

**TWO CONCEPTS OF THE SOUL IN PLATO'S *PHAEDO*:
A STUDY IN THE *PHAEDO* AND SOME RELATED PLATONIC TEXTS**

BY

RYAN TOPPING

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

**Department of Philosophy,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr. Don McCarthy for the meetings that we have had over the past months, and for taking me on as a student. Many thanks also to the members of my committee who read this thesis and provided feedback on my work, and in particular, to Dr. James Muir with whom I have had many good discussions since studying with him as an undergraduate student. I would like to thank the Winnipeg Foundation and the University of Manitoba through whom I received financial support which allowed me to study full time the last twelve months.

Writing this thesis was particularly joyful because I am married to my wife Anna. During the time that I worked on this project we lived at the Emmaus House, and I also want to express my thanks to the members of that community and to our potluck group that has gathered every Friday evening for the past number of years for worship, study, and fellowship.

*Te deum laudamus...
in te domine speravi non confundar in aeternum.*

Abstract

In this thesis I argue that the view of the soul in the *Phaedo* can be usefully separated into two concepts. The first is what I have termed the *basic* concept, which consists of the features of the soul which are not used by the character Socrates as the basis for arguments showing either the pre-existence or post-existence of the soul. The second is what I have termed the *total* concept, which includes the features contained in the *basic* concept, *plus* all additional features that are used as the basis of arguments intending to prove either the pre-existence or the post existence of the soul, *plus* the features of pre-existence and post-existence themselves. My primary text is the *Phaedo*, but through the course of this study I also look to the view of the soul presented by the character Socrates in five other Platonic dialogues, as a means of clarifying and contrasting the presentation in the *Phaedo* to some of the other significant presentations of the soul given within Plato's 'early' and 'middle' dialogues.

I try to prove the usefulness of this interpretive method by illustrating the results of its application in the analysis of the view of the soul in the *Phaedo*. By using this interpretive tool, and separating two concepts of the soul in the *Phaedo*, even where Plato has not explicitly done so, I argue that two further questions can also be answered. First, applying this interpretive tool allows us to make sense of Plato's arguments for immortality (including the nature of the arguments, their relation to each other, and in providing a basis for contrasting the arguments in the *Phaedo* to those given in other Platonic dialogues). Second, by using this interpretive method I am able to identify clearly the various features of the soul that emerge from an examination of the arguments within the dialogue.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....i

Abstract.....ii

Table of Contents.....iii

List of Abbreviations.....iv

1. General Introduction.....1

1.0 The question this thesis seeks to answer

1.1 The *concept* of the soul

1.2 Two concepts of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*

1.3 Outline of the structure of this thesis

2. The concept of the ψυχή in the *Apology*.....11

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Three direct references to the ψυχή

2.2 Three significant indirect references to the ψυχή

2.3 Conclusion: Summary of findings

3. The *basic* concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*.....32

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Division of the subject matter of the text of the *Phaedo*

3.2 Features of the ψυχή not used as the basis for arguments for immortality

3.3 Conclusion: Statement of the *basic* concept of the ψυχή

4. The concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*: Features in addition to the *basic* concept.....47

4.0 Introduction

4.1 Four arguments intended to prove the ψυχή will survive death and exist forever

4.1.1 1st argument: Generation from opposites (70C-72E)

4.1.2 2nd argument: Learning as recollection (72E-77D)

4.1.3 3rd argument: The ψυχή is similar to the Forms and to divinity (78B-80D)

4.1.4 4th argument: The ψυχή as the principle of life will not admit its opposite (102B-106E)

4.2 The ψυχή of the true philosopher in the afterlife (80D-84B; 114C-E)

4.3 How the true philosopher lives in this life: Philosophy is the training for death

4.4 Conclusion: The *total* concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*

5. Alternative treatments of the ψυχή in some of Plato's 'middle' dialogues.....78

5.0 Introduction

5.1 *Meno*: Recollection as the basis for the immortal ψυχή

5.2 *Symposium*: Vicarious immortality and the search for the beautiful

5.3 *Republic*: The ψυχή is immortal and has three parts

5.4 *Phaedrus*: The tripartite ψυχή is an unmoved mover

5.5 Conclusion: Alternative treatments of the ψυχή contrasted with the *Phaedo*

6. General Conclusion.....96

6.0 Introduction

6.1 Summary of the findings of this thesis

6.2 The moral value of Socrates' arguments for the immortal soul in the *Phaedo*

Bibliography.....108

Abbreviations and References

Ancient Authors and Works

Hdt.	Herodotus
Hom.	Homer
Olymp.	Olympiodorus
<i>Com.Phdo.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Phaedo</i>
Pl.	Plato
<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
<i>Euthy.</i>	<i>Euthyphro</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Meno</i>
<i>Phdo.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>

Modern Works and Editions

<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, H.G., R. Scott and H. S. Jones, <i>A Revised Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
<i>JB</i>	Burnet, John, edited with notes, <i>Plato's Phaedo</i> , Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911.
<i>LGW</i>	Westerink, L.G. <i>The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo: Volume 1: Olympiodorus</i> . New York: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1976.
<i>TMR</i>	Robinson, T.M. <i>Plato's Psychology</i> , 2 nd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.

Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.0 The question I seek to answer and statement of the thesis of this paper

Plato's *Phaedo* has attracted considerable attention since antiquity.¹ In this dialogue Plato provides us with a moving description of Socrates' last hours and final conversation with a group of his friends. We see, for example, Socrates calming the fears of timorous Cebes and his companion Simmias as they both, in their own way, prepare to lose their beloved in death. In the course of Socrates' soothing consolation he narrates his understanding of a number of important teachings, including an argument prohibiting suicide, the nature of philosophical calm in the presence of death, the value of purification or *katharsis*, and the nature of the human soul and its immortality.² The *Phaedo*'s primary influence upon the subsequent philosophical and theological traditions that developed within Europe and the Middle East has been through its presentation of

¹Three such ancient commentaries that have survived to the present day is that by Olympiodorus (ca.495-565) and the two by Damascus (ca. 462-537). For a good discussion on the reception and influence of Plato's *Phaedo* in antiquity see *LGW* (pp.7-20) in the introduction to Westerink's English translation of Olympiodorus' commentary. Since the work of John Burnet (1863-1928) in the early part of the 20th century there have been numerous full-length studies and a host of scholarly papers devoted to the explication and interpretation of the *Phaedo*. For commentary on the influence of Burnet's work on the interpretation of Plato and Greek philosophy, as well as a listing of his writings see the memoir written by Lord Charnwood (3-22) in the collection of Burnet's essays, *Essays and Addresses*, (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1968). For a bibliography of commentaries and translations see David Bostock's *Plato's Phaedo*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and the bibliography given at the end of Martha C. Beck's recent commentary *Plato's Self-Corrective Development of the Concepts of Soul, Forms and Immortality in Three Arguments of the Phaedo*, (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1999).

²There have been various ways of describing the themes of the dialogue. One of the earliest divisions is that given by Albinus, the second century Platonist, who in his commentary on the *Phaedo* divides the subject matter of the dialogue into three parts: the description of who the philosopher is (through the example of Socrates), the explanation of the aim of his life (detachment from the body), and a presentation of the fundamental supposition of Socrates' educational thought (the immortality of the soul). Cf. *LGW*, 10-11.

the doctrine of the immortality of the individual human soul,³ and it is to the study of the original Platonic formulation of this doctrine that we turn our attention.

The primary question this thesis seeks to answer is a methodological question, namely, by what method can we best interpret Plato's presentation of the soul in the *Phaedo* as given through the character Socrates? In this thesis I argue that interpreting Socrates' comments about the soul through separating them into *two concepts* helps answer a number of important other questions about the text. By separating the character Socrates' comments about the soul into a *basic* concept and a *total* concept I argue that we can better understand two other questions: first, what sorts of arguments for immortality does Socrates make in this dialogue? and second, what is the concept of the soul that emerges through the course of Socrates' argumentation and discussion about the soul? Although the primary question of this thesis is regarding a method of interpretation, the significance of the answer that I provide to this methodological question is made manifest in my answers' ability to help us acquire a better understanding of these and other secondary questions.

There are several points that I should like at the outset to make in order to clarify the aims and intentions of this thesis. Any authoritative study of Plato's works would, of course, have to take into account the entirety of his writings. A comprehensive view of

³In relation to Plato's influence upon the development of patristic thought Henry Chadwick's *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition: Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen* (Oxford: OUP, 1966) is a good general introduction and makes reference to Plato's doctrine of the immortal soul particularly in his chapter on Origen. Oscar Cullmann's well-known lecture *Immortality of the Soul or the Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1958) is a modern criticism of the historical union of the philosophical doctrine of the immortal soul to the biblical doctrine of the resurrection that has occurred within Christian theological reflection about the destiny of the soul. Cullmann's study argues that the Pauline and Platonic doctrines of the nature of the soul are in fact incompatible. Jan N. Bremmer's, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*, (London: Routledge, 2002.), is a fairly accessible treatment of the idea of personal immortality and its influence upon the doctrinal development of the major monotheistic religions.

Plato's teaching on the soul and the afterlife would require the detailed evaluation of all of the Platonic dialogues, as well as the relevant scholarly commentary. That task is, clearly, beyond the material limits of this thesis.⁴ Hence, by the stated formulation of the goal of this thesis I mean to delineate the scope of our discussion of the soul in four ways.

First, I limit the study primarily to Plato's *Phaedo* and only look to other Platonic dialogues as they serve to illumine the teaching of the *Phaedo*. The one notable apparent exception to this is the fact that I have devoted a complete chapter to the *Apology*; but this is done for reasons that I explain in section 1.3 below.

Second, I have restricted the scope of inquiry to the views held by the character Socrates. By narrowing our study to Plato's presentation of the views of the character Socrates we avoid the interesting but complex problem of determining the correct characterization of which are the opinions of the Socrates of history, and which are of the Socrates of Plato's literary invention. Except where otherwise noted I concern myself only with what Plato has presented of the character Socrates' views through the argument and action of the dialogue.⁵

⁴ I refer the reader here to a number of important works that have dealt with Plato's view of the soul and the afterlife. John Burnet's treatment of the early Platonic doctrine of the soul in a lecture entitled *The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul* given at the Second Annual Philosophical Lecture: Henriette Hertz Trust, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 7 (1916): 235-259, was an influential work in this century on the subject. T.M. Robinson's work, *Plato's Psychology*, second edition (Toronto: UTP, 1995) is a comprehensive study on Plato's doctrine of the soul, although it does not contain a thorough presentation of the various conceptions of the after-life presented in the dialogues. There are a number of full-length studies in English devoted specifically to the *Phaedo* and its presentation of the doctrine of the immortal soul, of which I will mention three. David Bostock's commentary *Plato's Phaedo*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) is quite accessible; David Gallop's *Plato: Phaedo*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) includes both a translation and a more detailed discussion that makes reference to the Greek text; Martha C. Beck's *Plato's Self-Corrective Development of the Concepts of Soul, Forms and Immortality in Three Arguments of the Phaedo*, (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1999) focuses almost exclusively upon the arguments for immortality themselves.

⁵ Those who wish to pursue further the question of the relation between the historical Socrates and the Socrates presented by Plato may begin by looking at three works. First, John Burnet gives a brief introductory discussion of the relation between the historical Socrates and Plato's Socrates in his work *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1964), 102-122, and summarises his position as follows: "The conclusion we are, in my opinion, forced to is that, while it is quite impossible to

Third, it is important to distinguish between investigating his description of the individual human soul, and the character of its existence in the afterlife. In this thesis I for the most part leave aside the separate question of Socrates' view of what happens in the underworld, and his ideas of the various punishments and rewards that await those who pass beyond bodily death.⁶

Fourth, in this thesis I look at Plato's arguments about the soul's immortality primarily with a view of understanding the concept of the soul. My main goal is to provide an articulate presentation, and not with affording an evaluation of the philosophical cogency, of his arguments.⁷

regard the Sokrates of Aristophanes and the Sokrates of Xenophon as the same person, there is no difficulty in regarding both as distorted images of the Sokrates we know from Plato. The first is legitimately distorted for comic effect; the latter, not so legitimately, for apologetic reasons. To avoid misunderstanding, I should say that I do not regard the dialogues of Plato as records of actual conversations, though I think it probable that there are such embedded in them" (pp.120-121). Next, one may turn to Gregory Vlastos' important work *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991) where he develops the argument that there are a number of various and distinct "Socrates'" presented through Plato's writings. Vlastos claims that the opinions of the actual Socrates of history may be known, by the evidence of Plato and other ancient authors, in the dialogues of Plato's early period (cf. p.106). He says: "In different segments of Plato's corpus two philosophers bear that name [Socrates]. The individual remains the same. But in different sets of dialogues [Socrates] pursues philosophies so different that they could not have been depicted as cohabiting the same brain throughout unless it had been the brain of a schizophrenic. They are so diverse in content and method that they contrast as sharply with one another as with any third philosophy you care to mention, beginning with Aristotle's. This is a large claim. I shall be arguing for it in this chapter and the next" (p.46). Finally, for an accessible introduction to the problem of identifying the historical Socrates and for a bibliography of some of the important scholarly discussions on this topic written after Vlastos, see Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 33-52.

⁶For a discussion of Socrates' views on death and the afterlife see the discussion in Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith's *Plato's Socrates*, (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 201-212.

⁷There are many discussions of the philosophical merit of Plato's arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo*. In Olympiodorus' 6th century Neoplatonic commentary on the *Phaedo* he points out that there existed a diversity of opinion among the leading philosophers at that time. For instance, Iamblichus considered each of the arguments for immortality in the dialogue to provide independent proofs. Olympiodorus' own view (and apparently that of the philosophical community at Alexandria) was that none of the arguments save the final one in the *Phaedo* prove the soul to be immortal (cf. *Com.Phdo*. Lecture 11, paragraph 2). Many 20th century commentators think that the proofs are inconclusive. However, there is divergence of opinion regarding whether or not Plato himself considered the arguments to be sound. For a summary of the views held within contemporary scholarship see Martha C. Beck's commentary wherein she provides an overview of the conclusions of Martha Nussbaum, Gregory Vlastos, David Bostock, Hans-Georg Gadamer and others upon this question. Cf. *ibid.*, 145-149.

1.1 The four aspects of each *concept* of the soul

By referring to Plato's concept of the soul as it has been presented through the character Socrates, I am referring to four distinct aspects of the individual human soul which need to be kept in view. That is, I will be seeking to make clear how Plato understands the following four things about the soul: its nature or essence, its operations or activities, its relation to the body, and any acquired habits or states that modify any of the other aspects. My investigations into Socrates' view of the soul in the *Phaedo* will assume this methodological starting point: although there may be more aspects of the human soul to consider, I do not believe there can be any less. I will here give a few words of general explanation of what I mean by each of the four aspects. After that I will explain how I will be analyzing Plato's presentation of the soul for the specific purposes of this thesis.

The four aspects of the soul may be briefly explained as follows. First, an account must be able to say something about what the soul is in itself. It must be able to describe something of the soul's nature or essence; this includes the defining characteristic or characteristics apart from which a soul could no longer be thought to be a soul. Even if one has to concede ignorance of what that nature is, the question still demands one's consideration.⁸ Second, a concept of the soul also must say something of the activities or operations carried out by the soul. In this we provide a description, not of what the soul is, but of what the soul does. Third, someone talking about the human soul should also give an account of its relation to the body. In this we answer how it is

⁸I am aware that my description of what goes into an explanation of a "nature" or "essence" is incomplete. What, exactly, satisfies as a description of an essence is very difficult question and one which occupies, for example, much of Plato's *Meno*. By describing the nature as the characteristic feature by virtue of which a thing is what it is I believe I am following what appears to be direction of the results of Socrates' explorations in the *Meno* (cf. *Men.* 72C; 73C-D; 75A-B). Also, I should note here that the existence of the soul will, in a way, also be discussed as a feature belonging to the soul's nature or essence. I will say more about this in Chapter Four.

that the body and soul are distinguished, how it is that they affect each other, and whether they may be separable. Fourth, a concept of the soul should be able to speak about the states and habits that may modify the other aspects already mentioned. In Plato's terms, the most apparent examples of the acquired states of the soul are the virtues and vices. Plato argues that the soul's virtue or excellence effects how it can perform its activities. In sum, I think that any description of the human soul must be able to provide an account of each of these four aspects, and I will try to show how Plato's account does this within the discussions of the soul to be considered.

1.2 Two concepts of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*

In this thesis I argue for the claim that the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* can be usefully separated into two: the *basic* concept and the *total* concept of the soul. I should make explicit that the *total* concept is the whole or complete concept of the soul presented by the character Socrates, while the *basic* is only a lesser part which I distinguish from the whole concept. By the *basic* concept of the soul I am referring to the features of the soul which are not used by the character Socrates as the basis for arguments showing either the pre-existence or the post-existence of the soul. By the *total* concept of the soul I am referring to the concept of the soul that includes all features held within the *basic* concept *plus* the additional features that Socrates will argue for within the *Phaedo* that he thinks provide the basis for arguments demonstrating its pre-existence and post-existence *and* the features of pre-existence and post-existence themselves. The point to be emphasized is that in this thesis I am arguing the following: the presentation of the soul in the *Phaedo* can best be understood by separating it into two concepts, the

basic concept and the *total* concept.

Before I explain the benefits of this procedure, I should also make clear what my argument is not claiming. I am not claiming that the two concepts are something that I or anyone else might discover in the text itself, strictly speaking. Rather, interpreting the character Socrates' doctrine of the soul as two separate concepts is a hermeneutical tool or device.

But what is the value of separating the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* into two? What greater clarity is achieved by this procedure? As I mentioned above I think that there are two reasons for interpreting the presentation of the soul in the *Phaedo* with reference to the *basic* and *total* concepts. In the first instance, drawing out the distinctions between the *basic* and the *total* concepts of the soul is a means of bringing out the argumentation of the text. Pointing out the distinctions between the *basic* concept (in which Socrates makes no assertions of the immortality of the soul) and the *total* concept (in which Socrates does assert the immortality of the soul) can help us to identify the sort of arguments that Socrates is making before his friends in three ways. One way is that it helps us to identify what sort of arguments Socrates is making. Through the course of the thesis I attempt to point out that, although the goal of Socrates' arguments is to prove that the soul is immortal, the means by which he does this is by producing arguments about certain features of the soul. As I point out at a number of places in my comments, nowhere in the *Phaedo* does Socrates give an argument for the *existence* of the soul, as such. Rather, what Socrates does give are arguments designed to prove that certain features of the soul exist. His claim is that these features themselves are what entail the unending existence of the soul. In other words, the goal of Socrates'

argumentation is not to prove *that* the soul exists, but that certain *features* exist. This is an important point to keep in view. Socrates does not argue for the existence of an immortal soul as such, but for additional features to be added onto the concept of an already existing soul. He argues that the soul has certain features and that those features entail immortality. The second way is that this interpretive method helps us gain a better understanding of the relation of the arguments in the *Phaedo* to one another. Third, understanding the nature and relation of Socrates' arguments also provides a basis from which one is able to begin the work of comparing and contrasting arguments for immortality within the *Phaedo* to other Platonic dialogues, particularly those considered to be written in the 'middle' period.⁹

The second main benefit to using this interpretive tool is that it helps us to identify the features of the soul themselves that emerge through Socrates' arguments for immortality. Showing how it is that Socrates' comments on the soul can be organized into two concepts, for the purposes of making clear the various features of the soul, will be the main work of this thesis.

1.3 Outline of the structure of this thesis

This present chapter serves as an introduction to the aims and methods particular to this thesis. In Chapter Two I examine the (whole) concept of the soul in the *Apology*, a dialogue where Socrates claims no knowledge as to whether the soul can survive bodily

⁹ I refer to the 'middle' dialogues merely as a convenient way of alerting the reader to various sets of dialogues that share certain features, such as in this case, certain common *thematic* features. For a summary of the conclusions and some of the arguments intended to establish the relative chronology of Plato's dialogues based on stylometric and other tests see David Ross', *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1-10. For arguments against the possibility and usefulness of determining the chronological sequence of the dialogues see Leo Strauss' *The City and Man*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), especially his chapter 'On Plato's *Republic*', and Leon Harold Craig's, *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic*, (Toronto: UTP, 1996), 323.

death. Beginning this thesis by examining the presentation of the soul in the *Apology* will prove helpful because it will allow us more clearly to distinguish and recognize the features which Socrates does and does not regard as the basis for immortality when we turn directly to the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*.

In Chapters Three and Four I analyze Plato's concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*. In Chapter Three (where I build on the conception of the soul in the *Apology*), I attempt to describe the *basic* concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*. In Chapter Four I examine the conception of the soul found within the *Phaedo* but this time taking note of the additional features (whether these pertain to the soul's nature, activities, relation to the body, or qualifying states) that Socrates presents as entailing, or providing the basis of arguments that show forth the soul's immortality, as well as the features of pre-existence and post-existence themselves.

Having studied the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*, in Chapter Five I look at some alternative treatments of the soul and arguments for its immortality that are presented in four of Plato's dialogues (*Meno*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus*) usually considered to have been written near the same time as the *Phaedo*. Although I will not subject them to the same thorough analysis as the *Phaedo*, these investigations will provide the basis of the comparative work that I will do at the end of that chapter. By comparing and contrasting the various ways that Plato describes the nature of the soul, its activities, relation to the body, and acquired states, we will be able to appreciate something of the diversity, and possibly even the development, of Plato's view of the soul as he presents it through the character Socrates.

In Chapter Six I summarize and make explicit what I take to be the conclusions of

the argument of this thesis. First, I review and summarize the conclusions of the thesis. In this I state why I believe interpreting Socrates' comments about the soul into two concepts is beneficial by reviewing the secondary conclusions that I have been able to make as a result of the application of this method to the analysis of the text of the *Phaedo*. I will argue that my methodological claim was justified chiefly by the results that it yielded in terms of providing answers to the questions I earlier mentioned (e.g. what can we know about the arguments for the soul? and what is the view of the soul that those arguments show forth?). Second, I say what I take to be the moral value or intention of Socrates' arguments for immortality.

