue may best be understood as addressed to the generation of Pythagoreans who succeeded Philolaus. This will be seen to mean that the argument moves to the *eide* through the positions of Cebes and Simmias who take number and numerical relations for existence itself.

Cebes and Simmias, as Gadamer has shown, are representatives of the scientific enlightenment of the time in which the dialogue is set.[5] The older religious teaching of the Pythagoreans holds little

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1. The only source on Echecrates, apart from Plato, is Diogenes Laertius VIII 46: "τελευταῖοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο τῶν Πυθαγορείων, οὓς καὶ 'Αριστόξενος εἶδε, Ξενόφιλός τε ὁ Χαλκιδεὺς ἀπὸ Θρᾴκης καὶ Φάντων ὁ Φλιάσιος καὶ 'Εχεκράτης καὶ Διοκλῆς καὶ Πολύμναστος, Φλιάσιοι καὶ αὐτοί. ἦσαν δ'ακροαταὶ Φιλολάου καὶ 'Ευρύτου τῶν Ταραντίνων." Phlius would be a reasonable place to present the argument of Phaedo if the audience most directly addressed was composed of the pupils of the Pythagorean Philolaus.

2. Echecrates speaks in *Phaedo* 57a-59c9, 102-a-b, and 88c-89a where he says that his own view of the soul and Simmias' account are the same.

3. *Phaedo* 61d-e.

4. See note 1 and G. S. Kirk and J. F. Raven, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 307-318 for an account of what is known about Philolaus and the Pythagoreans of his time.

5. For a very thorough and fine account of the positions of Simmias and Cebes, see H. Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic* (English trans. by P.C. Smith, New Haven and London, 1969), pp. 22-38. I fully agree with

interest for them. They consider themselves men of science who will not accept anything which is not proven to them. Socrates' task in *Phaedo* is to restore the realm of the divine and sacred by showing it to be intelligible because it has *Nous* as its principle.

The reader, in the circumstances which surround Socrates' prolonged imprisonment, meets with the side of Athenian life which sharply contrasts with the spirit represented by Cebes and Simmias. The normal course of events would have resulted in Socrates' execution promptly after the decision of the court. Athens, however, is involved in offering a sacrifice to Apollo which it has conducted annually since the time of its mythological past. The city has suspended its claim to exercise the power of life and death over its citizens in order to honour its vow to Apollo. The occasion, which was being commemorated, was the rescue of seven youths and seven maidens from the jaws of the Minôtaur. Athens' solemn recognition of Apollo's dispensation, and the winds, which held back the eternal ship from its return from the temple of Apollo, delay Socrates' death. The dialogue takes place when the sacred mission has been completed and the city resumes serving justice to its citizens.[6]

The image of Athens purging itself in solemn recognition of Apollo's intervention into human affairs in order to spare youths from a monster's grasp suggests the side of the argument not represented in the character of Echecrates. The argument of *Phaedo* begins with the question of how the division of human and divine is to be understood. What the ultimate fate of the soul will be is understood to depend on the relation the soul has to the divine. The 'scientific standpoint' must take account of the realm of the divine which the older Pythagoreans represented, if it is to be truly comprehensive and scientific. Socrates is portrayed composing a hymn to Apollo during his stay in prison. He introduces the religious teachings of Pythagoreanism into the argument and gives them a form for thought.

Gadamer's account of Cebes and Simmias as members of a new scientific development but would prefer to leave the question of the direction of their scepticism unresolved. The question, in the end, is whether their scepticism is directed against the dogmatism of older religious belief and of the materialism of their own position or against philosophy as it appears in the last section of *Phaedo* and the older religious conceptions understood by philosophy. Until the *eide* are known, numbers, while not being *eide*, are infused with the nature of *eide* and not understood as mathematical numbers. Cebes and Simmias, in this view, need not be thought far removed from a Platonic standpoint.

6. *Phaedo* 58a10-d.

Preliminary Narrative (59c8-63e5)

The prologue permits the reader to have a glimpse of the general perspective of the argument of the dialogue. Phaedo's preliminary narrative to the dialogue touches more directly upon the question the argument examines.

Phaedo begins his account of the dialogue by remarking on how those present felt during their final meeting with Socrates. Xanthippe, naturally, knew only pain because the death of Socrates for her was the loss of a husband and father to her children. Her relation was to the mortal Socrates and not to the philosopher.[7]

Phaedo, however, says he experienced a strange mixture of pleasure and pain which he found completely paradoxical (ἀτεχνῶς ἄτοπόν).[8] The paradox is Socrates. Phaedo knows that the conversation will end with Socrates' death but it seems to him almost certain that death will not be the death of Socrates. Phaedo is confident that, if anyone is destined to go to Hades under divine dispensation, Socrates' future is secure.[9] Socrates is somehow mortal and immortal.

The attention paid to the disposition of those present and of Socrates serves not only to satisfy general curiosity but also has a further purpose. In *Phaedo* the thesis to be explicated is embraced in Socrates' joyful countenance at the face of death. Those present ask Socrates to show that his confidence is not merely an irrational feeling but an attitude which is secure in the knowledge of the soul's immortality.[10]

The transition from the description of the prison scene to the argument is made by Socrates. When Socrates' leg irons are removed the pain he has been suffering passes over into pleasure. He proposes a fable, on Aesop's behalf, to explain how wonderfully (ὡς θαυμασίως) the contraries (pleasure and pain) are never present in the same man at once but that if you catch one the other necessarily follows.[11] The contraries are first imagined to be separate and independent. As such each seeks the destruction of the other. This is to imagine contraries without a *logos*. God, in Socrates' fable, intervenes to resolve the conflict. Even at the most immediate level — sensation — there is an appearance of the divine *logos*. God, being unable to reconcile the contraries,

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7. *Phaedo* 60a.
8. *Phaedo* 59a.
9. *Phaedo* 58e.
10. *Phaedo* 62c9-63a.
11. *Phaedo* 60b.

fastened them to one head. Thus the contraries lose their apparent independence from each other and are united by a *logos*. Socrates shows here how philosophical reflection begins. What at first seems independent and stable, is seen to be grounded in something else. The sensations, pleasure and pain, as contraries, are an appearance of a self-identical *logos* which is not an object of αἴσθησις but of thought. The transition from sensation to appearance is the transition to the wonder with which philosophy begins.[12] Socrates' detachment and calm resides in his conviction that his sensible particularity is mere externality and appearance and that when death comes and takes his body he will withdraw into his inner self-identity. The sensuous world which surrounds him points to another realm which is not divided against itself.

