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Christopher C.W. Taylor

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CCW Taylor
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THE ARGUMENTS IN THE PHAEDO CONCERNING THE THESIS
THAT THE SOUL IS A HARMONIA

At 85e - 86d Simmias puts forward an argument to show that the soul cannot be immortal. The premisses of the argument are, firstly, that the soul is a harmonia of the elements which compose the body, the hot, cold, wet, dry and so on (86b6 - c2), and, secondly, that no harmonia can exist unless the elements of which it is a harmonia maintain the proper inter-relation. (This point is made in 85e3 - 86b 5 with reference only to a particular case, the harmonia of a lyre, but is clearly to be taken generally.) It follows that when the inter-relation of the bodily elements has been dissolved by death, the soul-harmonia cannot exist apart. This argument is presented in the dialogue as posing a major objection to the thesis of the immortality of the soul; those who had been convinced by Socrates' previous arguments are now thoroughly dismayed (88c). It is, therefore, worth a certain consideration, particularly since the premiss that the soul is a harmonia expresses a philosophical doctrine whose sense is far from clear. Furthermore, the counter-arguments by which Socrates claims to refute Simmias have produced considerable disagreement among commentators as to their interpretation, while questions may be raised as to their validity. I propose, then, first to ask what is the meaning of the thesis that the soul is a harmonia and secondly to examine Socrates' arguments against Simmias.

The ambiguity of the thesis that the soul is a harmonia emerges from consideration of the different shades of meaning which the word may have. Formed from the verb 'to fit together', it expresses the idea of things being fitted together in an exact arrangement to make a properly-integrated whole, but particular uses express various aspects of the basic idea. Thus the word sometimes means 'proportion', particularly in contexts where elements are mingled in proportion, as when Empedocles describes painters mixing their colours 'mixing them in proportion, some more and some less' (DK 31 B 23, 1.4), and sometimes 'arrangement' or 'organisation' (conveying the idea of the proper relation of parts), as when Heraclitus refers to the harmonia of opposite forces in a bow or a lyre (DK 22 B 51). Or again a harmonia may be identical with a complex of parts in a certain order or arrangement; this is the sense in which the word can mean 'joint' or 'framework' (v. LSJ). Aristotle's discussion of the soul-harmonia thesis at De An. A4 deals certainly with the first two senses, and perhaps also with the third. In one sense a harmonia is the logos of a mixture, i.e. the ratio of the elements which is capable of mathematical expression. In another it is a combination (synthesis) of physical objects, probably in the sense of the arrangement of a number of physical parts but perhaps also as the complex of those parts in that arrangement. There appears also to be a fourth sense of

harmonia which Aristotle overlooks, in which a harmonia is something causally dependent on but distinct from a certain disposition of materials, e.g. a melody is distinct from the strings which produce it, and equally from the tuning of the strings, though without strings there could be no tuning, and without tuning no melody. The word has this sense especially in musical contexts, meaning variously 'scale', 'mode' or generally 'music' (v. LSJ). Given, then, that the elements in question are those which compose the human body, hot, cold, etc. (which are presumably thought of as different kinds of stuff), there appear to be four possible interpretations of the thesis that the soul is a harmonia of these elements:

- a) The soul is identical with the ratio or formula according to which the elements are combined to form the living man;
- b) The soul is identical with the mixture or combination of those elements according to that formula;
- c) The soul is some entity produced by the combination of those elements according to that formula, but distinct alike from them and from the formula itself;
- d) The soul is identical with a state of the bodily elements, viz. the state of being combined according to that formula.

