A DIVISION OF THE MENO

70A Meno proposes a question: whether virtue can be taught

70B-100B Three conversations or discussions following question

70B-80D Conversation on a question before Meno's: what is virtue?

80D-86C Conversation on how it is possible to investigate the unknown

86D-110B Conversation on Meno's original question whether virtue can be taught

First Conversation on What is Virtue (70B-80D)

70B-71D Necessity of knowing what virtue is before

70B-71B Socrates admits that he does not know the answer to Meno's question or to the question that is before

71C-D Socrates says he has met no one who knows while Meno thinks he knows

71E-79D Socrates examines Meno's claim to know what virtue is

71E-74A Meno twice gives examples of virtue rather than defining it.

74B-76E Socrates shows the difference between giving examples of a thing and defining it

74B-75A Difference between giving examples of a thing and defining distinctly what that thing is which is common to the many examples.

75B-76A Socrates exemplifies with the definition of figure

75B-C A weak definition of figure

75C-D Difference between dialectic and contention

75E-76A A stronger definition of figure

76A-E Socrates gives Meno a definition of color in the style to which Meno is accustomed while pointing out that the plain definition is better.

77A-79D Meno attempts to define virtue without examples

77A Socrates urges him to do so

77B Meno's definition: virtue is the desire for good things and the ability to achieve them

77C-79D Socrates examines this definition

77C-78B First part does not separate virtue from vice

78C-78D Defect of second part of definition

78D-79D Failure of attempt to mend second part (examples again)

79E-80D Afterword: Meno is ignorant as well as Socrates so Socrates proposes a joint inquiry into what virtue is.

Second Conversation on How it is Possible to Investigate the Unknown (80D-86C)

80D-E Meno's sophistical objection against the possibility of investigating what is unknown to you

81A-86C Socrates attempts to solve Meno's objection

81A-E Socrates proposes a solution: learning or discovery is recalling

81E-85E Explanation of the solution

81E-82A Meno asks Socrates to explain

82B-85E Socrates exemplifies the solution with Meno's slave

82B-84C Socrates examines the way the slave-boy thinks that a square should be doubled in size.

82B-83E The examination and refutation of the slave-boy's thinking that the side should doubled.

82B-E The slave boy thinks that the way to double a square is to double the side

83A-C The slave-boy's answer refuted by the contradiction to which it leads

83C-E A second guess likewise refuted

84A-C Socrates speaks to Meno of the good effect which the refutation has had upon the reason and desire of the slave-boy.

84D-85B Socrates helps the slave-boy recall or learn how to double a square

85C-E Socrates concludes that the slave-boy is recalling geometry

86A-C Corollaries and conclusions

86A-B Socrates concludes to pre-existence of the soul.

86B-C We should take heart and begin to investigate.

Third Conversation on Meno's Original Question (86D-100B) Whether Virtue can be Taught

86D-87B Foreword

86D Meno asks his original question again which Socrates says is out of order before one knows what virtue is

86D-87B Socrates agrees to consider by hypothetical syllogism

87B-96C Dialectical discussion whether virtue can be taught

87B-89C Hypothetical (if-then) syllogism that virtue can be taught

87B-C First premiss (if-then statement) of hypothetical syllogism

87D-89A Second premiss (simple statement) of hyp. syllogism.

87D-E Virtue is useful or beneficial

87E-88E Nothing of man is beneficial without wisdom or knowledge

89A Concluding to second premiss of main hyp. syllogism.

89A-B Corollary: men become good, not by nature, but by learning

89C Drawing conclusion that virtue can be taught

89C-96C Hypothetical (if-then) syllogism that virtue cannot be taught

89C-D Doubt whether virtue is knowledge and therefore teachable

89D-96C Hypothetical syllogism that virtue cannot be taught

89D-E First premiss (if-then statement) of hyp. syllogism

89E-96C Second premiss (simple statement) of hyp. syllogism

89E-95A Conversation with Anytus

89E-90B Anytus invited to join the conversation

90B-94E Conversation with Anytus

90B-92C Conversation on the sophists as teachers

92D-94E Conversation on good men as teachers.

95A Anytus' anger and Socrates' comment thereon

95B-96C Conversation with Meno: neither sophists nor good men can teach virtue.

96C Conclusion that virtue cannot be taught

96D-99D Socrates gives a solution of the question or problem

96D-98B The defect in the argument for the second premiss of the first hypothetical syllogism

96D-97B Right opinion can be as useful for action as knowledge is.

97C-98B Difference between right opinion and knowledge

97D Meno asks about their difference

97D-98A Socrates makes know their difference (98A"until someone ties these down by consideration of the cause")

98B Socrates says that he knows and does not guess that knowledge and right opinion are different.

98C-D Socrates reasons by disjunctive or either-or syllogism that virtue is not by nature.

98D-99B Socrates reasons by disjunctive syllogism that good men direct by right opinion

98D-99B The argument

98D-E Second premiss

99A First premiss (either-or statement)

99A-B Conclusion drawn

99B Corollary: why good men cannot teach

99C-d Right opinion is inspired by the gods.

99E-100B Epilogue or afterword

99E Restatement of probable conclusion to the question

100A But if someone could teach virtue, he would be pre-eminent

100B We will not be sure of these things until after we know what virtue is.

100B Socrates asks Meno to calm Anytus for the good of Athens

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MENO

We must first define Platonic Dialogue and then consider the *Meno*.

A Platonic Dialogue is a likeness in words of a conversation on a general question, disposing desire for philosophy and exercising reason therein.

The *Meno* is more useful as an introduction to logic than to ethics. In this paper, we shall limit ourselves to the *Meno* as an introduction to logic, without denying its interest or importance for ethics.

After Meno's original question of whether virtue can be taught (70A), the dialogue naturally falls into three parts. The distinction and order of these parts can perhaps be best understood from the definition and division of logic given by Albert the Great in his work *De Praedicabilibus*, Tractatus I.

Albert teaches us that logic is about how to go from a knowledge of the known to a knowledge of the unknown. And he divides logic into two parts, corresponding to the two unknowns which it helps us to know: the simple unknown (we do not know what this or that is) which is made known especially by definition and the complex unknown (when we don't know whether or why this is that) which is made known by syllogism or some other argument

The first of the three main parts of the dialogue (70B-80D) is concerned with the simple unknown and the problem of defining. The example in which this can be seen is taken from ethics: what is virtue and how is it defined.

The third of the main parts (86D-100B) is concerned with the complex unknown, the example being the original question of Meno (whether virtue can be taught).

Plato has separated these two parts by placing between them a discussion of what is common to both of them: the possibility of investigating by reason what you don't know. What is common to both is imaginatively placed between them, a master-stroke.

FIRST MAIN PART OF THE DIALOGUE (70B-80D)

The first main part of the dialogue is useful chiefly for the logic of definition. The first thing to be learned here is a three part distinction in regard

to what is to be defined: the distinction between *examples*, the *name* and the *definition* of what is to be defined. Socrates especially distinguishes between examples of a thing and its definition. Reason is exercised here in trying to find the difference between examples of a thing, the name of it and the definition of it. Some of these differences are brought out by Socrates.