Cebes is reminded by Socrates' fable that he has been asked by the poet Evenus why Socrates has turned to writing poetry.[13] Socrates' fable is an instance of a larger endeavour on his part to compose poetry during his final days. The command to practise and cultivate μουσική, which he received in his dreams, had always been understood by Socrates to refer to philosophy. It has occurred to him during his last days before departing the world of images that perhaps the command beckons him to write poetry. But Socrates is too much at home in the rational and ideal to be able to mix μῦθος with λόγος. The most he can do is versify Aesop's fables. He concludes his account by telling Cebes to advise Evenus to follow him in death as quickly as possible.[14] Socrates' experience in poetry, one might reasonably conjecture, has suggested to him that the poet is ever struggling to free his creations of their external and contingent character — to turn the image into ideal reality.

Preliminary I (61c-63c7)

Evenus is first spoken of as a poet.[15] Socrates' advice is directed to Evenus on the expressed assumption that he is a philosopher.[16] Socrates uses the terms 'philosopher' and 'philosophy' throughout the discussion of *Phaedo* to designate a definite standpoint. The position which gradually unfolds is the standpoint of Platonic philosophy which has *Nous* and the *eide* as its objects and is able to regard the soul and sensible particulars as taking part in or losing

12. *Theatetus* 155d.
13. *Phaedo* 60c8-d7.
14. *Phaedo* 60c8-61c.
15. *Phaedo* 60d8-e.
16. *Phaedo* 61c6.

part in their *logos*. The present section of the dialogue makes a beginning to the argument by gaining the unsuspecting assent of Cebes and Simmias to the basic logic of the Platonic position. This is most cleverly won by Socrates.

Socrates advances the view that the true philosopher would rather be dead than alive but that it is not lawful (θεμιτόν) to take one's own life to attain this desired state. Cebes, when asked, vaguely recalls that Philolaus stated such a view but he does not know why. The disregard Cebes has for older Pythagoreanism is brought out in this section.[17] Socrates then remarks that it must seem strange to him that it would be unlawful to benefit oneself and to be required to wait upon the service of another. Cebes drops into his Boeotian dialect and confirms Socrates' opinion of him.[18]

Socrates then cites the authority of an allegory, which is probably Pythagorean, in order to explain how it is possible that the servitude and freedom of man is of man to god and not of man to man.[19] Cebes offers his assent to the view that man is a possession and under the care of the gods. He also accepts the conclusion that man's life is not his own to take.[20]

Cebes then proceeds to try to turn the position against Socrates by observing that man should cling to life because by serving the good of his divine masters man, at once, is serving his own good.[21] Cebes finds this view of the gods acceptable because his own end and the divine good are one. Socrates has gained Cebes' agreement to consider the question of the fate of the soul theologically. How best can man participate in the life of the gods?

The theological position which Cebes has taken on seems to him to have the further consequence that human and divine can only come together at the point where the sensible and non-sensible, the natural and the divine, meet. Man, in such a view, can only serve the gods by being in the city and in the body. Socrates must show that death — dying as a sensible individual and dying to the sensuous world — results in reconciliation of self with self and self with the gods.

A common standpoint has been agreed upon. Human life is in the participation of the divine life. This is to be maintained in the

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17. *Phaedo* 61c ff. See Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24 for the positions of Cebes and Simmias in this passage.
18. *Phaedo* 62a.
19. For the origin of this allegory see J. Burnet *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1972), notes 62b, p. 23.
20. *Phaedo* 62b10-c5.
21. *Phaedo* 62c9-e7.

most radical sense because it was agreed to follow from the view that man's life is not his own and that man has no life apart from the divine. The problem is how the division between the divine, natural, and human is to be understood. No doubt, it does not seem unreasonable to Socrates to attend to poetry because myth and philosophy each seek to express the same divine nature. However, myth and philosophy differ in how each represents the divine. Death is understood in *Phaedo* as the separation of soul from its sensuous embodiment and its departure from contingent and particular existence. True myth, when purged of all that is sensuous, particular, and contingent in it, ceases to be myth. Socrates' claim to immortality, in the context of the introduction, is that myth may cease to be but its essential and universal content (philosophy) remains. Soul, which rules body, and the gods, who rule the world, must be known as separate and independent as well as causes.

Socrates justifies his joy in the face of death by saying that he is confident that he will enter the company of other wise and good gods and secondly of men now dead who are better than those who are in the world now.[22] The distinction between the gods here and the gods there must not be understood to mean that there are two sets of gods. The gods are known here through their participation in the world while the other gods are the same gods known in themselves. Socrates is not so certain that he will meet with other men as he is that he will be in the presence of the gods.[23] His uncertainty, no doubt, expresses the problem of the identity of soul after death.

Preliminary II (63a4-70c4)

The last section has set forth in a general way the relation the soul has to what is other than itself. Socrates now defines the inner activity of the soul as being thought. Cebes and Simmias are ready to offer their support to his exposition because the science they pursue also deals with objects which are only present to soul as intellect.

Socrates imagines himself making an apology (ἀπολογία) on behalf of 'the philosopher' in order to show that his attitude follows consistently from the standpoint of philosophy.[24] The latter, as defined in this section of the dialogue, is the standpoint of

22. *Phaedo* 63b4-c.
23. *Phaedo* 63c-c7.
24. *Phaedo* 63b.

thought (διανοία) which has the universal or the *eide* as its object. Socrates merely seeks agreement for the view of the soul he intends later to prove immortal, thus his position is not argued.

The division of body (σῶμα) and soul (ψυχή) is assumed. The further division of αἴσθησις and διανοιά is laid down; Αισθηοις belongs to body and διανοία to soul.[25] The very substance of soul is that it is thinking being.[26] Death is defined as release and separation of soul from body (λύσις καὶ χωρισμοὶ ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος).[27] These distinctions are maintained throughout the course of the dialogue.

How the unhappy marriage of body and soul ever came about in the first place is never explained in the dialogue except in mythical terms as a lapse of the soul. The conflict which comes of the marriage and desire for divorce are amply described.

The 'non philosopher' imprisons himself by taking the sensible to be primary and real. He takes his sensuous nature to be his essential nature. The 'philosopher', in contrast, believes the natural human condition is the liberated soul which determines itself by φρόνησις.[28] However, the individual is not born into that blessed condition, nor does the 'philosopher' while embodied perfectly attain to the condition he desires.[29] Hence the philosopher seeks to purge himself as much as possible of his sensuous nature by turning away from the objects of αἴσθησις to the objects of διανοία. The soul of the philosopher seeks to become alone by itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν) in order that, with pure intellect (εἰλικκινεῖ τῇ διανοία), it may apprehend pure beings (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ εἰλορινὲς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων).[30] The perfect and complete purgation for the philosopher is death.[31]

The final step (68b8-69e5) in this section shows that what unites and orders the soul (ἀρετή) is not to be found in the sensuous nature of man nor in the endless particularity of the sensible but in the universal as φρόνησις.