Chapter 2

The conception of the human ψυχή in the *Apology*

2.0 Introduction

Although the word ‘ψυχή’ appears only three times in the *Apology*¹⁰, the concept of the human soul figures prominently in the dialogue. At a key juncture of his defence before the Athenian jury (29B-30E) Socrates refers to the ψυχή two times when he explains that one of the primary goals of his philosophical activity has been to cultivate in his listeners the desire to care ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βέλτιστη ἔσται, that their souls will be the best (29E).¹¹ In a well-known paper delivered in the early part of the last century John Burnet argued that this text reveals the essential teaching of the historical Socrates.¹² Whether Burnet’s determination of the views of the ‘historical’ Socrates can be substantiated without qualification is a difficult question and one that I will not address. What is less controversial and more relevant for our present purposes, however, is the fact that the

¹⁰The term ‘ψυχή’ appears two times in the genitive case (at 29E.2 and 30B.2) and one time in the dative case (at 40C.8). Cf. Leonard Brandwood’s, *A word index to Plato*, (Leeds: W.S. Maney & Sons Ltd., 1976), s.v. ψυχή

¹¹All translations of the *Apology* are the author’s own. References to the Greek text are from John Burnet’s reprinted edition (unchanged from the original 1924 publication), found in *Plato’s Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). In my own reading of the text I have often referred to the translation of the *Apology* by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, *Plato and Aristophanes: Four texts on Socrates, Plato’s Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito and Aristophanes’ Clouds*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1984).

¹²Cf. John Burnet, *The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul* the Second Annual Philosophical Lecture: Henriette Hertz Trust, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 7 (1916), p.243. Burnet’s thesis is that the Socratic doctrine of the soul was a fundamentally novel invention in the history of Greek thought, combining elements of Homeric, Orphic, and scientific (Ionic) thought into a single conception. He concludes his survey of the uses of ‘ψυχή’ before Socrates thus: “It is safe to say that the ψυχή is never regarded as having anything to do with clear perception or knowledge, or even with articulate emotion. It remains something mysterious and uncanny, quite apart from normal consciousness” (p.254). David B. Claus’s work *Toward the Soul: An inquiry into the Meaning of ψυχή before Plato*, (London: Yale University Press, 1981) is a comprehensive study after Burnet dealing with the conception of the soul within Greek thought before Socrates. T.M. Robinson’s *Plato’s Psychology*, 2nd edition (1995) examines the Platonic conception of the soul within the middle and late dialogues. Claus accepts much of Burnet’s methodology but disagrees that Socrates’ account was as novel as Burnet believed it to be. On Claus’ determination of Burnet’s work see his introduction (pp.1-7).

exhortation to care for the soul does indeed appear to stand at the center of the character Socrates' own explanation of his philosophical teaching, at least as he presents it within the *Apology*. We notice, further, that at the close of his defence speech, when the verdict of guilty is announced and the death sentence prescribed by the jury of Athens,¹³ Socrates refers a third time to the ψυχῆ but this time speculating on the nature of its destiny after bodily death (40Cff). What has been pointed out, but by some taken less seriously,¹⁴ is the fact that here Socrates disavows any knowledge of the soul's *future* existence.¹⁵ In other words, the subject of the nature and care of the soul is a critical topic within Socrates' discourse, yet the doctrine of personal immortality finds no affirmation in the *Apology* as it does in some other Platonic dialogues.¹⁶ This agnosticism allows the student of the *Apology* to ponder what the character Socrates actually signified when he referred to the ψυχῆ in his exhortation to the Athenians. The question is: *what kind of thing is the soul* that Socrates thought the Athenians ought to care for? My goal in this chapter is to explicate Socrates' conception of the ψυχῆ in the *Apology*. (As we shall see, the whole or complete concept of the soul in the *Apology* will be recognized as being nearly identical to the *basic* and partial concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*).

¹³In early 4th century Athenian law prosecutions were initiated by private citizens. The trial was conducted before a jury that probably consisted of 500 Athenian citizens. This assembly gave judgment both on the verdict and, when found guilty, upon the sentence. Where there was no fixed penalty, such as in the above case, the litigants proposed alternative punishments which the jurors would deliberate upon. For a concise statement on the nature of Athenian legal practice in the classical period see Christopher Carey's, *Trials from Classical Athens*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 1-17.

¹⁴For example, in Burnet's essay "The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul" referred to above, after an able interpretation of aspects of the *Apology* and *Crito* the scholar derives a somewhat surprising conclusion. Having noted the fact that the doctrine of the immortal soul is nowhere affirmed by Socrates within the text of the *Apology* itself he concludes: "From the *Apology* alone it may, I feel sure, be inferred that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul followed as a necessary corollary from this view of its nature..." (p.257).

¹⁵For example, when Socrates claims: "The state of being dead is either of two things. For either it is like not existing and the dead man perceives nothing; or else, according to the things spoken, a certain change happens and a migration of the soul (μετοικησις τῆ ψυχῆ) from the place here to another place" (40C).

¹⁶For instance, *Phd.* 69Eff, *Rep.* Bk. X., *Phdr.* 245Cff etc.

I have divided my comments into two main sections. In the first I examine in turn the character Socrates' three direct references to the 'ψυχή', namely, at 29E, 30B, and 40C. Though Socrates makes only three direct references to the soul in the *Apology*, that is, where the term 'ψυχή' is explicitly used, there are a number of indirect references that occur throughout the work, and these also need to be taken into account if our explanation is to be complete. Accordingly, the second section of this chapter will focus on the indirect references to the soul that occur throughout the dialogue. Finally, by way of conclusion I will recapitulate our main findings and offer a summary statement of what I believe to be Socrates' conception of the ψυχή in the *Apology*.

2.1 Three direct references to the ψυχή

Our *first* and *second* references to the soul, at 29E and 30B, are preceded by Socrates giving a defence of his way of life and conversation among the Athenians (28Bff). Having considered the criticism that philosophy should be abandoned because it may lead one to persecution and ultimately death, Socrates entertains and then scoffs at the possibility of accepting a lesser punishment on the condition of keeping silent. To illustrate the moral impossibility of this imagined proposal Socrates recollects before the jurors the sorts of conversations that he has had and will continue to have with any one whom he meets. From this description of his conversations we are able to grasp a good deal of what he thinks about the human soul.

'Best of men, being Athenian, you are from the city that is greatest and best reputed for wisdom and strength. Are you not ashamed for caring how there will come to you as much money as possible, and reputation, and honor – but that you neither care for nor give thought to wisdom and truth, and *how your soul will be the best* (ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται)?...' (emphasis added) 29DE

It is important to note the terminology in Socrates' description of the sort of state of soul that people ought to strive to achieve. In the above passage Socrates uses the superlative 'βελτίστη' (best), while in the text a few lines below Socrates switches to the superlative 'ἀρίστη' (best). What I take to be the significance of this change I will point out shortly, after I quote below this second text wherein the change occurs.

Immediately following the above text Socrates then considers how it is that an Athenian might indeed claim to care for his soul. He offers an objective criterion that could verify such a claim. Socrates says the person who cares for the more valuable goods, such as the soul, will also be in possession of ἀρετή

....For I walk around doing nothing other than persuading you, both younger and older, to care neither for bodies nor money, not in the place of nor as vehemently as, *how your soul will be the best* (ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς ἀρίστη ἔσται). I say: 'Not from money does virtue come (Ὅτι ἐκ χρημάτων ἀρετὴ γίγνεται), but from virtue comes money and all of the other good things for people both in private and public affairs.' (emphasis added) 30AB

Shortly after these words the jury makes yet another disturbance.¹⁷ Socrates goes on, sardonically, to explicate the great debt that the city owes him. Socrates concludes this part of his case by telling his judges that he has done them all a great benefit by arousing them (to good action) in the same way that a gadfly moves a sluggish horse (30E). After this summary remark Socrates makes no more direct references to the ψυχὴ in the course of his formal defence against the listed public charges. Though the evidence not

¹⁷This is the last of four occasions where Plato has the jurors make a disturbance while Socrates addresses the assembly (20E, 21A, 27B, and 30C). Anticipating their hostility, Socrates encourages the jurors at the beginning of the dialogue "not to wonder or make a disturbance" when they hear him speaking with the same (philosophical) manner of speaking that he has always used (17D). In this prefatory comment he is contrasting the way that he speaks (truthful and just) to the way that others customarily speak at trials. As expected, each of the dramatic disturbances cited in the text come immediately after Socrates has spoken in a way that caused indignation in his listeners, in which the present example is not an exception.

extensive, I think we can come up with at least two conclusions from the above passages concerning the features of the soul as viewed by the character Socrates in the *Apology*. In what follows my procedure will be first to point to what I take as a significant observation on these two texts, and after that draw the two conclusions that I think can be inferred from them about Socrates' conception of the ψυχή

Foremost, we may observe that in Socrates' estimation the human soul can exist in varying states of moral goodness. To judge the moral character of the ψυχή is to judge the moral habits and dispositions of a human being. Before the time of Plato's writing there is some precedence that the term 'ἀρετή' (*arete*) could be applied to a wide variety of non-human or inanimate objects. For example, in Herodotus horses and fields can be recognized as having or lacking 'ἀρετή'.¹⁸ And in the *Republic* Plato discusses 'ἀρετή' in reference to both non-moral excellences of humans as well as to their moral excellences.¹⁹ The inclusivity of the range of application of 'ἀρετή' is significant for reasons I will show in a moment. Yet, despite the possible range of meaning of the term I suggest that Socrates' use of the superlative 'βέλτιστη' at 29E signifies that the sort of comparison that he is wishing to make between souls is in reference to their *moral* habits or states.

Referring to the texts I quoted above, we are now able to see the significance of the change in Socrates' terminology. The above observation, that to judge the moral character is to judge someone's moral habits, finds textual support in the way that Socrates switches the superlative terms he employs. Socrates had before himself the availability of three different common superlatives for the adjective 'ἀγαθός', namely,

¹⁸Cf., Hdts. 3.88.

¹⁹Cf., Pl. *Rep.* 355B.

‘ἄριστος’, ‘κράτιστος’, and ‘βελτίστος’, each of which mean ‘best’. The first, ‘ἄριστος’, is the preferred term in Attic Greek for the generic usage. The second form of the superlative, ‘κράτιστος’ usually refers to *physical* superiority, while the third, ‘βελτίστος’, more often denotes the *moral* quality of a thing.²⁰ Socrates' selection of this last term at 29E will be shown to be consistent with observations in the next section of this chapter where we will look at Socrates' indirect references to the soul.

This initial observation even now leads us to infer our *first* main conclusion about Socrates' understanding of the features of the soul. Socrates speaks about the soul as though it were the agent which performs moral actions and the subject which is modified by states of varying degrees of moral excellence. Along with this, Socrates seems to claim the soul is capable of moral improvement. Just as money and reputation are objects acquired through the deliberate action or inaction of human beings, so too the moral quality of one's soul is capable of being achieved in greater or lesser degrees by human effort (30AB). In Socrates' description of the soul thus far a virtue appears as a habit or disposition of the soul.

A *second* conclusion that we are able to draw from the first two direct references is the soul's ability to bring about not only moral goods dealt with above, but also non-moral (or pre-moral) goods. In this sense I want to show that although Socrates is specifically emphasizing the moral aspect of the soul's ἀρετή, we should also understand that the soul has *arete* in a non-moral sense as well. At this point it is significant to recall Socrates' change of terminology already pointed out in his description of the soul from

²⁰See *LSJ* s.v. κράτερός I.1 and the comments made in Pierre Chantriane's *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque: histoire des mots*, Volume 1, (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1983), s.v. βελτερός.

the use of 'βελτίστη' at 29E to 'ἀρίστη' at 30B. This change in terminology from the moral to the more generic superlative, I believe, is intended to signify the broad range of the kinds of activities that can be modified by the *arete* of the soul. Thus, for example, when Socrates reports the content of his message to his Athenian townsfolk, he exhorts them to recognize the broad nature of human *arete* and its range of possible benefits that include the acquisition of wealth. He reminds them: not from money does virtue come "but from virtue comes money and all of the other goods for human beings" (30B). Socrates' mention of *arete* in the above text is in relation to its causal function. *Arete* in the soul is able to produce money and also "all of the other goods." The soul that performs its operations and activities well, whatever those activities may be, is said to have excellence.

Hence, from both Socrates' change in terminology and from his own explanation of the range of human excellence in the modification of the soul's activities, I think it is clear that he is emphasizing the dual function of *arete* within the soul. On the one hand he is emphasizing the moral function of *arete* and with it the role of the ψυχή as the agent of moral action, and the subject which is modified by moral excellence. In addition Socrates is including the non-moral function of *arete* and with it the role of the ψυχή as the agent of non-moral action, and the subject modified by non-moral skills.²¹ Socrates is making the point that *every* object that is fitting or good for a human is brought into being

²¹What is the difference between a moral and a non-moral good? We will have to wait for a more precise explanation of Socrates' understanding of moral virtue when we look at the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* in Chapter's Four and Five. Perhaps at this point in Socrates' description of the soul and the distinction between the moral and non-moral aspects of virtue we could think, for instance, of the craftsmen that Socrates visited in his early investigations of the oracle's meaning. Socrates ascribed to them skill or *sophia*, because they knew how to make their productions well (cf. *Ap.*22DE). But working well with your hands and having virtue insofar as one is a craftsman doesn't mean that they have yet been able to attain the sort of excellence Socrates is emphasising. While a craftsman could have virtue from which comes money (30AB) he may not have the kind of moral virtue that one who cares for attaining wisdom and truth would strive to attain (29DE).

as the result of the soul's possessing *arete*. Therefore, the second conclusion we can draw is that the soul is operative not only in moral functions, but also in non-moral functions of human activity.²² This usage of '*arete*' is broader than the meaning normally applied to the English 'virtue', and as such, Socrates' teaching on the soul at this point may be a puzzling feature of the *Apology* for English readers.²³

Returning to the main thread of the discussion, let us turn now to the third direct reference to the soul, which comes at 40C. Having received the death sentence from the jurors Socrates takes a few moments to speak directly to his judges. After speaking to those who voted for his death in the form of a prophetic oration, Socrates makes an address to the remaining jurors. In this discourse (39E-41E) Socrates tries to convince

²²As a brief digression, it may be helpful to highlight in general terms how Socrates' use of the Greek word '*arete*' is different from the meaning of the English term 'virtue'. Although the Greek idea of *arete* is similar and includes much of the English notion of 'virtue', there is enough dissimilarity to warrant a few comments on the difference and the difficulty of translating the idea Socrates is communicating. Our English 'virtue' comes immediately from the Old French '*vertu*', and originally from the Latin '*virtus*' which is the lexical equivalent to the Greek '*arete*'. In many instances throughout classical literature '*arete*' can legitimately be translated either as 'manliness' or 'excellence' or even 'goodness'. Liddel and Scott trace the earliest etymological origins of *arete* to ὁ Ἄρης – the name for the Greek god of war and destruction and Roman equivalent to Mars. The oldest literary record of '*arete*' that I am aware of is given in Homer, and in the *Iliad* '*arete*' denotes the qualities of manhood such as bravery in war and valor (Cf. Hom. *Il.* 9.498; 20.411).

In Guthrie's view the non-moral sense of *arete* was common before the moral application of the term was used. The basic or first meaning of *arete* points to the Greek idea that each thing has a specific function to perform and that the *arete* of a thing is its proper state, or the condition in which it is best suited to perform its own function. Guthrie claims that it is in Plato's *Republic* that the specifically moral sense of *arete* was given its first clearly articulated expression: "He [Socrates] begins by repeating the point that everything has its proper *ergon*. Examples are tools, eyes, and ears. Therefore everything has its proper *arete* defined as the condition in which it can best perform its *ergon*, which you may call government or deliberation or anything else, or describe more simply and indisputably as rational living. Whatever the function be, its existence cannot be questioned. There must therefore be an *arete* or best state of the soul, given which it will perform that function successfully. It is this *arete* which we mean by justice. Hence the just man is living in the fullest and best way, and cannot fail to be happy as well as good" (109). See W.K.C. Guthrie's, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960).

²³The evolution of 'virtue' and its cognate terms in European intellectual history has come about in great measure as the consequence of the displacement of classical and medieval political thought in favour of modern political philosophy beginning with Machiavelli. A study of the novel way that '*virtu*' was reconfigured by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) in *The Prince* is an illuminating example of this phenomenon, and especially noteworthy are chapters 6 and 15. See Harvey Mansfield's *Machiavelli's Virtue*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) for a detailed analysis of Machiavelli's use of '*virtu*'.

the men that what has occurred in the events of the day has been good, and further, that they have reason to believe that death *itself* is something good. In the first instance, he says, the sign of the god always opposes him when he is about to do something incorrectly (40A) – and the god did not oppose his coming to the trial or how he conducted his defence. In the second instance, Socrates gives an argument to support the claim that one should have a great hope that death is good (40C). He states his argument in the form of a disjunction. It is at this place that we find the final direct reference to the soul:

The state of being dead is either of two things. For either it is like not existing and the dead man perceives nothing; or else, according to the things spoken, a certain change happens and a migration of the soul (μετοίκησις τῆ ψυχῆ) from the place here to another place. 40C

In Socrates' view both of these alternatives would be good options.²⁴ The first entails the extinction of the soul but would be, at the least, no more unpleasant than the night spent in the deepest sleep (40D). The second alternative, on the other hand, would bring with it inconceivable happiness, since it would afford the opportunity for Socrates to associate with and examine men such as the great poets and warriors of antiquity (41A). These texts both affirm the fact that Socrates does not know whether the soul will go on existing after death, and suggests, further, an interesting feature of the soul.

For although he does not claim to know whether the soul will migrate to another place after death, Socrates does think that *if* it does survive bodily death *then* the soul would have more or less the features that it currently has now (other than, perhaps, animating the body). As a living and waking person is capable of carrying on rational

²⁴As an aside, Socrates does not say that he has knowledge that these are the *only* two possibilities facing a human being, any less than he claims to know which of the two alternatives is more probable (41C).

conversation, so too would the soul that has migrated to another place be able to hold discourse with great men of old. In the text quoted above, at 40C, where Socrates says “...μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα...” I have rendered this as “the dead perceive nothing”. What exactly ‘ἔχειν’ (to have, to hold) refers to is not spelled out, but the general sense of the passage is intelligible. On the one hand, if the dead are nothing then they have no awareness whatsoever. The pleasantness of the sleep experienced during death that Socrates does refer to is spoken of only figuratively and as a way of expressing how we now should evaluate our lack of existence then (should the soul not migrate after death). On the other hand, if the soul does survive then it will have consciousness and, we may reasonably add, any other types of intellectual awareness that Socrates will make mention of in his indirect statements about the soul.

In sum, from the foregoing discussion I have drawn three main conclusions about Socrates' view of the soul from our observations of 29E, 30B and 40C. First, the soul is the part of us that governs moral and non-moral action. The soul is the part of a human that carries out the activity or operation of willing. Second, the soul is capable of improvement and acquiring *arete*. Specifically, the soul can possess excellence in relation to its ability to bring about both moral and non-moral goods. Third, the soul appears to be the part of a human that we customarily identify with waking consciousness. In this we saw that it is the soul that carries out the activity of self-reflective thought. In addition to these features of the soul we also noted the fact that Socrates clearly disavows having any knowledge of whether the soul will continue after death.

2.2 Three significant indirect references to the ψυχή

Building from what has been learned about the soul in the direct references discussed above we can now attempt to identify features of the soul from a study of instances where the soul is referred to only indirectly, that is, without the term ‘ψυχή’ itself being used. From all of the indirect references to the soul found in the *Apology* I have chosen three that each shed light on features of the soul we have already looked at above. From the first indirect text (21B) I argue that the feature of the soul as the acting agent is given further elaboration. As I shall make clear, the person is that which apprehends and evaluates. In the second (27E-29B), we again find the moral aspect of the soul emphasized. In the third text and final line of the dialogue (42A), Socrates reaffirms his belief that he is unable to tell if the soul can or cannot survive bodily death. In each of these texts I try first to show *that* an indirect reference to the ψυχή is actually being made. After this is shown I summarize what features of the soul are given by the indirect references.

The first significant indirect reference to the ψυχή that I will look at comes at 21B. Here Socrates recalls how his initial reaction to the Delphic oracle was perplexity, as he explained to the jury:

Now consider the reason why I say these things. I am about to teach you where the slander against me has come from. For when I heard these things, I considered them in this way: “Whatever is the god saying, and what riddle is he posing? For I indeed am aware of *myself* being wise neither much nor little....” (ἐγὼ γὰρ δὴ οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν σὺνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὢν). (emphasis added)

It is clear from the above that Socrates is bringing to mind a previous reflection that he had about his own wisdom or skill. Given that we have already identified the soul as that which carries out self-reflective thought (by Socrates’ explicit reference to the ‘ψυχή’ at

40C) I think we may proceed with our exploration of this text confident that at 21B Socrates is actually making an indirect reference to the ψυχῆ. In this text we find again that the soul is affirmed as the acting agent which performs the operation of self-reflecting thinking. Of greater interest, perhaps, is that three features of human agency can be recognized above.

First, we may call the agent the *knowing subject* because it is that which apprehends and evaluates. To explain what I mean by this feature of human agency I wish to draw attention to Socrates' use of the first person intensive singular pronoun 'ἐγὼ' (I) in the above passage. In this text it is the 'ἐγὼ' that is the agent performing the activity of knowing, that is to say, the activity of being aware of itself. It is the "I" that turns its attention to the objects of cognition. This 'ἐγὼ', or the knowing subject, is on the one hand the locus of intellectual perception because it is this "I" that is capable of *awareness* of the presence or absence of skill or wisdom. In addition the knowing subject is the locus of judgment because it is this "I" that is capable of *evaluation* of the degree of skill or wisdom that is present or absent.

