absence of background conditions. Rawls does not mention desert in his discussion, but I believe similar remarks hold there as well.

[18] It must be admitted that in the area of special relations the distinction between desert and entitlement becomes somewhat hazy. Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-87, remarks that English usage on some other points of contact between the two concepts is becoming murky.

[19] Feinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-74, discusses inconclusively the intelligibility of the assertion that a criminal is entitled to punishment.

[20] *Op. cit.*, p. 75, note 17.

[21] Feinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

[22] Could the will of God by itself alter a person's deserts? Feinberg considers this question (p. 59, note 6), and responds negatively. It seems to me that this answer is hasty. For one would like to have a general question answered first: Can the will of God by itself change a person's obligations or rights? If either of these proposals is intelligible it is unclear why a comparable position could not be held with respect to desert.

IMMORTALITY, TRANSCENDENCE AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SOCRATES IN THE *PHAEDO*

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. . . . Socrates walked about, and presently, saying that his legs were heavy, lay down on his back . . . The man . . . kept his hand upon Socrates, and after a little while examined his feet and legs, then pinched his foot hard and asked if he felt it. Socrates said no. Then he did the same to his legs, and moving gradually upward in this way let us see that he was getting cold and numb. Presently he felt him again and said that when it reached the heart, Socrates would be gone.

The coldness was spreading about as far as his waist when Socrates uncovered his face, for he had covered it up, and said—they were his last words—Crito, we ought to offer a cock to Ascelepius. See to it, and don't forget.

No, it shall be done, said Crito. Are you sure that there is nothing else?

Socrates made no reply to this question, but after a little while he stirred, and when the man uncovered him, his eyes were fixed. When Crito saw this, he closed the mouth and eyes.

Such, Echecrates, was the end of our comrade, who was, we may fairly say, of all those whom we knew in our time, the bravest and also the wisest and most upright man.[1]

During the first half-hour the symptoms consists mainly of salivation, nausea, vomiting, and irritation of the pharynx. Later the mouth becomes dry, the patient suffers from thirst, and he is unable to swallow. These symptoms are followed by convulsion, weakening of the lower extremities, and paralysis of the skeletal muscles, those regulating the respiratory movements being the last to be affected. The pupils are nearly always dilated, and the patient may suffer from diplopia [double vision] and amblyopia [early state of amaurosis or blindness] and impaired hearing . . . but consciousness is preserved up to the end.[2]

The quiet dignity of the death of Socrates in the *Phaedo* contrasts sharply and starkly with the actual symptoms of hemlock poisoning. Few interpreters of Plato have found this fact significant, understandably so, I suppose, since many interpreters of Plato are philosophers whose main interest often centers on the arguments for the immortality of the soul. Also, since most interpreters believe that the Socrates of the *Phaedo* is not the historical Socrates but a Platonic creation, they may not be unduly puzzled by the idealization of the death of Socrates.[3] I do find the particular way in which Plato idealized the death of Socrates remarkable.[4] For even though he was absent from the prison on the day of Socrates' death, Plato may well have known the symptoms of hemlock poisoning. Hemlock poisoning was common enough in the Athens of Plato's day, so either he may have actually known the symptoms or he could easily have found them out, if he wanted to depict the event 'realistically'.[5] It is not obvious to me that Plato could not have idealized the death of Socrates while also depicting

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his death 'realistically', unless there was some artistic convention against it.[6] Hence, my initial question: Why did Plato choose to depict the death of Socrates in the particular way he did in the *Phaedo*?

There is no simple, straightforward answer to this question, but I would like to suggest that if we look to the doctrine of reincarnation which sets the context for the discussion of immortality in the *Phaedo* we may get an initial insight. For those who believe in reincarnation, the question of immortality is, Does death have another dimension apart from the cycle of life, death, and life again in some other form? Is death the opposite of life, its contrary, or is there not another dimension (a timeless dimension usually) *within which* the cycle of life and death takes place; is there a dimension of deathlessness? This question arises for those who think of immortality within the context of belief in reincarnation because the purpose of life is to break out of the cycle of birth and re-birth. Without a dimension of deathlessness, the cycle of birth and re-birth has no *telos*, and life, in particular the moral life, would be absurd.

The deathlessness of the death scene in the *Phaedo* suggests an answer to the question of deathlessness—can it be found, and if so where and how? The death scene suggests deathlessness can be found, and found in the soul, and found by living a virtuous life. For the death scene is just that, a scene witnessed by others, not by Socrates. But what is it that is witnessed? Crito's question about the burial suggests that the *persona* Socrates was on to this question and that much is at stake in how one looks at the scene. Bury me in any way you like, Socrates teases Crito, "if you can catch me and I do not escape you" (115c). Would Plato catch the death of Socrates by realistic medical details? Socrates might reply, Not unless "he thinks that I am the thing which he will soon be looking at a corpse" (115d). Though he answers his dear friend Crito playfully, the *persona* Socrates also warns that much is at stake in how we see his death. "For know you well, my dear Crito, that to express oneself badly is not only faulty as far as language goes, but does some harm to the soul" (115e). Crito's question and Socrates' response may alert the reader as to where to look for deathlessness: in the soul of a philosopher. Life with Socrates is not only life with a philosopher but life as a philosopher because Socrates' life, the examined life, is deathless; it is deathless because the examined life is a life recalled, made present, relived, still available, a life of participation in eternal *logos*. And his death is deathless as well because it is a death that affirms his life; it is a death that makes available to his friends participation in the deathlessness of *logos*.[7]

If my hypothesis that the death scene of the *Phaedo* illuminates the kind of immortality Plato had in mind is true, then the idealization of Socrates' death must follow philosophically and dramatically from what has gone before it. My argument in this paper is that the idealization of the death of Socrates is required both philosophically and dramatically because it is Socrates himself, especially as revealed in his 'autobiography' (which is completed by his death), who serves as a 'living proof' of the transcendent reality of the Forms. The idealization of Socrates' death completes Plato's transformation of Socrates from an historical personality to a symbol of 'participation' in the Form of the Good, which symbol, I suggest, constitutes Plato's 'proof' of the transcendent reality of the Forms.