Socrates argues that the lover of the body limits his manifold desires by picking certain desires and excluding others. The measure determining which desires are to be regarded as ends is arbitrary subjective preference. The limit the subject imposes upon

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25. *Phaedo* 66a ff.
26. *Phaedo* 65e5 ff.
27. *Phaedo* 67d4.
28. *Phaedo* 69a5-d.
29. *Phaedo* 66b-67b3.
30. *Phaedo* 66a1-3.
31. *Phaedo* 67a-b.

himself to attain the ends is utility. Temperance, in such a view, is really calculated self-indulgence; courage is calculated fear. Socrates concludes that this attitude is irrational (ἄλογος) and provides no basis for morality. Its irrationality is revealed in the fact that the limit the individual places on his desires has no relation to virtue or vice, and can be described by either or neither indifferently.[32]

The philosopher, in contrast, measures himself by φρόνησις which is virtue itself. Virtue and wisdom are spoken of as a sort of purgation (κάθαρσίς τις) of the passions and desires.[33] The purgation must be understood as a purgation of the hold the sensuous nature of man has on the soul when it confuses the soul into regarding the objects of desire as primary and independent. The philosopher who has purged himself is prepared for death because he knows the ideal to be the real.

Cebes says that he accepts everything in Socrates' account except that he fears the soul may dissipate like smoke when separated from the body. He requires proof of the immortality of the soul.

First Proof of Immortality (70c4-77d5)

The argument from the cyclic character of nature and the recollection argument are said by Socrates to combine as one argument. It is reasonable, therefore, to regard them as steps in one argument.

a) Argument from Becoming (γένεσις).

The last argument on virtue has shown that the universal as φρόνησις unites and orders the soul; the sensuous nature of man must be subordinated and determined by the universal if soul is to preserve its integrity. The argument from Becoming considers how Nature is able to contain its process within a limit such that Nature itself remains imperishable or self-identical.

Socrates recalls an ancient myth to the effect that the living come from the dead and the dead from the living. Dying and being born are here conceived of as moments in one unified continuity. The contraries, life and death, are aspects of one process. The mythical individual unites his births and deaths, his being here and being in Hades in one life.[34] Socrates' earlier reflection that the contraries,

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32. *Phaedo* 68b8-69b.
33. *Phaedo* 69c.
34. *Phaedo* 70c4.

pleasure and pain, are not separate and independent but united as grounded in something else, is the determination he intends to establish here.[35]

Socrates proposes they consider the whole realm of Becoming in order that Cebes may learn more easily.[36] Examples are cited and the principle is laid down that "everything which has a contrary is generated from that contrary and from no other source".[37] The principle is then applied to man (sensible individual) and it is concluded that the living come from the dead no less than the dead come from the living.

Socrates then further interprets the principle which may be explained as follows.[38] If nature were not cyclic — a process of becoming between two contraries — but were the straight process from one contrary into another, two consequences would follow. Becoming and change would be abolished because once the contrary thing passed over into its contrary it would no longer be or not-be the contrary thing it formerly was. It would not change because it would simply be something or nothing without any relation to what is other than it. A thing becomes because it is a contrary thing. The second consequence follows from this. Namely, Anaxagoras' proposition 'all things together' would result because the thing which has passed over into its contrary would then be 'something' which no longer has contrariety or difference from anything else.

The law, which Socrates lays down, excludes any other source of Becoming for things which have contraries than from their contraries. This rules out the proposition that the living come from the living or the dead from the dead; or, generally, that beings (something) comes from beings (something) and not-beings (nothing) from not-beings (nothing). The object of Becoming becomes because it is not simply a unit or relation of units but is related to what is other than itself as being itself.

It is useful, perhaps, to anticipate the flaw which Socrates brings out in Simmias' standpoint in order to indicate the direction in which the argument is moving. Simmias will be seen not to be able to distinguish between having a quality and being a quality, or between a subject and the qualities or predicates of the subject. The logic which enables Socrates to speak of Becoming as a process between pairs of contraries in which the thing which changes

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35. *Phaedo* 60b-c.
36. *Phaedo* 70d7-9.
37. *Phaedo* 70e4-6.
38. *Phaedo* 72a11-e.

remains somehow self-identical is beyond the grasp of the Pythagoreans in *Phaedo.* The reader, who regards this argument from Echecrates' point of view, will recognize that Socrates is not lost in a monologue of his own but intends to bring out the weakness in his friends' positions before presenting a complete account of Becoming.

Socrates is considering nature as a whole in relation to things which become. Man, in the argument, is treated as merely an instance of the class of objects of Becoming.[39] If man's immortality is proven here so also is that of all the objects of Becoming. The peculiar nature of the soul is not a part of the proof. The argument, of course, is absurd if its purpose is to prove the immortality of sensible particulars or individuals' souls.

However, if the proof is understood to show that which it does show it makes perfect sense in the context of the next argument. Socrates argues that Becoming itself is imperishable because it unites its contraries as moments in its cyclic process. This, in the myth, was spoken of as the endless procession of the 'mythical individual' from here to Hades and back. The 'mythical individual' remains self-identical through all his lives and deaths. The object of Becoming, however, is the subject for the succession of the contraries. It comes to be, persists, and ceases to be. The object of Becoming, in the later language of the dialogue, perishes because it can never become its *eidos;* it is not what it is and so it passes away.

The next argument treats the soul in relation to its possessing 'absolutes', losing them through forgetting, and coming to re-possess them through recollection. Soul, as intelligence, is considered under the category of Becoming, or Life.

b) Argument from recollection (ἀνάμνησις) (72e3-77a5).

Cebes mentions that Socrates has often argued that learning (μάθησις) is recollection (ἀνάμνησις). Socrates' interest in the doctrine is not to expound it here as another bit of proof for the immortality of the soul, as Cebes would have him do, but rather to introduce it as a necessary step in a larger argument.[40]

The conclusion that the soul existed prior to its embodiment is derived from the fact that the soul has a content — 'absolutes' (τὸ αὐτο ὃ ἔστι) — which is not attainable through αἴσθησις.[41] The objects of αἴσθησις, according to Socrates, differ from 'absolutes' in

39. *Phaedo* 71a8-72a8.
40. *Phaedo* 72e3-73b2.
41. *Phaedo* 75c.

that the former may appear differently to different people while the latter cannot.[42] 'Absolutes', in other words, are universals and as such are either grasped or not grasped. They are what they are and nothing else. Such a content belongs to thought and thought alone. The conclusion is drawn that because the soul could not have obtained a knowledge of 'absolutes' through sense experience it must have existed prior to its embodiment.

