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Plato on Immortality of Soul and its contemporary relevance

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Plato's arguments for immortality of the soul. The main objective of this thesis is to scrutinize the arguments put forth by Plato and understand them with the help of some contemporary philosophers and scientific theories. By the end of this thesis one will have a greater understanding of the concept of the human soul and potentially develop his or her own perspective in greater detail - bridging the gap between philosophy and science.

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Introduction

Regardless of the advances made by humans in science, one of the biggest mysteries that remains unsolved is that of the souls. For centuries, or rather, for as long as human intellect has existed, the question of what happens to our soul after death remains a mystery even to the brightest minds. Every religion has a theory of life after death and whether the soul has existed even before us. From scientists to philosophers, have spent endless hours discussing and wondering about the existence of the soul. This dissertation aims to contribute to the discourse of the soul and its immortality.

For as long as we can remember, the concept of the soul has existed. Be it old and obsolete religions like Orphic or from old and ever-growing popular religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and so on. Each has their own concept of what happens to the soul after death.

Regardless of what religion a man belongs to, or whether he is an atheist, one is always afraid of death, for he has no idea as to what happens to the soul, the essence of a human after he has reached the end of life.

While such a concept, in my opinion, is abstract, as it has no physical form that can be conceived by our most reliable senses but only thought, many philosophers have formulated logical arguments to prove the existence of it. Not just existence but the fact that it is immortal.

One cannot start theorizing about the soul and its nature without first understanding the origin of such concepts. More importantly it is essential to look at the Ancient Greek origin of the word for soul: ψυχή (psyche). The meaning of the word is 'breath'. One of the early uses of this word is seen in Homeric epics. In Homer, the Trojan war sent Hades the ψυχή of many heroes and this ψυχή is what we interpret or rather what Plato interpreted as the soul. It is more likely that Homer did not mean soul as we understand the concept today when he said ψυχή of heroes was sent to Hades. Neither did he use the term in the sense of breath but possibly something like a shadow resembling the man but without any memory or attributes to make it recognizable or distinct. At no point in Homer do we see him describe ψυχή as the soul of man as we know from Plato and other philosophers. That is not to say that he does not mention the soul of man in his epics. He instead uses other words to mean the soul - mostly taken from parts of body or affections of body. Furthermore, what we learn and question about the immortality of the soul is a product of later periods of Greek mind. If we are to look at the origin of the concept of immortality of the soul, we find that in Homer a man is immortal through his deeds and memory of others, and how these people would keep the memory alive for generations to come. That being said, Plato took this concept further to figure out the soul (as we know today) and its immortality.

This thesis looks at the arguments presented in *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo* for the immortality of the soul. It carefully dissects the arguments to get a better understanding of the thought process of Plato. The thesis then moves onto a scientific approach to argue against the ideas put forth by him.

What we find in this thesis, is that many scientific theories and modern philosophers, even though not in complete agreement with Plato, somehow bring out concepts that seem to be in agreement. In fact, certain concepts provide more support to his theories. This is because if you are reading just Plato, you will find

that on a number of occasions he seems to jump from one theory to another or to some conclusion without providing satisfying explanations. But if you really take the time to think and analyze his dialogues, with help of some modern concept it starts to make a lot more sense.

Dialogues from Plato, namely *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, aim mainly to prove that the man's soul is indeed immortal and does not perish along with its mortal companion, the body. The discussions in this thesis will focus mainly on arguments and doctrines put forth in these two dialogues to back up the theory of the immortality of the soul. Recent research involving babies and their understanding of morality serves as a rather concrete proof of Doctrine of Recollection used in *Phaedo* to argue that the soul has existed before the body. While this may be one of the few kinds of research conducted in the last decade that may have accidentally supported the doctrine of recollection, the theory still feels unsolved.

The aim of this thesis is not just to scrutinize the arguments of the two dialogues, but it also extracts some concepts and arguments made by other contemporary philosophers and scientists such as Leibniz and Freud combining some modern-day researches to come to a conclusion that will hopefully provide a new set of eyes to not just the concept of soul but immortality as well.

The methodology of research used in writing this master's dissertation includes an in-depth reading and analysis of *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, in-depth research into ancient literature, namely Homeric poems, that gives the concept of the soul its origin, analysing and reviewing existing philosophical research and scientific research conducted in this area, as well as evolutionary researches conducted to support the main idea behind the thesis topic.

The thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter looks at Doctrine of Recollection, Opposites Argument, Argument of Affinity and Argument from Form of Life from *Phaedo*; the myth and the proof regarding immortality of the soul from *Phaedrus*. This part of the thesis conducts a detailed analysis into the arguments presented in dialogues and finds some gaps in the way the arguments are presented by Plato. The second chapter takes the approach of modern science and contemporary philosophy. In reference to an experiment conducted by researchers at NYU, the thesis further looks at the implications of evolution and psychology on the theory of the soul. Finally, the thesis concludes, that while on its own dialogues of Plato fall short when arguing for the immortality of the soul, if modern science and psychology is applied to some of these dialogues and theories, one can begin to understand why many ancient philosophers thought for the soul to be immortal and why it is believed so even today. Although a concrete proof of such a concept may be difficult, one can take a step towards solving the problem of the soul by combining philosophy and science.

I. On Soul and its immortality in reference to ancient texts

a. Approaching *Phaedo*

What happens to the soul after death? Does it cease to exist or continue to another world to be reborn? These are the questions surrounding the main discussions in Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*, where Socrates discusses the nature of the afterlife and immortality of the soul with his pupils before his execution.

Man is always afraid of death for he has no idea as to what happens to the soul, the essence of a human, after he has reached the end of his life.

Socrates presents his argument for the immortality of the soul through four stages: The Doctrine of Recollection, Opposites Argument, Argument of Affinity and Argument from Form of Life.

In this part of the chapter, each of these arguments has been carefully scrutinized, developed and compared to justify the immortality of the soul.

Doctrine of Recollection

This section discusses the Doctrine of Recollection, which revolves around the idea that humans possess innate knowledge (acquired before birth) and learning consists of rediscovering that knowledge within us - this argument has been used to back the existence of the soul before birth, and its repeated incarnation.

The argument starts by claiming that the body and senses are sources of error and mislead the soul in search of truth.

“because , if we can know nothing purely in the body’s company, then one of the two things must be true: either knowledge is nowhere to be gained, or else it is for the dead; since then but no sooner, will the soul be alone by itself apart from the body.” (66e4-67a2).

