

PLATO AND THE DIVIDED SELF

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Introduction

RACHEL BARNEY, TAD BRENNAN, CHARLES BRITTAIN

With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines, and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*¹

Most of the papers in this volume originated at two conferences, one held in 2005 at the University of Toronto and one in 2006 at Cornell University.² As organizers we then commissioned another seven papers in order to produce a much more wide-ranging, if still far from comprehensive volume.³ Philosophical accounts of the tripartite soul in Plato have traditionally focussed on the *Republic*: while that dialogue remains central to many of the papers in this volume, readers will also find discussions of other dialogues featuring soul-partition (including Sheffield on the *Phaedrus*, Lorenz on the *Timaeus*, and Brisson on the *Laws*) and other relevant psychological investigations (Dorion on the *Gorgias*, Vasiliou on the *Phaedo*, Sheffield on the *Symposium*, Moss on the *Philebus*). Also included are three case studies of uses of the tripartite theory within the later Platonic tradition (Opsomer on Plutarch, Schiefsky on Galen, and Emilsson on Plotinus). The reader will thus be able to judge to what extent these various sources present a constant, unitary theory – a unitary and stable Platonic Psychology – underlying the developments and revisions in Plato's thinking, and in the views of his successors.

1 Stevenson (2003, first published 1886) 64.

2 The papers first read at the Toronto conference are those of Dorion, Kamtekar, Whiting, and Woolf; at Cornell, those of Brennan, Lorenz, Moss, and Schiefsky.

3 These are the contributions by Brisson, Brown, Emilsson, Opsomer, Sheffield, Vasiliou, and Wilberding.

As these essays bring out, Plato's tripartite theory, like his 'theory of Forms', is an ever-evolving construction, engineered to serve an impressive range of different purposes. It is introduced in *Republic* IV to account for mental conflict; more generally, it serves there as a tool for the explanation of action and the definition of the virtues, while providing a paradigm for the analysis of just and unjust cities (and of course vice versa). But the theory also provides an account of personality types; explains the workings of non-rational thought and emotional experience (Brennan, Moss); provides the basis for a theory of education (Wilberding); and brings into focus questions about personal immortality and eschatology (Woolf). The impact of tripartition on Platonic theories on topics ranging from politics (Brisson) to animal thought (Lorenz) is a central theme of this volume. To speak of the impact of tripartition is not to assume a 'developmentalist' account, though, or assume that tripartition requires Plato to recant ideas developed earlier, such as Socratic 'intellectualism.' If anything the papers in this volume are broadly unitarian in their findings – perhaps 'continuitarian' would be a better term. For they include arguments that the account of *erôs* in the *Phaedrus* (Sheffield), the passions in the late dialogues (Moss), and even soul-partition itself (Whiting) are natural developments from earlier Platonic ideas; Brisson also argues for the essential continuity of both the psychology and the politics of the *Laws* with the *Republic*.

That each of us is a multiplicity is for Plato both intuitively obvious – How else could 'self-control' be intelligible? How else can we be both attracted and repelled by the very same thing? – and a radical, revisionist insight. The oligarch, with his careful self-preserving rationality, will presumably be shocked to discover that he is in fact a slave to appetite (553c–d). Much of the revisionist force of the theory flows from the rich conception it provides of reason, as a form (*eidos*) of the soul with its own pleasures, desires, and way of life – a powerful alternative to the instrumental conception of reason assumed by Thrasymachus and his modern successors.

Exactly what a part (*meros*) of the soul consists in is an endlessly intriguing question. Scholars have often noted that Plato tends to use *meros* much less often than English translators use 'part,' largely thanks to the nifty ability of Greek to use an adjective with an article as a substantive ('the calculating,' 'the spirited,' etc.). And what Plato means by sometimes calling the parts forms or species (*eidê*), a very loaded term in his metaphysics, is quite unclear (Woolf). Most of the papers here represent what seems to be a growing consensus that these entities (whatever the right

word for them might be) are robustly agent-like individuals: ‘a polity of multifarious, incongruous’ – albeit interdependent – ‘denizens’. For each seems to comprise an integrated system of capacities for cognition, volition, affect, and agency vis-à-vis the other parts. Plato’s use of animal imagery in both the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*, his depiction of the parts as interacting like individual humans or political groups, and his use of the theory to account for the differentiation of biological kinds in the *Timaeus* – all this evidence suggests that we are to understand the parts as real agents, having something of the completeness and autonomy of different kinds of organism. But both Kamtekar and Whiting present deep (and very different) deflationary challenges to this whole ‘realist’ line of interpretation. Thanks to the indeterminacies of Plato’s terminology, his often analogical mode of presentation, and the multiplicity of purposes we can see the tripartite theory as serving, its scope and import are open to contestation at the most basic level.

Analyses of tripartition also need to account for the sense in which Plato clearly remains committed to the view that the soul is somehow *one*. Some texts, including *Republic* X, suggest that the lower parts of the soul are temporary additions which develop to serve our needs at incarnation and disappear, or are reabsorbed into the rational part, at death – though how to reconcile this with the *Phaedrus* myth, which uses the image of charioteer and horses to depict an immortal tripartition, is a perennial interpretive puzzle (Woolf). And just what is divided and in what way by Plato’s arguments for partition in *Republic* IV is not so obvious as it might seem (Brown). In any case, to say that the parts are depicted as agent-like is not yet to say in what spirit the depiction is intended. Perhaps the theory gives an account only of human nature under certain non-ideal conditions, as *Republic* X suggests (Woolf); or of defectively educated, poorly integrated natures in particular (Whiting); or perhaps it is intended heuristically rather than literally, as a therapeutic tool more than a naturalistic scientific analysis (Kamtekar).

Elaborated for so many uses, the tripartite theory appears in a number of different versions in Plato’s own work. As the essays by Opsomer, Schiefsky, and Emilsson bring out, it was also creatively extended and redeployed by later Platonists, recombined with later ideas and reconfigured to address new challenges. But many later Platonic concerns also have deep roots in Plato’s own text. The relation of my soul to my personal immortality; the interaction of the partitioned soul with the body (and with it the bearing of the theory on topics such as medicine and the theory of perception); the connections between the individual soul and

the world-soul of the *Timaeus*; the problem of how a collection of soul-parts can add up to a free and responsible self – all are problems likely to nag at any reader of Plato's own works, and all are addressed in various ways by later Platonists. In doing so they develop sophisticated readings of the Platonic texts, harmonize them with the insights of other philosophers, defend them against objections, and develop their implications with permanently useful results. Thus Emilsson argues that Plotinus gets something importantly right in his understanding of the relation between Platonic virtue and external action; and Wilberding draws on Proclus to develop his own interpretation of Platonic physical education.

This volume is very far from presenting the full story of the tripartite soul even in antiquity; to trace its direct and indirect influence through different eras would be a massive undertaking. If that influence has today receded, it is all the more striking that analyses of the human self as irreducibly multiple are very much back in fashion. The kinship between Platonic and Freudian tripartite psychology is well-known,⁴ but equally striking are the resonances with contemporary neuroscience. On many versions of the latter, our cognition and agency are modular, flowing not from a single command centre but “a coalition or bundle of semi-independent agencies.”⁵ Daniel Dennett explains his deflationary account of consciousness (a concept which Plato seems to do without altogether, at least until *Philebus* 33c–5d) by claiming:

There is no single, definitive ‘stream of consciousness,’ because there is no central Headquarters, no Cartesian Theater where ‘it all comes together’ for the perusal of a Central Meaner. Instead of such a single stream (however wide), there are multiple channels in which specialist circuits try, in parallel pandemoniums, to do their various things, creating Multiple Drafts as they go . . . The basic specialists are part of our animal heritage . . . They are often opportunistically enlisted in new roles, for which their native talents more or less suit them. The result is not bedlam only because the trends that are imposed on all this activity are themselves the product of design.⁶

That Plato too saw the human self as an awkward coalition of very different animals, with specialized skills but a penchant for usurpation, is perhaps no coincidence. For Plato's commitment to teleological

4 Santas (1988).

5 Dennett (1991) 260, citing the work of neuropsychologist Michael Gazzaniga. A strongly Platonic version is the ‘triune brain’ theory of neuroscientist Paul MacLean; an accessible exposition of his views is given in Sagan (1977).

6 Dennett (1991) 253–54.

explanation (which *Phaedo* 99 ff. shows long predates the *Timaeus*) implies much the same explanatory framework as evolution provides for the modern naturalistic philosopher of mind. (*How* the complexity of the soul serves teleological purposes is explored in part by Brennan.) We hope that this book will encourage both philosophers and other students of human nature to investigate what Platonic psychology might still have to contribute to our self-understanding.

PART I

Transitions to tripartition

From the *Phaedo* to the *Republic*

Plato's tripartite soul and the possibility of non-philosophical virtue

IAKOVOS VASILIOU

Both the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* emphasize a great difference between philosophers and non-philosophers in terms of their respective abilities, aims, and ultimate post-mortem fates. Each dialogue also appears to refer to three hierarchically ordered kinds of virtue: (1) slavish virtue (*Phaedo* 68d–69c; *Republic* 430b)¹; (2) political or civic, habituated virtue (*Phaedo* 82a–b; *Republic* 429c–430c, 522a, 619c); and (3) genuine or philosophical virtue (*passim*). Crudely, the first type of person (or even animal) avoids or pursues an action out of fear of pain or desire for pleasure. The second acts from some sort of habituated state “without knowledge.” The third agent acts in a way possible only for those who are truly wise and have knowledge, namely, philosophers. Perhaps the most notorious difference between the *Phaedo* and *Republic* is the detailed presentation of the tripartite soul in the latter in contrast with the one-part psychology of the former. In this chapter, I shall examine what difference this makes for our understanding of the three “types” of virtue.² I argue that the positing of a tripartite soul creates the possibility for a much more extensive education and development than the one-part psychology of the *Phaedo*, which results in a more plausible and optimistic picture of a

I thank Matt Evans and Nancy Worman for helpful discussion. I am especially grateful to Rachel Barney, Charles Brittain, and Tad Brennan for their generous and extremely beneficial written comments.

1 All references to the *Republic* are to Slings (2003); the line numbers accordingly vary slightly from Burnet's Oxford edition (1900–07).

2 The idea that there are different grades of virtue connected to different cognitive and desiderative states in Plato has clear descendants in the Platonist tradition; see e.g., Plotinus, *Ennead* 1.2, Porphyry, *Sententia* 32, and the ancient commentaries on the *Phaedo*. I cannot pursue these connections here, but see e.g., Brittain (2002).

non-philosopher's potential for a type of virtue. At the same time, there are clues in the *Phaedo* that point to the more complex picture presented in the *Republic*.³

In examining these questions scholars have paid insufficient attention to who does and who does not count as a philosopher in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. This has led to an unwarranted collapse in the possible types of virtue, into either slavish virtue or genuine, full virtue. In the *Phaedo*'s conception of a philosopher, I shall argue that Plato opens up conceptual space for a type of virtue that falls short of genuine, complete virtue, but is nevertheless not slavish. In the *Republic*, the role for such virtue – habituated, political virtue – will be greatly enhanced by the more complex tripartite psychology, which in turn expands the possibilities for the role of education.

I Two conceptions of philosophers

In both the *Phaedo* and *Republic* what most significantly distinguishes philosophers from non-philosophers is their recognition of and concern with Forms. But while the *Phaedo* refers to philosophers in the real world, the philosophers in the *Republic* are “offstage” as it were and will emerge together with the Kallipolis in the role of rulers.⁴

The philosopher in the *Phaedo* (a “Phd-philosopher”) is described as someone who loves and seeks wisdom more than anything else, but for whom possession of wisdom awaits death. To be a Phd-philosopher includes having lived one's life trying as far as possible to “separate” the body from the soul by avoiding (or at least being indifferent towards)⁵ the body and its needs, including food, drink, clothing, money, and sex (cf. 64c–65a). Philosophy is part of a purification process that rids a person of the ill-effects of his body and, if conducted correctly, releases

3 My thesis fits neatly with the traditional consensus among scholars that the *Phaedo* precedes the *Republic*; it does not, however, require that this be the case.

4 In *Republic* VI, Socrates does discuss what happens to people with the best (i.e., philosophical) natures in the real world, as well as the reputation of people typically referred to as “philosophers.” In addition at 496a–e Socrates mentions himself, Theages, and a few others who, in the actual world, “consort worthily with philosophy” (*kat axian homilountôn philosophia(i)*, 496b1). It is striking, however, that in this passage no one (not even Socrates) is ever referred to as a “philosopher”; contrast the description of philosopher-kings, who are referred to as “those who are in truth philosophers” (*hoi hōs alēthōs philosophoi*, at e.g., 540d3–4). The *Phaedo* repeatedly refers to those who philosophize “genuinely” or “correctly” or “truly”; see e.g., 66b2, 67b4, d8, e4, 68a7, 80e6, 82c3.

5 See Woolf (2004).

his unitary, immortal soul from the cycle of reincarnation. In addition the Phd-philosopher, while alive, strives to attain wisdom and realizes that wisdom does not lie in the sensible world and the faculties that reveal it to us (namely, the senses), but in the mind (soul), which uses reason alone to contemplate entities that are timeless and unchanging, namely, the Forms (65a–66a).

Attainment of wisdom, however, eludes the philosopher while still alive:

Well now, it really has been shown us that if we're ever going to know anything purely (*katharôs*) we must be rid of it [the body] and must view the objects themselves [i.e., the Forms] with the soul by itself; it's then, apparently, that the thing we desire and whose lovers we claim to be, wisdom, will be ours – when we have died, as the argument indicates, though not while we live. Because, if we can know nothing purely in the body's company, then one of two things must be true: either knowledge is nowhere to be gained, or else it is for the dead; since then, but no sooner, will the soul be alone by itself apart from the body. And therefore while we live, it would seem that we shall be closest to knowledge in this way . . . [by separating soul from body as far as possible while alive].

(66d7–67a2, Gallop (1975) translation, slightly modified)⁶

This and similar passages claim that a Phd-philosopher will achieve wisdom only after he has died.

The *Republic* has a more optimistic view in one respect: in the Kallipolis the philosopher-rulers actually *attain* knowledge while embodied in the world. They know the Forms, including the Form of the Good and, once their education is complete (at the age of fifty), they spend most of their lives contemplating them except for the periods when they are required to run the Kallipolis (540a–b). They also educate a new generation of capable people to become philosophers and, when they die, they go to live on the Isles of the Blessed.⁷ While they may continue to contemplate the Forms there, unlike in the *Phaedo*, they do not have to wait for the afterlife to attain the wisdom they seek in the first place. Indeed, it is their attainment of wisdom while alive that uniquely qualifies them to rule.

At the same time the *Republic* is more demanding than the *Phaedo* insofar as the former insists that it is not sufficient to be a philosopher merely to love or to seek wisdom in the right way, i.e., by acknowledging that one must know Forms via reason alone; one must actually attain

6 See too 68b3–4: “since this will be his [the philosopher’s] firm belief, that nowhere else but there [in the afterlife] will he attain wisdom purely.” Cf. 65c9, 65e2, 66b.

7 Plato’s preferred resting place for philosophers; cf. *Gorgias* 526c.

it. Thus Socrates is *not* a philosopher in the *Republic's* sense, given his explicit disavowal of knowledge of the Form of the Good (505a), still less are any of his fellow interlocutors in the *Phaedo* or *Republic*. In the *Phaedo*, by contrast, Socrates, at least, manifestly *is* supposed to be an example of a philosopher and thus to be appropriately confident about his post-mortem fate.

While the *Phaedo* spends a considerable amount of time discussing the nature, activities, and outlook of the philosopher in contrast to the non-philosopher, there is little discussion about *why* or *how* one comes to adopt the attitude and outlook of a Phd-philosopher. Immediately after the Forms are introduced and the claim is made that they are accessible through thought alone and not through the senses (65c–66a), Socrates makes a speech *in oratio obliqua* (part of which was quoted above) that is presented as “what those genuinely practicing philosophy should say to one another” (66b2–3, cf. 67b3–4). This explains what a Phd-philosopher ought to believe and how he ought to act. It is clear that whether or not one is a Phd-philosopher depends on the recognition that wisdom lies in reason's grasp of the Forms and also on the practice of avoiding the bodily passions as much as possible (cf. 82c). It is clear too that the sort of “practice (*meletê*)” he or she engages in while alive (81c4–6, 80e5–81a2) both constitutes the sort of life one leads, philosophical or the opposite, and determines a person's corresponding post-mortem fate.

II Habituated, political virtue in the *Phaedo*

It becomes clear from the *Phaedo*, then, that one's education, the way one is taught to live, and the activities and practices one is brought up to engage in are what make a person a Phd-philosopher or not. Although the *Phaedo*, unlike the *Republic*, does not develop this idea, the account it presents of how a person becomes a philosopher stresses the importance of education, habituation, and upbringing. During the discussion of reincarnated lives in the Affinity Argument, mention is made for the first (and only) time of “popular and political virtue.” Socrates asks of those who will be reincarnated, i.e., everyone except genuine philosophers:

aren't the happiest even of these, who are going to the best place, the ones who have practiced popular and political virtue (*tên dêmotikên kai politikên aretên*), that which they call both temperance and justice, developed from habit and practice, without philosophy or understanding?

(82a10–b3)

Terence Irwin rightly comments that it is unclear to what extent this passage marks the distinction between political and slavish virtue that is made in the *Republic*.⁸ Christopher Bobonich argues that this “popular and political virtue” ought to be understood as a type of slavish virtue.⁹ As scholars emphasize, this “virtue” is “without philosophy or understanding (*nous*).” But, in theory at least (and, I argue, in practice in the *Republic*),¹⁰ practicing and possessing virtue “without philosophy or understanding” may have substantial ethical value. While the person with popular and political virtue may lack philosophy and understanding of what he does, he is, nevertheless, aiming at virtue. He intends to do the virtuous thing and conceives of his actions as virtuous. As we shall see below, this is in marked contrast with a person of mere “slavish virtue” and is similar to the person of full, genuine virtue (i.e., with philosophy and understanding).

What’s more, the person with popular, habituated virtue may be in two quite different situations. In one case, she may become habituated to act in certain ways called “virtuous” simply as determined by the beliefs or traditions in which she happens to be brought up, which may or may not be correct (i.e., in accord with what is truly virtuous). But another person of political virtue, while also lacking philosophy and understanding himself, may be habituated and brought up to act in ways that are *truly* virtuous because his education and habituation has been orchestrated by some person or people who are truly wise. The second scenario, which I believe is presented in the *Republic*, would make this habituated, political virtue an even more valuable state.

As a working hypothesis, then, the person of habituated virtue aims at doing the virtuous action and conceives of himself as doing what is virtuous because it is virtuous. Since he lacks philosophy and understanding, however, he is not in a position to know whether he is actually doing the virtuous action or not, since the content of his conception of virtue is based simply on the upbringing he has received and not on his own understanding. From what we might call a more “external” perspective, however, it may be the habituated person’s good fortune to have grown up

8 See Irwin (1995) 384 n. 16. Irwin believes that in the *Republic* a person can be non-slavish without knowledge, but not virtuous without knowledge. See Kamtekar (1998).

9 Bobonich (2002) 485 n. 16, takes the “popular and political virtue” of 82a11–b3 “to be a type of the slavish virtue (which is merely a façade of virtue) attributed to non-philosophers at 69b7–8.” Cf. Archer-Hind (1894) 149–55.

10 See below and Vasiliou (2008) chs 7–8.

in a Kallipolis, ruled by truly wise philosophers, so that what the person has been habituated to consider virtuous is in fact virtuous.

I shall return to the question of this “habituated virtue” again below, but we should note here that although this is the only place in the *Phaedo* where political or habituated virtue is explicitly referred to, after Socrates’ final argument for the immortality of the soul, he talks again about the importance of proper care of the soul (107c–d). Since the soul is immortal, one cannot be rid of a wicked soul by dying; the only way to escape wickedness is by making the soul “as good and wise as possible,” for the soul goes to the underworld with nothing “but its education and upbringing” (*plên tês paideias te kai trophês*, 107d3–4).¹¹ In the *Phaedo*, then, there is mention of the significance of education, habituation, and upbringing. Although the *Phaedo* discusses the types of practices philosophers and non-philosophers engage in, and the corresponding types of lives they lead, it does not, as the *Republic* does, focus on what sort of education makes a soul better or on how to realize such an educational program.

The *Phaedo* leaves open, however, the possibility that anyone could be a Phd-philosopher (though only a few people actually are) and so the possibility that anyone could possess wisdom post-mortem. The doctrine of *anamnêsis*, which is generally thought to be absent from the *Republic*, encourages such an idea. There is something quite optimistic about the doctrine of recollection as it is presented in the *Phaedo* and *Meno*. As part of the solution to “Meno’s Paradox,” it implies that it makes sense for anyone and everyone to inquire into what they do not know, for they have the knowledge inside them and have only to be reminded of it:

Inasmuch as the soul is immortal, has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the underworld, there is nothing that it has not learned, so that it is not amazing that it can be reminded of the things it previously knew, both about virtue and about other things. For inasmuch as the whole of nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, nothing hinders a person, having been reminded of one thing only – what people call learning – from discovering all other things himself, if he is brave and does not cease searching.

(*Meno* 81c5–d4)

11 Cf. *Gorgias* 524d4–7, where the soul stripped of the body after death carries the “marks” of the way of life it has led. A similar argument occurs at the end of the *Republic* 608d ff., where Socrates offers an argument to Glaucon for the soul’s immortality. A key idea in that argument is that even though, for most things, what is a proper and natural evil to it, destroys it (as, e.g., rust destroys iron), the soul is different, because what is bad for it, vice, doesn’t destroy the soul or make it any less a soul. So again a vicious soul cannot be destroyed or escaped except by becoming good.

This appears to be – and the argument needs it to be – a perfectly general claim about the capacities of all human beings. With some (unspecified) amount of determination, anyone is *capable* of acquiring knowledge of virtue. Although the *Meno* does not explicitly say so, the *Phaedo* makes it clear that the knowledge that resides in each person about virtue, equality, and so forth, is knowledge of Forms. In the *Phaedo* (73a–77b) recollection is used as part of an argument to show that everyone’s soul must pre-exist its bodily incarnation and that, in its prior non-bodily state, the soul has been in cognitive contact with the Forms.¹²

While the absence of recollection in the *Republic* may not necessarily signal a view that is inconsistent with the *Phaedo*, it does, I think, reflect a more pessimistic attitude about the ability of non-philosophers. In the *Republic*, it is not that only a few people *happen* to become philosophers and thus know the Forms, but that only a select few have the *natural ability* to do so. So even if, in a unitarian spirit, we believe that Plato holds the recollection theory in the *Republic*, the mere fact that all human beings have knowledge, in one sense, of the Forms inside them is not sufficient to prevent them from being hopelessly cut off from becoming knowers of the Forms by their natural abilities.¹³

I maintain, however, that the *Republic* is also more optimistic in that the citizens of the lower two classes in the Kallipolis will be more similar

12 *Phaedrus* 249b also appears to claim that anyone who is now human must have a soul that has seen the Forms. On the usual understanding of *anamnēsis*, it is involved in ordinary concept acquisition. As a person “learns” the ordinary concept, for example, of mathematical equality, so that she understands what it is for two objects to be the same length or the same weight, she is actually involved (whether she realizes it or not) in recollecting her forgotten knowledge of the Form of Equal, which is inside her soul and acquired from the time before her soul was incarnated. Scott (1995), however, argues that the act of *anamnēsis* is *not* in fact involved in ordinary concept acquisition and that *anamnēsis* is not intended to address the question of how human beings acquire concepts. Thus, unlike concept acquisition, *anamnēsis* is not an activity that most human beings ever engage in. Rather, it is restricted to those who are engaged in serious study of some philosophical, mathematical, or scientific issue. On this view, to recollect a Form involves a sort of study and investigation that goes considerably beyond the mere acquisition of concepts. But even if Scott is correct about how prevalent actual recollection is among human beings, the position is nevertheless still quite optimistic. As far as the “theory” of recollection goes, it is *still* true that all human beings *have* knowledge of the Forms inside them and could, in theory, engage in recollection, even if Scott is correct that few of them ever actually do.

13 If the *Republic* countenances recollection and if recollection is involved in concept acquisition, then ordinary people will partially recollect Forms. But the *Republic* will still be more pessimistic than the *Phaedo* in that ordinary people are unable to recollect Forms in a way that will count as *knowing* them; for the latter requires advanced mathematics, dialectic, and so on, which ordinary people will be incapable of doing.

to Phd-philosophers and will possess a habituated, political virtue, and will be less like ordinary people conceived of as possessing, at best, mere slavish virtue.¹⁴ I shall argue that what generates this more optimistic outlook is in part the *Republic's* account of the soul as tripartite. It will be important in the argument that follows to keep in mind the distinction between philosophers and non-philosophers who are in the Kallipolis as described in the *Republic*, on the one hand, and philosophers and non-philosophers in the ordinary world, as described in the *Phaedo*.

III Philosophical and slavish virtue in the *Phaedo*

That the *Phaedo* draws a contrast between genuine, philosophical virtue and a “slavish virtue” that is a mere illusory appearance of virtue is obvious, even if the precise description of each type is contested (68c–69d). The more controversial question is whether the “popular and political virtue” (cf. 82a11–b1) referred to above constitutes a third, distinct category or whether it is simply another way of referring to slavish virtue. This issue is significant because, as we shall see, Plato criticizes slavish virtue in harsh terms, calling it a mere “shadow-painting” of virtue.

Near the end of Socrates' defense of the claim that a person who is a philosopher should face death boldly and without fear, since philosophy is in fact a practice for dying and death (64a), he discusses the relationship between virtue and wisdom. The philosopher of the *Phaedo* looks forward to death, conceived of as the separation of the body and the soul (64c), because it is then (and only then) that he can attain the object of his desire: wisdom. Since this is the case, philosophers fear death “least of all men” (67e5–6). This conclusion is arrived at via a philosophical argument about the irrationality (*alogia*) of trying to effect a separation of soul and body as far as possible during life and then being resentful when that separation is about to come most definitively – at death. Thus anyone who is in reality a philosopher ought to welcome death (67e4–68a3). Socrates supplements this argument with a psychological one. Lovers of people are willing to die in the hope of seeing and being with the people they love. Analogously, genuine lovers of wisdom would be willing to die to attain the object of *their* desire (68a3–b6). Thus anyone who resents death must not be a true lover of wisdom, but a lover of the body (and

14 As I shall make clear below, the lower classes in the Kallipolis will not be similar to Phd-philosophers insofar as they are not striving for wisdom nor, therefore, are they striving to separate their souls from their bodies “as far as possible.”

so a lover of wealth, which enables one to provide things for the body), a lover of honor, or both.