Second, we may call the agent here the *object known*, the object which the knowing subject is aware of. To explain this feature of human personality we have also to mention the significance of Socrates' usage of the other first person singular pronoun 'ἐμαυτὸν' ('I' or 'myself'). Note that the term 'ἐμαυτὸν' at 21B is predicated by 'σοφὸς ὢν'. The 'ἐμαυτὸν' in the above context has predicated of it the *arete*-term 'σοφὸς' in the same way that 'ψυχῆ' at 29E has predicated of it the *arete*-terms 'βελτίστη' and

‘ἄφ’ ἰσθη’.²⁵ For the purposes of my present argument it makes no difference whether we interpret Socrates in the passage at 21B to be disclaiming his *sophia* in relation to *moral virtue* or *practical skill*. We already saw that Socrates thinks *arete* can be applied to the ψυχὴ in both the moral and non-moral senses of *arete*.

But what is the relationship here between the knowing subject and the object known? I think it is impossible at this point to give anything but a crude explanation of the relationship between these two features of the human person, because Socrates does not directly elaborate on this within the text. As a preliminary claim, however, it seems that one of the objects of the soul’s cognition is itself. In other words, the ψυχὴ, as the acting agent can at one and at the same time be the subject and object of thought, that is, the agent that perceives and evaluates itself.

Third, the agent is also the locus of memory and performs the activity of remembering. Although Socrates does not provide any elaboration here, it would also be correct to identify the “I” or the knowing subject of the above text with the locus of human memory. When Socrates brings to mind a former opinion that he had, he refers to this past opinion as though there was continuity between the agent who had the opinion *then* and the one recalling the opinion *now*. It appears as though the relation between the former “I” and the present knowing subject is mediated through time by recollection or *memory*.

Although there is more that could be explored in this text, it is enough to notice that by the first indirect reference to the soul we have been able to discern three distinct features of the soul or of the acting agent: it is that which perceives and evaluates objects

²⁵ By calling these words ‘*arete*-terms’ I am simply pointing to the fact that Socrates’ usage of ‘σοφὸς’, ‘βελτίστη’, and ‘ἄφ’ ἰσθη’ is for the purpose of drawing attention to particular aspects of the excellence of the ψυχὴ

of thought, it is able to be itself an object of its own conscious thought, and it is capable of memory, and therefore continuity over time. From this point on I will sometimes refer to these features of the soul as what together makes up the activities of an agent or a person's consciousness.

A second significant indirect reference to the soul comes between 27E and 29B. Immediately prior to this text Socrates had just finished a rebuttal of Meletus' verbal accusation of atheism that was added to the formal charges in the heat of the trial. After his summary dismissal of the charge, Socrates turns to give a positive explanation of the sort of pursuit that he has engaged in throughout his whole life that has now finally culminated in the possibility of execution. Specifically, Socrates proposes to answer the hypothetical charge that his philosophical way of questioning people throughout the city has, in the end, proved a shameful occupation.

Socrates replies to this hypothetical suggestion by comparing his own deeds to those of Achilles'. Socrates reminds his listeners that the Homeric hero despised danger rather than "endure anything shameful ($\tau\delta\alpha\iota\sigma\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\tau\iota$)" (28C). In fact, Socrates claims that his whole life has been guided by the same principle that led Achilles to face death willingly, and take no heed of his mother's prophetic warning that if he should return to the battle and kill Hector he would himself be killed.²⁶ Like Achilles, Socrates has always shown bravery in his military duties, and he cites his service at three Athenian battles as evidence of this fact.²⁷ Even more than his civic responsibilities, Socrates

²⁶"Then in turn Thetis spoke to him, letting the tears fall: 'Then I must lose you soon, my child, by what you are saying, / since it is decreed your death must come soon after Hektor's.' / Then deeply disturbed Achilles of the swift feet answered her: 'I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion / when he was killed. And now, far away from the land of his fathers, / he has perished, and lacked my fighting strength to defend him...' " Hom. *Il.*, 18.94-100. Trans. Richmond Lattimore, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

²⁷The battles were at Potidaea (430 BC), Delium (424) and Amphipolis (422) (cf. 28E) during the

discloses that the god at Delphi laid upon him the duty to live as a philosopher, examining himself and others (28E).²⁸ The basic principle that Socrates is illustrating by his recollections of the Greek hero and his own conduct before the jury is a moral point. Socrates' reply to the anticipated criticism amounts to a rebuke against the jury for committing a circumstantial *ad hominem*. In effect, Socrates argues: whether I do or do not face death because of the principles that have governed my action is irrelevant to the merit of the arguments that underlie those principles of action. The jury's attack, Socrates concludes, would be misguided. They are finding fault with the *condition* of Socrates' circumstance as opposed to the arguments that led him to act the way he did.²⁹ Instead, a noble person should not take into account the danger of dying, but "whether his actions are just or unjust, and the deed of a good man or a bad" (28B).

Continuing a few lines further in the present narrative, Socrates goes on to explain which characteristics make him unique among human beings. After announcing that to fear death is, in fact, to appear wise in a matter where one is not (29A), Socrates names

Peloponnesian war against Sparta. Elsewhere Socrates is reported to have fought courageously in battle, being acclaimed for never turning his back during retreat. Cf. *Sym.* 220D and *Lach.* 189B.

²⁸Given the recent political and military history of the Athenian people, such a comment by Socrates (that he spent his life philosophizing and championing the veracity of the oracle) might possibly be ironic. Socrates would have been aware what an outrageous claim he was making, given the fact that the oracle had such a poor standing among his judges. The political influence of the oracle reached its height in the 6th century, but by 399 the Delphic Oracle was already in disrepute in the Greek world, and especially among Athenians. There are various reasons for the cause of its decline. One significant factor seems to have been its inability to provide good counsel in matters of state. For instance, on the eve of war with Xerxes the Athenians went to the Oracle at Delphi for war-counsel and were effectively told to surrender themselves to the Persians (cf. *Hdt.* VII. 140). Then, nearer to the memory of Socrates' Athenian judges, throughout the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431-404B.C.) the oracle had shown gross partiality to the Lacedaemonians (cf. *Thuc.* I. 118). From this point on, the authority of the oracle in public matters declines. For a good study of the decline and fall of the significance of the Oracle at Delphi in Greek political life in the classical period see T. Dempsey's *The Delphic Oracle: its early history, influence and fall*, (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972), especially chapter 6. See also Burnet's comments on Socrates' reference to the oracle, *ibid.*, p.241.

²⁹The mistake made in a circumstantial form of the *ad hominem* fallacy is in the logical irrelevance of the connection between the opinion held and the perceived circumstances of the person holding the opinion. For further discussion of this fallacy see Irvin M. Copi and Carl Cohen's *Introduction to Logic*, 10th edition, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 168.

two characteristics that distinguish him from other people.³⁰ The first thing is that he does not think he knows sufficiently about matters pertaining to the after-life.³¹ He knows is that it is bad and shameful “ὅτι κακὸν καὶ ἀισχρὸν ἔστιν”, to do injustice and disobey one’s betters. From this he infers that, "compared to the bad things which I know are bad, I will never fear or flee the things about which I do not know whether they even happen to be good" (29B). The second characteristic that makes him unique or outstanding is that given his present lack of knowledge on this point and the necessity to make a decision to obey or disobey his understanding of the god's injunction, he believes the former to be justified against the latter course of action. He says that it is shameful (ἀισχρὸν ἔστιν) for a person to do what is unjust and that a noble human being takes care to do just things (δίκαια). We may also note the fact that it is immediately following the above description we find Socrates’ direct references to the ψυχή at 29E where he tells the Athenians that they are to “care that their souls be the best.” Hence, when Socrates told them to care for their souls we can now recognize that he has been previously emphasizing the care of their moral habits and dispositions.

The point of the above comments is to illustrate how Socrates believes the philosophical way of life to be noble regardless of the unfavourable personal consequences that may fall upon him. Socrates lists his own actions (along side those of Achilles) as examples of deeds motivated by *moral* considerations. The texts of the

³⁰“But I, men, perhaps here am distinguished from the many human beings also in this way, and if I was going say that I am wiser it would be this: that not sufficiently knowing about the things in Hades, so also I recognize that I do not know. But I do know that it is bad and shameful to do injustice and to disobey one's better, in respect to a god or human being" (29B). Socrates has sometimes been represented to claim ignorance about all things except his own ignorance within the *Apology* as for example by Allan Bloom in his *Love and Friendship*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 431-432. I do not think that Socrates presents himself as “prince of the sceptics” – as Bloom believes – even in his ironic moments in this dialogue. As in the above, Socrates enumerates two items of moral knowledge that he claims to know.

³¹As a note, here again Socrates is emphasizing the fact that he does not know what happens to a person after bodily death and by implication whether or not the soul is immortal.

second indirect references contribute to our understanding of the concept of the soul by re-emphasizing the specifically moral dimension of the ψυχή and its activities. The soul is the part of us that governs moral action. And further, the care for cultivating good moral dispositions and habitual action is judged by Socrates to be something central to the care and welfare of the soul.

The third indirect reference to the soul confirms the fact that Socrates does not know whether the soul will survive bodily death. In his final words to the Athenians Socrates underscores again the fact that he does not know what will happen to himself after he drinks the poison.

But already it is time to go away: for me to die, and for you to be with the living. But whichever of us is going to better things is unclear to all (ἄδηλον παντὶ) except to the god. 42A

Although Socrates had disavowed knowledge of personal immortality in the dialogue, here he does not discount its logical possibility. We will pick up this point again in Chapter Four when we look at Socrates' positive reasons for believing in the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*. (Also of note is that in Socrates' present discussion with the Athenians he speaks as though his conception of the soul is uncontroversial among his listeners. Socrates does not provide anything like a defence of his views on the soul in the *Apology* like he will in the *Phaedo*. What he does recognize as a difficult and controversial matter, however, is whether the soul is able to survive death and – to introduce a distinction that he will raise in the *Phaedo* – whether it is the sort of thing that is everlasting).

In sum, there are two main features about the soul that we can derive from Socrates' indirect references to the ψυχή at 21B, 27E-29B, and 42A. First, I identified

that the ψυχή is the agent or the person. Under this heading a number of features of the soul were brought to light: the soul is agent which perceives and evaluates, it is itself an object of thought, and memory is that aspect of person which mediates the knowing subject with the experience of continuity over time. Second, Socrates' self-description within 27E–29B sheds further light on the soul as the seat of the *moral character* of the ψυχή that is referred to directly at 29E. In the course of Socrates' defence of his own behaviour we saw that he recommends himself (as Achilles) as a moral example for the Athenians to follow. Socrates' explicit discussion of the soul that came at 29E began only after having already established the moral capacities of human beings to act according to the deeds of a good man or a bad (ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἔργα ἢ κακοῦ).

2.3 Conclusion: summary of findings

We are ready to provide a summary of the findings that we have gathered through the course of our investigation of the *Apology*. At the beginning of this chapter we made the claim that Socrates' exhortation to “care for the soul” seems a central teaching of the character Socrates, at least within the limits of the *Apology*. However, in this dialogue Socrates disavows knowledge of personal immortality – a doctrine that figures prominently in the *Phaedo*. Socrates' withholding of judgment regarding this aspect of the soul led us to a more careful consideration of what sort of soul Socrates actually had in mind within the *Apology*. From the foregoing discussion a number of features of the soul emerge.³² Below I summarize these features relating them explicitly to the four-fold

³²There is an additional aspect of the soul given according to the character Socrates is given in terms of a negative judgment. As we noted, in his last speech to the jurors Socrates makes evident that he does not have knowledge whether the ψυχή is capable of surviving after bodily death (40C). We noted too how Socrates is equally unwilling to say that migration of the soul (μετοίκησης τῆς ψυχῆς) is a logical

structure of a concept of the soul that I set out within the introductory chapter.

Most importantly, the ψυχὴ is essentially the acting agent or person. That the (perceiving, evaluating, recollecting) acting agent is the essential nature of the soul is because it is the acting agent to which all features of the soul are attributed. I identified the ‘ἐγὼ’ and ‘ἐμαυτὸν’ at 21B with the direct reference to the ‘ψυχὴ’ at 29E. Three features have been identified as what is included in the person’s consciousness: perception, evaluation, and recollection. The conscious human person is both the knowing subject and object of its own thought. It is the soul, as the person and seat of consciousness, which both *perceives* and *evaluates* rational thought, perceiving and evaluating objects in the world and as well as within its own consciousness. The soul performs the operation of thinking and remembering that mediates the experience of the soul, which allows for continuity of the awareness of the soul over time.

We may briefly elaborate here that that the activity of self-conscious evaluation, in turn, seems to imply the ability of deliberation, and on this basis the person may be said to perform the activity of willing.³³ We saw how Socrates’ explicit discussion of the ψυχὴ at 29E began only after first describing the moral capacities of human action. People are capable to act either according to the deeds of a good man or a bad (ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἔργα ἢ κακοῦ). The deeds of the bad man are evaluated by Socrates as shameful (αἰσχρόν). On the other hand, the deeds of a good man are just (δίκαια)

impossibility. He disavows knowledge of this aspect of the nature of the soul, but instead exhorts his listeners on the type of response that he thinks fitting for a human being to make in the presence of such ignorance.

³³One implication of Socrates’ comments is that to be self-conscious is to be freed – at least in part – from merely instinctual action. If the ψυχὴ has the feature of self-consciousness then it also has a degree of free thought or a moral will. In the course of Socrates’ other direct and indirect discussions of the ψυχὴ he made clear that this deliberative aspect of personality is also identified as a feature of the soul and its activities.

(28B).

It is with this view of the soul in mind that Socrates was concerned that the Athenians make their ψυχή become both βελτίστη and ἀρίστη. But what exactly does it mean to make the soul the best it can be? This question leads to yet another feature of the soul, which is that the soul is the agent performing not only moral activity but also non-moral activity. Since the ψυχή is the subject that is modified by moral *and* non-moral action, the ψυχή may have habits that are better or worse relative to its degree of ἀρετή or excellence. In other words, to judge the excellence of a person's skill is to judge the person's ἀρετή in every respect as it relates to their ψυχή. Socrates' description of ἀρετή includes both the moral and non-moral sense of the term, and it is ἀρετή which modifies both the moral and non-moral activities of the soul.

In addition to these features of the soul we made two other observations significant for the remainder of our study. First was the fact that Socrates disassociated himself from any claim to knowledge about the soul's immortality. Second, although Socrates does offer argumentation for his conception of the *value* of the soul and that the Athenians ought to pay more attention to the ψυχή, he nowhere defends this conception itself. In this sense Socrates acts more like a prophet than a teacher; he calls people back to re-consider what he assumes they already know. Plato writes as though the soul that Socrates refers to in the *Apology* is relatively familiar to his listeners, and it is for this reason that we should view our findings on the soul with some circumspection. Although we have compiled a list of features that clearly do emerge from the dialogue, we should not take this list to be an exhaustive catalogue of the features of the soul that the character Socrates' held. In the *Apology* explaining the features of the soul is not Socrates' main

concern. Nonetheless, with this cautionary note in mind, the exercise of studying Socrates' view of the soul in the *Apology* will yet prove useful in providing a backdrop against which we will distinguish part of the view of the soul in the *Phaedo* from the whole view. The view of the soul presented in this Chapter will have much in common with that presented in the next.

In the *Apology* the ψυχή appears as what is best in humans. In Socrates' view, at least, it is that part of human beings that deserves the most serious attention and concern; for without such care, we should have no hope of attaining to anything resembling the sort of existence Socrates held out to the Athenians as the best possible kind of life.

Chapter 3

The *basic* concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*

3.0 Introduction

In our examination of the *Apology* we concluded that for the character Socrates the soul is conceived as the acting agent or person, which is the locus of self-consciousness. This feature of the soul's nature makes possible the activities of intellectual perception, evaluation, and recollection over time. As well, it is the soul that performs the activities of moral as well as non-moral reasoning, and is the locus of moral and non-moral habits and dispositions. In Socrates' estimation it is that aspect of a human that demands the most care and attention if we are to hope to attain a good and noble life. Furthermore, in Chapter Two I noted how the view of the soul held by Socrates within the *Apology* seemed relatively uncontroversial to his listeners, at least as might be compared to the surprised reaction Socrates' presentation of the soul receives in the *Phaedo*. Socrates offered little elaboration, and no defense for his understanding of the soul. What he was far more concerned with in the *Apology* was to convince the Athenians of the exceptional *value* of the soul, and to provide a reasoned justification for the (philosophical) way of life that followed from such a conception of the soul's value. We now note again how none of the features attributed to the soul in the *Apology* by Socrates were seen by him as entailing immortality.

In the *Phaedo* the situation is very different. We meet Socrates in his final hours of life. He is among his closest comrades, and the conversation turns to an extended discussion of the soul, the afterlife, and the implications these have on how a philosopher ought to live. Here the character Socrates *does* affirm a doctrine of the natural

immortality of the individual human soul. The majority of the dialogue is a reported discussion between Socrates and his friends wherein Socrates labors to convince his companions that the soul will continue to exist after the body dies, and in fact will never cease to exist. Socrates tries to persuade his friends of this by clarifying certain features that he believes belong to the soul and entail its undying nature. Later, in Chapter Four, I will examine what those features are, and how Socrates uses them to argue for that immortality. The goal of this present chapter, however, is to explicate the conception of the soul held by the character Socrates in the *Phaedo* in so far as this can be done without even mentioning those features that he believes imply the soul's immortality; that is to say, my aim is to identify all features of the soul (whether they pertain to its nature, activities, relation to the body, or acquired states) other than those which Socrates will use to argue for immortality. As we shall see, this list of features shall include all those mentioned in the *Apology*, plus some additional ones. The features of the soul that emerge from investigation of this chapter are what I refer to as Socrates' *basic* concept of the soul in the *Phaedo*.

The reason I want to get at this more basic idea of the soul is that in the absence of the ability to identify the *basic* concept of the soul, we should be less capable of either properly understanding or evaluating Socrates' arguments for immortality. The reason for this is that Socrates' arguments are not, in fact, intended to prove the existence of the immortal soul, but to prove that a particular set of features ought to be attached to the concept of a human soul taken as existing. In other words, Socrates is not in the first instance arguing *that* the soul exists, but that certain *features* of soul exist. Further, grasping the *basic* concept allows us to clearly separate out the more from the less

controversial features of the soul that are presented by Socrates in the *Phaedo*. For the purposes of evaluation it is helpful to be able to single out the features of the soul that Socrates takes to be easily grasped, from those features that can be recognized only after long and sustained argument.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part I will briefly outline the structure of the dialogue as a whole. In the second part I will analyze the *Phaedo* from the point of view of the *basic* concept of the soul. In this I draw attention to texts that reinforce the earlier conception of the soul's nature as, among other things, the locus of consciousness and moral habits discussed in Chapter Two. I provide additional information about the soul, but generally exclude those features that Socrates will identify as implying either the soul's pre-existence or post-existence. In the third part I will summarize what I take Socrates' *basic* concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* to consist in.

3.1 Division of the subject matter of the text of the *Phaedo*

This division of the subject matter of the text is intended to provide a brief overview of the contents of the dialogue. I will refer to this outline at various points throughout the thesis and I have placed in bold font those sections of the text that I pay special attention to in Chapter Four.

I. Introduction to the whole dialogue (57A-61C): Dramatic introduction and opening conversation between Phaedo and Echecrates wherein the setting and some of the themes of the dialogue are introduced.

II. Main Body of the whole dialogue (61C-115A): Socrates attempts to prove to his friends the reason for his belief that a philosopher should face death with cheer by showing that the soul is such that it is immortal; Socrates will attempt to show that the individual human soul retains both intelligence and capability after death; through the course of his arguments a number of features of the soul come to light.

II.A. First Primary Section of the main body (61C-69E): Socrates makes clear why he is cheerful in the face of death.

1. Socrates claims that killing oneself is not allowed since humans belong to the gods; This rule applies even to philosophers for whom death would bring great benefits.
2. Socrates defends the position that the philosopher will not fear death; To pursue wisdom requires the practice of purification (κάθαρσις) of the soul.

II.B. Second Primary Section of the main body (69E-80D): Three arguments to prove the soul to be immortal (ἄθνατος).

1. **First argument: Generation from opposites (70C-72E).**
2. **Second argument: Learning as recollection (72E-77D).**

Brief Dramatic interlude: Socrates says that their desire for further argumentation is based upon childish fears; they should seek out an enchanter to help to be rid them of their fear of death (77E-78B).

3. **Third argument: The soul has similarities to the Forms and to divinity (78B-80D).**

II.C. Third Primary Section of the main body (80D-84B): Socrates describes what happens after death to the immortal souls of various types of people; those who esteem injustice, those who lack virtue, those who have virtue but only through habit; as well, **The soul of the philosopher in the afterlife (80D-84B)** who has practiced purification (κάθαρσις) during life.

II.D. Fourth Primary Section of the main body (84C-107B): Cebes and Simmias raise objections to the arguments for immortality; Socrates offers a series of replies to these

objections.