A number of arguments and proofs have been put forth to show that when a man is dead his soul exists and has any force or intelligence.

The example of a lyre and a man, whence a lover recognizes a lyre or garment which their beloved has been in the habit of using; they form an image of this beloved through the lyre - this he claims, is recollection. However, this is just a simple example. He then goes on to present his case with the example of absolute equality. He argues that recollection can be derived from things either like or unlike. For instance, we can obtain an idea of equality from a piece of wood and stone - which, by using our senses we declare to be different. To further the argument, he considered that same piece of wood to be of equal portion to the stone - although they are equals from one point of view, they, however, fall short of absolute or perfect equality - as that is inferior. Although at this point, we are thinking of equals rather than absolute equality, we conceive the idea of equality. The fact that from these equals one conceives and attains the idea of equality proves that there is an act of recollection. This is not limited to absolute equality but holds true for beauty, goodness, justice and so on. We acquire this knowledge when we first see the material equals with the help of senses, i.e. we see and hear and have use of our senses as soon as we are born. Therefore, the higher senses of equality, goodness, justice and so on must have been known to us before birth and forgotten at birth

only to be recovered by the use of senses and we continue to know this for as long as life lasts - “because this is knowing - to possess knowledge one has got of something, and not to have lost it.” (75d9- 75d10)

“... one of two things is true: either all of us were born knowing those objects, and we know them throughout life; or those we speak of as ‘learning’ are simply being reminded later on, and learning would be recollection.” (76a5-8)

Even though a simple man will not be able to give an account for this, the absolute essence of all things must have existed in our former state and with the use of our sensations, we find these ideas to be pre-existing in us. This means souls must have existed prior to the man or if not the souls then not the ideas or if not the ideas, then not the souls.

So far, the argument constructed to show a pre-existence of the soul through ideas is strong. By looking at an object or considering a concept, by default the human mind will be reminded of other objects or concepts that may or may not be like by relating to it. Such ideas, say that of equal and not of absolute equality may be passed down to us by our guardians or parents but even a child’s mind will not relate of them (piece of wood and stone) of being absolute equality - this knowledge is then, something recollected by the use of our senses, hence, the idea must have pre-existed and thus, the soul.

However convincing the argument is of the previous existence of the soul, does not answer the argument of whether the soul exists after death or scattered away. This has been argued by the compounded and un-compounded. The compound or composite is naturally capable of being dissolved but un-compounded is not, i.e. the compounded is always changing and never the same while un-compounded is unchanging. The idea or the essence or true existence is a dialectical process - which

is to say, have the same simple self-existence and not admitting to any variance, whereas material things such as horse or men admit to such variances. These are the things you can perceive with senses while the unchanging or uncompounded can only be perceived with mind and are invisible to the human eye, just as the soul. Since the soul uses the body as an instrument of perception is then dragged into the region of changeable.

“Whereas whenever it studies alone by itself, it departs yonder towards which is pure and always existent and immortal and unvarying, and in virtue of its kinship with it, enters always into its company, whenever it has come to be alone by itself, and whatever it may do so;” (79d1 - 79d5)

That is to say that the soul is divine, immortal, intellectual and unchangeable while the body is the exact opposite.

He then proceeds to assure Simmias and Cebes that soul being of the nature and origin can never be blown away and destroyed rather, the good souls is offered the company of god and the souls which have been polluted and is impure at the time of departure (after death) wanders into the bodies of the animals or birds.

This is to say that an animal which does not have the same complexity of mind as that of a human understands and recollects the concept of true essence. Since it is said that the soul is unchanging and has a previous existence and knowledge of idea of true existence which is only to be recollected after birth, the same stands for the soul of animals - as they to a great extent use the same senses as we do and yet by their actions we can perceive that they not only do not care about such concepts but given the fact that their complexity of brain is inferior to human are devoid of such concept - hence, posing a question, what happens to the knowledge of such things when the soul passes onto an animal body? Because if it continues to be there and

the animal such as a dog or lion can differentiate between true beauty and goodness is to say that their capability is the same as the human but if not, then the whole argument of the doctrine of recollection falls short in explaining the previous existence of idea and soul.

Argument of Affinity

However convincing was the doctrine of recollection for the previous existence of the soul, the existence of the soul solely through this argument remains unproven to a greater extent.

To this, Simmias and Cebes propose two analogies: the lyre and an old weaver. The first analogy questions that lyre and its strings are matter and material and are subject to mortality just as the body of man, while harmony like the soul is invisible, divine, incorporeal and existing in the said material harmonized. By this, when someone breaks the lyre or cuts and rends the string, harmony survives and does not perish, i.e. the harmony will still remain somewhere and the wood and strings will decay before anything can happen to that. The same is applied to the concept of the soul:

“... our body is kept in tension, as it were and held together by hot and cold, dry and wet, and the like, and our soul is blending and attunement of these same things, when they are blended with each other in due proportion. If, then, the soul proves to be some kind of attunement, it's clear that when our body is unduly relaxed or tautened by illness and other troubles, then the soul must perish at once, no matter how divine it may be, just like other attunements, those in musical notes and in all the products of craftsmen; whereas the remains of each body will last for a long time, until they are burnt up or rot away.” (86b7 - 86d1)

The second analogy of an old weaver presents the theory that although the soul may be immortal, it will perish at one point. After an old weaver dies, somebody says he is not dead but must be alive for there is a coat he weaved and wore which remains undecayed - demonstrating the survival of a man who is more lasting simply because the less lasting (the coat) remains. However, the same weaver must have woven and worn many such coats, which have perished, and now one coat outlived this weaver. This analogy when applied to the body and the soul argues that the soul like the man is lasting and the body weak and short lived. Like the weaver, the soul wears out many bodies and continues to weave another and repair the waste.

“... when the soul does perish, it will have to be wearing its last garment, and must perish before that one alone; and when the soul has perished, then at last the body will reveal its natural weakness, moulder away quickly, and then be gone.

