



# Socrates' Four Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul in the Phaedo: Informal Fallacies, Ambiguities, and Overall Inconsistency

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## Socrates' Four Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul in the *Phaedo*:

### Informal Fallacies, Ambiguities, and Overall Inconsistency

In this paper, I argue that none of Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul can prove it to be immortal. All that the four arguments amount to is an inference to the best explanation. However, this inference to Socrates' best explanation builds up on a series of informal fallacies and ambiguities, leading to inconsistencies in his overall four-fold argument. The fallacies, ambiguities, and inconsistencies will become clear as we navigate Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*.

In the first argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates argue that things come from their opposites. In his own words, "it seems to be a sufficient proof that the souls of the dead must be somewhere whence they can come back again."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the opposite of sleeping is being awake. We fall asleep after being awake and awake after having fallen asleep. According to Socrates, two processes are going on here: one from being awake to being asleep, and another from being asleep to being awake. Socrates claims that this two-process pattern matches the two-step process of being alive and dead. In other words, we are in the state of being dead after being in the state of being alive. Socrates reasons that if we accept the conclusion that things come from their opposites, we are in the state of being alive after being dead, and that is sufficient proof that the soul must exist in the afterlife. For it is the soul that has left the body that is in the state of being dead, and it is the soul that has come into the body that is alive. Thus, the soul must be different from the body: if the body is mortal, the soul must be immortal.

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<sup>1</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 109

Socrates' first argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* can thus be reconstructed as follows:

1. Things come from their opposites
2. The process of coming from opposites is twofold
  - a. We are in the state of being asleep after being in the state of being awake
  - b. We are in the state of being awake after being in the state of being asleep
  - c. We are in the state of being dead after being in the state of being alive
  - d. We are in the state of being alive after being in the state of being dead
3. A substance different from the body must exist in the afterlife that causes us to be in the state of being alive after being in the state of being dead (*instantiation*, 1, 2)
4. It is the soul that brings life to the body
5. The soul is different from the body (*modus ponens*, 3, 4)
6. The body is mortal
7. The soul is immortal (*modus ponens* 6, 7)

The argument is deductively valid, for if things come from their opposites, this process is twofold, and if this process is twofold, one process comes from the other. Thus, if things come from their opposites, then the process of being alive comes from the process of being dead, and vice versa. An objection may be raised with the in-the-text-unstated assumption that something other than the body must exist in the afterlife and that this substance must be the soul. While one may concede that something other than the body must exist in the afterlife to be able to bring life to the body that is in the state of being dead to the state of being alive, it is a rash generalization to infer that this substance must be the soul, for Socrates has not offered

any evidence that this substance must be the soul. The evidence he has provided is that there must be such substance.

Socrates offers an absurd-consequences move if one were to object that there must be a substance. If all bodies were put to death and stayed there with no substance to account for the process of coming back from the body's state of being dead to the body's state of being alive, then all bodies would remain dead, and nothing would be alive. He has not, however, offered any sufficient evidence that this substance must be the soul.

The initial upshot is that although things may come from their opposites, it is not clear that the soul must be involved in bringing a body from being dead to being alive. There may be another substance to make this process happen. So, with the first argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Socrates has failed to persuade an opponent for the immortality of the soul because there might not be any necessary soul in the first place. If so, Socrates' argument also becomes circular in that (1) a soul has to exist in the afterlife to give life to the body that is there in the state of being dead and (2) bring it back into the state of being alive because (3) what gives life back to the body in the state of being dead is the soul that exists in the afterlife. Although the process implies a substance that must be there for it to happen, no independent reason to think it is the soul has been given.

In the second argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates argue that learning is no other than recollection. In his own words, "if those realities we are always talking about exist, the Beautiful and the Good... and we refer all the things we perceive to that reality... then, just as they exist, so our souls must exist before we are born."<sup>2</sup> In other

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<sup>2</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 115

words, we must have learned what we now recollect at a previous time. To have learned what we now recollect, we must have existed at a previous time. Given that it is the soul that exists in the afterlife before birth, a premise of the first argument, the soul learns what it now recollects in the afterlife and forgets it once it takes birth. If the soul can do so, it is immortal because it exists in the afterlife, where it learns what it recollects; it exists after birth, where it recollects what it learned in the afterlife. The soul then survives death.