My hypothesis leads me to suggest, furthermore, that Plato's interest in the discussions and arguments for immortality (if any took place) on the day Socrates died is in the dramatic possibilities they had for revealing the meaning of Socrates' life. On my hypothesis, the more strictly philosophical arguments are not primarily intended to convince the audience; their primary function is purgative; and the aim of the purgation is to cleanse the audience so that it might be able to recognize the transcendent through an 'encounter' with Socrates. The *Phaedo*, in other words, is a religious drama, and the arguments contained within this drama are part of a religious ritual of purification that prepares the audience for 'participation' in the divine.[8] I hope to make this last point clearer with a brief discussion of Plato's view of the religious function of art in the next section of this paper. Then, in Part III, I wish to show how the first three proofs for immortality, so-called, break down in such a way that they reveal a need for a new conception of immortality. And in the final section of this paper, Part IV, I conclude that Socrates' autobiography and his death are meant to 'unhide' the nature of the immortal soul, and thereby also 'unhide' the transcendent nature of the Forms.

II. Martin Buber has passed on the following delightful Hassidic tale.

> My grandfather was paralyzed. Once he was asked to tell a story about his teacher and he told how the Holy Baal Shem Tov used to jump and dance when he was praying. My grandfather stood up while he was telling the story and the story carried him away so much that he had to jump and dance to show how the master had done it. From that moment, he was healed.[9]

The story healed the old man because he 'surrendered' himself to it. By imaginatively reliving the story of the death of Socrates, the reader too may be healed (of his loss of Socrates) by surrendering to the story. Just as the old man was 'healed' by taking the part of Holy Baal Shem Tov, so the reader of the *Phaedo* may be 'healed' by taking the part of Socrates and 'surrendering' to the Forms of the Good, as Socrates himself did when he repudiated mechanism in favor of a telic explanation of human existence. Socrates had been paralyzed by skepticism, by a 'forgetting' of what is, when he studied the physics of the day. Socrates narrates the story of his forgetting and remembering, and his narration has the effect of reminding his interlocutors and auditors of the deathlessness of the soul, for they too were paralyzed by

a skepticism, by a 'forgetfulness' brought on by the dialectical discussions of the possibility of immortality. In this way, Socrates' autobiography helps to heal his friends. And, as I hope to show, the structure of the *Phaedo* suggests that if the reader would 'surrender' to the Form of the Good, the reader too may realize that death is not to be feared, and so be 'healed' of his loss of Socrates. From this perspective, the *Phaedo* is reminiscent of a funeral ritual, as I will explain more fully later.

Though Plato castigated the poets and disparaged the arts in general, he was vitally interested in the experience of art from the point of view of how the experience of art influences the formation of character, which in turn affects one's ability to know (i.e., to 'see'). The experience of art can shape and transform and purify one's character. His objection to the arts in the *Republic* and elsewhere is not to the arts as such but to the arts considered merely as amusement. Plato's critique of fourth century art was from the point of view of the earlier art of the fifth century, the religious art of Olympian sculptures and Aeschylean drama. "What Plato wanted to do . . . was to put the clock back and revert from the amusement art of the Greek decadence to the magical art of the archaic period and the fifth century."[10] The principal difference between art as amusement and art as magic, following R. G. Collingwood, is the manner in which the emotions aroused by a work of art are discharged. In magical art, the emotions aroused are discharged in practical life, whereas in amusement art the emotions are discharged within the amusement itself.

> The primary function of all magical acts . . . is to generate in the agent or agents certain emotions that are considered necessary or useful for the work of living; their secondary function is to generate in others, friends or enemies of the agent, emotions useful or detrimental to the lives of these others.[11]

Religious drama is essentially magical art in Collingwood's sense. From this point of view, the *Phaedo* involves the participants in a new emotional reorientation toward Socrates similar to the emotional reorientation involved in a funeral. In it, the *personae* are laying aside their old emotional relations with Socrates as a living person and establishing a new emotional relationship with him as dead. This new emotional relationship with Socrates as dead is suggested by the very structure of the *Phaedo* itself, especially if set in the context of the other middle dialogues and compared with the early dialogues. All the early dialogues are performed dialogues, whereas the middle dialogues, with the exception of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* in which Socrates is an auditor not an active interlocutor, are narrated dialogues. In "the performed dialogue there is no bridge between the characters of the dialogue and the reader," whereas in the narrated dialogue the innumerable repetitions of 'he said' and 'I said' establish an emotional distance between the reader and the participants.[12] The performed dialogue gives the reader a sense of being contemporaneous with Socrates. The narration of a dialogue serves not only to give the narrator an opportunity to comment on the characters and their actions and reactions but to establish an emotional distance between the reader and the interlocutors, above all between the reader and Socrates. The shift in techniques corresponds to a shift in the emotional effects in the dialogues. The performed dialogue is an effective device for recreating in the audience the *aporia* or intellectual numbness an encounter with Socrates could produce. But a performed dialogue would be inappropriate for the death of Socrates. A performed dialogue is an 'imitation' or representation (*Rep.* 392e-394c). But ". . . the calm and wise character in its unvarying constancy is not easy to represent, nor when represented is it readily understood . . ." (*Rep.* 604e). When featuring Socrates as a religious seeker after the ideals of truth and goodness, the constancy of his character—the enduring or immortal features—are more suitably conveyed by a narrative drama.