... the souls of some, even after we have died, from still existing and continuing to exist, and from being born and dying over and over again - because souls is so strong by nature that it can endure repeated births - even allowing all that, were one not to grant the further point that it does not suffer in its many births, and does not end by perishing completely in one of its deaths, and were one to say that no one can know this death or detachment from the body which brings pressing to the soul - (87e2-88b2)

To this Socrates argues, that harmony cannot be the same as that of the soul as harmony is compound because harmony cannot be prior to the elements which compose it. Most importantly, the reason why harmony cannot be compared fully to the soul is because harmony, unlike the soul, tends to follow the parts or elements that lead it. Moreover, harmony admits to a degree, i.e, it is more of a harmony when more truly and fully harmonized and less when less truly and fully harmonized, whereas a soul can never admit of degrees and no two souls is more or less soul than other, even if it has more virtue or vice - a soul always leads. Because

if a soul is same as harmony, they all must be equally good but the soul is at variance with the affections of the body and if the soul is the same as harmony then it can never utter a note of variance of which she is composed and can only follow and not lead. This consequently disproves the analogy of lyre.

As stated in Doctrine of Recollection, compounded is naturally capable of dissolving while the uncompounded is devoid of variance. This is to say that a man or a lyre admits of variance and currently stated by Socrates that soul too admits of variance by body. There appears to be a contradiction in the two.

This is not to be mistaken with the thought that the soul, although being uncompounded will never accept variance, for if so, it would be driving the body to its death and the soul, in this light, uses the body as some sort of vessel and when the body is hungry or cold, the soul does not let it starve or deprive it of its materialistic needs.

However, according to the argument of affinity, if harmony can never utter a note of variance then she must be uncompounded for by Doctrine of Recollection: uncompounded is unchanging and not admitting to variance while soul from this refutation should be compounded then, because even though it leads the body or the vessel, it in some ways is following the demands of its elements. Hence, there can be found a contradiction in the arguments of compounded and uncompounded from these two.

The second analogy, although not clearly refuted, merges with the explanation above and in the parts following. The soul's divinity and demonstration of the strength and her existence prior to man do not necessarily imply her continuing existence after death.

The Opposites Argument

A young Socrates believed in the doctrine of Anaxagoras according to which ‘mind was the disposer and cause of all’ and from this he came to the notion that if the mind was the disposer and cause of all then ‘it will dispose all for the best and put each particular in the best place’ however, failing to decipher a method for inquiring into the cause from this theory, he devised a second mode: first assumed some principle which was judged to be the strongest and then affirmed as true whatever seemed to agree with this and that which disagreed to be untrue.

The notion behind this mode of enquiry is that all things exist by participation in general ideas, i.e to say if there was anything beautiful than absolute beauty then it can be beautiful in so far as it has qualities of absolute beauty because something is made beautiful by the participation of beauty, and by this all things become beautiful. Or a better and more concrete example is that of greatness and smallness.

“Similarly it’s by largeness that large things are large, and larger things larger, and by smallness that smaller things are smaller?” (100e5-100e6)

To escape the certain contradiction of relation a detailed example is produced: Simmias is greater than Socrates and less than Phaedo, which predicates that Simmias is both of greatness and smallness. Simmias is greater than Socrates by reason of size and not because he is Simmias but because Socrates has smallness when compared with the greatness of Simmias. Phaedo is greater than Simmias, again, by size and not because he is Phaedo but because he has greatness relative to Simmias who in comparison is smaller. Therefore, Simmias is both great and small because he is the mean between Phaedo and Socrates, exceeding the smallness of the one by his greatness and allowing the greatness of the other to exceed his smallness. That is to say that the idea of greatness can never be small and the greatness in us will never admit the small or to exceeding - because if it does, at the

approach of the opposite, that is the less, it will either retire before it or has already ceased to exist despite the fact that less, which is the opposite is generated from greater. Just like snow is converted to water at the approach of heat but not cold into heat. Snow is not the same as cold but has properties of it, hence at the advance of heat snow will perish just as the fire at the advance of cold will perish. The things in which the opposites exist essentially generate into and out of one another.

This concept is further developed in Argument from the Form of Life.

Argument from Form of life

“... what we’re saying now is that the opposite itself could never come to be opposite to itself, whether it be the opposite in us or the opposites in nature. Then, my friend, we were talking about things that have opposites, calling them by the names they take from them; whereas now we are talking about the opposites themselves, from whose presence in them the things so called derive their names.” (103b3-103b10)

That is to say that not all essential opposites but some concrete things which contain opposites exclude each other. For instance, take the idea of odd and even. Three can be called by its proper name and also as odd, same goes to every alternate number, same goes for two and every even number. And this number three when intruded by the opposite idea will obliterate sooner than converted into even. “Then not only do the forms that are opposite not abide each other’s attack; but there are, in addition, certain other things that don’t abide opposites’ attack.” (104c7-104c9)

That is to say that natures may not be opposed and yet may not admit to opposites - three for instance, although not opposed to two will not admit the even just as two will not admit to odd; rather than saying that oddness is the cause of odd numbers,

one can say monad is the cause of them just as fever is the cause of body being diseased. The same can be applied to the soul: it is not the life that makes it alive, rather a soul that makes it alive. With the same logic of odd and even, it can be inferred that life or the source that has life-giving power does not admit to death, hence is immortal and imperishable. For if immortality was imperishable it would retire whole as it could not admit to death just the principle of cold and warm is imperishable.

Although the two arguments: the opposite argument and argument from form of life is convincing, I cannot help but think the continuity of these arguments to be entirely justifiable.

Immortality at the arrival of death will not cease to exist - this stands for soul. However, let us once again consider the example of odd and even, or rather number three and two. Looking at the same example in another light: let's say when three attacked by two, although retaining its property of odd, changes, i.e, when the opposite, namely two, is added to three, it converts into five - retaining its oddness and this change continues. So to say, when a function is introduced to the number three while retaining the oddness it changes and takes a higher form. Should the same not be applied to the soul? That is, when the soul is attacked by death, although retaining its immortality, it changes and takes a higher form.

Just as without the presence of a function, in the case of three additions, the operation cannot be conducted - passing of a soul from its body at the approach of death cannot be conducted. To conclude, in order for death to approach the soul it needs a mediator or rather a process just as in order for two to approach or attack three it needs a function. This logic seems has not been clearly stated or explained in the dialogue. But this process or mediator can be taken as a disease or an accident. So death approaches the opposite, the life, in the form of a disease or accident that

ends the cycle of life, however, just as at the approach of heat snow melts, but the cold does not perish, a soul too does not perish and hence, by this analogy it is immortal.

b. Approaching Phaedrus

Phaedrus, at first may not seem like a dialogue concentrated on just one thing, as it talks about love, soul and speech. But if looked closely, Plato quite cleverly constructs this dialogue to match with the final discussion on the art of speech. Keeping that in mind, this part of the chapter will focus on the way the argument “all/every soul is immortal” (245c) is presented in *Phaedrus*.