Socrates bases his second argument for the immortality of the soul on an analogy argument that assumes the truth value of a premise based on the theory of the forms. "We must then possess knowledge of the Equal before that time when we first saw the equal objects and realized that all these objects strive to be like the Equal but are deficient in this,"<sup>3</sup> Socrates claims/ In other words, if  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  are equal is because they share in the form of the Equal,  $E$ . We know  $E$  exists because when we think about  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ , we think about equality,  $e$ , thus recollecting  $E$ . Now, Socrates argues, there is a difference between examples of  $e$  and  $E$ : if  $e$  is deficient to  $E$ , because  $e$  falls short of  $E$ , then we must have had prior knowledge of  $E$  to know that  $e$  falls short of  $E$ . For Socrates, this deficiency is a result of sense perception. In other words, sense perception leads us to realize that all  $e$  we perceive by the senses strives to be  $E$  but falls short of it. Socrates argues that we must have had knowledge of  $E$  before we could have sense perception; otherwise, we would not have been able to refer our sense perception to  $E$  to know that  $e$  comes short of  $E$ . If we started to have sense perception after birth, then we must have acquired  $E$  knowledge before birth. Thus, the soul exists before we take birth.

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<sup>3</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 113

Socrates, moreover, claims that losing knowledge of  $E$  means forgetting  $E$ . In other words, having acquired knowledge of  $E$  before birth, we lose it at birth. We then recover this knowledge of  $E$  by the sense perceptions of  $e$ . This recovery of knowledge is, for Socrates, recollection. Socrates then poses a dilemma: either we were born with the knowledge of  $E$  and continue to know it throughout life, or as we learn in life by sense perception, we recollect  $E$ . He responds to the dilemma by arguing that a person with knowledge could give an account of  $E$  if the person knows  $E$ , but that, as not everybody knows  $E$ , they must recollect  $E$ . It follows, for Socrates, both that our souls must have acquired knowledge of  $E$  before we were born and that our souls existed apart from the body before we were born and had intelligence. Because  $E$  exists, our souls must exist before we are born. The soul is then immortal because it survives death.

Plato's Socrates's second argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* has three sub-arguments within it: an argument for the theory of the forms, an argument for the necessity of knowing a form before birth, and an argument for the soul as the medium by which to know that form leading to the conclusion that the soul is immortal. The sub-argument for the theory of the forms can be reconstructed thus:

1.  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  are equal because they share in the form of the Equal,  $E$
2. When we think about  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ , we think about their equality,  $e$ , and thus recollect  $E$   
(*instantiation*, 1, 2)
3. The person with knowledge of  $E$  must give an account of  $E$
4. Not everybody knows  $E$
5. The person then recollects  $E$  (*modus tollens*, 2, 3, 4)

6. Because the person recollects  $E$ ,  $E$  must exist (*modus ponens* 5, 6)

Although some scholars assert that Plato has never had Socrates argue for the theory of the forms, we see there is an argument for the reality of the form of  $E$  in Socrates' second argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*. An objection can be raised nonetheless that such an argument is circular:  $E$  exists because someone recollects  $E$ , but no independent reason has been given for the reality of  $E$  besides Socrates' inference to the best explanation that because we see equality in several examples of  $e$ , that there must be  $E$ .

The sub-argument for the necessity of knowing a form before birth can be reconstructed thus:

1. Sense perception leads us to realize that all  $e$  we perceive by the senses strives to be  $E$  but falls short of  $E$
2. Because  $e$  falls short of  $E$ , we must have had prior knowledge of  $E$  to know that  $e$  falls short of  $E$
3. We started to have sense perception after birth, so we must have had prior knowledge of  $E$  before birth (*hypothetical syllogism* 1, 2, 3)

If, in the previous argument,  $E$  is just an inference to the best explanation for our knowledge of  $e$ , the argument for the necessity to know  $e$  before birth is, at best inductive, whose conclusion is then only probable but not certain. In other words, although we started having a sense perception of  $e$  after birth, it is only probable that we acquired knowledge of  $E$  and, perhaps even less probable, acquired knowledge of  $E$  before birth. The conclusion of the argument is not certain, at best, probable.