The opening of the *Phaedo* indicates that Socrates was not unduly disturbed about altering his relationship with his friends. Indeed, the 'excuse' for the discussion of immortality in the *Phaedo* is that Socrates is "bearing leaving us so lightly . . ." (63a). The discussion is initiated by Simmias' recognition that Socrates willingly alters their relationship from a living one to a 'dead' one. On one level, then, the *Phaedo* sketches out a new 'funeral' relationship with Socrates, one which 'lives immortally' because now, as I hope to show, through the death of Socrates, his interlocutors and auditors (and perhaps some of his readers) share with him a new relationship to the Forms, to the realm of the deathless. A change in emotional relationships is effected, I hope to show, not by a revelation of the Forms directly but by a gradual realization by Socrates' interlocutors and friends of who he is. That is, in the *Phaedo* the true character of Socrates is unhidden in a way that it has not been revealed in the presented dialogues.

If one accepts the view that Plato did not condemn all art and that the *Phaedo* is usefully seen as magical art, as a religious drama, then the clear aim of the *Phaedo* is to get its audience to tend to its soul. This is achieved by the establishment of a new relationship with Socrates. This new relationship is established not by an encounter with the 'living Socrates' (such as might be achieved through a performed dialogue) but by a recognition of the deathlessness of Socrates. This recognition entails a new conception of immortality. The thrust of the intellectual arguments for immortality is to transform a relatively crude conception of immortality based on Greek natural science to a conception of immortality as a new mode of existence. This suggests that the first three proofs for immortality, which I take to be one extended argument, had to break down in precisely those ways that serve to reveal the need for a new conception of immortality. The breakdown of the arguments, then, is designed dramatically to enable the reader to most perceptively

realize who Socrates is. This is achieved by showing how a purely immanent conception of *psyche* fails to capture the 'spirit' of Socrates just as Crito did when he asked Socrates about his burial procedures. The aim of the next section of this essay is to show how the philosophical arguments do just this.

III. Although it is customary to distinguish three or four separate arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo*, from a dramatic point of view there are two only. The first argument goes from 70c to 95e, and is based upon a biological or naturalistic theory of opposites and the doctrine of recollection. The first argument ends when Socrates fails to answer Cebes' objection to his argument for immortality because Cebes' objection reveals the deadend Socrates is forced into because the theory of opposites needs only an immanent theory of Forms whereas the doctrine of recollection presupposes a transcendent theory of Forms, as I will explain more fully in a moment. The second argument, which is based on a transcendent theory of Forms, a revised theory of opposites inspired by Pythagorean mathematics, and the doctrine of recollection, is in a way a surprise, especially in the way Socrates makes the transition from the first to the second argument. After Cebes has pointed out that Socrates had not proven the immortality of the soul but only that the soul may have many lives, Socrates suddenly enlarges the scope of the discussion.

> This is no unimportant problem that you raise, Cebes, for it requires a thorough investigation of the cause of generation and destruction. I will, if you wish, give you an account of my experience in the matter. Then if something I say seems useful to you, make use of it to persuade us of your position. (95-96a)

Socrates' claim that an adequate response to Cebes required 'a thorough investigation of the cause of generation and corruption' is not obvious unless the backdrop belief that the soul is akin to the Forms is made explicit. If this belief is kept in mind, then the first argument bears on the possibility of the immortality of *psyche*. For if the soul is akin to the Forms, and if the soul is not immortal (i.e., cannot transcend the perceptible world), then the Forms also are wholly immanent and, therefore, mutable. And if the Forms are mutable, then the judgment of Socrates as "a man who . . . was of all those we have known the best, and also the wisest and most upright" is relative, if not plainly vacuous, because the criteria for making such judgments are passing forms caught up in a Heraclitean world of change (118a).[13]

Socrates' enlargement of the scope of the discussion and the direction which he takes in the second argument are conditioned by the way in which the first argument breaks down. The first argument breaks down because, even though the theory of opposites and the doctrine of recollection initially seem to complement one another, they are incompatible. In the first argument for the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of recollection establishes the pre-existence of the soul, but not its future existence (76d-77c). The theory of opposites enables Socrates to project the soul into the future (77c-77d). The theory of opposites is a variant of pre-Socratic theories designed to explain why there are orderly processes in the cosmos (70d-71b). It is based on the idea that the cosmos is an organism and its order is homeostatic: order is a balance or harmony of opposing forces. According to the theory of opposites, cosmic processes are circular, not linear, because if cosmic processes were linear, they would be asymmetrical; and the asymmetry of cosmic processes implies that ultimately change results in cosmic chaos; and, *a fortiori*, cosmic chaos implies the mortality of the soul (72a-d). A theory of opposites conceived on a circular model supports immortality in the form of the doctrine of reincarnation by establishing that "the living come to be from the dead" (72d).