The recollection argument is a myth which expresses in itself the transition out of mythological conception to philosophical conception. Consider how the terms 'birth' and 'death' apply to soul in the recollection argument. The soul, before the sensible individual is born, is in the fullness of its life, since its life is contemplating what truly is. 'Death', for the soul, is forgetting what it knows which corresponds to the moment of 'birth' for the individual. However, 'death' as forgetting is a mere beginning point for the soul and not its end as it is for the individual. The 'death' of the sensible individual corresponds to the moment of 'birth' for the soul. The soul lives before the 'death' of the sensible individual which corresponds to the 'birth' of the soul. The life of the soul is to return back to its condition at 'birth'.

It is appropriate to speak of beginning and end for the sensible individual as 'birth' and 'death' because it is not, and then it is, and then it is not. The soul, as characterized in the recollection argument, is analogous to the 'mythical individual' spoken of in the last argument, who unites his 'births' and 'deaths' in one life. The soul's beginning is its end and its end is its beginning; its life is becoming what it already is.

What is forgotten must be present to the soul not simply as forgotten if it is to be recalled. Socrates speaks of the objects of αἴσθησις, in the argument, as stretching out or grasping at (ὀρέγεται) and as desiring (προθυμεῖται) to be the 'absolutes' but falling short.[43] What the soul has forgotten, in some sense, is present to it in the sensible.[44] The sensible provides a beginning

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42. *Phaedo* 74b-c.
43. *Phaedo* 75b and 75b7.
44. The question of how sensible particulars cause the soul to recollect 'absolutes' has received nearly as much attention as any questions in *Phaedo,* Rather than attempt to treat it in this paper I will assume that sensible particulars, whether similar or dissimilar to 'absolutes', remind the soul of 'absolutes', *Phaedo* 74c-e. For detailed discussions of the relevant passages on this question see R. P. Haynes, "The form equality, as a set of equals: *Phaedo* 74b-c", *Phronesis,* 9 (1964), pp. 17-26; J.M. Rist, "Equals and intermediates in Plato", *Phronesis,* 9 (1964), pp. 27-37, new series 4 (1964), pp. 16-22; M. V. Wedin, "αὐτὰ τὰ ἴσα and the argument at

point for the soul to turn inward and grasp what the sensible is grasping at. The soul in knowing the 'absolutes' would be at once knowing the truth of the sensible. In this sense, it is viewed as being comprehensive of the sensible and the ideal.

Coming to know what is present but forgotten is γένεσις as the activity of becoming self-conscious. The soul's contraries, as intellect, here appear as the forgotten or unconscious knowledge and the recollected or self-conscious knowledge. The process between the contraries is learning.

The recollection argument does not secure the soul's immortality because its prior existence merely reveals that the soul does not simply exist through the body but that it has a being and content of its own. If the soul, as self-related, is not merely to be the subject of its own becoming, it must actually become (come to know) and be (if it is possible) what it has forgotten or is ideally. Hence Socrates' demand that one's devotion to philosophy be uncompromising. The next section treats the question of the soul's affinity to the *eide*. The soul's possible immortality and the condition of its mortality is to be understood through its relation to *eidos*.

c) Combining the argument from γένεσις with the argument from ἀνάμνησις (77a6-77d5).

Cebes and Simmias, at the end of the last proof, comment that Socrates has only provided half the proof. The soul exists prior to birth but what about after death?[45] Socrates responds to their question first by saying "if the soul exists prior to birth, and if it goes toward life and is born, it is necessary for it to be born nowhere else than from death or the dead state (τεθνάναι)".[46] The conclusion, that being born from a prior existence is being born from the dead or the dead state, is necessary if one holds fast to the pictorial image of the soul existing somewhere and then coming here. The former argument showed that the living come from the dead and the dead from the living. The recollection argument shows the soul as an instance of that proposition. The sense in which this is to be understood has already been indicated.

The argument leaves Cebes and Simmias dissatisfied and

Phaedo 74b7-c5", *Phronesis*, 22 (1977), pp. 191-205: D. Tarrant, "*Phaedo* 74a-b", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 76-77 (1956-57), pp. 124-126; K. W. Mills, "Plato's *Phaedo* 74b7-c6, Part 2", *Phronesis*, 3 (1958), pp. 40-58; K. W. Mills, "Plato's *Phaedo*, 74b7-c6", *Phronesis*, 2 (1957), pp. 128-147.

45. *Phaedo* 76e7-77c5.

46. *Phaedo* 77c6-d2.

Socrates recognizes the need for further proof.[47] A problem in the argument thusfar is that it is dependent upon analogy and experience. Socrates in the next section introduces Cebes and Simmias to the true Hades (εἰς Ἅιδου ὡς ἀληθῶς) where the pure and invisible soul is at home in a pure and invisible world. The soul must be thoroughly distinguished from body and what is foreign to it and must be investigated in its own terms if satisfactory proof is to be attained. The last proof is the first step in a series of preliminary stages leading towards the final proof. The function of the next section is to characterize soul in relation to its objects.

Argument from Affinity (78b4-84b8)

Socrates, in this section, offers a proof by 'affinity' rather than demonstration. It will suffice for the purpose of the present paper to indicate briefly the nature of soul as it is revealed in Socrates' splendid characterization.[48]

Soul encounters a cosmos constituted of the sensuous and non-sensuous, sensible and intelligible, composite and simple, particular and universal, mutable and immutable, self determining and determined.[49] Soul is able to sink into the confused realm of sensuous being and become itself in flux and division.[50] Or, it may know the sensible as mere image or the otherness of pure *eide* and turn from the divided to the undivided and return into its own primary unity in thinking such objects.[51] Man can become ape-like or god-like. Whatever soul becomes it becomes by its own active desire. If philosophy takes over soul it leads soul out of the prison which soul has made for itself by gently revealing the structure to be constructed of images and opinions which are half-lies. Finally, philosophy teaches soul to secure its immunity from desires by following reason and abiding always in her company in the contemplation of the divine and true and unconjecturable. Soul, at this point, needs no longer fear death because its life is in thought.[52]

Socrates, in this account, brings out the nature of soul as not itself an *eidos* but *eidos*-like. Soul is able to rule over its desires and

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47. See Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.
48. For an excellent account of this section of the dialogue see J. N. Findlay, *Plato: The Written and Un-Written Doctrines,* (London, 1974), pp. 135-137.
49. *Phaedo* 78b-80b7.
50. *Phaedo* 81b-82c9.
51. *Phaedo* 82d-84b9.
52. *Phaedo* 82e-84b9.

passions in a similar manner to the dominion the *eide* have over 'the many'. Soul also is able to take on the *eide* as its content and be at home in the universal. The knowledge of the *eide* is at once a knowledge of the truth of the sensible which reveals that the soul is comprehensive of the totality.