The sub-argument for the soul as the medium by which to know that form leading to the conclusion that the soul is immortal can be reconstructed thus:

1. Having acquired knowledge of *E* before birth, our souls must have acquired knowledge of *E*
2. The soul then exists before we take birth
3. The soul is immortal (*modus ponens* 2, 3)

Suppose the probability for the conclusion of the previous argument is not certain. In that case, the probability for the conclusion that the soul must be the medium to acquire knowledge of *E* is even less certain. It has already been argued that one cannot infer from what the premises of Socrates' first argument for the immortality of the soul imply that it is the soul that must exist in the afterlife. It is only inductively probable then that the soul has acquired the knowledge of a form in the afterlife.

Even if, for the sake of argument, we accept Socrates' inference to the best explanation that it must be the soul, the argument nonetheless continues to be circular: (1) a soul has to exist in the afterlife to give life to the body that is there in the state of being dead and (2) bring it back into the state of being alive because (3) what gives life to the body in the state of being dead so that it brings it back into the state of being alive is the soul that exists in the afterlife. Besides, the soul is now immortal because it had probably acquired knowledge of a form before it gave life to a body that now has life on the condition that the soul probably acquired knowledge of a form before the birth of a body. Then it must exist in the afterlife – thus being immortal. What is probable, however, cannot “must.”



Another objection is raised in the text: though it has been argued that the soul must exist before birth, it has not been argued that it must continue after death. In Simmias' own words, "I do not think myself, however, that it has been proved that the soul continues to exist after death."<sup>4</sup> In other words, because the twofold process in the second argument prioritizes that the living must come from the dead, it has been arguably settled that the soul must exist before we take birth. What has not been argued is that it must exist after death.

Socrates responds to the objection by providing a sub-argument that, given that the nature of the soul must be changeless, it must make its way to the afterlife. In his own words, "if the soul exists before, it must, as it comes to life and birth, come from nowhere else than death and being dead."<sup>5</sup> In other words, if  $x$  is composite,  $x$  is more liable to split up into component parts. It follows that whatever is non-composite is not likely to be split up. For Socrates, if  $x$  always remains the same,  $x$  is most likely not to be composite, whereas  $y$ , which varies over time, is composite. He resorts to the theory of forms as an example: the  $e$  of equal things may change, but  $E$  always remains the same.

By analogy with the soul, Socrates argues that what changes can be perceived by the senses, whereas what does not change cannot. He then deduces that there are two kinds of existence: visible and invisible. Socrates has Simmias and Cebes assume that "the invisible always remains the same, whereas the visible never does."<sup>6</sup> For Socrates, the soul must be invisible if the body is visible. The soul is more likely to remain the same, whereas the body changes. Likewise, because it is more natural for the body to dissolve, whereas the soul is

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<sup>4</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 115

<sup>5</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 116

<sup>6</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 117

indissoluble, although the body remains for some time after death, it is the changeless and indissoluble soul that makes its way to the afterlife. Thus, the soul must continue after death.

Socrates' sub-argument for the conclusion that the soul must continue after death can be reconstructed thus:

1. Whatever is composite is more liable to undergo change
2. Whatever is non-composite is not likely to undergo change
3. What undergoes changes is more likely to be perceived by the senses, whereas what does not undergo change cannot be perceived by the senses
4. Thus, there are two kinds of existence – visible, because it changes, and invisible, because it does not change (*instantiation, 1, 2, 3*)
5. The invisible, because it does not change, always remains the same, whereas the visible, which changes, never does
6. The body is visible, whereas the soul is invisible
7. The body is then that which changes, whereas the soul is that which does not change (*modus ponens, 5, 6*)
8. Because the body undergoes changes for some time after death, it must be the soul that always remains the same that makes its way to the afterlife
9. Thus, the soul must continue after death to the afterlife (*modus ponens 8, 9*)

The main objection to this sub-argument of Socrates' that is nested within his second argument for the immortality of the soul will bring forth his third argument for the immortality of the soul. I want to focus here, however, first on how this argument is inductively probable but not cogent and embeds an informal fallacy of division and, second, on brief objections

posed to this sub-argument. It is not cogent because the probability of the premise that what undergoes changes is more likely to be perceived by the senses does not *prima facie* hold. For example, whenever one looks at the sun, it seems to be the size of a marble. The massive mass of the sun is undergoing changes continually even as one looks at it, and it seems to one to be the size of a marble. Thus, the massive mass of the sun undergoing changes while one looks at it at the size of a marble is not more likely to be perceived by one's senses.