The theory of opposites is not compatible with the doctrine of recollection however. Central to the doctrine of recollection is the belief that perceiving, learning, and thinking presuppose unchanging criteria of discrimination and comparison—the Forms as transcendent (73a-75d). These criteria are logically transcendent, though not necessarily ontologically transcendent. Nonetheless, the doctrine of recollection proves the pre-existence of the soul on the condition that the Forms are ontologically transcendent, not just logically transcendent. Socrates explicitly makes this point, and it is explicitly endorsed by both Simmias and Cebes, his chief interlocutors.

> So this is our position, Simmias, he (Socrates) said. If those realities we are always talking about exist, the Beautiful and the Good and all that kind of reality, and we refer all our sense perceptions to them, and we discover that it existed before and we had knowledge of it and we compare our perceptions with it, *then just as they exist, so our soul must exist before we are born. If these realities do not exist then this argument is altogether futile* . . . . (76d-3, emphasis mine)

The theory of opposites undercuts the logical transcendence of the Forms by suggesting that the Forms are ontologically immanent. The ontological immanence of the Forms inheres in the conception of change as circular, for it suggests that change reflects an interpenetration of Forms, and an interpenetration of Forms implies mutability. The theory of opposites supports ontological transcendence of sorts in two ways, however, but both ways prove insufficient for establishing the immortality of the soul. The two ways in which the theory of opposites supports ontological transcendence of sorts are embodied in the objections of Cebes and Simmias to Socrates' first proof for the immortality of the soul.

Simmias' objection to Socrates' first argument for immortality based on a naturalistic theory of opposites is that the 'form' or harmony of the body—its *psyche*—is transcendent only in the sense that it is a holistic property of the body.[14] The soul or 'form' of the body is the way the

'parts' of the body are arranged. However, precisely because the 'form' of the body, its *psyche*, is an holistic property of the body, it cannot exist apart from the body; hence it is not immortal (86b-c).

Socrates' response is as one would expect. By a series of questions, he gets Simmias to acknowledge that the conception of *psyche* derived from a naturalistic theory of opposites is inconsistent with one derived from the doctrine of recollection (92a-92c). Simmias chooses to reject the view of the soul as merely the harmony of the elements of the body because the doctrine of recollection, he believes, is better established (92d). As if by way of an indirect proof of the transcendent character of *psyche*, after Simmias' acknowledgement of the incompatibility of the conception of the soul as the harmony of the body with the conception of *psyche* presupposed by the doctrine of recollection, Socrates proceeds to unhide the true character of the soul by pointing to features of the soul that are incompatible with a conception of the soul as the harmony of elements (92e-94a). If the soul is a harmony of elements, Socrates leads Simmias to realize, then "all the souls of all living creatures will be equally good . . ."(94a). That is, an holistic conception of the soul implies that there is no objective basis for discriminating good from evil, which implies, of course, that there is no moral order. Socrates' response to Simmias' objection unhides the essentially moral character of the soul, the soul as the locus of intellectual and moral consciousness.[15] The essentially moral character of *psyche* is developed further by Socrates when he gets Simmias to acknowledge that a conception of the soul as a harmony of elements fails to account for our moral experience, specifically the common experience of moral agents controlling their passions and desires for the sake of some chosen end (94b-95a). By this further move the radical difference between the soul and our biological nature is underscored. The relationship between the soul and body is not that of a harmony of elements but of struggle and discord. The soul's ability to control and direct its bodily appetites implies a detachment of the soul from the body, which detachment suggests a genuine difference between the nature of the soul and the nature of the body.

Simmias' objection and Socrates' response to it reveal a need for a stronger transcendent theory of the soul as well as a need for a revised theory of opposites, a theory more compatible with the doctrine of recollection. Cebes' objection reinforces Simmias' and pushes it further. It shows why a radically new conception of the transcendence of *psyche* and the Forms is needed. For Cebes' objection turns on a relativizing of the notion of transcendence.

Cebes' objection to Socrates' arguments for immortality is based on the very ideas Socrates used to refute Simmias; hence it is a very forceful objection. As we have seen, Simmias rejected a purely immanent theory of opposites when he realized that the doctrine of recollection requires the genuine transcendence of *psyche*. With great dramatic effect, Cebes turns Simmias' concession to Socrates against Socrates. For all that the doctrine of recollection strictly requires, Cebes points out, is that the soul exists prior to its present embodiment; it does not require eternal existence. Furthermore, even if the soul is ontologically independent of the body, its immortality does not follow. For ontological independence is not the same as transcendence, though it may be a condition of transcendence. The ontological independence of the soul may be satisfied if the genesis of the soul is by a different causal mechanism than that which produces the body. But the independent genesis of the soul, by itself, does not entail immortality. Cebes' objection reveals that the doctrine of recollection presupposes only that the soul and the body are ontologically independent; it does not require a conception of the soul as a fundamentally different mode of being. For the thrust of Cebes' objection is that moral corruption is inherent in embodiment, and moral corruption implies ontological corruption or degeneration. Consequently, even if one granted ontological transcendence (in the sense of causal independence) of the soul, the belief that the body 'taints' the soul implies that ontological transcendence is relative; hence the soul is not deathless, and, therefore, not immortal (88a-b).