Narrative Interlude (84c1-85b9)

The last proof is not conclusive because soul has only been shown to be more like (ὁμοιότερον) the imperishable than the perishable. Simmias and Cebes are reluctant to press the argument further lest they overthrow Socrates' position, and thereby, shatter his confidence.[53] Certainty (τὸ σαφὲς εἰδέναι), in respect to the questions of concern here, appears to Simmias to be unattainable for human reason (τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων).[54] He recognizes, however, that certainty would be more secure if it were possible to ground one's standpoint in divine reason (λόγου θείου τινός).[55] Socrates had previously commented that he considered himself to be a servant of Apollo endowed with prophetic powers.[56] Simmias' recognition of the need for divine reason anticipates the course towards which Socrates will guide (and has been guiding) the argument. The final section of the argument asserts that *Nous* is the first principle and cause of all things. Ideas which are intelligible in themselves, unlike numbers, will be seen to be the basis of science.

When Cebes' and Simmias' objections have been presented, those gathered around Socrates, who were previously convinced of his position, now find themselves at a loss as to what to believe.[57] Phaedo first comments on the humanity displayed by Socrates in attending to the despair suffered by his friends.[58] Socrates then proceeds to give an account of the cause and danger of misology and misanthrophy. It will suffice to say that Socrates' concern here is to indicate that the philosopher is moved by a love and unyielding confidence in reason and truth.[59] The sophistic art of setting one argument against another and displaying the nullity

53. *Phaedo* 84d4-d7.
54. *Phaedo* 85c3.
55. *Phaedo* 85d2.
56. *Phaedo* 85b.
57. *Phaedo* 88c1-7.
58. *Phaedo* 89a-d.
59. *Phaedo* 90d9-91b.

of all that is believed to be stable and objective is a destructive technique which has as its end self admiration.[60] Despair of reason has its source in the individual's unwillingness to accept his own incapacity. He therefore declares reason itself the enemy. Such an attitude leads to the poverty of a life spent loathing reason.[61] Socrates knows that the older religious piety which has been lost to the new scientific spirit carries with it grave dangers. Reason caused the breakdown in older belief and only a complete confidence in reason can restore the sacred and divine for these children of enlightenment. *Phaedo* (96-102) discloses the nature of sophistic reason and how it is to be avoided.

Simmias' criticism requires some explanation if Socrates' response to it is to be understood. The body, according to Simmias, is compounded out of extremes or contraries (hot and cold, wet and dry, and such like). Soul is the 'blending' (κρᾶσις) and 'attunement' (ἁρμονία) of these elements.[62] Simmias assumes that the sensible individual — the composite of body and soul — is primary. Body and soul are aspects of one object. However, body is prior to soul because the unity which is soul is merely the integrity of the corporeal elements. The tension which unites the extremes may vary in degree and still be considered an 'attunement'. A certain degree of slackness results in sickness and a greater degree in death. There is a curious point when the 'attunement' has ceased to be but the body remains somehow still sufficiently attuned to be called a body. Finally, the contraries cease to be contraries altogether and the body returns back into its elements (decomposition).[63]

The sensible individual, therefore, is a 'ratio' of body (as elements which are not united as contraries) to soul (as the elements related as contraries). Pure body would be unconnected elements or atoms. Pure soul would be the identity of the elements as contraries. It is possible to speak of the sensible individual as a certain 'ratio' or numerical relation of body and soul if the terms are defined as above. Simmias would be forced to speak of degrees of soul. Soul, in this account, is nothing apart from body. Abstract understanding is able to posit the distinction of body and soul and then proceed to explain how they are one thing by a sort of mathematical cook book reason.

Socrates' first response to Simmias' criticism is instructive. He

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60. *Phaedo* 90c.
61. *Phaedo* 91d.
62. *Phaedo* 86b7.
63. *Phaedo* 86b7-d4.

says that Simmias has been following the argument not at all badly.[64] This must be understood to mean that Simmias' definition of soul follows from a certain understanding of what has been said. An 'attunement' is a simple like the *eide* and like soul in the former characterization. Further, an 'attunement' is said, by Simmias, to unite the diverse which makes it a universal. A definition which defines soul as a simple which is a unity of the diverse, no doubt, would seem to Socrates to require further determination to distinguish it from universals generally, but would not be objectionable. The problem in Simmias' account of soul is that precisely the character which he seeks to assign to soul his definition denies to soul. Namely, an 'attunement', as he understands it, is a barren word which at most is descriptive since it signifies the unity which body possesses but does not designate the cause of the unity.

Simmias and Cebes differ from older Pythagoreans in the direction and aim of their speculations.[65] However, older and contemporary Pythagoreanism may be viewed as the same so far as both explain things in terms of numbers and numerical relations. Socrates' response to Simmias' objection goes beyond merely refuting his definition to the very foundation of Pythagoreanism. Namely, he brings out the inadequacy of explaining things in terms of numerical relation.

Socrates begins his response to Simmias' criticism by recalling the recollection argument which asserts that soul exists prior to its embodiment. The definition of soul as an 'attunement' makes soul posterior. Simmias surrenders his position without a struggle.[66] He says that the recollection argument is derived from the hypothesis that 'absolutes' exist and that the soul possesses them. He cannot afford to oppose this and still hope to have a basis for science. Simmias earlier had accepted the recollection argument for the same reason he does here but now he is forced to realize that its acceptance involves abandoning his own position. Simmias, from this point on in the dialogue, ceases to be a force in the argument and becomes a listener who is prepared to agree with Socrates in order to learn from him. The priority of soul to body has the implication that the ideal exists independently of the real. Simmias had taken 'absolutes' as the ideal structure and order of things which is the real, immediately and inseparably. The uncertainty of thought and need to have recourse to analogy arose because

64. *Phaedo* 86d4-e.
65. See Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.
66. *Phaedo* 91e-92.

thinking, as he understood it, deals is non-sensuous abstractions which are the very being of the sensible.

Socrates pursues his criticism further. Gadamer has correctly pointed out that Socrates' criticism of Simmias' position brings out the distinction between being a harmony and having a harmony.[67] Soul, according to Simmias' account, is a harmony. Therefore, it is merely a consequence of the elements which constitute body and cannot be in conflict with them since it is the harmony of them. Harmony and what is harmonized are inseparable.

