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The Mythological Aspect of Plato's *Phaedo* as Disclosing the Soul's Ontological Significance

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Abstract: This essay offers an interpretation of Plato's *Phaedo*, which proceeds in two parts: (1) methodological interpretation of myth and (2) application of the method to the analysis of the soul. The paper claims that the myths in this dialogue are not limited to the explicitly mythical sections but that the entirety of the *Phaedo*—including the arguments that it presents—is saturated with myth. Through this interpretive lens, the soul, as it appears in the *Phaedo*, ceases to be characterized as a mere thing and gains an ontological dimension.

Keywords: Earth itself; Hades; logoi; Minotaur; muthoi; space; time; Theseus

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1. Introduction

First, we defend a thesis that Socrates' (and other interlocutors') speeches and arguments cannot be separated from his commitment to make myths (61b) [1–19].[1] By combining myth and argument in the dialogue's structure and meaning, Plato intends to free the reader from certain captivity to the everyday and straightforward understanding of things (which Socrates primarily aligns with a bodily nature, for example, 66b–67b and 81b–84c). In short, when we look at Socrates' demonstrative arguments with our sight turned towards things (τὰ πράγματα), we become blind to the deeper psychological meaning of existence and beings (τὰ ὄντα), which to play on Socrates' own phrase, is specifically a kind of "soul-blindness" (99d–e). Myths invite us in a peculiar way to see layers of meaning and to interpret language as representing different relations than those obtaining between the things about which a speech or story literally signifies. This essay shows how Plato uses Socrates' myths in order to have us look past the soul as a mere thing—as a fanciful product of the human fear of death (68b), in this fantastic guise no different than spooky ghosts and hobgoblins (77e)—and to see it rather with respect to "looking into the truth of beings" (σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, 99e).

The second half of the essay offers the development of a fourfold thesis following directly from the application of the interpretive methodology established in the first part. It is argued that (1) Socrates' speeches about the soul, in which he separates it from the body as a deathless thing, conceal a more fundamental and ontological understanding of the soul. This is best shown through a reinterpretation of the arguments in conjunction with the myths. (2) We demonstrate how the soul, which the arguments make into a separate *thing*, can nonetheless be understood in terms of a distinctive kind of being that characterizes mortal, living things. Consequently, (3) we argue that what is disclosed through Socrates' mythologizing is the proper way in which the soul is ontologically distinct from things. Thus, (4) the meaning of when and where the soul exists (or the meaning of the "when" and the "where" as such) depends on the recognition of the ontological distinction. This fourfold thesis is worked out with respect to the sense of the soul's place and its temporality. With respect to place, we consider the argument from invisibility concerning the 'here' of the visible world and the 'there' of Hades (starting from 77e). Then, with respect to temporality, in the argument from contrary things (71e), the argument from recollection

(77a), and the argument from the contraries themselves (106b), Socrates presents these in the guise of the three temporal aspects (of the past, present, and future). The result of the analysis as applied to place shows that Hades is not some invisible place in the netherworld where the souls of the dead go. It is rather a part of the structure of life, such a part that serves as an orienting principle for our choices and actions. In terms of time, we deconstruct Socrates' arguments in such a way as to claim that the past, present, and future are not discreet but that there is a permeability among them. The (1) past and the (2) future serve as the horizons of the (1) given conditions that inform our decision making and (2) the structure of choice. Together, these two fold into the present in a ceaseless arrival of potential infinity. Thus, also eternity, in our analysis, transpires as the ever-recurring current of temporalized unfolding of living beings' possibilities rather than as some immovable "forever" accessible only to the souls of the dead.

In terms of the commentaries on the *Phaedo*, we draw on Seth Benardete's and Francisco J. Gonzalez's respective studies of the *Phaedo* to explicate Socrates' role in relation to the opening myth of dialogue. We also engage with several analyses by Radcliffe G. Edmonds's III and Christos A. Zafiropoulos' when situating the relationships between *muthos* and *logos* [10,13,18,20,21].[2] When applying the results of the methodological section and articulating the soul's ontological, temporal, and spatial dimensions, we largely draw on themes present in the interpretations by Carol Atack, John Sallis, and Hallvard Fossheim [22–24].[3] This paper distinguishes itself from the extant literature in two ways: (1) It argues that the joining of myth and argument in the *Phaedo* represents an important correspondence between the dialogue's form and its content. Namely, Socrates' arguments are concerned with the joining and separation of contraries, while Plato has Socrates join myth (*muthos*) to argument (*logos*) in a way that informs the meaning of the text. And (2) the precise way in which this essay understands the soul goes in an ontological direction that the other authors have largely left unexplored. Points 1 and 2 go together in that understanding the ontological significance of the soul depends on reading with an eye on the peculiar way in which myths envelop, inform, and qualify the arguments of the *Phaedo.*

1.1. Part 1

In the last days of his life, Socrates has adopted a new practice of "making myths rather than arguments" (ποιεῖν μύθους ἀλλ' οὐ λόγους, 61b). Indeed, Socrates says that he is obeying a recurring dream, which—although the dream itself has not changed—he lately interprets to be encouraging him to make demotic or "popular music" (δημώδη μουσικὴν) [25][4], which he again loosely contrasts with philosophical arguments (61a). Thus, although he says he is no mythologer, Socrates weaves into all of his arguments in the *Phaedo* the "telling of mythic tales" (μυθολογεῖν, 61e) and ghost stories (77e–84c). He proceeds throughout the dialogue to "discourse in myth" (διαμυθολογῶμεν, 70b) to "console" his friends with "persuasive talk" (παραμυθία, 70b, 115d) and to "sing" (ἐπαείδω) a myth (107c–114c) of care for the soul "for all time" (107c). The practice culminates in Socrates laying out a mythical travelogue of the soul's journey through the "Earth itself" (αὐτὴν . . . τὴν γῆν, 109b) across "all time" (. . . τοῦ χρόνου . . . τοῦ παντός, 107e). Immediately after the travelogue, Socrates claims with a poetic phrase to "have long been at length (πάλαι μηκύνω) with the myth" (114d). Socrates says that he began to practice making myths at least several days before the arrival of his companions (61a). Nowhere in the dialogue does he abandon or place a limit on his new practice. Therefore, when taking all these points together, it is clear that Plato's readers cannot assume that any of Socrates' speeches in the *Phaedo* are completely separable from myth [4].[5] To that end, Zafiropoulos concludes about the travelogue that it decisively contradicts Socrates' "introductory denial of being *mythologikos*" and that, moreover, this myth, which Socrates composes is not an imitation of the myths of fabulists. So it is by means of extended mythologizing controlled by the philosopher that Plato seeks to widen the limits of the conversation and to provide his present audience (but for future hearers and readers too) with a treatment for the disease of hatred of argumentation that of *mythologia* against *misologia*" [26,27].[6] The latter arises, in

large part, because of our over-reliance on or because of our excessive trust in the power of *logoi*—of reasoned argumentation.