Philosophers' lack of fear of death and indifference to (or disdain of) the pleasures and pains of the body thus make Phd-philosophers fit very well the ordinary descriptions of courageous and temperate characters (68c–d). Phd-philosophers do not know the Form of Courage, for they are mere lovers of wisdom, not possessors of it. Socrates is careful to say that Phd-philosophers most of all display “*what is called courage*” (68c5) and “*what the many name as temperance*” (68c9–10, my emphasis).¹⁵ They display these most of all because they are not aiming at avoiding death or minimizing pain, but at achieving wisdom; they are not in the business of exchanging pleasures, pains, and fears, but are, as it were, trafficking in other matters. But Socrates doesn't go so far as to say that they *are* in fact virtuous, since in the *Phaedo*, as we shall see, virtue is ultimately the purification that results from the *possession* of wisdom (which is what does the purifying). One must have wisdom to identify correctly the actions that are indeed virtuous. Otherwise, one might land in the contradiction of being, for example, temperate, but engaging in intemperate actions.

In addition Socrates claims that everyone else besides philosophers behaves irrationally because they are courageous through cowardice and temperate through intemperance (68d2–69a4). Most people act bravely because they are afraid of dying; so in order to avoid what they fear even more, they endure a lesser fear, such as fighting in battle; similarly, in order to avoid a greater pain, such as a hangover, they forego what they perceive as a smaller pleasure, such as having another drink. So ordinary people act “temperately” because, irrationally, they are ruled by pleasure (and fear of pain) and act “bravely” because they are ruled by fear, e.g., of death (68d2–69a4). In the difficult passage that follows, the way people end up exchanging pleasures for pleasures and fears for fears without wisdom turns out to be only a “shadow-painting” (*skiagraphia*) of virtue that is “fit for slaves” and “has nothing true in it” (69b6–8). The understanding of part of this account is relatively uncontroversial. People will engage in actions that are, in one sense, the same as the actions that a truly virtuous person would engage in. For example, in some situations both the ordinary person and the truly virtuous person might stand firm in battle. The reason why the ordinary person stands firm, however, is because he fears death or the pain of disgrace more than

15 Cf. *Republic* 429c–430c where slavish and habituated “political” courage are distinguished.

he fears standing firm. This is “slavish” virtue and has “nothing true in it,” however, for a very specific reason. The slavish person’s ends are avoiding pain and gaining pleasure; he is not concerned about the truth about what the virtuous action is.¹⁶ The only faculty that could know what the *truly* virtuous action is is reason. While the body (or, in the *Republic*, the appetitive part of the soul) might tell a person what she fears or desires, only the mind (soul) (or, in the *Republic*, the rational part of the soul) can say what is true about virtue, once it is assumed (as Socrates does assume, cf. 65d) that the Just itself, the Good itself, and so on, are objects of knowledge whose existence and nature are independent of our attitudes towards them.¹⁷ Ordinary people’s virtue, then, is “slavish” because they are ruled not by virtue (and wisdom’s knowledge of it) but by pleasure, pain, and fear; it has “nothing true in it” because it has to do with people’s attitudes and feelings towards pleasure and pain and not with objective truth about the nature of virtue (contained, ultimately, in the Forms); and, finally, it is a “shadow-painting” because it only accidentally resembles a truly virtuous action.

This last criticism is important. If one acts ruled by fear of death, then, if one does what is in fact the brave action, it is only an *accident* that one has done it. Since one’s ultimate aim is to avoid death (and not to do the virtuous action) it is a mere coincidence that in such and such circumstances the action that avoids death happens to be the action that is brave; *mutatis mutandis* for “temperate” actions. This criticism that their “virtue” is a mere “shadow-painting” is not, as it were, about purity of motive for its own sake, but about how one correctly identifies what the virtuous action is. Only if one aims to do the virtuous thing above all does one non-accidentally do the virtuous action; if one is aiming at something else above virtue, such as staying alive, it will be a mere

16 This is a common argument in Plato’s dialogues. If avoiding pain or gaining pleasure is the highest aim one ought to have, then it is relatively simple to determine which actions afford pleasure and avoid pain. But if the highest aim one ought to have is to do the virtuous action (or not to do the action that is contrary to virtue) and one believes that whether or not an action is virtuous is *not* simply determined by the pleasure or pain it yields, then one needs knowledge of what the nature of virtue is in order to determine which actions are the virtuous ones; knowing which action avoids pain or gains pleasure will be of no help. See Vasiliou (2008), especially chs 3, 4, and 5, for more details.

17 Of course if hedonism were true, as the final argument in the *Protagoras* (351b3–360e5) supposes, then the virtuous action would be the action that maximizes pleasure and the only question left would be how to determine *which* token action in fact does that – thus, “the art of measurement of pleasures and pains” would be the “salvation of our lives” (357a6–7).

accident if a person does what is right. Of course, in addition, one must have knowledge of what the objectively virtuous action is. We saw this issue arise above in the context of understanding habituated or political virtue. The person with habituated virtue aims at doing the right thing and conceives of what she does as virtuous, but she lacks the knowledge and understanding that would ensure that what she actually does *is* the virtuous action. Ordinary people with slavish virtue exchange pleasures and pains *without* wisdom, but in addition they are aiming at avoiding the most pain, not at identifying the independent, objectively right or virtuous action. In the *Phaedo* (and the *Republic*) the necessary wisdom consists in knowledge of the Forms. Knowing the Form of Courage, one will be able to correctly identify which token actions in fact participate in Courage and which do not. Phd-philosophers, in contrast to ordinary people, are at least striving to attain the knowledge that would enable them to know what virtue is, even if they have not yet attained it.

We should note too that this argument about the nature of “slavish virtue” ought to be something that people who conceive of virtue in the ordinary sense can understand. Anyone can see that there is something amiss in the idea that temperate behavior, conceived of as behavior that rules over pleasure and pain, is engaged in for the sake of gaining pleasure or avoiding pain. When Phd-philosophers conform to virtue as ordinarily conceived, the point is that – however far they may be from genuine virtue, which requires possession of wisdom (see below) – they are at least engaging in actions in the right way, namely by trying to figure out (by trying to acquire wisdom) what the truly temperate and brave actions are.

If the argument so far is correct it makes sense of what Socrates says true virtue is in the “right-exchange” passage:

My dear Simmias, for this may not be the correct exchange with a view to virtue, the exchanging of pleasures for pleasures and pains for pains and fear for fear, and the greater for the lesser, like coins, but rather that alone may be the correct coin – wisdom – for which one must exchange all these things; and buying and selling everything for this, or rather in the company of this¹⁸ may in reality be courage and temperance and justice and, in sum, true virtue, in the company of wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and all other such things are added or subtracted; but when everything is separated from wisdom and being changed for one

18 Gosling and Taylor (1982) 92–93, argue persuasively that “with this” (*meta toutou*) does not mean using wisdom as a means, but to conduct the exchange *wisely*. See too Rowe (1993) 149–50.

another – such virtue may be a kind of shadow-painting and in reality fit for a slave, and neither is it anything healthy nor does it contain truth, but the truth may really be that temperance and justice and courage are a kind of purification of all such things and wisdom itself may be a kind of purifying rite.

(69a6–c3)

The person with slavish virtue is aiming at pleasure or at avoiding pain or fear and not at what true virtue requires, which, furthermore, can only be known if one has wisdom.

Christopher Bobonich comments on this passage as follows:

True virtue requires that

- (i) a person aim at wisdom for its own sake, and
- (ii) wisdom govern all the person's exchanges involving other things, that is, that the person choose and act on the basis of wisdom.

All non-philosophers lack genuine virtue because they fail both conditions. They do not aim at wisdom for its own sake, and their choices are not governed by wisdom . . . *Phaedo* 69a–c shows that Plato's requirements are stronger: genuine virtue requires both being guided by wisdom and taking wisdom as an ultimate end. The pursuit and possession of wisdom is not a higher good that may or may not be possessed by virtuous people, rather it is essential to being a genuinely virtuous person.

(Bobonich (2002) 16, 18)¹⁹

For both textual and philosophical reasons I agree with Bobonich that in the *Phaedo* (and specifically here at 69a–c) genuine, full virtue requires possession of wisdom.²⁰ But I think that there is trouble for his understanding of the contrast between the “slavish virtue” of the

19 Cf. also Bobonich (2002) 20: “Genuine virtue, as we have seen, requires both aiming at and possessing wisdom.”

20 It is less clear, though I won't press the point, that 69a–c *by itself* requires that a person pursue wisdom for its own sake. I suspect that this idea comes more from Bobonich's understanding of what it is to be a Phd-philosopher. A Phd-philosopher does, in fact, devote his life to seeking wisdom as far as he is able and also recognizes that wisdom consists in knowledge of intelligible objects, the Forms, which are knowable only by the mind alone. To this end, as we have seen, he seeks to purify himself by separating the soul from the body by ignoring or counting as worthless bodily desires as far as possible while alive. And, to be fair to Bobonich, on the account in the *Phaedo* a person will *only* have the chance of attaining wisdom after death if he has *pursued* it in the right way while alive (thereby purifying his soul so that it may go dwell with the gods and, in contemplating the Forms, attain the object of its desire: wisdom).

non-philosopher and the genuine virtue of the philosopher.²¹ As I discussed above, Phd-philosophers do not *possess* wisdom, and so, if virtue requires the possession of wisdom (as Bobonich repeatedly insists), Phd-philosophers must not possess genuine virtue. Roslyn Weiss appreciates that a Phd-philosopher is one who *pursues* but does not *possess* wisdom.²² But she then concludes, incorrectly in my view, that Plato's position must be that philosophers can be virtuous even though they do not possess wisdom; all that virtue requires is *aiming* at wisdom. She points out that the philosopher is described as temperate and courageous "*in life*" (her emphasis), citing 68c–d; thus she argues that since the philosopher of the *Phaedo* is virtuous while alive, yet does not possess wisdom while alive, possession of wisdom must not be necessary for virtue.²³ But we have seen that all 68c–d says is that a Phd-philosopher will act more than anyone else in the ways *most people call* temperate and courageous; we have seen too why this would be so and that it is not the same as saying that the Phd-philosopher is fully virtuous. Weiss' position contrasts nicely with Bobonich's. He holds (as I do) that full virtue requires wisdom, but then, as we shall see, waters down the criteria for possession of wisdom so that Phd-philosophers will count as wise. The reading I defend takes the two (apparently) offending pieces of evidence in stride and accepts the conclusion that follows: (1) genuine virtue *does* require possession of wisdom; (2) Phd-philosophers do *not* possess wisdom; therefore (3) Phd-philosophers must not be genuinely or fully virtuous.

Another, to my mind unpalatable, consequence of *both* Weiss' and Bobonich's positions is that since Socrates fulfills the criteria for being a Phd-philosopher, he turns out to be fully virtuous. This strikes me as a characterization of Socrates that runs counter to all of the dialogues.²⁴ The *Phaedo* ends by saying that Socrates is the most virtuous, wisest, and most just "of those whom we then (*tote*) had had experience" (118a16),

21 This is a particularly important issue for Bobonich since he insists that in the *Phaedo* Plato denies not only that non-philosophers can be happy but also "that even the best of non-philosophers can have lives that are worth living" (2002, 22).

22 Weiss (1987) esp. 62 n. 34 and n. 39. 23 Weiss (1987) n. 39.

24 Bobonich (2002) does not discuss this implication of his position. Weiss (1987, 57 and n. 1) thinks that Socrates claims he himself is virtuous in the *Apology* because he claims to be the greatest good for Athens and is a "champion" of justice and virtue. In my view he is the greatest good for Athens because he *champions* virtue above all, but this is compatible with his not possessing virtue himself. For the importance of this distinction, see Vasiliou (2008) chs 1–2.

which nicely leaves open how far short that might be from the virtue, wisdom, and justice Socrates will possess post-mortem when he knows the Forms.

Bobonich avoids the conclusion that Phd-philosophers fall short of genuine virtue only by manipulating the criteria for possession of wisdom. He makes it clear that wisdom involves knowledge of the Forms (2002, 34 and n. 38). He maintains that:

A person who knows the Form of F:

- (A) recognizes that the Form of F is not identical with sensible things or properties,
- (B) is able to give an account of the Form of F, and
- (C) recognizes that all sensible Fs are F in virtue of participating in the Form of F.

Certainly Bobonich is right that a person who knows the Form of F meets these three criteria.²⁵ But is each of them of equal significance? (A) and (C) are things that anyone who has read certain dialogues, such as the *Phaedo*, can do.²⁶ They are also something that Phd-philosophers can do.²⁷ Criterion (B), however, seems to me quite different: (B) is *the* criterion for knowing the Form of F, as Socrates himself says at 76b5–7: “Would a man who knows be able to give an account of the things he knows or not?” ‘He must certainly (*pollê anankê*) [be able to],’ he [Simmias] said.” If one is able to give an account of the Form of F, then, given what Forms are, one will have already met (A) and (C). But no reader of the dialogues – not the most distinguished scholar on Plato – meets (B). The most we can say is that scholars have some views about *what it would be* to give an account of the Form of F. But this is quite different from *having* the account of the Form of F and it is this that is necessary for possessing knowledge of the Forms.

25 As will be clear below, Bobonich calls all three “criteria,” although they are not strictly written so as to function as such.

26 I am assuming, of course, that the “theory” of Forms is true and that the dialogues give readers good reason to accept it.

27 (A) and (C) are not sufficient for being a Phd-philosopher. In particular one must also lead a certain sort of life of “purification” and strive to achieve knowledge by devaluing or dismissing the testimony of the senses and the pleasures of the body. In a way that is important for the *Republic*, it is also significant that one can fulfill (A) and (C) *without* striving one’s utmost to achieve that wisdom (e.g., if it has been determined that you are naturally incapable of achieving it) and without adopting an indifferent or ascetic attitude towards the body and its needs.

Bobonich continues:

Since non-philosophers do not recognize Forms in addition to sensible things and properties, they fail all three criteria . . . Plato can, on the other hand, allow that philosophers, even while embodied, satisfy enough of these criteria or come close enough to satisfying them to have a genuine sort of wisdom, although this wisdom is not fully adequate or pure. They will have recognized the non-identity of Forms with sensibles, accepted the priority of non-sensible Forms with regard to understanding and explanation, and will have made some progress toward grasping an account of what they are.²⁸

Bobonich takes this amount of progress towards wisdom as “close enough” for having a “genuine sort of wisdom.” Clearly it does amount to more than an inchoate desire for wisdom, but it also amounts to much less than what is required of philosophers in the *Republic*, who completely meet all three criteria, most critically (B), in the case of the Form of the Good as well as the rest of the Forms. (A) and (C) by themselves are insufficient to count as having knowledge of the Form of F; (B) is a necessary criterion. Without needing to meet (B), any reader of the dialogues might meet (A) and (C).

In an attempt to argue that Socrates meets (B) at least to some degree, Bobonich appeals to 74b where Socrates and Simmias say that they know what the Equal itself is, and to 76b10–12 where Simmias says that after Socrates dies, he fears that no one will be able to give a “worthwhile” (*axiôs*) account of the Forms “they have been discussing.” Bobonich then says: “This does not entail that no one but Socrates (i) can give such an account of some of these Forms, or (ii) can give some sort of account of all of these Forms” (2002, 488 n. 40).²⁹ Socrates himself, however, never endorses Simmias’ flattering idea that he can give an adequate account of *any* of the Forms. It is true that Socrates and his fellows acknowledge *that*

28 Bobonich (2002) 34–35.

29 I also think that this conclusion strains the text, for the following reason. At 76b8–9 Socrates asks whether Simmias thinks that everyone can give an account “about these things which we were now discussing.” Bobonich’s reading attempts to restrict the scope of Simmias’ reply so that it does not entail that no one but Socrates can give a “worthwhile” account of “some of these Forms.” But it is clear from 75c10–d5 that “these things which we were now discussing” refers to *all* of the Forms, not just the Form of Equal: “for our argument is no more about the Equal than about the Beautiful itself, the Good itself, the Just, the Pious, and, as I say, about all those things which we mark with the seal of ‘what it is’ . . . so we must have acquired knowledge of them all before we were born.” So, Simmias’ remark must mean that *no one*, once Socrates has died, will be able to give a worthy account of *any* of these.

there are Forms, grasped only by the intellect, but the crucial further claim that anyone has an adequate account of any of them is absent; it is certainly never suggested or endorsed by Socrates.³⁰ Even if one thinks that Socrates is presented as having knowledge of the Form of Equality, there is no hint that he knows the Forms of Beauty, Justice, or any other ethical property. And it is knowledge of *these* that is important for assessing a person's virtue. If mere acknowledgment of the existence of the Forms as entities that are distinct from sensibles is sufficient to count as "a genuine form of wisdom" and so to make people "close enough" to count as philosophers, it seems odd that Bobonich's account is so stark and either/or when it comes to attribution of kinds of virtue. Why is there not an enormous difference between the belief *that* there are Forms, distinct from sensibles, and so on, and the knowledge that consists of *giving an account* of those Forms? We can call the first "a sort of" genuine wisdom if we wish, but then there ought to be two different kinds of virtue to go along with these two different types of wisdom.

My hypothesis, then, is that with his conception of a Phd-philosopher as fulfilling (A) and (C), but not (B), Plato has made room for a third category of virtue between slavish and genuine, full virtue. In addition to the slavish virtue of people who fail to meet all three of Bobonich's criteria, there is the so-far unnamed virtue of Phd-philosophers who, in my view, meet (A) and (C) (as well as leading a certain kind of life) but fail to fulfill (B). (B) is fulfilled by Phd-philosophers post-mortem but by Rep-philosophers while still alive. The Phd-philosopher's virtue is not slavish because he is striving to become wise (including becoming wise about virtue) and lives a life in accordance with that (involving, among other things, welcoming death). But the Phd-philosopher's virtue also falls short of genuine virtue, since the Phd-philosopher lacks wisdom; once the Phd-Philosopher dies he will obtain the wisdom, and so obtain the virtue, that he lacked while alive.

Let's consider one final aspect of the passage from 69a6–c3. The passage makes the odd claim that wisdom is the cause of the purification, the result of which is the purified state, i.e., virtue. Christopher Rowe comments on 69c1 as follows:

30 Indeed, despite the evidence provided by the Recollection Argument, Socrates continues throughout the dialogue to regard even the *existence* of the Forms as a working hypothesis – a hypothesis that he believes, to be sure, but never one that he claims to know or to have established in a way that necessarily ought to convince someone who was skeptical about their existence. See e.g., 76e, 100b, 107b.

Previously it was said that our purification from ordinary desires and fears was a condition of our acquisition of wisdom (see especially 66c–67b); now the claim seems to be that such purification is conditional on wisdom. “Wisdom” here, however, is not the complete understanding of things which was talked about earlier (since that was said to be inaccessible to the philosopher while still alive), but simply a clear-minded appreciation of what is truly valuable (which is what will be available to the philosopher, and to him alone).³¹

Rowe raises an important puzzle here. How can wisdom be the *katharmos* (what effects the *katharsis*) in 69b8–c3, and the resulting states of virtue be the *katharsis*, since the whole idea up until then is that by purifying oneself, i.e., by separating the body and soul as far as possible in life, one might then be able to achieve wisdom in the afterlife? It seems an unsatisfactory resolution of this, however, to think that, in this pivotal passage which is concerned to distinguish true from illusory virtue, “wisdom” would suddenly no longer refer to the object of the philosopher’s desire, but only to some appreciation he has about what is valuable. Rather, we should recall that it is clear that purification is something that comes in degrees. Phd-philosophers’ actions are dictated by their aiming at wisdom and so their aiming at the truth about what ought to be done and not by calculations about bodily pleasures or pains. This is why their actions are so different from those of ordinary people and are not slavish. But what would accomplish the final “purification” of them is the possession of, not the mere seeking after, wisdom. Insofar as this only happens after death in the *Phaedo*, to that extent only after death could a person be completely virtuous.

And indeed there is something problematic and unsatisfying about this, for anyone who is a Phd-philosopher will, upon death, be completely separated from his body, which, as I shall discuss below, is the seat of all desires and fears (66c). For the disembodied mind of the post-mortem Phd-philosopher, possessed of wisdom and dwelling with the gods in eternal contemplation of the Forms, virtues like courage or temperance would presumably have no application. Certainly the post-mortem attainment of true knowledge of, for example, the Form of Temperance will have no practical effect in the sensible world or in the Isles of the Blessed. Matters are quite different, however, in the *Republic*. Rep-philosophers have knowledge of the Forms *while embodied* and thus can and will, in the Kallipolis, manifest as far as possible that knowledge in the sensible world

31 Rowe (1993) 151.

by dictating which actions and practices are in fact temperate, courageous, and so on (cf. 484c6–d3, 500d4–8, 501b1–7, 540a8–b1).

IV Training desire in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*: what a difference a tripartite soul makes

In the *Phaedo* the body is the subject of desires.³² One place this emerges clearly is during Socrates' three arguments against Simmias' suggestion that the soul may simply be an "attunement" (*harmonia*) of the body and not a distinct substance. The first of these (92e3–93a10, 94b4–95a3) sheds some light on the possibilities that the psychology of the *Phaedo* allows for a person's education.³³ In the argument Socrates appeals to the fact that the soul of a person (especially a wise soul) frequently opposes the affections of the body, "dragging it the opposite way" when the body is thirsty or hungry (94b9). The soul rules over the body, opposing it practically always, and is master in "all kinds of ways" (94c9–d2). These include punishing (*kolazousa*) it by inflicting pain, e.g., by physical training (*gumnastikê*) or medicine (*iatrikê*). In addition there are "more gentle" methods: "in some cases threatening, and in other cases admonishing, by conversing with our desires, passions, and fears as one being to some other thing" (*hôs allê ousa allô(i) pragmati*, 94d2–d6).

What follows is a quote from the *Odyssey*, notoriously repeated in Book IV of the *Republic* (441b), where Odysseus' reason rebukes his spirited desire to take immediate revenge. In the *Republic*, this anecdote is taken as evidence for positing a spirited part of the soul that is distinct from the rational part. Here in the *Phaedo* it is supposed to be an example of the soul admonishing a desire of the body. Either way, however, the passage describes conflict: Odysseus' spirited desire, whether the subject of it is a distinct part of his soul or his body, is proposing to do something wrong and so gets rebuked by either the rational part of the soul or the soul *simpliciter*. What is important for present purposes is that in the passage from the *Phaedo* the methods for handling the desires of the body involve, in the first instance, a non-discursive and painful physical training and painful medical treatment in order to get the body to conform with the

32 Some have tried to deny this, e.g., Bostock (1986) 26–27, or diminish its force, e.g., Rowe (1993) 142. But see Bobonich (2002) 28 and 486 n. 26, for an effective response.

33 Socrates provides the premises of the argument in the first passage, moves on to a distinct argument from 93a11–94b3, and then returns to conclude the argument from 94b4–95a3. For some ideas about why Plato presents the arguments in this complex structure, see Gallop (1975) 157–58, and Rowe (1993) 220.

dictates of reason (the soul). And even the “more gentle” methods, which include a conversation (*dialegomenê*) between soul and body, involve either threats (presumably threats of pain or at least the denial of pleasure) or admonishments (*nouthetousa*).³⁴ Entirely absent from this section of the text is the idea of any education or habituation of the body; instead it is physical force or the threat thereof “by one being on another thing” that makes the body conform. The body is viewed as a recalcitrant “other thing” that can only be avoided, shunned, or else admonished, mastered, and punished.

The account of education in Books II and III of the *Republic* provides an illuminating contrast. At the beginning of the account of education Socrates declares that “a person who intends to be a fine and good (*kalos kagathos*) guard of the city” must be a lover of wisdom, spirited, and quick and strong (376c4–5). A proper education and upbringing is supposed to transform someone with the proper nature into such a “fine and good” guard. It is clear that proper education is the result of proper training, which consists in engaging in the proper activities and practices (*epitêdeumata*). By practicing different sorts of activities people become whatever they are, whether cobbler, farmer, soldier, artist, or athlete (374b ff.). Having the right education consists (at this point in the *Republic* anyway³⁵) in engaging in the right activities, which is particularly important for the young insofar as they are easily impressionable and take on whatever stamp (*tupos*) is impressed upon them (377a11–b2). Activities affect both one’s body and one’s soul, and engaging in activities of a certain sort generates a person of a corresponding sort (377c1–6). What makes the activities one engages in so significant is that such conduct “settles into both habits and nature in body, speech, and thought” (395d2).³⁶

In discussing what sort of education would make the guards as excellent as possible, Socrates and Glaucon must rely on some idea of how virtue arises in individuals. In general terms the answer is by engaging in

34 Cf. *Gorgias* 478e2–4, where Socrates describes a man who gets rid of his vice (*kakia*) by “being admonished and whipped and paying the penalty” (*ho nouthetoumenos te kai epiplêttomenos kai dikên didous*). “Being admonished” is here grouped together with corporal punishment without comment.

35 The education described here will later be downgraded as bringing about merely “political” (cf. 430a–c) or “habitual” virtue (cf. 522a), and not the genuine virtue that will be the possession of philosophers alone. I shall nevertheless continue to describe this early education as inculcating virtue, since that is how Socrates himself speaks about it (e.g., 378e1–3, 386a6).

36 There is a similar story for the activities one “imitates,” though I will not discuss that here.

the right (virtuous) activities, listening to and imitating the right stories, and so forth. Over the course of Books II and III, the proper content of stories, their proper style, appropriate rhythms, and proper types of painting, weaving, and architecture are all discussed. Exposure to and engagement with excellent examples of such stories and artworks yield excellent, graceful, and well-ordered souls. Thus a version of what we might call “the habituation principle,” the idea that one becomes, for example, just (or unjust) by doing just (or unjust) actions, is an explicit part of the argument here in the *Republic*.³⁷ As Socrates emphasizes in the *Gorgias* (cf. 464a, 524d ff.), acting virtuously is so important because how we act leads either to the health or illness of one’s soul, to its excellent condition or its corruption, and the condition of one’s soul is of paramount importance.

An important contrast with the *Phaedo* becomes evident. The *Republic* is deeply concerned with how people become the sorts of people they are and plausibly explains this as resulting from a combination of nature and education. These two ideas are succinctly expressed by Socrates very early in the *Republic*, where he secures Adeimantus’ assent to the ideas that people “differ in nature” and so are naturally suited to different tasks, and that people get better at what they practice (370a6–b7). We saw that the *Phaedo* marks philosophers as those who live a certain kind of life, that is, engage in certain practices while holding certain attitudes. Absent from the *Phaedo* is any idea that people have different natures. It would seem to be up to any ordinary person to adopt the attitude of a Phd-philosopher, but, as we have seen, a Phd-philosopher does not attain wisdom. To become a Rep-philosopher, by contrast, it is not enough for a person to adopt the proper attitude or engage in the proper type of practice: One must have a certain natural ability to complete the complex educational program, which results in the attainment of wisdom. According to the *Republic*, very few people have the capacity to do this.