According to the way in which Simmias spoke, soul would admit of degree.[68] Soul, Simmias now concedes, cannot be more or less soul. No doubt, he now sees that soul, as he conceived it, was a quality of body and qualities admit of degree. But now that soul has been shown not to be a quality but an οὐσία he must deny his former position. It is then pointed out that soul can be predicated of contraries (qualities). This is impossible if soul itself is a quality. Moreover, soul does not become more or less soul as a result of being predicated of badness or ignorance. The latter are understood as discord. The problem is that soul, in Simmias' definition, would be predicated of its contrary and would, therefore, no longer be. Soul is able to be predicated of contraries because it does not itself have a contrary.

The problem in attempting to explain things in terms of numbers and numerical relations (ratios, harmonies, and such like) is that the units one deals in do not in themselves admit of the distinction of being and not-being or self-relatedness and otherness. The final section of the argument will show how a thing and its contraries or qualities can be distinguished in such a way that it is possible to explain Becoming. Cebes and Simmias must be shown a way beyond the law that contraries do not combine, if they are to have a science which can explain Becoming and grasp the imperishable.

Three statements which come out of Socrates' refutation should be noted:

1. The recollection argument here is used to establish that the soul exists in and by itself against the view that it is a function of body. However, the recollection argument also says that soul uses the instrumentality of body as its beginning point and in that sense needs body.

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67. *Phaedo* 92c8-e2.
68. *Phaedo* 93a-b. For a discussion and clarification of the text see W.F. Hicken, "*Phaedo* 93a11-94b3", *Classical Quarterly*, new series 4 (1954), pp. 16-22.

2. Soul does not follow the lead of its bodily elements but has dominion over them. Soul is self determining. Soul, as intelligence, exists for itself since it determines itself in relation to the 'absolutes' which belong to soul as its true content.

3. Soul may be predicated of contraries without being more or less soul as a result. This capacity reveals that soul itself does not have a contrary such as 'attunement' or qualities do.

Response to Cebes' Objection (95a4-c6)

The remainder of the argument is a response to Cebes' objection. Cebes is prepared to concede to soul its wonderful nature — that it exists in and for itself and is able to determine itself like an universal ruling over the particular. Cebes' objection is that the soul, however *eidetic* it may be, is not an *eidos* but an instantiation. How can soul put on the garment of finitude and mortality without itself taking on its nature? Soul in body is in a struggle with what is alien and foreign to it.[69]

Socrates does not attempt to address Cebes' problem directly because nothing short of a total explanation of the cause of generation and destruction (περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς τὴν αἰτίαν) is required.[70] Why such an account is necessary has already been seen.[71] The question Cebes raises is concerned with how the participant and participated are sustained in their unity by *Nous*. Soul must be examined within the context of these three hypotheses.

The Origin of the Second-Best Course (δεύτερος πλοῦς) *of Inquiry* (95e7-102a2)

Socrates, in response to Cebes' objection, proposes to report on his own experience in seeking an answer to the cause of becoming and perishing of things.[72] The account is given the form of a personal report because it allows the possibility for setting down hypotheses which he adopts, without requiring the more difficult demonstration of the elements assumed in the hypotheses. Plato, one might say, allows the argument to proceed with the qualification that certain assumptions in the argument must be treated elsewhere. *Parmenides* treats this matter.

Socrates begins by describing how he took up the study of

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69. *Phaedo* 86e6-88b9.
70. *Phaedo* 95e7-96a4.
71. See p. 56.
72. *Phaedo* 95e7 ff.

natural science with the highest expectations of finding out what the causes for each thing's becoming and persisting are. He met with total disappointment both as regards material causes and arithmetic explanations. Why he rejected such explanations became clear to Socrates once he had discovered the kinds of causes he found adequate.[73] The reader of the dialogue must wait until the next section of the dialogue for an explanation, so it seems reasonable to delay comment until that point is reached in the argument.[74]

Socrates goes on to describe how out of despair there came hope. Someone read to him from a book by Anaxagoras that *Nous* is what orders and is the cause of all things (νοῦς ἐστιν ὁ διακοσμῶν τε καὶ πάντων αἴτιος).[75] In *Nous* Socrates found the pregnant notion he sought. He straightway translated *Nous* into the Good both as the origin or beginning and as the end of all things.

> "There is nothing else for man to consider with regard to himself and to other things than the Best and Good (τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον), although this will necessarily involve knowing what is inferior since it is the same knowledge."[76]

Nous is the comprehensive cause which is prior to any particular activity, either in nature or in the soul, which grounds them. In thought, and not in nature considered apart from thought, the cause of the becoming, continuing to be, and persisting of all things is to be found.

Socrates obtained Anaxagoras' books hoping that he would find how *Nous* is effectively the total cause of Becoming. He expected Anaxagoras would generate the cosmos from *Nous* explaining that it is best and rationally necessary that the heavenly bodies and each phenomenon in turn be of such and such a nature and arranged in such and such a way.[77] The knowledge Socrates sought would explain how *Nous* is cause both as that from which all things are derived and determined, and as that to which all things are returning. In other words, Socrates hoped to discover how *Nous* is implicitly and explicitly the determined end of all the objects of nature.

Socrates then proceeds to explain his disappointment when he found that Anaxagoras did not apply *Nous* as cause to reality but,

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73. *Phaedo* 96a5-97b7.
74. See pp. 58-60.
75. *Phaedo* 97c2.
76. *Phaedo* 97d2-4.
77. *Phaedo* 97d5-98b6.

instead, tried to account for natural phenomena through accessory causes or conditions (συναίτια). Socrates illustrates the problem by pointing to his own circumstances. He takes conscious reality, in which the self-conscious subject wills his own end, as exemplary of all reality. The distinction between the relation a self-conscious individual has to the Good and nature's relation to the Good is not made. Anaxagoras, according to Socrates, would say that *Nous* is the cause of everything which Socrates does but would nevertheless explain his particular actions physiologically and physically.[78]

He concludes his comments on Anaxagoras by expressing the defect in the position of all the physicists whom he has encountered. The distinction between what the cause of something is and the condition without which it could not be a cause (ἐκεῖνο ἄνευ οὗ τὸ ἄἴτιον οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἔιη αἴτιον), according to Socrates, was not made by Anaxagoras.[79] Those who take the latter to be causes (the physicists Socrates first encountered) are described as groping in the dark.[80] The conditions without which there cannot be a cause, in Socrates' view, must be included in a total account as instrumental to the operation of *Nous*. The relation of soul as intelligence and body as instrumental for soul has been expressed in the argument. *Nous*, in the present argument, is comprehensive of the totality so it must extend itself to include every particle in its operation. If the 'conditions' (συναίτια) are taken apart from the operation of *Nous* they cease to have any significance for thought. The physicists, and night-gropers generally, who consider the 'conditions' alone as causes, are without any measure to determine anything. Their hope is that they will accidentally happen upon an all-sustaining Atlas to prop up the universe.