The first thing one will notice while reading this dialogue is that immortality and the nature of the soul is argued for in two parts: through logic, and through the myth of charioteers. One of the main differences to note between the presentation of the two parts is the usage of language. The logic or the proof is presented in a rather rigid and economic manner while the myth has a florid and loose approach. One of the major differences that can be noticed between *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* is that the argument for the immortality of soul in this dialogue does not take place in the classic question and answer style but rather in a story telling format. The influence of the way the language is used may be of importance to the argument of immortality of the soul.

This section of the chapter is dedicated in dissecting the two parts of the dialogue as carefully and minutely as possible.

The Proof

In *Phaedrus*, argument for immortality of the soul is presented in three-step structure before moving on to the myth of charioteer. A rather strange construction for the argument which seems to work for it trying to convince its readers or listeners.

What Plato does is starts this piece of the dialogue with a conclusion (step 1) “every soul is immortal” (245c4), then moving onto provide a proof to support it (step 2) “self-mover is immortal” (245e3) and into an indefinite result (step 3) which further solidifies the conclusion “souls are self-movers” (246a).

The explanation for the argument “self-mover is immortal”, as it can be seen, has been established in a complex manner. There are four parts to this:

1. “...anything that is ever-moving is immortal...” (245c5)
2. “...the thing which moves itself never stops moving ..” (245c7)
3. “Such a thing is also the original source of motion for everything else that move” (245c8)
4. “.... a source is ungenerated, it is also necessarily imperishable. ” (245d5)

Clearly, the underlying thought in this argument is that something that is always moving must always exist and so is immortal, because if it were to stop moving, at any given time, would be for it to abandon its own nature, hence it would cease to exist, and thus mortal.

To begin with, let’s take the argument 2 which fully states “It is only something which moves itself that never stops moving, because it never abandons itself” (245c7-8). From here we can deduce that the essential property of a self mover is that it should be in constant motion, that is to be moving itself at any given time. The logic behind this conclusion is that if a self-mover were to stop moving then it

could not start moving itself unless jolted into motion by something else or by itself. Because if it were to be jolted into motion by itself then that would mean some part of it was already in motion which would cause it to move - a clear contradiction of the hypothesis and if it were jolted into motion by something else then we cannot call it a self-mover, as that would be in contradiction to what other term implies or means. But does this mean that a self-mover has to be eternally in motion? Clearly an essential property of a self-mover is to be in constant motion or in self-motion, which means a self-mover cannot stop and still be called a self-mover (as established before but this does not mean that it will keep moving forever and existing eternally. Since “the thing which moves itself never stops moving” could mean either of the two things: i) it is impossible that there should be a thing that moves itself without moving or motion (which is what Plato is mainly concerned with or focuses on) or that ii) that what which moves itself is eternally moving - this would imply the notion of immortality. However, since Plato seems to be more focused on essential property (as represented by i)) and not the second conclusion suggest, the eternal possession of a property (where moving is the property and self-mover is in possession of it) may bring to question the premise that self-movers are immortal.

Now, moving on to statement 3 and 4, we can see that “Such a thing is also the original source of motion for everything else that move” is not argued for explicitly but the fact that it is followed by statement 4 and its argument for it “... a source is ungenerated, it is also necessarily imperishable...” is done so in order to present that statement in favour of statement 4. Furthermore, the repetition of “a defunct source can never be generated from anything else nor can it bring about the generation of anything else, given that everything is generated from a source.” seems to cycle back as a support for 3, almost creating a loop that you cannot get out of.

A source is ungenerated since everything that comes to be comes out of a source and it does not come out of anything else (as stated by Plato) because if it were to then it would no longer be a source that all things that comes to be came to be from. This statement makes sense as long as you assume the basic principle that nothing can generate itself. This follows that source must also be imperishable because otherwise nothing else could bring it back to being and neither could anything come out of it. This in turn would create the universe and the whole creation to collapse as it would fall into a negative loop. The explanation here is quite clear so far.

While on its own this whole argument seems to be sound, one has to wonder, how does this relate to the soul and its immortality? How does Plato come to relate the soul to a self-mover? The notion that the soul always brings life was a common view amongst greek philosophers. Anything that has a soul is alive and it is an essential property of the soul that they are absent in things which have died (or lifeless). This would by the analogy so far mean the reason for an organism's motion (maybe not in strict definition of the term motion as in movement) is soul, making it a self-mover, a source or a first principle. This answer is maybe oversimplified.

Let's shift the focus a bit on the word "motion" used by Plato in this dialogue.

This "motion" that is mentioned can mean a number of things (like coming-to-be) and is not limited to movement type motion. This is because, if you read the dialogue, Plato uses two words: κίνησις and γένεσις, where " γένεσις" is a part of "κίνησις".

If we are to assume that self-mover as a thing of existence then we can also conclude that these are responsible for motion of everything else. Where, as mentioned before, 'coming-to-be' (γένεσις) is included in 'motion' (κίνησις). This

would mean that the source or as we termed before (and probably the correct term to use in this case), first principle of ‘motion’ is the first principle of anything that is in motion in the universe, because the notion of impersible lies in the principle of motion.

If we are to look at the word “ γένεσις”, it has several meanings: generation, production, coming-to-be) and if γένεσις would mean as first principle of ‘all motion’ then it would not make sense for all universe to “run down and stop” if only one of the ‘ γένεσις’ was to be perished, sine at least one of the other ‘genesis’ is to remain active at any given time. Thus, Plato’s probable assumption and usage of just one motion as the first principle does not entirely make sense here.

Through statement 3 and statement 4 we are led to conclude that the soul is a self-mover and hence is the principle of motion. As stated above this requires that there should be just one principle of motion, which would mean that there is just one soul. This seems in direct contradiction of the myth that follows the proof which touches upon the plurality of the soul. Perhaps, Plato here was playing with the notion of World Soul and the goal of individual souls is to descend to that World soul. Although we find no such direct suggestion in *Phaedrus* of this assumption. Moreover, we can deduce that the myth is trying to emphasise on the individuality of the souls.

So the assumption of World Soul in *Phaedrus*, while may be not entirely correct, seems to be a way to explain the existence of just one self-mover.

