

Abstract: There are many philosophical issues that have been discussed for more than two thousand years. And consequently, we have dozens of philosophical schools. In this paper, I would propose a new argument by considering all the unspecific arguments for the existence of the soul together for example, as a single argument for its existence. Doing so would close the door to the continuation of most of those schools.

Keywords: Soul; Dualism; Free will; Life after death

IN A CLASSROOM...

A Professor entered the classroom and started the lecture by saying “Today our discussion going to be about someone known for his wisdom and his exceptional philosophical ideologies; the greatest mind of all time; one of the founders of western philosophy; the founder of the academy; the author of the republic; Plato. I hope you have read or heard something about him. So now, I want each of you to share something unique about him.”

And the discussion went as follows:

Student 01: His name was Aristocles.

Professor: His grandfather was also named Aristocles.

Student 02: He was born in Athens, Greece.

Professor: Cleisthenes also was born in Athens, Greece.

Student 03: He was a famous student of Socrates.

Professor: Xenophon also was a famous student of Socrates.

Student 04: He was an ancient philosopher.

Professor: Pythagoras as well, was an ancient philosopher.

Student 05: He was a founder of western philosophy.

Professor: Aristotle likewise was a founder of western philosophy.

Student 06: He wrote a book called ‘the republic’.

Professor: One of your classmates writes a book and he too has named it ‘the republic’.

Student 07: He served as a soldier for a few years.

Professor: There are many people who serve as soldiers even today.

Student 08: He believed that Atlantis was a real place.

Professor: There are many historians too, who believe that city to be real.

Student 09: He argued for the immortality of the soul.

Professor: Any theological philosopher would argue for it.

Student 10: During the trial and execution of Socrates he was not present physically.

Professor: We neither.

Student 11: He was a wrestler.

Professor: Milo of Croton was a wrestler too. Though you brought up more facts about him, I can come up with a counter-example for each of them. So, let us settle our discussion right here. And the result might shock some of you. As we discussed earlier, the points you brought up about Plato, are not unique to him. They are not strong and they never can be used to solely point toward Plato per se or prove that Plato is a real person as claimed by them. To strengthen my claim, I want to highlight the fact that there is no accuracy in the years of his birth and death let alone the months and days. I believe that Plato was a fictional character created by Greece people just to claim to have some great philosophers from themselves.

Student 12: Professor! I have something to share. Since my classmates were not able to come up with some strong points, it does not necessarily mean that Plato was just a fictional character. Because there might be some strong facts about him we are not aware of. Despite that, I can come up with a sound argument to prove that Plato was a real person.

Professor: Go ahead

Student 12: Why do we not look at all those facts as a single argument instead of treating them only as individual points? By considering so, the collective argument would point toward only one person. And that would be Plato himself. So, I would say: He was born in Athens during the ancient era of philosophy; a famous student of Socrates; one of the founders of western philosophy; the author of ‘the republic’; a wrestler...

Professor: How do we know that these are the only facts about Plato?

Student 12: We do not necessarily have to include all the facts about something in order to come up with a sound argument. Perhaps, only two of them would be enough for some arguments. For example, I could just say, He was born in Athens, and He is the author of The Republic,

Professor: Though, it will not prove whether his existence was real or fictional.

Student 12: Don’t you notice that some parts of the collective argument demand his existence in reality?

Professor: What do you mean by that?

Student 12: What was the remarkable thing in his existence?

Professor: His philosophical contributions.

Student 12: Don’t we have his philosophical works with us today?

Professor: Yes, we do.

Student 12: Aren’t they real?

Professor: Yes, they are.

Student 12: Can something that has no existence cause something in reality?

Professor: I don’t think so.

Student 12: Therefore, his existence was real.

As the bell rang, the class was over...

In the genre of the said story, there are hundreds of philosophical arguments to prove the existence of the soul. Some of those arguments are nonspecific. This means some of the arguments for the existence of the soul, for example, can be used to prove the existence of the soul. And at the same time, it might mean something else too. By bringing all those arguments collectively and making them a single argument, we can come up with a sound argument for what we argue for. If an argument is specific per se, that would be strong enough to be treated as a sound argument.

If I argue for the soul with its reasoning and emotions, someone might give me the example of a chess-playing computer or a character in a video game as a counter-argument. And if I argue for it saying that the soul could be imagined independently from the body. You might give me the example of the morning star and evening star. But if I say that the soul is something that could be imagined independently and it has beliefs, desires, emotions, reasoning, and so forth. No one would be able to come up with any counter-examples to it. Only the soul would be a solely entitled candidate to be described that way. Because there is no chess-playing Venus or a chess-playing computer that could be imagined independently from itself.

The arguments for the existence of the soul would be as follows:

- The nonspecific arguments for the existence of the soul together, along with or without the specific arguments prove its existence. Therefore, the soul exists.

The very same style of argument could be used to find the objective truth of some other philosophical questions too, such as free will, life after death, so forth, and so on.

References

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