Socrates concludes the account of his own experience in seeking causes by saying that, although it had become apparent to him how the highest form of investigation ought to proceed, neither he himself nor anyone he could find was able to carry out the inquiry.[81] He expresses the difficulty of investigating the Good itself by the image of the sun which blinds the eye which directly gazes on it.[82] To gaze, so to speak, on the Good itself would be to know oneself as having no independent ground apart from the Good which would destroy oneself as an independent thinking subject.

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78. *Phaedo* 98b7-99a.
79. *Phaedo* 99b2-4.
80. *Phaedo* 99b5.
81. *Phaedo* 99c6-d2.
82. *Phaedo* 99d4-e.

It is possible to expand Socrates' account of his second-best method without departing from what he says. This second-best course (δεύτερος πλοῦς) must explain the becoming and persisting of things as caused by *Nous*.[83] There is no taking flight from *Nous* to some alternative which would not make Socrates subject to his own criticism of Anaxagoras. The object of investigation must be *Nous* since it is the only adequate cause. The problem for Socrates was to find a way of investigating *Nous* indirectly. Socrates lays down his hypotheses: *Nous, eide,* and 'the many' as participants. The problem is solved by viewing the *eide* as expressing the relation of *Nous* to 'the many'. 'The many', if one can imagine them apart from *Nous,* as the physicists understood them, are altogether indeterminate and unintelligible (without *Nous). Nous,* in Socrates' second-best course, is investigated indirectly as the self-identical or *eide* in the indeterminate many. The *eide* and 'the many' must be seen as sustained in the relation of participant and participated by *Nous* if the *eide* are to be considered causes of becoming and not simply separate entities. The participant is other than the participated while at the same time it is the participated as the becoming of its *eidos.* The becoming and ceasing to be of a thing is explained as its taking or losing part in its *eidos.*

Socrates' second-best course takes the following form: *Nous, eide,* and participants are laid down as a beginning point to investigation. Any method of explanation which does not follow from these assumptions is rejected. Socrates explains why. To say a given object is beautiful because it has a certain shape or colour or some other attribute,[84] or, to say that ten is more than eight by two,[85] or, that addition, subtraction and such like are causes for something coming to be,[86] must be rejected as forms of explanation and rejected for the same reason. Namely, the connection between the cause and the caused is unintelligible. The division between what is to be connected is presupposed and their connection is made by a process external to what is to be connected. What connects this or that shape with the beautiful in the object is the

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83. the interpretations of Socrates' use of ὑποθέσις are abundant. The following proved the most useful for the present paper: Gadamer, *op. cit.,* pp. 33-34; Findlay, *op. cit.,* pp. 140-141; R. S. Bluck, "ὑποθέσις in the *Phaedo* and Platonic dialectic", *Phronesis,* 2 (1957), pp. 21-31; S. T. Bedu-Addo, "The role of the hypothetical method in the *Phaedo*", *Phronesis,* 24 (1979), pp. 111-132.
84. *Phaedo* 100c9-e2.
85. *Phaedo* 100e5-101b7.
86. *Phaedo* 101b9-102a.

perceiving subject. There is nothing in numbers themselves which accounts for them coming together and falling apart. The logic by which addition and such like is accomplished is a possession of the arithmetician and not his units. The assumption underlying these ways of accounting for things — the separation of thinking or *eide* and object — destroys the power of reason. The relation of participant to participated must be maintained as a hard and fixed beginning point if reason is to be preserved as more than a subjective activity.

Socrates is able to explain how sophistic reasoning arises because he knows *eidos* as separated and distinguished from what participates in *eidos*. 'The many' which participate in an *eidos* at once are images of what they participate in and are like *eidos* but they are also not their *eidos* and both differ from their *eidos* and from each other. Sophistic reason takes the participants, which are the appearances of the self-identical as divided against itself, for their object and brings image against image.[87] Socrates' course of inquiry considers only the *eide* and 'the many' so far as they are known as participating in their appropriate *eide*. An *eidos* is hypothesized and examined to determine what springs out of it (τὰ απ' ἐκείνης ὁρμηθέντα).[88] The hypothesized *eidos* is purged of the difference or not-being in it, which is not difference or not-being in the *eidos* itself. Once the pure *eide* are attained they must again be viewed as hypothesized and examined in relation to their being and not-being or difference from other *eide*. The higher *eide* is one which contains the being and not-being of different *eide* in itself. The movement to something sufficient (τι ἱκανον) is the movement to what grounds the *eide* in their identity and difference — *Nous*.[89]

The above account of Socrates' second-best course of inquiry is proven by the fact that he follows it in detail in his proof of the immortality of the soul.

Proof of the Immortality of Soul (102b-107b3)[90]

a) First Hypothesis:
Contraries or qualities (102b-103c8).

The first step in the argument lays down the rule that contraries do not combine. The rule is not proven but taken as self-evident.

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87. *Phaedo* 101d4.
88. *Phaedo* 101d2-5.
89. *Phaedo* 102b-103a4.
90. B. Frege, "The final proof of immortality of the soul in Plato's *Phaedo* 102a-107a", *Phronesis*, 23 (1978), pp. 27-41 offers a defence of Plato's

The concern here is to make certain distinctions clear which are necessary to the next stage in the argument. The statement — 'Simmias is taller than Socrates but shorter then Phaedo' — is interpreted to mean that there is present in Simmias 'shortness' and 'tallness'. The distinction is then made between the subject and its predicates or qualities. It is possible in this particular instance to abstract the predicates (short and tall) from the subject of the predicates and treat them as universals or logical contraries. Simmias is Simmias whether he is 'short' or 'tall'. These qualities or contraries, in other words, are not contraries in the *eidos* which defines Simmias. Contraries cannot combine either when considered by themselves or in a participant.[91]

Someone, who has been attentive to the whole argument, recalls that Socrates had maintained that contraries do combine when Becoming was considered. Socrates explains that before he was saying that contrary things come from contrary things (ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου πράγματος τὸ ἐναντίον πρᾶγμα γίγνεσθαι) but that now he is speaking of the contrary itself (αὐτὸ ἐναντίον).[92] It is necessary to preserve the former position if he is to explain Becoming as 'participation' of *eide*. The object of Becoming, at the same time, must be like and unlike, be and not-be, the *eidos* it participates in. Socrates says that neither the contrary which is in us (ἐν ἡμῖν) nor the contrary in nature (ἐν τῇ φύσει) can become its contrary. The subject knowing the object of Becoming, however, sees it in two relations — in its difference and identity with its *eidos*. The object itself is not able to unite its contraries but is the subject for the succession of one contrary into the other. It was necessary to introduce an unnamed contributor to the argument because neither Simmias nor Cebes could make such a contribution.[93] This has already been seen when Simmias' position was discussed.[94]

b) Second Hypothesis:
Species and members of species (103c8-105b3).