Although an objection can be raised that I am here committing the fallacy of composition – that what is not true of the particular example of the sun implies that it is not true for the general example of what does not undergo changes – I am proposing this counterexample only against the fallacy of division embedded in Socrates' premise that what is true of the general example of what does not undergo change implies that it is also true for a particular example – that of the sun, to which fallacy I just argued that it is not.

There are two other objections anticipated by his sub-argument nested within his second argument for the immortality of the soul – that the soul must continue after death: one of the objections raises the point that the soul is sort of like a harmony to the body. Simmias poses it as “if... the soul is a kind of harmony... when our body is relaxed... without due measure by diseases and other evils, the soul must immediately be destroyed....”<sup>7</sup> In other words, when the body dies, the body is in a state of disharmony. Because it is in a state of disharmony, the soul must have been destroyed because the soul is like harmony to the body. The opponent argues that harmony, related to the lyre that, when played, produces harmony, is invisible, whereas the lyre is visible.

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<sup>7</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 124

The opponent's objection to this sub-argument of Socrates' second argument for the immortality of the soul, which will lead Socrates to put a third argument for the immortality of the soul, can be reconstructed thus:

1. Socrates argues there are two kinds of existence: visible and invisible
2. The lyre is visible
3. Harmony is invisible
4. When the lyre is destroyed, the lyre is in disharmony
5. Harmony must have been immediately destroyed upon the lyre's destruction  
*(hypothetical syllogism 4, 5)*
6. By analogy, the soul is the harmony of the body
7. When the body dies, the body is in disharmony
8. The soul must have been immediately destroyed upon the death of the body  
*(hypothetical syllogism 6, 7)*
9. It is unclear whether the soul exists after death *(modus ponens 8, 9)*

The opponent anticipates an objection of Socrates' to his argument by analogy. The opponent asserts that, for Socrates, although someone breaks the lyre, the harmony is not in disharmony. Harmony must still exist because it would be impossible for the lyre, which is mortal and visible, to exist still. In contrast, harmony, which is divine and invisible, is to be destroyed before what is mortal and visible. In other words, what is mortal must die before what is immortal. Socrates' objection, as posed by the opponent, results from Socrates' reliance on his argument for the theory of the forms.

Since Socrates gives an argument for the theory of the forms mentioned above, there are a few issues with Socrates' objection as proposed by the opponent. Socrates has argued that what is composite is most likely to be visible, divisible, and undergo change. A lyre is a composite object; thus, it is visible, divisible, and undergoes change. When the lyre is destroyed, then, the lyre, while still visible, becomes divided and changed. The problem for Socrates involves an equivocation of the word harmony. There is one harmony,  $h_1$ , that is in the lyre when the lyre is still assembled together. This harmony is referential because it results from the component parts of the lyre. There is another harmony,  $h_2$ , also referential and produced by the component parts of the lyre, but that is picked out beyond the aggregate of the component parts of the harmony. There is thus a lexical and referential ambiguity in the use of the word harmony here. The opponent's and Socrates's use of this ambiguity is at play.

That is why, for Socrates, it would be a contradiction to argue that what is immortal must die before what is mortal: if what is immortal is what gives life to the body, then the mortal must die before what is immortal. Socrates is taking harmony in the sense of  $h_2$  – in other words, Socrates means the harmony produced by the lyre when played. In such a case, it would be a contradiction to argue that this harmony must die before the lyre because the playing of the lyre causes harmony. The harmony only dies after the lyre has been destroyed. The opponent, however, means harmony in the sense of  $h_1$ . In this case, it is not a contradiction to argue that the harmony produced by the component parts of the lyre was destroyed when the lyre was broken because the component parts of the lyre, which formed a harmony, have become disharmonized upon broken. That is why the opponent can claim that it is unclear whether the soul must continue after death. The harmony that exists when played by the lyre

has become non-existent upon the disharmonious nature of the breaking apart of the component parts of the lyre.