Cebes' objection, then, raises a fundamental question: Is it possible to be embodied and untainted? This question is actually two questions, a metaphysical question and an existential question. The metaphysical question is, Can change be accounted for on some view of the Forms other than on the assumption that change is orderly because the Forms interpenetrate? On a metaphysical level, Cebes' objection brings Socrates to a recognition of the need for a theory of opposites in which the Forms themselves do not change: Opposite things may come from opposite things, but "the opposite itself could never become its opposite, neither that in us or that in nature." (103b) Socrates must show how the ". . . opposites themselves, from the presence of which in them things get their name, never can tolerate the coming to be from one another." (103b) The theory of Forms familiarly associated with Plato is designed to show how Forms can be both immanent yet untainted by change. (Plato's success in this regard, as is well known, is moot.)[16]

The existential question is, Can anyone escape the perceptible world of Becoming? Or, more precisely, Can *psyche* escape the world of Becoming? In one sense, the existential question is the question of immortality for Plato, but it is also the flip side of the metaphysical question. In fact, the answer to this second, existential, question serves as evidence for the first question, the metaphysical question. Plato took full advantage of this fact by letting Socrates himself serve as an answer to the existential question, and, as an answer to the existential question, Socrates serves also as an answer to the metaphysical question. How did Plato do this?

IV. Up until the argument for the immortality of the soul based on the Good, Simmias and Cebes are portrayed as tenacious and clever interlocutors, veritable bulldogs. From Strato of Lampsacus on, commentators have had little difficulty attacking the final argument based on the Form of the Good. Why suddenly do Simmias and Cebes have no difficulty with what Socrates says? I am not fully persuaded that the belief that Simmias and Cebes were Pythagoreans is a sufficient explanation. It seems to me to import too much into the text. What in the text accounts for the change in their attitude? Between their vigorous objections to Socrates and their ready assent to his final argument are the statement of the methodological canons and Socrates' narration of his life. Why did Plato insert them at this point in the dialogue? It seems to me that Plato makes the methodological cannons explicit at this juncture in the dialogue in order to suggest that no abstract reason can be given for accepting the hypothesis of the Form of the Good.[17] Why, then, do Simmias and Cebes accept the hypothesis? One could suggest, *pace* Ryle, that the rules of dialectical discussion required them to accept Socrates' hypothesis in order to keep the discussion going. True enough. But Simmias and Cebes do more than provisionally accept; they are not portrayed as accepting the hypothesis in order to keep the game going; they are portrayed as being *convinced* by Socrates' argument, though Simmias qualifies his conviction (107a-b). My suggestion is that Simmias and Cebes are convinced by Socrates' argument because his narration of his life 'reminds' them that the nature of Socrates' life is such that only a telic way of thinking makes it intelligible. Simmias and Cebes are no longer the argumentative bulldogs they had been because they have become convinced believers in the ethical Forms through their personal experience of Socrates. If they were Pythagoreans, they would have had no difficulty with the idea of transcendent Forms. But *ethical* Forms—the Good—these they accept because of their personal experience of Socrates. In other words, they are 'converted' over to Socrates by 'surrendering' themselves up to the story of his life, and the structure of the dialogue suggests that the reader may also.

Structurally, the effect of introducing the autobiographical form (with the personal I narrating) is to bring Socrates to life immediately for us, this in spite of the fact that the autobiography is a narration within a narration. We are led up to this (at 88c) when Echecrates interrupts Phaedo's narration to express his sympathy for the confusion the arguments have caused Socrates' friends and to express misology: 'What argument shall we trust?' The interruption takes us out of the narrative context and presents us in an immediate way with a response to the situation. In re-creating Socrates' arguments for immortality and Cebes' and Simmias' objections, Plato not only re-created the confusion and temptation to misology or philosophical death of Socrates' companions, he has also created in the present time of the narration in the character Echecrates the very confusion and temptation.[18] Echecrates urges Phaedo to tell him how Socrates responded because "What I really need now is another proof, right from the beginning, to convince me that when a man dies his soul does not die with him" (88d). Thus, the emotional distance that has been exploited by Phaedo's narration of the last day of Socrates is broken, for Echecrates in the dramatic now needs to listen to the story in order to be saved from philosophical death. Phaedo's recreation of the dialectical discussion has reproduced in the present time of the narration the experience of confusion and despair which Socrates' companions experienced on the day of his death. An emotional bond has been created between Echecrates, Socrates' companions and Socrates himself by Phaedo's narration. For Echecrates has experienced the confusion and despair of Socrates' companions which is very like the confusion and despair Socrates in his autobiography says he himself experienced in his youth.[19] Socrates' companions, like Echecrates who is twice removed, 'imitate' the very confusion and conflicts of the young Socrates. Echecrates, like Socrates' companions, finds himself—'participates'—in the same situation as Socrates did in his youth. Through the narration of his life, Socrates attempts to bring his friends out of confusion and near philosophical death to clarity and the examined life. And it turns out that the narration has the power not only to 'save' those present at his death but those not present as well. And Echecrates, it appears, is also going to 'imitate' Socrates, though his imitation is mediated by the narrator Phaedo. And the reader . . . .?

The brief interlude between Echecrates and Phaedo draws attention to what Socrates was doing when he narrated his life. He was not simply re-living his past, making it present, but living it as well. I do not mean by this the trivial point that in order to narrate one's life one must be living, at least in fictional time. I mean that Socrates lived it in the sense that his narration characterizes what he tried to do all his life. His narrative discloses his being, not simply his three score and ten years of mortal life. His *telling* of his life is an act that gets to the very root of Socratic existence. Phaedo himself directs our attention to this:

> I can assure you, Echecrates, that Socrates often astonished me, but I never admired him more than on this particular occasion. That he should have been ready with an answer was, I suppose, nothing unusual, but what impressed me was, first, the pleasant, kindly, appreciative way in which he received the two boys' objections, then his quick recognition of how the turn of the discussion had affected us, and lastly the skill with which he healed our wounds, rallied our scattered forces, and encouraged us to join him in pursuing the inquiry." (88e-89a)