The Myth

Moving onto the myth of the charioteer. We see Plato here describing a soul not in singularity but a tripartite soul. In this part the underlying concept of soul has

several features. As we noticed before one of them is, it being a self-mover. Not just a self-mover but a soul being in unceasing self-motion/ Furthermore, it moves everything else. Also, the job of a soul is to look after all that's inanimate and thus patrol the whole universe. (246b8)

According to the image created by the myth of charioteer, the two horses “soul is like an organic whole made up of charioteer and in a team of horses” (246a7-8). According to this the inner ruler (charioteer) drives the two horses, one of which is good and noble while the other is difficult and disagreeable. These two parts of the soul are always in conflict (unlike the souls of gods, which are always good).

The end point of the souls is to progress towards eternal traversing of the heavens but is interrupted by contemplation of Forms. The two parts of the soul through this eternal traversing takes the charioteer to a point of contemplation, because as it seems, on its own the charioteer appears to be motionless in a way, or senseless. Together they fulfill the souls destiny of being in constant motion.

This whole myth seems in connection with *Phaedo's* Doctrine of Recollection, where the underlying idea is that soul has a previous existence and knowledge of idea of true existence which is recollected after birth - by the use of our senses through looking at an object or considering a concept and relating it to true knowledge.

Similarly, in *Phaedrus*, Plato says “This is a recollection of things which our souls once saw during their journey as companions to gods...”(249c2-3). Here he gives a reason as to why the soul is immortal while the body of a human being is called mortal. Because a soul has had the chance to get a glimpse of god or has seen god it is immortal while the body, having never seen god is called mortal. The soul has a wing which is responsible to carry the soul to the gods. These wings have to be

nourished with good and virtue and so on to be lifted up to gods and not fed with badness which could cause the wings to shrink and perish. The charioteer's job is to train the two parts of soul perfectly to let these wings grow and take it to the gods. Once it has made it to the edge of heaven and had a peek around, it is able to get a sense of true being; it is able to witness higher good, absolute beauty, justice and all that is intangible. This intangible has no color or form and is comprehensible only by the intelligent part of the soul, that is, the charioteer. But because they are always pulled by the horses, the charioteer does not get a good look at the true being and is uncertain of the image of things he has seen or they are able to see some things and other things not. Once this tripartite soul is inside a body and is encountered with somebody resembling the true knowledge, it is drawn towards it. That is to say, the soul recollects the true being to certain degree and relates that to the object or the person it sees. This point is described with the concept of a lover.

There is a striking similarity between the myth of charioteers in *Phaedrus* and Parmenides proem. Plato here has based his concept of immortality of the soul on Parmenides concept of the true being. The soul is self-moving and cannot be destroyed or come into being is similar to Parmenides's ungenerated, whole, imperishable and complete being. The charioteer's journey in Plato is close to the chariot journey of a young philosopher beyond sense-perception reality to the realm of eternal existence. One can see Plato's charioteer and the reasoning part of the soul perform the same role as the immortal companion of Parmenides' charioteer.

No doubt, if read closely one can see the influence of Parmenides on Plato on many occasions.

Furthermore, this myth is quite closely corresponding to *Phaedo's* Doctrine of recollection, where a lover is reminded of their beloved through a lyre which they had been in the habit of using. Or when we attain the idea of equality by looking at a

piece of wood and stone. Similarly, the soul through the lover is reminded of divinity or something of true knowledge. The soul goes through this experience many times in one life and in all other lives.

In both the dialogues the aim of recollection is to escape the cycle of rebirth as soon as possible and this can be done only through living a life as a philosopher. Clearly, in the myth you can find an undisputed argument for the immortality of the soul and it being a self-mover being in unceasing self-motion.

II. On Soul and its immortality in reference to scientific texts

In pursuit of truth, every human puts their faith towards something. In ancient times it was pagan gods and the cosmos to whom they looked up when an illness or bad situation fell upon a city or a family. In medieval times the church started acting as a medium through whom advice was sought and in the modern time, it is science and technology that we pray to.

With passing years it became easier to understand and learn the ways in which our world works. It became known to us that it was earth that revolved around the sun and not the other way around or that it is because of gravitation that we are able to stand on the ground and not float around in the atmosphere. The reason for volcanic eruptions, earthquakes or tornadoes got a scientific and logical explanation rather than just saying “it was gods’ will”. And with that, the wonderful discoveries of modern science trust in religious scriptures, such as the Bible, for scientific explanation or even common problems started to shake.

One subject modern science could not provide proof for with confidence is that of the soul. Be it evolutionary theorists, or psychology - neither of them consider the question of soul as popular science and soon it fell out of the table of things to consider when understanding human nature and mind and became a thing for philosophy only. Today, if anything has to be stamped as credible, it must agree with the principles of modern day investigation (scientific experiments mainly) and general laws of the universe put forth by science, in order that it is comprehensible by the rational mind.

This chapter deals with modern scientific researches conducted in the last few decades that have rejuvenated the questions about the soul. It looks at exactly what happened at the approach of science to the soul discourse? What does science have to say about the soul? Does all those years spent by numerous philosophers (who set the path for modern discoveries) such as Plato, Aristotle and so on debating and theorising about the soul and its function mean nothing at all?

a. Approaching modern science

Many great scientists agree with the hypothesis that the transition from nonliving to living entities was not a single event, but an evolutionary process of increasing complexity that resulted in formation of cell membranes and thus humans, plants, animals and so on.

One of the most famous and widely known theories is Darwinian theory - which states that all species of organism arise and develop through natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase individuals ability to compete, survive and reproduce. (Evans and Selina, 2005)

These theories and laws of evolution have revolutionised our ways of thinking in such a way that today very few accept religious doctrines as sufficient evidence of truth. A curious mind has to take into account the significance of laws of evolution when questioning or discussing the soul's origin, survival and death.

From invertebrate to vertebrate form, from mammal to human life - when we study the life-history of humans or any living organism, we are able to trace it back to its origin and comprehend the evolutionary development into the current life form.

Thanks to the number of experiments conducted we know each species has a typical number of chromosomes in their cells and this number regularly recurs in division and multiplication of these cells. (Bixby, 1920)

Along with bodily developments we see a progress in the mind as well - from reflex actions to subtle instincts present in almost all living organisms to more advanced behaviour like perception, conscience reason, judgement and so on. From what it seems humans may have reached the peak of physical development but not yet cognitive development as even to this date we are still developing and testing our limits. This is where we begin our journey to understand our purpose in this universe.