It is important to view Socrates' "making myths rather than arguments" as anticipating what he says concerning misology. Notably, after Simmias and Cebes raise what seems to Socrates' company to be devastating arguments against the deathlessness of the soul, Socrates turns again to myth, likening himself and Phaedo to Heracles and Iolaus (89b). We can interpret the heroic moment in which Socrates and Phaedo come to the rescue against misology as further illustrating the function of myth in the dialogue. The myths are not there to replace the arguments but to turn us back towards them in a new way. In this new way, the arguments do not necessarily change, but the person who understands them takes a different orientation to the truth (90e). Misology, according to Socrates, arises when an argument betrays one's trust, throwing one's worldview and self-confidence into question. Having suffered betrayal, the misologist loses all trust in arguments and turns away from them entirely. However, as an antidote to misology, the interaction of myth and argument wards off a foolhardy trust in reason alone to tell the truth. After all, a myth can be false without betraying trust, while it nonetheless provides a way to truth through the interpretation of its untruth. Even if this way is itself unsure and possibly dangerous, it represents a way forward for a philosophy that would otherwise be foreclosed if the *logos* should fail. And for one reason or another, Socrates' *logos* does fail (or it at least fails his friends), either because his time is too short to lay out a full analysis or more likely because his companions are in need of a story or song to calm them down enough to understand the arguments (e.g., 114d). By weaving mythical elements into his arguments, Socrates, of course, does not make them *more* trustworthy. He simply removes one of the conditions from which misology arises: the crushing disappointment that one feels—and that his friends are clearly feeling in the face of the death of Socrates—at finding out that an argument is not trustworthy or is simply false. It would be too much to say that Socrates intends to make myths because he has lost all confidence in arguments himself, such that he is motivated by misology. Rather, the reflection that the myths and mythical elements cast upon the arguments is what calls Socrates' interlocutors and us to more calmly consider the meaningful ways in which an argument's untruth can lead to a philosophical understanding of death. In consequence, if the untruth of myth attends to the disclosure of truth, then recourse to myth may have the power to save the truth of the arguments, as Socrates means to save his friends from misology.

Socrates—as though emulating the absurd fashion in which Aesop might have joined pleasure and pain—joins *muthos*[7] and *logos* "together at the head" (συνῆψεν . . . κορυφάς, 60c), seemingly because he can neither separate the two ways of speaking about life and death nor find a way to reconcile their differences [28,29].[8] As a matter of method, it is imperative to determine how to read Socrates' strange mythological arguments in the *Phaedo*. As Edmonds contends, "Platonic myth poses a particular problem because the presented myths are told by a specific character who shapes the myth for his audience within the dialogue, while at the same time", Edmonds continues, "Plato is the one manipulating the form of the myth for the audience of the reader of the dialogue. Any understanding of Plato's use of myth must therefore take into account both levels of myth-telling" [10] (pp. 161–162). In other words, we must consider both the intentionality of the mythic narration in terms of its internal logic as well as the effect that the myths have on the overall reception of the dialogue by its readers.

In addition to Socrates' words, the pervasive insinuation of myth into the *Phaedo's* meaning can also be established from its dialogical frame [30].[9] Socrates is not the only maker of myths, but the dialogue's namesake, Phaedo himself, also performs the role of mythologer. Since Phaedo's myth reflects on the development of the character of Socrates in the dialogue, the frame, in turn, will provide important considerations for our methodological orientation to interpreting Socrates' speeches. That is, elements of Phaedo's narration are meant to reimagine the myth of Theseus and to set its images

upon the dialogue, subtly casting Socrates in the two mythical guises of both Theseus and the Minotaur.

The connection between the *Phaedo* and the Theseus myth is evident starting from the opening reference to Delos and the comparison between the "twice seven" (58b) that accompany Theseus on his voyage to Crete with the number of Socrates' companions (59b–c).[10] Then, at the very end of the dialogue, Phaedo makes another allusion, in which he describes Socrates as having the "bull's look" (ταυρηδόν, 117b), i.e., apparently likening him to the Minotaur. Dorter [4] (p. 565), Brann et al. [31][11], and Benardete [21] (p. 130) have all commented specifically on how Phaedo makes Socrates into a latter-day Theseus. As a Theseus, Socrates' arguments look to take on a heroic character—that is, they seek to "save" (ἔσωσέ . . . ἐσώθη, 58a–b) his comrades from what Benardete poetically calls the "labyrinth of fear" [21] (p. 130). Benardete elaborates that this labyrinth is all-encompassing or that a "wholly mythical structure is imposed upon Socrates; it is not something he devises. It is the labyrinth out of which he will have to lead his fourteen companions to save them from the fear of death" [20] (p. 280). However, this is not to say that in order to do so, Socrates will have to leave the *muthoi* behind. On the contrary, it is the repositioning of the meaning of the soul, its spatiality, temporality, and existential vitality that gives Socrates' companions and us, the readers, an edge in the labyrinthine pathways of the *Phaedo* and of life itself. In other words, close attention to the interplay between the *muthoi* and the *logoi* is integral to the interpretive insight into the life–death relationship.

Socrates' likeness to the Minotaur suggests that he may not only be the hero, Theseus, but that he might also be the Minotaur or an embodiment of the very same fear of death—a point discussed, but left somewhat underdeveloped, by both Benardete [20] (p. 280)[12] and Brann et al. [32].[13] To wit, if Socrates is to embody not only a second Theseus but also the Minotaur, that is, if he is to fulfill both the role of savior and monster, then clearly, in likeness to the events of the myth, Socrates must slay himself to prevent harm from coming to his companions.

If Socrates had fled Athens instead of taking the φάρμακον by his own hand in obedience to what he calls the "necessity sent by the god" (62c) or again, if he had even just hesitated rather than relishing the drink (117c), then, by his actions, Socrates would have appeared in the monstrous aspect only. It is precisely this outcome that in the role of Theseus, he must prevent. Therefore, he must contend with that very potential within him to be a source of fear for his friends.[14] That is, if Socrates faltered in the face of death, then through the example set by his actions, he would have done the monstrous thing of inculcating in his companions a fear of death resistant to arguments. Therefore, it is Socrates' peculiar fortune that he can assume the role of Theseus only by an action that, proving his resolve beyond mere words in the face of death, simultaneously places him in the role of the Minotaur. Put otherwise, if Socrates is a Theseus for showing no fear, and Theseus's role is to slay the Minotaur that strikes fear into the hero's companions, then Socrates' death by his own hand is for the sake of saving his companions from the truly fearsome sight of Socrates losing his resolve in the face of death.[15]

The interpretation offered here of Socrates' action in terms of *Phaedo's* mythological allusions, however, is not meant to disclose what the reader already knows as a matter of Socrates' own account: that he chooses to stay in Athens because he deems this choice "the most just and beautiful" (99A). Rather, we take it that the way in which we must confront Socrates' dual nature through the myth is meant to teach us something important for the development of our interpretive method overall. Socrates' duality is brought out by Plato's skill in the art of writing and presents Plato's reader with what the author must deliberately intend to be an interpretive problem. As Dorter formulates the ambiguity, Plato makes "Socrates compose what are in one sense myths, but in another sense not" [4] (p. 565). It would be fair to say that Socrates also gives what are in one sense arguments, and in another sense not. Thus, throughout the *Phaedo*, Socrates practices the very art that has the power to save his companions from misology. As Gonzalez explains, "misology would be caused by having one's full and naive trust in arguments disappointed to the point of

