My aim in this paper will be to contribute to the understanding of the Phaedo as an entity in itself, by examining some of the connections between its parts. That the Phaedo is a highly articulated whole is, I think, beyond dispute; but there is no clear agreement either about the relationships between its parts or about what sort of whole it is. Even if no such agreement is possible, there is, I think, still plenty of room for discussion of the issues.

1. This paper, in its present form, is for the most part an annotated version of the one originally delivered at Brown University in January 1991; the notes include an indication of my responses to points raised on that occasion (particularly by my respondent, Professor Thomas Tuozzo), by audiences later in the year at the Universities of Amsterdam and Perugia, and by an anonymous commentator for the Proceedings.

2. That, for example, all the arguments somehow contribute to a single, complex conclusion (however we may define the "arguments": see below), or that the arguments and the dramatic action are connected, cannot reasonably be denied; even if this leaves out two significant elements, i.e. Socrates' "autobiography", and the "myth", the Phaedo already thereby possesses a rather higher degree of overt structural organisation than many or most other Platonic dialogues.

3. My own primary concern will be to examine the relationships between the arguments, and between the characters who propose and respond to them, from which there will emerge a specific explanation of the combination in the dialogue of argument and action. About Socrates' autobiography, and the "myth", I shall have little or nothing to say, for reasons which will become clear; in any case, they deserve full treatment in their own right, for which I have no space in this paper, and whatever view is taken of them is unlikely to affect my conclusions.

4. As this already suggests, I shall be offering a highly determinate reading of the dialogue. In a preliminary seminar paper at Brown, I presented an argument against those who, for whatever reason, are inclined to deny the existence of any
Most of the items in any modern bibliography on the *Phaedo* are naturally concerned with parts or aspects of the dialogue in isolation, for example the individual arguments for immortality (if I may so describe them, in the traditional way\(^5\)), or those stretches which look like promising quarries for Plato’s metaphysical ideas; and commentaries are themselves usually so preoccupied with particular problems that issues about the overall structure tend be neglected (though Gallop’s philosophical commentary\(^6\) is more helpful than most). There are, however, three relatively recent books whose titles, at least, suggest a concern with the dialogue as a whole: those of Bostock,\(^7\) Burger\(^8\) and Dorter.\(^9\) Of these, Bostock’s turns out to be restricted wholly to what he calls “the philosophical interest of the dialogue;” it “has nothing to say of its considerable literary merits and dramatic power;” because, he says “it stems from a course of lectures designed for undergraduates . . . who were studying the *Phaedo* as their first introduction to philosophy.”\(^10\) Burger and Dorter, enforceable limits on the interpretation of (Platonic) texts. I do not of course claim that my own interpretation of the *Phaedo* exhausts its meaning, or that it is invulnerable either to general arguments of a skeptical nature or to specific objections which I have failed to foresee or answer. I do claim that if the relevant parts of the dialogue are read in the way I shall suggest, they represent an internally coherent and consistent ordering of elements; and that if it is at all legitimate to prefer one interpretation, of any work, over any other, the discovery of such an ordering is one plausible basis for making the choice. While any work, whether by Plato or by anyone else, may turn out to be internally incoherent, inconsistent, or ambiguous, the interpreter has no reason to begin by assuming it to be so; and there is strong evidence, as I hope to show, that the *Phaedo* is not like this.

5. Of the four arguments, according to the usual division, the first (the “cyclical” argument, or the argument from opposites) requires combination with the second (from recollection), if it is to fulfil Cebes’ original requirements (70b2-4), and the second with the first (77c1-d5); only the last two (that from the alleged “affinity” of soul to the unchanging, and the final argument) appear as self-standing “arguments for immortality”—though if Cebes is prepared to attribute the same description separately to the first and the second too (as he implicitly does at 73a2-3), it will do no harm to go on doing the same.