It is not just a popular belief amongst philosophers but many scientists also that there will come a time when all life forms will become extinct only to dissolve into some new fire-mist to develop again from a lifeless nebula into a home for some animal species. It is a senseless disaster to think all the grand evolution progress happened only to end in complete annihilation, as Darwin said, “it is an intolerable thought”, unless there is a continued life after death of souls, or atleast a hope for it.

Without the support of some spiritual progress evolution appears to be a concept of hopelessness and in vain for a man.

“the soul encapsulated the mind’s conscious operations as well as the body’s unconscious vital activities...” - Robert Whytt, (Bassiri, 2013, p. 428)

Psychology is the science of behavior and consciousness, however, up until 19th century psychology was not even considered as science. Aristotle’s approach to dream (a reaction to Plato’s soul-concept) became the first scientific psychology to

be discussed. It is said that to know psychology one has to know its object, the soul. (Rank, 1996)

Soul is a versatile thing, for psychologists (mainly early psychologists) it is a bearer of personal identity while for philosophers it is the bearer of life. But for sometime now the soul, as we know it from ancient times, is not a thing of scientific psychology - with progress in research, the soul-concept became invalid in the scientific psychology society and became a thing mainly to be discussed and studied by philosophers.

Otto Rank in his paper *Psychology and the Soul* highlights a problem many raise when trying to grasp what psychology is - whether it is objective or subjective - a dualism or as he calls it “science of relationships”, where subjective is more concerned with self awareness with its theory of self knowledge and objective is like a tool used to understand others and human nature in general.

If we are to justify the immortality and existence of the soul in the modern world we must consider some experiments and theories conducted in the field of psychology.

“We would never be moral beings if we did not start as moral babies.” (Wynn and Bloom, 2014 p. 451) - with this statement Karen Wynn and Paul Bloom conclude their experiment on whether humans are born with some basic understanding of morality. From an evolutionary point of view, there is an explanation for the rise of such complex behaviour in regards to serving a purpose in preservation of the race of species. This study suggests that humans do have a rudimentary moral sense from the very start of life. Wynn and Bloom carefully developed an experiment that shows moral thought in first years of life - like it's bred in the bones. (Wynn and Bloom, 2014)

They conduct a number of experiments with babies from 5-months old to 10-months old. For infants, they use looking-time as an indication to what the baby is more interested at and draw conclusions from that. For older babies, who have the capacity to hold objects or reach for objects, they use that as an indicator to determine the results.

The first experiment found that infants are sensitive to the competence of social interactions, by demonstrating them an event in which a character, a climber, repeatedly attempted to ascend a steep incline. In one scenario the climber was helped by a helper and in the other it was obstructed by a hinderer. When the climber approached the hinderer instead of the helper, it was noted that the infants looked longer at the climber, probably because they expected the climber to approach the helper instead of the hinderer - suggesting that like adults, babies do hold some expectations in social behaviour. The next experiment went on to study how babies felt about negative and positive social actions. In the next experiment, the same demonstration was shown to the babies again and this time when the puppets were held out to the infants to show their preference, most of the babies reached out for the helpful individual. When given a choice between a neutral character and a hinderer, babies again did not reach for the hinderer. For babies of 3-months old, since they are not able to reach for their preferred character, the two characters were held in front of them and their looking-time was observed. As stated before, babies tend to look towards the character they prefer and so in this experiment, they looked towards the helper longer than the hinderer. Infact, babies possess more subtle moral capacities than good and bad. They would even prefer a character who rewards the helper or punishes the hinderer than a character who would reward the hinderer and punish the helper.

These experiments indicate that within the first few months of life when humans have not had any personal experience with moving from one location to another, they can differentiate positive from negative behaviour.

Many scholars believe that humans have some inborn moral sense which would explain the reaction of babies in this experiment. Babies are not “a perfect idiot” as Jean-Jacques Rousseau would say. This experiment shows that babies have expectations about how objects should behave and have an actual understanding of mental life.

Alfred Russel Wallace, claimed that humans do have some higher moral faculties and some sort of “godly force” must have been the reason for creation of these capacities, which was no doubt ridiculed by his partner Darwin.

Danish D'Souza, a writer and film-maker also concluded something of similar nature in his book *What's so great about Christianity?* In this book he said that while there may be genetic benefits to niceness and good morals, there is no evolutionary positive purpose for disinterested kindness and reasoned that this was “voice of god” in our souls. To which many evolutionary psychologists disagreed, saying that certain biological traits do not always evolve to serve a purpose in preservation of the race of species.

Although the results of this experiment shows that humans possessed some innate moral values, scientists and evolutionary psychologists tend to credit it to social and cultural experiences, and biological evolution rather than to the soul.

The results of this experiment can be interpreted in terms of Platonic Doctrine of Recollection. Through this experiment we can prove that there is a possibility that humans possess innate knowledge and that through senses and learning they

rediscover the innate knowledge present within, for an empty head learns nothing. For a human to be able to absorb information they need to have some pre-existing understanding of what to pay attention to and what generalizations to make. So the babies in the experiment, according to Plato's theory are recollecting the 'Truth' because their soul existed before them and has previous knowledge of absolute good. They are hidden in the depth of the soul.

As we know, not just from Doctrine of Recollection from *Phaedo*, but from *Meno* as well, that Plato believed that learning is nothing but remembering or 'anamnesis' (ἀνάμνησις) of 'Truth'. When the soul is incarnated in the body, it forgets the truth and is able to regain them by educating through remembrance and with the help of someone more knowledgeable. In *Meno*, he demonstrates this through a slave boy who has no knowledge of mathematics or geometry. Socrates by drawing square figures on the ground asks the slave boy to find twice the area of the square. Initially the boy has no idea but through answering the questions of Socrates he is able to calculate the answer. The idea here is that he does not learn, in the terms that we understand learning, but learn through the process of remembrance led by someone more knowledgeable. The same way, through this experiment we learn that humans hold this idea of morality from a very young age. They are able to learn/remember these ideas through the use of their senses - in this case, watching a puppet show or watching their parents or television programs that teach them certain moral values..

However, one could say that this behaviour, from infants inclining to choose the good individual and even rewarding them, is something they pick up from watching their parents or guardians - like a blank canvas being painted and it takes the form that which is being painted. From the moment of birth, a parent installs a reward system for their infants to train them into good social behaviours - leading them to act the same way. As Locke observed, it is through perception and understanding furnished by experience, that we are able to gain knowledge. (Locke, 2000)

According to him all the ideas come from sensations and it is through these senses the ideas are conveyed to mind. The mind, through reasoning and experience provides understanding. For him there are two kinds of ideas: simple and complex - where simple is like raw material and are provided to the mind in different ways, and complex ideas are made out of simple ideas. The mind receives these simple ideas either passively or actively. Some of these ideas can be like heat, cold, colour and so on. The mind is either able to combine these simple ideas and form something of complex nature like gratitude, beauty and so on or existing on its own by comparing ideas, relating them and forming something distinct.