When the distinction of these three is understood, one must try to understand their order. Meno is only one of many characters in the Dialogues who give examples when asked to define something. Plato is here true to our experience where people give examples when asked to define. Two questions naturally arise here: why do people give examples when asked to define? And granted their difference, is there a road from examples to the definition? The first questions leads us back to a road before the road considered in logic: the natural road from the senses into reason. The second question leads to the recognition of the two roads to a definition studied in the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*.

Likewise, we could ask why we usually name a thing before we define it. This leads us back to another aspect of the natural road in our knowledge: we know a thing in a confused way before distinctly.

We can also ask whether all things that have a name in common can also have a definition in common. Socrates points out in his example of figure (74D-E) that the name is said equally of the things of which a common definition is being sought. One could also ask whether this condition is necessary and whether it is sufficient.

Looking at Meno's difficulties, we see that there are two ways in which he fails to hit the definition. He overshoots it or undershoots it. When he defines by examples, he undershoots. But when he defines at 77B, he overshoots. Definition should not go beyond the limits of the thing (like an argument that proves too much or too little). This difficulty of hitting a definition is like the difficulty of virtue, the difficulty of hitting a mean between two extremes. Did Plato, like a good poet, arrange these coincidences?

The two definitions of figure and the definition of color also raise interesting questions for the logic of definition. Why is the second definition of figure better than the first and why is it better than the definition of color?

The Epilogue if this part (79E-80D) is useful for seeing when the examination discussion should be followed by a dialectical discussion. This is when neither partner knows.

SECOND MAIN PART OF THE DIALOGUE (80D-86C)

The second main part of the dialogue is begun by Meno's sophistical objection against the possibility of investigating the unknown. Socrates has proposed a joint dialectical investigation of what virtue is since apparently neither he, nor Meno, knows what virtue is. But Meno's objection against the possibility of any reasoned investigation of the unknown prevents the proposed investigation from beginning. Meno's objection concludes that reason or art cannot direct us to the unknown. If reason knows what it is looking for, it does not have to seek it. If it doesn't know what it is looking for, it has nothing to aim at. If reason doesn't know what the goal is (as a teacher does), how can reason direct to that goal? Further, how would reason knows when it has come to know if it did not know before what it was trying to know?

This objection would destroy logic if (as Albert teaches) the end of logic is to direct us to a knowledge of the simple unknown or the complex unknown. If such direction is impossible, logic is impossible.

One could also say that the objection is especially against the dialectical part of logic in particular. Meno's argument that we can neither know what we are looking for, nor when we have found it, reminds one of the second and third reasons given for dialectic by Aristotle in the beginning of the third book of the *Metaphysics*. (Objections against the other parts of the art of reasoning in particular, such as the art of demonstration and the sophistic art, are found in other dialogues, such as the *Charmides* and the *Sophist*.)

Meno's objection and Socrates' attempted solution (even if the latter contains only a part of the truth and perhaps a sophism or two of its own) indicate one very important way that our mind investigates or finds the unknown which is by untying the knot of apparent contradiction. (This falls under the first of the four reasons given for dialectic in the beginning of the third book of the *Metaphysics*. The fourth and also last reason is exemplified in the third part of this dialogue.)

When Socrates shows in his two discussions with the slave-boy (the first is an examination conversation and the second is a teaching conversation, even though Socrates denies that he is teaching) is that the conclusions of geometry come out of what the slave-boy knows already. This however is not sufficient for saying that the slave-boy is recalling the conclusions of geometry. But it certainly does arouse wonder. Socrates by his questions is not only leading the slave-boy to recall statements he knows already, but to recall them *together*

and in a certain *order*. If this is the first time the slave-boy has put together these statements, this will be the first time that he has seen what follows from them. But what follows from them is a conclusion of geometry. Hence, he may not be recalling the conclusion, but coming to know it for the first time.

This kind of coming to know (which Aristotle speaks about in the beginning of the *Posterior Analytics*) involves recalling, *not* what you come to know or learn, but that through which you come to know. You recall the premisses, not the conclusion. One should perhaps not say that learning is recalling because what is learned is not recalled. But nevertheless there is a recalling of that *through which* one learns.

We have noted above that there are two conversations with the slave-boy. The first is an examination conversation in which the slave-boy contradicts himself, thus showing his ignorance of the way to double a square. The second conversation is a teaching one in which Socrates' ordered questions enable the slave-boy to put together statements already in his mind from which follows necessarily the way to double the square. By asking questions, Socrates not only hides that he is teaching, but also shows that good teaching imitates the way of discovery. If the slave-boy had sufficient ability to bring together by himself the statements which become premisses, he would discover the conclusion by himself.

One can ask here why the examination of the slave-boy is followed by a teaching conversation while the examination of Meno should have been followed by a dialectical conversation as Socrates proposed. The reason is that Socrates knows how to double a square and hence he can teach the slave-boy who does not know. But Socrates does not know (or at least he says that he does not know) what virtue is and hence he cannot teach Meno. But if one guesses that Socrates does know what virtue is, then the reason may be on the side of desire. The slave-boy is humble and hence teachable. Meno is not humble and teachable and his sophistical objection is perhaps a sign of this.

If there is a road from what we know already to what is unknown to us (such as the road from the premisses of a syllogism to its conclusion or the road from examples of a thing to its definition) as the conversations with the slave-boy exemplify, do we have an answer to Meno's objection? Not entirely, because we have not untied or broken down the apparent contradiction that what we are looking for is both known and unknown to us. One cannot know what road to follow (even if there is a road to follow) without knowing where one is trying to go.

Meno's objection uses the fallacy of *simpliciter* and *secundum quid*, of simply and in some way. There is a distinction between what is fully or completely or perfectly so and what is so partially and incompletely and imperfectly. What we are looking for is unknown to us, but known in some way. For example, one can direct oneself to knowing the number of people in a room by counting, not because one knows that number before one counts, but because it is known in some way. If the number is 31, it is not known before the counting. But since one knew that he was looking for the number of people in the room before he counted and 31 is the number of people in the room, it was known is some way. To know 31 in general as a number is not to know it fully or perfectly and hence one can say simply that one does not know the number of people in the room before counting. But knowing in some way what one is looking for (the number of people in the room) is enough to know the road to take to what one does not know (31) which road is by counting.

Logic is like the art of counting and calculating. When you ask what virtue is, you know in some way what you are looking for. You are looking for the definition of virtue, but you do not know yet that definition. Hence, if there is a road, or roads, to take to the definition of a thing (such as the two roads distinguished in the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*), you can know the road to take to what you do not know.

Socrates' solution also involves the mistake of simply and in some way. The conclusion of geometry was not in the slave-boy's knowledge before his conversation with Socrates. The slave-boy did not know how to double the square. In fact, he was mistaken about how this should be done. But in some way, how to double a square was already in the slave-boy's knowledge. The conclusion was in the ability of the statements which became premisses when brought together. But the conclusion did not actually exist until the statements were brought together.