1. Introduction: Socrates encourages Cebes and Simmias to express any doubts about the arguments.
2. Main Body of the fourth primary section: Objections to the arguments for immortality and Socrates' replies to them.
 - a. Objections (85B-88B)
 - i). Objections made by Simmias: the body is related to the soul as a musical instrument is to its proper tuning; once the body (instrument) is destroyed, so is the soul (the resulting effect of the properly tuned instrument) also destroyed
 - ii). Objections made by Cebes: the body is to the soul as a cloak is to the tailor who made it; Cebes asks Socrates to show not only that the soul is immortal (*ἀθάνατος*), but also that it is everlasting (*ἀνώλεθρος*).
Brief Dramatic interlude: the discussion is interrupted by Phaedo and Echecrates; Echecrates expresses uncertainty as to which arguments are to be believed, while Phaedo praises Socrates' skill as an educator even in his final hours of life(88C-89A).
 - b. Replies by Socrates to the objections (89B-107A).
 - i). Introduction: Socrates gives a warning against *misology*, the mistrust of argumentation; he begins his response by asking both if they agree that learning is recollecting and that the soul pre-exists the body.
 - ii). Socrates replies to Simmias by refuting the view that the soul is a material harmony.
 - iii). Socrates replies to Cebes by recounting his own intellectual biography. First, he recounts how he came to understand the cause of generation and decay not through the method of natural philosophy but by an understanding of the Forms as the cause for why things are the way they are. Second, Socrates gives his **Fourth Argument: The soul as the principle of life will not admit its opposite (102B-106E)**, and for this reason is both immortal (*ἀθάνατος*) and everlasting (*ἀνώλεθρος*).
3. Conclusion to the Fourth Primary Section (107A-107B) in which both Cebes and Simmias agree with Socrates' position; Simmias admits to still having uneasiness about the arguments.

II.E. Fifth Primary Section of the main body (107C-115A): Socrates again speaks about what happens after death to the souls of various types of persons: to the incurably wicked, the curably wicked, those who have lived an average life, the extremely pious, and the philosophers.

III. Closing Dramatic Scene (115A-118A): Socrates makes preparations for his own death and is given the poison by the jailor; Socrates emphasizes the distinction between his real person, which they have been talking to, and the body which they will soon be burying; Socrates dies.

3.2 Features of the ψυχή not used as the basis for arguments for immortality

Below I briefly examine each section of the five primary sections of the dialogue, as well as the introduction and conclusion to the whole dialogue, looking at Socrates' presentation of the soul where he discusses (among other things) features that he will not explicitly use to show either the pre-existence or post-existence of the soul. I make special reference to Socrates' explanation of features that are over and above those already argued for in Chapter Two.

Introduction to the whole dialogue (57A-61C) and First primary section of the main body (61C-69E). We see in these sections a confirmation of much that was said about the soul in the *Apology*. The character Socrates continues to hold the soul as the locus of self-conscious rational thought. It is the soul that is responsible for rational inquiry, and it is the soul that is able to perceive reality. While separating out some of the differences between the activities of the body and of the soul, Socrates asks Simmias:

Then what about the actual acquiring of knowledge? Is the body an obstacle when one associates with it in the search for knowledge....Do you not think so? /I certainly do, he said. /When then, he asked, does the soul grasp the truth? For whenever it attempts to examine anything with the body, it is clearly deceived by it./True. /Is it not in reasoning if anywhere that reality becomes clear to the soul?
65A-C³⁴

In addition to giving confirmation to the view held in the *Apology* (that it is the soul which carries out the activity of rational thinking), in these sections of the dialogue Socrates provides further clarification about the relationship between the soul and the

³⁴In this chapter and subsequent chapters I shall rely for quotations of the *Phaedo* on G.M.A. Grube's translation. I shall make occasional amendments and translations of my own; these will be signified by italicizing the Stephanus number. All references to the Greek, unless otherwise noted, are from Burnet's text (*JB*).

body. Although we had previously concluded in Chapter Two that the soul and body were conceptually distinct from each other within the *Apology*, in the *Phaedo* Socrates provides a more detailed description of what their relationship to each other is, in four ways. He clarifies their relationship by contrasting their methods of inquiry, their highest objects of inquiry, the degree of certainty their methods yield, and the objects desired by them which give them pleasure.

First, Socrates distinguishes the soul from the body (σῶμα) by means of their distinct methods through which they seek to grasp or perceive reality. The method by which the soul itself examines reality is through logical reasoning. The method by which the soul examines through the senses of the body is one of empirical observation.

Second, the soul is distinct from the body in terms of its object of highest inquiry, or what it seeks to gain insight or knowledge about. The soul seeks to grasp and attain knowledge of intellectual and immaterial objects, such as the just (δίκαιον αὐτὸ), the beautiful, and the good (65D). Where the highest objects of attention of the ψυχή are intelligible objects, the highest objects the soul can grasp through the σῶμα are material objects only, and this in an unsatisfactory way.

This leads to a third difference. Socrates goes so far as to say that "men do not find any truth in sight or hearing" (65B). The soul does not attain an accurate understanding of things when it examines reality through the body. The results of the soul's examination, on the other hand, when it is done in the proper manner and without reference to the senses, are accurate. But what, exactly, is the cause of this error? There are several, of which I will only mention one. Socrates says that the senses only provide mediation for sensible objects. Being physical themselves, they cannot perceive or

mediate to the soul the essential or unchanging features of objects. Knowledge of “what is most true in things” is gained only through grasping the forms, which by their very nature are intelligible (65DE).³⁵

Fourth, the objects of pleasure for the soul can be contrasted with those of the body. While the soul desires to grasp the truth, the body desires material and sensual pleasures such as food, sex, and the acquisition of fine clothing (64D). Socrates mentions that it is these desires within human beings that cause war (presumably because material goods are limited and tend to incite competition for resources) (66C).³⁶ He says that one way philosophers can be identified as a group is by the fact that they desire the truth even more than bodily pleasures (66E). The objects of desire for the philosopher are not the sort that change, but are permanent realities, and qualify as objects of knowledge (cf. 84A).

Second Primary Section of the main body (69E-80D). It is within the second primary section of the main body that we find three of Socrates’ four arguments for immortality. Not surprisingly, we find little in Socrates’ descriptions in this section that contributes to our understanding of the *basic* concept. Between 69E-80D Socrates argues that the soul is a principle of life (71E), that it performs the activity of learning as recollecting (72E), and that it is invisible and similar to the forms (80A), features of the

³⁵A second reason the body is a cause of error is because its own maintenance (such as when it is sick) requires that the soul turn its attention away from intellectual objects of cognition towards the care of the body. And this leaves little time for contemplating the truth. A third reason is that the results of sense experience are incapable of being properly interpreted without a further judgment by the intellect to distinguish which are accurate from the inaccurate perceptions. This seems to be the point of Socrates’ comments at 60B-C where he says, “What a strange thing that which men call pleasure seems to be, and how astonishing the relation it has with what is thought to be the opposite, namely, pain! A man cannot have both at the same time. Yet if he pursues and catches the one, he is almost always bound to catch the other also, like two creatures with one head.”

³⁶Throughout the *Phaedo* the cause of conflict within and among human beings is not due to a faulty ordering between the *parts* of the soul, as in the *Republic*, but because of the disordered relationship between the *soul* and the *body*.

soul which do not belong to the *basic* concept but which will be considered in the next chapter.

Third Primary Section of the main body (80D-84B). In this section Socrates turns to the theme of the after-life and describes what happens to souls of people after death. In his description of the after-life, however, we also learn a good measure about what brings healing to the soul even in this life. And it is within this section that the theme of the “care of the soul” is again revisited (on this point compare *Phdo.*82D and *Ap.*29DE), but this time in fuller detail.

His discussion in this section of how to care for the soul begins with a few words on the relationship of the soul to the body by contrasting their objects of cognition. This time, however, Socrates includes a description of what he takes to be the moral, epistemological, and metaphysical consequences of his views on the relationship of the soul to the body. The soul of the philosopher that trains itself to be free from unnecessary bodily desires undergoes a process of purification and illumination³⁷, whereas the soul that remains attached to the physical becomes ignoble and eventually “nothing seems to exist for it but the physical” (81B). Moreover, the soul of the non-philosopher, through its constant association with the physical, not only becomes fooled but even becomes transformed, apparently, in its very nature:

[This sort of soul] is no doubt permeated by the physical, which constant intercourse and association with the body, as well as considerable practice, has caused to become ingrained in it....this bodily element is heavy, ponderous, earthy and visible. Through it, such a soul has become heavy and is dragged back to the visible region in fear of the unseen and of Hades. 81CD

By constantly fixing its attention and desires upon physical things Socrates appears to

³⁷By purification I am referring to the limiting of unnecessary desire and the education of the moral habits of a person. Illumination is what results from the method of purification, which I will discuss in greater detail in section 4.3 of the next chapter.

make the claim that the soul itself may take on materiality. It is not altogether clear how much of Socrates' language on this metaphysical point is figurative and how much literal,³⁸ but the moral point is clear enough. The soul, figuratively speaking, takes on a material nature the more it unnecessarily associates with the desires of the body. Casting his comments in the religious terminology of the Orphics he says that those who serve the desires of the body and seek its pleasures, coming to believe that nothing save the material exists, become impure. Their nature is rightly called "material" because such people disregard the care proper or fitting to an immortal soul. Acting as though their soul's nature were merely material, and had only material desires to attend to, leads to disastrous moral consequences. Habitual servitude to the senses, Socrates argues, leads to such moral vices as gluttony, violence, and drunkenness (81E).

The point to be noted in the above is that materialism has moral consequences for the soul. Before proceeding further, I should say that by materialism I mean the dogmatic or unquestionable belief that the human soul can have no knowledge of immaterial objects of cognition. Socrates argues that when "nothing seems to exist [for the soul] but for the physical" – so that the soul hates and fears and avoids the intelligible (81B) – there are detrimental moral implications and practical consequences which inevitably follow. In contrast, the philosopher seeks to know immaterial objects, and

³⁸Both the epistemological and moral consequences are more clearly presented than the metaphysical consequences. It seems that the materiality of the soul and its becoming "heavy, ponderous, earthly and visible" (81C) would be meant as an image given Socrates' prior descriptions of the invisibility of the soul at 78Bff. However, the fact that Socrates then goes on to use his description of the 'material soul' as a basis for accounting for reported sightings of ghosts (81D) might temper our willingness to interpret his comments as being wholly figurative language. Hackforth takes the 'spatialist' language about the soul as purely metaphorical, whereas Robinson assigns more weight to such texts and argues that "all the metaphorical language is remarkable for its internal consistency and coherence, and I suggest a particular view of the soul, if only an unconscious one, underlines it. For the sake of a word, we may call it 'ectoplasm theory.'" Cf. *TMR*, 31. For my part, I agree with Hackforth in arguing that we should take

gradually gains separation (i.e. independence) from the body by the practice of purification or *katharis*. Purification is the true means to care for the soul and is something which I shall say more about the practice of *katharsis* in Chapter Four.

Fourth primary section of the main body (84C-107B). In this section Cebes and Simmias raise objections to Socrates' arguments for immortality, and Socrates offers a series of replies to these objections. In the discussion that follows we learn nearly as much about what Socrates does not believe about the soul (e.g. that the soul cannot be a harmony resulting from material elements of the body [92A-95A]) as what he does believe about the soul. In his reply to Cebes Socrates recounts how he came to hold the Forms as causes (100D) and gives a proof to show that the soul is not only immortal (*ὄθ' ἀνατος*) but also indestructible (*ἀνώλεθρος*) (106D).

I think that the most interesting features about the soul in this section, in terms of the *basic* concept of the soul, are made known in Socrates' comments about misology and his role as educator. At one point the reported dialogue breaks off while Phaedo and Echecrates comment on the seemingly hopeless state of the argument up to that point.³⁹ Echecrates relates how Socrates had earlier made such convincing proofs about the soul's immortality, only to have these countered by other arguments that were as convincing as the first. How to decide which arguments are sound? (88D)

Phaedo responds to Echecrates' observations with a moving tribute to Socrates, highlighting his ability to understand the individual souls of his friends and to speak to them in a way suitable to their particular characters and dispositions. He says:

I have certainly often admired Socrates, Echecrates, but never more than on this

³⁹Burnet conjectures that the significance of this break in the reported dialogue form is that it returns us to our original characters and setting of the dialogue. Plato uses this dramatic interlude to show us that the "current Pythagorean views about the soul are inadequate and that we must go deeper" *JB*, note 88C1.

occasion. That he had a reply was perhaps not strange. What I wondered at most in him was the pleasant, kind and admiring way he received the young men's argument, and how sharply he was aware of the effect the discussion had on us, and then how well he healed (ὡς ἐὶ ἡμᾶς ἰώσατο) our distress and, as it were, recalled us from our flight and defeat and turned us around to join him in the examination of their argument. 88E-89A

Socrates' skill as educator is brought to light. As educator he is able to both heal their distress, and turn their attention back to the argument at hand. Here we see Socrates as educator, but in viewing him as such we also learn something about the soul which is in need of education. The healing and turning around of his friends' souls was done through both the words and actions of Socrates. How exactly does he educate, and what does this tell us about Socrates' view of the human soul?

Foremost, Socrates warns his friends not to be misologues, or haters of rational discourse. As having one's own trust broken by a number of people can lead to a generalized mistrust of all people, so too can having one's trust in the truth of the conclusions of particular arguments lead to a generalized mistrust of all argumentation as such (90D). This experience of having the conclusions of arguments that one believes turn out to be false says nothing about argumentation, and it says nothing about the trustworthiness of reasoning in its ability to make truth and knowledge of reality come clearer to the soul (cf. 90E). Rather, it shows forth the lack of skill of the person himself. Socrates' advice is the following: take courage in persevering in the desire for attaining soundness, and view the value of argumentation as that by means of which one may know the truth (not for its ability to defeat or win the approval of one's opponents [91A]). After giving this advice Socrates then patiently returns to their objections and reviews what had been established and agreed upon between them (91Dff.).

In short, through both word and deed Socrates reveals himself as educator and in so doing gives further insight into the concept of the soul without mentioning features pertaining to immortality. Form and content match perfectly in the patient example of Socrates the teacher. Having his own example of kindness towards his friends and the courage to meet their objections, correspond to his direct instruction related to the questions raised reveals that two distinct aspects of the human soul need to be appealed to if education is to be successful in its aims. By his arguments, Socrates shows that the educator must appeal to the reasoning part of the soul; by his own example we see that the educator must also appeal to the imitative facet of the soul. Unfortunately, Socrates does not speak in any detail about this facet of human nature here. What aspect of the soul does Socrates think is involved in imitation? How exactly is it that dispositions and habitual ways of acting are acquired through copying the example of others? Socrates does have more to say about these things in the fourth book of the *Republic*, but for now we may conclude from the above the following: the soul's dispositions, or acquired habits of moral action and feeling, are formed for good or ill by both the instruction and example of others.

In addition to Socrates' comments on misology and his example as educator we find confirmation of the feature of the soul as the seat of the moral habits and dispositions confirmed in yet another text. In the course of mounting an argument to show that the soul shouldn't be thought of as a kind of bodily harmony, Socrates appeals to Simmias by asking:

Come indeed, by Zeus, he said. One soul is said to have intelligence and excellence (νοῦν τε ἔχειν καὶ ἀρετὴν) and to be noble, another to both have folly and wickedness and to be base. Are those things truly said? /They are rightly said. 93B-C

Here again I draw attention only to an obvious point. In this text Socrates appears to hold the soul to be the part of the human being that can be evaluated in moral terms. In other words, the soul is the locus of the moral habits and dispositions of a person.

Fifth primary section (107C-115A) and Closing dramatic scene of the dialogue (115A-118A). In these sections Socrates again speaks about what happens to the souls of various persons after death; as well, we find Plato's description of the final moments and death of Socrates by hemlock. In these sections once again the moral dimension of the human is underscored. Also, Socrates emphasizes that his real self, that is, his soul will not any longer be present within his body after he has died. For this reason his friends ought not to grieve at seeing his body either burned or buried (115E). Socrates displays in these words to Cebes his belief that the soul is what animates and gives life to the body. But as this feature of the soul is used explicitly as the basis for proving immortality, we will not make use of Socrates' comments here as relevant to understanding the *basic* concept.

3.4 Conclusion: Statement of the *basic* concept of the soul ψυχή

The goal of this chapter has been to describe the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* from an examination of those texts where Socrates discusses aspects of the soul which he does not regard as entailing the soul's immortality. We have seen that the view of the ψυχή expressed within the *Phaedo* is in essential agreement with the view of the soul that was articulated by Socrates in the *Apology*. The most significant differences lie in the clarifications that were made with regards to the relationship of the activities of the soul

to the body, and in the moral, epistemological, and (figuratively speaking) metaphysical implications that the belief in materialism has upon the soul. These clarifications only illumine but do not significantly alter the concept of the soul already discovered in the *Apology*.

What we shall hereafter refer to as the *basic* concept of the soul may be stated in the following way: the defining characteristic or what makes up the essence of the soul is that it is the active agent or the self-conscious person; it performs the activities of thinking (perceiving) and willing (evaluating), and desiring after the knowledge of immaterial objects of cognition; the soul is the locus of moral and non-moral habits and dispositions; the soul is distinct from the body, and (while joined to the body) attains excellence by striving to avoid preoccupation with the desires of the body, or with objects of bodily cognition, as much is humanly possible.

Chapter 4

The concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*: Features in addition to the *basic* concept

4.0 Introduction

Near the opening of the dialogue Socrates makes a pair of puzzling and seemingly inconsistent claims. On the one hand Socrates contends that a true or genuine philosopher would be better off dead; on the other hand that a philosopher should not commit suicide. To justify the first claim Socrates defends the view that philosophy is the "practice of death and dying." Socrates' initial arguments are criticised by his friends Simmias and Cebes, and all those gathered playfully agree that Socrates should stand trial again to make a defence of his position. Socrates agrees to the challenge. He concedes, in fact, that the arguments intending to show how a philosopher ought to look forward to death might not make sense *but for the fact* that he expects to find himself in the future company of the gods. He says:

I want to make my argument before you, my judges, as to why I think that a man who has truly spent his life in philosophy is probably right to be of good cheer (θαρρεῖν) in the face of death and to be very hopeful (εὐελπις εἶναι) that after death he will attain the greatest blessings yonder. I will try to tell you, Simmias and Cebes, how this may be so. I am afraid that other people do not realise that the one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for death and dying. 63E-64A

It is this conflict of opinion, over whether a philosopher ought to be willing to die, that generates the action and the arguments presented in the dialogue for the immortality of the soul.

The goal of this chapter is to uncover the features of the soul that are in addition to the *basic* concept of the soul that we earlier saw within the *Phaedo* (a concept very

similar to the complete concept of the soul in the *Apology*). These additional features that I point out in this chapter, however, are made up of two groups. In this chapter I present, first, those additional features (whether of the soul's nature, activities, relation to the body, or acquired habits) that Socrates uses as the basis for proving that the soul is pre-existent and post-existent and, second, the features of pre-existence and post-existence themselves. Thus, in sum, the whole or *total* concept includes the following: the *basic* concept, plus those features that are the basis of arguments for immortality (or the pre-existence and post-existence of the soul), and the features of pre-existence and post-existence themselves.

There are three principal ways by which Socrates reveals these additional features: through his various arguments themselves for personal immortality, by his descriptions of the after-life, and in his recommendations of how a philosopher is to live in this present life. Accordingly, I have organised my comments into three parts. First, I look to see what features of the soul emerge during the course of Socrates' explicit arguments intending to show the human soul is immortal. This first part has four sections wherein I look at each of the main arguments for immortality (including indestructibility). In part two I look at the way that the soul, especially the soul of the philosopher, is presented in Socrates' descriptions of the afterlife. In the third part I look at how some of the features of the soul are made even more explicit through Socrates' teaching on how a philosopher ought to live his life on the earth; in particular, I look at Socrates' notion of *katharsis* as a necessary part of philosophical method in the soul's deliverance from the body and its passions. Here we will see that Socrates' view of the soul in the after-life has a direct bearing on the way a philosopher lives on earth. Finally,

by way of a conclusion I offer a statement on the complete notion of the soul held by Socrates within the *Phaedo*. I should point out that my subject headings between 4.1.1-4.2 in this chapter correspond to the bold headings listed in the “Division of the subject matter of the text” given within Chapter Three (3.1).

4.1 Four arguments intended to prove the ψυχή will survive death and exist forever

Below I look at four separate arguments that Socrates offers as proofs for the immortality of the soul (that is to say, the fact that it will not only survive death but will exist forever): his arguments that generation occurs from opposites, that learning is recollection, that the soul has greater similarities to the Forms than to bodies, and his argument that the soul will not admit its opposite and is indestructible.

Before beginning the first proof Socrates explicitly states to his friends what he is aiming to achieve in all four of the arguments that I will be examining. He agrees with Cebes by affirming that he wants to show not only that the individual soul will forever survive bodily death, but also that it still “holds some capability and wisdom (τινα δύναμιν ἔχει καὶ φρόνησιν)” (70B). As we shall see, Socrates aims to show that the sort of soul he thinks will survive death forever is the same distinct person that animated the body during earthly life.⁴⁰ I should like to make clear that in each of these arguments I am looking at them not primarily from the point of view of evaluating them (i.e., not to see whether their premises are true, or whether those premises do in fact entail

⁴⁰That this is the kind of soul Socrates has in mind is emphasised again at the close of the dialogue. In the final death scene when Socrates tells his friends not to worry excessively about how the body is to be treated after he has gone: “I have been saying for some time and at some length that after I have drunk the poison I shall no longer be with you but will leave you to go and enjoy some good fortunes of the blessed, but it seems that I have said all this to him in vain in an attempt to reassure you and myself too” (115D).

immortality), but rather, as a means of understanding the concepts and arguments of Socrates' view of the soul. I am looking to see how he understands the four aspects of the soul mentioned in the introduction to the thesis: the nature, activity, relation of the soul to the body, and any modifying states that the soul can acquire. My analysis of Socrates' arguments proceeds by two stages. First, I outline the basic steps of the argument itself. Second, I make explicit the features that become clear as a result of the argument Socrates is making.

4.1.1 1st argument: Generation from opposites (70C-72E)

The argument about the nature of the generation of things from their opposites constitutes Socrates' initial attempt to prove that the soul will be able to survive the death of the body. Not far into the dialogue Socrates modifies this argument by joining it to the second, which is about learning and recollecting (77C). Nevertheless, even in this first attempt something of Socrates' view of the soul is made manifest, and so the argument has value for our study.