Next, objects which are predicated of an essential attribute are

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argument against contemporary critics. See esp. G. Vlastos, "A note on 'Pauline Predications' in Plato", *Phronesis*, 19 (1974), pp. 95-101; D. Keydt, "The fallacies in *Phaedo* 102a-107b", *Phronesis*, 8 (1963), pp. 167-172; E. Hartman, "Predication and immortality in Plato's *Phaedo*", *Archiv f. Geschichte d. Philosophie*, 54 (1972), pp. 215-228.

91. *Phaedo* 102d5-103a2.
92. *Phaedo* 103a4-c4.
93. See Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
94. See pp. 55, 56.

considered. Heat and cold may be considered as logical contraries or *eide* which exist independently as separate *eide*. However, these contraries also exist as contraries in *eide*. The *eidos* fire has as an essential quality the contrary 'heat'; the many fires, which participate in the *eidos* fire, do likewise. The *eidos* fire and its participants will not admit the contrary to their essential quality 'heat'. The rule that contraries do not combine, therefore, applies to *eide*, which are not themselves contraries but which possess a contrary as an essential quality, and to participants who are defined by such *eide*.

c) Third and Sufficient Hypothesis:
Genus and Species (105b5-c7).[95]

Socrates says that the safest answer to the question 'what must be present in the body to make it hot?' would be heat, but that he, as a result of the argument, has discovered another answer to such a question — 'fire'. This final step allows for the distinction between soul and life while maintaining soul as essentially related to life, as a species is related to its genus.

d) The Hypotheses.

Socrates has followed his proposed course of inquiry to the letter. He began by considering contraries in relation to the example of Simmias' height. The sophistic way of inquiry would show Simmias to be both tall and short. Socrates' method begins by distinguishing *eide* from what does not belong to them as *eide*. Hence the first hypothesis is reached by distinguishing the *eide* from what participates in them. The first hypothesis — logical contraries as independent *eide* — is examined. Contraries are seen to be present in *eide*. Thus the second hypothesis takes up the first in the determination of the generic individual. Finally, the third hypothesis takes up the first two. The generic individual belongs to a genus which contains all such generic individuals. How the differentia within the genus is to be understood is left by Socrates to be investigated by his friends. His second-best course of inquiry has been revealed so that they ought to know how to proceed.

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95. For a useful discussion of this passage see P. Shorey, *Classical Philology*, XIX (1924), pp. 1-19; W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, (Oxford, 1951), pp. 32-34.

e) Formal Proof (105c7-107b3).

It is concluded from the premise that soul must be present in the body to make it alive, that life always accompanies soul. Life will not admit its contrary death. The life which always accompanies soul will not admit death. Soul, it follows, will not admit death, and therefore, is immortal.

Socrates sets out to prove the soul immortal and that apparently is the conclusion the argument reaches. The conclusion itself, Socrates goes on to point out, still needs to be further interpreted. Is the 'immortal' also 'indestructible' (ἀνώλεθρος)? It is said that if what is immortal is also indestructible it is impossible that soul should cease to be at death. Does it necessarily follow from the conclusion that the soul possesses life and does not admit the contrary death, that it cannot cease to be? That the immortal is indestructible is sought as a conclusion to be conceded. Socrates recognizes that the final problem is not adequately resolved. He says that if it is not conceded another argument would be required. No one present demands such a demonstration.

Socrates speculates further on what the conclusion of the argument means. God, and the *eidos* itself of 'Life', he concludes, if anything is immortal, these of all things can never cease to exist. This requires some explanation.

The final problem arose because Socrates wondered whether the immortal is indestructible. The 'mythical individual', spoken of earlier in the dialogue, united his lives and deaths in one life. Nature itself was shown to be imperishable because it unites its contraries in its cyclic process. When Socrates remarks on God and the *eidos* itself of 'Life' his reflection surely is that they themselves unite their contraries. The contrary of the *eidos* itself of 'Life' is nothing apart from the *eidos* of 'Life'. The movement from hypothesis to hypothesis until something sufficient is reached is the movement to God. What is other than God, at that point, is known as nothing apart from God.

The relation the soul, as a member of the species in the genus of Life, has to the *eidos* itself of 'Life' determines its ultimate fate. Soul, no doubt, cannot be and be dead. There is no assurance that it may simply cease to be. Soul must be further considered in relation to the *eidos* itself of 'Life'. Socrates encourages Simmias and Cebes to pursue their inquiry. He observes that the argument may be developed beyond the point they have reached from the original assumptions with which they began. Socrates, no doubt, is thinking of the relation of species and genus as the determination of the concrete Idea which he said resulted from the argument.

Myth and Socrates' Death (107c-118a17)

For the purposes of the present paper, it will suffice to comment briefly on the remainder of the dialogue. *Phaedo* began with the prison scene and the immediate circumstances of Socrates' death. The dialogue ends by returning to the scene of Socrates' actual death. The subject of both scenes, naturally, is the mortal, individual Socrates and his children, wife, and friends. Myth provides the transition from the argument to the individuals facing mortality at the end, just as myth led to the argument in the beginning.

The argument about soul in *Phaedo* does not end with soul but with the cause and measure of soul — God and the *eidos* itself of "Life'. The myth considers individual soul in relation to what truly measures it. The soul, in mythical language, lapses into the lower realm of appearances and contingency. Even in the fallen condition the desire for a return back to *eidos* is present in soul. The freedom which belongs to soul's nature permits for its liberation or self-imprisonment. The myth is about the return back to the *eidos* through the purgation of what separates the individual from the *eidos*. For souls which have separated themselves completely from the *eidos* by willing their own particular end against the universal Good there is no purgation because they have no relation to the *eidos*. For those who have attained to the universal through philosophy and purged themselves of their particularity there is release from the conditions of mortality. The others must suffer their appropriate purgations. *Eidos*, mythically, is asserted to be in reality the cause and measure of soul.

The myth does not add anything of philosophical importance to the argument of *Phaedo*. The full explication of the myth is to be found in the argument of the dialogue.

Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N.S.