one's falling into the opposite extreme of complete mistrust, and the cure, the required *technê*, would be the recognition that most arguments are neither completely true nor false but somewhere in between" [13] (p. 91). We further extend Gonzalez's point to claim that in order to suspend one's complete trust in the power of *logoi*, one is well-advised to put them in conversation with the *muthoi* or even to realize, as Cobb-Stevens does, that "we find elements of myth throughout the dialogue, not only in passages where myth is 'gathered together by itself' but also within the very fiber of the logoi" [9] (p. 393). However, it may need to be explained why Socrates thinks it best to communicate in a way that joins myth and argument. It should be remembered that Socrates speaks directly with his companions in the *Phaedo*, whose despair over his impending death causes them to panic when the arguments for the soul's deathless way of being are called into question. If a certain mood or disposition would be required to reach the philosophical content of an argument, in which argument truth and untruth are mingled, then the myths could serve the purpose of attuning the interlocutors to the right mode of interpretation in the face of death. If, on the other hand, it is not possible to understand the soul's deathlessness fully in terms of *logoi* (which Socrates does not say but which may be inferred as a distinct possibility given his discursive choices), then the very meaning of the arguments about the soul will depend on the conjunction with myth. In any case, the conjoining of myth and argument raises two important questions: How should we understand Socrates' arguments, e.g., for the deathlessness of the soul, insofar as they are saturated with myth? And how should we understand his myths if they are not even pure myths but are bound up with the arguments?

Socrates himself gives some guidance that may help us address these questions, provided we recognize that even his guiding speech is subject to the interpretive problem just set forth. Just after providing his mythical travelogue, Socrates says, "It is not proper for a man having a mind (νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρί) to be confident about what I have gone over just as such" (114d). The straightforward sense of this guidance is proscriptive—it is explicitly a *warning against confidence*. Obviously enough, this warning, taken just as such, says that Socrates' companions should not be confident in the literal sense of his story, e.g., that the soul travels to exotic countries above and below our current place on this Earth. How the guidance should apply to Plato's reader, though, and whether or in what way the guidance applies to the dialogue as a whole, is more complicated. As Kenneth Dorter says, "Plato presents the mythic image of a doctrine as if it were the doctrine itself, and because such a procedure involves persuading people of what is not literally true, a certain amount of deliberately specious argument is to be expected" [4] (p. 573). Recognizing Dorter's point, this paper practices a certain hermeneutical reexamination of the arguments. Being overly confident when it comes to the reasoned arguments that deal with the soul—especially if this confidence turns us away from the importance of the mythic narration itself—leads to a misunderstanding of the dialogue as a whole, as well as to a misinterpretation of the soul's activity and meaning.

Presumably, if one recognizes a myth for what it is, one does not need to be warned against placing too much confidence in myths. However, if the myths of the *Phaedo* are there to make Socrates' interlocutors question the arguments in a certain way, then the warning applies indirectly to the arguments as a matter of dialogical necessity. Gonzalez draws a similar conclusion for what he calls a "peculiar 'trusting distrust' that constitutes the skillful way of dealing with arguments" [13] (p. 91) from the discussion of misology:

> If Socrates wants his followers to take care of and not neglect their own souls (107c5, 115b5–c1) by living a life dedicated to philosophical argumentation, the diagnosis of misology shows us that this dedication is an emotional commitment that as such is fragile and always under threat. The opposite of the hatred of logos is the love of logos, but this love can easily turn into its opposite when overcome by fear, especially the fear of death; we eagerly put blind trust in whatever doctrine protects us from this fear. [13] (p. 93)

There are no pure arguments or pure myths. Thus, we should not be confident that what is said in the arguments—e.g., either about the soul or Hades—needs to be literally true to be meaningful anymore than one would be confident that a myth could be taken literally.[16]

Socrates' warning against confidence, however, does not stand by itself as a simple proscription against the literal interpretation of Socrates' arguments. Rather, as much as Plato composes the dialogue from a tension between myths and arguments, the proscription in the warning against confidence in myths finds a proper complement in Socrates' prescriptions concerning the mindfulness of arguments. This prescription is found primarily in the account of Socrates' "second sailing" (δεύτερος πλόος, 99e).

The connection between the warning against confidence and the second sailing can be supported on both a literary basis and a conceptual one. In terms of the literary analysis, we find that the warning's use of the phrase "a man with mind" forms an internal allusion, which recalls Socrates' wordplay from his autobiographical account (96c–99e). Specifically, it recalls his complaint against the teachings of Anaxagoras, who Socrates says invoked Mind, however, such that "the man [Anaxagoras] made no [real] use of mind" (ὁρῶ ἄνδρα τῷ μὲν νῷ οὐδὲν χρώμενον, 98b–c). Socrates says that he had hoped Anaxagoras would explain why things are best in terms of real causes, not merely in terms of enabling conditions, i.e., the things without which something cannot happen, but which do not strictly cause something to be the case (99b). Instead, according to Socrates, Anaxagoras stopped at the enabling conditions, the "air, ether, and water" or "bones and sinews", without ever getting to ind. Dissatisfied that Anaxagoras could not differentiate between enabling conditions and proper causes, Socrates turns his attention away from things and towards arguments in what he calls a "second sailing", implicitly contrasting his own way of looking into the truth of beings with Anaxagoras' causal explanations in terms of things (99e).

The second sailing is also connected conceptually to the warning against confidence because it shares the injunction that, as a "man of mind", one must use arguments and myths in order to look away from things in their literal and mundane sense. One must look instead towards the truth of beings. But this looking does not turn away from things simply; but finds itself released from being held captive to superficial appearances. It finds itself free to see things in arguments as though they held a "deeper" significance, as the symbols of myths often do. Finding this meaning entails something like a "soul-sighted" interpretation of Socrates' arguments through his myths.

In simple terms, Socrates' second sailing marks a distinction, disclosed by speech, between things (τὰ πράγματα) and beings (τὰ ὄντα). And it is with this point in mind that we find a conceptual affinity between the warning against confidence and the second sailing. For laying out the program of the second sailing, Socrates offers the following: (1) since he has abandoned looking into beings (directly) and (2) he feared that a direct examination of the things (τὰ πράγματα) would "make blind his soul" (τὴν ψυχὴν τυφλωθείην), he would thus (3) have to "take refuge by examining the truth of beings in arguments" (εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, 99e) rather than relying on his senses. There are, therefore, three modalities being distinguished: beings, things, and the reflections or likenesses of beings as the truth in arguments or speeches. Socrates further clarifies that "examining beings" in arguments would be no better than reflecting on images of the things of daily life (100a). In this qualification, he is speaking of the beings rather than the "truth of beings", implying that the truth of the arguments may be concealed by our literal or pragmatic sensibilities, as well as our abstract or metaphysical speculations. That is, the "truth of beings" lies neither in grasping that thing about which the argument speaks nor in providing an explanation (e.g., as would Anaxagoras) that makes those daily things (like fire and water) into abstract causes. Rather, the truth of beings dwells more deeply in things than the eye can see since it is always to be understood in the precise reasoning for Socrates' prescription in the second sailing: the

beings are inaccessible, the things are blinding, but speech, which is capable of a nonliteral meaning, can tell the truth.

Now, whereas the warning against confidence proscribes placing our confidence in the *muthoi*, the second sailing prescribes looking deeper into the *logoi* in order to go past the appearances that the *logoi* carry on their surface (i.e., the appearances of mere things to the truth that can be disclosed only in a figurative way). And, as it turns out, the Mind connects both the warning and the second sailing. In both cases, Plato has Socrates attempt to turn his interlocutors (and us) away from what is more familiar to the senses towards what is better known by the Mind. Therefore, what the connection signals is that Socrates' way of disclosing the truth of beings through arguments must be tied intellectually to his myths (the prescription of the second sailing must be bound to the proscription of the warning). Specifically, we must take the power of myth to display the aspects of something singular in being by way of separate things as coordinated with the distinction between things and beings, which is premised in the second sailing. That is, the person who understands how to take a speech in the mythical register can avoid "having his soul blinded" (99e) by too straightforward captivity to things.