Socrates begins by recalling an ancient theory (παλαιὸς...λόγος) that states the living come from the dead and that souls arrive on earth from the dead (70C).⁴¹ The remainder of the argument is given as a hypothetical explanation of the consequences that must follow from this ancient theory. The most obvious consequence is that souls must have existed in Hades, the underworld and the place of the dead. Socrates thinks that the theory is convincing, however, because of more than its ancient origin. He goes on to

⁴¹At 70C Plato has “πάλιν γίγνεσθαι” and here Burnet notes how the regular name for this ancient doctrine in latter writers is ‘παλιγγενεσία’. In early Christian writers such as Hippolytus and Clement this ancient teaching was referred to by the term ‘μετενσωματώσις’ from which, through Latin, we get our English term “reincarnation”. Cf. *JB* note 70C8.

suggest that if his friends consider not only human beings, but also the generation of plants and animals and everything that comes into existence, they could better grasp the principle upon which the theory depends. He proposes that whatever comes into existence comes to be from its opposite, if it has one. Examples of opposites are such pairs as the beautiful and the ugly, and the just and the unjust (70E).

He says that there are two principles at work between each pair of opposites in the process of generation. He says from the first member of the pair comes the second member of the pair, and then again from the second comes the first. That is, in any pair of opposites that come into existence, A leads to B, and then B leads back to A (71B). Socrates gives an example of these principles at work in the movement between life and death. At the close of his reflections on this two-fold process of generation Socrates feels confident to ask Cebes: "Then, Cebes, living creatures and things come to be from the dead?" Cebes affirms this, and Socrates concludes, "Then our souls exist in the underworld" (71E). Socrates adds by way of clarification that if there is such a thing as coming to life again it would be a process of coming to life from the dead. Thus, as living leads to dying, so the process of dying eventually causes its opposite within the pair to be generated. Things come to life from the dead, and become dead from being alive. Socrates suggests that if the preceding explanation of the generative process were not the case, then an absurd conclusion would follow. If things did not return to their opposite form (as a living thing eventually becomes a dead thing and vice a versa), everything would at some point stop at one form and there would cease to be any generation at all. In other words, everything would at some moment in time become dead and absorbed into death (72D). Since not everything has been absorbed in death,

however, we can have some confidence that a process of generation through opposites does in fact occur.

I think there is a good deal lacking within this argument, concerning generation. We have already noted that Socrates admits as much within the course of this dialogue. Nevertheless, what can we understand of Socrates' view of the soul from this theory and the reasons he offers in support of it? At the outset it appears that soul is identified with a principle of life. The soul is a principle of life in the sense that it is the cause of the life or animation of the physical body. This seems to me the case since the soul is associated with what is "living" in his explanation of the two-fold movement between dying and becoming alive. This association of the activity of soul with "living" has important consequences and these will be made more articulate further in the dialogue. I think some confusion at this point arises from the fact that Socrates is not careful to specify what the relevant opposing characteristics are within each of his pairs. Socrates' language about what is living and what is dead is very loose and imprecise. For instance, he represents life as the opposite to death (71E) and gets Cebes to agree that it is by the generative process that the living comes from the dead. Yet oddly enough Socrates infers from this that "the souls of the dead must be somewhere whence they can come back again" (72A). Herein appears to lay some confusion on Socrates' part. If the soul is said to exist for the living as for the dead, in what function or capacity does the soul of a dead man operate anyway? That is, if the soul of the dead man retains waking consciousness then in what way are we to consider him dead? But on the other hand, if the soul of the dead man really is *dead* then Socrates' argument, at least on the surface of things, is not achieving what it sets out to prove: that the soul lives on past death and in fact is

immortal. Despite the imprecision of Socrates' way of speaking about the soul in this initial argument I think we can take away from it the fact that Socrates holds the soul to be, in some manner, a principle of life. This principle will be expanded upon later in Socrates' fourth argument for immortality.

4.1.2 2nd argument: Learning as recollection (72E-77D)

We turn next to Socrates' argument that what is commonly called learning is actually only recollection (*ἀνάμνησις*). Following the conclusion of the first argument (with which Cebes seems to be wholly satisfied), in a touch of dramatic humour Simmias says he has forgotten that 'other proof' about the soul that Socrates is accustomed to mentioning. That 'other proof' is the argument that whenever we learn something we are actually only recollecting knowledge that we had previously gained. Cebes remembers the main idea of the 'other proof' (in which the soul was also likely to be immortal) and at Simmias' request Socrates furnishes another – second – explanation of an argument that learning is actually recollecting. The basic idea is that we must have at some previous time learned what we now recollect. Recollection is possible, says Socrates, only if our souls existed somewhere before they took on human shape. Thus, since we are able to recollect knowledge, according to this current presentation of the theory of *ἀνάμνησις* Socrates says the soul is likely to be something immortal (73A). In this present explanation of the theory of *ἀνάμνησις* (unlike that given in the *Meno*) Socrates discloses that the theory of learning as recollection of previously acquired knowledge is actually based upon the truth of a different theory altogether.

In the *Phaedo* the theory of learning as recollection of previously acquired

knowledge is based upon a theory of the transcendent Forms. Through the course of his discussion Socrates provides a brief description of his doctrine of the ideal Forms and shows why it is the logically prior theory upon which the theory of recollection depends.⁴² Socrates leads Simmias to agree that people possess knowledge of the Equal itself prior to any time that they perceived objects of equal proportions through the senses. Socrates reasons:

Then before we began to see or hear or otherwise perceive, we must have possessed knowledge of the Equal itself (αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἴσου ὅτι ἔστιν) if we were about to refer our sense perceptions of equal objects to it, and realised that all of these were eager to be like it, but were inferior. 75B

Continuing on a little further Socrates says that we must also have possessed this knowledge of the Equal before we were born because the ability to see and hear is present from the very moment of birth.

Therefore, if we had this knowledge, we know before birth and immediately after not only the Equal (τὸ ἴσον), but the Greater (τὸ μείζον) and the Smaller (τὸ ἔλαττον) and all such things, for our present argument is no more about the Equal than about the Beautiful itself, the Good itself, the Just, the Pious and, as I say, about all those things to which we can attach the word "itself," ("αὐτὸ ὅ ἔστιν"⁴³) both when we are putting questions and answering them. So we must have acquired knowledge of them all before we were born. 75C-D

Socrates thinks that whenever we recollect one object at the time of perceiving something similar (or dissimilar) to it, we are recollecting one of a certain class of objects that exists independently of sense perception. In other words, we refer all that we perceive to those

⁴²Jacob Klein points out how Socrates emphasizes this point by saying that there is both an *equal* and *same necessity* (ἴση ἀνάγκη- 76 e 5; ἡ αὐτὴ ἀνάγκη- e 8-9) for the soul to exist before birth as the Forms. "Still, the necessity of asserting the soul's pre-existence is understood to depend on the presupposed being of the intelligible objects. If they had no being, Socrates says, there would be no point in arguing the pre-existence of our souls (76 e 4;cf. e 7)" (p.130), in his *A commentary on Plato's Meno*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965).

⁴³At 75D.2 the revised Oxford text of the *Phaedo* in *Platonis Opera: Tomus I*, ed. E.A. Duke et. al., (Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1995), has "ὅ ἔστιν" where Burnet's text (1911) has "αὐτὸ ὅ ἔστιν". This emendation does not change either the interpretation or the translation of the text.

permanent and unchanging transcendent realities aforementioned. Socrates brings this line of argumentation to a close by saying that since our ability to perceive inequalities among sensory objects is derived from knowledge of the Equal itself, it must be the case that our souls gained knowledge of the Forms before we had physical sense-perception. As surely as those permanent realities exist, so too must our souls have pre-existed our bodies so as to have been able to attain knowledge of them before birth (76E).

At the end of his discussion of learning Socrates recognises that this proof on its own is insufficient to show the soul is immortal in the sense of existing after the death of the body. The theory of recollection, says Socrates, can prove that the personal soul (as the Forms) existed *before* bodily life; however, it cannot itself show that the soul will continue to exist *after* death. At this point in his argument Socrates joins the second argument about the nature of learning and recollection to the first proof about the processes of generation. While the latter argument shows the soul must pre-exist, the former is needed to show that the soul will continue to exist even after the body has died.

What features of the soul are present in this second argument? The first is that Socrates explicitly names the soul as the part of the human being that has both memory and intelligence, and carries out the activities of learning. And it is through the soul that formerly acquired knowledge is brought into consciousness by giving aid to the memory. It is also through the soul that a person is able to reason and grasp the intelligible Forms. These features of learning (memory and intelligence) do not in and of themselves add significantly to the basic concept already argued for in the last chapter, but Socrates' treatment of them here is more extensive. The implicit logical relation between memory, knowledge, and the permanence of the soul is now something made explicit by Socrates

in a way that had not been done before. Moreover, the soul has also been shown, within this second argument, to have a certain resemblance to the ideal Forms themselves. He argues that since all bodily perception is logically dependant upon the knowledge of the Forms, and the Forms are non-bodily, it seems to follow that the soul gained its knowledge of the Forms (an event of which it now has no conscious memory) in a pre-bodily condition.⁴⁴ The relation between the nature of the Forms and the soul will be exploited further in the sequence of the next argument we look at.⁴⁵

4.1.3 3rd argument: The ψυχή is similar to the Forms and to divinity (78B-80D)

We turn now to Socrates' third argument. In this the soul is shown to be immortal by virtue of the fact that its nature shares a greater likeness to the Forms than to the body, and that it shares likeness to divinity. We look first at how Socrates presents the soul's affinity to the Forms.

It is interesting to note that throughout the course of Socrates' explanation to Simmias and Cebes, his friends have not brought up any logical difficulties with the two arguments earlier presented. Rather, what prompts this next proof is his friends' confession to a childish fear. Simmias and Cebes admit that despite the preceding arguments, they are arrested by the worry that their souls may scatter at death. Socrates tells them that the way to get rid of this sort of (irrational) fear is to sing a charm. "You

⁴⁴Why this *must* be so is not given a thorough explanation at this part of the dialogue. Socrates brings up the possibility of the soul gaining knowledge of the forms at the moment of birth (which would then alleviate the necessity of the soul having to exist prior to natural conception). However, he dismisses this suggestion as nonsensical (76D). Incidentally, although St. Augustine (356-430 A.D.) was aware of the Platonic argument on this point, he refused to make a judgment on the question of whether the soul existed before physical conception. Cf. *Confessions*, Bks. I.(7) and IX. (37).

⁴⁵We should note Socrates acknowledges that his understanding of the Forms has a significant bearing on the credibility of his belief in an immortal soul. Apart from the veracity of the first theory, the second belief is not tenable (76E).

should search for such a charmer among them all, sparing neither trouble nor expense, for there is nothing on which you could spend your money to greater advantage" (78A).

After this dramatic interlude Socrates agrees to go on with the discussion and proceeds to the third argument.⁴⁶ He prefaces this argument by stating that they will together consider two questions: what kind of thing is likely to scatter? And what class of things does the soul belong to? Answering these two questions will enable his friends to know whether it is or is not reasonable to have confidence in the immortality of the soul in the face of death (78B).

What kind of thing is likely to scatter? Socrates begins by positing that there are two kinds of objects, those that are composite and those that are not (78C). He details the various ways that these two types of things are spoken of. The composite is compound, liable to split up into component parts, and varies from one time to another. Composite things are particulars. On the other hand, the non-composite does not split up, and always stays the same. Further, the two types of objects are distinguishable not only by reference to their internal make-up, but in the manner by which they are grasped by humans. While the former are perceived by the physical senses, the latter are known only by the soul through thought (78E-79A).⁴⁷ Continuing on, Socrates goes on to posit that

⁴⁶It appears by this brief dramatic interlude that Plato is emphasizing the role of desire in the pursuit of truth about the soul. Rational argument is not enough to persuade Simmias and Cebes; they also require convincing on other levels as well. This theme is returned to at 107A where Simmias again admits that he still has misgivings about the conclusion of the argument, even though he has no reason to disbelieve the arguments themselves. Socrates will eventually turn to a presentation of the immortal soul that appeals more directly to the desire and imagination of his listeners (107Dff).

⁴⁷From what Socrates has said so far we would expect him to go on to say that it is by some capability of the soul that these invisible things are grasped. But at this place he introduces a new term. Socrates says that that which always remains the same "can only be grasped by the reasoning of the *mind* (τὸ τῆς διανοίας λογισμὸν)" (79A) (my emphasis). (On this text Burnet thinks that there is no distinction being drawn by Socrates' use of 'διάνοια' in preference to 'νοῦς' (mind). He says: "The phrase [τὸ τῆς διανοίας λογισμὸν] means thinking generally as opposed to sense-perception." Cf. *JB* note 79CA3.) This change of terminology certainly raises the question as to how Socrates understands the relation between the

the human is a composite being. He gets Cebes to agree that "one part of ourselves is the body, another part is the soul" (79B).⁴⁸ In short, there are two types of existing things that make up the world, and two parts that make up a human being: composite objects are perceived by sense and likely to scatter whereas non-composite things are neither perceived by sense nor likely to scatter.

Socrates turns to the second question and asks what class of thing does the soul belong to? (79B) He answers, of course, that the soul belongs to the second sort of things, and the body to the first. In Socrates' answer to this question we are able to determine additional features of the soul which emerge in light of the preceding distinction between composite and non-composite objects. He says that the soul in its nature is more akin to the invisible things, while the body in its nature is more like the visible.

To return to Socrates' original questions, he has answered them in the following ways. First, it is the body that is likely to scatter since by its nature it is most akin to what is composite and visible. Second, the soul belongs to the class of things that, like the Forms, does not scatter (since it is non-composite or simple) and is invisible.

Because the nature of the soul has some features that make it more like the Forms than like corporeal objects, Socrates thinks that the soul should also be described as having all of the features listed below:

mind and the soul. Are they the same identical thing? Or is it the case that 'διάνοια' signifies only those features of 'ψυχὴ' that specifically are associated with *rationality*? I do not think we have enough to go on at this point to determine whether 'mind' and 'soul' are being used interchangeably or not. This passage does, at the least, alert us to the close proximity of meaning that Socrates attaches to these two terms.

⁴⁸Socrates is not altogether consistent in his terminology on this point throughout the *Phaedo*. For instance, Socrates sometimes speaks as though the person consists of only two parts, body and soul. (79B, 81A, 106E). In other places Socrates speaks as though there were a third part that went into making up a human being in addition to the body and the soul. In these texts he makes reference to a third part that acts as a kind of super-ego directing the activities even of the soul (64C, 66B, 88B, 88D). As I shall mention again below, Socrates sometimes speaks of the soul as immaterial and distinct from the body (64C, 92D), while at other times he speaks as though it may be contaminated by corporeality and even become partly visible (81C, 83D).

Consider then, Cebes, whether it follows from all that has been said that the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same.... Well then, that being so, is it not natural for the body to dissolve easily and for the soul to be altogether indissoluble, or nearly so? 80AB

Socrates' conclusions require further explanation in addition to what has so far been given, in order to draw out the precise nature of the argument for the soul's immortality that he is making.

Although there appears to be a measure of incompleteness in Socrates' explanation, I believe that the basic organization of his comments is given in terms of an argument from analogy. Socrates claims that the Forms have one set of features, which includes immortality, and that the soul has some of the same features as the Forms and so he thinks it is also likely that the soul has certain other features as the Forms, most importantly, immortality. Socrates seems to say that it is from the fact that the Forms are non-changing (ἀεὶ ἰέχεται) (78D) they should also be thought of as uniform or simple (ἀ ὑτὸ καθ' α ὑτὸ) (cf. 78D), intelligible (i.e. graspable only by the reasoning power of the mind) (79A), and immortal (ἀθάνατος) (79D).⁴⁹ From the fact that the Forms are intelligible he also says they must be invisible (ἀδρῆ) (cf. 79A).

But which of the above features of the Forms does the soul have which, by analogy, also imply the immortality of the soul? We recall that Socrates had posited two classes of existence, and that the soul was said to be more like the invisible than visible. And further, that the soul was concluded to be without parts or simple, as compared to the body which is made up of parts and is composite. Later on in the passage, at 79E, he

⁴⁹Socrates says that something having the feature of being unchanging also has the feature of immortality in the following way at 79D: "But when the soul investigates by itself and passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it..."

appears to simply *assert* that the soul is more like that which is “always existing”, that is, that which is immortal. But if we are to charitably interpret Socrates’ discussion between 78B-80D we might be able to recognize the way he arrives at this conclusion. As I have said, he thinks that the Forms have the feature of being non-changing and they are also simple, intelligible, invisible, and immortal. Socrates’ argument, by analogy, is that because the soul has the same features of being simple and invisible, it would likely also have the feature of immortality. Socrates has presented an argument from analogy in that he supposes that *since* the soul also has the features of being non-changing and invisible, *then* it should also have the other features of the Forms listed (such as being simple and intelligible), and most importantly, the feature of immortality.

Socrates goes further than this, however, and also claims that the soul has some features that the Forms do not have. The soul shares an affinity not only with the Forms but also with the divine. And, on the basis of this affinity, too, Socrates takes it as likely that the soul is something immortal. He argues that as the divine rules what is over the mortal (and lives forever), so also the soul is such that it is what, properly speaking, rules over the body. The soul shares an affinity to the divinity in that the soul also performs this operation, when considered in its relation to the body. Thus, Socrates concludes, as the divine rules and is immortal, so the soul is immortal since it also rules (80A).

4.1.4 4th argument: The ψυχή as the principle of life will not admit its opposite (102B-106E)

We now come to the final argument for immortality.⁵⁰ Immediately preceding Socrates’

⁵⁰This argument actually has two parts. The first intends to prove the soul immortal in the sense of unceasing life, while the second part that the soul is indestructible and that this unceasing life will continue on *indefinitely*. I will look at them both following the order they are presented in the text. I have

fourth argument comes a lengthy discussion about the nature of cause, and the nature of the Forms as agents of causality. This discussion finds its place within Socrates' own account of his intellectual biography that he gives to Cebes to help strengthen his belief in the soul's undying nature. I will review a number of the main points covered in this previous section (96A-102A) because they are assumed within the formal argument that begins at 102B.

In the course of Socrates' intellectual biography he is concerned foremost with outlining how his views of the nature of causality developed. He says that he began his intellectual inquiry by searching for the cause of generation and decay by means of the methods of study used within the physical or natural science of his day (96A). One of the prominent thinkers he encountered in this exploration was the philosopher Anaxagoras. The philosopher had said that it is Mind ($\nu\omicron\ \hat{\upsilon}\zeta$)⁵¹ that directs and is the cause of everything (97C). However, when Socrates looked more closely into how Anaxagoras explained things, he found that the philosopher actually made no use of Mind "nor gave it any responsibility for the management of things, but mentioned as causes air and ether and water and many other strange things" (98BC). Socrates rejected this sort of explanation as inadequate for what he was investigating. Anaxagoras' view was lacking because it offered a series of material causes to account for all sorts of effects that Socrates believed could only be understood in terms of teleological or purposeful ends.

two reasons for grouping them under one heading. First is because the argument that the soul is indestructible is short and can be examined briefly. Second is because this latter argument is logically entailed by the first.

⁵¹In David Gallop's translation of the *Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) he translates ' $\nu\omicron\ \hat{\upsilon}\zeta$ ' as 'Intelligence' instead of 'Mind' for the following reason: "The translation 'Intelligence' has been used here as best suited to the idea that things are arranged for the best, which Socrates thought implicit in Anaxagoras' theory...but which 'mind' and 'intellect' fail, in different ways, to convey. 'Intelligence' (*nous*) should be understood here as a substance term. It is the faculty of thought, or that which thinks, rather than a mental quality, such as 'sagacity' or 'good sense'" (p.174).

For instance, Socrates found it ridiculous to give a detailed account of the workings of the bones and sinews of the human body to explain human action (99A).⁵² While providing an account of how bones and sinew may interact with each other is one aspect of an explanation, it is useless if you want to know *why* people act how they do (98D). To understand that, one must take into account the end or goal of the intended action.

Socrates' chief criticism of Anaxagoras' view is not so much that it is false, but that it is incomplete:

To call bones and sinews causes is too absurd. If someone said that without bones and sinews and all such things, I should not be able to do what I decided, he would be right, but surely to say that they are the cause of what I do, and not that I have chosen the best course, even though I act with my mind (*voûς*) is to speak very lazily and carelessly. Imagine not being able to distinguish the real cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as a cause. It is what the majority of people appear to do...99A-99B

In place of Anaxagoras' material causes Socrates relates how he eventually came to believe in the Forms as causes, and particularly the Beautiful and the Good (100B). Socrates came to postulate that the *real* reason why things can be beautiful is because the Beautiful itself caused them to be such (100C). The beginning of this fourth argument thus starts off with Cebes having agreed to two things. First is that each of the Forms actually exists and, second, that the Forms act as a sort of cause (102B).⁵³ The argument

⁵²Socrates expresses incredulity at those who suppose a materialist view of causality is sufficient. He says that while material causes do explain some things they cannot account for *why* it is that things happen the way they do. Socrates takes this as obvious, for example, as when considering the cause of human action. Reflecting on his own actions of the past weeks he scoffs at the possibility that a material explanation could account for why he allowed himself to be tried and, ultimately, executed by the Athenians: "For by the dog, I think these sinews and bones could long ago have been in Megara or among the Boeotians, taken there by my belief as to the best course, if I had not thought it more right and honorable to endure whatever penalty the city ordered rather than escape and run away" (98E-99A).

⁵³Socrates does not give a detailed explanation of the way that he thinks the Forms act as causes, and he warned earlier that he would not provide such detail when he told Cebes "I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship [between the Forms and their effects]" (100D). For a discussion of what might be conjectured regarding Socrates' presentation of the relation between the Forms and particulars at this point in the dialogue see Gallop, *ibid.*, 182-184.

that we will turn to below, that the soul will not admit what Socrates takes to be its opposite (death) and so must be able to live continuously, begins by assuming a theory of the transcendent Forms.