Phaedo wonders at (1) how Socrates received their argument;—i.e., unlike his companions, Socrates was not thrown by the argument, though he knows full well the force of Simmias' and Cebes' objections. His serenity, in other words, is not rooted in a blindness to the force of

reason. It derives from a willingness to live in the light of death—because he has embraced spiritual deathlessness, the life of reason. (2) Phaedo admires how Socrates was aware of the distress of his companions, though he is the one who awaits execution. The analogy that is drawn between misology and misanthropy is tightened by the Socratic attitude. Socrates' concern is that if his friends turn against reason they are turning against their own deepest humanity.[20] (3) And Phaedo admires the way Socrates recalled his companions from flight and defeat and turned them around. How did he do it? By letting them participate in his life: I have been there, my friends, and have 'come out/away'. And I participate in that life still: that is why I am here in prison.

What is Socrates doing when he narrates his life? He is not telling his companions about his seventy or so years on this earth. He is telling how he overcame the shifting, changing unrealities of a way of thinking that inhibited intellectual and moral stability and how he was able to attain stability by participating in a timeless, an absolute, reality. Socrates' autobiography tells not simply of his past but of his way of being. He may live in time some three score and ten years, but in being he is immortal for he has been saved from the shifting chaotic world of Becoming. He has found the meaning of his life not in something external to himself, not in a Mind that does not permeate and structure change, but in his soul when it 'imitates' the Forms.

In his autobiography, Socrates recalls how pursuit of a mechanistic way of thinking resulted in a kind of forgetfulness—*anamnesis*—and how forgetfulness led him to unanswerable questions, questions which deepened his forgetfulness, questions which induced not enlightened ignorance, but misologic ignorance and despair. And he tells how he was called back from his despair, reminded about the order of things and his relationship to it, when he began to pursue a telic way of thinking. Socrates tells how a mechanistic explanation of his life rendered it meaningless, for if man is a natural being in a Heraclitean world, a creature of pleasure or pain, a creature who fears death, then as Socrates remarks, by "dog, I fancy that these sinews and bones would have been in the neighborhood of Megara or Boeotia long ago . . . ." (99a) But something deeper and more powerful prompts him to be a jail rather than live the unexamined life: his daimon has not rebuked him. That is, his choice[21] is in harmony with reality, with his true self; otherwise his daimon would rebuke him. He could face death with a serenity rooted in deathlessness. By restructuring his experience, by choosing to explain it telically, Socrates in his autobiography is revealing how the soul finds its true self.[22] In his autobiography, Socrates is like the demuriage of the *Timaeus*: Looking to the Forms he gives order and meaning to his personal cosmos. Hence, in so far as his autobiography reveals his true self, it serves as evidence for the reality of the Forms.[23]

This reading of the significance of the autobiography of Socrates in the *Phaedo* is supported by the fact that the reader is reminded of the doctrine of reminiscence just prior to Socrates' account of his life. For if we are 'reminded' of the goodness and truth of Socrates as revealed in his life, then we are reminded of the goodness within our own souls; for unless the reader too participated in the Form of the Good, he would be incapable of being reminded of the goodness of Socrates, of the goodness inherent in the philosophical life. Plato's choice of narrative structure, the dialectical discussions which lead to a kind of forgetfulness and the place of Socrates' autobiography in the *Phaedo* are designed to change the audience's perception of Socrates by 'reminding' it of the Good it too participates in. In this way, the reader may 'see' the Good, which must be unchanging, deathless. Hence, the revised mathematical theory of opposites to fit the demands of the theory of recollection, rather than revision of the theory of recollection to fit a mechanistic theory of opposites.

Plato, of course, could not leave it at that, because recognition of the reality of the Good through Socrates entailed for him a transformation of one's life. If the story of Socrates' life 'heals' the reader if he 'surrenders' to it, and therefore to the Good, the reader must also realize that he will lose his own immortality—he will 'forget' the Good—if he immerses himself in the perceptible, Heraclitean world. Hence, belief in the Good is not moral escapism but makes moral demands upon the reader. Hence, the myth of immortality (107d).[24] To recognize one's own goodness as a participant in the Good implies a commitment to the Socratic life. And if one does commit one's self to the Socratic life, one's own life and death are as *a-thanatos* as Socrates'.

NOTES

[1] *Phaedo* 117e-118a. I cite throughout the translation of Hugh Tredennick in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series L XXI (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961). Subsequent citations of the *Phaedo* or any other dialogue will be from the Bollingen *Dialogues* and will be incorporated into the text in the Stephanus pagination.

[2] From Wolfgang Von Oettingen, *Poisoning*, p. 317, quoted in William B. Ober, M.D., *Boswell's Clap and Other Essays* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 268. Parentheses mine.

[3] See R. Hackforth's Introduction to *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp. 3-24. John Burnet is a noteworthy exception. In Appendix I to his translation of *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), Burnet reviews the philological evidence and concludes: "In the face of all this, it is disturbing to be told, as we are by some authorities, that hemlock-juice would produce quite different symptoms." (p. 149) Burnet is disturbed because he takes the *Phaedo* to be a stenographer's report of Socrates' last day. Christopher Gill in "The Death of Socrates," *Classical Quarterly*, N.S. Vol. XXIII, no. 1 (May, 1973) 25-28 notes the discrepancy between the actual symptoms and Plato's idealization. His account, which I agree with although it does not go far enough, is that the death scene illustrates "a major theme in the *Phaedo*: the liberation of the soul from the body." (p. 27) I think the scene does more than illustrate, as I argue in the body of this paper.