The second sailing is connected to the warning against confidence not only because Socrates himself links the warning to the appearance of the soul in the arguments but also because it shares the injunction that, as a "man of mind", one must use arguments and myths in order to look away from things in their literal and mundane sense. One must look instead towards the truth of beings. But this looking does not turn away from things simply; it finds itself released from being held captive to superficial appearances. It finds itself free to see things in arguments as though they held a "deeper" or a more multifaceted significance (and as the symbols of myths often do). Finding this meaning entails something like a "soul-sighted" (as opposed to soul-blind) interpretation of Socrates' arguments through his myths. We can understand the above point better by returning to consider Socrates' main concern with the teachings of Anaxagoras.

In the case of Anaxagoras, the captivity to things can become obvious enough. It amounts to thinking about the causes that are responsible for "ordering things" (διακοσμεῖν τὰ πράγματα, 98c) through those very things themselves, which is tantamount to failing to see the distinction between things and beings. Specifically, Socrates' frustration seems to be that if one attempts to explain, e.g., one's choice to remain in Athens by saying that his bones and sinews have not moved from the place, then another explanation will be required for why those same bones and sinews have remained, or perhaps even an explanation as to why they are what they are, e.g., bones and sinews rather than whatever other things compose bone and sinew. Likewise, if one explains the formation of the cosmos by the motions of the elements, some explanation for why they move accordingly, that is, in such a way that makes them a cosmos, will be lacking. While the examples here are our own extrapolations, in general, Socrates' point seems to be that things cannot properly be held responsible at all except as a matter of confusion.

The central focus of the arguments and the myths in the *Phaedo* is the soul itself. Thus, we must use arguments and myths to look away from a too-literal interpretation of the soul as a separate *thing* and look instead towards the truth of the soul in terms of the meaning of its being [23] (p. 188). The telling of the myth proceeds by dividing what is selfsame into a duality or plurality of things (e.g., the heroic and the monstrous aspects of Socrates' character, which Phaedo divides into opposing *personae* to disclose the oneness of Socrates' resolve). This division into things and images, in turn, discloses by reflection what is singular and selfsame in the new light of a mythological understanding (e.g., Socrates' choosing to remain in Athens, effectively dying by his own hand, is made authentically his own in accordance with his dual nature, and the necessity to purge his potential to be a monster). We must now—by the kind of same light—attempt to see how the myths and the arguments, when they are put into a mutually informative play, disclose the singular truth of the soul's being through a separation of the soul into different aspects.

1.2. Part 2

The methodological insights that have just been reached must now be rehearsed in terms of the particulars of the soul as Socrates lays them out. Through the application of the method, we stand to gain an understanding of the soul in Plato's *Phaedo*, which looks to disclose the ontological significance of the soul as distinct from the straightforward presentation of things. The warning against confidence (114d) provides the first facet of our method, which points us by direct reference to the mythic travelogue of the soul's journey through the "Earth itself" (108c–114c). The second facet points to Socrates' several arguments that demonstrate the soul's apparent deathlessness. Our method now predicts that the travelogue should take the separations that Socrates makes in the arguments and represent these separations as reflected in an image. This image, in turn, will have the power to free us from captivity to the straightforward appearance of things in the arguments. In other words, the mythic image, although it too will not speak the truth of the soul's being (its ontological situation), will cause us to look at the arguments in a way that preserves the ontological sight of the soul from the blinding light of things.

The warning against confidence (114d) provides the first facet of our method, which points us by direct reference to the mythic travelogue of the soul's journey through the "Earth itself" (108c–114c). The second facet is developed in accordance with the second sailing, which points to Socrates' several arguments that demonstrate the soul's apparent deathlessness. Our method now predicts that the travelogue should take the separations that Socrates makes in the arguments and represent these separations as reflected in an image. This image, in turn, will have the power to free us from captivity to the straightforward appearance of things in the arguments. In other words, the mythic image, although it too will not speak the truth of the soul's being (its ontological situation), will cause us to look at the arguments in a way that preserves the ontological sight of the soul from the blinding light of things.

Now we have only to ask the following: What central theme or themes in Socrates' arguments are reflected in the image of the "Earth itself"? There are, indeed, manifold details painted into the myth; however, beginning with the most general coincidence between myth and argument, the travelogue makes an image out of the dwelling place and temporality of the soul, while Socrates' several arguments for the soul's deathlessness are, however subtly, presented in these same terms: place and temporality. The coincidence of place and temporality in myth and argument, then, is precisely what our method requires.

With respect to the soul's place, the mythic travelogue unquestionably represents the exploration of a τόπος (place, region); it is explicitly topographical.[17] Also, the argument that seeks to demonstrate the soul's deathlessness (from the separation of the visible and the invisible, 78b–79c) pertains directly to the (ontological) question of the soul's place with respect to the visible world and Hades.

With respect to time and temporality, Socrates says in the prelude to the myth that the deathless soul requires care for "all time" (… τοῦ χρόνου … τοῦ παντός, 107e). Meanwhile, with respect to the soul's temporality in the several arguments, it must be seen (although the point is surprisingly overlooked in the literature on the *Phaedo*) that the soul's relationship to Hades is demonstrated in three separate temporal aspects. That is, in the argument from contrary things, the demonstration concludes that the soul is presently in Hades (71e). The argument from recollection concludes that it was there before birth in the (77a). Lastly, in the argument from the contraries themselves, the soul is demonstrated in terms of its will-be being there in Hades (τῷ ὄντι ἔσονται ἡμῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν Ἅιδου, 107a) after the death of the mortal. The "all of time" of the myth can be understood in a way that coincides separately with the temporal aspects—past, present, and future—from the arguments.

The following two subsections address the issue of the mythological aspect of the soul's place, first with respect to the connection between the "Earth itself" and Hades, and then with respect to the soul's temporality in terms of the connection between "all time" and Socrates' subtle use of the three temporal aspects in the conclusions of his arguments.

The myth is reflected and refracted through the arguments as disclosing the truth of the soul's being—its ontological dimension—as freed from captivity to things.

1.3. Place

The travelogue invokes place both in the sense of τόπος (place and region) and οἶκος (dwelling, 108c).[18] As for dwelling, Socrates says, "[I]nsofar as the soul properly appears to be deathless, concerning our souls and their dwelling (τὰς οἰκήσεις), this or something such as this *is* [the case]" (114d). Socrates' myth makes emphatic the contiguity of the regions of the soul's dwelling. That is, his description of the "Earth itself" is topographically composed of regions that are laid out as "analogous" to the way the sea and air are separated within the region of our present habitation (the situation is explicitly construed by way of an analogy at 110c–d) [23].[19] In this respect, Socrates says that our present habitation is but "a small part" of the "Earth itself", a hollow set above deeper hollows and a place in which what we take to be "water, mist, and air" are but the sedimentation of the "ether" set above us (109b–e). All of these places are then connected by a flowing system of rivers (likely an image reinforcing the connection between the regions, 112a–e), such that death is represented by the passage from this central region of ours to either the upper or lower region.