It might be objected at this point that the third alternative is illusory, since even where the harmonia is a scale or melody it must be considered identical with a mixture of elements. This seems implausible on the assumption that the elements in question are strings or other physical objects which compose the instrument which produces the music, but this assumption is mistaken. Just as the elements of a physical constitution, e.g. the living human body, are the hot, the cold and so on, so the elements of a piece of music are the high and the low, which are conceived of as being mixed together in the proper proportions to give the right notes, either in the sense that each note is thought of as consisting of so much of the high mixed with so much of the low, or in the sense that each mode or scale is produced by combining so many high notes in fixed ratios with so many low notes. The elements, therefore, out of which a musical harmonia is formed are themselves musical entities, the high and the low, and not the physical objects which produce the sounds. This view of the elements of a musical harmonia is clearly expressed for instance in the pseudo-Aristotelean treatise De Mundo, 396b 7ff. (DK 22 B 10): 'Music makes a single harmonia out of different sounds by mixing together high and low, long and short notes'. On this view of a musical harmonia, then, the harmonia cannot be separated from its elements, and so this view does not admit the third interpretation of the soul-harmonia as an independent alternative to the first two.

But while this view of the nature of musical harmonia appears to be the standard view of musical theory, and gives the most exact parallel to other kinds of harmonia, e.g. the

formation of physical substances out of the elements, or the production of a certain temperature by mixing the hot and the cold, it is not the view of musical harmonia which Simmias uses to illustrate his thesis that the soul is a harmonia. For Simmias' presentation of his thesis involves positing a parallelism between two relations, of each of which the terms are a) a physical object and b) a non-physical entity causally dependent on that object. Thus corresponding to the incorporeal soul we have the musical harmonia, which is 'invisible and incorporeal and all-beautiful and divine' (85e 5-6), while corresponding to the physical body we have not the high and the low but the physical strings and pegs of the lyre, which can be broken apart and left lying around after the harmonia has vanished. It is true that Simmias slightly distorts the parallel when he says (85b 5-c 1) that the soul is a harmonia of the hot, cold, etc., in the body, since a more exact parallel to the strings etc., of the lyre would seem to be provided by the limbs and organs of the body than by their microscopic elements. But the essential point is to contrast the incorporeal product with its physical cause, and in order to make this contrast it is unnecessary for Simmias clearly to distinguish the physical macroscopic parts of the body from their own elements, which are no doubt conceived of as minute but equally corporeal parts. The relation of musical harmonia to its elements which Simmias is using cannot therefore be that between a scale or tune and the musical elements of high and low etc., but must be that between a musical instrument and some non-physical entity produced by a certain state of the instrument.

This, then, enables us immediately to eliminate the second of our four suggested interpretations of the soul-harmonia thesis, viz. that the soul is identical with the mixture or combination of the bodily elements according to a certain ratio or formula. For it would be clearly absurd to make a sharp contrast between the physical elements and the non-physical harmonia if the latter just was identical with the elements in a certain arrangement. One might as sensibly contrast the invisible, incorporeal plum-pudding with the gross, earthy suet, raisins, flour etc. which compose it. This still leaves us with three alternatives, that the relation of the soul to the body is a) that of the ratio of the tuned strings to the strings themselves, or b) that of the music produced by the instrument to the instrument itself, or c) that of the state of being in tune to the strings.

There seems no conclusive evidence from the dialogue which alternative Plato had in mind, or indeed whether he had clearly distinguished the three. Various phrases give some hints, but these are conflicting and inconclusive. Thus for instance the description of musical harmonia as 'all-beautiful and divine' might seem most readily applicable to the music produced by the instrument; but when we reflect that the speaker is a pupil of the Pythagorean Philolaos, and might therefore