After Cebes agrees that the Forms exist and act as the cause of particular things in the world, Socrates turns more directly to his fourth proof. He begins by reflecting on the nature of the Forms, and arrives at the conclusion that there are Forms that may be thought of as being opposite to each other. For instance, he takes Tallness and Shortness, and the Forms Odd and Even to be opposites such as he has in mind. In both examples Socrates thinks that neither Form can become like or ever admit its opposite Form.

At this point in the argument, however, Phaedo breaks into his telling of the account of Socrates' final conversation and interjects how someone present at the discussion asked how this supposition could be reconciled with an earlier comment that was already agreed to. This interruption allows Socrates to clarify his comments. Phaedo relates to Echecrates how an unnamed participant reminded the group that it had been earlier accepted, in the course of the first argument for immortality, that things having an opposite were generated from their opposites and thus that the larger came from the smaller and vice versa (103A). Phaedo recalls how this person pointed out that the earlier view seems irreconcilable with the latter idea that an opposite will never admit an opposite. According to Phaedo this question allowed Socrates to better clarify his point. He says Socrates replied to the questioner in the following manner:

You have bravely reminded us, but you do not understand the difference between what is said now and what was said then, which was that an opposite thing came from an opposite thing; now we say that the opposite itself could never become opposite to itself, neither that in us nor that in nature. 103A-B

Socrates goes on to explain how then he was talking about things that have opposite

qualities, whereas now he is claiming that these opposites themselves "from the presence of which in them things get their name" (i.e. the Forms) can never admit their own opposite (103B). But what exactly does this mean? To clarify, Socrates has Cebes agree to a set of relations that are opposing by admitting that as hot is distinct from fire, so also cold is distinct from snow (103D). On the principle that a thing cannot become opposite to itself I take Socrates to be meaning that, in terms of the opposite relations just mentioned, it is inconceivable that there could be such a thing as "hot-snow" or "cold-fire". As these opposites could not exist at the same time within one object, for the same reason it would be nonsense to suppose that there could be a "dead-soul" – since whatever soul occupies is made alive.⁵⁴

Socrates asks Cebes what coming into the material body makes it a living body? (105C) Cebes, answering correctly, replies that it is the soul. Socrates claims that not only a human body, but whatsoever a soul occupies comes to life. This is an important point to keep in mind. He then takes the argument further by saying that the opposite of life is death. The result of this is that, since life always accompanies soul, the soul can never admit death, since death is the opposite of life. But how is it that the human soul, while itself is not a Form, acts like a Form in not admitting what is opposite to itself? As Socrates says, "Whatever the soul occupies, it always brings life to it" (105D). Socrates tries to show how it is that *soul* will never admit the opposite of that which it brings along with it (namely, life) by giving examples of three Forms (uneven, unmusical, unjust) which do not allow their opposite Forms (even, musical, just) (105D). Socrates has argued that because the Form life always accompanies the soul, the soul would also share

⁵⁴I have benefited from David Bostock's comments on these texts which are given in his study, *ibid.*, 187-189.

the property of not admitting the Form opposite to life *where and when soul is present*.

From the fact that the soul will not admit death, Socrates concludes that the soul is also immortal (ὄθ' ἀνατος). For the purposes of clarification and in response to Cebes' objection made at 87D-88B, Socrates temporarily restricts the meaning of the term 'ὄθ' ἀνατος' to that which merely lasts beyond bodily death. He then elaborates exactly what sort of immortality the above argument implies. Because the soul will not admit death, Socrates also thinks the soul is something that is not even able to be destroyed⁵⁵ (ὄδ' ὑνατον... ἀπ' ὀλλυσθαι) (106B). The soul not being able to be destroyed, in turn, means that the soul is also something everlasting or does not perish⁵⁶ (ἀνώλεθρος), capable not only of existing over a long period of time but indefinitely. Thus, the soul that is immortal (ὄθ' ἀνατος) is not capable of being destroyed, and because it is not able to be destroyed it is also everlasting (ἀνώλεθρος). Socrates temporarily limited the meaning of 'ὄθ' ἀνατος' only to return to it again the fuller sense of the term which now explicitly includes the concept of being something that never ceases to exist.

From the above what further can we know about Socrates' view of the soul? The two obvious features that emerge from the above argumentation are that the soul is a principle of life, and that it lasts forever. In this Chapter we saw that the former feature was mentioned in the first argument we considered, but his explanation of it has been considerably revised within this fourth argument. We noticed at a key point in the argument how Socrates claimed "whatever the soul occupies, it always brings life" (105D). It is from this activity or operation of giving life that Socrates is able to derive a more fully articulate view of immortality. Socrates has been able to show why he thinks

⁵⁵Cf. *LSJ* s.v. ἀπ' ὀλλυμι I.1.

⁵⁶Cf. *LSJ* s.v. ἀνώλεθρος I.2.

the soul that is *ἀθάνατος* is also *ἀνώλεθρος*.

4.2 The *ψυχή* of the genuine philosopher in the afterlife (80D-84B; 114C-E)

In the next two parts of this chapter we leave behind Socrates' explicit arguments intending to prove the soul's immortality. In what follows we will consider how Socrates' view of the soul is made known within texts that deal with the moral character or habits and dispositions of the soul of the philosopher in the after-life. In his description we learn about Socrates' *total* conception of the soul, except for how the soul relates to the body since, as we shall see, the soul separates from the body once the real philosopher has passed through death. After discussing this, in part three of this chapter we will look at texts that show how a genuine philosopher conducts his life while in the body, given what is to come in the next life.

There are two sections in this dialogue where Socrates discusses the soul of the philosopher in the afterlife. The first description comes immediately after Socrates' third proof of immortality and begins at 80D. We recall how in the course of his argument that the soul is more similar to the immaterial Forms than to the body, Socrates had posited that a human is a composite being having body and soul. Completing this argument he then turns to a more detailed discussion in which he describes the goal of philosophy and distinguishes the soul of the philosopher from the soul of the non-philosopher (80D-84B). (Most strikingly in this text, the practice of philosophy is characterized as training for death [81A], an idea that will be explored further in the next section.)

Between 80D and 84B Socrates describes what the after-life will be like for the philosopher. Having sought after its own deliverance in earthly life the soul of the

philosopher eventually will find itself in a disembodied state:

A soul in this state makes its way to the invisible, which is like itself, the divine and immortal and wise, and arriving there it can be happy (εὐδαιμονία ἐῖναι), having rid itself of confusion, ignorance, fear, violent desires and the other human ills and, as is said of the initiates, truly spend the rest of time with the gods. 81A

The nature or essence of the soul of the philosopher (by virtue of its being a human soul) is here clearly depicted as something invisible and divine-like. After death it has no more association with the corporeal. The soul is immeasurably happy. Socrates presents the soul's happiness as coming about in two ways. In the first instance, the soul's happiness after death is achieved as a result of the character of the fellowship and company with which it is now able to keep. The soul of the philosopher is able to be in the midst of the gods (82B). Presumably the soul is also able to keep company with other philosophers as well, but this is, curiously, nowhere stated.⁵⁷ In the second instance, the soul's happiness is achieved as a result of its ability to constantly contemplate what is true and divine and not the object of opinion (84A). The philosopher before death is characterized by his longing to attain knowledge. With respect to the acquisition of knowledge and the activity of learning, what could only be approximated in life can be fully achieved after death.

Between 114C-114E we find Socrates' second description of the soul of the philosopher after death, which comes at the end of Socrates' presentation of the Myth of the underworld. In this Myth Socrates describes the fate of four classes of people who receive four kinds of judgements. He explains how everyone will face a judgement and everyone will be rewarded and punished according to their deeds done in the body

⁵⁷I say 'presumably' because the implications of Socrates' comments at 81A quoted above seem to lead to this conclusion. If the soul of the philosopher makes its way to what is invisible and like itself, and if there are also souls of other philosophers that have undergone a similar purification, then it would seem to follow that these like-purified souls would find themselves in a common fellowship.

(113Dff). Those who lived an average life go the Acheron River in the underworld. The incurably wicked are hurled into the Tartarus River for everlasting punishment; the curable wicked also go to the Tartarus River but for a shorter duration. From among the many human beings the extremely pious and the philosophers are singled out and receive unique rewards for their deeds. The extremely pious are released altogether from the regions of the earth as a reward for their actions (114C). It is the philosophers alone, however, who find themselves completely freed from the body. Those who have purified themselves through philosophy "live in the future altogether without a body; they make their way to even more beautiful dwelling places which it is hard to describe clearly..." (114C).⁵⁸

There are at least three features of the soul that we can gather from the above texts. These features have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter or chapter Three, although we have gained more insight into Socrates' understanding of them. First, Socrates affirms once again the belief that the soul is the seat of the conscious personality. One feature of the person that we have already made reference to is the capacity for rational thought. It is the soul that carries out the activity of thinking. This aspect has again been pointed to in Socrates' claim that a chief activity of the soul of the

⁵⁸I should like to point out that through the telling of the Myth of the afterlife Socrates is doing much more than attempting to outline a logical sequence of ideas. He is endeavouring to persuade his friends to live a good life. The Myth is part of a larger *moral* exhortation wherein Socrates prevails upon his friends to watch over themselves, and that means to take care of their souls. Socrates reasons that because we have good evidence for the immortal soul, certain moral virtues should be sought, which in turn bring with them good dispositions:

...a man should be of good cheer (θαρρεῖν) about his own soul, if during life he has ignored the pleasures of the body and its ornamentation as of no concern to him and doing him more harm than good, but has seriously concerned himself with the pleasures of learning, and adorned his soul not with alien but with its own ornaments, namely, moderation, righteousness, courage, freedom and truth, and in that state awaits his journey to the underworld. 114D-115A.

Socrates has concluded his Myth by admonishing his friends to turn from bodily pleasures to the pleasures of the soul. Having sought to attain virtue in this life the philosopher can expect to face death with confidence. These ethical exhortations recall the spirit of Socrates' remarks made before the Athenian jury at the end of the *Apology*.

philosopher after death will be the contemplation of permanent realities (84A). It is only after death that the philosopher will have clear intellectual vision of the Forms. Second, we are given further insight into how Socrates thinks the body and soul relate to each other. At one point Socrates explained that a difference between the soul of a philosopher and a non-philosopher is that the former are entirely freed from the body after death, while the latter are not. In fact, Socrates went so far as to say that apparitions nearby graves and other burial monuments can be accounted for as the appearances of souls of the dead who have not been fully freed from corporeality (81C). It is because the souls of these persons had not been purified and cleansed from material desires that we are still able to see them – as shades – with our physical eyes. Third, in Socrates' view the soul is capable of attaining virtue. This aspect of Socrates' *total* concept of the soul has already been mentioned but receives additional clarification here. Through his description of the soul in the afterlife we come across an elaborate catalogue of states and acquired habits that modify the activities done through the soul. The virtues of moderation, bravery, righteousness, freedom, and truth are each listed as kinds of excellences that are the adornments of the soul which modify how it carries out its operations (114E). Moreover, the fact that virtue and the soul's separation from the body leads to happiness is perhaps more definitely emphasised here than in other parts of the dialogue that we have looked at (81A). Happiness is the resulting by-product of virtue.

4.3 How the true philosopher lives in this life: Philosophy is the training for death

As we have seen above the ultimate goal of the philosopher is achieved only after death and this in two ways. On the one hand the soul of the philosopher will be happy after

death because it will gain fellowship with the gods. On the other hand the soul of the philosopher will be happy because it will be able to fix its contemplation upon the unchanging Forms. Given the goal of the soul of the philosopher we now ask: how is the philosopher to live in this life?

Socrates says that above all else the philosopher pays attention in this life to care for the welfare of his soul (μέλει τῆς ἑαυτῶν ψυχῆς) (82D). This theme was prominent in Socrates' exhortations in the *Apology* and we see that it also finds a significant place in this dialogue. In the *Phaedo* caring for the soul essentially means that all the philosopher's actions are determined in light of the final goal that he longs after. This goal is the attainment of happiness (εὐδαιμονία) (81A). The soul that avoids association with the body (80E, 81B) by withdrawing to itself and seeking what is intelligible (80E, 83B), rids itself of violent passions (81A, 83B). Rather than seeking bodily pleasure it pursues learning (82C, 83E) and true virtue (82C, 83E), and this kind of soul is able to join the company of divinity in the afterlife.

Given Socrates' answer to this question, the whole of the philosopher's life can be seen as a preparation for death. This is to say that how the philosopher lives in life is determined by the future goal he hopes to attain. The goal is the attainment of happiness and the means by which the philosopher can pursue this goal is to practice purification, or *katharsis* (κάθαρσις).⁵⁹ In what follows I will try to explain what Socrates means when

⁵⁹ According to Burnet Socrates' notion of *katharsis* seems to be ultimately derived from the Pythagorean doctrine (cf. *JB* note 61A3). Gallop says of the general significance of *katharsis* within the dialogue that, "The concept of purification pervades the whole dialogue, and strengthens the Pythagorean associations suggested by its characterization and setting...It is ironic that Athen's concern for her 'purity' should have delayed Socrates' death. His execution was to afford the release of soul from body in which his own 'purification' would be perfected" *ibid.*, 75. Jacob Klein identifies rebirth, purification, as well as related to musical topics, as the main Pythagorean themes that appear within the dialogue. In his footnote (nos.52) he also provides references to ancient and modern commentary on these themes within the *Phaedo*, *ibid.*, 125-127.

he says that philosophy is the training for death and how he presents κἀθαρσις as part of the method by which that training is carried out. Socrates says that all of the philosopher's activities aim at achieving the ultimate goal of attaining fellowship with the gods, uninterrupted contemplation, and in short, happiness (81A).

To understand what Socrates means by κἀθαρσις we need to recall that he believes it is only the soul that can attain knowledge. Furthermore, we need to keep in view that he believes the senses of the body tend to deceive in their representations of the world. Senses are unable to represent objects, material or otherwise, in the most accurate way. The activity of reasoning or thinking, however, is a characteristic particular to the soul. The greater the independence of the soul and its thought from the association with the body, the more possible it is for the philosopher to attain the immediate object of its desire, which is the truth. Through understanding the relation between the locus of thought and its object a method for acquiring knowledge and wisdom becomes recognizable.

The means by which that goal is achieved is through moral purification, by which the soul continually seeks to separate itself from the body with its sense perceptions and its desires. Purification includes the total collection of practices and habits by which the philosopher frees the soul from the association with the body (65A). In this most intimate of settings, Socrates tries to help his friends understand the argument by representing it to them in the form of an image. He likens κἀθαρσις to travelling a path (ἄτραπός) that guides the philosopher out of the confusion that accompanies the close association of the body and soul (66B). We should take note that Socrates' use of an image at this point in the dialogue is for an educational purpose. As such, Socrates

communicates to his comrades in a way that will appeal as well to their reason (in his detailed arguments), as to their imagination (through use of image).

Socrates' image of *κάθαρσις* as a path has two parts. The first part of the image represents the singularity of the philosopher's goal. We might speak of this in other terms by saying that the philosopher's will needs to be unified through the ordering of desires. The less valuable desires of the body need to be evaluated as such in comparison to the more valuable desires of the soul. This re-evaluation happens, initially, through the limiting of bodily desires for material objects; food, sex, and clothing are to be despised except in so far as they are necessary (64E). It is the re-evaluation of the relative importance of bodily desires, and the practical consequences of this re-ordering, that Socrates refers to when he talks of disassociating the soul from the body. In turn, limiting the bodily desires to those which are necessary has the effect of producing a calm within the soul. Apart from achieving this calm, the soul of the philosopher is continually distracted, and its attention divided by the various and conflicting unnecessary pleasures and pains that it experiences through the body (84A). Hence, the first part of *κάθαρσις* is the re-evaluation and limiting of material desire.

The second part of the image of a path represents the skills that are necessary for travelling along the philosophical journey. In this way *κάθαρσις* also includes the acquisition of *arete*. The initial weakening of physical desire is actually only a means to strengthening the soul's natural capabilities for action. Socrates distinguishes two kinds of *arete* to illustrate his meaning. The *arete* attained by the many is gained for the sake of other material pleasures, while the *arete* of the philosopher is gained for the sake of acquiring knowledge:

My good Simmias, I fear this is not the right exchange to attain virtue, to exchange pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fears for fears, the greater for the less coins, but that the only valid currency for which all these things should be exchanged is wisdom. With this we have real courage and moderation and justice and, in a word, true virtue, with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and all such things be present or absent...moderation and courage and justice are a purging away of all such things, and wisdom itself is a kind of cleansing or purification.
69A-C

Purification includes not only the separation of the soul from the body (insofar as this is possible) but also the acquiring of genuine *arete*. Practising the method of *κάθαρσις* the philosopher has hope that he will be able to grasp completely the objects of his longing and attain further knowledge. Socrates calls philosophy the practice of dying because all the activities of a philosophic life are exercises (limiting desire and gaining *arete*) to aid the contemplation of the truth; and truth can be grasped through thought by the philosopher in a manner proportionate to the soul's separation from the body. Thus, linked with the purification of desire, then, is the procurement of philosophical virtue.

Philosophy is the preparation for death because the goal sought while living can be achieved fully only in dying. And as dying is the separation of the soul from the body, for this reason that Socrates faces death cheerfully (68B) and exhorts his friends to follow his example.

From Socrates' description of philosophy as the practice of death what can we learn about the soul? I think there are two points to draw attention to. Foremost, we gain a better understanding of the relationship between the soul and the body. Socrates re-emphasises the fact that the soul can be not only be distinguished, but even partially separated from the body in this life. Through the practice of purification the philosopher is able to loosen the soul's attachment to the body. Secondly, the *value* of the soul is underscored. In the *Phaedo*, much more than in the *Apology*, we find that the good life

consists in the struggle to fight against the desires of the body and free the soul to pursue learning. The philosophical life is more like a religious life wherein the soul is engaged in a struggle for deliverance.⁶⁰ The philosophical life is a profoundly moral life that requires a total reorientation of the person; the soul must turn from material goods to immaterial goods, and apart from this turn of the soul it is impossible to gain happiness and true freedom.

4.4 Conclusion: The *total* concept of the ψυχή in the *Phaedo*

Having examined Socrates' four arguments for immortality, his view of the soul of the philosopher in the after-life, and how the philosopher ought to live on earth, we are now in a position to bring together our findings on the character Socrates' view of the soul in the *Phaedo*. Before I offer what I believe is the *total* conception of the soul, however, I want to point out a few more general observations about Socrates' discussions of the soul in this dialogue and the relation to his comments here to his comments made in the *Apology*.

Although these are obvious differences between the view held in the *Apology* and the *total* concept in the *Phaedo*, there are significant similarities. For instance, in the *Apology* no less than in the *Phaedo* the soul is the acting agent or person, the locus of consciousness, which carries out the activities of thinking. Likewise the belief in the soul as the locus of moral character or habits and the activity of willing, and that it is capable

⁶⁰On this point Robinson notes the significant difference between Socrates' conception of purification and the view dominant within the popular Greek mystery religions of his time: "But if [Socrates] has incorporated the religious notion of purification into his thinking, it is no ritual cleansing, no superstitious placation of the powers that be with meticulous ceremony. True purification is the life of philosophy...or love of learning, or 'philosophic virtue'; all amount to the same thing. Whatever esoteric creeds may have taught, the notion is transformed into something new by Socratic intellectualism. There is no true virtue without intelligence..." *TMR*, 24.

of attaining to greater or lesser degrees of and *arete*, are each affirmed throughout both dialogues. It is clear that in the *Phaedo* Socrates affirms much of what is said about the soul in the *Apology*.

This is a fitting time to recap some of the ground that we have covered in this chapter. In this chapter we looked at the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* from a second point of view, and attempted to make clear features in addition to the *basic* concept. Through the course of the *Phaedo* we noticed a number of features we were able to add to his earlier concept of the soul: (i) that its nature is non-changing and simple, (ii) invisible and intelligible, (iii) that it is divine-like (ruling over the body), (iv) that it carries out the activity of imparting life, (v) that it performs the operation of recollecting, (vi) and that the body and soul are separable; from these features Socrates thinks that we can know three others: that the soul is immortal, that is, (vii) that it must pre-exist the body, (viii) survive death, (ix) and never cease to exist. In part one I tried to show how the activity of thinking includes the operations of both learning and reasoning, as well, I pointed out the list of moral virtues and vices that Socrates made which were derived from his understanding of the nature of the soul as the seat of consciousness. Along-side Socrates' developing idea of the soul was presented a notion of the transcendent Forms. I make no claim as to whether one came before the other in the sequence of the development of Plato's thought, but in the *Phaedo* at least, the argument for the immortality of the soul relies upon the existence of the Forms. Because of the indivisible and invisible nature of the soul, and because the Forms also have an indivisible nature, Socrates argued that the soul is likely immortal as the Forms are immortal. The activities of the soul as animating the body or giving life were also made known there. In fact, all

of the arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo*, in some way, are based on either of these two ideas: the idea that the soul is similar to the Forms (arguments number 2 and 3), or that the soul performs the operation of giving life (arguments number 1 and 4). In parts two and three I both revisited some of the aspects just mentioned and made particular note of the value of the soul and its relation to the body. In the *Phaedo* we have seen that the value of the soul is again emphasised and re-affirmed. In the *Apology* too the soul was portrayed as having value, but in the *Phaedo* Socrates provides more detail trying to back that claim up with arguments. In this dialogue he says that the soul is valuable not only throughout this life but also for the next. Further, the soul is valuable because it is by caring for it and purifying it that we are able to attain happiness. The soul is the most important part of a human being, and the real person. Apart from its health, that is to say, apart from its attaining philosophical virtue, there can be no happiness to speak of. Lastly, in the *Phaedo* the soul and the body are presented as distinguishable and separable entities. Indeed, given Socrates' determination of a human as a composite of body and soul it is difficult to see how one could conceive of personal immortality where the body had any lasting involvement at all.