The other objection to Socrates' sub-argument nested within his second argument for the immortality of the soul is brief and concerns how long the soul can last after the death of many bodies. In Socrates' paraphrasing of his opponent's words, "Cebes... agrees with me that the soul lasts much longer than the body, but that no one knows whether the soul often wears out many bodies and then, on leaving its last body, is now itself destroyed."<sup>8</sup> In other words, after many births, the soul may be destroyed. The opponent argues that though the soul may last longer than the body, it may be that the soul wears out after being born into so many bodies. At one point, the soul may be destroyed by leaving its latest body.

The second upshot is that it is not clear that a form must exist. The argument for the theory of forms that Socrates provided earlier is circular. Because a form may not exist, it is not clear that it is necessary to know a form before birth. Because there is no such necessity, it is not clear that the soul must be the medium to know a form, thus leading to the conclusion that the soul is immortal. Given that Socrates' sub-argument for the conclusion that the soul must continue after death is what impels him to provide his third argument for the immortality of the soul, I now turn to this Socrates' third argument.

In the third argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates argue that the soul is not harmonious with the body because that would imply that the soul has parts. Socrates poses it as a question: "can this be true about the soul, that one soul is more

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<sup>8</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 129

and more fully a soul than another, or is less and less fully a soul, even to the smallest extent?”<sup>9</sup>

In other words, because the component parts of the lyre produce the harmony of a lyre, the harmony of the lyre is composite by its component parts. Socrates argues that a soul is not like that because the soul is, in the *Phaedo*, a non-composite thing. A non-composite is a single substance that does not subsist on any other component. Thus, the soul cannot be in harmony with the body; otherwise, it would have to be composed of parts.

Furthermore, Socrates charges that because the component parts of the lyre produce the harmony of the lyre, harmony is directed by the component parts of the lyre. By composition, a soul that is like harmony to the body would have to be directed by the body in which it dwells and can become either good or bad. Since Socrates' soul in the *Phaedo* does not have parts, it cannot have a good or bad part. The soul just is. Thus, the soul cannot be a harmony to the body; otherwise, it would contain parts. Moreover, because the component parts of the lyre create harmony, it is affected by the elements of which it is composed. Socrates charges that the non-composite soul is not a thing affected by its parts. It does not have parts in the first place. So, it must rule the body in which it dwells. Thus, the soul cannot be a harmony to the body; otherwise, it would not rule it but would be ruled by the body.

Socrates' third argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* has a series of four sets of inconsistencies embedded in it and can be reconstructed thus:

1. Harmony is a composite thing
2. A composite thing cannot exist before the elements from which it is composed
3. The soul is a non-composite thing

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<sup>9</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 131

4. The soul can exist apart from the body in which it dwells
5. The harmony argument is thus inconsistent (*absorption*, 1, 2, 3, 4)
6. Harmony does not direct its components but is directed by them
7. Each harmony then depends on the way its components have harmonized it
8. The soul as harmony can be either good or bad depending on how it has been harmonized
9. However, one soul is not more or less a soul than another
10. The harmony argument is thus inconsistent (*absorption*, 6, 7, 8, 9)
11. Harmony does not share in disharmony
12. No soul in harmony will share in disharmony
13. The soul has no greater share of disharmony or of harmony
14. Thus, it is not the case that there are good and bad souls
15. The harmony argument is thus inconsistent (*absorption*, 11, 12, 13, 14)
16. Harmony does not rule over the elements of which it is composed
17. Harmony is a thing affected by the elements of which it is composed
18. The soul is not a thing to be directed by the affections of the body
19. The soul rules over the body and masters it
20. It is quite wrong to say that the soul is a harmony (*absorption*, 5, 10, 15)
21. The harmony argument is inconsistent (*absorption*, 16, 17, 18, 19)

It has already been argued that the equivocation of the word harmony is at play throughout this argument, which leads Socrates and his opponents to engage in lexical and referential ambiguities of the word throughout this argument. An example is the meaning



derived from the phrase “before those elements from which it had to be composed.” If Socrates argues that if the opponent believes that harmony, in the sense of  $h_2$ , is a composite thing, he equivocates on the word because the opponent may be using harmony to be a composite thing in the sense of  $h_1$ . Thus, the opponent can maintain that this composite harmony exists in the sense of  $h_2$ .