“Unless the mind had a distinct perception of different objects and their qualities, it would be capable of very little knowledge” - hence, mind plays the main role in associating ideas (Brunt and Locke, 2000, P138). For Locke, at this point, there is no such thing as innate knowledge or ideas. Though, he points out that when a baby is in the womb he receives some ideas such as heat or hunger, through experience in the womb - that is a pre-existing idea and not innate. These ideas in the minds of the babies are produced in the beginning through senses. But these ideas are not knowledge, like mathematics. So, how does this justify babies having a moral compass? Is it something they experienced in the womb? Certainly not, because how can one, to think logically, produce these ideas or even comprehend and exercise these ideas in the womb. That means, the idea of morality must be a knowledge that is perceived and exercised through mind. But if babies are like blank canvas, as Locke would say, or an ‘idiot being’, how can they choose a good individual over a bad one, and further, punish the bad one? Surely, there is a clear contradiction in Locke’s theory here, proved by the scientific experiment. And at this stage Plato’s Doctrine of recollection seems more applicable in explaining the results.

What would happen if we were to apply Leibniz law of continuity to the theory of soul, to understand or maybe even to prove the possibility of existence of soul and further try to get a better understanding of existence of innate ideas.

“In reality there is no transition of the soul from one body to another, except insofar as the body itself is insensibly changed. Metempsychosis would be against the rule that nothing takes place by leaps. The transition of the soul from one body to another would be the same as the leap of one body from one place to another, without traversing the intermediate space.” (Leibniz, Foucher de Careil and Owen, 1855, p. 76). The law of continuity informs us that nothing jumps in nature and that one thing cannot pass from one state to another without passing through all the other states that can be conceived of between them. This would mean that every state in which a being finds itself must possess sufficient reason why this body finds itself in this state rather than in any other state; and this reason can only be found in its prior state. The prior state therefore contained something which gave birth to the actual state which it followed. We need to apply the same thought process to soul-body theory, where this “something” would be a life-giving substance and prior state would be the soul (without body).

Leibniz has somewhere referred to atoms as an example of incomplete being - these beings are something of abstract theory and do not exist in the real world. The same stands for souls. Souls without bodies exist no more than two individuals who are exactly similar and differ only numerically (Brown, 1998). Thus, soul without body would not be complete and vice versa. But that is not to say that without each other they do not exist. Their separated existence could be imagined as an incomplete existence - “creatures free or freed from matter would at the same time be separated from the universal order of things, and be, as it were, deserters from the general order” (Brown, 1998, p. 580). This is not to say that souls cannot exist outside its matter but that they can be something more than matter - something that “does not

produce or destroy by the changes which matter undergoes.” So how does this justify immortality? This “something”, mentioned above, that is a life-giving substance cannot admit to death and so is immortal. Immortality suggests continuity. However, this statement lacks full support.

So far we have noted that through the law of continuity, soul transmigrating would be an odd occurrence. And if it was possible for it to pass from one body to another, it would have to retain some part of it from the old body and take it to the new one. So according to Leibniz, if immortality was possible, it would mean that there should be some psychological continuity in the soul and some physical continuity (suggesting there are no separated souls). Thus, the soul has a subtle body, somehow included in a gross body which cannot perish.

In his earlier works, Freud divides the soul or the subject (as he calls it) into three components - two of these are so closely connected that we can look at them as one (preconscious/conscious), as distinct from the unconscious (or id). If we are to look closely at his structuring, we find that there is a tripartite structure of the id: ego and superego which could be compared to Plato’s passion or appetite. The superego keeps the ego (reason) in check when it errs morally, that is, it surrenders too much to the passion’s demands rather than being a complaint helper. The superego drives the ego towards moral perfection. Just as the ego has to struggle to fight with the powerful impulses, such as sexual desires or aggression coming from the id, it also has to, equally resist the demands of the superego. If it surrenders too readily to either of these sets of demands – which come from within the psyche itself – the ego risks becoming pathological in the sense of being either at the mercy of id-drives, or of superego-imperatives. This could weaken the ego’s freedom to the point where it can no longer maintain a kind of balance between the two psyche-components which, together with itself, comprise the human psyche. Add to this the fact that the ego also, in addition, faces the necessity of confronting pressures, demands and

dangers from the outside world – the relation to which is captured by Freud with the so called ‘reality-principle’ – then it becomes apparent that the ego has no easy task, for its actions are orchestrated by the reality principle. In fact, unlike Plato’s rational charioteer who, with the assistance of the spirited white horse, is depicted as being able to restrain and control the passionate, untamed black horse, the ego is assured of no such ability to control or overpower the other two psychic agencies in relation to either their demand, or the exigencies of the external world. The situation with Freud, then, seems to be crucially different from that of Plato when it comes to reason’s justified confidence in its ability to master countervailing forces either within the psyche or outside of it.

As mentioned before, with growing research and psychology now being considered as science, the concept of soul soon starts to depart from this area. Freud, who wanted to give an objective understanding of unconsciousness (or what we know as the soul) and explain it in terms of reality by merging and understanding it with the help of a conscious mind, ended up shutting out the concept of soul completely. Although he acknowledged the soul, he refused to explain it materialistically. No doubt Freud made attempts to do this through an unconscious mind. For him unconsciousness is something extra than the data registered by our conscious mind. It holds something more than we take in, a residue of the outside world or a reflection of reality - all characteristic soul.

The problem with considering soul as science is that it is something that cannot be sensed or frayed or observed with a microscope and yet unlike contemporary psychologists, early philosophers like Aristotle took it into consideration when evaluating psychology. Psyche (ψυχή) cannot be explained as a ‘typical’ brain function and as ancient philosophers believe, the soul uses the body as a vessel or an instrument. So for any scientist to test the theory of existence of soul they would need to have some form of physical proof. Furthermore, psychology always

involves some form of matter being studied and for souls in strict scientific terms, this matter is absent.