It is instructive to look more closely, if briefly, at what the *Republic* says about the educative effects of “musical education” (*mousikê*) and physical training (*gumnastikê*).³⁸ We saw above that in the *Phaedo* the soul masters

37 The *locus classicus* for this idea is, of course, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1.

38 “Musical education” translates *mousikê*, which is a considerably broader idea than our “music.” It consists not only in playing music and singing but in the study of poetry, and even acting out parts in skits. To be *mousikos* is to be cultured, well-read, and refined, not to be a musician in the contemporary sense (cf. 398e1). It is one of the three traditional parts of an Athenian education, along with “physical training” (*gumnastikê*) and “letters” (*grammatikê*).

the body through physical training and medicine, along with threats and admonishments. Those educated in the Kallipolis, however, will become temperate as a result of the proper training they receive in “music” and because of this they will pursue physical training in the same way and so have no need of medicine, except when absolutely necessary (410b1–3).³⁹ Socrates then goes on to say that in fact people who establish education properly realize that *both* musical education *and* physical training are in reality “for the sake of the soul” (410c5–6). He goes on to say that physical training toughens the spirited aspect (*to thumoeides*) of the soul while musical education softens it; the proper amount of each yields courage, while too much of one or the other yields excess or defect. When properly harmonized, the soul becomes both temperate and courageous (410c8–411a1). Socrates here is already talking about parts⁴⁰ of the soul, prior to the famous division in Book IV, and about how they are molded and transformed by the education they receive. This is no longer the account of the *Phaedo*, where “one being is talking to some other thing” that has to be forcibly combated or avoided or punished. Violence and force are for recalcitrant people; those who have an “incurably bad-natured soul” are put to death in the Kallipolis (410a3–4). The more elaborate psychology expands the educative possibilities. A habituated virtue, which does not depend on a purely rational soul, is now possible.

I do not have the space to explain in detail how such a reading plays out over the rest of the *Republic*.⁴¹ In brief, just as the condition of Phd-philosophers is a matter of practice and attitude (and not natural ability), so the non-philosophers of the Kallipolis will have undergone a habituation of sorts simply by growing up in the restricted environment of the Kallipolis (and, for the guards, at least, by going through the educational program of Books II and III).⁴² In addition, all of the citizens must be persuaded that philosophers ought to rule, since the Kallipolis possesses moderation, which consists in a common belief between ruler and ruled about who should rule and be ruled (431d9–e2). Thus, parallel to the Noble Lie discussed at the end of Book III, which is told to all

39 Necessary medical treatment would be for wounds or “seasonal illnesses”; see 405c7–d1.

40 Most scholars speak of “parts” of the soul, although the word “part” (*meros*) is most often absent, the Greek saying simply “the spirited [thing].” See Jennifer Whiting, Chapter 8, for the potential significance of this.

41 For a detailed argument for the reading of the *Republic* outlined in this paragraph, see Vasiliou (2008) chs 7–8.

42 See Burnyeat (1999) and Kamtekar (2004) for some ways that musical education and growing up in the Kallipolis affect its inhabitants.

of the citizens, there must also be an argument similar to the one given to “lovers of sights and sounds” at the end of Book V, which aims to explain to all of the citizens why philosophers ought in fact to be the rulers. This argument establishes that there are Forms, distinct from sensibles, and that knowledge is not possible without knowledge of them. The philosophers’ knowledge of Forms is what qualifies them to rule and justifies their ruling. So, the ordinary citizen of the Kallipolis, like the Phd-philosopher, will understand *that* there are Forms but will also recognize that he or she does not have knowledge of the Forms, inasmuch as he or she does not possess an account of the Forms (see criterion [B] above). It is true, however, that the non-philosopher of the Kallipolis will not spend his or her life striving to attain wisdom, like the Phd-philosopher, but this is at least in part because they will have understood that they are not naturally capable of attaining it.

I have argued that the *Phaedo* provides conceptual space for a type of virtue between full, philosophical virtue and slavish virtue, despite there being little explicit discussion of a habituated, political virtue in the dialogue.⁴³ The Phd-philosopher lives a certain life and engages in certain activities with the aim of putting himself in the position to achieve wisdom finally at death. Those who participate in habituated, political virtue in the *Republic* are similar to Phd-philosophers insofar as they possess neither slavish virtue nor genuine, full virtue, and so fall in between. They are also similar in that each group, Phd-philosophers on the one hand, and possessors of political, habituated virtue on the other, has become the way it is by a certain sort of practice at engaging in particular activities. They are nevertheless importantly dissimilar insofar as the lower classes in the *Republic* are not aiming at becoming wise. In the *Republic*, there is an expansion of the idea of habituation and engagement in particular activities that yield not wisdom, but a type of virtue, viz., habituated, political virtue. The model of musical education is able to work on the lower parts of the soul and to guide their development. Assuming that the person guiding the structure and content of that education is doing it with wisdom (i.e., as a Rep-philosopher would do it), it should yield people who have been habituated in what is in fact the best way. So the model of engaging in a certain way of life from the example of the Phd-philosopher is now generalized to the populace of the Kallipolis. Since the populace relies on the knowledge of the philosopher-kings to establish their educational regimen, they are habituated into ways of acting

43 As I said above, the brief mention of it at 82a–b is not conclusive by itself.

that are genuinely virtuous. While they will not be aiming at wisdom, as Phd-philosophers were, they will be getting their malleable souls molded in accordance with virtue, as determined by their truly wise philosopher-kings.

It seems apposite to note in conclusion that there is a brief appearance in the *Phaedo* (60d8–61c1) of *mousikê*, which looms so large in the *Republic* as an educational program for effecting habituated, political virtue in the Kallipolis and, in part for this very reason, as a cultural product that must be regulated by wise rulers.⁴⁴ Very early in the dialogue, Cebes asks Socrates, on behalf of the absent Evenus, why he has begun to write poetry by converting Aesop's fables into verse. Socrates replies that he did this in an attempt to make sense of frequent dreams that he has had ordering him to make "*mousikê*" (60e3). Again and again, Socrates says, his dreams told him "to do and practice *mousikê*" and until then he had always interpreted them as encouraging him to practice philosophy, which, he says, he took to be the "greatest *mousikê*." But now in prison, in case the dreams were ordering him to practice "popular music" (*dêmôdê mousikê*), he thought he would try his hand at verse.

It is striking that Plato depicts Socrates, at the very end of his life, as wondering whether there may be some value to practicing a *mousikê* that is not philosophy. There is no question, of course, that Plato concurs that philosophy, after all, is the greatest *mousikê*. But the *Republic* claims there is important value as well in a *mousikê* that is not identical to philosophy but that would be, in the final analysis, guided by the knowledge that philosopher-rulers possess. *Mousikê* reaches down and affects the character of one's soul (now conceived of as tripartite), constituting habituated, political virtue and laying the groundwork, for those with the requisite natural ability, for the attainment of wisdom and complete virtue. Moreover, an ideal state should carefully monitor what is available for cultural consumption because of the role that culture plays in affecting the souls of its citizens. Once the soul is more than just the rational mind it may be shaped and influenced by more forces, and even by physical training. The highest aim for the rational part of the soul is still, as in the *Phaedo*, wisdom. While only the most elite will *possess* wisdom, the rest, in a way partly similar to Phd-philosophers, will recognize their own ignorance

44 And also in Aristotle, cf. *Politics* 8.5, esp. 1340a14–1340b19. Protagoras, in his "Great Speech" in the eponymous dialogue (320a8–328c2), also outlines more briefly an educational program for instilling "political virtue" that has striking similarities with the account in *Republic* II and III; but Protagoras does not use the term *mousikê*.

and thus be content to have philosophers rule. The brief reference to Socrates' search, in the eleventh hour, for the possibility of a new role for a different sort of "musical education" sounds a call answered in the *Republic* for a more thorough account of culture and education and the nature of the soul affected by them.

Enkrateia and the partition of the soul in the *Gorgias*

LOUIS-ANDRÉ DORION

This study forms part of a wider research project on Xenophon's¹ and Plato's use of the concept of *enkrateia*. In my recent study "Plato and *enkrateia*,"² I tried to pin down Plato's reasons for ignoring *enkrateia* in the early dialogues (with the exception, as we'll see, of the *Gorgias*) and his partial rehabilitation of it in later dialogues. I argued that there is a tight, even necessary connection between his rehabilitation of *enkrateia* and the partition of the soul, a view I want to elaborate further here. I shall proceed as follows: first, I will explore the links between *enkrateia* and the partition of the soul in the *Republic*; secondly, I will show that the connection between *enkrateia* and the partition of the soul is present already in the *Gorgias*; thirdly, I will discuss the reasons why Plato does not rehabilitate *enkrateia* in full.

I *Enkrateia* and the partition of the soul in the *Republic*

While the term *enkrateia* does not occur before the *Republic*, the adjective *enkratēs* occurs six times, only one of which means 'self-mastery with regard to pleasures.'³ The other five instances refer, in line with contemporary usage, to the power or mastery one exercises over things beyond oneself.⁴ In other words, there is no reflexive use of the term *enkratēs*

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1 Cf. Dorion (2003) and (2004c). 2 Dorion (2007).

3 *Gorgias* 491d11 (cf. section II below).

4 Cf. *Menexenus* 238d, *Cratylus* 391c, 393d, 405c, *Symposium* 188a. Jaeger (1943) 54, notes correctly that the term *enkrateia* is not found prior to Plato and Xenophon. The adjective *enkratēs* was already in use, but it denoted not self-mastery, but rather the power one exercises over things, or over others (cf. Herodotus 8.49; Thucydides 1.76.1, etc.).

before the *Gorgias*. As to Plato's use of the term *enkrateia*, there is a pivotal passage in *Republic* IV which highlights both why Plato had come to distrust the term, and why it now returns to favour:

SOCRATES: Moderation (*sōphrosunē*) is surely a kind of order (*kosmos pou tis*), the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires (*hēdonōn tinōn kai epithumiōn enkrateia*). People indicate as much when they use the phrase 'self-control' (*kreittō dē hautou*) and other similar phrases. I don't know just what they mean by them, but they are, so to speak, like tracks or clues that moderation has left behind in language. Isn't that so? – Absolutely. – Yet isn't the expression 'self-control' (*to men kreittō hautou*) absurd (*geloion*)? The stronger self that does the controlling (*ho gar heautou kreittōn*) is the same as the weaker self that gets controlled (*kai hēttōn dēpou an hautou eiē*), so that only one person is referred to in all such expressions. – Of course. – Nonetheless, the expression is apparently trying to indicate that, in the soul (*peri tēn psuchēn*) of that very person (*en autōi tōi anthrōpōi*), there is a better part and a worse one (*to men beltion eni to de cheiron*) and that, whenever the naturally better part is in control of the worse (*kai hotan men to beltion phusei tou cheironos enkratēs ēi*), this is expressed by saying that the person is self-controlled or master of himself. At any rate, one praises someone by calling him self-controlled. But when, on the other hand, the smaller and better part is overpowered by the larger and worse (*kratēthei hupo plēthous tou cheironos smikroteron to beltion*), because of bad upbringing or bad company, this is called being self-defeated or licentious and is a reproach (*kalein hēttō heautou kai akolaston ton houtō diakeimenon*). – Appropriately so. – Take a look at our new city, and you'll find one of these in it. You'll say that it is rightly called self-controlled (*kreittō gar autēn hautēs*), if indeed something in which the better rules the worse (*to ameionon tou cheironos archei*) is properly called moderate (*sōphron*) and self-controlled (*kreittōn hautou*).

(IV 430e6–431b7)⁵

The absurd (*geloion*) character of the expression 'self-control,' or literally to be 'stronger than oneself' (*kreittō hautou*) is linked, no doubt, to the same analysis given in the *Charmides* (168b–c) of expressions such as 'heavier than oneself,' 'larger than oneself,' 'older than oneself,' etc. While he examines the possibility that *sōphrosunē* is a science of itself and the other sciences, Socrates (in the company of Critias) exposes the absurdity that something should exercise its *dunamis* over itself: anything bigger than itself will *ipso facto* be smaller than itself, anything older than itself will *ipso facto* be younger than itself, etc.⁶ It is tempting to think

⁵ The translation is from Grube (1992), revised by Reeve, with minor revisions.

⁶ Cf. also *Parmenides* 141b–c: "Therefore, that which comes to be older than itself (*presbuteron heautou*) comes to be, at the same time, younger than itself (*neōteron heautou*),

that it is in virtue of this logical impossibility, revealed in the *Charmides*, that Plato rejects the reflexive use of the term *enkrateia* in the pre-*Gorgias* dialogues. If something cannot exercise its *dunamis* over itself, 'to be stronger' necessarily means 'to be stronger *than something else*,' so the expression 'to be stronger than oneself' is absurd. Plato's indifference to *enkrateia* is evident above all in the *Charmides*, where none of the six definitions considered refers to *sōphrosunē* understood as *enkrateia*, that is, as self-mastery with regard to pleasures and bodily desires.⁷ This absence is odd not only because this is a common and widespread conception of *sōphrosunē*⁸ which would merit discussion, and because, according to Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.2.1), Socrates himself was reputed a model of *enkrateia*;⁹ but also because Plato, in dialogues later than the *Charmides*, appears to subscribe to this conception of *sōphrosunē* himself.¹⁰ So it would be a mistake not to take seriously Socrates' reluctance to recognize that relatives which typically appear in comparative form can reflexively refer. For it is for this reason that Plato finds the notion of being 'stronger than oneself' (*kreittō hautou*), and with it the very idea of self-control, at least *prima facie* absurd.

If *Republic* 430e–431b still contains an echo of Plato's reasons for mistrusting *enkrateia*, it also reveals his reasons for rehabilitating it. Since Socrates invites us to consider the term *enkrateia* and related expressions as relating to the soul, it is possible to make sense of them if one supposes that they explain the control the better element exercises over the worse within one individual. At this stage of the *Republic*, the question of the tripartition of the soul hasn't yet been raised, nor (*a fortiori*) that

if in fact it is to have something it comes to be older than . . . So that which comes to be older than itself (*presbuteron heautou*) must also, at the same time, come to be younger than itself (*neōteron heautou*)" (trans. Gill and Ryan (1996)).

7 Cf. Dorion (2004a) 37–41.

8 Plato frequently stresses the 'popular' character of this conception of *sōphrosunē* (cf. *Phaedo* 68c, *Rep.* II 364a, III 389d–e, *Laws* IV 710a).

9 Devereux (1995) 381, is surprised at the contrast between the importance accorded to *enkrateia* by Xenophon's Socrates and the indifference shown by Plato's Socrates, according to contemporary interpreters. According to Devereux, "it is difficult to see how he [viz. Xenophon] could have placed self-mastery at the centre of Socratic ethics if in fact Socrates believed there was no such thing," so that *enkrateia* must be important for Plato's Socrates as well. This conclusion is unwarranted, however, because it wrongly presupposes that Xenophon and Plato were intent upon uncovering the ethical doctrine of the historical Socrates, and thus that they should agree on essentials. *Pace* Devereux, the early dialogues absolutely rule out the view that *enkrateia* is at the heart of the ethics of Plato's Socrates (cf. Dorion (2004b) 104–9; (2006) 96–104; (2007) 120 n. 5).

10 Cf. *Gorg.* 491d, 507a–d; *Rep.* III 389d–e, 402e–403a, IV 430e, 431b, d, IX 573b; *Phaedrus* 237e; *Phil.* 12d, 45d; *Laws* I 647d, II 673e, III 696b–c. Cf. also North (1966) 158.

of the identity of its different parts.¹¹ For all that, however, there is no doubt that Socrates recognizes that *enkrateia*, and the expressions ‘to be stronger than oneself’ and ‘to be weaker than oneself,’ relate to the soul, that the better element refers (by anticipation) to the *logistikon*, and the worse to the *epithumētikon*. The fact that the better is described as ‘smaller’ (*smikroteron*, 431a8) must be compared with passages where Socrates affirms that the better element, in the city or soul, is likewise the smallest or least numerous;¹² conversely, the fact that the worse is ‘larger’ (*hupo plēthous*, 431a8) refers to the multitude that composes the third class of the city, and to the multiplicity of desires contained in the *epithumētikon*.¹³ Although Plato now appears to recognize the legitimacy of the reflexive usage of expressions such as ‘self-control’ and ‘stronger than oneself,’ it nonetheless remains (in line with contemporary usage of the adjective *enkratēs*) a matter of the control one entity (the *logistikon*) exercises over another, distinct entity (the *epithumētikon*). Still, we may reasonably speak of a reflexive usage of these expressions, seeing that the two relata here are in fact subdivisions or parts of one and the same entity, viz. the soul. It is also worth underlining that the rehabilitation of *enkrateia* is just as possible in the framework of a bipartite soul. For *enkrateia* and related expressions to regain their *raison d’être*, the soul needs no more than two parts, one of which is deemed better than the other, whence the control the former ought to exercise over the latter.¹⁴ So tripartition is not necessary for the rehabilitation of *enkrateia*. It seems not to have occurred to Plato that, in the context of body/soul dualism, the control of the soul over the body amounts to a form of *enkrateia* exercised by the soul. Although this possibility fits Xenophon’s use of *enkrateia* (see below), Plato never considers it – no doubt because, when applied to the soul, the term *enkrateia* immediately imports a reflexive relation, which makes bipartition of the soul a necessary condition for its applicability.

However, the responsibility for controlling the desiring part of the soul does not rest with *enkrateia*. In fact, this task falls to the better part of the soul, namely the *logistikon*. Thus Plato appears not to consider *enkrateia* as a full-fledged force or capacity whose role is to master the desiring part of the soul. *Enkrateia* is nothing more, it appears, than a description of *sōphrosunē*; this is indeed defined as ‘the mastery of certain pleasures and

11 The section on the tripartition of the soul begins at 436a.

12 Cf. *Rep.* IV 428e–429a, 431c–d, 442c, IX 588c–589b.

13 Cf. *Rep.* IV 442a. 14 Here I agree with Irwin (1977) 199.

desires' (*hē sōphrosunē estin kai hēdonōn tinōn kai epithumiōn enkrateia*) (430e6–7), but it falls to reason to exercise this mastery.

Before the *Republic*, there is only one dialogue in which Plato uses the expression 'to be stronger than oneself,' and the precise sense in which he uses this expression allows us to take full measure of the distance between the Socratic intellectualism of the early dialogues and the moral psychology expounded in the *Republic*. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates objects to the everyday interpretation of the expression 'to be weaker than oneself' (*hēttōn hautou*), which consists in recognizing the possibility that knowledge may be ruled (*krateisthai*)¹⁵ or conquered (*hēttasthai*)¹⁶ by desires and pleasures. In Socrates' view, the only acceptable interpretation of this everyday expression¹⁷ highlights that being weaker than oneself is nothing other than being ignorant, and likewise, that being stronger than oneself is being knowledgeable.¹⁸ In other words, what is usually described as the victory of the desires over knowledge is, in reality, ignorance; in the same way, control over oneself is to be understood not as a relation of force in which knowledge prevails over the desires, but as that possession of knowledge itself, which is sovereign and invincible by definition. Hence Socrates denies there can be a conflict between desire and knowledge and, *a fortiori*, that this conflict can be resolved by the victory of desire over knowledge.¹⁹ Now in light of the partition of the soul in the *Republic*, Socrates there recognizes explicitly what he refuses to admit in the *Protagoras*, viz. not only that there can be conflict between reason

15 Cf. *Prot.* 352e2, 353c6, and 357c5.

16 Cf. *Prot.* 352e1, 353a1, a5, c2, 354e7, 355b3, c3, d6, e7, 357c7, and e2.

17 At *Rep.* IV 430e8–9, Socrates acknowledges this as an everyday expression.

18 Cf. 358c: "to be conquered by oneself (*to hēttō einai hautou*) is nothing but ignorance (*amathia*), and to be stronger than oneself (*kreittō heautou*) is nothing but knowledge (*sophia*)." Cf. also 357e: "this is what letting oneself be conquered by pleasure is (*to hēdonēs hēttō einai*): it's the greatest ignorance (*amathia hē megistē*);" 359d: "we've discovered that letting oneself be conquered by oneself (*to hēttō einai heautou*) is just a sign of ignorance (*amathia ousa*)."

19 Devereux (1995) 389, thinks the occurrence of *kratein* at 357c3 clearly means that reason should resist the desires, and impose itself on them, so that there is a conflict between knowledge and pleasure (on the presence of 'psychic conflict' in the *Protagoras*, cf. also Carone (2001) 140–42). Devereux's mistake is not to have noticed that Socrates borrows the terms *kratein*, *kreittōn*, and *hēttōn* from everyday expressions that describe conflicts and relations of force, and that Socrates' aim in reinterpreting them is precisely to give them an acceptable sense that eliminates all trace of conflict (as the key passage at 358c, unmentioned by Devereux, confirms, cf. n. 18 above). More generally, it is paradoxical (to say the least) that Devereux, who wants to show that Socrates accords importance to self-mastery in the early dialogues, is completely inattentive to the vocabulary of *enkrateia*.

and desire, but equally that it is possible to be overcome by the latter.²⁰ So in the *Republic*, self-mastery no longer refers to knowledge, as in the *Protagoras*, but to the control that reason should exercise over the desires. If being weaker than oneself consists in the control which the least good part of the soul exercises over the best, Socrates recognizes in the *Republic* the everyday interpretation that he rejects in the *Protagoras*, namely that reason can be ruled and conquered by the desires.

II Self-government and the bipartition of the soul in the *Gorgias*

This tight connection between *enkrateia* and the partition of the soul is already present in the *Gorgias*, where we find the first occurrence of the term *enkratēs*, understood in the sense of ‘master of oneself’ with regard to pleasures and desires:

SOCRATES: But tell me, my good fellow, once and for all, whom you mean by the better and the superior, and what they’re better and superior in. – CALLICLES: But I’ve already said that I mean those who are intelligent in the affairs of the city, and brave, too. It’s fitting that they should be the ones who rule their cities, and what’s just is that they, as the rulers, should have a greater share than the others, the ruled. – But what of themselves, my friend? – What of *what?* – Ruling or being ruled? – What do you mean? – I mean each individual ruling himself (*heautou archonta*). Or is there no need at all for him to rule himself (*heautou archein*), but only to rule others? – What do you mean, rule himself? – Nothing very subtle. Just what the many mean (*hōsper hoi polloi*): being self-controlled and master of oneself (*sōphrona ontā kai enkratē auton heautou*), ruling the pleasures and appetites within oneself (*tōn hēdonōn kai epithumiōn archonta tōn en heautōi*).

(*Gorgias* 491c4-e1)²¹

Several comments are worth making on this important passage. First, whereas the *Charmides* ignores the conception of *sōphrosunē* which assimilates it to *enkrateia*, the *Gorgias* links them so closely that it is hard to see how they are distinct.

Second, Socrates’ position, which consists in assimilating self-government (*heautou archein*) to self-mastery (*enkratē auton heautou*) with regard to pleasures, is – despite what he says – not the opinion of the majority (*hōsper hoi polloi*). According to Irwin (1979, 190), “it is

20 Indeed Leontius is conquered by his desires (*kratoumenos d’oun hupo tēs epithumias*, 440a1).

21 Translation is from Zeyl (1987).

actually quite hard to find evidence of this view in pre-Platonic Greek.²² Third, in describing someone who governs himself (*heautou archein*) as someone who demonstrates self-mastery (*enkratē heautou*), Socrates uses two expressions that would appear absurd from the perspective of the *Charmides* doctrine that a thing's *dunamis* cannot be exercised reflexively. The fact that one governs oneself, or that one controls (*kratein*) oneself, seems indeed to entail that one is governed by oneself, so that the 'self' here would *per impossibile* be both governor and governed. But the Socrates of the *Gorgias* does not find these expressions absurd; indeed he uses them unreservedly. Whence the question: what has taken place that Socrates now recognizes as possible what appeared impossible in the *Charmides*?²³

According to Socrates, 'to govern oneself' (*heautou archein*) actually means to govern the pleasures and desires that occur 'in oneself' (*en heautōi*). But what does the 'self' that harbours such passions and desires consist in? Is it the body? According to the *Phaedo* (66c and 81b), the body is indeed the source of pleasures and desires, and earlier in the *Gorgias* (465c7–d1) Socrates reminds himself that the soul commands (*epistatein*) the body. Thus it would be up to the soul to govern the passions and desires in oneself, that is, in the body. This interpretation of the expression 'to govern the passions and desires that are in oneself' should nonetheless be rejected; not so much because it would be strange for Socrates to identify the self with the body, but rather because the following passage seems to make out that the seat of the passions and desires is in fact the soul, or more precisely, a *part* of the soul. In a development that comes almost immediately after 491d, Socrates affirms that he has "heard from a wise man (*tou . . . tōn sophōn*) that our present life is a kind of death, that our body

22 Cf. also Canto (1987) 336 n. 124; Dorion (2007) 127–29.

23 This question assumes that the *Gorgias* is later than the *Charmides*; but one could object that it is earlier, and that Plato in the *Gorgias* considers the vocabulary of *enkrateia* unproblematic precisely because he had not yet discovered the *Charmides*' principle that a *dunamis* cannot be reflexive. Nevertheless, I believe we have excellent reason for taking the *Gorgias* to be later than the *Charmides*: since the *Republic* clearly rehabilitates *enkrateia*, and this rehabilitation is outlined in the *Gorgias*, while the *Charmides* strangely ignores *enkrateia*, the sequence *Charmides*–*Gorgias*–*Republic* seems more plausible. Indeed, given that the *Charmides* never considers an assimilation of *sōphrosunē* to mastery of desires and pleasures, and given that this conception of *sōphrosunē* – whose appearance in the *Gorgias* (cf. nn. 60, 66 below) coincides with the partition of the soul and the rehabilitation of *enkrateia* – is the standard conception of *sōphrosunē*, not only in the *Republic*, but also in later dialogues up to and including the *Laws* (cf. nn. 61–65 below), we may reasonably suppose that the *Charmides*, which also ignores the partition of the soul, is earlier than the *Gorgias*.

is a tomb (*to men sōma estin hēmin sēma*), and that this part of the soul inhabited by the desires (*tēs de psuchēs touto en hōi epithumiai eisi*) obeys the most contrary impulses by nature.”²⁴ Alluding to another individual, Socrates then attributes to him the famous image of the leaking jar:

And hence some clever man, a teller of stories, a Sicilian, perhaps, or an Italian, named this part a jar (*pithos*), on account of its being a persuadable (*pithanon*) and suggestible thing, thus slightly changing the name. And fools (*anoētous*) he named uninitiated (*amuētous*), suggesting that that part of the souls of fools where their appetites are located (*touto tēs psuchēs hou hai epithumiai eisi*) is their undisciplined part, one not tightly closed, a leaking jar, as it were.