be expected to have a lively reverence for numbers as the source of all things, this argument seems to have little force as between alternatives a) and b). Rather stronger is the argument from Simmias' statement at 92d 2 that the soul-harmonia doctrine is accepted by most people; surely, it may be argued, this indicates that the soul is something distinct from a mathematical ratio, since such an obscure theory can never have been held by the majority of ordinary people. On the other hand, the view that the soul is something non-physical, which is yet dependent on a certain state of the body, so that when that state is disrupted the soul is dissipated, might seem to be a belief quite congenial to common sense. But against this we have the comparison of the soul at 86c 6-7 to 'harmoniai in sounds and in all the works of the craftsmen'. 'All the works of the craftsmen' must include statuary and painting, and probably carpentry and house-building as well. Where, in the cases of the products of these arts, are we to look for the non-physical — product of the physical elements? Surely in the harmony or proportion of the constituent parts, as exemplified by different amounts of differently-coloured paints, or by the relations between the dimensions of various parts of a statue or a piece of furniture. It would be too fantastic to suggest that to every well-made table there corresponds a non-physical entity which is related to the dispositions of its parts as the non-physical soul is to the disposition of the bodily elements. This comparison, then, tends in the opposite direction from the remark at 92d 2 that most people accept the soul-harmonia thesis. Further difficulty is created by the description of the soul at 86b 9 as a mixture (krasis) of the bodily elements. The word krasis, which is regularly used as a synonym for harmonia (e.g. Ar. De An. 408a 30-31), commonly occurs, like the English 'mixture' in contexts which leave it open whether the word refers to the state of being mixed together or to the compound of elements which are mixed up. We have seen that the second alternative is clearly unacceptable, but what about the first? Can Plato mean that the soul is identical neither with a ratio nor with any product of a ratio, but rather with a certain state of the body, viz. the state in which the elements of the body are in a certain ratio? While on the one hand this would give a fair account of the comparison of the soul with works of art, on the other hand it fits rather ill with the sharp contrast between the invisible, divine musical harmonia and the physical instrument, while again it might well seem very dubious that most people believe that the soul is nothing other than a bodily state. There appear, then, to be hints in the text of the dialogue of support for all three possible interpretations of the soul-harmonia thesis, a) that the soul is identical with a ratio of the bodily elements, b) that it is identical with some non-physical product of that ratio and c) that it is identical with the state of being in that ratio. It might thus appear that Plato has failed to distinguish these alternatives; before leaving this question, however, we should look at some evidence from other sources, to see whether they throw any light on Plato's meaning.

First of all there is the fact already mentioned, that in his discussion of the thesis in De An. A4 Aristotle ignores the possibilities that on this theory the soul might be a non-physical entity causally dependent on the ratio of bodily elements or that it might be a bodily state, while explicitly mentioning the possibility of its being identical with that ratio, or with a spatial arrangement of parts. Further, not only does Aristotle not give these as possible interpretations of the thesis, but he appears to introduce the former as an alternative view of the soul which would be unacceptable to one who held the harmonia theory. He produces objections first to the suggestion that the soul is a combination of limbs and then to the suggestion that it is the ratio of the mixture of elements, objecting to the latter on the ground that since there is a different mixture for flesh, bones, etc., there would have to be a number of souls in each body. He then adds (408a 20-21) 'Is it the ratio which is the soul, or is it rather something separate which comes to be in the parts of the body?' The implication is that Aristotle is suggesting a more plausible alternative theory, not giving an interpretation which a supporter of the theory might be inclined to accept as expressing his meaning. But in order to contend on the strength of this that the thesis of the Phaedo is definitely to be interpreted as identifying the soul with a ratio or arrangement we must be certain that both Aristotle and the philosophers whom he is discussing had made all these crucial distinctions. Even in the case of Aristotle himself this assumption appears questionable; for instance, at 408a 1-3 he says that it is more plausible to call health or other physical excellences harmoniai than to say that the soul is a harmonia; does he mean by this that it would be plausible to identify health with some ratio or arrangement of elements, or rather with some state, say the capacity for various activities, which supervenes upon the possession of such a ratio, or even with the state itself of having one's elements in this ratio? When one recalls the difficulties Aristotle has over the question whether pleasure is identical with the activities which one enjoys or is something supervening upon them, one might well hesitate before pronouncing on Aristotle's exact meaning here. And if this doubt arises in the case of Aristotle, how can it be avoided when one attempts to reconstruct the views of earlier philosophers? Aristotle may well be concentrating on what he considers to be the central sense of the word harmonia, ignoring, perhaps unconsciously, the confusions which run through the theory he is criticising. Since we have seen ground for thinking that such confusions are present in the Phaedo passage, it appears unjustified to take Aristotle as giving the undisputed sense of that passage, to which he does not in any case refer explicitly.