There is also the equivocation of *exist in* whose meanings are distinguished in the fourth book of *Natural Hearing* (usually confusingly called the *Physics*) In English, this is especially crucial because we speak of thinking *out* a definition or division or conclusion (or reasoning *out* a conclusion) and *out* has three different meanings here.

It is interesting to note that Socrates calls the syllogism here a *recollection* while Aristotle in his treatise on recollection and memory calls recollection a *syllogism* in some way (453a 10) The likeness between syllogism and recollection is important and worth investigating further.

On may also note that the argument from recollection for the pre-existence of the soul is much stronger in the *Phaedo* than in the *Meno*. Hence, too, it is more difficult to answer.

THIRD MAIN PART OF THE DIALOGUE (86D-100B)

The third part of the dialogue is useful for the second part of logic in Albert's division which is ordered to the complex unknown.

The dialectical discussion whether virtue can be taught (87B-96C) exemplifies three fundamental beginnings about dialectical reasoning. (It is also of considerable interest for ethics, but we have limited ourselves to the *Meno* as an introduction to logic.)

The first is that dialectic is able to reason to opposite or contradictory conclusions.

The second is that it reasons from probable opinions which need only have a part of the truth. One of the opinions is clearly seen later to contain only a part of the truth.

The third is the form of the syllogism used in dialectic. Although the categorical and hypothetical syllogisms can be used in both demonstrative and dialectical matter, yet the categorical syllogism fits demonstrative matter more and the hypothetical syllogism is more suitable for probable matter. Hence, Aristotle puts together the book on the categorical or simple syllogism, the *Prior Analytics*, with the book on demonstration, the *Posterior Analytics*, even though he notes that the dialectician can use that form too. Likewise, in discussing the fourth tool of dialectic, Aristotle notes its usefulness for the hypothetical syllogism. The ability to see a likeness of ratios is connected with the hypothetical syllogism for four terms cannot be put into the categorical syllogism. And in the formal fallacy opposed to dialectic, he considers the fallacy of the consequence (in the book *On Sophistical Refutations*). Socrates uses the two forms of the if-then or hypothetical syllogism here, reasoning from the affirmation of the antecedent to the affirmation of the consequent and from the denial of the consequent to the denial of the antecedent.

Socrates' solution of the question (96D-99D) is useful for logic as well as for ethics. First we may note that he is untying a dialectical knot while in the second main part (80D-86C), he was trying to untie a sophistical knot (that is a

knot produced by a sophistical argument). Untying either knot can be most useful in finding something or in understanding it better.

Socrates is also in a better position to judge after he has heard both sides. This exemplifies the last of the four reasons given for dialectic in the beginning of the third book of the *Metaphysics*. This dialogue then exemplifies the first and fourth reasons given there and objects to the second and third reasons, the solution of which objections enables us to understand those reasons as well. The second and third reasons are, of course, closely related to the first. For seeing the knot tells where something is hidden; and when you can untie the knot, you have a sign that you have arrived. Hence, the second and third reasons are exemplified as well.

In his solution, Socrates distinguishes between right opinion and knowledge in the strict sense and between guessing and knowing. This distinction is perhaps the most fundamental one in the art of reasoning or the art of argument. In demonstration and hence in reasoned out knowledge, the effect of demonstration, the conclusion is tied down by the bond of the cause. We could say that the knot tied by demonstration is distinct from the knots tied by sophistic and even by dialectic in that the first is a knot that cannot be untied.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act V, Sc. 2, Duke:

> She's fled unto that peasant Valentine,
> And Eglamour is in her company.
> 'Tis true; for Friar Laurence met them both,
> As he in penance wander'd through the forest;
> Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she,
> But, being mask'd, he was not sure of it;
> Besides, she did intend confession
> At Patrick's cell this even, and there she was not.
> These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence.

And it is most interesting that Socrates, who is generally reluctant to claim to know anything, here insists that he knows and is not guessing that there is a difference between right opinion and knowledge. Indeed if Socrates knows that they differ, they must surely differ. But if you say that Socrates is guessing and does not know for sure that they differ, your assertion is making use of the distinction between knowledge and opinion, or assuming it in saying that Socrates does not know the difference, but has only opinion on the matter.

In both the prologue (86D) and the epilogue to this part (100B), Socrates asserts that we will not *know* whether virtue can be taught before we now what virtue is, before we have the definition of virtue. If we put this together with what he says at 97D-98A about knowing by the cause, we may say that he insinuates a connection between cause and definition. This is, of course, of immense importance for logic.

Socrates' solution also involves the use of the disjunctive syllogism so that all three kinds of syllogism are found in the dialogue. We may also note that all four kinds of conversation or discussion distinguished in the second chapter *On Sophistical Refutation* are here exemplified (although some more fully than others).

We have indicated how this dialogue is useful for exercising reason in that part of philosophy called logic. (One could also consider how this dialogue is useful for exercising our reason in ethics, but that would be to go beyond the limits set for this paper.) However, since in our definition of a Platonic dialogue, we said that it also disposes desire for philosophy, we can conclude our remarks by some observations on the role of desire (we mean by *desire* both the will and the emotions) in the philosophical life as exemplified here.

Plato represents the desire of the characters who partake in the conversations. There are four characters here: Meno, Socrates, the slave-boy and Anytus. In Socrates and the slave-boy, we see more dispositions of the desire that help one in the philosophical life. But in Meno and Anytus, we see more the reverse.

In Anytus, we see especially the impediment of anger. Meno suffers from curiosity or the disordered to know. This is seen by his desire to know out of order at the beginning of the third part (86D) and also in his preferring (like Hippias) the flowery and elegant sounding definition to the plain one (76A-E). Both Anytus and Meno are too proud to admit or admit fully their ignorance. Anytus becomes angry and Meno says that Socrates has bewitched him (80A) and attempts to put down Socrates with a sophistical objection (80D).

But the slave-boy is humble enough to admit his ignorance and his refutation arouses his desire to know, as Socrates observes (84A-C). Contradiction or apparent contradiction seems especially to arouse the desire of a philosopher or to strengthen that desire. Both the slave-boy and Meno have been led into contradictions, but the slave-boy has a strong desire to learn how to double the square while Meno hardly seems interested in finding out what virtue is. We must praise the slave-boy, as Samuel Johnson praised the boy who ferried him and Boswell across the waters.

Besides humility to admit ignorance and the desire to know, Socrates also exemplifies the fear of being mistaken (100B) and the fear of taking things up out of order (86D). both of these fears are necessary for the true philosopher. In his attempted solution of Meno's sophistical objection or a the end of it (86B-C), we see how concerned he is about avoiding despair in the investigation of truth and having hope that we can overcome the difficulties that so often face us in that investigation. Just as that despair is the end or destruction of the philosophical life, so also the hope of coming to know is most necessary in that life. This is brought out even more strongly in the *Phaedo*.