(493a5–b3)²⁵

It seems to me not only illuminating, but also necessary to read 491d in the light of 493a–b: to be master of oneself (*enkratēs heautou*), to be governor of oneself (*heautou archein*), is actually to govern the pleasures and desires that are in oneself (*en heautōi*), that is, in the part of the soul where the desires are found (493a3–4: *tēs de psuchēs touto en hōi epithumiai eisi*; 493b1: *touto tēs psuchēs hou hai epithumiai eisi*). So the *Gorgias* parallels the *Republic* exactly: the reflexive usage of the expression ‘master of oneself’ (*enkratēs heautou*) is justified, if one understands it as the mastery one part of the soul exercises over another (inferior) part of the same soul. Likewise, as a passage in the *Republic* (IV 443d) makes clear, the only satisfactory sense one can give to the expression ‘to govern oneself’ (*heautou archein*) is that the better part of the soul controls the worse. Here again, the Socrates of the *Protagoras* expresses himself completely differently. At 352b6–7 and c4, he holds that knowledge is capable of governing the person (*archein tou anthrōpou*) in whom it is present. It seems to me significant that he does not use the expression ‘to master oneself,’ nor does he claim that reason should rule the desires, for that would be to admit a form of conflict where he admits none (see n. 19). Instead, he affirms that knowledge governs the person, as if the object of its control were the whole person, body included, and not only or especially the desiring part of his soul. One can doubtless object that at *Gorgias* 493a–b Socrates is not announcing his own position, so that it would be wrong to assimilate 491d to 493a–b, as if they amounted to one and the same position, viz. that of Socrates himself. But whatever the identity of the ‘wise man’ and of the ‘clever man’ whom Socrates evokes

24 493a1–5. 25 Translation is from Zeyl (1987).

in 493a–b,²⁶ there can be little doubt that Socrates subscribes to the myth he reports,²⁷ so it seems wholly justifiable to read 491d in the light of 493a–b.

Translators have had difficulty translating the expression *touto tēs psuchēs* without using the term ‘part’;²⁸ but certain commentators have emphasized that the vocabulary of ‘partition’ is not here required. For example, Irwin – who translates *touto tēs psuchēs hou hai epithumiai eisi* as “that of the soul with appetites” – is wary of supplying the term ‘part’: “It is natural to supplement ‘that’ with ‘part’ here [*viz.*, 493a3–4] and just below [*viz.*, 493b1]; but the Greek does not show whether Socrates thinks of parts, or more generally, of aspects of the soul.”²⁹ Although in the *Gorgias* Plato never has recourse to the vocabulary of ‘partition’ to designate this ‘aspect,’ ‘dimension,’ or ‘part’ of the soul that relates to the desires, I believe that we are nonetheless justified in holding that Plato is thinking of a form of bipartition of the soul. I would put forward the following arguments in support of this position.

(a) If Plato were thinking of an aspect of the soul, as Irwin suggests, one would have to explain the markedly ‘local’ character of the expressions he uses. In fact he speaks of “this [part] of the soul *in which* (*en hōi*) the desires are found,” which suggests more a part of the soul than an aspect of it.³⁰ In another passage of the *Gorgias* (496e), Plato uses vocabulary that is even more spatial, since he seems to recognize the existence of several ‘places,’ *topoi*, in the soul.

26 The identity of these two men is very controversial (cf., among others, Linforth (1944), 304–13; Dodds (1959), 296–98; Burkert (1972) 78 n. 157, 130 n. 62, 248; Canto (1987) 337–38 n. 134, 135, 137; Kingsley (1995) 104–5). There is no consensus among interpreters on this issue; for my purposes, I need take no position on it.

27 493c–d seems to confirm that Socrates subscribes to the ‘lesson’ of the myth. Linforth (1944) and Blank (1991) have demonstrated that the principal elements of this myth form part of Socrates’ argumentation throughout the *Gorgias*. *Contra* this, cf. Cooper (1999a) 63 and Carone (2004) 80 n. 64.

28 The translators (Croiset, Robin, Chambry, Zeyl, etc.) and commentators (Linforth (1944) 298 f.; Robinson (1970) 15–16; Blank (1991) 23; Devereux (1995) 404; Kahn (1996) 247 n. 46, etc.) who use the term ‘part’ in translating or commenting on 493a–b, far outnumber those who avoid the vocabulary of partition (Canto (1987); Irwin (1979)).

29 Irwin (1979) 195. Cf. however Irwin (1977) 123, 128 and (1995) 109, 114, where Irwin refers explicitly to a ‘part of the soul’ in commenting on *Gorgias* 493a–b.

30 Cf. Cooper (1999a) 62 n. 52: “The Greek at 493a3–4 and b1, where Zeyl reasonably translates ‘the part of our souls’ and the ‘part of the souls of fools’ where appetites reside, does not actually have a word for ‘part’ but uses only a genitive with a neuter demonstrative pronoun (‘that of the soul’) – but the relative pronoun meaning ‘where’ at b1 plainly invites this translation.”

(b) In the same passage where he refers to a doctrine that seems to recognize a bipartition of the soul, Socrates urges Callicles to lead an ordered life (*ton kosmion bion*, 494a4),³¹ and tries to convince him that this kind of life is more conducive to happiness than a disordered (*akolastos*) one. As the rest of the dialogue makes clear, what conditions this ordered life is in fact the order that ought to reign in the soul. At 504b–d, Socrates maintains that it is thanks to the order (*taxis*) and arrangement (*kosmos*) that reign in the soul that citizens are respectful of the laws (*nomimoi*) and ordered (*kosmioi*), and that justice and moderation consist precisely in this order and arrangement of the soul.³² This passage definitely recalls the passages in the *Republic* where justice and moderation are defined similarly in terms of agreement (*sumphōnia*),³³ harmony (*harmonia*),³⁴ concord (*homonoia*),³⁵ arrangement (*kosmos*),³⁶ and even friendship (*philia*)³⁷ among the different parts of the soul. In my initial quotation from the *Republic*, Socrates affirms precisely that “moderation (*sōphrosunē*) is surely a kind of order (*kosmos pou tis*), the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires” (430e6–7). If justice and moderation in the soul consist in a kind of order, this presupposes an agreement between its different ‘parts’ (elements, components, functions). According to Robinson (1970, 14), this implicit recognition of the heterogeneous character of the soul at 504b–d is a new departure in relation to the other early dialogues. It nevertheless remains to be seen whether, in addition to being new in relation to those dialogues, it is also something new *simpliciter* – that is, a novel and original view attributable to Plato.

(c) If the desires and passions that reside in a particular part of the soul are the *object* of the control Socrates invites Callicles to exercise, what is the *subject*? In other words, who or what exercises control over the desires and pleasures found in a certain part of the soul? It seems impossible to attribute responsibility for such control to something outside the soul. Since the soul is destined by nature to rule, it cannot be governed by something external and alien to it (for example, the body). Ultimately, the reflexive form of the expressions ‘to govern oneself’ and ‘to master oneself’ entail that such control is exercised within the self – that is, the soul. Responsibility for such control lies necessarily with another

31 Cf. also 493c6 and d2.

32 On the order (*kosmos*) which should reign within the soul, cf. also 506e, 507d–508a, and 525a.

33 Cf. IV 430e3, 432a8, 442c10.

34 Cf. IV 430e4, 431e8, 443d5 (*sunarmoizein*), e2 (*harmoizein*). 35 Cf. IV 432a7.

36 Cf. IV 443d4 (*kosmein*). 37 Cf. IV 442c10.

part of the soul, which can only be the *logos* or reason. Although in the *Gorgias* Plato never explicitly asserts a bipartition of the soul into reason and desire, one can conclude nonetheless (in the light of 491d and 493a–b) that Plato envisages a bipartition of this sort. But if reason must assume responsibility for self-government and mastery of the pleasures, it seems impossible to attribute this responsibility to *enkrateia*. Here too the *Gorgias* is in agreement with the *Republic*: to the extent that reason affects self-mastery, *enkrateia*, conceived as an ability to master the desires and the appeal of the pleasures, appears functionless.

On this reading, *Gorgias* 491d and 493a–b represent an important innovation in relation to the early dialogues: for the first time, Plato recognizes a kind of partition within the soul, one consequence of which will be the rehabilitation of the notion of self-mastery. But several commentators belittle this peculiarity of the *Gorgias*, alleging that, rather than being an innovation with considerable consequences for moral psychology, it is a mere allusion to a ‘popular distinction’ between reason and the appetites. Several commentators have unquestioningly taken this view, which seems to go back to Dodds’ commentary.³⁸ Dodds is certainly correct in affirming, *contra* Taylor (1926, 120 n. 1), that this passage of the *Gorgias* implies no tripartition of the soul.³⁹ But Dodds does not consider the hypothesis of bipartition, arguing on the basis of a false dilemma: either one is dealing with a popular distinction, in which case this passage of the *Gorgias* reveals nothing new; or one is dealing with the only position genuinely original to Platonic psychology, namely the tripartition of the soul. And as there is no trace of tripartition in this passage, we must be dealing with the popular distinction between reason and the appetites. Hostage to this false dilemma, Dodds fails to consider a third possibility, namely a bipartition that represents a major innovation vis-à-vis the pre-*Gorgias* dialogues. In order to determine whether we are here dealing with a bipartition which is new in Plato’s work, and has considerable implications for his moral psychology, or merely an inconsequential borrowing of a contemporary

38 Cf., among others, Robinson (1970) 14, 19; Canto (1987) 337 n.134; Dalfen (2004) 369 ad 493a.

39 Cf. Dodds (1959) 300 ad 493a3–4: “Taylor claimed that this [viz. 493a3–4] shows the Platonic tripartition of the soul to be Pythagorean in origin, as maintained by Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 296 n. 2. But no tripartition is involved here. All that need be assumed is the popular distinction between reason and impulse which is already present, e.g. at Theognis 631 or Aesch. *Pers.* 767, and is referred to by Aristotle at *EN* 1102a26, *De An.* 432a26. It is worth noticing that the *epithumētikon* has as yet no name – it has twice to be described by a periphrasis.”

distinction, we must carefully examine the evidence which, according to Dodds, attests to the existence of this popular distinction.⁴⁰ Let's begin with the evidence of Theognis and Aeschylus:

He whose mind (*noos*) does not rule his passion (*mē thumou kressōn*),
Cynos, always finds himself in troubles, and lives amid great perplexities.
(631–32)

Medos was the first leader of the army. After him, his son got the job: his
reason steered his passion (*phrenes gar autou thumon oīakostrophoun*).
(*Persians* 765–67)

Although Plato is clearly thinking of a distinction that is *internal to the soul*, Theognis and Aeschylus make no reference to the soul, and contrast two entities – on the one hand, *noos* or *phrēn*, on the other *thumos*⁴¹ – that are mutually independent and not conceived as ‘parts’ or ‘aspects’ of another entity, in this case the soul.⁴² Hence it seems misleading to me to assimilate the bipartition of the *Gorgias* to the so-called ‘popular distinction’ that one finds in Theognis and Aeschylus. This assimilation would have been relevant only if these two authors had posited a distinction within the soul.⁴³

The two Aristotle passages mentioned by Dodds are even less probative than the passages in Theognis and Aeschylus:

Some things are said about the soul adequately enough even in the exoteric discussions (*en tois exōterikois logos*), and we should make use of these.

40 So my aim is to examine the justification for Irwin's reservations about the well-foundedness of Dodds' commentary: "It is not clear exactly what view of the soul is implied in 493b; but it seems to be more than the 'popular distinction between reason and impulse' mentioned by Dodds, citing Aesch. *Pers.* 767, Theog. 731" (1977, 312 n. 17). Along the same lines see Cooper (1999a) 63 n. 53.

41 On *noos*, *phrēn*, and *thumos*, see Sullivan (1995) 18–35, 36–53, and 54–70, respectively.

42 Far from being a part of the soul, *thumos* is often opposed to *psychē*: "Thumos, in other fragments of the Presocratics and also in other passages of the lyric and elegiac poets, when it is mentioned with *psychē*, appears still to be a separate psychic entity" (Sullivan (1995) 68). Cf., among others, Theognis 910, Heraclitus DK B 85.

43 While Dodds invokes a popular distinction between reason and the appetites, without suggesting this distinction is internal to the soul, Robinson claims, vis-à-vis 493a–b, that Plato "is following the popular bipartition of soul into reason and impulse" (1970, 14; cf. also 19: "Here [*viz.*, *Meno* 88d–e], as at *Gorgias* 493a3–5, there seems to be the popular distinction of the soul into a rational and a non-rational part or aspect"). Robinson not only provides no references to this 'popular bipartition,' he also misconstrues Dodds' understanding of the latter.

For example, that one part of the soul is irrational while another has a rational principle (*hoion to men alogon autēs einai, to de logon echon*).⁴⁴

But there is straightaway a puzzle as to how one should speak of parts (*moria*) of the soul and what their number might be. For in a way they seem to be infinite, and not only those which some people speak of in distinguishing parts for calculation, for spiritedness and for desire (*ou monon ha tines legousi diorizontes, logistikōn kai thumikōn kai epithumētikon*); or, according to others, the part that has reason and the irrational part (*hoi de to logon echon kai to alogon*).⁴⁵

The only way of discerning a reference to a popular distinction in the first passage is by interpreting the expression *en tois exōterikois logois* as referring to common and widely held views. While commentators disagree⁴⁶ on the question of whether the *exōterikoi logoi* are those of Plato, the Academy⁴⁷ or Aristotle himself,⁴⁸ it is improbable (to say the least) that Aristotle is thinking here of non-philosophical, popular views.⁴⁹ Whatever the provenance of these *exōterikoi logoi*, this passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, far from attesting to the existence of a popular distinction between reason and the appetites, confirms rather that the bipartition of the soul is a thesis current in Academic circles.⁵⁰

As to the second passage (*De Anima* III 9, 432a22–26), Aristotle seems to be contrasting two rival ways of dividing the soul: some (*tines*) posit a tripartite division, whereas others (*hoi de*) rather defend bipartition. Although this passage appears to attribute these rival divisions to different philosophers, they are actually both present in Plato.⁵¹ What's more, they do not exclude each other, since a passage in the *Timaeus* (69c–d) allows us to see how one hinges on the other: the soul divides in the first instance into an immortal and a mortal part; the immortal part corresponds to reason,

44 EN I 13, 1102a26–28. Aristotle uses very concise expressions to refer to the rational (*to men . . . autēs*) and irrational (*to de*) parts of the soul. Granted that he doesn't use the term 'part' here, he does a few lines later (at 1102a29, b4), which justifies using it as a supplement at 1102a27–28.

45 *De An.* III 9, 432a22–26. 46 Cf. Rees (1957) 117–18; Bodéüs (2004) 95 n. 1.

47 Heinze (1892, 141–43) and Burnet (1900, 63–64) believe Aristotle is thinking of Xenocrates. This view has been questioned by Rees (1957) 118.

48 Cf., among others, Bernays (1863) 63–69; Rees (1957) 118; Gauthier and Jolif (1970) II 1, 93; Nuyens (1973) 191 n. 133; Irwin (1985) 302 (*ad* 1096a3), 310 (*ad* 1102a26).

49 Pace Hicks (1907) 550 (*ad De An.* 432a26) and Ross (1961) 312 (*ad De An.* 432a26).

50 Cf. Rees (1957); Kahn (1996) 247 n. 46.

51 Cf. *Statesman* 309c, *Timaeus* 65a, 69c–d, 70a, 72d; Rodier (1900) 529 *ad* 432a26; Hicks (1907) 550 *ad* 432a26; Barbotin and Jannone (1966) 88 n. 1–2; Bodéüs (1993) 240 n. 6 and 241 n. 1.

while the mortal part is subdivided in two, comprising spirit (*thumos*) and desire (*epithumētikon*). In any case, this passage from the *De Anima* provides no evidence for a popular distinction between reason and the appetites. On the contrary (cf. *ENI*, 13), it confirms that bipartition of the soul is, if not Platonic in origin, at least closely associated with Platonism. The author of the *Magna Moralia* even appears to attribute the bipartite conception of the soul to Plato; he contrasts the unitary conception of the soul defended by Socrates with a bipartite conception which he expressly attributes to Plato.⁵² In short, not only do the two Aristotle passages invoked by Dodds fail to attest to the existence of a popular distinction between reason and the appetites, the other passages⁵³ where the Stagirite alludes to bipartition of the soul give us no more license to suppose that he has in view a popular distinction.

The question of the origin of bipartition of the soul is, in fact, very difficult to resolve. On the one hand, if we return to the *Gorgias*, Socrates appears to attribute the bipartite conception of the soul – or at least the identification of a desiring part within the soul – to an anonymous ‘clever man’ (*kompsoi anēr*, 493a5),⁵⁴ which has generated numerous tenuous conjectures.⁵⁵ On the other hand, since we find no clear evidence for a bipartite conception of the soul before Plato,⁵⁶ and the author of the *Magna Moralia* appears to trace the birth of this conception to Plato, it is tempting to think that bipartition of the soul is Platonic in origin.⁵⁷ In any

52 *MMI* 1, 1182a16–25.

53 Cf. *EN* VI 2, 1139a3–9; *EE* II 1, 1219b26–1220a12; 4, 1221b27–32; *Pol.* I 5, 1254b4–9; I 13, 1260a5–7; VII 14, 1333a16–18.

54 Cf. Linforth (1944) 299: “The question whether the idea of the tripartite soul and, more generally, the notion of parts or faculties of the soul were original with Plato is more insistent in the *Gorgias* than elsewhere because Socrates says that he has heard, from some person unnamed, about the part of the soul in which the desires are located.”

55 Cf. n. 26 above.

56 Several sources ascribe a bipartite or tripartite conception of the soul to Pythagoras (cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, IV 5, 10; D.L. VIII 30; Theodoret of Cyr, *Therapy of Pagan Ills*, V 19; Galen, *De Plac. Hipp. et Plat.* V 478; Aetius, IV 4, 1), but these sources are probably reworkings of the Platonic doctrine (cf. Linforth (1944) 300, 307; Burkert (1972) 74–75). Cf. also Irwin (1977) 312 n. 17: “the pre-Platonic evidence for a division of the soul is scarce and weak” (cf. also 289 n. 20). It is possible, however, that the distinction between reason and the desires in the *Phaedrus* (237d–e) is of popular origin (cf. Hackforth (1952) 41).

57 On the desiring part of the soul, cf. Linforth (1944) 300: “In the *Gorgias*, the idea that there is a part of the soul in which the desires are located may not have been original with Plato, though we cannot assign an authority for it with any certainty; but the language in which he describes this part of the soul is novel, and in all probability the application which he makes of the idea is original with himself.”

case, the origin of bipartition ultimately has little bearing on my argument. Whatever its origin, the key fact here is that it is not invoked before the *Gorgias*,⁵⁸ and its introduction entails not only a rehabilitation of the concept of *enkrateia*, but also profound changes in Platonic psychology. This is precisely what cannot be explained by those who, following Dodds, claim that Plato is merely evoking a ‘popular distinction’ at 493a–b, as if only a banal and inconsequential view were in play. The position Dodds defends in his commentary is all the stranger because in a previous work⁵⁹ he recognizes that *Gorgias* 493a–c anticipates the moral psychology of the *Republic*, and that it is in conflict with the intellectualism of the early dialogues. What is essential, then, is not the historical origin of bipartition, but the fact that when it appears in the *Gorgias* it represents a genuine innovation, one that has at least two consequences which directly concern self-mastery.

(a) Both in the *Gorgias* (491d10–11) and the *Republic* (430e6–7), *enkrateia* seems conflated with *sōphrosunē*, and it is difficult to see how they are distinguished from each other vis-à-vis control of the appetites (drink, food, and sexuality). Is *enkrateia*, then, in the end nothing more than another name for the virtue of *sōphrosunē*? Such a conclusion risks neglecting the essential fact that Plato, when he reconciles himself with *enkrateia*, also redefines *sōphrosunē* in terms of the mastery of pleasures and desires. It is indeed striking that before the *Gorgias*, *sōphrosunē* is never defined in these terms.⁶⁰ Starting with the *Gorgias*, the vocabulary of *sōphrosunē* shows multiple borrowings from that of *enkrateia*:⁶¹ self-government (*heautou archein*),⁶² self-control (*kreittōn hautou*),⁶³ victory over self (*to nikan hauton*),⁶⁴ and, finally, mastery (*kratein, archein*) of the desires and pleasures (*to kratein hēdonōn kai epithumiōn*, *Symposium*

58 This is also the view of Kahn (1996) 247 n. 46. 59 Cf. (1951) 213 n. 30.

60 Cf. Dorion (2007) 134 n. 45. It is inaccurate, therefore, to claim *tout court* – as does Kahn (1996) 188 n. 8 – that “Plato normally associates *sōphrosunē* with the control of pleasure and the appetites; e.g. *Gorgias* 491d10, *Phaedo* 68c, *Philebus* 45d–e, *Laws* IV, 710a.” It is revealing that Kahn mentions no pre-*Gorgias* dialogue here. The change in the meaning of *sōphrosunē* after the *Gorgias* provides powerful evidence against Devereux’s thesis (cf. n. 9 above and nn. 66 and 70 below).

61 *Laws* I 645e.

62 Cf. *Rep.* IV 443d; VIII 558d, 559e, 561b; IX 590c, 590d, 590e, 591a; X 606d; *Laws*, I 644b7.

63 Cf. *Rep.* IV 430e, 431b; *Laws* I 626e8, 627a3, a8, b7–8, c10, 645b2; cf. also IX 863d. The opposite expression, ‘to be weaker than oneself’ (*heautou hēttōn*), points to someone ruled by pleasures (*ton hupo tōn hēdonōn kratoumenon*, I 633e).

64 *Laws* I 626e2 et 628c11. At VIII 840b–c, the Athenian holds that the citizens’ victory over pleasure (*tēs tōn hēdonōn nikēs*, 840c) is far more beautiful than victories in the gymnasium or other sporting triumphs, because “if they win (*enkrateis ontas*) they

196c).⁶⁵ *Enkrateia* is therefore *not* just another word for *sōphrosunē*: rather, it is on the model of *enkrateia*⁶⁶ that *sōphrosunē* is redefined by Plato.

(b) In the *Republic* and the *Gorgias*, the rehabilitation of *enkrateia* coincides not only with the partition of the soul, but also, apparently, with the recognition of the possibility of *akrasia*. The correlation in the *Republic* between partition of the soul and the possibility of *akrasia* is generally acknowledged,⁶⁷ but the existence of this correlation in the *Gorgias* is far from a matter of consensus. As Irwin emphasizes (1979, 190), Socrates' agreement with common opinion, according to which self-government consists in mastering one's pleasures and desires, is very surprising. For, *contra Protagoras* 352b–e, 355a–d, and 358c–d, this reaffirms the possibility of being conquered or governed by pleasure, this form of defeat or submission not necessarily being imputable to ignorance – whence the necessity of self-mastery.⁶⁸ If Socrates still adhered to his position in the *Protagoras*,⁶⁹ one would expect him to hold, contrary to the

live happily (*an zēn eudaimonōs*); but if they are defeated (*hēttōmenous de*), it's quite the opposite.”

65 Cf. also *Rep.* III 389e; IV 430e, 440a.

66 I am therefore in complete disagreement with Devereux when he claims: “It is curious that Plato, in his middle and late dialogues, does not seem to consider or discuss the sort of character whose reason must overcome strong opposition from desires and passions” (1995, 405). I have demonstrated that, on the contrary, from the *Gorgias* on, up to and including the *Laws*, Plato shows a lively interest in this question. Devereux (1995, 405) erects a very sharp distinction between Socratic and Platonic ethics: on his reading, the former admits the necessity of self-mastery for the development of virtue, while the latter no longer has need of self-mastery, insofar as virtue now presupposes harmony between the different parts of the soul. My position is the diametrical opposite: self-mastery is absent before the *Gorgias*, and its appearance coincides with the partition of the soul, precisely because partition, which is a source of conflict, reveals the need to control the desires. Self-mastery is thus characteristic of the post-*Gorgias* dialogues, up to and including the *Laws*.

67 Cf. Vlastos (1991) 102; Bobonich (1994) 3, 5; Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 90 n. 25, 98 n. 35; Kahn (1996) 254–55. Carone has argued, however, *contra* the prevailing view, that “the *Republic* does not substantially depart from the *Protagoras* in its answer to the problem of *akrasia*” (2001, 146).

68 Cooper (1999a) 63 n. 54 holds, by contrast, that the self-mastery which Socrates affirms at 491d is “exactly the sort of self-control and self-mastery that he argues in the *Protagoras* is the only coherent one: control by possessing wisdom or knowledge.” Besides the fact the *Protagoras* makes no explicit reference to self-mastery (*enkrateia*), it proposes an interpretation of ‘being stronger than oneself’ which rules out the possibility of conflict within the soul. As used in the *Republic*, however, this expression clearly recognizes the possibility of such conflict (cf. above).

69 Although Kahn acknowledges that, among the early dialogues, the *Gorgias*' moral psychology is closest to that of the *Republic*, he nonetheless believes the *Gorgias* precedes

common view, that it is not possible to be governed by pleasures, and that self-mastery, to whatever extent it is distinct from the natural effects of knowledge, is useless. This difference between the *Gorgias* and *Protagoras* derives precisely from what Socrates recognizes – for the first time – in the *Gorgias*: the existence of a part of the soul that comprises non-rational, good-independent desires. Since these non-rational desires can conflict with desires that are connected with beliefs about the good, it is necessary to control them, whence the *raison d'être* of self-mastery. So long as Plato does not recognize the existence of non-rational, good-independent desires, he has not recognized the relevance of self-mastery;⁷⁰ and given that recognition of these non-rational, good-independent desires presupposes partition within the soul, the rehabilitation of self-mastery is closely connected with the identification of a desiring part within the soul. But while he admits the possibility of conflict between two orders of desires within the soul, and speaks in favour of self-mastery as the means to overcome this conflict, Socrates continues, in line with the previous dialogues, to hold that knowledge is sufficient for virtue (460b), in which case self-mastery seems otiose. Accordingly, Socrates would hold two incompatible positions in the *Gorgias* concerning the relations between virtue and knowledge.⁷¹ Whatever is the case, exactly, concerning this

the *Protagoras* (1988, 89–90). On the contrary, the complexity of the *Gorgias*' moral psychology argues for the *Protagoras*' being the earlier dialogue.