One might hope to throw some light on this question by considering the origins of the theory; but here too it seems impossible to reach any positive conclusions. Neither Aristotle nor any of the speakers in the Phaedo attributes it to any named philosopher, but since Simmias says that 'we' hold the soul to be a harmonia (86b 6-7), and Echechrates that he has always been very impressed with that thesis (88d 3-4), it would

be natural to assume that it was current in the Pythagorean circle to which they belonged. Though they are described as pupils of Philolaos (61d-e; D.L. viii, 46), the theory itself is not ascribed to him by any writer earlier than Macrobius (4-5 cent. A.D.), who says that Pythagoras and Philolaos held that the soul is a harmonia (DK 44 A 23). It is not clear how much reliance can be put on this testimony, since there is obviously a possibility that it may derive ultimately from this very passage of the Phaedo. But whatever may be the truth about that, it is highly unlikely that Philolaos' view of the soul can be reconciled with the harmonia theory as expounded by Simmias. For at 61a-62b it is implied that Philolaos taught that suicide was wrong on the ground that the soul is put by the gods in the body as a prison for a set time, and must not seek to escape before the time of its release, but that a philosopher will welcome death, presumably because his soul will have a better existence in separation from the body. This is supported by a quotation from Philolaos given by Clement of Alexandria (DK 44 B 14) 'the soul is yoked to the body and as it were buried in this tomb as a punishment'. The conclusion from this is plain, that unlike his pupils who take part in the dialogue, Philolaos believed that the soul exists independently of the body. It is not impossible that he may have held some version of the theory, in which the soul was a non-physical entity whose association with the body depended on the maintenance of the proper bodily ratio, but the divergence from the view expressed by Simmias is so great that it is obviously fruitless to attempt to interpret the latter in such a way as to assimilate it to some conjectural reconstruction of Philolaos' view.

I conclude, then, that not only is there no evidence that the soul-harmonia thesis definitely identifies the soul either with a ratio of its elements or with the state of being in that ratio or with some entity dependent on the possession of that ratio, but that we can best account for what is said in the dialogue on the assumption that Plato did not clearly distinguish the three possibilities. Nor is this particularly surprising; for in the first place the distinction is a very fine one between the soul's actually being a ratio and its being the state of having one's elements in a ratio, since in either case having a soul will be identical with having one's elements in a ratio. It is possible to be clear about the distinction only if one clearly distinguishes purely mathematical entities such as numbers from states of physical objects which can be described in mathematical terms. Failure to make this distinction was the ground of one of Aristotle's criticisms of the Pythagoreans (Met. A8, 989b29-990a32), while we have seen that the presentation of the thesis by Simmias in the dialogue is similarly unclear. While the distinction between the soul as a ratio and as an entity supervening on the possession of a ratio is more obvious, Aristotle's example of health which we have already noticed indicates that that distinction too may

be easy to overlook. In considering Plato's arguments against the thesis we shall therefore have to regard them as concerned with a thesis which contains in an undifferentiated form the three alternative senses which we have considered.

Socrates' first argument against the thesis requires little comment. He points out that it is inconsistent with the doctrine, which was earlier accepted, that all knowledge is in fact recollection of what the soul had learnt in a previous existence when it was not associated with the body. No harmonia can exist unless the elements of which it is a harmonia are already in existence, and hence if the soul is a harmonia of the bodily elements it cannot have had a previous non-bodily existence (91e-92e). This argument is valid against any interpretation of the harmonia thesis; obviously a bodily state cannot exist unless some body exists of which it is the state, and equally obviously a non-physical entity causally dependent on a ratio of bodily elements cannot exist before those elements have been combined in that ratio. A defender of the thesis might, however, argue that it is not cogent against the identification of the soul with the mathematical ratio itself. For a ratio, being a timeless mathematical entity, cannot itself be said to come into existence whenever it is embodied in some particular material. Since it exists equally at all time, it may truly be said to have existed before a certain body came into being, and hence the argument from recollection does not refute this version of the thesis. This defence is not, however, adopted by Simmias, who agrees that his thesis is inconsistent with the doctrine that all knowledge is recollection. Nor is it difficult to see why. For it is possible to defend the soul-harmonia against this argument only at the cost of making it a universal; if a certain set of elements combine in the ratio $3/4$, then indeed that ratio existed before the combination of the elements, but the thing that existed was the ratio $3/4$, i.e., the very same ratio which is exemplified whenever three units are related to four units. Thus anyone who held this theory would have to admit that it was logically possible for many things to have the same soul, including things which would generally be reckoned inanimate, e.g., geometrical diagrams, since there is no reason why the same ratio which is embodied in a particular human being and is his soul might not also hold between certain lines and angles. It is not, of course, impossible that anyone may have believed something like this; it might, for instance, provide a theory to account for transmigration. Empedocles would on this view have been a bush and a fish because one and the same ratio was embodied in bush, fish and Empedocles, i.e., they all had the same soul. Simmias, however, will have none of this; if his version of the theory is interpreted as making the soul a mathematical entity, it must be such an entity individuated by being embodied in these bodily elements. As such it clearly cannot exist independently of the elements by reference to which it is individuated, any more than Socrates' height can exist independently of Socrates, though in the sense in which Socrates' height is a universal, say four cubits, that length may be said always to have existed, or rather never to have come into existence, whether or not Socrates exists.