What is even more interesting is when trying to understand the role of soul in psychology, because in some ways psychology has evolved from soul-concept, is that it claims to be self-knowledge that comes from others and is tested on others - quite paradoxical. This is mainly because one cannot simply avoid including oneself when revealing some kind of universal pattern seen in human beings in general. While scientific psychology denies the soul, it studies inner life or self and this self or "I" or what we are is what we know of as soul-concept, as its nature.

As Aquinas said, "dispositions of the soul, such as anger, fear, and so on are not separable from the physical matter insofar as they have this kind of existence, viz., to the extent that dispositions that do not exist without a body. They are not like lines and plane surfaces, which can be separated in reason from the matter natural [to them]. If this is so, then the study of [such dispositions] and also of the soul pertain to natural science." (Zupko, 1997, p. 302)

Fear, anger, love, morality and so on are all part of some sort of self identity, a part of the soul-concept. It is this identity that makes us different from each other. For instance my opinion on the right way to discipline a child might vary from that of my mother's. It is this existence of personal identity that creates a problem when considering the soul as immortal. As Nathan Oaklander says, "soul [cannot] be both what we are and what continues after our bodily death." For him, survival implies identity. (Oaklander, 2001) However, if we are to take Cartesian point of view the souls being an immaterial thing remains the same through time and supports properties and experiences. Which is to say that the soul endured through change (including personal identity) and is immortal.

The problem that lies in this view is that this soul which is the subject of some kind of consciousness before and after death is what makes me, me and it does not appear to completely justify the problem of identity and that survival requires identity.

For this we need to turn to Plato's affinity argument from *Phaedo*, where he brings out the two categories: compounded and uncompounded. Compounded is subjected to change and exists in space and time, that is to say it is something particular. Uncompounded neither exist in time and space and can neither change nor come to existence or cease to exist. For Plato, soul is uncompounded, having the characteristics of indestructibility, invisibility, divineness and so on. Soul being uncompounded would mean personal identity is lost for uncompounded is common to many different particulars and since universal soul is what each soul participates in the existence of it can hardly be the foundation of individual personal identity.

Furthermore, according to Plato or Socrates, the soul is what gives life to the body. This would mean either the soul is the same as life or that soul has life in it. For if the first, then soul is immortal but if not, then the argument in *Phaedo* with the form of life is weak. Hence, the soul is either immortal and does not bear personal identity (because of the nature of uncompoundedness) or it falls short of immortality.

Conclusion

To conclude, arguments presented in *Phaedo* are convincing enough to justify the existence of the soul before man and after man. However, there seems to be some negligence and contradictions in the ideas and examples presented. For instance, by the example of odd and even, if the number three takes a higher position in order to retain its oddness at the attack of the opposite, even, then by the same idea a soul must also take a higher position in order to retain its immortality. But it can be said that it is the idea of immortality that is immortal or imperishable and not the soul itself, as by the analogy, a soul should have a beginning and hence, could mean that its proof for existence before a man can once again be questioned. The second example that leaves a confusion is that of an old weaver. So if the old weaver, lets say a synonym in this example of the soul and the garment is that of a man, by this analogy the soul at one point will perish and that knowledge is something a simple man cannot account for, for no body would outlive a soul or retain the knowledge of such event, and if it does the said man or soul is still alive and has not perished. The idea that a good soul is offered the company of God while a folly soul wanders and enters into an animal body, that is of a lower intellect is somewhat an unsteady argument.

Furthermore, there is a lack of discussion on the concept of immortality itself. The dialogue solely concentrates on proving immortality of soul but nowhere is there mention of existence of the concept of immortality. One could argue this through the opposite argument: just as the opposite of life is death, the opposite of even is odd and the opposite of hot is cold - opposite of mortality is immortality since we know that mortality exists, hence its opposite must too. However, this argument is not strong enough.

What *Phaedo* lacks in argument for the concept of immortality, is made up in *Phaedrus*. No doubt that the Proof and the Myth are good arguments for immortality. If we are to consider the soul being a self-mover it would seem not completely convincing to deduce that soul is immortal. This is because, as mentioned before, being in constant motion does not necessarily mean that it will be in motion eternally. Self-mover needs no other force to keep it moving but does that mean that it will keep moving forever? Given that “motion” is the property of a self-mover, then by that analogy it should always be in motion. Let’s revert back to opposites argument and argument with Form. Here Plato has established that something at the approach of the opposite would rather obliterate than admit to it. By that analogy, a self-mover at the approach of it’s opposite will not admit to it. Similarly, the soul at the approach of death will not admit to death, because if it were to, life being the essential property of soul, it would admit to death and that does not make sense, because life cannot admit to death and hence soul cannot admit to death. For if it were to admit to death, it would mean that soul has something else that holds life in it.

While at initial look it seems that *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* fails to create a strong support for the immortality itself, but if thought about it carefully the arguments put forth in *Phaedo* does justify the immortality of the soul. Even if we are to argue against it with modern science, it still seems that soul being immortal is a sound conclusion. For it supports the law of continuity. Soul cannot jump from one state to another, that would essentially mean that it cannot just jump to death, if it were to perish it would have to go through some intermediate process. We cannot say with a 100% guarantee that soul will never perish because there is still a possibility that soul does undergo some intermediate process or that it changes into something else. However, to speculate about this theory would mean we are giving soul properties of being “changeable”, which in turn means the soul might not itself be the one containing life giving property but has something that holds this property.

These dialogues have made me wonder, if soul being immortal and by my own analogy changing its form, ever existed in another form instead of ceasing? That is a soul must have had a previous form before it changed into soul and after wearing its last garment, does not perish but changes its form - hence, retaining its immortality. But does immortality as a concept even exist in reality? Immortality, in this case can be argued as an idea such as good or evil, harmony or disharmony, absolute beauty and so on - but these concepts exist within mortals however the same cannot be said for the idea of immortality. Ideas as proved before, precedes existence of a man; immortality being an idea itself in the same manner could prove to be pre-existing but this argument is based on shaky grounds.

However, these arguments are not enough to talk about immortality of the soul. There are still many things that need to be considered when theorising about such a complex topic. One has to take into account evolution and its impact on our nature. And if we are to consider evolution, we can very well say that immortality of the soul based on the argument of recollection falls short. Because the possibility of innate ideas may just be the result of an evolutionary process. What we have to keep in mind when studying Plato for the soul and its immortality is that philosophers of those times never considered that one species could come out of another species, and so certain arguments do fail in the eyes of science and evolution.

To really be able to come to an agreeable conclusion on this theory, science, psychology and philosophy need to work together. Maybe only then will we be able to come close to answering some of the most important lingering questions.

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