- 70 According to Irwin (1977, 128), the reason the *Charmides* ignores *sōphrosunē* in the sense of 'self-mastery' is simply that Plato does not recognize the existence of non-rational, good-independent desires. But this is less than fully satisfactory: it explains why Plato cannot accept such a conception of *sōphrosunē*, but not why this conception is not even discussed. Devereux (1995) attempts to demonstrate, *contra* Irwin, that several early dialogues appear to recognize non-rational, good-independent desires, and hence also the need for self-mastery. Besides the fact his interpretation of several passages is unsatisfactory, Devereux establishes no link between self-mastery and partition of the soul; nor does he ask himself why the *Charmides*, where one would expect a discussion of *sōphrosunē* understood as *enkrateia* of pleasures and desires, is silent regarding this interpretation of *sōphrosunē*.
- 71 Cf. Irwin (1977) 123–24; (1979) 143, 222; (1995) 116–17. Brickhouse and Smith try to show the coherence of Socrates' position in the *Gorgias*, but the attempt is unconvincing, as they take no account of the partition of the soul at 493a–b (1994, 97–101). In addition, their imprecise translation of 491d in a way presages their 'forgetting' to take 493a–b into consideration (this passage is moreover absent from their "Index of passages," 227). In translating *tōn hēdonōn kai epithumiōn archonta tōn en heautōi* as "ruling over the pleasures and appetites one has," Brickhouse and Smith completely shrug off the question of what the 'self' containing the desires and pleasures consists in. Hence they miss the fact that the close of 491d is clarified only in the light of 493a–b, which recognizes the existence of a desiring part of the soul.

seeming incoherence in the *Gorgias*, the divergence between the *Protagoras*, on the one hand, and the *Gorgias* and *Republic*, on the other, seems to indicate that the rehabilitation of *enkrateia* coincides not only with the partition of the soul, but also with the recognition of the possibility of *akrasia*.⁷²

III A partial rehabilitation

The *Gorgias* and *Republic* clearly establish a link between partition of the soul and the vocabulary of *enkrateia*. This link is all the more incontestable inasmuch as Plato evidently snubs *enkrateia* in the pre-*Gorgias* dialogues. If Plato's use of the vocabulary of *enkrateia* is conditional on his partition of the soul, however, we should not assume that this is a *sine qua non* for all those authors who recognize the necessity of *enkrateia*. Xenophon, for example, accords the greatest importance to *enkrateia* – he makes it no less than the foundation of virtue⁷³ – but postulates no link between it and partition of the soul.⁷⁴ And it is important not to exaggerate the significance of the rehabilitation of *enkrateia* which Plato undertakes beginning with the *Gorgias*. To judge from the number of occurrences of *enkrateia* and its cognates, this reconciliation seems partial and cautious. Such terms occur only twenty-one times,⁷⁵ of which only nine refer to mastery of pleasures and desires.⁷⁶ What is more, there are only two occurrences of the substantive *enkrateia*.⁷⁷ This reticence is paradoxical, since Plato uses multiple expressions to designate the mastery one should exercise over oneself (cf. above).

It seems, in fact, that Plato's moral psychology leaves no room for self-mastery (*enkrateia*) conceived as a capacity or aptitude, distinct from reason, which controls and contains the desires. Since reason, supported

72 *Contra* this, cf. Carone (2004).

73 Cf. *Mem.* I 5, 4. For interpretation of this passage, cf. Dorion (2003) 648–50.

74 *Contra* this, cf. Morrison (2008) 21: “But the language used by Socrates to describe self-mastery and its opposite prove that Xenophon's Socrates believes in a soul composed of several parts.” None of Xenophon's Socratic writings, so far as I know, support this claim. On the other hand, Xenophon does admit partition of the soul in his *Cyropaedia* (VI 1, 41).

75 This excludes instances found in the *Definitions*, the *Letters* and the *Theages*.

76 *Gorgias* 491d; *Rep.* III 390b, IV 430e, 431a, IX 589b; *Phaedrus* 256b; *Laws* I 645e, IV 710a, VIII 840c.

77 *Rep.* III 390b and IV 430e.

by *thumos*, is ultimately responsible for controlling the desires,⁷⁸ *enkrateia* as a distinct capacity would be without purpose, since it would replicate the function of *thumos*⁷⁹ and usurp a role that is, in the final analysis, taken by reason. Partition of the soul would thus explain, paradoxically, both the rehabilitation of the vocabulary of *enkrateia*, and the impossibility of recognizing *enkrateia* as a distinct force, the role of which is to control the desires. Indeed, it is partition of the soul that allows Plato to revive the vocabulary of *enkrateia*, but the responsibility for self-mastery (as I have underlined several times over the course of this study) in fact falls to reason. As a result, *enkrateia* does not designate reason's auxiliary – this is the role of *thumos* – but rather the control exercised by reason. It follows that the order which obtains in the soul, among its different parts, is due not to *enkrateia* (*enkrateia* is a state, rather than a force or power) but, ultimately, to reason.

Plato's reasons for adopting the vocabulary of *enkrateia*, without, however, giving it a substantive status and role, could further be studied in light of Aristotle's conception of *enkrateia*. Aristotle considers *enkrateia* as a kind of second-best – a disposition (*hexis*)⁸⁰ that one can count on in the absence of true virtue. With the genuinely moderate (*sōphrōn*) man, there is no conflict between reason and the appetites, since the object of desire is the same as that fixed by reason. Whereas Plato's tripartition of the soul is the principal obstacle to according *enkrateia* a status and function proper to it, it is precisely Aristotle's tripartition of the soul that affords it these. Because desires are located in the intermediate part of the soul, viz. the non-rational part that can nevertheless 'listen' to reason,⁸¹ the *logistikōn* evidently can't be helped by that intermediate part in cases of conflict between reason and the desires. On the other hand, the *logistikōn* can count on the support of *enkrateia*, which is a disposition (*hexis*) that allows the subject in possession of right reason to remain firm in his judgement, even though he is assaulted by impetuous desires that

78 Cf. *Rep.* IV 442a; *Timaeus* 70a.

79 According to *Rep.* IV 429b and 430b, *thumos* is a capacity (*dunamis*) for maintaining true opinion despite the attractions of pleasures and desires. Plato never gives *enkrateia* the status of a *dunamis* whose job it is to control pleasures and desires.

80 Cf. *EN* VII 3, 1146a14; 9, 1151a29. *Enkrateia* has no clear status in the *Memorabilia*; it is neither a virtue, nor a species of knowledge; perhaps it is a disposition, but Xenophon never states this explicitly (cf. Dorion (2003) 653–54). Aristotle is thus the first to pin down the status and nature of *enkrateia*.

81 Cf. *EN* I 13, 1102b28–31.

demand satisfaction.⁸² Hence, in a sense, *enkrateia* plays the role given to *thumos* in Platonic psychology: that is, it helps reason to master those impetuous desires which strive to be fulfilled despite being repudiated by reason.

82 Cf. *EN* VII 3, 1146a16–17; 9, 1151a26–27; VII 11, 1151b27–1152a3.

The unity of the soul in Plato's *Republic*

ERIC BROWN

I Introduction

In Book Four of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates divides the soul.¹ He argues that because one thing cannot do or undergo opposites in the same respect, in the same relation, and at the same time, some cases of psychological conflict can only be explained by supposing that the soul is actually more than one thing. But Socrates does not deny that the soul is a unity. Rather, he holds that the soul, like so many entities, is both a many and a one. He refers to the divisions as *parts* of the soul,² and even when he ascribes actions and attitudes to a part of the soul, he also ascribes them to the whole soul (esp. 439a–b, 439d). Although few souls enjoy the unity that virtue earns,³ every human soul possesses an unearned unity.⁴

What explains this unearned unity? How do reason, spirit, and appetite constitute a single whole? This question has received little attention.⁵ My

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- 1 For the *Republic*, I cite the text of Slings (2003), and translations are mine, though I have borrowed heavily from Grube's translation, as revised by Reeve, which appears in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997.
- 2 Socrates calls the divisions εἶδη, γένη, and μέρη: εἶδη in 435c1, 435c5, 435e1, 439e1, γένη in 441c6, 443d3, μέρη in 442b10, 442c4, 444b3 (cf. 577d4, 581a6, 583a1, 586e5). He also refers to the *whole* soul in 436b2 (cf. σύνθετον at 611b5–7).
- 3 For earned unity, see especially 443d–e. That it is rare follows from these three points: virtue requires knowledge (442c), knowledge requires philosophy (474b–480a), and philosophy is rare (491a–b).
- 4 I discuss an apparent exception (554d) in the last section.
- 5 But see Aristotle *De An.* I 5 411b5–7, Archer-Hind (1882) 124, and Lorenz (2006) 38–40. Some scholars offer a principled excuse: they maintain that the soul is a simple unity with three different kinds of psychological states and activities that are mere conceptual parts (e.g., Shields (2001)). I argue against this reading in section III below.

first aim here is to establish that it is an important puzzle, and my second is to venture an answer.

II The importance of the soul's unity

My question is in part mereological. Plato assumes that my reason, spirit, and appetite constitute a complex unity, and that my reason, spirit, and appetite together with your spirit do not. What explains which psychological elements constitute a whole soul and which do not?

The interest of my question, however, is not exclusively mereological, and Socrates' talk of "parts" and "wholes" does not exhaust the reasons for asking it. Plato *needs* to explain the unearned unity of the soul. First, if the soul is, for all that he can explain, three distinct entities, then he cannot account for the felt unity of consciousness.⁶ As Descartes puts it, "When I consider the mind, or myself insofar as I am merely a thinking thing, I am unable to distinguish any parts within myself; I understand myself to be something quite single and complete."⁷ In the *Republic*, Socrates does not address this unity of consciousness directly, but he assumes that a human agent is somehow aware of what every part of his or her soul thinks and feels. Unless the human agent is something over and beyond the parts, it is somehow composed of the parts. How?

Second, if Plato cannot explain the unity of the soul, then he cannot treat the whole soul as the locus of moral responsibility. Socrates speaks as though our ordinary practices of praise and blame correctly take the same agent to be responsible whether he pursues wisdom, reacts angrily, or seeks a yummy dinner (cf. 436a8–b4, quoted below), even if that person's soul is tyrannically divided against itself (572b–580a, esp. 577d13–e1). Plato cannot mean that the complex of soul and body is the proper locus of responsibility, since the Myth of Er makes it clear that the disembodied soul in the afterlife is responsible for what it did while embodied (614b–616b).⁸ (Besides, the soul is supposed to be responsible for what the body does (353d).) It might be tempting to make the rational part alone responsible, since Socrates suggests that only the rational part of the

6 See Bobonich (2002) 254, and Price (2009) 10.

7 *Meditation Six*, in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (1984) 2:59, rendering the text in Adam and Tannery (1964–1976) 7:86.

8 For the earned unity of the soul and body, see 462c–e. Socrates does not discuss the unearned unity of this complex, though this is surely relevant to the unity of consciousness (think of sense-perception) and to moral responsibility.

soul survives separation from the body (611b–612a)⁹ and Er's myth says that the soul in the afterlife bears responsibility for the person's past embodied existence (614b–616b) and for the next (617d–e). But many actions for which an embodied human being is responsible are motivated by appetitive or spirited desire, and holding the rational part responsible for such actions seems to blame an innocent bystander or, worse, a victim. So it is better to infer from Socrates' manner of speaking that the whole soul is responsible. This can accommodate the hypothesis that only the rational part of the soul survives death. Plato could take the whole complex soul to be the locus of moral responsibility while it is embodied and the whole remaining (incomposite) soul to be the locus in the afterlife. He would be justified in doing this because these are the same soul. (In connection with the body, the soul develops parts that it lacks without a body (cf. 518d9–519a1), but it is nonetheless the same entity with or without the body.) He could elaborate this justification if (as I will suggest) what explains the complex unity of the embodied soul also explains how reason (and each of the other parts) is at least indirectly responsible for everything that any part of the embodied soul does.

There are, then, good reasons to take Socrates' talk of parts and wholes seriously and to seek an explanation of how the parts of every soul compose a single whole. But these reasons are not necessarily conclusive. First, if Plato's best account of unity does not attribute unity to every soul, one might take another approach to all this evidence.¹⁰ One might, for example, say that Socrates speaks falsely of parts and wholes and of single agents, for merely practical reasons.¹¹ Second, even if Plato *can* account for unity in every soul, there might be evidence that calls into question Plato's commitment to the unearned unity of every soul. So I aim to show that Plato can account for the unity of every soul, and that there is no evidence undermining his account.

There remain two other challenges to the claim that the soul's unearned unity is a significant puzzle. One might think that Plato faces no real puzzle because he conceives of every soul as a simple unity, with merely conceptual parts, like subsets of psychological attitudes or "aspects" of

9 Socrates is not fully committed to this suggestion (612a3–6), but he plainly considers it plausible. See also 518d9–519a1, the *Phaedo* (esp. 78b–84b), and the *Timaeus*, but contrast the *Phaedrus*, contra Archer-Hind (1882) 127.

10 Cf. note 36 below, concerning Harte (2002).

11 Cf. Rachana Kamtekar, Chapter 4, minus her insistence that Plato would not find pro-reptie value in a wholly false account.

a single entity.¹² Alternatively, one might think that Socrates' way of dividing the soul simply rules out its unearned unity, so that his talk of a "whole" soul comprising "parts" and his endorsement of ordinary practices of praise and blame and of the unity of consciousness call for an error theory or a fresh start in another dialogue.¹³ These views assume that if the *Republic* assigns three distinct subjects to the soul, it cannot account for the soul's unity. The first performs *modus tollens* with this conditional, the second *modus ponens*. I reject the conditional itself. First, I show that according to Book Four's division of the soul, the soul's unearned unity must and can be complex. Then I will identify a Platonic account of complex unity that explains why the whole soul is a locus of moral responsibility and at least enables explaining the unity of consciousness.

III The problem of complex unity

The puzzle of how Plato might account for the unearned unity of the soul stems from Socrates' main argument to divide it. Socrates introduces the argument by suggesting that there might be three different things in us "by which" we do three different kinds of things. He says:

But this is hard, [to determine] whether we do each of these things by this same thing or by three things, one thing by one and another by another. Do we learn by one thing, get angry by another of the things in us, and again by a third desire the pleasures concerning nutrition and procreation and all the things akin to these, or do we act in each of these cases by the whole soul, whenever we should have an impulse to act? This is hard to determine in a way worthy of our argument.

(436a8–b4)¹⁴

12 See e.g., Shields (2001) and (though he does not go for this approach wholeheartedly) Price (1995) and (2009).

13 See Grote (1865) 2:161n ("three souls"); Adam (1902) *ad* 435a, qualified by the note *ad* 439b; and Stalley (1975). Bobonich (2002, 219–57) has recently argued forcefully for this conclusion, though he also allows himself to talk about the composite soul without explaining the composition or admitting that it offers any unity of the person. His cogent denial (234 with 531n27) that there is any ultimate subject above and beyond the three parts of the soul does not exclude the possibility that the three parts might compose a unified subject.

14 Socrates says "in a way worthy of our argument" not to say that their standards are especially high but to remind his interlocutors that they are not as high as they might be: they are not traveling the "longer road" that leads to a fuller answer by means of the Good (435c9–d3 with 504b1–7). Socrates continues to remind his interlocutors of these lower standards when he notes that the principle of non-opposition is merely a hypothesis in their current argument (437a3–8). I take these to be related because I assume that

Socrates and Glaucon then agree to “try to determine the things in us, whether they are same as each other or different” (436b6–7).

This opening raises the problem of the soul's unity without taking a stand. It plainly introduces the possibility that there are three distinct sources of psychological states and activities in us. Socrates is not merely categorizing the kinds of psychological states and activities; he has already done that easy task (435d–436a). He now raises the hard question of whether we should attribute these different kinds to different causal sources in us. This already tells against the suggestion that the soul has merely conceptual parts. But it does not rule out the possibility that the distinct causal sources could compose a complex unity.¹⁵ Socrates and Glaucon simply do not consider the ramifications of there being different sources for learning, anger, and desires for bodily pleasures. For all they say, the different sources might be parts of a single soul, as they are all sources “in us,” or they might fail to be parts of a single soul, despite their being “in us.”

To answer his question, Socrates introduces the principle of non-opposition, a general principle applicable to any entity whatsoever: “It is clear that the same thing will not be willing to do or undergo opposites [1] in the same respect (κατὰ ταῦτόν γε) and [2] in relation to the same thing (πρὸς ταῦτόν) [3] at the same time (ἅμα)” (436b9–10).¹⁶ He immediately draws out the consequence for the “things in us” that he has mentioned: “The result is that if we should somehow discover these things [*viz.*, opposites] happening in them [*viz.*, the things in us by which we learn, feel anger, and desire the pleasures of nutrition and generation and such], we will know that they were not the same thing, but

the Good is supposed to be the unhypothetical first principle (see 533a–534c with 505a, 506d–509d, and 509d–511d). Hence, I take him to be saying that the longer argument would be required to render their conclusion in Book Four *unhypothetical*. If that is right, Socrates does not suggest that the longer road would necessarily lead to a substantially different conclusion.

15 It might seem so. Socrates contrasts acting by one of three psychological sources with acting “by the whole soul (ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ)” (436b2). But if this were the only way to understand the possibility of acting by the whole soul, then how would Socrates explain the implication of the whole passage (436a8–b4) that a single human agent acts whether this or that part of her soul is the source of the action? We need to distinguish acting by the whole soul underivatively (which contrasts with acting with one of three psychological sources) and acting by the whole soul derivatively, insofar as one is acting by one of three psychological sources. Socrates' question presupposes the first and ignores the second. The implication of the whole passage, to which Socrates returns (439c3–8), requires the second.

16 Compare the principle of non-contradiction at Aristotle, *Metaph.* G3 1005b19–20.

many.”¹⁷ Socrates continues to presuppose that *either* we act by one thing *or* we act by many things. So either he continues to set aside the ramifications of acting from multiple psychological sources (perhaps the multiple psychological sources are parts of a single soul and perhaps they are not) *or* he assumes without argument that the only way the soul can be unified is for its apparently multiple sources of activity to be the same. He has explicitly said nothing to shut the door on complex unity.

But what has he implied? The principle of non-opposition allows that a single subject can undergo opposites (call them ϕ and ψ) only when at least one of three conditions is met. A single subject can ϕ at one time and ψ at another; a single subject can ϕ in relation to *A* and ψ in relation to *B*; and a single subject can ϕ in one respect and ψ in another. But can a single subject ϕ by one part and ψ by another? Or has Socrates already ruled this out?

According to what I will call the standard reading, a single subject can ϕ by one part and ψ by another, because to ϕ by one part and ψ by another just is to ϕ in one respect and ψ in another.¹⁸ On this reading, the principle of non-opposition allows the soul to be a whole that comprises parts that are distinct sources of psychological states and activities.

Unfortunately, it is not hard to make trouble for the standard reading.¹⁹ Socrates immediately clarifies the principle of non-opposition by considering two potential counter-examples to it. First, he says

If someone were to say of a human being who is standing still but moving his hands and head that one and the same person is standing still and moving at the same time, we would not, I think, think that we should say

17 436b10–c2: ὥστε ἂν που εὕρισκωμεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ταῦτα γιγνόμενα, εἰσόμεθα ὅτι οὐ ταῦτόν ἦν ἀλλὰ πλείω. My supplement takes αὐτοῖς to refer to the same things that the αὐτὰ of 436b6–7 refers to, namely the things in us discussed in 436a8–b4. Unfortunately, the Grube-Reeve translation (in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997)) is misleadingly careless here. It reads, “So, if we ever find this happening in the soul, we’ll know that we aren’t dealing with one thing but many.” The careless “in the soul” for ἐν αὐτοῖς apparently leads to the complete fabrication of “we aren’t dealing with one thing.”

18 See, for examples, Irwin (1995) 204; Price (1995) 40–41; and Shields (2001) 145. The Grube-Reeve translation (in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997)) unfortunately forces this reading on readers. They render the principle of non-opposition’s κατὰ ταῦτόν (436b9: “in the same respect”) as “in the same part of itself,” and they use the same rendering for κατὰ τὸ αὐτό at 436c6.

19 I draw on Bobonich (2002) and Lorenz (2006) for the “trouble-making” reading. Both believe that Socrates establishes three distinct “ultimate” or “proper” subjects of psychological states and activities, though they disagree about the nature of the subjects, their oppositions, and the implications of the division.

this, but rather that one thing of him is standing still and another [thing of him] is moving.

(436c10–d1)

Socrates does not say that the single human being stands still in one respect (by some part of him) and moves in another (by another part of him). He insists, instead, that one thing stands still and another thing moves. Nothing prevents his point from generalizing. If two parts of a single thing are subjects of opposites, the single thing does not undergo opposites in different respects; rather, a many undergoes opposites.

This leaves unclear what it would mean to say that something ϕ s in one respect and ψ s in another. If talk of different “respects” does *not* cover different parts, then what does it cover? The trouble-makers take Socrates’ treatment of the second potential counter-example to answer this question:

And if the person who says these things [about the man standing still and moving] became even more amusing and was sophisticated enough to say that whole spinning tops stand still and move at the same time when they have fixed their center in the same spot and revolve, or that anything else that stays in one spot while moving in a circle does the same thing, we would not agree, because such things belong to things that stand still and move not in the same respect of themselves. Rather, we would say that they have an axis and a circumference in them and that with respect to the axis they stand still, since they do not incline to either side, while with respect to the circumference they move in a circle. And whenever one does incline its axis to the left or the right, or to the front or back, while it is spinning, we would say that it is in no way standing still.

(436d4–e5)

This “sophisticated” counter-example is supposed to prevent Socrates from saying that some parts of the top move while others stand still. The *whole* top is supposed to be moving and at rest (436d5). Presumably, the whole top is moving insofar as it is revolving and at rest insofar as it does not incline now in this direction and now in that but continues to occupy the same volume of space (since the axis remains fixed). Socrates accordingly explains how this top does not violate the principle of non-opposition by insisting that the top moves in one respect and stays at rest in another (cf. *Laws* 893c).²⁰ So understood, difference in respects is not

20 See Stalley (1975), Bobonich (2002) 228–31, and Lorenz (2006) 23–24.

the same as difference in parts, and difference in parts is not one of the excusing conditions of the principle of non-opposition.

Although this makes trouble for the standard reading, it does not establish that Socrates has ruled out the possibility that the soul is a complex unity. In fact, he goes on to make room for something very close to the standard reading.

To divide reason from appetite, Socrates restates the principle of non-opposition:

Therefore, if sometime something draws the soul back when it is thirsting, wouldn't that be something in it that differs from the thing that thirsts and drives it like a beast to drink? For, as we say, the same thing would not do opposites [1] by the same thing of itself (τῷ αὐτῷ ἑαυτοῦ) [2] about the same thing (περὶ τὸ αὐτό) [3] at the same time (ἄμα).

(439b3–6)

This restatement differs from the original in three ways. The first is trivial: this specification leaves out the possibility of “*undergoing*” (πάσχειν) opposites. The second is potentially significant, but intelligible: “in relation to the same thing (πρὸς ταὐτόν)” has become “about the same thing (περὶ τὸ αὐτό),” perhaps because Socrates assumes that mental experiences are related to other things specifically because they are *about* other things. (Mental experiences, we might say, are characterized by intentionality.) Third, in place of “in the same respect (κατὰ ταὐτόν)” Socrates has now said “by the same thing of itself (τῷ αὐτῷ ἑαυτοῦ).” This is of some consequence.

Recall the human who stands still while moving his arms and head: “one thing of him is standing still and another [thing of him] is moving” (436d1). According to the trouble-makers, because Socrates does not say that the human moves in one respect and stands still in another, the case does not satisfy any of the three excusing conditions of the principle of non-opposition. It is not an allowable case of one thing being a subject of opposites but is instead a case of a plural subject. But this case *does* satisfy one of the three excusing conditions of the *restated* principle of non-opposition. The restated principle allows a human to move “by one thing of him” and stand still “by another thing of him.”

Why has Socrates restated the principle to such effect? Perhaps the restated principle is just a more specific version of the original principle, tailored to the case of psychological conflict. On this view, something close to the standard reading was right all along: to φ with one part of oneself while ψing with another is *one way* of φing in one respect and

ψing in another. (It is not the *only* way because the case of the top high-lights another, though it might be the only way relevant to psychological conflict.)²¹ So on this view, the trouble-makers misunderstood Socrates' characterization of the human who stands still and moves. They took him to be saying *only* that one thing of him stands still and another moves, whereas he is *also* saying that the human moves in one respect and stands still in another.²²

Or perhaps the trouble-makers were right about the original principle of non-opposition and the human who stands still and moves, but they missed the way in which the restated principle of non-opposition blocks the trouble-making implication. On this view, the original principle emphasizes the plurality required of an apparent subject of simultaneous opposites: we should not say, strictly speaking, that the human moves in one respect and stands still in another. But Plato does not mean to imply that the human body is not a whole comprising parts some of which can move while others are at rest. The restated principle makes this explicit, since it allows us to say that the human moves by one part and stands still by another. By putting the principle in both ways, Socrates emphasizes both the plurality and the unity of the human body and, by implication, the human soul.²³

21 For an attempt to defend the standard reading more thoroughly by rejecting the Stalley-Bobonich-Lorenz account of the spinning top, see Price (2009).

22 In support of this, one might make two points (cf. Price (2009)). First, one might point to the question Socrates asks just before he raises the first potential counter-example (436c6–7): “Can the same thing stand still and move at the same time in the same respect?” If this question focusses Glaucon's attention on ways in which a thing can simultaneously stand still and move in different respects, the two potential counter-examples could highlight two different ways in which a thing can stand still in one respect and move in another. Second, one might question the trouble-makers' construal of 436d1. It is possible to take the τὸ μὲν and τὸ δὲ to be accusatives of respect and not nominatives, in which case Socrates reports that “we should say . . . rather that he stands still in one respect and moves in another.” To reject this reading, Lorenz (2006, 23 n. 9) appeals to the parallel case of the archer at 439b8–c1, where Socrates says that one hand moves one way and the other another, and not that the archer moves one way with respect to one hand and another way with respect to the other. But the archer enters *after* Socrates has restated the principle of non-opposition and traded the more general “in the same respect” clause for the more specific “by the same thing of itself” clause. That would explain the general talk of respects for the human standing still and moving and the more specific talk of parts for archer.

23 Adam (1902, *ad* 439b) allows only that by the restatement “Plato betrays a sense of the unity of the soul.” Bobonich (2002, 232–33 with 530 n. 22) goes so far as to deny that restatement differs significantly, by appealing unpersuasively to the position of γὰρ in 439b5. But Lorenz (2006, 27) appreciates the passage's significance.

Whether the restated principle clarifies or substantially corrects the original, it explicitly allows the soul to be a single thing comprising multiple parts and not merely a many. Thus, when Socrates answers his original question – Does a person, a soul, do diverse activities by diverse elements of itself, or does she do each by the whole soul? – he stresses that the diverse sources of an agent’s actions are elements in or of a single soul. He says that sometimes when “there are thirsty people who are unwilling to drink . . . there is something *in their soul* bidding them to drink, and there is something *in [their soul]*, forbidding them to do so, something that is different and that overrides the thing that bids” (439c3–8, my emphasis). He quickly labels “that by which *the soul* calculates the calculating thing *of the soul* and that by which *it* lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites the uncalculating and appetitive thing, companion of certain indulgences and pleasures” (439d4–8, translating d5–8, my emphasis). Socrates takes himself to have shown not merely that there are multiple psychological sources within us but that “these two kinds are distinguished *in the soul*” (439e1–2).