This way of looking at the soul-harmonia has the advantage of preserving as a necessary truth that different persons have numerically different souls, whereas on the other interpretation two contemporaneous persons might discover as the result of physiological investigation that they had the same soul. It leaves the thesis open, however, to attack on the grounds of inconsistency with the doctrine of knowledge as recollection; whether one considers it adequately refuted on those grounds will naturally depend on the strength of one's conviction in the soul's pre-existence.

The remaining arguments are more problematical, in that commentators have disagreed not so much as to their conclusiveness, but rather on the question of how many arguments Socrates employs, and just what these arguments are. Like Miss Hicken in C.Q. 1954, pp. 16-22 and Bluck in his commentary, I discern two arguments, as opposed, for instance, to the four specified by Philoponus in his commentary on Aristotle's De An. A4.¹ These arguments are not, however, presented consecutively; at 92e4-93a10 Socrates gives a set of premisses (A) which are not immediately used in the argument. Instead, at 93a11-12 he begins a new argument by formulating a principle which is to some extent independent of the set of premisses A. This argument continues to its conclusion at 94a12-b2; for convenience this whole argument may be called B. Then at 94b4 Socrates returns to the set of premisses A, which he uses to construct the second argument, which we may call A¹, whose conclusion is reached at 95a2. While I shall deal first with argument B, it is necessary first to look at premisses A, in order to determine the relation they have to the principle with which Socrates begins B.²

A begins with the acceptance by Simmias of the proposition that the qualities of a harmonia are determined by those of its elements (92e4-93a2; let this be labelled a1). We then have three successive applications of this principle, first to all activities and passivities of the harmonia (93a4-5; a1.1) and then to a particular activity and some particular passivities which are ruled out by the principle. In virtue of the principle it is impossible for a harmonia to lead or control its elements, but it must rather be controlled by them (93a6-7; a1.11), and it is impossible for it to be affected in any way contrary to that which its elements determine (93a8-9; a1.12). It is a1.11 and a1.12 which provide the premisses for argument A¹. At 93a11-12 we have the principle which marks the beginning of argument B: 'Well, now, doesn't every harmonia have to be the kind of harmonia which corresponds to the way that it is attuned (or arranged)' (b1). It is not easy to find a translation which is both exact and comprehensible but the next sentence, giving an application of the principle, makes fairly clear what is meant; if a Harmonia is more attuned, then it is more (of) a harmonia, and if it is less attuned it is less (of)

1 The grounds for rejecting Philoponus' interpretation, which is followed, not without incoherence, by Archer-Hind and Hackforth, are cogently stated by Miss Hicken, pp. 17-8.

2 See Appendix

a harmonia (93a14-b2; b1.1). The sense of b1 itself can then best be expressed formally, as follows, that where ' ϕ ' stands for an adjective which can apply to a harmonia, and where ' ϕ ly' is the adverb formed from ' ϕ ', then for all x, if x is a harmonia, if x is attuned or arranged ϕ ly, x is a ϕ harmonia. While this certainly goes beyond anything that is said in A, it seems an extreme view of Miss Hicken that Socrates here begins 'an entirely new set of admissions'; rather we might say that this 'formal' account of the dependence of the harmonia on what gives rise to it is at least suggested by what has been said in A. The difference is that whereas there we were concerned with the dependence of the harmonia on the elements, now we are concerned with its dependence on the state or process of being arranged or attuned.