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DIVISION OF THE PHAEDO

57A-59E Phaedo agrees to recount the last day of Socrates' life and set the scene

60A-118 The last day of Socrates

60A-61B Preliminary conversations of Socrates

60A Socrates and Xanthippe

60B-C The connection of bodily pleasure and pain

60D-61B Socrates and "music" (61A: "philosophy is the highest kind of music)

61C-107B The two chief conversations or discussions of the day

61C-69E Whether the philosopher should be willing to die (See division of this part below)

70A-107B Whether the human soul is immortal

70A-84B First part of the discussion whether the human soul is immortal (See division of this part below)

84C-107B Second part of the discussion whether the human soul is immortal (See division of this part below)

107C-115A Socrates tells a muthos about the soul after death (See division of this part below)

115A-118 Last words and death of Socrates

115A-116B Last instructions and bath of Socrates

116C-118 Death of Socrates

WHETHER THE PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE WILLING TO DIE (61C-69E)

61C The philosopher should be willing to die, but should not commit suicide

61D-69E Defense of these two statements

- 61D-62C Neither the philosopher nor any other man should commit suicide
- 62D-69E The philosopher should be willing to die
  - 62D-63C The objection of Cebes
    - 62D-63A The objection stated
    - 63B-C The objection answered
  - 63D-E Request for further elucidation and interlude about poison
  - 64A-68B Proof that the philosopher should be willing to die
    - 64A-B The chief syllogism, an if-then syllogism (A), and laughter of Cebes (B)
    - 64C-68B Proof of the premisses
      - 64C-67D Proof of the second premiss of chief syllogism
        - 64C Major of syllogism proving the second premiss of chief syllogism and the definition of death
        - 64D-66A Minor of syllogism proving the second premiss of chief syllogism
          - 64D-65A Shown from moral virtues
          - 65A-C Shown from knowledge
          - 65D-66A Shown from Forms

66B-67D Conclusion and corollaries

66B-67B Only by death can knowledge of soul be freed from impediment of body (67B philomatheis)

67C Catharsis

67D Fetters of body

67D Conclusion: philosophy is an untying or separating of soul from body

67E-68B Manifestation of first premiss (if-then statement) of chief syllogism

68C-69E Corollaries and further conclusions

68C Distress at death is a sign that one is not a philosopher, but a philosomatos (lover of body)

68C-69C Moral virtue is a purification or catharsis from pleasure, pain and fear

69C-D Truth of the mysteries

69E Why Socrates is not troubled at leaving this world

FIRST PART OF THE DISCUSSION WHETHER THE HUMAN SOUL IS IMMORTAL
70A-84B

70A-B Cebes' question of whether the soul survives death of body; even the comic poet cannot question the relevance of the inquiry since we will all die.

70C-80E Socrates reasons that the soul survives death

70C-77A Socrates' first syllogism

70C-D Socrates proposes a chief if-then syllogism

70D-81A Proof of the second premiss (affirming the antecedent)

70D-72D First proof of the second premiss of chief syllogism

70D-71E The first proof

70D-71B Everything comes to be from its opposite, both ways (71B)

71C-D The living and the dead are opposites

71D-E Conclusion to second premiss of chief syllogism

71E-72D Reply to a possible objection (only one direction is clear)

71E-72A Argument from anomaly of nature

72A-D Generation would give out

72E-77A Second proof of the second premiss of chief syllogism

72E Statement of if-then syllogism from recollection

73A-77A Proof of the antecedent or second premiss of this syllogism

73A-B First proof from recollection of conclusions in geometry as in *Meno*

73B-77A Second proof from recollection of beginnings in geometry

73B-74A Description of recollection

74A-75C Application to the Form of equality

75C-D Conclusion to foreknowledge of soul before birth

75D-77A Souls recollect what they knew before

77A-80E Cebes' objection to the proof and Socrates' reply

77A-C Cebes objects that only half of the conclusion has been shown

77C-80E Socrates' reply

77C-D Socrates refers to the first proof (70D-72D) to show sufficiency

77D-80E The longer reply

77D-78A Necessity of longer consideration; their fears

78B-80E Longer proof by if-then syllogism

78B-80B First premiss (if-then statement) established

78B-C The connection between the composed and changing and the simple and unchanging

78D-80A Soul is more akin to the unchanging than the body

78D-79E First proof from reason and senses, Forms and individuals

80A Second proof from soul ruling body

80C-D Second premiss (affirming antecedent) established

80D Conclusion drawn

80E-84B Corollaries and further conclusions from the above.

80E-82B Condition of lovers of wisdom and lovers of body after death

82C-84B Why the philosopher lives in a kind of separation from the body

SECOND PART OF THE DISCUSSION WHETHER THE HUMAN SOUL IS IMMORTAL 84C-107B

84C-88D Objections of Simmias and Cebes

84C-85B Foreword

85C-D Simmias on how to proceed and need of perseverance

85E-88B Objections of Simmias and Cebes

85E-86D Objection of Simmias based on harmony

86E-88B Objection of Cebes that soul may be to the body as man to clothing

88C-D The effect of the unexpected objections upon the will and emotions

88C On those present in the prison: despair of finding the truth

88D On Echecrates hearing it recounted: distrust of all arguments

88D-107B Reply of Socrates

88D-89A Foreword

88D-E Desire of Echecrates to hear how Socrates responded

88E-89a Wonder of Phaedo for Socrates' reply, especially in regard to desire.

89A-91C How Socrates rectified the desire of those present

89A-C Socrates urges them in the person of Phaedo to continue the inquiry

89C-90E Socrates warns them against becoming misologists (haters of argument)

89C-D The warning

89D-90C How men become misologists like they become misanthropes

89D-90B How men become misanthropes

90B-C How likewise they become misologists (90B need for an art about arguments)

90C-D The miserable and pitiable condition of the misologist

90E Socrates urges them to consider not all arguments as unsound, but rather themselves as not sound, and to seek health of mind.

91A-C Socrates urges them to love truth much more than Socrates

91C-107B Socrates replies to the objections of Simmias and Cebes

91C-D Restatement of the objections

91E-107A Reply to the objections

91E-95A Reply to Simmias' objection that the soul may be harmony of the body: soul is not harmony of body.

91E-92E First argument based on recollection

93A-94B Second argument based on there being a harmony of the soul

94B-95A Third argument based on the soul's opposing the body's inclinations

95A-107B Reply to Cebes' objection

95A-B Socrates cautions Cebes against boastfulness

95C-E Restatement of objection

95E-107B Reply to the objection

95E-96A Order of proceeding

96A-107A Following this order

96A-102A Socrates recalls his investigation of nature and the causes of generation and corruption

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PHAEDO TALK

The *Phaedo* is one of the major dialogues of Plato. And before considering the *Phaedo* in particular, we should ask what is a *platonic dialogue*. It is an imitation or likeness of a conversation about a philosophical question (or questions) exercising our reason on that question (or questions) and disposing our will and emotions for philosophy. Our reason is exercised on the question by the defining and reasoning, which are represented in the dialogue. Since man is the most imitative of the animals and at first we learn by imitation, we learn from the dialogues how to go about answering a philosophical question. The dialogue also disposes our will and emotions for philosophy by showing how the dispositions of will and emotion in the characters of the dialogue either help or impede them in answering the question(s) of the dialogue. One advantage of the dialogues of Plato over a philosophical treatise is that the dispositions of will and emotion that help or impede one in philosophy can be clearly represented while in a treatise the dispositions of the will and emotions may be hidden.