We may now summarize the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* in terms of the four-fold structure of the concept of the soul highlighted within the introductory chapter to this thesis: the nature of the soul is non-changing and simple, invisible and intelligible, immortal (i.e. pre-existing, surviving death, and never ceasing to exist), and it is the acting agent and self-conscious person; the soul carries out the various activities associated with consciousness including the activities of perceiving, evaluating and willing, and recollecting (particularly the Forms which are immaterial objects of

cognition), the soul also performs the operation of giving life to the body; in relation to the body the soul is that which animates and rules over the body and perceives the material world through the physical senses of the body; the soul acquires both moral and non-moral *arete* which modifies the effectiveness of how it performs the various activities natural to the soul, and, being separable from the body, the soul having been purified by philosophy and acquiring *arete* will outlive the body in a state of everlasting happiness.

Chapter 5

Alternative treatments of the ψυχή in four of Plato's 'middle' dialogues

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I consider a number of alternative treatments of the soul, and particularly features related to its immortality within four of Plato's other major dialogues. In the course of Plato's dialogues we find a variety of at least somewhat different conceptions of the soul presented by the character Socrates, from the immortal and tripartite soul of the *Republic* to the apparently mortal and eros-led soul of the *Symposium*. In this chapter I examine Plato's representation of what the character Socrates thinks of the soul in four of his dialogues that have often been considered, like the *Phaedo*, to fall within the middle period of Plato's writing. I focus for the most part on the features that are related to arguments given for the immortality of the soul. I limit my basis of comparison to the above because of the limitation of space, and because these are the features that provide the basis for the belief in the soul's immortality that have been the focus of our study in the *Phaedo* thus far.

This chapter is divided into five parts. In each of the first four parts I consider a separate dialogue saying something of the context within which the main discussions of the soul arises, and then something of the particular arguments for immortality and the view of the soul that is put forward. I will examine the dialogues in what is sometimes regarded as the chronological sequence in which they have been written⁶¹: *Meno*,

⁶¹The relative chronology of the dialogues which I have listed is based upon the evaluation of stylometric and other evidence as evaluated by David Ross in *Plato's Theory of Ideas, ibid.*, 10. Ross claims to provide only a probable order of the texts, and whether or not this is the actual chronological

Symposium, (*Phaedo*), *Republic*, *Phaedrus*.⁶² In the fifth part I point out what are some of the main differences and similarities between the presentations of the soul in the *Meno*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus* to that given in the *Phaedo*.

5.1 *Meno*: Recollection as the basis for showing the ψυχή to be immortal

The doctrine of the immortal soul does not figure prominently in the overall discussion of the *Meno*, but it does appear at a rather significant juncture in the dialogue. Meno is an accomplished orator and asks Socrates early on in the dialogue whether he thinks virtue (ἀρετή) is something that can be taught (70A). Socrates says he does not know, and soon leads Meno to realize that discovering whether virtue is teachable depends on one being able to answer what virtue is in itself (71B). From then on the main problem that animates much of the dialogue is Meno and Socrates' search for a common definition of excellence or virtue (ἀρετή). After a series of failed attempts at saying what virtue is Meno finally admits that he has come to his wits end, and finds himself stunned in a state of perplexity or *aporia* (ἀπορία) (80A). As a result of Socrates' questions he finds that he is unable to say even what virtue is. He states the dilemma that Socrates has led him into by posing a question: How can one ever find what they are searching for unless one

order of the dialogues is not in the first instance relevant to my own argument. For my purposes I have chosen to look at these particular dialogues because of their *thematic*, and not chronological, similarities to the *Phaedo*. For a good review of the methods and findings of 19th and 20th century research in stylometry and its bearing on the chronology of Plato's dialogues see Leonard Brandwood's essay "Stylometry and Chronology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut, (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 90-120.

⁶²All translations in this chapter are my own. The editions I am using are as follows: R. W. Sharples' modified version of Bluck's Cambridge edition printed alongside Sharples' translation and commentary of the *Meno*, (Warminster, Wiltshire, UK: Aris and Phillips, Ltd., 1985); Kenneth Dover's edition of the *Symposium*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2002); I have referred to the text of the *Republic* printed alongside Paul Shorey's translation (in two volumes) in the Loeb edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1937); lastly, I made reference to the modified version of Burnet's Oxford text printed alongside C.J. Rowe's translation and commentary of the *Phaedrus*, (Warminster, Wiltshire, UK: Aris and Phillips, Ltd., 1986).

already knows beforehand what they are looking for so and identify it when they find it?
(80D)

It is in response to Meno's paradox that Socrates proposes a teaching which includes the theory of the immortal soul. He recounts for his friend the teaching of priests, priestesses, and divinely inspired poets who say that the soul is not only immortal, but also that it has been born many times. This means that the soul existed before it came into a body, and that there was time beforehand for the soul to gain knowledge of many subjects (e.g. geometry, as in the case of the slave boy). The doctrine of reincarnation is suggested as a means of overcoming the impasse that they have found themselves in. Socrates offers the soul's immortality as a way of explaining how learning is actually a process of recollecting things already known before birth. If what is commonly called learning is actually recollection (ἀναμνησις), then Meno's paradox does not apply; the soul need not search for what it doesn't in any way know, since it merely has to recognize and call to mind knowledge that was *previously* acquired.

The doctrine of the immortal soul has both ethical and epistemological implications. On the first count, actions in this life have enduring moral repercussions. Because the soul lives on past death Socrates admonishes Meno that a person must live as piously as possible (81B). On the other hand, Socrates believes that the doctrine of an immortal soul helps to justify his account of learning as remembering. Since the soul existed in a pre-bodily state Socrates can resolve the contradiction pointed to in Meno's paradox by saying that as a matter of fact, "there is nothing that is not learned" (81C).

5.2 *Symposium*: Vicarious immortality and the search for the beautiful

The *Symposium* is a series of encomia delivered in praise of the god Love. In the dialogue Socrates and six of his friends gather to celebrate Agathon's victory at the dramatic contest held during the Lemon Festival at Athens. Instead of spending yet another evening in heavy drinking, at Phaedrus' prompting they give the night over to conversation. Eryximachus arranges his guests in a speaking order and each in turn deliver a hymn of praise to the god. Socrates agrees to go along with the proposal by wryly saying the only thing that he does understand is "the art of erotics (τὰ ἐρωτικῶ)" (177D). Each person in the group takes his turn and Socrates delivers his encomium in the form of a recitation of a speech that he earlier heard from Diotima, a wise woman with magical powers (201D). It is in the course of Socrates' speech that the subject of the nature of the soul and its immortality come up. He says Diotima defined *eros* as the desire for continual possession of good things (206A), and along with it the desire to reproduce and "give birth in the presence of beauty" (206E). Further along Socrates clarifies her meaning by saying that a lover must desire immortality along with the good. The desire to reproduce in its turn is said to be nothing other than an expression of the desire for immortality (206E). In short, by means of love the mortal nature of humans and animals alike seeks so far as is possible "to exist forever and be immortal (ἄε ἵ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος)" (207D).

But what sort of immortality is it that mortals actually can or do attain? Diotima points out that both body and soul are in constant flux: the body, because its physical features are ever changing and coming into being; the soul, because its habits, desires, and knowledge are always changing (208A). She goes on to add that some people are

pregnant with the desire for immortality in their bodies, while others are pregnant in their souls. Immortality is gained by exerting influence to cause change in the world which can be recognized by others. Producing physical offspring no less than deeds of glory are each, in their own way, means to achieve a lasting memory of oneself (208Dff). Through these means people show forth their striving for immortality. What is significant to note is that here the only kind of immortality open for humans to attain is that which is gained vicariously through others.

Socrates goes on to give a more systematic explanation of the desire for immortality and the various ways that love manifests its presence within people. Though all immortality is achieved through the memory of other people, there are distinguishable degrees or kinds of longing that are manifest within people's souls. He reports how Diotima disclosed to himself the ladder of love: an image of the ascent that must be climbed by all people who are to rise to the object of greatest longing of all. People pass through longing for individual bodies, bodies in general, souls, and then arrive at the peak of the ladder. The greatest longing is revealed as the yearning for the Form of the Beautiful itself; the Form of Beauty is that for the sake of which all other things are ultimately desired (210A-210E).

What is striking in Socrates' account of the soul in the *Symposium*, in relation to the account found in the *Phaedo* and each of the other dialogues we are looking at in this chapter (with the qualified exception of the *Meno*)⁶³, is the presence of a doctrine of the transcendent Forms but without a doctrine of the immortal individual human soul. For the vast majority of people the only completion of their longing for immortality is to be

⁶³See R. W. Sharples' comments in his introduction to his translation of the *Meno* where he lists the various ways that the presentation of the forms given in the *Meno* is different from that given in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*, *ibid.*, 11-14.

achieved through sexual reproduction. Their memory and something of their physical body lives on through their offspring. Far fewer people (of the likes of Alcestis and Achilles) achieve a kind of immortality through the remembrance of their noble deeds (208D). Fewer still, such as the great poets and lawmakers of Greece, gain a measure of immortality through the ideas and arguments that they pass onto those who study their works or live under their legislation (209Cff). To the philosopher alone, it seems, is a continuation of their individual soul even suggested, and that only tentatively (212B). The philosophers are the ones who rise above the love of beautiful bodies, rise above the love of fine souls and laws, to gaze upon the Form of Beauty itself (210Aff). Plato has a very developed account of the Forms that in the *Symposium* is the basis for his account of eros within the soul, but he draws no further conclusions about the soul's immortality here.

5.3 *Republic*: The ψυχή is immortal and has three parts

In the *Republic* we find Plato's most sustained treatment of the nature of justice. The dialogue is a discussion of the nature of justice and the relationship between the philosopher and the political community. In it Socrates defends the merits of justice. He sets forth to consider whether justice is in and of itself better than injustice (cf.358D and 612C), and in the end concludes that justice is rightly praised for bestowing good things on those who possess it (612D). In the *Republic* philosophy vindicates justice and the value of leading a philosophical life by proving that justice and the search for a just regime within the soul and within the life of the community brings with it its own rewards that far outweigh the perceived benefits of injustice. In order to evaluate the

merits of justice, however, Socrates must first help his friends to discover what it is. To discover what justice is they turn to an examination of a city in speech, which, Socrates says, is an image of the human soul writ large (cf. 368E and 435C). By viewing the perfectly good city and the perfectly good man, Socrates says: "perhaps searching them out side by side, and rubbing them as though fire-sticks, we would make justice to burst into flame, and becoming clear, we would confirm it for ourselves" (435A). With a view to understanding the nature of justice, then, does Socrates look to describe the nature of the soul.

In the *Republic* Socrates provides a detailed account of all four aspects of the soul that we had earlier said, in Chapter One, together comprise the concept of a human soul. As for the nature of the soul, in the *Republic* it is said to be tripartite. In Socrates' treatment of the *polis* he found three distinct classes of citizens that comprise the population. He goes on to say that a single human would have the same forms in his soul as can be found in the naturally occurring political organization of the perfect city that was constructed in speech by the character Socrates. After much argumentation Socrates eventually feels confident to assert that they have discovered a form and disposition (ἔιδη τε καὶ ἦθη) corresponding to each of the three distinct forms found in the city (435E). First is the calculating part of the soul, the part that is capable of reckoning and reasoning about what is the best course of action to take. This part of the soul is analogous to the ruling class in the city. Second is the irrational or desiring part of the soul. This is the part of the soul's nature by which it loves, hungers, thirsts and is agitated by the other desires (439D). The desiring part is analogous to the moneymakers and merchants within the city who spend their time accumulating wealth. The third part of

the soul is the spirited part. This part is analogous to the warrior class. Socrates says this spirited part is the part of the soul's nature that sometimes makes war against the desires and reproaches the man for desiring base things. As an example of the activity of the spirited part of the soul Socrates recounts a story of a man who once noticed corpses of executed men lying by the public executioner. Upon seeing the bodies he experienced two kinds of desire. The one was an impulse to gawk at the dead men and the second an impulse to turn away from the sight, since looking upon dead bodies is a shameful thing to do (339E). It is the spirited part of the soul that is roused against (or helps to strengthen) the desiring part whenever it is in conflict with the calculating part of the soul (440A). The spirited part of the soul's nature is what helps a man to endure hardships and suffering for the sake of justice or achieving ends the calculating part considers good. Hence, Socrates presents the nature or essence of the soul in the *Republic* as tripartite.

It is through Socrates' description of the nature of the soul as tripartite that we also gain an understanding into his view of the soul's activities or operations. Each of the three parts are responsible for carrying out a different activity that is performed by the soul. In the calculating part the soul's reasoning is highlighted. In the second, irrational part of the soul, we can see the activity of desiring most clearly. Lastly, it is in some relation of the activity of the calculating and the spirited parts that we are able to identify the activity of the soul's willing, or bringing into action what has been determined as the best course of action by the calculating character of the soul.

In Socrates' explicit treatments of early education the relation between the soul and the body is given some consideration. The soul and the body are both distinct and separable parts of a human being. Although the body is clearly subordinate in value and

influence in regards to the education of the soul (403D), the education of the body is also important. In Socrates' description of the philosopher's education, the body has an important role, particularly in relation to the education of the young. The educational goal of early education is to habituate the desire and the will through training by music and poetry (401Aff) and gymnastics (403Dff).

Socrates has a good deal to say about the virtues and vices of the soul in the *Republic*. Socrates' discussion of the virtues in the dialogue show forth his understanding of the fourth aspect of the soul that makes up any conception of the soul. The catalogue of virtues and vices are the possible variations of the habits and states of soul that serve to modify principally the soul's activities, but also its relation to the body. Hence, in the *Republic* the soul that has virtue is able to carry out its own operations well, while the soul lacking virtue is not able to do so. Each of the parts of the soul that comprise its essence has a different and corresponding virtue. The calculating part is virtuous when it acquires *wisdom*, and the ability to discern what is good in every situation (442C). The vice of the calculating part is ignorance and stupidity. The desiring part of the soul is virtuous when it has *moderation*, and the ability to desire what the calculating part determines is good to seek after (410E). Lack of virtue of this part of the soul is recognizable when the desiring part attempts to guide the direction of the activities of the soul, prompting it to give itself over to pleasure and seeking money (442A) and allowing itself to become easily irritable (411B). The spirited part of the soul is said to be excellent when it has *courage*, and the ability to arouse the soul to persevere through hardships for the sake of what is good (410B; 441D). The soul which has not properly trained its spirited aspect will find itself acting harshly, and lose any natural concern for learning

and philosophy. Lastly, *justice* is achieved in the soul when all the parts of the soul's essence work together, or when each part minds its own business (441D). When each of the three parts of the soul has acquired the excellence proper to itself, the soul is able to be in harmony with itself.

We should also briefly say something of Socrates' argument for the immortality of the soul in Book 10. He begins with a definition of good and bad; what brings benefit and saves is good while what destroys and corrupts is bad (608E). Everything, he says, has its own particular corruption and sickness that is suited to its own nature. As rust is to iron, so rot is to wood. In these examples Socrates is pointing out that things can be destroyed only by an evil that is particularly related to itself (609A). Socrates then considers sicknesses of the body and soul. The sickness particular to the body is disease. As he points out, not even bad foods can make the body sick unless the food introduces the sort of disease that is particular to the body itself (610A). He draws the general conclusion that one thing is never destroyed by the evil of another (610A); the application of this principle means that the sickness of the body can have no direct harmful influence upon the soul. Socrates admits that there are things that make the soul bad: injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, and lack of learning each qualify as vices that can harm the soul (608B). However, do these vices actually destroy the soul? He answers that they do not. Socrates observes: when a man is caught doing injustice he is not destroyed, but only harmed, and is able to continue living. Thus, from this empirical observation, and the previous conclusion that each thing has its own evil, Socrates surmises that if vice cannot destroy the soul then nothing will (611A).

5.4 *Phaedrus*: The tripartite ψυχή is an unmoved mover

Socrates' most important discussion of the soul in the *Phaedrus* is found in the middle of his second 'Great Speech' of that dialogue (243E-257B). Socrates and Phaedrus have left the city walls to find a quiet place together to read. They have ventured into the countryside so that Phaedrus may read aloud to Socrates a newly completed speech by Lysias, the famous Athenian rhetorician and speech-maker, on the topic of love (ἔρωτικός). After listening to the speech Socrates gives a reply (237Cff) and lengthy speech of his own (237B-241D). Immediately after concluding his first speech, however, Socrates retracts his statements and sets out upon a second attempt. He says that the reason why he must take back his first speech is because he acted foolishly and impiously (242D). He spoke as though love were something evil; with regret, he now regards this as a terrible thing to have said (242E). Socrates' second and celebrated speech is a Palinode to Love. In it he recounts his former position that madness is an evil (244A) and goes on to describe the types of madness and their benefits to Greece in both public and private spheres. Socrates then considers: why do the gods allow madness to be given to humans at all? He answers it is so that humans may achieve the greatest good fortune (245B). To understand how madness can bring about the greatest fortune to humans Socrates says we must first comprehend the nature of the soul. It is at this point Socrates turns to his proof of the immortality of the soul.

His basic argument is as follows. He claims that whatever always has motion is immortal (τὸ γὰρ αἰεὶ κίνητον ἄθ' ἀνάτων). Now some things move on their own accord, and some things are moved by other things. A first principle (ἀρχὴ) is that which moves things by its own accord and itself never comes into being. And since first

principles never come into being, Socrates' further supposes that they must also never perish and go out of being (245D). An unmoved first principle is immortal because the negation of this would lead to an absurd conclusion, namely, if ever a first principle would die then the whole universe would collapse (245E). The universe would collapse because without the existence of unmoved sources of motion there would be nothing left to impart motion throughout the structure of the physical world. Socrates thinks the ceasing of all motion to be an unlikely event. But how exactly are we to recognize the effects of an ἀρχὴ in the material universe? Socrates says that every body that has its source of motion outside itself is devoid of soul, whereas whatever is self-moved is ensouled (ἐμψυχον). We recognize the effects of the first principles in the universe by observing bodies that have self-generated motion. From his explanation of motion in the world, and the identification of first principles with the cause of motion, Socrates is able to succinctly summarize his understanding of the nature or essence of soul. In short, since whatever is self-moving is immortal “this very thing [i.e. self-motion] is [or is of] the essence and definition of soul (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν τε καὶ λόγον τοῦτον αὐτόν)” (245E). Thus, the soul is something which is both self-moving and immortal (246A).

Having spoken of its immortality Socrates fills in the concept of the soul by means of an image. His image for the soul is of a charioteer and his two horses. The charioteer attempts to guide his horses, but finds one of them is difficult to master and make obedient to his commands. The charioteer represents the reasoning part of the soul. One of the horses is the noble desire within the soul, the other is the irascible and rebellious appetite. The role of the charioteer is to rule over his horses and lead them in the best direction. While doing this, however, he is constantly quarrelling against the

unruly horse which symbolizes the base appetites that try to re-route the direction of the whole chariot and the whole soul.

The soul in the *Phaedrus* is immortal because it is self-moving. And we have seen how Socrates believes that that which has soul within it is imparted motion. Like the *Republic* the soul has three parts. Socrates does not in the *Phaedrus* address the question (as we shall see in section 5.5 that he does in the *Republic*) whether all three parts of the soul are immortal. Also, there is a different emphasis on the nature of the soul than that given in the *Republic*. In the *Phaedrus* the main conflict experienced within a person is between the base appetite and the reasoning part of the soul. We note how the noble appetite has a less significant role to play in Socrates' chief image of the soul. In the *Republic*, on the other hand, the role of the spirited part of the soul's nature was thoroughly described, as were the catalogue of virtues and vices that corresponded to each of the various parts that together make up the soul's essence.

5.5 Conclusion: Alternative treatments of the ψυχή contrasted with the *Phaedo*

Compared to the treatment of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Socrates' treatment of the soul in the *Meno* is minimal. Yet even despite its slight direct treatment the little that we can notice seems to be a significant development from Socrates' view of the soul in the *Apology*. The soul in the *Meno* is associated with the moral character or habits of a person; in this sense the nature or essence of the soul as the centre of rational consciousness is reaffirmed here as it was in the *Apology*. However, the soul is also associated more directly with the activity of recollection. It is from the activity of recollecting that Socrates believes he is able to show that the soul must have a pre-bodily

existence and be immortal. It is a soul that experiences birth and death in an unending cycle of reincarnation.

There is also a significant difference in the way the soul is treated in the *Meno* as compared to the *Phaedo*. For example, Socrates makes use of the arguments for immortality in at least three different ways in the *Meno* than he does in the *Phaedo*. First, in the *Meno* argument for immortality there is no recourse to the doctrine of the immaterial Forms. We recall that in Socrates' view the doctrine of the Forms played a very significant role in the argumentation for immortality in the *Phaedo*. Second, in the *Meno* Socrates presents 'learning as recollecting' as an argument that independently establishes immortality. From this activity of the soul alone Socrates thinks that it must both have pre-existed and be immortal. In the *Phaedo* Socrates seems to have revised his views on the value of this argument. In the *Phaedo* the soul's operation of learning is directly the basis only for the soul's pre-existence, but not its post-existence. The third difference is that in the *Phaedo* Socrates considers an objection to his argument from the activity of learning that he seems not to have anticipated yet in the *Meno*. We recall that in the *Phaedo's* version Cebes asks Socrates if knowledge could have been acquired at the very moment of birth, and thus account for their observations on learning without needing to posit the soul's pre-existence. Where in the *Phaedo* this objection is addressed, in the *Meno* the possibility is not even raised (compare *Men.* 86A with *Phdo.* 76C). In the *Phaedo* there are both new improvements to the argument that the soul's activity of learning shows forth its immortality as well as new objections considered that do not appear within the *Meno*. These differences in the treatment of the soul and the arguments for personal immortality to me, on these grounds alone, suggest a strong

likelihood that the *Meno* was written before the *Phaedo*.