Argument B proceeds by way of two further premisses, b2, that no soul is more or less (of) a soul than any other (93b4-7) and b3, that a good soul is in tune and a bad soul out of tune (93b8-c10). Neither of these premisses is felt to require any justification or explanation; the sense of the latter is clearly that the good man is not a prey to the conflicting desires and impulses which are the mark of the bad man, but has all his wants properly under control with a view to the attainment of the right ends. We now come to one of the most problematical passages in the argument: at 93d1-5 Socrates says that premiss b2 is the same as the proposition (b2.1) that no harmonia is more or less (of) a harmonia than any other, and Simmias agrees. Of course b2 is not as it stands equivalent to this, and the question is what additional assumptions Plato must have used in order to produce what he considered a valid equivalence. Clearly we cannot arrive at such an equivalence simply by making the most obvious assumption, viz. the assumption under examination in this argument, that the soul is a harmonia, since taken together with b2 that would still allow that some harmoniai might be more or less harmoniai than others. But did Plato see that? I am inclined to think that he did not, but rather assuming that the soul is a harmonia, took this to mean that everything which is true of soul is also true of harmonia (using these terms in the unquantified style familiar from Aristotle). In effect this is to confuse implication with equivalence, which seems a not unlikely error for Plato to commit at this stage in his philosophical development, since it is only in the Sophist that he clearly distinguishes predication from identity.

The standard modern interpretation of this sentence, adopted by Archer-Hind, Bluck, Hackforth and Miss Hicken (but not by Burnet) differs from the above in taking Socrates to be asserting not a general proposition about all harmoniai, but a specific proposition about the sort of harmoniai, that souls are, viz. that no soul-harmonia is more or less of a harmonia than any other. As this requires an admittedly unnatural reading of the text as it stands, many scholars (see Hackforth's note, p. 116) have suggested removing the word harmonias from d4, thus making the sentence read 'And this (namely the admission that no soul is more or less (of) a soul than any other) is the admission that no (soul) is more or less a harmonia than any other.' But since this emendation lacks any manuscript authority, and destroys what looks like a very emphatic and deliberate parallelism

of sentence construction, it is worth asking whether there are cogent grounds either for emending the text, or for reading the received text in other than its natural sense. The strangest ground appears to be that urged e.g. by Miss Hicken, that since the argument is to depend on the assumption that some harmoniai (in particular, goodness) admit of degrees, it would be flatly inconsistent if Plato also used the assumption that no harmonia admits of degrees. I doubt the cogency of this argument, which seems to me to depend on a confusion over the notion of 'degrees of attunement'. For the thesis that some harmoniai (e.g. goodness) admit of degrees comes to this, that some things, e.g. the parts of the soul, may be so arranged as to approximate more or less closely to some norm which represents the perfect arrangement of those things.¹ But that is in no way incompatible with the thesis which I take Plato to be asserting at 93d1-5, viz. that if what a thing is is a harmonia, it can't be more or less a harmonia than anything else. This amounts to an extension of the truism 'Everything is what it is', and applies equally to degrees of harmonia, in the sense just explained. Every inter-relation of parts of the soul, at whatever remove from the norm, is an inter-relation of parts. There is, then, no general incompatibility between the thesis 'No harmonia is more or less a harmonia than any other' and 'Some things are more attuned (in Platonic terms 'partake more of harmonia') than others'. Plato, however, thinks contradiction arises if one tries to say that one harmonia is more attuned than some other: that he is wrong even in this restricted thesis will be seen once the argument is viewed as a whole.