The *Phaedo* is a likeness of a conversation on the last day of Socrates' life when he is in prison awaiting his death at the sentence of the Athenian court. Phaedo narrates the conversations of that day to Echecrates. The largest parts of the *Phaedo* are two conversations on two philosophical questions and a *muthos* or myth told by Socrates. The first long conversation is about the question whether the philosopher should be willing to die or whether the soul is better off while it is in the body or after it has left the body. This question however presupposes the answer to another philosophical question: does the soul continue to exist after the death of a man? If the soul does not continue to exist after death, there is no reason to ask whether it is better off then. The philosopher would not we willing to die unless (1) the soul continued to exist after death and (2) the soul is in a better state after death than before. The second and longer conversation of the *Phaedo* is about whether the human soul is immortal or deathless. The immediate relevance of these two questions for Socrates and his friends on this day when he is going to die is obvious. But their importance for all of us is inescapable. For we all expect to die some day. After these two long conversations, Socrates tells a long *muthos*, a myth or story, about the soul after death. We can ask later why he stops reasoning and tells a *muthos*.

Before these two long conversations and the telling of the *muthos*, Socrates sends his weeping wife Xanthippe home and remarks on the connection between pleasure and pain in the body as he rubs his legs after being released from his bands and touches upon philosophy as being the

highest music. And after the two long conversations and the telling of the *muthos,* there is the moving scene of Socrates' death.

Before looking at the two main conversations and why Socrates tells a *muthos*, we should look at what is most interesting in the first part of the dialogue. This is the statement of Socrates that philosophy is the highest music. Although the Greek word *mousike* can be understood for all the arts, I think Socrates' remark is more interesting if we think of music in particular. In music, as opposed to noise, there is harmony. The musician aims at the harmony of sounds, but the philosopher aims at a higher kind of harmony. Indeed at two kinds of harmony. When Socrates examined others he found a kind of noise in their heads. One thought did not agree with another. One thought contradicted, or led to a contradiction with, another. As Aristotle observed in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, with the truth all things harmonize. The philosopher then aims at the harmony of truth which involves the harmony of our thoughts with each other and with things. If our thoughts do not harmonize or fit together, they are not in harmony with things. And if they are in harmony with things, they will also be in harmony with each other.

But there is also another kind of harmony which is the end of the practical philosopher. This is the harmony of desire with reason and consequently the harmony of action with reason. This is first considered in ethics. But in political philosophy, we are also concerned with the harmony of citizens or of the classes within the city.

It is important to have seen that philosophy aims at a harmony within the soul (the harmony of our thoughts and the harmony of desire with reason) when we examine later Socrates' arguments against the soul being the harmony of the body.

Turning now to the first major conversation: Socrates intimates that a true philosopher should be willing to die and his friends wish that he would explain this since it seems strange that any man should be willing to die. Before one can know whether the true philosopher should be willing to die, we must know what death is and what true philosophy is. If by the word *soul* we mean the cause of life within living bodies (which is what the Greeks meant by their word *psyche*), then it seems clear that death is the separation of the soul from the body. And if true philosophy involves separating one's soul to some extent from the body, then true philosophy is a practice or exercise in dying. And if these are true, then Socrates can reason that the philosopher should be willing to die; just as the man practicing hitting the ball should be willing to play ball when the time comes.

That death is the separation of the soul from the body seems reasonable right away if by *soul* you mean the cause of life within living bodies, whatever that cause may be. But that the true philosopher is separating his soul from his body to some extent is in need of being shown. How does Socrates show this? The philosopher seeks knowledge and moral virtue and Socrates reasons from both that he is practicing death, that is, separating to some extent his soul from his body. Does one acquire the moral virtues by following the inclinations of the body or by resisting them? Faced with danger, the body inclines one to run away. But one becomes courageous by resisting this inclination of the body when it is reasonable to face the danger, as in the case of a soldier defending his country. But faced with something very pleasing to the senses such as food or wine or a beautiful woman, a man's body is inclined to go to excess in the pursuit of them. A man does not become moderate or temperate or chaste by following these inclinations of the body but by resisting them. Thus the soul becomes virtuous by resisting the body or by separating itself to some extent from the body rather than by following the body. And this separating of the soul from the body could be called a practice in dying since death is the complete separation of the soul from the body. Hence, Christians also talk about mortifying the body and dying to oneself and so on.

But the philosopher also separates his soul from his body to some extent in seeking knowledge. We all know that concentration is essential in acquiring knowledge. The body is first of all a great distraction to the soul, both through what is going on in the body and by what impinges on the senses from outside the body. We speak of the absent-minded professor. His mind seems to be withdrawn from his body and surroundings. Sometimes our mind is so engrossed in its thoughts that we do not realize our hunger until we stop thinking.

The body and the things that act upon our bodily senses are changing all the time, to a greater or lesser extent. But understanding, as the word itself indicates, is possible only of what stands still. Hence, to perfect our reason by understanding, we must turn away from these changing bodily things towards unchanging things such as the immaterial things of geometry and theology.

Thus the soul is perfected both in moral virtue and in understanding by resisting the body or turning away from it. And this partial separation of the soul from the body can be called a practice in dying or the practice of death.

If the philosopher then as a lover of the soul and in his pursuit of the goods of the soul is practicing dying in this life; that is, separating to some extent his soul from his body; then he should be willing to die; that is, undergo the complete separation of his soul from his body. For only in this way can his soul reach complete perfection in knowledge and the moral virtues.

Someone might think that all of this is an argument in support of suicide. Socrates does not try to reason that suicide as such is a bad thing. Rather he says that the soul is in the body perhaps as in a prison, but at any rate at the command of the gods. And that we should not leave the body until the gods approve of our departure by our natural death or death in battle or death at the command of the city.

Socrates seems to be thinking that the soul is the whole man and the body is not really part of us. The body is more a prison. The body impedes and leads astray the soul in so many ways that one could think that the union of the body and the soul is not natural, but that the soul is in the body to be punished or as a prison.

Aristotle, the pupil of Plato, saw that the union of the body and the soul was natural and that the body is part of us. Yet the puzzle remains. Why should the body impede the soul in so many ways? All of this makes one think that human nature has been vitiated by something like the original sin of which Christianity speaks.

If the soul then continues to exist after death and the soul is better off separated from the body than in the body, then the philosopher should be willing to die - for he is a lover of the soul and its good. But for those who have been lovers of the body, death is the worst of all evils because it separates the soul from all that it loves - the body and its pleasures. Socrates says that the stories we hear of the souls of the departed lingering around graveyards are about the souls which were lovers of the body in this life. They wish to get back into their bodies to continue enjoying the goods of the body.

But does the soul continue to exist after death? The friends of Socrates want to know. This leads to the second and longest conversation of the *Phaedo*. This conversation naturally falls into three parts. In the first part, Socrates develops a number of arguments which conclude that the soul is immortal - it does survive death. But Simmias and Cebes towards the end of this part raise some objections and suddenly the arguments of Socrates seem no longer good or, at least, not necessary. The hope that the soul is immortal and that we could know its immortality suddenly turns to despair. There is a distrust of arguments in its favor.