[4] Ober, pp. 269-270.

[5] The writings of Homer, Aeschylus, and Sophocles suggest that realistic *descriptions* of death or suffering (e.g., Oedipus plucking out his eyes) were acceptable, though there were conventions about violence on stage. Since the *Phaedo* was meant to be read in public, Plato could have been quite 'realistic' without violating the conventions. This accords with what Aristotle says in the *Poetics* 1453b1-11.

[6] This differs from a more usual way of looking at the death scene from the point of view of the completed proofs. Looked at from the point of view of the completed proofs for immortality (whatever one's estimate of the proofs), the death scene in the *Phaedo* is not infrequently read as a kind of dramatization of a classical holy card, like David's *Death of Socrates*. My approach has been stimulated by John Herman Randall's *Plato: Dramatist of the Life of Reason* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970). With Randall, I hold that "Socrates is deathless, not because knowledge is like remembering, and not because the soul is simple, but because Socrates had *lived* like Socrates, and is *dying* like Socrates."(p. 215) I think Randall pushes his own naturalistic predilections too far, however. For Randall, immortality in the *Phaedo* is *not* life after death but the quality—or perhaps one could say, the human intensity—of one's present life. True enough, as far as it goes, but Randall believes such a view of immortality means that a "future life is clearly irrelevant to such immortality." (p. 216) But Aristotle's own difficulties with the idea of immortality in *De Anima* should have given Randall reason to pause. My view is that the *Phaedo* is not clear one way or the other on this point; the *Phaedo*, I believe, is more open-ended than Randall allows. More importantly, Randall's efforts to read the *Phaedo* naturalistically leads to serious difficulties. For Randall, the arguments for immortality are all "myths and parables". (p. 215) In the main text, I hope to convince the reader that the arguments are more than myths and parables. But consider what Randall's view means: that by the last day of his life Socrates had given up the examined life; i.e., he gave up his *raison d'etre*. What, then, is Socrates' intent in the *Phaedo*? "It is clear, Socrates is trying to give his friends what they most want, consolation."(pp. 214-5) May it not be that consolation is not the end Socrates aims for but a by-product of philosophical inquiry? I endorse Randall's efforts to distinguish 'Platonic immortality' from that expounded in "hundreds of foolish sermons"(p. 211) by Christian divines. Nonetheless, it is difficult to understand Socrates without taking into account his religious experience.

For a view similar to Randall's, see William S. Cobb's "Plato's Treatment of Immortality in the *Phaedo*", *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 15 (Sum 1977): 173-188.

[7] "What is distinctive in his [Socrates'] vision is that in it death does not appear as a threat and so as something to be feared. The notion of the soul's immortality is the notion of something in one's life which death cannot destroy." Ilham Dilman, *Studies in Language and Reason* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1981) p. 34. I do not endorse Dilman's Wittgensteinian rendering of the meaning of the *Phaedo*, although I find it suggestive in some ways, and insightful. In defense of Dilman, however, I cannot determine how much of the discussion of the *Phaedo* is meant as exegesis and how much is meant as philosophical reflection.

[8] Kenneth Dorter in "Equality, Recollection, and Purification," *Phronesis* 17 (1972): 198-218 argues that the doctrine of recollection and the theme of purification are connected. He argues that though when taken literally, the accounts of recollection and purification appear incompatible, "they nevertheless show sufficient similarities between the accounts to suggest the possibility that they are compatible. In fact, the closer the two doctrines are scrutinized, the more difficult it becomes to preserve the distinction between them."(p. 218) And in an article cited in footnote 10 above, "The Dialectic of Plato's Method of Hypothesis," Dorter writes the following suggestive footnote: "Whether the sketch is autobiographically accurate is much disputed . . . but less important than whether the stages through which Socrates is depicted as passing are meant to be philosophically significant, stages necessary to philosophical development, or merely contingent. That they are meant to be significant emerges from the fact that they correspond to the stages of the divided line and the allegory of the cave, but a substantial digression would be required to substantiate this correspondence."(p. 185) I do not know if Dorter has developed this idea in print. For a discussion of the *Phaedo* as 'orphic liturgy', see Douglas J. Stewart's "Socrates' Last Bath," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10 (Jl 1972): 253-259.

[9] John Shea, *Stories of God* (Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1978), p. 66.

[10] R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 49.

[11] Collingwood, pp. 65-66.

[12] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Edition, 1978), pp. 58-59.*

[13] *R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 65-70.

[14] H. B. Gottschalk, "Soul as *Harmonia*," *Phronesis* 16 (1971): 179-198.

[15] John Burnet, *Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), pp. 126-162.

[16] For a flavor of the literature, see R. S. Bluck's, Gallop's, Hackforth's, and Archer-Hind's introductions to their translations of the *Phaedo*. For an attempt to show that the *Phaedo* is a philosophically sound demonstration of immortality see Robert L. Patterson's *Plato on Immortality* (University Park, Penn: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965). For more recent literature, see the bibliographical references at the end of Dorethea Frede's "The Final Proof of the Immortality of the Soul in Plato's *Phaedo* 102a-107a," *Phronesis* 13 (1978) 40.