The next step (93d6-8) is that something which is neither more nor less (of) a harmonia is neither more or less attuned: this follows directly by contraposition from b1.1, and may hence be called b1.2. Another problematic sentence follows (d9-10): 'And does that which is neither more nor less attuned partake more or less of attunement, or to just the same extent? To the same extent.' At first sight it might appear that this is the converse of the proposition stated immediately before (and it is so taken by Miss Hicken): But, firstly, in contrast to the previous sentence, where the subject is 'that which is neither more nor less a harmonia', the predicate of 39-10 is 'partakes of (i.e. is characterised by) harmonia more or less'. One might indeed see here a further confusion of predication and identity, but the shift in terminology is presumably intended to indicate that a new point is being made. Secondly, if d9-10 is interpreted as 'Something which is neither more nor

1 Another sense in which harmoniai admit of degrees is exemplified by temperature, where the inter-relation of hot and cold makes up a continuous scale, but that is irrelevant for the purposes of this discussion, since there is no norm of heat or cold, and so no sense in which one temperature might be thought to be more or less arranged than another.

less attuned is neither more nor less a harmonia, 'it has no subsequent role in the argument, whereas if it is read 'Something which is neither more nor less attuned is neither more nor less harmonious', we have a straightforward argument of a syllogistic form, as will be seen below.

Socrates next concludes (93d12-e2) that no soul is more or less attuned or arranged than any other, giving as premisses b2 and apparently b1.2. But clearly some additional premisses are required, viz. the understood assumption that the soul is a harmonia and b2.1, that no harmonia is more or less a harmonia than any other. In fact the conclusion follows from these two together with b1.2, without depending on b2, but since Plato regarded b2 and b2.1 as equivalent he would not have noticed the redundancy. From this point on the argument proceeds straightforwardly. From b5 and b6 it follows syllogistically that no soul is more or less harmonious than any other (e4-5) and hence, by b3 that no soul is better or worse than any other. It is agreed (94a12-b3) that this conclusion is absurd, and hence one of the premisses from which it is derived must be false; obviously, the one to be rejected is the assumption that the soul is a harmonia.

It appears, therefore that in B we have a single argument which is, despite some obscurities clear in its main lines and (perhaps not so clearly) fallacious. The flaw is not simply in the fallacious equivalence of b2 and b2.1, since one might patch this up by introducing b2.1 as an independent assumption; it is perfectly plausible to suggest that, where ϕ is a predicate saying what kind of this its subject is if A and B are both ϕ s, A can't be more (of) a ϕ than B. A more serious flaw is that the kind of harmonia whose presence or absence makes a soul good or bad is not the same kind as that which makes a soul to be a soul; the latter is a harmonia of bodily elements, whereas the former is a harmonia of parts of the soul, or of desires and emotions, or similar psychical entities. Thus when Plato argues that because no soul can be more of a soul-harmonia than any other therefore no soul can have more 'virtue'-harmonia than any other, he is guilty of a fallacy of equivocation. An illustration should make the point clear. One might reasonably say that some piece of music was a harmonia in that it was produced by strings playing together in certain ratios, and yet that it lacked harmonia in that some of the strings were out of tune with one another.¹ We may thus reject the opinion of most commentators (most vigorously expressed by Miss Hicken) that to say that something which is a harmonia either has or lacks a harmonia is as absurd as to say that a blow is either vulnerable or invulnerable or that a length either has or lacks a length. And in rejecting this opinion we reject Plato's argument and defend the propriety of holding both that the soul is an entity which depends on some relation of bodily elements and that it itself contains parts or faculties which can be better or worse integrated with one another. Put like that, these propositions both seem reasonable enough, and it is perhaps surprising to notice the eagerness with which writers on Plato have insisted that one must abandon one or the other.

Argument A¹ begins immediately. It is agreed at 94b4-c1 that in a sensible man the soul controls and opposes bodily inclinations such as hunger and thirst. Socrates now (94c3-36) recalls premisses a1.11 and a1.12, to the effect that a harmonia can never control or be opposed to its elements. Hence, (9438-95a2) the soul cannot be a harmonia. This concludes the discussion of the thesis, and Socrates goes on to deal with the separate objection raised by Kebes.