This leaves our puzzle.²⁴ Although Socrates has left room for the soul to be a complex whole comprising multiple parts, he has also made it clear that the parts are separate sources of psychological activity (appetite bids, reason forbids). The rest of the *Republic* only makes this clearer, as each of the separate sources of psychological activity is characterized as agent-like.²⁵ What, then, explains how these separate sources are parts of a single soul?

24 Among others. I set aside here the problems concerning how many parts Socrates’ argument establishes. One of these problems concerns whether he is entitled to think that there is just one appetitive part: the heterogeneity of its desires suggests that there can be conflicting appetitive desires. (Compare the strategies offered by Reeve (1988) 124–31; Irwin (1995) 203–17; Price (1995) 46–48; and Lorenz (2006) 13–52.) Another concerns whether he is entitled to think that there is a spirited part in addition to the appetitive and rational parts. (See Cooper (1984).) A third concerns whether there might not be some part(s) beyond reason, spirit, and appetite. (See 443e and Kamtekar (2008).) My problem, concerning how the parts constitute a whole soul, applies however many parts there are and however they might be subdivided.

25 This has been widely recognized, at least since Moline (1978), although there are debates about exactly what characteristics should be imputed to the different parts, and especially appetite (cf. Bobonich (2002), Lorenz (2006), and Moss (2008)). Anyone who takes the parts of the soul to be merely conceptual must somehow explain away Socrates’ descriptions of the soul-parts as distinct agent-like subjects of psychological states and activities. But there are good reasons to take these seriously (see Kamtekar (2006)). Four reasons to deflate them are unconvincing. First, Price (2009, 10) argues that if the parts are distinct subjects, Plato cannot account for the unity of consciousness (what Price calls “co-consciousness”). But this is prematurely pessimistic. Next, Shields (2001) argues that if soul-parts were more than conceptual, then the soul could not be essentially simple and thus could not be immortal. But in *Republic*X (611b–612a), Plato entertains the possibility

IV Failed explanations of the soul's unity

One might be tempted to say that nothing psychological explains the unity of a soul. Only the brute fact of embodiment renders my rational, spirited, and appetitive elements parts of me and leaves your psychological elements out. One might offer two reasons for this suggestion. First, the soul is supposed to explain the distinction between a living and dead body (353d9–10). The *explananda* are the vital activities of a living body. That body's soul is the *explanans*. But if we are dealing with just one living body, we should be dealing with just one soul to explain it. Second, if the soul by itself is a simple unity whose embodied complexity is due to embodiment (611a–612a with 518d–e), the embodied soul's complex unity might be best explained not by the soul itself, since the soul explains simple, disembodied unity, but by precisely what makes it complex, the body.

These reasons are not convincing. The first gives at best a reason why we should *want* an account of the soul's unity; it does not actually give that account. The second is perhaps unduly speculative, since Socrates in Book Ten pulls up short of saying that the disembodied soul is partless (612a3–6).²⁶ But more importantly, the basic claim that the soul's unity is due to the body flouts two basic and widely attested Platonic commitments.

of a complex soul being immortal and the possibility of the same soul being simple when disembodied and being necessarily complex when embodied (see also n. 26). Shields (2001, 147–48) also argues that because the principle of non-opposition can establish a distinction among conceptual parts, it cannot establish organic or aggregative parts. But this does not follow. The principle establishes multiplicity without characterizing the multiple entities or their relation to each other. Finally, Shields (2001, 148–151) argues that Socrates does not establish that the soul is *essentially* a complex unity since the true nature of the soul might not be multiform (611b–612a) and since the Book Four argument in any case uses a contingent *a posteriori* premise (“Our souls sometimes both have an appetite to drink and refuse to drink” (439c1–2)). But Socrates does not need to show that the soul is essentially multiform; he can and does allow that the disembodied soul might be simple. He does mean to show that the *embodied* soul is necessarily multiform – notice the definitions of the virtues in terms of the distinct parts of the soul, though virtues are found in people free of internal conflict – but the *a posteriori* premise can and should be construed as the existence proof for the modal premise Socrates needs, which is that every embodied soul *can* experience conflict (cf. Bobonich (2002) 235).

- 26 Before and after 611a–612a in Book Ten, he gives no support to the idea: his argument for immortality assumes nothing about the simplicity of the soul, unlike the so-called “Affinity Argument” in *Phaedo* 78b–84b (see Brown (1997), and contrast Shields (2001) 143–44) and some of what Er says is more readily intelligible if disembodied souls retain spirited and appetitive elements. Moreover, for what it is worth, the *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus* suggest divergent answers to the question of whether the disembodied soul is complex or simple. So no matter how suggestive 611a–612a might be, it is difficult to be confident that Plato held a settled view on the question.

First, it flouts the Platonic dictum that the soul rules the body.²⁷ It also makes the soul's unearned unity an extrinsic property, dependent upon something external to the soul, though Plato's dialogues invariably treat unity as an intrinsic property.²⁸ In the *Republic*, Socrates says that the just person:

puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale – high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and becomes entirely one thing out of many, moderate and harmonious.

(443d5–e2)

This unity is internal harmony, and by calling the unified soul moderate, Socrates means that psychic unity, just like the unity of the city (cf. 462b–e), is defined by internal agreement (442c9–d2, cf. 432a6–b1). This is the earned unity of the virtuous few, and not the unearned unity we are looking for. But this specification nevertheless casts doubt on taking unearned unity to be an extrinsic property.

At this point, one might try a different tack. If the human soul contains three distinct sources of psychological states and activities but is nevertheless a morally responsible agent, perhaps it is quite literally a “plural subject” or corporate agent. On this view, the psychological unity that belongs to a human being is nothing more and nothing less than what belongs to a group such as a parent-teacher organization, and the practice of holding a human being morally responsible is akin to recognizing collective responsibility.

This approach needs an account of collective agency. What makes a collection a plural subject and thus a single agent? One popular answer is that multiple agents become a plural subject by sharing an intention.²⁹ This can work for all sorts of plural subjects, and it can even explain how a plural subject becomes a kind of unity.³⁰ Moreover, it would seem to fit well the *Republic's* insistence that *earned* unity is a matter of agreement among the parts of the soul. But there is some reason for doubt. Given the different aims that Socrates attributes to the three parts of the soul, it seems plausible that some vicious people will have psychological elements that fail to share intentions. What would explain the unity of such a soul,

27 See 353d with *Phaedo* 80a and 94b–e, *Alcibiades* 130a, and *Philebus* 35d. Cf. Aristotle, *De An.* I 5 411b5–9.

28 I here concentrate on the *Republic* and in the next section draw help from the *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*. For evidence in the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*, see Harte (2002).

29 See e.g., Gilbert (1989) and (2000). 30 See e.g., Velleman (1997).

and thus how it is the locus of moral responsibility? Well, perhaps a group can be a plural subject by sharing an intention that its members do not all recognize, because the relationships within the group give all its members intentions whether they recognize them or not.³¹ Perhaps the psychological elements in even a deeply conflicted soul share intentions in this way.

This resembles Plato's account in some important ways. The unearned unity of the soul is, like earned unity, a function of agreement among its parts, but unearned unity does not require each part of the soul to *recognize* the aims that it shares with the other parts. So the moral responsibility of the whole soul is akin to the collective responsibility of a corporate agent. But Plato does not take the soul to be merely a corporate agent. For one thing, at least some corporate agents are formed and dissolved voluntarily, by convention, whereas the human soul is a natural composite (cf. 588d5–6). There are natural relations among the soul's parts that secure the unity of the soul. This is a good thing, since Plato needs more than a plural subject if his account is supposed even potentially to explain the coordinated source of all vital activities and especially the unity of consciousness. To grasp Plato's account of natural unity, we need a fresh start.

V A fresh approach to unity

In the *Phaedrus*,³² Socrates tries to lead young Phaedrus to take up the genuine art of oratory and to reject what ordinarily passes as that art. Among other things, he claims that ordinary teachers of oratory give insufficient attention to how an expert speaker fashions his speech into a whole (269c1–5). To motivate this claim, he appeals to the difficulty of crafting a tragedy, and Phaedrus readily sees that a tragedy must be a “system” whose elements fit with one another and with the whole (268d3–5). Socrates says, “Every speech, since it has a body of its own, must be composed like a living being, so that it is neither headless nor footless but instead has things in the middle and at the extremities which are written to fit each other and the whole” (264c2–5). On this account, something is made a whole by the special arrangement of its parts.³³

31 Cf. May (1987) and (1992).

32 I cite the text in vol. 2 of Burnet (1900–1907), and translations are mine.

33 One might want to insist, more precisely, that something is made a whole by the arrangement of things that are, because of the arrangement, its parts. I forgo such precision here.

Although the *Phaedrus* applies this account only to speeches, tragedies, and living bodies, the *Gorgias* encourages further generalization.³⁴ There Socrates maintains that *every* craft, and not just tragedy and oratory, confers special organization on its products (503d–504e, cf. 506c–508a), and he suggests that the same kind of order or organization is manifest in the natural world (507e–508a). In the *Gorgias*, he does not talk of unity or wholeness exactly, but the language he does use (of order (κόσμος) and organization (τάξις)) perfectly fits what he says in the *Phaedrus* about what makes elements into parts of a whole.³⁵ Encouraged by the *Gorgias*, I attribute to Plato this perfectly general account of complex unities (wholes): diverse elements constitute a complex unity, a whole, if and only if they are suitably organized in relation to each other and in relation to the whole that they constitute.

But what makes diverse elements *suitably* organized in relation to each other and in relation to the whole that they constitute, as opposed to being organized in some unsuitable way? In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates maintains that if the elements of a speech are not organized well, then the speech not only fails to constitute a whole, its speaker fails “to speak these elements persuasively” (269c2–3). That is to say, since oratory is the art of leading souls through speech (261a7–8, cf. 271c10), a speech without good organization fails to perform its function well. This explanation also generalizes well to other artifacts and living bodies. A shipbuilder’s product, if it is not a whole of suitably ordered parts, will fail to be seaworthy. A living body, if it is not a whole of suitably ordered parts, will fail to be able to perform its vital activities.

Plainly, there are degrees of organization and degrees of success here. A speech (or ship or living body) need not be perfectly organized to be persuasive (seaworthy, vitally active), but the best speeches (ships, living bodies) will be more persuasive (seaworthy, good at vital activities) by displaying greater organization than lesser ones. Still, in every case, the range of permissible organization has a lower limit. Below this limit, there is nothing performing the function of the relevant kind, and so nothing of the relevant kind at all: sometimes we have a heap of potential ship-parts but not a ship, a string of words but not a speech, or an assortment of limbs but not a living body.

In sum, then, the *Phaedrus*, with help from the *Gorgias*, suggests that diverse elements are parts of a whole if and only if they are organized in relation to each other and to the whole in such a way that the whole is

34 Text: Dodds (1959). 35 As Dodds (1959, ad 504a1) sees.

able to perform its function. Unity is a function of organization, because a complex thing's ability to do what it does depends upon its parts' ability to do what they do, which in turn depends upon their orderly relations (since no part could do what it does *as a part* independent of the other parts and the whole).³⁶

VI Explaining the soul's unity

By now, my hypothesis should be obvious: I suggest that Plato treats the human soul like a speech, a ship, or a living body. The soul's unity is a function of the order or harmony of its parts. The parts' causal relations with each other produce this order or harmony: the more the parts do what they are supposed to do, as parts, the more the soul enjoys unity. On this view, Socrates can and does say that the soul's unity takes the specific form of agreement, since agreement is the harmony or order of minded things. And on this view, the soul can perform vital activities – that is, its function of living – with only some minimal agreement and order, since it requires perfect agreement and order only for excellent or virtuous activities. (That is the distinction between unearned and earned unity.)

In the *Republic*, Socrates does not make this account fully explicit. He does explicitly characterize the just person's maximal unity as a kind of harmony and agreement (462d5–e2, quoted and discussed above), and with his account of justice, he makes clear that the parts produce this harmony by doing what they are supposed to do. But he only hints at how to extend this account of unity to less than perfectly just souls. First, he explains to Glaucon:

For the sake of a model we were seeking both what sort of thing justice itself is and what sort of man the completely just man would be if he

36 Harte (2002) finds in Plato's *Sophist*, *Timaeus*, and (especially) *Philebus* a broadly similar account of wholes in terms of the structure or harmony of parts. The account she finds, however, does not welcome degrees of structure and wholeness or unity. If the *Republic* offered the same account (and see section VI for this), earned unity would be the only kind of unity that souls could enjoy, and in fact, any talk of the whole soul would be merely an unjustified manner of speaking except when we were speaking of the virtuous. But Plato has good reasons for wanting the soul to have unearned unity (see section II above) and Socrates speaks as though it does (see sections I and III). Moreover, what Socrates says in the *Republic* about the soul's order and functioning fits the general account of the *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*, according to which unity comes in degrees. If my account is right, then either Harte's is wrong; or Plato changed his mind after writing the *Republic*; or Plato has two distinct accounts, one (admitting degrees) for things subject to becoming and another (not admitting degrees) for abstract objects.

came into being, and likewise injustice and the most unjust man, in order that, by looking at them and how they seemed to us concerning happiness and its opposite, we would have to agree about ourselves as well, that the one who was most like them would have a portion of happiness most like theirs.

(*Republic* 472c4–d1)

Here Socrates says that the imperfect soul lives more or less well (has a greater or lesser “portion of happiness”) according to how closely its order approximates the just soul’s. He elaborates in Book Nine, arguing that the perfectly just soul lives best (is most happy) and other souls live more or less well (are more or less happy) according to how closely their order approximates the just soul’s (580a–c). Socrates assumes both that there is a correlation between psychological order (that is, justice) and psychological functioning (that is, living) and that each of these features comes in degrees.

These assumptions do not commit Socrates to the thought that imperfect souls enjoy unearned unity. But he also suggests in Book One that a soul needs some minimal justice if it is to perform its function. After arguing that a city or a band of thieves would be unable to achieve an unjust purpose if its members were unjust toward each other (351d), he generalizes the point thus: because injustice sows internal disharmony, it threatens to render “a city, a family, an army, or anything else,” including a soul (cf. 352a6–7), “unable to do anything with itself” (351e10–352a3).

Moreover, Socrates offers two causal principles about the interaction of the soul’s parts that illuminate the structural order that makes the three psychological elements parts of a whole. The first can be called Plato’s hydraulic principle of psychology. Socrates says, “When someone’s desires incline strongly for one thing, they are thereby weakened for others, just like a stream that has been partly diverted into another channel” (485d6–8; cf. 328d3–5). This plainly applies to different soul-parts within the same soul. If my spirited desires grow stronger, my rational and appetitive ones grow weaker. Just as plainly, the principle cannot apply to psychological elements in different people: if *your* spirited desires grow, nothing automatically follows for my rational and appetitive desires. (Of course, you might influence me, and if my spirited desires were to strengthen, too, then my rational and appetitive desires would weaken. But this is a rather different story.)

The second I will call Plato’s principle of psychological hegemony. In Books Eight and Nine, Socrates maintains that different kinds of people are ruled by different soul-parts. As he explains this, to be ruled by a

soul-part is to take the ends of that soul-part to be one's ends, generally.³⁷ If I am ruled by spirited desire, I take my good to be honor or victory, the ends of the spirited part. If I am ruled by appetitive desire, I take my good to be bodily pleasure or, perhaps, if I calculate a bit, the best means to achieve bodily pleasure, which is money. This pattern requires certain causal interactions within the soul. Because the spirited or appetitive part of the soul gets more powerful, the rational part, which alone calculates what is good for the whole soul (441e3–4, 442c4–7), begins to calculate that it would be good to achieve what the powerful part wants. When a young man is influenced by his father to pursue wisdom and by everyone else to pursue money and publicly contested honors, he calculates that his good lies in the middle way, pursuing the spirited part's end of honor (549c–550b). When another young man sees his honor-loving father killed or reduced to poverty, he calculates that it would be safer to pursue money, the end of the appetitive part (553a–d).

This principle explains what it is for a soul to be ruled by some part of the soul by explaining what it is for the rational part of the soul to be ruled. Corollaries to the principle explain what it is for the spirited or appetitive part to be ruled. When spirit is ruled by either reason or appetite, the spirited part finds honor in the ends of the ruling part. When appetite is successfully ruled by either reason or spirit, it limits its pleasures to those deemed good by ruling reason or honorable by ruling spirit (and thus good by ruled reason).

Again, the principle of psychological hegemony and its corollaries explain direct connections in me without imputing direct connections between *your* spirited element and me. That your spirited element has grown so strong as to dominate your soul does not force *my* rational part to determine that honor or victory are my good (or yours). Again, you might influence me. If my spirited desires were to strengthen, too, then I would calculate that honor or victory is good for me (cf. 549c–550b). But that is not the direct causal influence that my soul-parts enjoy over each other.

The two causal principles are related. For instance, a rational part can come to accept that honor or victory is what is good only if it is too weak to grasp what really is good, but it will be too weak if the spirit has taken much of the soul's "hydraulic power" away from reason.

Also, these are not the *only* causal principles Plato would invoke to explain psychological behavior. Among others, Plato clearly believes that

37 The evidence for this principle is diffuse; it emerges as the best explanation of what Socrates says in Books Eight and Nine about what it is for one part of the soul to rule.

the appetitive part has its own internal tendency to grow stronger, which requires that it be checked at every turn (442a). Socrates paints this principle into his imaginative portrait of the soul at the end of Book Nine, when he says that the *just* person must continually prevent the many-headed beast of appetite from sprouting savage heads (589a–b; cf. 571b–572b). He also assumes it when he asserts that gold and silver need to be kept away from guardians (416e–417a) and when he predicts that a person with a timocratic soul will become progressively more money-loving over the course of his lifetime (549a–b). So there are causal tendencies in the soul that encourage it to become *less* orderly and unified.

Still, the hydraulic principle of psychology and the principle of psychological hegemony explain how the soul tends to organize and unify itself, *even when* its appetite grows. Even in these circumstances, there is a tendency for the rational part to agree with appetite about what is good and a tendency for the spirited part to find some honor in what appetite pursues. This tendency is a product of the causal relations among my soul-parts and does not extend to yours, which captures the sense in which my soul-parts are parts of one psychological system, one soul. They are parts of one soul because they are parts of an orderly causal structure that manifests itself in every soul as a tendency toward agreement, a tendency which reaches perfect fulfillment in only some souls. The minimal structure is required for living, its perfect fulfillment for living well. But not even the most corrupt dissolves to the point of inactivity.³⁸

This account of psychic unity shares some features with accounts of collective agency. Just as some human beings might share aims due to the way they relate to each other in a group (even if they do not realize that they share these aims, or converge on some mistaken view about them) so, too, the soul's parts share aims though they do not realize it or converge on a mistaken view about them. This parallel helps to explain how the whole soul can be held responsible for whatever any part of it does. When one part of the soul does something, the others are causally implicated in a structure that fosters agreement. At the least, each of the others could have been a more powerful obstacle. So it would not be inappropriate to hold the rational part alone responsible in the afterlife for what the other parts had done during embodied life.

Unlike collective agency, though, psychic unity on this account depends upon a purely natural structure of causal relations (cf. 588d5–6). Given the way the soul and body naturally are, the embodied soul comprises

38 Cf. 608c–611a with Brown (1997).

parts that causally relate to each other in ways that tend toward agreement. These parts are distinct subjects, but the account presupposes that they are not distinct in exactly the same way that two human beings are distinct subjects. It presupposes that soul-parts naturally share information intimately, though it does not explain exactly how or how much information is shared. It also presupposes that at least much of the shared information manifests itself to the soul as a single consciousness, and again, we might ask questions about exactly how this is supposed to work. The *Republic* does not address those questions, but it does not render them unanswerable, either.³⁹

VII Sustaining this explanation of the soul's unity

This account of the soul's unearned unity is incomplete. Most obviously, it lacks a precise notion of internal agreement. This calls for some reckoning of the mental content of the various soul-parts, to see how there could be shared content. This would give additional flesh to the account of psychic unity and perhaps explain the unity of consciousness. But for now, the skeleton of the account needs further defense, and I close by addressing suggestions that some souls lack unity.

The first depends upon the city-soul analogy. Socrates tells Adeimantus:

You are happily innocent if you think that anything other than the kind of city we are founding deserves to be called a city . . . We need a bigger category to address the others because each of them is a great many cities, not *a* city . . . At any rate, each of them consists of two cities at war with one another, that of the poor and that of the rich, and each of these contains a great many.

(*Republic* 422e1–423a2)

Now, if none but the ideal city is really a city, because every other claimant fails to be a unity, then the analogy of city and soul suggests that none but the ideal soul is really a soul, because every other claimant fails to be a unity.⁴⁰

39 Related questions face current philosophers who suppose that modularity is essential to explaining the mind-brain (e.g., Fodor (1983)).

40 One might doubt that Socrates is entirely serious here. In Book One, he urges that even a band of thieves must have some justice to achieve its purpose (351c–d), which reinforces the idea that justice comes in degrees and encourages the thought that even an imperfectly functioning community has enough justice to be a community. I am nevertheless inclined to think that Socrates is seriously reserving “polis” for the most successful communities

But the analogy of city and soul can only suggest; it cannot prove. There is an open question about *which* features of cities have analogues in souls and *vice versa*, and so it is easy enough to suppose that *this particular* feature of cities does not have an analogue in souls. Moreover, we can justify this supposition. First, cities do not seem to have the same causal regularities governing the interaction of their parts that souls do. In particular, the principle of psychological hegemony has no analogue for the city: that the oligarchs rule does not tend to make the democrats accept the oligarchs' rule. This is not to say that there is no tendency toward shared values in a city: Plato plainly recognizes the power of a shared culture to shape the citizens' values.⁴¹ But shared values do not necessarily produce agreement about who should rule in the city as it does in the soul. Agreement in values just *is* agreement about who should rule in the soul. In the city, by contrast, the oligarchs and democrats can agree broadly in their values but disagree about whether the rich alone should rule. Second, competing factions in a city do not share responsibility for "what the city does" as parts of a divided soul do. That is why Socrates insists that when Kallipolis is at war with another Greek city, the Kallipolitans will not ravage the entire enemy city but will target the real enemies in the city who are responsible for the war (471a–b).⁴² These differences between cities and souls explain why it is reasonable to say that a divided city is not a whole city but not to say that a divided soul is not a whole soul.

But this might seem to prove too much. In Book Eight, Socrates returns to his point about divided cities, and he extends his analysis to divided souls. Having said an oligarchic city is "not one but two, one of the poor and one of the rich" (551d5), he claims of an oligarchic soul, "Such a

(cf. *Pol.* 293e). Perhaps the ensuing discussion helps to explain why he does this: he might be worried that attributing goodness to every community undercuts the goodness that he wants to predicate of only the best communities. Alternatively, his reasons might run deeper: perhaps the causal relations among human beings, unlike those among the parts of the soul, do not underwrite unearned unity. I thank Anton Ford and Clerk Shaw for discussion of this point.

41 See Lear (1992) and Burnyeat (1999).

42 Cf. Thucydides' presentation of the Mytilenian debate. The Athenians come to understand that the democrats in Mytilene were not responsible for the revolt, because that revolt was led by the oligarchic faction and stopped by the democrats themselves (esp. 3.47.3). It is true that the Athenians come to see this belatedly (3.36) and only by a slight majority (3.49.1). But this is not because the point is reasonably contested: at least, Thucydides suggests that passionate rage has blinded those who want to punish the Mytilenian democrats (3.36.2, 3.44.4).

person would turn out not to be free of civil strife in himself, and he would be not one but in a way twofold (διπλοῦς τις), but for the most part he would have better desires in control of worse" (554d9–e2). This is the strongest evidence that Socrates is willing to deny unearned unity to a human soul. But it shows, in fact, that Socrates is *not* willing. In the case of divided cities he says forthrightly that they are two (δύο, 422e6 and 551d5), but of the soul he says only that it is "in a way twofold" (διπλοῦς τις, 551e1). The hedge is significant, and well explained by the fact that even the "in a way twofold" soul has parts that are causally related so as to promote agreement. Socrates says explicitly that such a soul "for the most part would have better desires in control of worse," and presumably, if the better desires were to lose control of the worse, then the soul would tend away from oligarchy and towards democracy by jettisoning the distinction between better and worse appetitive desires and treating all equally. The causal tendencies are enough to establish that the oligarchic soul is a single soul.

Socrates' point in this passage is not that the oligarchic person has more than one soul. His point is that the oligarchic person's soul falls far short of the unity that virtue earns. He makes this sort of point often in the *Republic*, as he is keen to convince his interlocutors that people who do not pursue wisdom suffer psychologically in ways that philosophers do not. But this point deprecates the earned unity of non-philosophical souls, not their unearned unity.⁴³ Even the most divided soul is still a single soul whose unity is explicable in terms of a structure of parts causally related so as to tend to agreement.

43 Recall 608c–611a with Brown (1997). One might say that Socrates' point deprecates their "ethical" unity, not their "metaphysical" unity, but this is misleading. There is just one kind of unity. Every embodied soul possesses it at least to the minimal extent that a complex entity needs to exist, though only some souls possess it maximally.

PART II

Moral psychology in the *Republic*

Speaking with the same voice as reason

Personification in Plato's psychology

RACHANA KAMTEKAR

I Introduction

Contemporary readers of Greek ethics tend to favor those accounts of the virtuous ideal according to which virtue involves the development of both our emotional and our rational motivations. So our contemporaries find much of interest and sympathy in Aristotle's conception of virtue as a condition in which reason does not simply override our appetites and emotions, but these non-rational motivations themselves "speak with the same voice as reason."¹ By contrast, the Stoic ideal of "apathy," the result of extirpating the emotions,² and the Stoic analysis of the emotions as defective impulses of reason, have few contemporary fans: our contemporaries tend to reject "defective" as an appropriate evaluation of emotion and so to reject extirpation as a goal; most also reject the Stoic analysis

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1 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (EN) 1102b14–29; this and other translations from EN are from W. D. Ross' version, revised by J. O. Urmson, in Barnes (1984). For an exemplary contemporary discussion favoring this conception of virtue see Hursthouse (1999) chs. 4–7.