The implied contiguity and conjoining of regions entails that life and death are separated only in what Socrates earlier called a confused, thingly way, i.e., by a principle of proximity and distance (97a–c). If the soul's journey to the place of death as opposed to its arrival in the place of life is always already a matter of dwelling in the "Earth itself", then are we ever separated from the Earth (i.e., what we know as the Earth we presently inhabit), even by death? And if not by death, then what difference is there between life and death? What the myth depicts, then, is the confusion that life and death must be thought of as utterly separable into two distinct states, whereas rather, the being of the one implies the being of the other. Benardete addresses the confusion "of what it means to make two", for instance, to make the regions of the soul's dwelling in life and dwelling in death separate. He says that the difference must be thought "in terms of either separating or dividing . . . based on the understanding of [place] . . . [such that] 'apart' and 'together' can be understood only in terms of the operation of logos itself" [20] (p. 288). But this operation, which must turn us to the arguments, would hold all identity and difference in things accountable to the *logos* itself. In this case, the *logos* must join the disparate regions into the "Earth itself" as one while separating the Earth into the regions of life and death. Thus, the arguments about the soul's nature that proceed from the opposition between life and death also proceed from the assumption that, in terms of the soul, it draws both life and death into itself when understood ontologically.

The travelogue is meant to depict the separation of life and death in a way that reflects and refracts through the arguments to disclose the two as psycho-ontologically unified. Naas's analysis supports a part of this conclusion. He writes: "The soul . . . is, both before the birth and after the death of the *zōon* [animal being] it causes to live. Living and being thus appear . . . to be distinct [. . .]. Life here would seem to be restricted . . . to the time when a soul takes possession of a body to make it live [. . .] it makes the human what it essentially is, quite apart from its *zōḗ* [or] its *bios*" [33].[20] In this interpretation of the relationship, the soul is seen as a cause that, in Naas' way of phrasing it, holds the human being "apart from" life. However, is this ultimate separation not what Socrates' myth challenges? For example, at 114b–c, Socrates describes the dwelling place of those who have succeeded at holy living (τὸ ὁσίως βιῶναι). Lifted into the upper region of the "Earth itself", they continue to live without bodies (ἄνευ τε σωμάτων ζῶσι). They live as souls. In this way, again, Socrates transports both "*zōḗ* and *bios*" into the region of death.

If we consider the topography, in which Socrates says the "Earth itself" is centered in and surrounded equidistantly on all sides by the heavens (109a), we can understand that the present habitation of the soul takes its shape both from what lies below it as well as what lies above it. That is, the surface of the central region, whereupon the living soul

apparently dwells, is surface and central only if there are other regions above and below. This shape of the "Earth itself" both binds life to death and, in the same image (as Naas has it), separates life from death. We can infer that "the soul that appears to be deathless" (ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται οὖσα, 114d), has a life that is defined by death. The myth, then, draws death around life, and it draws both together into the shape of one whole, the "Earth itself" while holding them apart as distinct and different regions.

Sallis gives further voice to the sense in which the myth's separations between the regions of the living and dead correspond to the binding of the soul to the Earth. In his interpretation, death or the region of death ceases being the negation or absolution of the mutually informative relation between death and life. He says, "[Even if] the purest and holiest souls . . . go to dwell up on the surface of the earth, not even they, though purified by philosophy, would take flight from the earth. Thus, Socrates' song is the celebration of the earth" [23] (p. 245). Although he has stated the matter somewhat differently, Sallis' view basically aligns with our own: in the image of the "Earth itself", life and death are drawn together by an earthly belonging—distended throughout the Earth and by means of the soul.

The separation that joins the places of life and death in the myth is just the reflected image of Socrates' demonstration of the soul's deathless character in the argument from the visible and invisible. That is, Socrates claims that the soul is deathless because of its likeness with Hades—i.e., the place of "the unseen" to which the soul is supposedly passing (τὸ ἀιδές . . . εἰς Ἅιδου 80d). Socrates begins the argument by reasoning with Cebes that composite things are more likely to be scattered than whatever is non-composite. Socrates then asserts that the body is composite, while he aligns both "Beingness itself" (αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία, 78d) [34,35][21] and the soul with the non-composite. He then makes a sharp separation between the visible and the invisible, reasoning that something composite would be visible while the non-composite would be invisible. And, as the soul is invisible, Socrates says that it is also "unseen" (ἀιδές, 79b), substituting the near-synonym (as the word 'ἀιδές' or unseen plays on 'Ἅιδου', or Hades 80d), to which Socrates promptly likens the soul. He contends that the soul, as unseen, is similar to that which uniformly and indissolubly keeps always to itself (μονοειδεῖ καὶ ἀδιαλύτῳ καὶ ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἔχοντι ἑαυτῷ ὁμοιότατον εἶναι ψυχή, 80b). Thus, according to Socrates' account, we may infer that Hades is the place of that which is non-composite, invisible, and that which keeps itself to itself. If the soul is like the place to which it goes, then the soul is to be thought of in terms of "Beingness itself" (78d), the invisible, non-composite, and self-same.

Besides, the interspersion of mythical creatures like Mormo and ghosts into the argument running from 77e to 84c,[22] Socrates' whole speech is reminiscent of sophisticated wordplay. It raises both the specter of the warning against confidence while also challenging us to look otherwise at the relations between that which the speech attempts to separate and dislocate from our familiar, visible world as though they were mere things: the soul, the "looks" or "forms" (including "Being itself"), and Hades. That is, Socrates' argument makes two worlds by separating this world from Hades in terms of a distinction between visible and invisible things. However, the place of death (Hades or the invisible realm of the dead) and life (the place of the living soul) are contiguous as far as the image of the "Earth itself" goes, i.e., that is, they are separable and distinct only insofar as they are connected. Once we abandon the *logoi* that are tied to the permanence and discreteness of things that readily meet the eye, we no longer need to believe that the "here" of life is forever separate from the "there" of death or that life and death are utterly distinct because of the evidence provided by the present and absent things as well as by the being and nonbeing in the world of living creatures. It is rather the case that the "there" is "here", the invisible in the visible, in such a way that the structure of life is informed by and interwoven with decay, dissipation, absence, and death ontologically. Hades—the realm of the unseen and the realm of the dead—is therefore not in some otherworldly "beyond", but instead—and insofar as the mutual interwovenness of life and death is concerned—it is "here" drawn into the apparent way of things in terms of their being alive.

This conclusion is in line with the methodological point of mutual informability of *logos* and *muthos*. For as Fossheim contends, "reason . . . is not capable of independently reaching truth on the most important matters. Reason needs techniques directed at the other aspects of soul in order to ground its domain of arguments" [24] (p. 185). Following such a technique when it comes to putting into play *logos* and *muthos* allows us to suspend belief in the veracity and certainty of arguments or *logoi* that are based on the palpable nature of things in their apparent self-identity and discreet separateness. The mythical action fractures this stability of the world of things in order to pivot our understanding in such a way as to have it turn upon the ontological situation—i.e., towards the "beingness itself" as disclosed in the soul's orientation to itself. Fossheim articulates such a reflective turn when he writes that "the *Phaedo* works as a reminder of the reader's moral psychological situation: a confrontation with oneself that is at the same time an occasion to engage reflectively with one's own motivational constitution. In the *Phaedo*", he continues, "rational argument definitely has an important place, but one that is crucially embedded and dependent" [24] (p. 186). In such a reflective attitude, whereby we examine our rational understanding and suspend belief in *logoi*, we see that things are neither discreetly separate nor do they run into the homogeneity of an indistinguishable mixture; neither are things self-reliantly present or unquestionably existent nor do they vanish without a trace. This extends further—to the living beings—and to the structure of mutual permeability of life and death, the structure that is supported by the soul in its ontological dimension.