Despite its neatness, this argument too has certain suspicious features. For it is not clear that the elements of which the soul is said to be a harmonia in the conclusion are the same elements as those which are referred to in the premisses. Given the earlier account of the theory by Simmias, it would be most natural to take the premisses to say that the activity of the soul is determined by the relations of the bodily elements such as the hot and the cold, so that, for instance, a certain mixture of hot to cold will produce anger in the soul, or a certain mixture of wet to dry will produce a desire for a drink. But in the conclusion Socrates treats such events as being angry or wanting a drink as themselves being the physical elements of which the soul is a harmonia, and insists on the incompatibility of the premisses with the view that the soul opposes these events, in the sense that the reason often brings such desires under control. But clearly, there need be no such incompatibility. All that a defender of the harmonia thesis need say is that in the case of such a conflict of reason and desire we see, not the soul-harmonia opposing and controlling its elements, but rather one part of the soul-harmonia opposing and controlling another. And he might add for good measure that of course the controlling part is equally determined by some disposition of the bodily elements. In effect this would be to replace the soul-body dualism of the Phaedo with an account akin to the view of the divided soul in the Republic and Phaedrus, with the addition of a thesis of physicalistic determinism of the functioning of all parts of the soul. It is no doubt Plato's intention to resist this determinism, and to insist that the soul, or rather the rational element in it, is an autonomous agent, but his arguments in the Phaedo seem somewhat too strong if this is their main intention, since they are directed not specifically against the view that the soul is a harmonia of bodily elements, but against the view that it is a harmonia of any sort. If they were successful, they would indeed refute physicalistic determinism, but at the cost of refuting any such theory as that of the Republic. For there seems to be a perfectly good sense in which the tripartite soul of the Republic may be called a harmonia, since it is a composite entity made up of parts whose relations affect its functioning as a whole. So if the arguments in the Phaedo were conclusive, the whole psychology and corresponding political organisation of the Republic are based on a theory which Plato had already (assuming the priority

1 This point is made by Cornford, C.Q. 1922 p. 149, and by Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo, p. 120.

of the Phaedo) refuted. This difficulty does not seem to have occurred to those who so enthusiastically endorse Socrates' arguments here. In fact, the arguments of the Phaedo are not decisive against any version of the harmonia thesis. Their main importance lies in making explicit the incompatibility of physical determinism with a view of the non-physical soul as an autonomous agent, but this is far from showing that the deterministic thesis is false.

C. C. W. Taylor
Oxford University

APPENDIX

A	a1	The qualities of a harmonia are determined by those of its elements.	P(remiss)	92e4-93a2
a1	a1.1	The activity or passivity of a harmonia is determined by the activity or passivity of its elements.	(from a1)	a4-5
a1	a1.11	It is impossible for a harmonia to control its elements.	(from a1.1)	a6=7
a1	a1.12	It is impossible for a harmonia to be affected contrary to its elements.	(from a1.1)	
B	b1	A harmonia must be as it is attuned.	P	a11-12
b1	b11	If a harmonia is more or less attuned it is more or less a harmonia	(from b1)	a14-b2
	b2	No soul is more or less a soul than any other.	P	b4-7
	b3	A good soul possesses harmony, a bad soul disharmony.	P	b8-c10
b2	b2.1	No harmonia is more or less a harmonia than any other.	(from b2 by equivalence: invalid)	d1-5
b1	b1.2	Something which is neither more nor less a harmonia is neither more nor less attuned.	(from b1.1 by contraposition)	d6-8
	b4	(The soul is a harmonia).		implicit
	b5	Something which is neither more nor less attuned possesses neither more nor less harmony.	P	d9-10
b1,b2, b4	b6	No soul is more or less attuned than any other.	(b1.2, b2.1, b4)	d12-e2
b1,b2, b4,b5	b7	No soul possesses more or less harmony than any other.	(b5, b6)	e4-5
b1-5	b8	No soul is better or worse than any other.	(b3, b6)	e7-94a10
b1-3 b5	b9	The soul is not a harmonia.	(from b4, b8 by <u>reductio ad absurdum</u>)	a12-b3
A1	a2	The soul controls and opposes bodily inclinations.	P	b4-cl
a1		Re-statement of a1.11 and a1.12.		c3-7
a1,a2	a3	The soul is not a harmonia.		c8-95a2