What the opponent may not be arguing for is that it cannot exist before  $H$ . However,  $h$  exists in the aggregate of the component parts, making it possible for  $h$  to refer to  $H$ . Although the opponent is not claiming that it exists before  $H$ , that is what Socrates’ objection to the opponent relies on. From this, Socrates concludes that the harmony argument is inconsistent. However, it is inconsistent only to the extent that Socrates relies on the equivocation of the lexical and referential ambiguities in the argument.

Socrates’ next moves through the argument become more ambiguous from his equivocated charge of inconsistency. For example, he argues that harmony, or any composite thing, is not in a different state from that of the elements of which it is composed. If by this, he means  $h_1$ , he is, in fact, arguing that the aggregate of the component parts of the lyre cannot pick out a harmony that can refer back to  $H$ . This move, however, contradicts his argument for the theory of the form: because the sense perception of  $h$  created by the aggregate of the component parts must be able to refer to  $H$ , if there is no  $h$  being picked out by the aggregate of the component parts, it is not at all clear what, if anything, refers back to  $H$ .

The third upshot is that what is quite wrong to argue is that the soul may not be harmony to the body, and that the harmony argument is inconsistent. It is not at all clear that the soul, if it is what must continue after death, cannot possibly be a harmony to the body

because of the inconsistencies brought about by Socrates' continued equivocation of the word harmony.

In the fourth and final argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates argue that the soul cannot be destroyed upon death because it will not admit the death of itself. "It is impossible for the soul to be destroyed... for it follows... that it will not admit death or be dead, just as three... will not be even nor will the odd..."<sup>10</sup> In other words, Socrates relies on this fourth argument in his argument for the theory of forms: if there is any *f* besides *F* is because *f* shares in *F*. From this, he provides an argument by analogy: although sense perception tells us that *x* is taller than *y* because of height, *x* is taller than *y* because *x* shares in *T* – the form of tallness. From this, Socrates deduces that each thing comes to be because it shares in the reality from which it comes.

Now, Socrates proposes a thought experiment: that *x* may participate in *F* and  $\sim F$  at the same time, as when one person is taller than another and shorter than another. Socrates argues, however, that although *x* may participate in *F* and  $\sim F$  at the same time, the premise implies neither that *F* and  $\sim F$  share in each other nor that *f* admits  $\sim f$ . Socrates argues that either *f* flees whenever  $\sim f$  appears or is destroyed by its approach. In other words, *f* is unwilling to endure  $\sim f$  and be other than it was, even though *x* may participate in *f* and  $\sim f$  while being the same person. By analogy, Socrates concludes, the opposite itself, *O*, can never become its opposite,  $\sim O$ , though *o* can participate in  $\sim o$ .

Socrates provides a clearer argument by analogy using the number three. For Socrates, *t*, three, is known not only by sharing in *T* but also by sharing in odd, *O*. Thus, *t* is odd but is not

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<sup>10</sup> Grube. *Five Dialogues*. 143

the form of odd,  $O$ . Socrates deduces that not only do opposites not admit each other, but things that, while not being opposite to each other yet contain opposites, do not admit of each other either. They do not admit an  $F$  opposite to that  $f$  that is in them. Thus,  $t$  will either perish or undergo anything else before, while remaining  $t$ , sharing in  $E$ , even, for example.

Besides, Socrates argues, it is not only  $F$  that does not admit  $\sim F$ . That which brings along some opposite into that which it occupies does not admit the opposite to that which it brings along. For example, the  $F$  of  $t$  occupies  $t$  but also  $o$ , odd. So,  $F$  and  $\sim F$  that result in this can never come to it. That is because of  $O$ , whose opposite is  $E$ . The  $F$  of  $E$  never comes to  $t$  because  $t$  shares in  $O$ . Likewise,  $f$ , five does not admit the form of  $E$ , nor will  $t$ , ten, which is its double, admit the form of  $O$ . The double itself is an opposite of something else, yet it will not admit the form of  $O$ .

From all this, Socrates brings back the argument to the soul analogy. He argues that what makes a body hot is not heat but fire. Likewise, what makes a body alive is the soul. The opposite of the state of being alive is the state of being dead. Given that the soul never admits the opposite of what it brings along, the soul does not admit death. Thus, the soul is deathless. What is deathless cannot admit destruction. Thus, the soul cannot be destroyed upon death. The soul is immortal.