1.4. Temporality

Whereas the travelogue makes all of the places of the soul's dwelling contiguous, it makes all times continuous. This continuity, when refracted through the arguments, has a similar importance for disclosing the ontological significance of the soul in terms of temporality as the contiguity that the mythic topography has with respect to disclosing the significance of the ontological distinction that characterizes the separation between Hades and the visible Earth.

By "continuous", we mean that Socrates myth lays out the past, present, and future in a single vision to correspond to the regions of the "Earth itself", analogizing the contiguity of places with continuity between temporal phases or aspects. The present aspect of the soul is represented by its dwelling in the centermost region (109c). Meanwhile, the soul's past, as well as its future conditions, are both represented by the opposing possibilities of its ascent, through goodness and care, to the upper region or its subduction, through evil and carelessness, into the deeper hollows (109d) [33,36–39][23].

Notably, both the past and future aspects are indistinguishably set in the region of death, with the upper and lower regions of the "Earth itself" connected by a continuously flowing river system (112e–d), likely representing the inner dynamic range of "all time". That is, the image again unites what it separates; the past and future are said to continuously sediment and surge up into the present, flowing together into the singular form of "all time" (110c), which in turn corresponds to the singular vision of the Earth.

The separation of time according to the three regions of the myth is reflected in Socrates' arguments as well. In the argument from "contrary things" (70c–72e), Socrates moves from describing how the souls of the dead are in Hades—coming to be there when we die and coming to be from there when we are born (70c–d)—to speaking of our souls as presently being there (εἰσὶν ἄρα, ἔφη, αἱ ψυχαὶ ἡμῶν ἐν Ἅιδου, 71e). That is, throughout the argument, but especially in its conclusion, Socrates' emphatic use of the present tense suggests that the soul arrives from the place in which it already is and then departs again to where it already is. The use of the present tense becomes even more remarkable in this regard when we consider that, in the conclusion of the argument from the "contraries themselves" (103b–107a), Socrates says that "our souls . . . will-be being in Hades" (107a). Furthermore, in the argument from recollection, he states that "the soul is [There] before birth" (77a). It is as though Socrates saw the need for the conclusions to coincide with the aspects of time. It is not particularly striking to find that his arguments demonstrate

the soul's having been before in Hades. Nor is it remarkable in itself that they should demonstrate that the soul will be in Hades in some future. However, it is uncanny to find that being in Hades in no way separates the future and past from the present but unites them as a common term—not atemporally, but as the ground of temporality. Thus, the temporal aspects that operate discretely end up pointing to and generating a deeper unity.

In the *Apology*, Socrates makes the analogy explicit, stating, "[A]ll eternity would be like nothing but a single night" [40] (40e). Reflecting on Socrates' meaning through the *Phaedo*'s mythologos, the unity of eternity is a unity reflected in the soul, whereby, with respect to being, even a single night can be the measure of the whole. The *Sophist*, as well, although it does not speak specifically to the question of time, bears witness to the notion that difference presupposes the unity of being [41] (257b–259b). And if, with respect to time and temporality, the notion of an ontological unity (e.g., from the *Sophist*) can be extended to imply a psychological unity, then the soul qua being is presupposed by the difference between temporal parts.[24] Moreover, the soul cannot be separated from itself by these parts. In simpler terms, and given the gravity of Socrates' speeches in both the *Apology* and *Phaedo*, we should think that Socrates is alluding to the idea that a moment's choice—the choice to flee or to do violence—is binding. Such a choice thoroughly constitutes a person's being and belongs in a unified way to the life of the person who chooses or acts. In similar terms, the unity that unfolds as the living present draws death into itself through the other two aspects, i.e., through the future and the past. The latter two aspects also include the time afterlife and the time before birth [25].[25] Thus, no action passes without significance for the whole of life. Accordingly, in his mythologizing, Socrates gives voice to the notion of a person being bound to the actions of their life in such a way as not to be able to escape them even in death. Hence, in the climax of his ghost story, the soul becomes earthy and carries its deeds along with it as a physical form (81d). But this is not an image of eternal punishment in the typical sense. Rather, it is an image meant to convey that the nature of time, the past and future, must always reflect and presuppose what one is presently doing or choosing so that one cannot escape from responsibility by the passage of time or by death. The ghosts and the specter of death, in this view, are just the limit by which the irrevocability of choice and action is reflected in the present.

Our soul's passage into Hades is possible only by it already being there, such that the difference that time makes is one of disclosing the ontological situation of the soul, not the itinerary of a thing called "soul" that is sometimes caught in the visible world and sometimes in Hades. Given our analysis of place from before, it should not be surprising that the soul turns out to undergo only a figurative transposition from our current habitation to another place. Indeed, the soul's ontological situation in time is perfectly analogous to its situation in place. Namely, the arguments situate the soul such that the past and future are to constitute its present, just as the middle region in the travelogue can only be depicted as in between a higher and a lower region, i.e., as the sedimentation of the higher region and the welling up from the bottomless hollow (112b).

Carol Atack provides a slightly different way of reflecting on the whole of time in the myth and the separate and discrete aspects of time in the arguments. In her view, the myth depicts a "a cycle of life" that hovers "at the timeless instant of the state change between living and dying" [22] (p. 18). Through the instances of mythical narration, "the lived experience of time is challenged" [22] (pp. 18–19), and the discrete divisions of time appear to come together into a timelessness, which nonetheless is not a meaningless homogeneity but represents a reckoning with primordial time. The latter is the sense of time that corresponds to the singularity of a life that unites disparate temporal phases. That is, as Atack claims, "Socrates' visions challenge lived human time by suggesting a life lived in multiple temporalities that have been collapsed into contemporaneity" [22] (p. 19). In the mythical narration, this coincidence of the temporal aspects is, on the one hand, broken down into the separate moments of past, present, and future, but on the other hand, the soul in its being—in its ontological presentation—stretches throughout all three and grounds them in a deeper, and more primordial unity.

Atack's interpretation is very close to our own with one exception, i.e., if the separate aspects of time in the arguments are reflected in the image of the whole of time that is projected out topographically, then the aspects *do not* collapse into "contemporaneity". Also, "all time" and eternity are not "timeless". Rather, the past and future become as full of the present (the moment of choice and decision) as the present becomes full of the past and the future (the cause and the result of our action that stems from our vision of the world). This temporalized eternity, or the potential infinite, which arises out of the mutual informability of the three aspects of time, corresponds to the three aspects of place in the soul's mythic travels. The latter, if we take the myths and the arguments as mutually informative, ceases to be a made-up tale and becomes a gateway by means of which the soul is revealed in its ontological register. As such, the soul stretches through and grounds the play of the temporal vicissitudes and the mutual belonging of life and death. The soul holds together the temporal and (or as) the eternal. It makes possible the (invisible) projection of our image of ourselves as destined for the upper or the lower regions (as deserving reward or punishment) from the place of our lived (and visible) belonging to this Earth.