2 See e.g., Graver (2002).

of emotion as a modification of reason, maintaining that emotions have distinctively non-rational elements.³

However, Aristotle's own optimism about the cultivability of our non-rational motivations rests on substantial psychological commitments that he inherits from Plato, and it is worth thinking about whether we can accept those commitments or whether the Aristotelian ideal of virtue is available to us with some other psychology. Following Plato, Aristotle divides the human soul into rational and emotional and appetitive "parts," and then describes the non-rational "part" of the soul concerned with appetites and emotions as itself partly rational, capable of obeying although not of issuing rational commands. Aristotle likens this part of the soul to a child, and its relationship with reason to a child's relationship with its father.⁴ Now the conception of our appetites and emotions as capable of agreeing with, obeying, or being persuaded by reason suggests that the appetites and emotions themselves involve belief-like items that can be modified in light of expanded considerations, new evidence, and so on. This cognitively rich characterization of emotions and appetites raises the question: why suppose that these are independent sources of motivation rather than, as the Stoics maintain, modifications of reason? Why not allow that the child within can grow up into an adult, instead of insisting that it can at best be an obedient child? A further question is whether, in attributing rationality to the non-rational, Aristotle has not undermined the explanatory value of analyzing our mental attitudes into rational and appetitive and emotional components. If the explanandum is a person's decision to eat, what could be the value of an explanans such as "appetite's desire (or even decision) to eat"?⁵

While Aristotle may have available to him various local responses to these questions, my interest in this chapter is in the sort of global response suggested by his claim that the student of ethics and politics, as

3 An exception is Nussbaum (1994) 318, who points out that one may accept the Stoic analysis of the emotions without accepting their recommendation that emotions be eliminated from one's life.

4 *EN* 1102b12–1103a3. For illuminating discussion of this comparison, see Broadie (1991) 62–67. Broadie distinguishes between reason's persuading the desiderative part (perhaps at the beginning of moral cultivation), and reason's simply commanding a desiderative part that is ready to do its bidding (at the end).

5 Cf. Cooper (1999c) 237–52. Cooper stresses independence; the problems I focus on have to do with the attribution of rationality, agency, and person-status to the independent motivations. Given the high status enjoyed by the idea of the modular mind nowadays, the independence of the parts may not be thought so much of a problem. For a high-level but accessible introduction to modularity, see Appelbaum (1998) 625–35.

opposed to the student of natural philosophy, need only study the soul to the extent required for addressing the types of questions under discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, “for to be more precise may be more laborious than matters before us require” (1102a22–25, cf. 1094b13–27). According to Aristotle, the conception of the soul he is working with in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is somehow especially suited to the concern of this work, namely, the concern to “make citizens good and obedient to the laws” (1102a8–10, cf. to “become good,” rather than to know what virtue is, 1103b26–28). Aristotle determines that for these purposes, he can set aside disagreements with Plato about such issues as whether the parts of the soul are separable and spatially distant as are the parts of the body (1102a27–32). Yet those disagreements are at the forefront of *De Anima*, where Aristotle complains that the Platonic conception of the soul as having parts is inadequate to understanding thought (407a3 ff); that a soul composed of parts, one to think and another to desire, could not be held together – a particularly serious difficulty if the soul is meant to be the principle of the unity of the body (411b5–12); and that a tripartite soul requires the division of desire into three parts (432b5–8).

The peculiar indifference of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to these difficulties in the psychology it assumes has a Platonic antecedent, as does Aristotle’s conception of the soul’s irrational parts as capable of “speaking with the same voice as reason,” and it is with the Platonic antecedents that this chapter is concerned. In this chapter, I argue that Plato’s psychology represents our motivations as themselves person-like (“personifies” our motivations) with the aim of showing us the lineaments of philosophic virtue and of the self-transformation required for its development. Recognizing this affords us insight into how Plato appropriates and transforms the psychological conceptions of his predecessors, and allows us to appreciate the value of personification, which has otherwise been under attack in recent scholarship. Finally, the changing details of personification and its changing relationship to other elements in Plato’s psychological accounts reveal a dimension of progress between the psychology of the *Phaedo* and that of the *Republic* and suggest a reason why Plato might continue to attribute rationality to the non-rational motivations in the *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus* at the same time as he insists on their cognitive poverty.

In what follows, section II explains what personification of the soul is and argues that it is in need of explanation. Section III examines the way we ordinarily use personification to think about our own motivations, and section IV argues that Plato uses personification in a similar way with respect to the development of philosophic virtue. Finally, section V

develops parallels between Plato's psychology and the theology of the *Republic* to suggest that we ought to regard personification as a likely story told for its effects on our self-conceptions and behavior.

II Why personify?

While Plato characterizes the soul as unitary, bipartite, or tripartite in different works, what I call "personification" cuts across these distinctions and is sometimes present, sometimes absent, in unitary, bipartite, and tripartite conceptions. I consider the soul to be personified to the extent that it or each of its parts is treated as itself a subject of desires and beliefs which can originate movement and which can converse with the body or with other parts of the soul. Let us consider some examples.

The *Phaedo* represents the soul and the body as distinct subjects of beliefs, desires, and other attitudes; body and soul are, moreover, able to communicate, agree, and conflict with one another. So for instance, Socrates says that the soul can, if it believes that the truth is what the body says it is (δοξάζουσιν ταῦτα ἀληθῆ εἶναι ἅπερ ἂν καὶ τὸ σῶμα φῇ), share the beliefs (ὁμοδοξεῖν) of the body and enjoy its pleasures (83d6–7). He says the soul may be deceived (ἐξαπατᾶται) by the body (65b11), that the soul reasons (λογίζεται) best without the senses (65c5), that the soul of a philosopher disdains (ἀτιμάζει) the body (65d1), that the body disturbs the soul and doesn't allow it (ταράττοντος καὶ οὐκ ἐῶντος) to acquire truth and wisdom (66a5), that the body and its desires (τὸ σῶμα καὶ αἱ τούτου ἐπιθυμίαι) are the cause of war (66c5–7), and that disassociation from the body frees us from the body's folly (τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀφροσύνης) (67a7). He says that nature orders (προστάττει) the divine-like soul to rule (ἄρχειν) and be master over (δεσπόζειν) the mortal-like body, which it commands to be ruled (ἄρχεσθαι) and be subject (δουλεύειν) (80a1–5). He describes the soul's rule as opposing (ἐναντιούμενη) and mastering bodily affections by means of threats and admonishments (τὰ μὲν ἀπειλοῦσα, τὰ δὲ νουθετοῦσα) as well as by physical means, and to sum up, he says that the soul talks to the desires, angers, and fears as one thing talking to another (. . . ἄλλη οὔσα ἄλλω πράγματι διαλεγομένη) and cites the Homeric precedent of Odysseus telling his heart to endure until it is the right time for revenge (94c10–e1, cf. *Odyssey* 20.17–18).

Similarly, the *Republic*, which introduces three parts of the soul as parts with which we learn, grow angry, and desire food, drink, and sex (436a), also characterizes these parts as themselves the subjects and agents of

learning, angering, desiring, and so on.⁶ This move is partly justified by application of the Principle of Opposites to cases of psychic conflict. According to the Principle of Opposites, “the same thing will not (οὐκ ἐθέλησει) do or undergo opposites in the same respect (κατὰ ταῦτόν), in relation to the same thing, at the same time” (436b8–9).⁷ Cases of psychic conflict analyzed by means of the Principle of Opposites show that “we aren’t dealing with one thing but many” (436c). So, for example, a person is thirsty but still doesn’t drink on the grounds that the drink available is bad for him; if being impelled to drink and being restrained from drinking are opposites, then, according to the Principle of Opposites, the person’s soul must be divided into two parts, one of which impels him to drink and the other of which restrains him from drinking (further reflection on the case leads to the identification of these as the appetitive and the reasoning parts). It is not only that in such cases people want to drink insofar as they have a thirsty appetite but refrain insofar as they have a forbidding reason; rather, there is in their soul “something bidding (τὸ κελεύον) . . . them to drink” and “something different, forbidding them to do so, that overrules the thing that bids (τὸ κωλύον πιεῖν, ἄλλο ὄν καὶ κρατοῦν τοῦ κελεύοντος)” (439c5–7). Again, the case of Leontius, who wants to look at corpses but is disgusted and turns away, and, once he has given in to his appetites, curses them (439e–440a), is taken to be a case of “anger making war on the appetites, as one thing against another (τὴν ὀργὴν πολεμεῖν ἐνίοτε ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις . . . ὥς ἄλλο ὄν ἄλλῳ)” (440a5–6). Socrates speaks of the spirited part as itself being angry (440c) and quotes with approval Homer on Odysseus speaking to his heart (*Odyssey* 20.17–18): according to Socrates, “here Homer clearly represents the part that has calculated about better and worse as different from the part that is angry without calculation” (*Republic* 441b7–c2). Yet despite lacking calculation, the spirited part in a courageous person is said to preserve the reason-given word on what is terrible and what is not (τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων παραγγελθὲν δεινόν τε καὶ μὴ) (442c3–4). And Socrates characterizes the virtue of moderation as a condition in which all the parts of the soul share

6 For an argument that personification is due to an “ambiguity” between function and agent, rather than to identification with a bodily agent as claimed by Snell (1960) ch. 1, see Claus (1981) 17–21.

7 This and all subsequent translations of Plato are from the versions in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997). I have here modified the Grube-Reeve translation of *Republic* 436b in two places. For οὐκ ἐθέλησει “will not” replaces “will not be willing,” because the latter seems unnecessarily cumbersome. For κατὰ ταῦτόν, “in the same respect” replaces “in the same part,” following the arguments of Stalley (1975) 112–18.

the same belief (ὁμοδοξῶσι, 442d1) about which of them should rule and which be ruled (442c–d).

The *Republic's* later characterizations of the soul intensify the personifying features identified so far from Book IV. In Book X, Socrates observes that we sometimes persist in having appearances contrary to those we have arrived at by reasoning; for example, even though we have reasoned that the stick half in the water is straight, it still goes on *looking* bent. Applied to this phenomenon, the Principle of Opposites yields a division of the soul into two parts: one to hold the beliefs arrived at by measurement and the other to hold the beliefs which conflict with them; it is the latter, “inferior,” part that is affected by imitation (602c–603a).⁸ Again, the appetitive part is said to “suppose” (οἷεται, 571d1) a dream-experience real. And while the general Book IX identification of ends characteristically pursued by each part of the soul – knowledge of the truth by reason, honor by spirit, and “food, drink, sex, and all the things associated with them” by appetite (580d–581b) – does not particularly personify the parts, the image with which Socrates sums up this account of the soul does: our soul consists of three creatures somehow joined together, a multicolored beast with many heads of gentle and savage animals (the appetitive part), a lion (the spirited part), and a human being (the rational part). The advocate of justice recommends that the human being take control and, like a farmer, feed and domesticate the gentle heads while preventing the savage ones from growing, make the lion his ally, and make the lion and the beast friends with each other and himself (588b–589b). In sum, whether they are represented as human or animal,⁹ the parts of the soul are agents or origins of movement; they are subjects of desire, long- as well as short-term, and belief; finally, it is as independent subjects that they communicate with one another.¹⁰

8 The poetry-loving part of the soul that “hungers for the satisfaction of weeping and wailing, because it desires these things by nature” (606a) is not easily mapped either onto the cognitively inferior part of 602c–603b, which believes in accordance with appearance, or onto one of the inferior parts identified in Book IV.

9 The characterization of some of the parts as animals is by no means confined to this image. For example, at 440c–d, reason is said to recall the spirit of an angry man like a shepherd calling to his dog to come back.

10 The earliest complaint about personification of the soul and its parts I have found is in Grote (1865) 3:147–48: “The confusion, into which Plato has here fallen, arises mainly from his exaggerated application of the analogy between the Commonwealth and the Individual: from his anxiety to find in the individual something like what he notes as justice in the Commonwealth: from his assimilating the mental attributes of each individual, divisible only in logical abstraction, to the really distinct individual citizens whose association forms the Commonwealth. It is only by a poetical or rhetorical

Why does Plato represent our motivations as like animals or humans? To answer this question, we need to distinguish personification from partition.¹¹ One goal of partitioning the soul may be to explain behavior: positing a small number of different sources of motivation to account for different action tendencies reduces the bewildering variety of our motivations to a comprehensible few; characterizing some of these motivations as having their own direction and so as capable of conflicting with reason accounts for the surprising phenomena of action contrary to the agent's judgment of what is best. But by contrast with partition, the personification of these motivations contributes nothing to the explanation of behavior.

In addition to explaining synchronic behavior, partition can also explain why different people have different patterns of behavior, action tendencies, and characters: they are dominated by one or another of the different sources of motivation present in each of us. Thus the honor-lover is a person dominated by the spirited part of his soul (the motivations of which may be developed in particular ways in different societies, 435d–e, cf. 544d–e). Once again, however, this explanatory task – explaining personality-types by the predominance of particular motivations in their psychology – does not seem to require that the motivations be personified. So then why personify?¹²

metaphor that you can speak of the several departments of a man's mind, as if they were distinct persons, capable of behaving well or ill towards each other." Recent commentators who agree that the non-rational parts of the soul are "personified" include Annas (1981) ch. 5, esp. 123 ff.; Irwin (1995) 217–22; Cooper (1984) (1999d, 128), and Bobonich (2002) 229–57. These commentators agree in regarding personification as a source of problems for Plato, the most important of which are (1) that if the parts were introduced to explain the behavior of the whole person but themselves behave just like the whole person, their behavior too stands in need of explanation (indeed the same explanation) as the whole person whose behavior they were introduced to explain, and (2) that it is hard to see how these three person-like parts form a unitary subject of experience and action.

11 In his paper for the University of Toronto conference on the Divided Soul, André Laks drew a similar distinction between what he called "heterogeneity" and "homunculus" in the psychology of the *Republic*.

12 I do not mean to suggest that if personification does no theoretical-explanatory work, we should judge that the parts of our souls are not really person-like. We may have reason to believe in unobserved entities (or unobserved features of entities) because they do some theoretical-explanatory work or because they serve some practical end. Compare Socrates' comment on the doctrine of recollection: "I do not insist that my argument is right in all other respects, but I would contend at all costs both in word and deed as far as I could that we will be better men, braver and less idle, if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know and that we must not look for it" (*Meno* 86b–c).

It is commonly said that the characterizations of the soul detailed above should not be understood literally, for they are metaphorical, or a *façon de parler*. Even if this is right, we still need to understand why Plato chooses these metaphors or *façons de parler* rather than others. One (I suspect widely-held) view is that personification somehow captures the way we experience ourselves.¹³ I do not know whether this is the case (Is it true in every culture? Where it is true, is it the cause or the effect of ways of representing human beings?), but even if it is, personification is not the only way in which Plato characterizes the soul or its parts: for example, he also likens the embodied soul to the body of the barnacle-encrusted and maimed sea-god Glaucus (*Republic* 611b–612a), the spirited part of the soul to a metal that must be tempered (*Republic* 411a–b), and the appetitive part to a jar which may be leaky or sound (*Gorgias* 493a–494a). Nor is it the case that Plato needs to personify psychic entities in order to represent psychic conflict. For example, in the *Republic*, he uses the language of opposing forces to show how the Principle of Opposites applies to psychic conflict, describing desire as “tak[ing] something (τινος λαβεῖν)” (437b2) and “be[ing] impelled towards it (ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὀρμεῖ)” (439b1) and “thirst[ing] and driv[ing] . . . [the soul] like a beast to drink (τοῦ δίψοντος καὶ ἄγοντος ὥσπερ θηρίον ἐπὶ τὸ πιεῖν)” (439b4–5), while aversion “draws . . . [the soul] back when it is thirsting (αὐτὴν ἀνθέλκει διψῶσαν)” (439b3), and aversion as “push[ing] and driv[ing] away (ἄπωθεῖν καὶ ἄπτελάνυειν)” (437c9).¹⁴

It may also be said that it is the city-soul analogy that explains the personification of the soul in the *Republic* (so personification in other dialogues would have to be explained by the literary context in those dialogues).¹⁵ But this is not yet an explanation: Plato the author chose the political analogy in order to illuminate the nature of the soul (with

13 A.W. Price suggests that personification is “a manner of speaking, a way of writing up internal conflict in the style of external drama . . . such conceptions can faithfully capture an aspect of the way the mind pictures itself, a self-dramatizing mode in which it experiences, and transmutes, its own workings” (Price (1995) 56).

14 Bobonich (1994, 3–36) documents Plato’s use of two models for talking about psychic conflict in *Republic* IV: in terms of opposing forces and in terms of command and consent. This is already reason to disagree with Price (1995, 2), when he writes, “It is inevitable that we should speak of mental conflict in social language.”

15 So, for example, Price claims that personification is most intense in Books VIII and IX, which, “expounding parallels between political and psychic decline, naturally picture the soul in civic and interpersonal terms” (Price (1995) 56). In comments on the present chapter, A.A. Long developed this suggestion and argued that it is the city-soul analogy, which models vice on civil war and virtue on concord, that politicizes the soul and so is responsible for personification.

respect to what individual justice looks like and how it is good for its possessor), but this leaves open at least two possibilities: that the personified depiction of the soul is a side-effect of the city-soul analogy chosen for other purposes (which purposes?), or that the city-soul analogy was chosen in part because it personifies the soul.

Considered in his time and place, Plato is not unusual in personifying psychic elements. In a Homeric passage well known to readers of Plato, Odysseus' spirit (θυμός) is aroused when he sees his maidservants off to visit the suitors, and his heart (κράδιη) cries out, and he has to tell it to endure patiently (*Odyssey* 20.9–21). Other Homeric examples include Nestor taking counsel “if wit (νόος) can do anything for us now” (*Iliad* 14.61–62);¹⁶ Asios failing to persuade the heart (φρήν) of Zeus (*Iliad* 12.173); and Kalchas being accused of prophesying whatever is dear to his heart (φρεσί) (*Iliad* 1.107). Euripides' Medea addresses her heart “Do not, O my heart, you must not do these things! Poor heart, let them go, have pity upon the children!” and then a little later, “Oh, arm yourself in steel, my heart! Do not hang back/ From doing this fearful and necessary wrong.” In the next lines she addresses her hand in much the same way, “Oh, come my hand, poor wretched hand, and take the sword/ Take it, step forward to this bitter starting point/ And do not be a coward, do not think of them/ How sweet they are and how you are their mother” (*Medea* 1056–57 and 1242–47).¹⁷ Still, that a philosopher's predecessors did *x*, *y*, or *z* is a less satisfactory explanation than one that explains what role this *x*, *y*, or *z* plays in the philosopher's work. And as we shall see, Plato does not just continue to personify psychic elements as his predecessors did; he transforms the use of personification.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that personification is a feature not only of Plato's middle-period but also of his late psychology, where it appears to conflict with two significant theoretical developments in the psychology: (1) the denial of belief to appetite, and (2) the recognition of the requirements for unity of the experiencing subject.¹⁸

In the myth of the *Phaedrus*, Plato represents the soul as a chariot driven by a charioteer (reason), and pulled by one noble and one bad

16 Tr. R. Lattimore (1951).

17 Tr. Rex Warner, in Grene and Lattimore (1955). In Sophocles, Oedipus says his soul (ψύχη) grieves for both himself and the city (*Oedipus Rex* 64); Antigone says that her soul (ψύχη) has long been dead so as to serve the dead (*Antigone* 559), and Odysseus says he does not like to praise a stubborn soul (σκληρὰν ψύχην) (*Ajax* 1361).

18 These developments, and their philosophical motivations and consequences, are described in Bobonich (1994) (discussed in the longer version of the present chapter in OSAP). The first development is also discussed in Lorenz (2006).

horse. According to the myth, the horses never see the Forms (247d–e, 248a–c), but having seen the Forms is necessary for the ability to conceptualize or speak (249b–c). Yet the myth goes on to describe the horses as having beliefs and desires as complex as any in the *Republic*, and as engaging in cognitively sophisticated bargaining and manipulation. The noble horse, “lover of honor with modesty and self-control (τιμῆς ἐραστὴς μετὰ σωφροσύνης τε καὶ αἰδοῦς); companion to true glory (ἀληθινῆς δόξης ἐταῖρος) . . . needs no whip and is guided by verbal commands alone (κελεῦσματι μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἡνιοχεῖται)” (253d6–e1); it is “controlled . . . by its sense of shame (αἰδοῖ βιαζόμενος)” (254a2); when the bad horse tries to make the lover suggest to the beloved that they have sex, the noble horse and the charioteer both become “angry in their belief that they are being made to do things that are dreadfully wrong” (ἀγανακτοῦντε . . . ὥς δεινὰ καὶ παράνομα ἀναγκαζομένω) (254b1); when the charioteer pulls back from this, the noble horse “fall[s] back voluntarily . . . and drenches the whole soul with sweat out of shame and awe” (ὑπ᾿αἰσχύνης τε καὶ θάμβους) (254c4); together with the charioteer, the noble horse begs the bad horse to wait till later and when “later” arrives, it pretends to have forgotten (254d); finally, when the lover and beloved are in bed, the noble horse “resists such requests [viz., the bad horse’s requests for sex] with modesty and reason (μετ᾿αἰδοῦς καὶ λόγου ἀντιτείνει)” (256a6). As for the bad horse, although (almost) deaf, it “gives in [to the charioteer and noble horse refusing sex] grudgingly only when they beg it to wait till later . . . and when the promised time arrives, and they are pretending to have forgotten, it reminds them” and charges them with cowardice and promise-breaking (. . . δειλὶς τε καὶ ἀνανδρὶς λιπόντε τὴν τάξιν καὶ ὁμολογίαν) (254c8–d1). And so on.

Again, in the *Timaeus*, although the appetitive part lacks the capacity to form beliefs (77b), it is nevertheless also supposedly capable of obeying reason (only if it refuses to obey (ὁπότε . . . τῷ ἐπιτάγματι καὶ λόγῳ μηδαμῇ πείσθῃσθαι ἐκὸν ἐθέλοι, 70a6–7) should the spirited part of the soul restrain it by force), and of divination (the gods having made even “this base part of ourselves as excellent as possible” (71d–e)). A final example, from the *Laws*: the Athenian describes pleasure as getting its way “by persuasive deceit,” remarking that it does not matter whether pleasure and anger are parts or states (863b).

Personification, then, is a persistent feature of Plato’s psychology, and it stands in need of explanation. To answer the question, “why does Plato personify?” I want to begin with our own practices of personification.

III Thinking about our motivations

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes thinking as the soul's conversation with itself about the objects under consideration (189e). This is a quite natural way to conceive of a process in which one gives voice to reasons for and against believing that something is the case or engaging in a particular course of action. It allows for, but does not require, conceiving of the internal debate as engaged in by distinct subjects with different interests and points of view. Our question is: what is the advantage of that further characterization?

People often make use of this further characterization. For example: suppose you have a bad temper, and become easily irritated at people for making small mistakes, or taking too long to complete jobs. Suppose also that you would like to become more patient and forgiving, on the grounds that this is a better way to be (both for yourself and for those around you). What can you do to become as you want to be? A few common strategies: you can make a resolution, *viz.*, "After 31 December, I'm not going to lose my temper"; when you feel your anger rising at what looks to you like carelessness or inefficiency, you can count to ten before responding; you can also, in the meantime, talk to yourself, saying, e.g., "It isn't his fault; he's new at his job" or "That's a boring job; it's natural for the mind to wander." Of course, if you adopt the last strategy, you had better be prepared for some talking back: "When you're new at your job, you should pay more attention; you need to work harder to make sure you do it right" or "Everyone's job is sometimes boring, and then you have to take responsibility for making sure your mind doesn't wander."

We can characterize this sort of internal debate in different ways. Focussing on the content of what is said, we can say that the strategy involves determining which beliefs about the situation and the agent are appropriate, or true and relevant, in anticipation of the fact that the arousal and dissipation of anger are responsive to such beliefs. But if we are already conceiving of the process of determining what to believe or do as an internal debate, modeling our experience of inner dissension or uncertainty on disagreement among distinct individuals in a group, we might also group some of the beliefs together under the rubric of a certain kind of "voice" and then construct a character for their "speaker." To return to the example, you might say that one part of you is sympathetic, seeing others' situations from their point of view as well as your own, but another part is self-righteous and unsympathetic, concerned only with

meeting the standards that have been set. You then might (depending on the images you have to use from your culture and your personal experience) model your internal conflict on the sort of conflict that, say, an experienced teacher would have with a principal whose only background is administrative.

Now I don't know whether assigning one's motivations to distinct parts of oneself or *personae* "in" oneself leads to greater success in influencing one's own behavior than does counting to ten.¹⁹ But it looks as if it might. And what it certainly does is to give one a way of understanding what one is trying to do in trying to change oneself to better live up to one's ideals. Assigning motivations to distinct and evaluatively loaded *personae* facilitates disowning some of one's motivations and identifying with others. Is that the sympathetic part, or the part that's afraid of confrontation? Is this the self-righteous part, or the part that alone maintains standards? Such attributions can enable one not only to disown some of one's motivations, but to do so in what seems an appropriate way: "The anger that I'm feeling just belongs to the child in me who can't see things from others' point of view." On the one hand, it really *is* me feeling this anger (it's no one outside of me); on the other hand, the anger is not a motivation I fully endorse. Conversely, such attributions can enable me to identify with some of my motivations in an appropriate manner: although not every part of me is patient and forgiving, the part that's sympathetic is. That (patient and forgiving) is what I'd like to become – and already am potentially, because a part of me already is, actually.

I can see two reasons why we might personify our motivations in such circumstances. First, our default mode of explanation seems to be by the attribution of desires and beliefs, and we eschew this default mode only when we have good reasons to, such as that the explanandum is not intelligent or even animate. So if I am trying to influence my own behavior, or if I feel conflicted, or insufficiently motivated to do what I think I ought, or puzzled about some attitude that I have, it is likely that I will explain this in terms of the beliefs and desires of "parts" of my psychology. Second, we tend to love and hate human beings and other animals much more intensely than we do other sorts of things, and so representing other sorts of things, including our own motivations, as

19 Richard Wollheim asks this question about the bodily ego, which, according to Freud, enables the internalization or externalization of other people using metaphors of ingestion, excretion, and so on, when he asks whether such representations of mental states and processes are necessary for the mental states or processes to be efficacious. See Wollheim (1993) 64–78. I'm grateful to Jonathan Lear for directing me to this discussion.

humans or other animals may enable us to mobilize our emotional and motivational resources towards them.²⁰

This sketch of our own practices of personification is oversimplified in at least two ways. First, our various motivations do not always wear their value on their sleeve, and so our *personae* for them are often not as one-dimensional as the above examples may suggest. Sometimes, anger is the appropriate response.²¹ Second, one's uncertainty about the value of one's various motivations is likely to be heightened when one does not have a clear sense of which of one's motivations ought to be authoritative. This may open us up to manipulation (including self-manipulation), perhaps in terms of a conception of what is authoritative that is acknowledged by one's actual and potential selves; consider, for example, the efficacy of the label "unmanly" in the formation of the timocratic character (*Republic* 549d).

A final observation: to the extent that folk psychology already involves personification, Plato may not need to argue that the soul or its parts are person-like (as he does have to argue that there are three distinct parts of the soul) in order to use it in the service of ethical transformation as sketched in the next section.