Socrates' fourth argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* can be reconstructed thus:

1. There is  $f$  besides  $F$  because  $f$  shares in  $F$
2. Sense perception tells that  $x$  is taller than  $y$  because of height
3.  $x$  is taller than  $y$  because  $x$  shares in  $T$

4. Sense perception is deceptive (*modus tollens* 2, 3)
5. Thus,  $f$  can come to be only by sharing in the particular reality of  $F$
6.  $x$  may participate in  $F$  and  $\sim F$  at the same time
7.  $F$  is never willing to be  $F$  and  $\sim F$  at the same time
8.  $f$  never becomes  $\sim f$  (*modus ponens* 7, 8)
9. Thus,  $O$  never become  $\sim O$  although  $x$  may participate in  $O$  and  $\sim O$
10. Things that always contain the opposites, while not being opposite to each other, do not admit each other
11. Those things, while not being opposite to each other, do not admit  $F$  which is opposite to that  $f$  which is in them (*instantiation*, 10)
12. Thus, not only does  $F$  not admit  $\sim F$ , but that  $f$  which brings along some  $\sim f$  into that which it occupies, while not being opposite to it, does not admit  $\sim f$  to itself (*modus ponens* 10, 11)
13. What makes a body alive is the soul
14. The soul never admits the opposite of that which it brings along
15. The opposite to life is death
16. The soul does not admit death (*modus ponens*, 14, 15)
17. Thus, the soul is immortal (*modus ponens* 16, 17)

The first part of the argument relies on the conclusion for the argument of the theory of the forms. This conclusion does not hold because the argument for the theory of the form is circular. Thus, it is a rash generalization to argue that there is life inside the body because life shares with the soul, given that the form of the soul has yet to be argued for. The argument for

the deceiving aspect of sense perception is thus irrelevant because it tells nothing about the form of the soul – only that if the form of the soul exists, it must be what gives life to the body because sense perception deceives us in thinking that life exists because we see life in the body.

Another objection an opponent raises concerns what prevents the odd, while not becoming even, from being destroyed, and the even from coming to be instead. In other words, the objection concerns what prevents the soul, while being the opposite of the body, from being destroyed, perhaps after many deaths of the body as objected before, and having the death of soul and body come to be instead. Socrates responds by arguing that when we die, our bodies die. Our souls, however, being indestructible, yield the body to death but do not die themselves. However, this is an unsatisfactory answer because it does not explain why the immortal soul has to yield anything at all to the mortal body, its opposite. From this, Socrates concludes that the soul is deathless and dwells in the afterlife, but he has given no independent reason that the soul must be deathless except for the argument that opposites come from each other. This argument, as shown above, relies on the inconclusive conclusion of his argument for the theory of the forms. Thus, it is unclear what Socrates' conclusion for his final argument for the soul's immortality should hold.

Because the rest of Socrates' fourth argument for the immortality of the soul relies both on the dubious conclusion of the argument for the theory of the form and on the assertion, never argued for, that it is the soul, and no other substance, that must exist in the afterlife and give life to the body, the overall argument is only inductively probable. Thus, its conclusion that, given that the soul cannot die because it does not admit what is opposite to it, the soul must be immortal, is only probable and far from cogent.

Thus, none of Socrates's arguments for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* survive logical scrutiny to prove that the soul indeed is mortal. It does not provide an argument even to make it clear whether there must be a soul in the first place, let alone that it may or may not function as a harmony to the body, that one must know it before birth because it does not admit the opposite itself, death, or not.

It is important to note here what I am *not* arguing for: I am not arguing that the soul is not what must exist in an afterlife that brings back the dead body to the state of being alive, nor that it does or does not function as a harmony to the body, nor that one must not know the soul before birth or not. I am arguing that, given the nature of the four arguments Socrates provides for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, none can prove conclusively that such are the cases because there might be no necessity for a soul, as Socrates understands it, in the first place.

That is so because the arguments build up on a series of informal fallacies, starting with the assertion that there is a soul and his circular argument for the theory of forms, which make its conclusion that the soul must be immortal probable at best, uncertain in the least, thus inconsistent. Although some may argue that what Socrates has provided is an inference to the best explanation, that this inference to his best explanation builds up on a series of informal fallacies makes it challenging to take his inference to the best explanation reasonably.

## Works Cited

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