2. Conclusion

The thesis that, in the *Phaedo*, no *logoi* are entirely free from *muthoi* and that the latter suspend our wholehearted assent to the persuasive power of reasoned arguments makes up one side of the dialectic of *muthoi* and *logoi*. The other side is the fact that Socrates' *muthoi*, albeit not to be taken on faith, nonetheless point the way to the nonapparent dimensions of Plato's thinking. In terms of the *Phaedo*, our methodological procedure—when applied to the interpretation of the soul—yielded a sighting of the soul in its ontological dimension. The latter showed itself most readily through the spatial and temporal aspects that the myths of Hades and the "Earth Itself", as well as the arguments from opposites, recollection, and the contraries themselves, bring to the fore when the arguments and the myths are taken together.

In its ontological register, the soul serves as the unifying ground of the temporal vicissitudes of the past, present, and future in such a way as to render the three times as recognizably separate while, at the same time, allowing the past (before birth) and future (after death) to really belong to the living present. Thus, the eternality and deathlessness of the soul, in our reading, arises out of the temporalization of life, which is impossible without it being grounded in the work of the soul. Likewise, the spatial elements of this Earth and the upper and the lower regions are—at once—made distinct and also contiguous through the insinuation of the soul into spatiality. Together, the temporal and the spatial elements distended and made manifest by the soul align to indicate the confluence of life and death. These (life and death) appear to be utterly different and independent from one another but, in fact, are impossible without each other.

The interpretation of the soul thought as the unfolding of the world and of beings rather than as a thing, suggests that the invisibility of Hades is constitutive of the visible world of this Earth. Hades, in fact, offers an image of ourselves as deserving of rewards or punishments and thus of our hopes, fears, and aspirations [42,43].[26] Hades, then, ceases to be a literal place and becomes a reflection of our worldly orientation and self-interpretation (however accurate or misguided it may be). The three aspects of time become indices for the givenness of what we have (1) already done and gone through, thus becoming constitutive (albeit not utterly restrictive) of the (2) possibilities of our future choices and actions. Taken together, the past and the future lay out the horizon of the (3) present, which surges up with the fullness of the infinitely possible instantiations for life. The latter is unthinkable without death, and both are held together as meaningful and mutually definitive opposites by their ground—the soul.

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Notes

1 The extant literature on the *Phaedo* includes the following: Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy*: An *Interpretation of Plato's Phaedo* [1]; Ronna Burger, *The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth* [2]; John Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo* [3]; Kenneth Dorter, "The Dramatic Aspect of Plato's Phaedo" [4]; Reginald Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedo* [5]; *Plato: Phaedo* C. J. Rowe, ed. [6]; David Sedley, "Dramatis Personae of Plato's Phaedo" [7]; and William David Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* [8]. As to the studies of myth in the Phaedo, see the following: Veda Cobb-Stevens, "Mythos and Logos in Plato's Phaedo" [9]; Radcliffe G. Edmonds, III, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets* [10]; Paul Friedländer, *Platon. Eidos, Paideia, Dialogos* [11]; Dylan Futter, "The Myth of Theseus in Plato's Phaedo" [12]; Francisco J. Gonzalez, "Why the Minotaur is Misology" [13]; David N. McNeill, *An Image of the Soul in Speech: Plato and the Problem of Socrates* [14]; J. S. Morrison, "The Shape of the Earth in Plato's 'Phaedo'" [15] and "The Shape of the Earth in Plato's 'Phaedo'."; John Palmer, *The Method of Hypothesis and the Nature of Soul in Plato's Phaedo. Elements in Ancient Philosophy* [16]; David A. White, *Myth and Metaphysics in Plato's Phaedo* [17]; and Christos A. Zafiropoulos, "From Here to Eternity: Mythologein in Plato's Phaedo" [18]. Sheldon Nahmod connects myths and dreams in "The Dream Motif in 'Phaedo'" [19].

2 Benardete, "On Plato's *Phaedo*" [20]. We also draw on Benardete, *Plato's 'Laws': The Discovery of Being*, esp., pp. 129–130 [10,13,18,21].

3 Carol Atack, "Plato's Queer Time: Dialogic Moments in the Life and Death of Socrates" [22]. John Sallis, *Figure of Nature: On Greek Origins*, esp., pp. 158–248 [23]. Hallvard Johannes Fossheim, "The Limits of Rationality in Plato's *Phaedo*", pp. 179–188 [24].

4 For an excellent discussion on the meaning of significance as such with respect to Socrates' dream, see M. Dixsaut *Platon et la question de l'âme*, p. 127 [25].

5 Dorter makes a similar claim but without providing the appropriate evidence ([4] esp., pp. 565, 573).

6 Zafiropoulos [18] (pp. 294–295). Luc Brisson provides a contrary viewpoint, claiming that Socrates is something close to sincere in his statement that he is not one of the poets (*Platon, les mots et les mythes. Comment et pourquoi Platon nomma le mythe?* p. 142) [26]. That is, Brisson attempts to save Socrates from contradiction by differentiating between a philosophical form of discourse that includes myths and a mythical form of discourse as such. So, there can be Socrates merely telling a myth and Socrates fabricating a mythical form of discourse like a poet (pp. 186–188). Zafiropoulos's [18] claim is somewhat more believable than Brisson's in general, where the latter does not immediately consider that the tension in this case between what Socrates says in the *Phaedo* and what Socrates does, with respect to the opposition between myth and philosophy, is productive of the dialogue's meaning. It is not simply a textual issue to be resolved. Moreover, the dialogues do not, in general, give us reason to resolve performative contradictions rather than to let them be. However, Brisson's [26] further claim that the final myth of the *Phaedo* has an ethical and political significance (p. 143) accords well with Socrates' dual aspect and his role in the dialogue, as discussed below. On the ethical significance, see Jörn Müller, "Ethos und Logos. Platons Phaidon im Spiegel der wissenschaftlichen Interpretation" in *Platon: Phaidon*, esp., pp. 5–6 [27].

7 While there are only thirteen instances of myth-related terms in the dialogue, Socrates' expressed intention stated at the beginning gives these instances a special and weighty significance. Still, tracking the more or less direct instances of myth-related terms can be a good preliminary guide. It is important to also understand the terms in their dialogical context and to recognize both the allusions to the well-known myths and the hallmarks of mythmaking that are otherwise apparent (e.g., as in the ghost story).

8 Karl Reinhardt [28] observes the peculiar way in which myth and logos coincide as once opposed and joined in their opposition (pp. 91, 94). In our view, this opposing-that-joins, which is accomplished by a god in Socrates' mythical description of pleasure and pain, is to set an interpretive condition for the dialogue as a whole: the dialogical form—its unity—is composed of oppositions, and its content involves the consideration of so many oppositions, e.g., as life and death. The form-content relation as it pertains to the myths in Plato's dialogues is studied by George Karamanolis, see "Γιατι ο Πλατωνας χρησιμοποιει «Μύθους»", pp. 115–149 [29], esp., pp. 115–119.

9 Sallis, "Speaking of the Earth: Figures of Transport in the *Phaedo*" [30].

[10] Dorter points out that the total number of those present does not match up with the fourteen (inclusive of Theseus) from the myth. Phaedo does not count either Socrates or himself. This can be explained if Phaedo takes on the guise of Ariadne and if Socrates is, as this essay claims, also ambiguously the Minotaur. With respect to the latter point, the one man Socrates would have to be counted twice in his mythical aspects.