[17] Richard Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 123-145. In "The Role of the Hypothetical Method in the *Phaedo*," *Phronesis* 24 (1979): 111-127, J. T. Bedu-Addo argues "that Socrates' description of the hypothetical method is, in effect, a description of the philosopher's 'practice of death,' and that it is at once a general statement of method and *the* description of his 'second voyage' in search of *the cause* of generation, existence, and destruction, namely, the Good." (p. 112) Bedu-Addo, it should be noted, holds that the hypothesis of the Form of the Good does not remain an hypothesis but can become knowledge (pp. 121-124). But, as Bedu-Addo himself admits, there is no positive evidence in the *Phaedo* for this. For a view opposing Bedu-Addo, see Robinson cited above and N. Gulley's *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1962), esp. p. 43. In "The Dialectic of Plato's Method of Hypothesis," *Philosophical Forum* 7 (Wint 75-76): 159-187, Kenneth Dorter interprets Plato's method of hypothesis in an Hegelian sense of 'dialectic', but—fortunately—without obscurity and with proper qualifications.

[18] In "Socrates' Pre-Socratism: Some Remarks on the Structure of Plato's 'Phaedo'," *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (MR 80): 559-577, Michael Davis writes: "It [i.e., Socrates' first sailing or the first arguments for immortality] induces a kind of forgetfulness which cause us to lose sight of what things are."(p. 563)

[19] On the parallels between the two arguments (those based on pre-Socratic theory of opposites and those based on theory of recollection) and the two stages of Socrates' life (his investigations of nature, and his attraction to Anaxagoras' theory), see Davis pp. 566-573.

[20] "Misology and misanthropy are the same because to be an *anthropos* is already to be immersed in *logos*." Davis, p. 574.

[21] *Dia-logos* derives from *legein* which means to choose as well as to discuss.

[22] The narrative structure that establishes an audience's distance from the action of the *Phaedo* is more suitable than a presented structure for the journey theme that is central to the myth of immortality in the *Phaedo*. In a presented dialogue, the soul discovers that it knows not itself; in a narrated dialogue like the *Phaedo*, the soul discovers itself in its recognition of its kinship with the Forms. In a narrated dialogue like the *Phaedo*, the soul is on a journey toward itself with Socrates as its guide and model.

[23] James Olney has done some fine work on the philosophical implications of autobiography. Especially relevant is the following from his "Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of *Bios*: The Ontology of Autobiography" in *Autobiography:*

Essays Theoretical and Critical, ed. by James Olney (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 239: When "Socrates says, 'The unexamined life (*anexetastos bios*) is not worth living', he does not have in mind the three score and ten that we take as the average lifetime of the individual . . . . I suggest that one could understand the life around which autobiography forms itself in a number of other ways besides the perfectly legitimate one of 'individual history and narrative': we can understand it as the vital impulse—the impulse of life—that is transformed by being lived through the unique medium of the individual and the individual's special, peculiar psychic configuration; we can understand it as consciousness, pure and simple, consciousness referring to no objects outside itself, to no events, and to no other lives; we can understand it as participation in an absolute existence for transcending the shifting, changing unrealities of mundane life; we can understand it as the moral tenor of the individual's being. Life in all these latter senses does not stretch back across time but extends down to the roots of individual being; it is atemporal, committed to a vertical thrust from consciousness down into the unconscious rather than to a horizontal thrust from the present into the past."

[24] Olney writes elsewhere: "The point of his myth, however, is that *he* is exactly as his theory and his vision suggest, and he, for the moment, is humanity realized." *Metaphors of Self* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 18. For an interesting discussion of the connection between the myths of the *Phaedo* and the dialectical arguments, see Veda Cobb-Stevens' " 'Mythos' and 'Logos' in Plato's *Phaedo*" in *The Philosophical Reflection of Man in Literature*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Boston: Reidel, 1982), pp. 391-406.

PLEASURE AND THE CONTINUUM IN THE *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

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Several pivotal doctrines in the *Nicomachean Ethics* depend, in part, on notions introduced and discussed in Aristotle's *Physics*. In Book II of the *Ethics*, for example, Aristotle characterizes the nature of moral virtue as "continuous and divisible" (1106^a26).[1] Now the definition of moral virtue given at 1107^a1-3 is complex—it includes state of character, choice, rational principle, and practical wisdom. Does continuity pertain to some or all of the elements of this description? Thus, is it the case that pleasure and pain, as features in actions done in accordance with moral virtue, are continuous and divisible? To several recent commentators, the answer is straightforwardly affirmative.[2] But this question is not as transparent as it might appear. For once the issues involved are considered in light of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a whole, the question eventually leads to two different and apparently inconsistent answers. In determining whether Aristotle should be accused and convicted of this inconsistency, we will be led to consider a series of implications drawn from the factor of continuity which will broaden our understanding of the Aristotelian notion of moral virtue in general and acting according to the mean in particular.

As a prelude to this inquiry, consider the following remark by J. A. Stewart: "It is unfortunate that Aristotle, in introducing the subject of the ethical mean, gave such prominence to . . . Quantity simply as Quantity." And further on in his discussion, Stewart affirms that the divisibility of the continuum "throws little light upon the problem" of determining the nature of the mean.[3] But Stewart's dismissal of continuity is premature. It will be a subordinate yet significant result of this study to show that the continuity of pleasure is not merely a gratuitous stipulation; rather, it is a characterization with important implications for understanding the sense of morality involved in acting in accordance with the mean. Although commentators on Aristotle's ethics often point to lines of thought discussed in the *Physics* as essential background for understanding the *Ethics*, there have been few sustained attempts to apply the details concerning the continuum found in the *Physics* to the rich textures of Aristotle's moral thought.[4] This study

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