In the second part, Socrates gradually leads them out of this despair and distrust of arguments, and prepares them to investigate further the question of whether the soul is immortal. It is in this second part that we learn much about the dispositions of will (and emotion) which either help or impede or even

prevent the pursuit of philosophy. Likewise, in this part, Socrates says that we need an art about arguments. This, to my knowledge, is the first explicit reference to the need of logic for our reason.

And in the third part of the conversation, Socrates again takes up the investigation of whether the soul is immortal, answering the objections of Simmias and Cebes and strengthening and developing new arguments for the immortality of the human soul.

We should look at each of these parts in some detail.

In his first argument for the immortality of the soul, Socrates brings out two general statements, which he then applies to life and death and the soul.

The first general statement is that *change is between contraries*. Socrates shows this by induction. The dry becomes wet and the wet dries out. The hard becomes soft and the soft hardens or becomes hard. The cold becomes hot and the hot becomes cold. The sick become healthy and the healthy become sick.

The second general statement is that *if both contraries continue to exist in the world, there must be change in both directions*. Thus, for example, if there was only change from hot to cold and not the reverse change, everything would by now be cold and the hot would not exist. Underlying this is the common opinion that things are always changing and the universe has always been, so that if there is only change in one direction, there would only be by now one of the contraries, the one towards which there was change.

Socrates then applies these two statements to life and death and the soul. Living and dead are contraries. And there is change from living to dead or souls are separated from bodies. Now if the reverse or contrary change from the dead to the living does not take place, if souls are not joined to bodies again, then by now all things should be dead and nothing alive. But this is contrary to our experience. There continue to be living and dead things in the world. Hence, souls must be joined to bodies again and not merely separated. Therefore, souls must continue to exist after they have been separated from bodies or they could not be joined to bodies again or enter into bodies again.

Some people object to this argument, saying they see living bodies becoming dead, but they do not see dead bodies coming alive. This however is to miss the point of why Socrates is reasoning. If we saw dead bodies coming back to life or souls reentering bodies, we would not have to reason to this conclusion.

Socrates' argument can be explained by a likeness. If we saw people leaving houses all day long, but we never saw people entering houses; we would have to reason to the latter. Now if people are always leaving houses (as we know), but they never enter them, all houses would be by now empty. But since some houses have people in them now and some do not, we can conclude (although we do not see it) that people must be entering houses. The same could be said of cars and people.

The real weakness in this argument is not brought out in the *Phaedo*. If the separation of the soul from the body (which is death) is a change of place for the soul, then the argument is good; just as the arguments from the house and car. But this supposes that the soul is a substance distinct from the body. For only if the soul is a substance distinct from the body, is it possible for the soul to be where the body is not. But if, as Simmias will suggest later, the soul is only the harmony or order of the body, then the argument will not be good. For when the harmony or order of bodies is lost, the harmony or order cannot go elsewhere since it is essentially something of the body. When students disturb the order or arrangement of chairs in a classroom, that order does not leave and go elsewhere. It no longer exists. And if someone again arranges the chairs in the same order, it is not the same numerically. Not only the change from living to non-living, but also the change from non-living to living must exist as Socrates has shown. Otherwise, nothing would be alive anymore. But this change may be like that from arranged to disarranged chairs and back again. In this case, no one's soul remains after death. But this weakness in the argument is not seen by anyone in the dialogue. However, Socrates remedies this weakness later when he reasons against the soul being the harmony of the body which Simmias suggests in reply to another argument of Socrates. But Simmias does not present this position on what the soul might be as an objection to the first argument, nor does Socrates reply to it as to an objection to the first argument.

The second argument of Socrates is from recollection or recalling. And here it should be known that there is one argument from recalling in the dialogue called the *Meno* which is referred to in this dialogue and another argument which is developed here in the *Phaedo*. And the argument here is more difficult to answer than that in the *Meno*. We must see the difference between these two arguments. But first we must see what they have in common.

Both have the same chief syllogism which is an if-then syllogism, but they differ in how they back up the second premiss in this chief syllogism.

The chief syllogism is thus: If the soul has some knowledge which it did not acquire in this life or in this body, then the soul must have existed before this life or before it was in this body. But the soul does have some knowledge it did not acquire in this life or in this body. Therefore, the soul must have existed before it was in this body. This shows that the soul's existence does not depend upon this body and therefore that the soul will not cease to be because the body is destroyed.

The if-then statement in the chief syllogism is clearly true. This can be illustrated by a simple example. If the teacher meets his students for the first time in the classroom; and in conversation with them, it appears that the students have acquired some knowledge which they did not acquire in this teacher's class, then they must have existed before they were in his class. Since they did not acquire the knowledge in the class, they must have acquired it before the class. And hence they must have existed before the class.

The problem then is to show the truth of the second premiss of the chief syllogism. How can one show that the soul has some knowledge which it did not acquire in this body or in this life? Socrates develops one argument for this in the *Meno* and another one here in the *Phaedo*.

In the *Meno*, Socrates asks the slave-boy of Meno questions and out of the slave-boy's answers comes the way to double a square in geometry. Since Meno has testified to the fact that his slave-boy has never studied geometry, it appears that the slave-boy has some knowledge of geometry which he did not acquire in this life. For the way to double a square comes out of the slave-boy's answers and therefore out of the knowledge of the slave-boy.

Socrates has touched here upon a profound truth about how we come to know in geometry and, more generally, in philosophy. We come to know by recalling together two or more things that we know already. We can know, for example, two statements from which we can reason to a conclusion. But, if we cannot recall these two statements *together*, we cannot reason from them to a conclusion. The questions of Socrates not only help the slave-boy to recall things that he knows already, but to recall them *together* so that he can see their consequence. The slave-boy does not recall the way to double a square. Rather he recalls other things from which he can reason to this conclusion. The slave boy is able to know the way to double a square, but he actually comes to know this only after he has put together (with the help of Socrates) things he knows already. Thus Socrates has not shown that the slave-boy already knew how to double the square. In fact, when Socrates first asks him how to do so, the slave-boy is mistaken as to how to do this. He thinks you double the side and only later realizes this would give you a square four times as big.

But in the *Phaedo*, Socrates reasons, not from the soul recollecting what is a conclusion of geometry, but from its recalling what is a beginning in geometry. This argument is not so easily answered. The geometer knows what equality is. But the material things we know in our body and through our body are not really equal. They approach equality, but fall short of perfect or strict equality. How, Socrates asks, do we make this judgment that the things we know through the body approach, but fall short of equality. We must have a knowledge of equality not gotten through this body and to this equality we compare the material things around us, saying they approach but fall short of true equality.

The strength of Socrates' argument is brought out by a likeness. If you see the painting or statue of some man and you say that it resembles the real man, but is not exactly like him; must you not have a knowledge of the real man before and independent of the painting and the statue? If your only knowledge of the man was through the painting or statue of him, you could not say that it falls short of him.

Thus, if we judge the material things we come to know as not being perfectly equal, but as resembling equality and falling short of it, our soul must have a knowledge of perfect equality gotten before it was in the body.