[11] Plato, *Phaedo* [30].

[12] While Benardete [20] does say that Socrates embodies the Minotaur, he spends more time connecting intertextual details and does not explain the significance of Socrates looking like a bull or being monstrous in his look (p. 280).

[13] However, see Gonzalez [13], who claims that the identification of the Minotaur with the fear of death limits our understanding of the *Phaedo*. He recommends that we extend the identification to *misology* because, as Socrates claims, "there is no greater evil one could suffer than to hate logoi (89d2–3)" (p. 90). See, further, an interpretation of Socrates' last words by Michel Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth: The Government of Self and Others II, Lectures at the College de France, 1983–1984* [32] esp., p. 105. Foucault, in his engagement with Dumèzil, concludes that the sacrifice to Asclepius at the end of the *Phaedo*, and hence the sickness or the evil from which one is cured through the dialogical *logoi* and *muthoi*, has to do with being "freed from the common opinion, from the opinion capable of corrupting souls, in order, on the contrary, to choose, resolve, and make up his mind through opinion founded on the relation of self to the truth" (p. 105).

[14] This is not to say that Socrates has the courage "through fear and cowardice" (68e), but that he set himself to defeat the fear that lies in him as a matter of his choice and to choose, therefore, with practical wisdom the best course of action in recognition of himself and his own responsibility.

[15] Socrates explicitly attributes to himself a dual nature in *Phaedrus* (cf., 230a)—one monstrous and the other gentle.

[16] Following the line of thinking that questions the straightforward sense of the arguments, Socrates' many separations and oppositions (e.g., between the soul and body, 64c, 66a; the living thing and the dead thing, 71d; life and death, 106d–e; recollection and sense, 74b; the visible and invisible, 79b; this life and the afterlife in Hades, 80d–e; or thing and being, 99e) can be interpreted as so many separations like that between Theseus and the Minotaur, or even myth and argument, as leading us beyond the binary terms. That is, we are to see these separations, which make up the terms of his arguments, as producing opposites. These opposites, in their tension, are subject to the kind of mindful interpretation required by myth. As in the case of Phaedo's myth, the labyrinthine course of separations that Socrates makes in his arguments will lead us back to something that, if we have the right interpretive thread, will show itself as being one, just as Phaedo's separation of the heroic and monstrous comes back to Socrates himself, or as Plato's separation of myth and argument comes back to show us the unity of his *Phaedo*.

[17] There are two textual points worth considering here:

i. While the quoted line refers to a dwelling, it does not discuss τόπος directly. However, τόπος occurs some twenty times between lines 107c and 114c. Clearly, the soul's dwelling is a τόπος.
ii. Socrates' Greek, here, says the following: ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἄττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς οἰκήσεις, ἐπείπερ ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται οὖσα.

[18] It seems worth pondering whether there is not a play in this particular passage between οἴκησις (the act of dwelling) and ἔοικα (to seem like), almost as though setting out the likeness between the soul and its dwelling as the travelogue's theme. If this is the case, then the travelogue must be seen in this respect as quite deliberately mirroring what Socrates says about the likeness of the soul to Hades in the corresponding argument (see the analysis below). However, there is always some degree of uncertainty in cases of suspected wordplay like this.

[19] See Sallis's helpful schematic presentation of the analogy [23] (p. 244).

[20] Naas, *Plato and the Invention of Life* [33] (p. 177).

[21] On this point, see Debra Nails, "Ousia in the Platonic Dialogues", *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* [34]; see intricate analyses of being in ancient Greek philosophy and literature in Benardete's engagement with Charles H. Kahn in "The Grammar of Being" [35] (esp., p. 489).

[22] Indeed, this is Socrates' most overtly mythical argument, which weaves stories of ghosts and hobgoblins in between its premises. The argument begins with a strange request from Cebes: "Try to persuade [or mislead, ἀναπειθόμεναι] us as though we are fearful. Or perhaps as though there is a child within us gripped by fear" (77e). This phrasing invites a further reflection on the correspondence of this particular argument with myth. In the *Republic*, Socrates scolds mothers for misleading (ἀναπειθόμεναι, 381e) children with the poet's stories, whereas, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates agrees to sing (ἐπᾴδειν) away the child's fears. Ironically, his story is haunted by ghosts and hobgoblins (μορμολύκεια, 77e) that torment unjust souls in death. Therefore, Socrates is following his own advice that it is proper "for [one] to sing (ἐπᾴδειν) [a myth] to himself" (114d) as a palliative song whenever fear and doubt threaten to undermine care of the soul. What is most important about the ghost story, however, is that not just the shorter passage from 81b to d but the whole argument from 77e to 84c follows from the request that Socrates persuade or even mislead (which Socrates himself proposes to do by signing and mythologizing, and which therefore binds the argument together with Socrates' mythmaking) in just the way predicted by our method. If this interpretation is correct, then not just Mormo and the ghostly soul of the unjust person but many of the typically doctrinal holdings of Platonism are called into question under the auspices of the warning against confidence. This is the case because the dualistic separations of body and soul, as well as the

dislocation of Hades from our world, and, finally, "beingness itself" would be strongly bound up with Socrates' mythmaking and irony.

[23] The analysis of time and temporality in this paper is limited to the *Phaedo*. However, the subject appears in such dialogues as the *Statesman* (esp. 268d–277c), *Timaeus* (27a–28a), *Parmenides* (151e–152a), to some extent also in the *Republic* (614a–621d) as well. Notably, in the case of the *Statesman* and the *Republic* (but also in the *Timaeus*, depending on how one interprets the passage)—just as in the *Phaedo*—the discussions of temporality appear within the mythical narration. In the *Statesman*, the myth of Cronus and Zeus offers an image of time reversal, which also affects the lived and biological time of human beings. Timaeus portrays the unfolding of cosmic time and the coming into being of the cosmos with respect to a soul that is at first within and then stretched around the Earth. In the *Parmenides*, the question of eternity is broached. The final myth of the *Republic*, among other things, depicts the time and events that transpire after one's death. For analyses of temporality in Plato, see, for example, Gregory Vlastos's "Creation in the *Timaeus*" [36]; David Bostock's "Plato on Change and Time in the *Parmenides*" [37]; Owen Goldin's "Plato and the Arrow of Time" [33,38]; and Daniel Vazquez's "Time and Cosmology in Plato and the Platonic Tradition" [39].

[24] We can see this alignment between psychological and ontological unity in the *Phaedo* when we realize that the soul exists as the basis of our existence but not as an existent thing.

[25] Dixsaut [25] provides a different interpretation of the ontological significance of the soul's existence before birth, in which recollection stands as an ontological condition of possibility for the sensuous seeing of things: i.e., the appearance of things is not separate from, but depends on a recollection of beings. Dixsaut's explanation in no way contradictions what we are proposing; however, it works best if one considers the argument from recollection as a ship in a bottle, so to speak, leaving little room for important questions about the connection of the three temporal aspects on display in Socrates' other arguments.

[26] On the power of images in the context of epos, see Marina Marren's "Achilles' Character as a Critique of Warmongering Ideals in the *Iliad*" [42]. However, see E. E. Pender, "*Phaedo*", *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Plato*, who offers a very different view of the function of mythical images [43].

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