What sort of soul is presented in the *Symposium*? We have a very incomplete presentation of the soul in this dialogue. In it the soul of the philosopher is able to perform the operation of reasoning about the Forms, but Socrates makes no argument for the affinity between the soul and the indivisible Forms as he does in the third argument in the *Phaedo* that we looked at in Chapter Four. Also interesting to note is the relation of the soul to the body in the *Symposium*. In the *Phaedo* the life of the philosopher was depicted in terms of a conflict between the desires of the body (which seek after material goods) and the desires of the soul (which seek after immaterial goods). Thus the conflict for the philosopher is between the body and soul. In the *Symposium* this is not the case, and the desires of the body are seen not in terms of a qualitative but a quantitative difference to those of the body. The desires of the body and soul are placed upon a continuum from good to best. In the *Symposium* it seems unlikely at all that the philosopher could ever rise to the love of the sublime intellectual objects without first having some *eros* for the lower. There is a new common denominator between the two kinds of desire. The presence of *eros* is now recognized within both kinds of longings. The task for the philosopher is not to reject the desires of the body, which seemed the tendency of the *Phaedo*, but to use them as a means for ascending to the objects more fitting for the soul. Regarding the acquired states and habits that qualify the activities of the soul and its relation to the body, again, there is very little said in this dialogue. Perhaps we might say that the chief virtue of the philosopher in this dialogue is a strong *eros*. But it is unclear whether the degree of longing felt within a person is something that may be cultivated or is something given to them by nature.

What is distinctive about the soul in the *Symposium* is that its capability for intellectual contemplation is dependent upon its degree of *eros*. Also, a person may impress their identity upon the memory of others; but it does not appear, at least not for the vast multitudes of human beings, that their soul could possibly live forever.

There are similarities between the *total* concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* and the conception of the soul in the *Republic*. Most prominently, of course, is the fact that the soul in both dialogues is an immortal soul. Moreover, the value of the soul and of its education is also emphasized in both dialogues, as well as the view that the soul's immortality has ethical implications for how a philosopher ought to live in this life. This being said, there are also a great many dissimilarities.

Socrates' conception of the soul in the *Republic* differs from the *Phaedo* in that the nature of the soul in the *Republic* is tripartite instead of simple. In Book 4 Socrates leads Glaucon step by step in a reasoned argument to identify each of the distinct parts. The calculating or reasoning, the desiring, and the spirited parts together make up the essence of the soul. Although Socrates spends a good deal of time describing the three-part soul, and indeed relies upon it to make coherent the analogous description of the three parts of the *polis*, at one point he even acknowledges the possibility that this account may be inaccurate. In Book 10 when Socrates offers his proof for the soul's immortality he raises the following objection: he admits that it is not easy "for a thing to be eternal that is both composed out of many things and whose composition is not of the finest, as the soul now looked to us" (611B). Socrates then qualifies all his previous descriptions of the three-part soul by saying that they have been looking at the soul as it appears to them now, not as it really is. As we see the soul now, he confesses, we see it

in a condition of countless evils. To properly understand it one must look elsewhere. One must look towards "its love of wisdom, and recognize what it lays hold of and with what sort of things it longs to keep company on the grounds that it is akin to the divine and immortal and what *is* always..." (611E). This late qualification, in the end, seems to bring Socrates' account of the nature of the soul much closer to that given in the *Phaedo* than we had earlier supposed. It brings the account of the soul closer to that given in the *Phaedo* because Socrates has suggested that only one part of the soul is immortal, the reasoning part.

In the *Republic* Socrates' account of the relation of the soul to the body appears more developed compared to that given in the *Phaedo*. In the *Republic* the soul is distinct from the body, but unlike the *Phaedo* the *Republic* clearly represents the conflict within a human being as occurring between the various *parts* of the soul. The struggle to become good and wise is a struggle within the soul to bring together into a working harmony the calculating and the desiring parts, and to have the spirited part continually strengthening and encouraging this union between reason and desire. The various states of soul that modify the activities of the soul are also much more fully developed in the *Republic*. Each part of the soul has a corresponding virtue: wisdom, courage, moderation, and the whole soul is said to have justice when each of the parts work together in their proper function. Such a detailed catalogue of virtues and vices is absent from within the *Phaedo*.

There are three interesting points to note when comparing the conception of the soul in the *Phaedrus* to that given in the *Phaedo*. First, like the *Phaedo* the soul is sometimes referred to as "mind" in the *Phaedrus*, as in when Socrates refers to "the mind

of the philosopher” (ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοια) during his second speech (*Phdr.* 249C). I had earlier noted in Chapter Three that Socrates' references to 'διάνοια' as a term for the individual soul was always in places when the activity or operation of rationality and the rational part of the soul's nature was being highlighted. But at another point in the *Phaedrus* Socrates also refers to the soul by means of the term 'διάνοια' when specifically pointing to the irrational activity and irrational part of the soul (265E). Hence, in the *Phaedrus* Socrates either makes a slip or changes his terminology as, perhaps, a means of underscoring the fact that the soul has both a rational and an irrational part to its nature. Second, also in regards to the nature of the soul in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates posits a conception of the soul's nature in this dialogue in a unique way. He says that whatever is self-moving is immortal, and that “this very thing is the essence and definition of soul (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν τε καὶ λόγον τοῦτον αὐτόν)” (245E). In this dialogue alone self-motion is specifically singled out as the nature or essence of the soul, and that by which we can give an account of what it is. Third, Socrates makes use of the theory of recollection to draw attention to the souls' activity of learning, but puts far less emphasis on the argument here than in either the *Phaedo* or the *Meno*.

Chapter 6

General Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I attempt to summarize and make explicit what I take to be the conclusions of the argument of this thesis. My remarks in this chapter are divided into two parts. First, I recapitulate the overall argument of the previous five chapters. Second, I offer some reflections on what I take to be the moral value of Socrates' doctrine of the immortal soul and his arguments for it.

6.1 Summary of the findings of this thesis

We are ready to revisit the primary and secondary questions of this thesis, some of my own methodological procedures that I have employed throughout this study, and the conclusions that I have come to.

In Chapter One, the general introduction to the thesis, I stated that the primary question I sought to answer was a methodological question. I asked: by what method might we best interpret Socrates' comments about the soul in the *Phaedo*? I have answered that the best way to do this was to separate Socrates' comments into a *basic* and *total* concept of the soul. The subsequent chapters of this thesis have been, for the most part, an attempt to substantiate this claim by illustrating its efficacy or explanatory power. I have tried to show that this interpretive tool can help us to answer other secondary questions that fall into two groups. First, by analyzing Socrates' comments about the soul in the *Phaedo* from the point of view of the *basic* and *total* concepts I have been able to identify something about the nature of the arguments in the *Phaedo*, their relation to

each other, and something of their relation to arguments about the soul in a series of other Platonic dialogues. Second, I have been able to identify the features of the soul presented throughout the *Phaedo* which I will list below.

Also in Chapter One, I explained but did not thoroughly justify two methodological procedures that I have used throughout this thesis. In addition to this, I asserted that any conception of the human soul must include four elements: an account of the soul's nature, activities, relation to the body, and the acquired states and habits that modify any of the other aspects. On the other hand, I stated in the first chapter that I did not aim to present an exhaustive interpretation of the dialogue, but rather the view of the soul as given by the character Socrates.

In Chapter Two I looked at the view of the soul in the *Apology*. By turning first to the *Apology* we were able to examine a concept of the soul wherein the character Socrates made no assertion of its immortality; this was a useful exercise because it provided a backdrop against which we could turn to study the *basic* and *total* concepts of the soul in the *Phaedo*. The basic concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* was merely a modification of the complete or whole concept in the *Apology*.

In Chapters Three and Four I analyzed the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* from two different points of view. In Chapter Three, keeping in mind Socrates' view of the soul in the *Apology*, I analyzed the concept of the soul by noting those features given by Socrates that were not used by him to show forth either its pre-existence or post-existence. I tried to show that the *basic* concept of the soul that I separated out in the *Phaedo* is, for the most part, in agreement with the view of the soul in the *Apology*. After applying this interpretive method, at the end of Chapter Three I concluded that the *basic*

concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* was as follows: the defining characteristic or what makes up the essence of the soul is that it is the active agent or the self-conscious person; it performs the activities of thinking (perceiving) and willing (evaluating), and desiring after the knowledge of immaterial objects of cognition; the soul is the locus of moral and non-moral habits and dispositions; the soul is distinct from the body, and (while joined to the body) attains excellence by striving to avoid preoccupation with the desires of the body, or with objects of bodily cognition, as much is humanly possible.

In Chapter Four I articulated those features of the soul that were not only held in common with those recognized in Chapter Three, but also those that were held in addition to the *basic* concept. By the end of Chapter Four we were able to state the *total* conception of the soul in the *Phaedo*. I summarized the concept of the soul in the *Phaedo* in terms of the four-fold structure of the concept of the soul highlighted within the introductory chapter to this thesis: the nature of the soul is non-changing and simple, invisible and intelligible, immortal (i.e. pre-existing, surviving death, and never ceasing to exist), and it is the acting agent and self-conscious person; the soul carries out the various activities associated with consciousness including the activities of perceiving, evaluating and willing, and recollecting (particularly the Forms which are immaterial objects of cognition), the soul also performs the operation of giving life to the body; in relation to the body the soul is that which animates and rules over the body and perceives the material world through the physical senses of the body; the soul acquires both moral and non-moral *arete* which modifies the effectiveness of how it performs the various activities natural to the soul, and, being separable from the body, the soul having been purified by philosophy and acquiring *arete* will outlive the body in a state of everlasting

happiness.

In Chapter Five I briefly looked at the arguments for immortality given within four other Platonic dialogues. Reviewing Plato's conceptions of the soul in the *Meno*, *Symposium*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus* I tried to make explicit the alternative conceptions of the soul within these dialogues. By this exercise I was able to highlight places of similarities and dissimilarities between Plato's concepts and arguments in the *Phaedo* and those within these four other dialogues which are generally considered to have been written during the second or middle period of Plato's writing.

It seems fitting at this point in the thesis to clarify the two main secondary findings that I believe have followed from our procedure with regards to the interpretation of Plato's thought about the soul. The first main secondary finding is concerning the arguments of the *Phaedo*, and has three parts.

First, through my analysis of the *Phaedo* I have been able to illustrate how Socrates is making arguments about features of the soul, and not arguments intending to prove the existence of the individual human soul *per se*. We have seen that Socrates attempts to prove the soul is immortal by showing that the soul has certain features which themselves provide the basis for belief in its immortality. Next, in terms of the relation between the arguments for immortality, I have been able to show that there is a development of the complexity of the arguments themselves. If Plato did not change his views on the conception of the soul throughout the course of writing the dialogue, he certainly presents it as though the character Socrates' views had done as much. In Chapter Four I already highlighted the way that the character Socrates seems to be improving upon his arguments by making additions (e.g. the first to the second argument)

and wholesale revisions (e.g. the fourth argument as compared to the first).⁶⁴ Whether or not Plato wrote this way in the *Phaedo* because of pedagogical aims or because he had not fully thought through the entirety of the argument beforehand is a question I do not need to decide upon. What seems clear enough is that there is a change and a refinement in Socrates' initial ability to describe the aspects of the soul such that his arguments become more sophisticated as the conversation of the dialogue goes on.⁶⁵ Third, when we compare the conceptions of the soul in the *Phaedo* to Plato's other dialogues, my findings seem consistent with or as confirming the generally accepted chronological order of the composition of the dialogues.⁶⁶ I think there are grounds to show that there is development within Plato's view of the soul throughout the so-called middle dialogues, although I make no claim to have demonstrated such a view myself. What is key to note here is that Plato's *Phaedo* represents a highpoint in his developing conception of the soul, but it is by no means the summit. There are many questions and ambiguities that Plato simply does not address in the *Phaedo* that are resolved elsewhere, most notably in the *Republic*. For example, in the *Phaedo* Plato provides a very rudimentary treatment of the virtues and vices of the soul, whereas in the *Republic* this fourth aspect of his concept

⁶⁴Also, in the *Phaedo* Socrates sometimes speaks as though the human is a composite being comprised of a body and a soul (79B, 94B); other times he appears to speak as though body and soul are both subordinate to the ruling of a third super-ego that even governs the activities of the soul (66BC, 67E, 88B). Robinson comments on the way that Socrates sometimes does and sometimes does not speak as though the soul were the locus of the self. On 66B and 67E he writes: "Once more the soul and its possessor seem to be distinguished, as also apparently at 64 E8-65A2. How seriously this is to be taken is hard to say. If it is taken at its face value, the true self will be some sort of super-Ego beyond soul and body, and this will stand in direct conflict with the view of the self as the soul. Be this as it may, what is quite certain is that Socrates wants to flout the greater part of tradition by maintaining that the self or person is definitely *not* the body." *TMR*, 32.

⁶⁵This conclusion is similar to that reached by Martha Beck in her study of the arguments of the *Phaedo* where she sets out to argue the following: "The thesis to be defended here is that Socrates' positions in these three arguments [in the *Phaedo*] become progressively more complex, more comprehensive and more systematic. When the arguments are read in the order presented, each discussion of the immortality of the soul leads to unresolved problems which, in turn, are addressed immediately and directly in the next discussion." *ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶As mentioned, for instance, in David Ross' work, *ibid.*, 1-10.

is refined and given a systematic treatment. Also, in both the *Republic* and *Phaedrus* Plato feels confident to describe the soul's nature in terms of three parts. By reference to the soul's three-part nature Plato is able to give a much more elaborate expression of the soul's activities (reasoning, willing, desiring) and acquired states (virtues and vices).

I say that Plato appears confident to discuss the three-part soul in these two dialogues because there are difficulties inherent in this view that he is also aware of. As Socrates himself admits (*Rep.*611B), a three-part soul makes immortality something more difficult to prove. In the *Phaedo* the arguments for immortality are prominent, and one gets the sense that they are just being worked out for the first time. By the time of the *Republic* the situation is quite different. Plato's clarity about the soul has been sharpened and there is familiarity, as he has Socrates mention, with those "other arguments" for immortality – presumably referring to those already given in the *Phaedo* (cf. *Rep.* 611B). In the *Republic* and *Phaedrus* Plato does not need to insist that an invisible soul must be indivisible or simple; he has found new arguments that do not depend on the kind of distinctions between body and soul argued for in the *Phaedo*. My own findings appear to be consistent with the view that the *Phaedo* was written before both the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic*.

Although the *Phaedo* appears to be written earlier than these two dialogues, it displays a considerable maturity on the subject of the soul and a development when compared to the so-called "Socratic dialogues", and even when compared with the *Meno*. As we have seen in Chapter Two the Socrates of the *Apology* does not know whether the soul is immortal, and he is not even willing to say that he believes it will survive bodily death. The Socrates of the *Phaedo* has gone far beyond the Socrates of the *Apology* in his

willingness to affirm and offer arguments in support of the belief in the immortal soul. One of the arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* has direct resemblance to that given in the *Meno*, although the former is superior to the latter. In the *Phaedo* Socrates answers objections to the argument that did not even arise in the *Meno* and gives a completely new version of the argument from the activity of learning which incorporates a doctrine of the Forms.

The second, and perhaps more important secondary finding that has resulted from analyzing the *Phaedo* from the point of view of the *basic* and *total* concepts is that I have been able to identify the features of the soul that Socrates' presents in this dialogue: the nature of the soul is non-changing, invisible, intelligible, immortal, and it is the seat of the rational self-consciousness of a person; the soul carries out the various activities associated with thinking including the abilities of recollecting, evaluating, and perceiving (particularly the Forms which are immaterial objects of cognition); the soul performs the operation of giving life; in relation to the body the soul is that which animates and rules over the body and perceives through the physical senses of the body; being separable from the body, the soul having been purified by philosophy and acquiring virtue will not only outlive the body, but will do so in a state of everlasting happiness.

6.2 The moral value of Socrates' arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo*

In the *Phaedo* Socrates is concerned to tell us not only what kind of soul we have, but also what its value is and what the implications of his view are for the way that we ought to live our lives. This is to say that there is a moral point underlying Socrates' arguments, and I think that if we miss this point we miss a great deal about what the

arguments themselves are trying to get at. Plato's *Phaedo* is a dialogue narrating the last hours and final discussion of Socrates' life. Socrates has no need to worry about assemblies and the swaying opinions of large gatherings of Athenian men. He is alone with all but a few of his intimate friends. The central event of the dialogue is not the death of Socrates, but the struggle to overcome the fear of death. And right until the end of his life the character Socrates is trying to bestow the benefits of philosophy upon his friends. In the *Apology* Socrates introduced the theme of philosophy as “care of the soul” and this theme runs through the *Phaedo* as well (cf. 107Cff).

But why is it important to prove the soul is immortal? Do we have any clue as to what value Socrates assigns to his arguments, or we might say, what *motivated* him to want to prove to his friends that the soul is immortal? In the dramatic context of the *Phaedo* the arguments for immortality come about as a result of Socrates accepting the challenge to stand on ‘trial’ for a second time. This time he stands on trial not before the Athenians but before his friends with the task of explaining his claims about philosophy. He has to defend his position that a philosopher will calmly meet his death since philosophy itself is a preparation for death. In other words, Socrates has to explain the premise underlying his argument that a philosopher will be one to have good cheer (θαρρεῖν) and be hopeful towards (εὐελπίς ἐνθάτι) death, while all the while refusing suicide and death until it is forced upon him (63E-64A).

Socrates has to defend his belief in the immortal soul if he is going to uphold his conception of philosophy as the practice of death. Socrates says that belief in the immortal soul and its future happiness is a risk or a hazard, but that it is a noble risk (καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος) and one worthwhile taking. At the very end of his pictorial

representation of the afterlife to Simmias and Cebes, he admits that he cannot prove what he has just represented to them, but nevertheless that the image has merit:

No sensible man would insist that these things are as I have described them, but I think it is fitting for a man to risk the belief— for the risk is a noble one (καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος)— that this, or something like this, is true about our souls and their dwelling places, since the soul is evidently immortal, and a man should repeat this to himself as if it were an incantation, which is why I have been prolonging my tale. 114D-E

Belief in the immortality of the soul is so important that one should repeat this teaching as though it were a spell to be chanted continuously. Why is this belief valuable for his friends to hold? And are there any other reasons that we have not explicitly referred to that Socrates might have for wanting his friends to be convinced by these arguments? I think that there are three other motives or ends that Socrates thinks he achieves by his arguments; three reasons why the arguments for immortality are important arguments to make.

First of all Socrates presents himself as though he wants to convince his friends of the argument for personal immortality because he thinks it is true. He says as much during the interlude wherein he warns them against misology, or becoming sceptical of the value of rational argumentation (89D-91D). Socrates is forthright about the fact that he thinks the truth is more valuable than deliberately believing in a deception about the soul's immortality, however noble such a deception may turn out to be. "For I am thinking," Socrates mused, "that if what I say is true, it is a fine thing to be convinced; if, on the other hand, nothing exists after death...my folly will not continue to exist along with me—that would be a bad thing—but will come to an end in a short time" (91A-B). Even though Socrates believes in a doctrine of immortality, we still have to give an account of why he thinks this doctrine would be important enough to spend time on. This

leads us to the second reason.

I believe that Socrates thinks proving the soul is immortal is a valuable argument to pursue because belief in the immortal soul can have positive moral effects on its adherents. Believing that the soul is immortal can motivate one to practice moral virtue. Socrates pointed out to Simmias and Cebes that if death were really the end then there would be a remarkable equality between the good and the bad. Neither would the good be rewarded, nor would the wicked be punished for their deeds if death were the end of human consciousness. This sort of equality between the good and the bad might potentially lead to harmful moral consequences, and the neglect of one's own education. The reason for this is that if death were actually an escape from one's own deeds, then death would hold out for the wicked an easy opportunity to escape the consequences that justice seems to require. The wicked could go free without repentance. On the other hand, Socrates seems keenly aware of how belief in the immortal soul can strengthen one's motive for becoming wise and virtuous. In fact he explicitly pointed this out to his friends: "But now that the soul appears to be immortal, there is no escape from evil or salvation for it except by becoming as good and as wise as possible" (107C-D).

The second reason leads naturally to the third. Socrates presents belief in the soul's immortality as valuable because it can help a person attain happiness in this life and the next. Throughout the dialogue Socrates constantly refers to the philosopher's ability to have good cheer ($\theta\alpha\rho\rho\epsilon\ \hat{\iota}\nu$) in the face of death. Certainly after death the philosopher gains great happiness in the company of gods and the Forms, but even in this life the philosopher lives better than those who act as though as though only material causes existed (98D-E, 118A). In saying this I am not suggesting that the philosopher

practices virtue because of the outcome of a calculated cost-benefit analysis of the results of virtue. Socrates repeatedly rejects such a notion in the most stringent terms (69Aff). No, virtue has its own intrinsic rewards even if its benefits happen to extend into the next life as well. Thus in life, at the moment of departure, and after death Socrates holds out philosophy as the doorway to the happy life.

I think that all of Socrates' comments on the soul in the *Phaedo* are to be understood with a view to each of the above considerations. Socrates wants to convince his friends of the truth of the conclusion of his argument, he thinks belief in the immortal soul helps to provide a rationale for practicing *katharsis* and the pursuit of virtue, and this cultivation of virtue in its turn results in noble action at death and happiness in the bodiless state that follows death. Socrates, no doubt, wants to convince his friends of the doctrine of the immortal soul because he thinks it true, but I have tried to show that there are other reasons as well.

In conclusion, by separating out two conceptions of the soul in the *Phaedo* I have been able to gain other insights as well. By using this interpretive tool, and distinguishing between two concepts of the soul in the *Phaedo* even where Plato has not explicitly done so, we can gain a better understanding of the argumentation about the soul (in three ways) as well as the total view of the soul itself as presented by the character Socrates. The history of the philosophical and theological traditions that developed over the subsequent centuries found in Plato's thought about the immortal soul a wellspring of ideas. Plato's teaching served to give life to the emerging doctrines of the soul that formed under the influence of both Hebrew and Classical Greek thought, brought

together in the teachings of the Christian Church.

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