One could reason in the same way about other things, such as flat surface and perfect happiness.

At this point, Cebes objects. Socrates has shown only half of what he should show. Socrates has reasoned that the soul has existed before the body, but not after. To this Socrates replies that the first argument did touch upon this. If the soul did not continue to exist after death, there would be no souls to come back into bodies. And then by now there would be no living bodies. And in general, one could say that if the soul existed before the body, then its existence does not depend upon the body. And hence it will not cease to be because the body has been destroyed.

Nevertheless, Socrates says that he understands their fears and concern, and he will reason directly to the soul's existence after death.

The direct argument of Socrates to the soul existing after death is an if-then syllogism. The if-then statement is based on the soul being more apt to survive death than the body. *If the body survives death, then the soul survives death* will be the first premiss. We will see in a moment how Socrates establishes that the soul is more apt to survive death than the body. But if he

can show this, he can then reason that if surviving death belongs to the one it is less apt to belong to, even more so will it belong to the one it is more apt to belong to. But we do know that the body, or part of it, the bones, does survive death. Hence, the soul must survive death.

How does Socrates show that the soul is more apt to survive death than the body? He shows that the soul with its reason is more apt to survive death than the body with its eye. For the bodily eye knows this dog, which is corruptible, but the reason knows what a dog is and this does not change. The soul then through reason is in contact with the incorruptible and necessary while the body through its senses is in contact only with the corruptible and contingent. Hence, the soul is more akin to the incorruptible and unchangeable than the body. Hence, it is more apt to survive death than the body.

Again, the soul rules the body, just as the gods or immortals rule men or the mortals. Thus the soul is more like the gods or immortals than is the body. Hence, again it is more apt to survive.

At this point, everyone is satisfied, except for Simmias and Cebes. Simmias has heard the famous opinion that the soul is the harmony of the body, a sign of which is that the soul delights in the harmony of music. There is something godlike in music. Hence, its name which is derived from the Muses. But if the soul is godlike in the way that harmony is godlike, then the soul would not be immortal even though it is in this way godlike. For the harmony of a body does not precede that body in existence, nor does it exist after that body. Hence, although the soul may be godlike, it may not be immortal at all.

Cebes objects that, although the soul is longer lasting than a body, it enters into one body after another, according to Socrates' earlier arguments, and it may eventually corrupt. The weakness of Socrates' argument is brought out by Cebes in a proportion. Just as a soul is apt to last longer than a body, so a man is apt to last longer than a pair of shoes or trousers etc. But a man goes through many pairs of shoes or trousers in his life. And the man gradually wears out himself and finally he puts on a pair of shoes or trousers that will out last him. Maybe my soul is gradually wearing out and, although it outlasts many bodies, eventually it also wears out. So, for all I know, my soul may be now in its last body. Socrates' reasoning is like that of a man who said that someone has not died since his shoes and trousers still exist and a man is longer lasting that a pair of shoes or trousers.

At this point, despair seizes the friends of Socrates. Arguments, which had seemed good, no longer seem to be any good. They begin to despair of knowing the truth about the soul. Such despair in the life of the mind is by no

means uncommon. What is remarkable here is how Socrates leads them out of this despair. He warns them of becoming misologists; that is, haters of argument. And he makes a beautiful comparison between how men become misanthropes and how they become misologists. He says that there are few men one can trust completely. There are some men that should not be trusted at all. Most men are in-between. They can be trusted up to a point. Men become misanthropes by trusting someone they should not trust or by trusting someone more than they should. They should have understood the three-fold distinction of men and understood whether a particular man is to be trusted completely, not at all, or up to some point. By not knowing this, they trusted someone they should not trust or someone more than they should have. When they were let down, they began to distrust all men and in this way they became misanthropes. It is the same with arguments. Some arguments can be trusted completely and some arguments cannot be trusted at all. And some can be trusted up to a point, some more, some less. We need, says Socrates, an art about arguments; an art that would help us distinguish between an argument that can be trusted completely, an argument that cannot be trusted at all, and an argument that can be trusted up to a point.

This is the first time, to my knowledge, that someone has seen the need for logic which is the art about arguments. When Aristotle, the father of logic, thought out and wrote out the basic parts of the art about arguments, his works fall into this three-fold division. The *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* are about the kind of argument which can be trusted completely, demonstration. The *Topics* or *About Places* and the *Rhetoric* are about arguments that can be trusted up to a point. And the book *On Sophistical Refutations* is about arguments which should not be trusted at all.

Just as the misanthrope misses out on one of the greatest goods in human life which is friendship, so the misologist misses out on the other greatest good in human life which is wisdom. For wisdom can be achieved only by arguments.

Socrates urges them not to distrust all arguments, but to distrust their own knowledge of arguments.

Socrates also warns them against loving Socrates more than the truth. Since Socrates wants to think that the soul survives death, he and his friends must be on guard against wishful thinking.

Socrates then resumes the investigation and replies to the objections of Simmias and Cebes. Simmias had objected that the soul might be godlike in the way that harmony is godlike, but he had not proven that the soul is the

harmony of the body. Socrates quickly demolishes the opinion that the soul is the harmony of the body. Since the soul existed before the body, as was shown by the argument from recollection (and this argument has not been refuted in the conversation), and a harmony of the body cannot be before the body, clearly the soul is not the harmony of the body. Moreover, there is a harmony of the soul as when we say that philosophy is the highest kind of music. But there does not seem to be a harmony of harmony. And third, the soul sometimes resists the inclinations of the body, but the harmony of the body would not resist the body's inclinations.

This was so easy that Socrates has to warn them of the opposite of despair - overconfidence and boastfulness. The argument of Cebes will not be so easy to answer. We see here the role of a good teacher in learning. He must encourage the student when the student is discouraged and he must caution the student when he is overconfident.

Cebes is pushing Socrates to come up with a necessary argument. Socrates has been giving reasons for thinking that the soul is immortal, that the soul does not die when the body dies. But Cebes wants the best reason that can be given for the truth of a statement. The best reason that can be given for the truth of a statement is the reason why it must be so. Such a reason contains the cause of the truth of the statement. Hence, when Socrates is, so to speak, pushed to the wall by Cebes to come up with such a reason, he sees the need to recall his experience as a natural philosopher.

It was the natural philosophers before Socrates who most of all looked for the causes of things. The desire which motivated the natural philosophers is well expressed in a fragment of Democritus which has come down to us.

> I would rather discover one cause than be master of the kingdom of the Persians. (Democritus, DK 118)

The natural philosophers discovered that there is more than one way in which something can be responsible for the existence, or the coming into existence, of another. Eventually, by the time of Aristotle, they saw clearly that something could depend for its existence or coming into existence upon as many as four things, but in different ways. *Wood* is responsible in one way for the existence and coming into existence of a wooden chair while the *carpenter* is responsible for the chair coming into existence in another way. And *sitting* is responsible for the existence of the chair and its coming into existence, in yet another way. Even the *shape* of the wood and the *order* of its parts are responsible in some way for the existence of the chair. For there would not be a chair without that shape and order.

Socrates discusses at some length his dissatisfaction with the use of these various kinds of cause by the natural philosophers to explain why things are so. And then he states the usefulness of the kind of cause that is most connected with definition, the form or the what it is of a thing. If we are asked, for example, why an odd number cannot be an even number, we can give a very satisfactory answer in the light of the definition of odd number and the definition of even number. There is an opposition in the definitions of these two whence we can see that one does not admit of the other. For an even number is divisible into two equal parts while the odd number is not.

With the light then cast upon causes by his experience and thinking as a natural philosopher, Socrates then returns to the objection or demand of Cebes that he show that the soul must be immortal.

Socrates first develops some general statements which he then applies to the particular case of the soul and death.

One opposite cannot be the other. The hot cannot be cold, the wet cannot be dry, the hard cannot be soft and so on. This is clearly impossible for then the same thing would be both hot and cold, hot and not hot at the same time; wet and dry, wet and not wet, at the same time; and so on.

The second point is that, if one of two opposites is in the definition of a third thing, in what it is, that third thing also could not admit of the other opposite. If hard were in the definition of butter or pertained to what it is, then butter could never be soft. For this would also involve the hard being soft. But as a matter of fact, hard is not in the definition of butter. So butter can lose its hardness and acquire the opposite softness.

But since odd is in the definition of three or to be an odd number belongs to what three is, not only is it impossible for an odd number to be even, but it is also impossible for three to be even.

We must clearly see this difference before we descend to the question of the soul and death. If one was to define butter, one would not put hard in its definition. If one was to define cloth, one would not put dry into its definition. Hence, the butter can becomes soft and the cloth could become wet. And the reverse is also true. One would not put wet in the definition of cloth even though a cloth may be wet. Likewise one would not put soft in the definition of butter even though butter may be soft. Hence, the cloth can become dry even though the wet cannot be dry. And likewise butter can become hard even though the soft cannot be hard. The butter loses its softness when it becomes

hard and it can do so because softness does not pertain to its definition. or to what it is.

Socrates then applies this to the soul and death. Life and death are opposites so life cannot admit of death, nor can death admit of life. But life is in the definition of soul for the soul is the cause of life in living bodies. But life is not in the definition of body. Hence, a body which is alive can die, just as soft butter can become hard. But since life is in the definition of the soul, as odd number is in the definition of three, it is impossible for the soul to admit of death, just as it is impossible for three to admit of being even.

At this point, even Cebes is satisfied. However, Socrates says later to Simmias that the consideration of the soul is difficult and further thinking would be appropriate on the subject.

After these intense discussions of the questions whether the soul is immortal and whether the soul is better off in the body or outside the body, Socrates tells a *muthos* about the soul after death.

We cannot enter into the details of this *muthos* now, but we can attempt to answer why Socrates should stop his intense reasoning at this point and tell a *muthos* instead.

One reason is that we all need to return to our senses even if we can follow the reasoning. It is natural for man to begin and end in his senses. The *muthos* is sensible in that it is imaginable. Just as Christians enjoy returning to their inward eye or imagination in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, so too the Greek would enjoy this *muthos*.

Second, telling a *muthos* about the soul after death is suitable insofar as the condition of the soul after death is not able to be investigated very much by reason. Socrates' telling a *muthos* may be a sign that he recognizes that the subject is one that is not very accessible to reason. Christ also told parables in part because he was speaking of things that exceed the grasp of our reason and a parable is an extended metaphor.

A third reason for telling a *muthos* is a dramatic one. Just as Shakespeare relieves the tension and intensity of tragedy, such as in *Macbeth*, with a slightly comic interlude, so Plato does not want to pass from the intensity and strain of the two great discussions to the different, but very intense (in an another way) scene of the death of Socrates, his revered master. We need a break so that we can concentrate upon a different intense scene.

Now the time has come for Socrates to die by drinking the hemlock according to the sentence of the Athenian Court. Socrates gives the example of a man who believes that his soul is indeed going to a better place. When Crito asks Socrates where they shall bury him, he replies that Crito will have to catch him first. Socrates is evidently thinking that he is a soul and the body is not Socrates and it is hard or impossible to catch the soul. Socrates' last request is that they sacrifice a cock to Aesculapius, the god of medicine. Socrates is indicating his belief that his soul, when it is separated, will be purged from the errors and vices it has occurred by being in the body.

Phaedo, who has been narrating this last day of Socrates, concludes his narration with a eulogy of Socrates as the best and wisest and most just man they have known.

Perhaps some general reflections are in order here. The study of the soul is the greatest of studies except for the study of those things which are above the soul in the excellence of their natures. Only the study of the angels and the study of God are above the study of the soul. For nothing is more noble than the soul except an angel or God. And the study of the soul is presupposed to a study of the angels or a study of God. We understand the higher immaterial substances by the likeness of our soul to them and by the negation of the natural defects of our soul

There were many opinions about the nature of the soul among the Greeks, some more probable than others. But two probable opinions are touched upon in this dialogue. A probable opinion is not necessarily the whole truth, but a truly probable opinion is apt to have some part of the truth in it. The opinion that the soul is the harmony of the body, although not much defended in this dialogue, has much probability. Likewise, the opinion of Socrates that the soul is an immaterial substance distinct from the body also has much probability. There is a part of the truth in both of these positions. It is not until the second book of Aristotle *About the Soul* that these two parts of the truth were united and the whole truth in general about what the soul is was seen.

Likewise, the truth about the existence of the human soul before or after the body is between the two main positions in the *Phaedo*. The human soul does not exist before and after the body as in the opinion of Socrates, nor does it neither exist before nor after the body, as in the opinion of those who think the soul is the harmony of the body. Rather the soul exists after the body, but not before it, as Aristotle first saw. The reason for this depends upon seeing fully what the soul is.

Aristotle also perfected the arguments of Socrates for the immortality of the soul, especially the last one.

But the *Phaedo* is not only important for its investigation of the soul. It is also extremely important for the light it casts upon what is necessary to undertake any investigation. On the part of the will, one needs not only the desire to know, but also the endurance in pursuing a difficult truth and the reasonable fear of making a mistake. As Socrates shows or exemplifies in his words to his friends, one needs a balance of hope or endurance in the pursuit of a difficult good and the fear of making a mistake in important matters. This is proportional to the Christian need to both hope in God and fear God. Without hope in the divine mercy, the Christian would despair. And without fear of the divine justice, the Christian would become careless and presumptuous. Likewise, without the hope of coming to know the truth, the philosopher would despair and give up the pursuit of wisdom. But without the fear of making a mistake, the philosopher would become careless and fall into many mistakes.

And on the side of reason, one needs logic or the art about arguments as Socrates calls it. It is, of course, Aristotle who is usually called the father of logic. For Aristotle was the first to think out the basic parts of logic.

We can also see, especially in Socrates' first and last arguments for the immortality of the soul, that the philosophy of nature is before the study of the soul.

Given the importance of the study of the soul, it is strange that hardly anyone studies it. It is important for the study of living bodies and it gives us a foundation for logic and ethics. And a knowledge of the soul is the only way to get a glimpse of the separated substances.

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