IV Philosophic virtue and personification

Let us return to Plato's uses of personification in particular. In this section, I argue that in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus* Plato personifies the soul as part of his protreptic to philosophic virtue, showing how philosophic virtue develops the best of our features and requires the disciplining of the others. By representing some of our motivations as worthy-of-our-identifying-with, and others as to-be-alienated, personification both attracts us to philosophic virtue and steels us for the difficult task of acquiring it.

Plato makes explicit that the psychology developed in the *Republic* is in the service of showing what justice in the soul is and why it is choiceworthy: this is what Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge to Socrates requires (358c–d, 367b–e, 368c), and it is what Socrates appeals to when he wants to excuse the imprecision of the *Republic's* psychology.²²

20 I owe this suggestion to Robert Wright.

21 Philip Clarke made this point in his thoughtful comments on this chapter.

22 While Aristotle affirms the lack of precision as appropriate to practical matters in general (1094b12, 1098a28, 1137b19), Plato seems only to countenance it for the protreptic purposes.

SOCRATES: you should know, Glaucon, that, in my opinion, we will never get a precise answer [*viz.*, to the question, do individuals have the same parts in their soul as the classes in the city, so that they may be correctly called “just” etc. if they have the same internal condition?] using our present methods – although there is another longer and fuller road that does lead to such an answer. But perhaps we can get an answer that’s up to the standard of (ἀξίως) our previous statements and inquiries.

(*Republic* 435c–d, cf. 504a–b, 611e–12a)

Socrates’ apologetic words should not obscure how positively well-suited is his personified soul to the task of showing the nature and choiceworthiness of justice conceived of as the virtue of a philosopher.

To see this, we need to consider two things: the (explicit) characterization of the virtue of the soul, and its (implicit) contrast with the imperfect virtue of non-philosophers. Following the argument establishing the three parts of the soul (*Republic* 435d–441c), Socrates gives a surprisingly brief account of the virtues of the soul (441c–442d). Justice is the condition in which each of the three parts, reason, spirit, and appetite, does its own work: reason ruling with wisdom, and spirit obeying and allying with reason (441d–e). So justice requires wisdom, which is the rational part’s knowledge of what is advantageous for each part and for the whole soul (442c).²³ It turns out that the argument for the choiceworthiness of justice establishes the choiceworthiness of the philosopher’s justice, and to understand what that is, one has to learn something about what wisdom is. The brief account of the individual virtues gives way to a lengthy account of what a philosopher is and knows (474b–540c).

We may now turn to philosophic virtue’s contrast with “civic” (πολιτική) virtue (Socrates’ example is courage), which is based on law-inculcated true belief (430a–c). That the argument for the choiceworthiness of justice establishes the choiceworthiness of the philosopher’s justice does not mean that Plato denies the value of less perfect instances of justice, or that he would not extend his argument to acknowledge the value of these less perfect instances.²⁴ But these two kinds of virtue do play different dialectical roles in the argument of the *Republic*. Socrates

23 And courage is the condition in which the spirited part obeys the declarations of the rational part as to what is to be feared (442b–c), and moderation the condition in which the parts of the soul agree that the rational part should rule and the non-rational parts be ruled (442c–d).

24 I have argued that the non-philosophic guardians in the ideal city do have genuine, albeit imperfect virtue, and that their possession of imperfect virtue is also good for them, in Kamtekar (1998) 315–39.

is advocating or recommending philosophic virtue to his interlocutors, as supremely worthy of choice. Civic virtue, on the other hand, is not a choice: Socrates' interlocutors are not in a position to choose it, for they are neither living in nor actually able to bring about the ideal city whose program of early education produces civic virtue, and in any case, the production of civic virtue seems to require that environmental forces shape the pre-rational mind. (In the "musical" education, impressionable young minds are stamped with stories of what gods and heroes do, so as to develop in them both firmly held beliefs about which acts and events are terrible, shameful, impious, permissible, admirable, moderate, courageous, etc., as well as stable dispositions to behave gently towards co-citizens and harshly towards enemies, and to deal properly with dangers, losses, and so on.) So even though civic virtue may be good for its possessor, the argument of the *Republic* does not feature it for its choiceworthiness.

Consequently, because he is not recommending to his interlocutors that they pursue civic virtue, Socrates has no particular need of a personified psychology to describe it. Instead, Socrates speaks of two parts of the soul, the spirited and the philosophic, which, having been stretched and relaxed by musical and gymnastic training, are now in harmony (410b–411e). He characterizes the philosophic part as the source of cultivation and the spirited part as the source of savagery, which must, like iron, be tempered to just the right extent else risk melting or becoming brittle. Too little music and too much gymnastic make a person savage, his spirited part harsh and his philosophic part reason-hating; but too much music and too little gymnastic make a person cowardly, his philosophic part soft and his spirited part feeble (if it is naturally weak) or irritable (if naturally strong). Even though the spirited part and the philosophic part are independent sources of motivation, and tend in different directions, they are not conceived of as themselves subjects or agents, but as like strings in a musical instrument, to be harmonized with one another.

It might be objected that even in the course of describing early education in civic virtue, Socrates already personifies psychic motivations. At 389d, he describes moderation as rule over the pleasures of food, drink, and sex, and at 430e–431a, as rule of the better over the worse; at 390d he quotes the very lines from Homer he later uses to distinguish the reasoning part of the soul from the spirited part: "He struck his chest and spoke to his heart: 'Endure, my heart, you've suffered more shameful things than this.'" It is true that the notion of one thing ruling another is

suggestive of personification;²⁵ but that only makes it all the more striking that Plato does not exploit this possibility as long as he is talking about civic virtue – and then does exploit it fully, using the very same lines of Homer, when he is setting out the psychology which will enable him to characterize and praise philosophic virtue. Indeed, it is not until Socrates defines philosophic courage that he says that the spirited part is the holder of the beliefs about what is to be feared and what isn't (442b–c; contrast the account of civic courage, 429c–430c).

Recall (from section II) Book IX's image of the soul as containing a human being, a lion, and a beast with many heads, some gentle and some savage; virtue is the condition in which the human being "within"²⁶ is in control, with the lion as his ally, taming or restraining the heads of the many-headed beast in the manner of a farmer (588c–589b). While there is no little person or lion or many-headed beast inside (and Socrates doesn't express any hope that people will believe there is, as he does in the case of the Noble Lie that our souls are gold, silver, or iron and bronze, 415c–d), thinking about our motivations as belonging to one or another of these *personae* will help us to identify with them or to approve them conditionally, or to be alienated from them. Given that we already believe that the appetitive desires the fulfillment of which leads to health and well-being (e.g., hunger and thirst) have to be fulfilled moderately, and that the unnecessary ones (e.g., unlawful sexual desires that surface in dreams, 571c–572a) have to be stamped out or at least restrained, this image should, on any given occasion, reinforce our intentions; it may even steel us for the disciplining we have to do. Finally, it provides a way of dealing with particular motivations without attending to their content.²⁷ After all, who wants to say that he is run by a pack of wild beasts?

Julia Annas warns about this way of looking at our souls:

This idea, that something is part of me but not really me, not really human, is an unattractive and dangerous way of looking at myself. When I think that I am rational but it is not, I am externalizing part of myself, looking at it as something over which I have only the kind of control that I might have over an animal – that is, external control; I can get it to do some things and refrain from others, but I can never get it to understand my

25 As is the talk of virtue as concord (συμφωνία), cf. *Laws* 653bc 660d–e, cf. 689a–c.

26 Aristotle explicitly states that the rational part of the soul is what a person is, most of all (*EN* 1178a7); here Plato is making the same point by characterizing the rational part as the human being within the human being.

27 This way of handling one's own motivations would seem to be more appropriate for those making the transition to philosophic virtue than for philosophers themselves. I am very grateful to Philip Clarke for discussion on this point.

deliberations. It is thus not an accident that we find in this context the most extreme form of the language of coercion in the *Republic* – the view that the lowest part, or the person following it, should be enslaved to the best part, the reason . . . There are two ways in which Plato regards the divided soul . . . In one he is trying to do justice to the way in which some aspects of us may fail to go along with right reason, and may need habituation and training to develop in rational ways and in pursuit of ends sanctioned by reason. The idea here is the harmonized, integrated person all of whose motivations are, without conflict, in line with reason . . . But Plato also sees the idea at times in a different way, one in which the person isolates his “true self” in his reason and then externalizes the parts other than reason as something subhuman, rejected and kept under harsh external control.²⁸

Annas’s criticism here is not of personification per se, but of the particular *personae* sometimes accorded to the non-rational parts of the soul: if they are animals, they are subject only to external control, not really “me.”

Now it might be that “the two ways in which Plato regards the divided soul” correspond to two classes into which Plato divides our various emotions and appetites: the kind that can respond to reason, and the kind that can’t. But it is also worth noting that the *Republic* externalizes less than the *Phaedo*.²⁹ The *Phaedo* identifies the self with the soul, and calls the body the soul’s instrument, while at the same time treating it as a distinct subject with base commitments (and as such unsuited to ruling for different reasons).³⁰ It locates the non-rational motivations in the body, and advocates disengagement – this is why the philosopher regards pains and pleasures equally as nails riveting his soul to his body (83d), and indeed regards his body as hindering his pursuit of wisdom (65a–67b, 83a–d);

28 Annas (1999) 135–36.

29 As Charles Kahn noted in comments on this chapter, the *Phaedo*’s personification of the body is also extreme in comparison with antecedents such as Democritus. Democritus does personify the body and soul to some extent, for example by imagining them (or more precisely the mind and senses) in conversation. But, on his account, while the body has its own desires and needs, it is not independent enough to cause trouble: the body’s desires are simple and easily fulfilled (B 223); ruin can only be caused by the mind’s bad judgment, and when it comes to assigning blame, Democritus faults the soul only for ruining the body, for the body is like a tool (B 159). By contrast, Plato’s *Phaedo* blames the body for afflicting us with all kinds of desires; as a consequence, Plato must give the body greater independence and agency than Democritus does.

30 In his sensitive reading of the *Phaedo*, Raphael Woolf tries to resolve this tension “in terms of the autonomy not of the body as a subject of experience, but of sense-perception as the deliverer of a misguided picture of reality” (Woolf (2004) 108). But if the argument I am making in these pages succeeds in showing that Plato has good practical or protreptic reasons to characterize the body as an autonomous agent and subject (i.e., to give over some of our psychic motivations and abilities to the *persona* of the body), then we do not need to resolve the tension.

this is why death, the separation of the soul from the body, is no tragedy for the philosopher, for the philosopher constantly seeks to disengage his soul (65a–67b, 114e), which “by itself” has intellectual affinities, from the interests of his body, the source of appetitive and emotional desires. And to the extent that the body and the soul are committed to conflicting values, as two persons might be,³¹ the condition of the embodied soul looks to be unavoidably conflictual, and disengagement the best prospect for peace. By contrast, the *Republic*’s location of emotional and appetitive desires as well as intellectual ones in the soul supports a conception of philosophic virtue not as disengagement but rather as a condition of rule or management (when all the parts are conceived of as human subjects) or restraint, domestication, and cultivation (when the lower parts are conceived of as wild or tame animals). The *Republic* much more than the *Phaedo* suggests acknowledging ownership of (although not of course granting authority to) these motivations: they are all of the soul, and the soul as a whole is the subject of virtue or vice and happiness or unhappiness (even if only the rational part of the soul survives death). The *Republic* seems quite concerned to point out proper and improper ways of identifying with our motivations. For example, in discussing temperance, Socrates says that the expression, “control over oneself” (κρείττω αὐτοῦ) is laughable, since the same self is controller and controlled; nevertheless, he explains that there is something true in this expression; as he puts it, it is the trace moderation has left in the language. The truth is that self-control is the condition in which the better part of the soul controls the worse part (430e–431a). The expression “control over oneself” expresses that truth because people use the expression to praise, implicitly identifying the person praised with the controlling self, and judging it to be the better self. Nevertheless, as Socrates points out, the object of the control exercised by this praised person is also the person himself, i.e., a “lower” part of himself, not some alien force to be controlled.

31 In the *Phaedo* Socrates contrasts the philosopher’s ideal – virtue with wisdom – and ordinary, non-philosophical virtue – virtue without wisdom – labeling the latter “so-called,” “illusory,” and “slavish.” He calls wisdom the only true coinage: whereas ordinary virtue empowers its possessors to face fears in order to avoid greater fears, to refrain from pleasures in order to enjoy greater pleasures, and so on (68c–69c). Plato’s point seems to be that philosophic virtue involves the agent’s adopting wisdom as a new end and standard of evaluation, while ordinary virtue, although it may involve a change in the agent’s behavior, involves no change in the agent’s conception of the good or terms of evaluation – pleasures and fears remain the agent’s good and bad, and to obtain more of the one and less of the other remains the basis on which he decides what to do.

Finally, the *Phaedrus* simultaneously insists that the lower parts of the soul lack the conceptual capacities required for belief or speech and personifies these soul-parts extensively. Because the *Phaedrus* recommends, in rival speeches, both non-philosophic and philosophic virtue, it tests my claim that Plato uses personification especially to represent and recommend philosophic virtue.

Socrates begins his speech on the harms of a relationship with a lover (and the benefits of one with a non-lover) with a definition, for which he sketches a rudimentary psychology. According to this psychology, we have in us two forms, an inborn desire for pleasure, and an acquired judgment (ἐπικτήτος δόξα) aiming at what is best. The condition in which judgment rules is self-control; the condition in which desire for one or another pleasure rules might be gluttony or sexual love or something else, depending on the pleasure desired. Love, then, is the condition in which the irrational desire for pleasure in beauty, along with kindred desires for bodily beauty, dominates judgment and all the other desires (237d–238c).³²

The two parts mentioned in this psychology are minimally personified: they have intentional attitudes, and their relations are described in political language. Thus judgment aims (ἐφιμένει) at what's best; the parts can conflict with one other (στυγιάζετον) or be of the same mind (ὁμονοεῖτον). The claim that they can dominate (κρατεῖ) one another could be just a claim about relative strength, but cashing out the difference between judgment leading (ἀγούσης) us by reasoning about what's best and desire dragging (ἐλκούσης) us without reasoning requires some personification (23d9–238a1). With love characterized as a condition of being out of mental control, the failings of the lover are easy to see: the lover, overwhelmed by desire, seeks to assure the beloved's total dependence on him and so deprives him of his family and wealth, bodily health and strength, and intellectual development (238e–240a). While his love lasts, the lover is a pest (240c–e), but his love doesn't even last; after a time he comes to be ruled by "right-minded reason," whereupon he turns away from his past, including his past promises to the beloved (241a).

32 Here, the fact that others besides those called lovers desire beauty is taken as a reason to find out what is distinctive about lovers' desire for beauty (the answer being that it is irrational and accompanied by bodily desires); by contrast, at *Symposium* 205a–d, the fact that others besides those called lovers desire good things and happiness is taken as a reason to discount the ordinary-language restriction of the term "lover" and to count all desirers of good things lovers too (cf. "these words . . . really belong to the whole," 205d7).

Socrates famously interrupts this speech to recant, and at the end of his recantation describes the non-lover's friendship for what it really is: "diluted by human self-control, all it pays are cheap, human dividends, and though the slavish attitude it engenders in a friend's soul is widely praised as virtue, it tosses the soul around for nine thousand years on the earth and leads it, mindless, beneath it" (256e–257a). This condemnation of "human self-control" and the "slavish" attitude it engenders echoes the *Phaedo's* condemnation of the "slavish" moderation of those non-philosophers who "wallow in the mire" of the underworld (68e, 69c). Merely human self-control is put in its proper place by contrast with philosophic virtue, but to show this, Socrates first makes the point that madness, not having one's judgment in control, can be a blessing from the gods, as in the cases of prophecy and poetry. Socrates' brief now is to show that love, too, can be a god-sent madness, the source of divine goods, but this requires him to introduce a new psychology.

This second psychology describes the soul as composed of a winged chariot driven by a charioteer and pulled by two horses; in humans, one of these horses is good and the other bad (246a–b). The image of the charioteer expresses (better than the image of the farmer in the *Republic*) reason's two functions: to manage the other parts and to know the truth. A charioteer manages his horses and uses them to get somewhere; reason manages non-rational motivations (and somehow uses them) to see the Forms (248a). Conversely, representing the non-rational motivations as the chariot's horses suggests that they are not (not even appetite is) merely obstacles to reason's progress but somehow (as a whole, when properly trained) essential to it. It is the horses that are winged, and it is wings that enable ascent to the divine heights that afford a view of the Forms (246d). And the horses as well as the charioteer respond to the beauty of the beloved – although the bad horse's particular way of responding requires reining in, so to speak.

By contrast, the first psychology ignores the intrinsic value of, and rational desire for, knowing the truth, and so it can recommend control by rational judgment rather than by irrational desire only on the grounds that rational control, being sober, stable, and lasting, better equips us to have the very same goods sought by our irrational desires – it is in no position to say that rational control alone affords us access to divine goods.³³ The idea of a god-sent madness pulls apart these two reasons for

33 This is my main reason for disagreeing with Martha Nussbaum's claim that the *Phaedrus's* first two speeches represent the views of Plato's middle-period dialogues (1986, ch. 7):

valuing rational control and shows that if the divine good of knowledge can come to us in some other way than via the controlled exercise of our rational powers, for example, through madness, then we ought to value this madness, for the value of madness or rational control is derivative. From the perspective of the second psychology, we can also see that the first psychology neglects the insight into genuine value – responsiveness to beauty – possessed by our non-rational motivations.³⁴

Representing reason as the charioteer leads us not only to identify with reason, but also to regard the behavior (and presumably also the condition) of our appetites and emotions as our responsibility, just as a charioteer is responsible for his horses. The fact that charioteer and both horses survive death also encourages identification with them; contrast the post-mortem survival of only reason in the *Republic* (but cf. 246d).

After the bad horse has been bloodied by being pulled back by the bit many times, it becomes “humble enough to follow the charioteer’s warnings, and when it sees the beautiful boy it dies of fright” (254e). Here it seems as if, violent as the training has been, appetite is at last able to follow reason without actual or threatened violence: perhaps forbidden desires are by now associated in memory with punishment, as in a trained horse which needs only the touch of the bit as a sign reminding it to obey.³⁵ Yet there are limits to how the charioteer can mould his horses. The charioteer’s reverence for the boy (which is prompted by his memory of Beauty enthroned next to Temperance) is contrasted with the fear which helps the bad horse hold back from the boy as the charioteer does and wishes it to do. Further, (part of) appetite remains somewhat recalcitrant, for when the lover and beloved are in bed, the bad horse pleads with the charioteer “that after all its sufferings it is entitled to a little fun” (256a).

The new psychology can represent the struggle involved in pursuing wisdom in a way that both prepares one for what is to come and supports one’s resolve to persevere despite difficulties. One difficulty is of understanding the internal conflict and resistance to philosophic virtue, and the new psychology provides a way of thinking about this. When the

it seems to me that the non-lover’s fault is a failure to appreciate what is most valuable about reason – he thinks it is control over the non-rational, rather than access to the divine – and that in the *Republic* it is already clear that what is most valuable is not merely rational rule and harmony, but rather contact with (or approach to the) Forms (a concomitant of which is rational rule and harmony). Cf. *Rep.* 590c–d. I do agree with Nussbaum, however, that the *Phaedrus* acknowledges the role of emotions and appetites in the best life more than the *Republic* and *Phaedo* do.

34 Cf. *Timaeus* 71d–e. 35 Thanks to Sarah Broadie for discussion on this point.

bad horse pleads for sex, the noble horse and the charioteer both grow angry at it for trying to make them do the wrong thing, and try to restrain it, the charioteer bloodying the bad horse's mouth by yanking on the bit. In return, the bad horse calls them cowardly and unjust (254b–d). Surprisingly, here the charioteer uses the whip and the bit to control the bad horse, while the bad horse pleads with the charioteer and the good horse and reproaches them with cowardice and injustice.³⁶ One point this makes is that our being rational allows our appetitive desires to appear to us as reasons, and our being appetitive allows our reasons to appear to us as violent forces.³⁷ We might develop this point to characterize the way in which a philosopher must consider the reasons in favor of even appetitive desires, since the philosopher's wisdom equips him with knowledge of what is good for the whole soul and each of its parts.

V The status of the psychological accounts

I have argued for a relatively narrow conclusion, that Plato's personification of the soul and its parts can be accounted for by the practical and protreptic goal of representing the development of philosophic virtue to would-be philosophers. But Plato's psychology comes as a package, and a question arises as to how much of the content of that psychology one should try to account for in terms of Plato's practical and protreptic goals. For example does Plato (ever) think it a theoretical-explanatory truth that we have three types of motivations – appetitive, spirited, and rational – or is this part of his psychology also to be explained in terms of its practical and protreptic goals?³⁸

36 Bobonich (2002) claims that the *Phaedrus*, like the *Timaeus*, rejects the *Republic's* distinction between controlling the appetitive part by force and by persuasion (314). But it seems to me that, as in the *Republic*, so too in the later dialogues appetites are controlled by persuasion as well as by force (presumably some can be controlled by reason while others must be controlled by force). For examples of the former: at *Phaedrus* 254d–e the bad horse is said to follow the charioteer's requests and warnings; at *Timaeus* 70a–b the explanation of the location of the spirited part in the chest is that this enables it to use force on the appetites if they should refuse to obey the dictates of reason.

37 As an ex-smoker I find that nicotine cravings present arguments for their satisfaction: "you can't concentrate on your writing unless you smoke" or "you'll gain all kinds of weight if you stop smoking." And as a parent I find that young children can experience their parents' reason-giving as a kind of aggression.

38 Edelstein (1949) argues that Plato's ethical myths about the fate of the soul in the afterlife appeal to the non-rational parts of the soul, rousing and confirming their hopes, and allaying their fears, because these parts cannot understand the dialectical arguments that speak to reason. I have been arguing that the representation of the parts of the soul as spoken to is itself "mythical."

In order to answer this question, we need to consider the disclaimers in Plato's accounts of the soul in addition to the remarks about limited accuracy in the *Republic* (noted above in section IV). The *Phaedo* concludes its account of the afterlife of the soul with Socrates saying, "No sensible man would insist that these things are as I have described them, but I think it is fitting for a man to risk the belief – for the risk is a noble one – that this, or something like this, is true about our souls and their dwelling places, since the soul is evidently immortal, and a man should repeat this to himself as if it were an incantation, which is why I have been prolonging my own tale" (114d).³⁹ The *Phaedrus* begins its account of the structure and history of the soul with the words, "To describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account, altogether a task for a god in every way; but to say what it is like (ὥς δὲ ἔοικεν) is humanly possible and takes less time. So let us do the second (ἐοικέτω)" (246a5–6). Referring back to this account of the soul later in the dialogue, Socrates calls it a "not altogether implausible account, a storylike hymn" (οὐ παντάπασιν ἀπίθανον λόγον, μυθικόν τινα ὕμνον, 265b8–c1).

Perhaps it is difficult to know the soul because all our experiences are of the embodied soul, whereas the soul may in its true nature be simple (*Republic* 611b–612a, *Phaedo* 80b). Or perhaps it is the embodied soul that cannot be known because it undergoes change and things that change cannot be known (cf. *Republic* 477a–479d). Or perhaps again understanding a part of the soul requires understanding what (object of desire or perceptual property) it grasps (*Republic* 611e, *Timaeus* 61d). Yet despite these problems for knowledge of the soul, in the *Phaedrus* Plato suggests that his account of the soul is "likely" (246a5–6), and in the *Phaedo* that the account is worth believing.

I take "likely" to mean "compatible with what the truth must be," where what the truth must be is established by dialectic; my model is the *Republic's* way of determining permissible content for theology or stories about the gods.⁴⁰ Here, some truths about the gods are established by dialectic: god is good, the cause only of good things, and unchanging (379b–383a). These truths constitute patterns (τύποι) to which stories

39 The *Timaeus*, claiming only to present a "likely story" or "likely account" of the cosmos, to which belongs the account of the tripartite soul and the bodily organs in which these parts are housed, warns of inconsistency and inaccuracy in this account (29c). The *Meno* admits the fallibility of its account of the possibility of our learning what we do not know as recollecting truths latent in our souls, but insists on the value of believing that one must search for what one does not know (86b–c).

40 The *Republic* does not call the stories about the gods "likely," but instead, "falsehoods," albeit falsehoods with a core of moral truth.

about the gods must conform (379a, 380c).⁴¹ Socrates deems suitable for elementary education stories which although “false, on the whole . . . have some truth in them” (377a), so long as they only involve “falsehood in words,” but not “falsehood in the soul,” i.e., so long as they do not involve false beliefs about “the most important things” (I take it this means about matters of value) (382a–b). While falsehood in the soul is always bad, falsehood in words can be useful: against one’s enemies, to protect one’s friends from harming themselves, and in the case of stories of ancient events involving the gods; in these contexts, falsehoods should be made as much like the truth as possible (382c–d).⁴² A prime example of a valuable falsehood in words would be the Noble Lie, which although false about the citizens’ birth and psychic make-up, expresses the moral truths that the citizens are interdependent and unequal. Similarly, the “falsehoods in words” about the behavior of gods and heroes express moral truths about what it is permissible or desirable to do and to be.⁴³ So, having established the “patterns” to which representations of the gods must conform, Socrates introduces a second criterion by which to evaluate these representations: their effects on citizens’ souls and behavior. Presumably our lack of exact knowledge about the gods makes it impossible for us to evaluate the truth of these stories beyond their compatibility with the “patterns” of theology.⁴⁴

41 It is difficult to see what sorts of stories could be told about the gods that didn’t represent them as changing at all; perhaps the idea is that behavior expressive of a stable disposition doesn’t involve change and what the gods shouldn’t do is behave in ways that betoken conflicting or unstable dispositions.

42 This last statement is ambiguous between: “falsehoods should be made to appear to be true so that they can convince people” and “falsehoods should deviate from the truth as little as possible.” In the *Phaedrus*, Plato identifies the skill of making *x* appear like *y* with persuasion or the production of conviction (rhetoric); this, he says, requires knowledge of the classes into which *x* and *y* fall, and that is achieved by dialectic (261e–62b, 263a–c, cf. 273d–74a).

43 For the gods to function as models for behavior it does not seem necessary that people believe the stories about them to be true “as a whole.” We imitate fictional characters even knowing that they are fictional. Further, we may acquire beliefs, for example beliefs about value, through the fictions we encounter. Socrates seems keen that citizens of the ideal city believe the Noble Lie (414d–15d) and even more keen that they not believe that the gods behave as tradition has it that they do.

44 In the *Republic*, Socrates says that if the traditional stories about the gods turned out to be true, they should still not be broadcast, because of their moral effects. Might this indicate that the *Republic*’s stories about gods would still be told even if there were (contrary) knowledge about the gods’ true nature, on the grounds that the stories have virtue-engendering effect in listeners’ souls? (This suggestion was made by Alice van Harten.) The relationship between Plato’s theology and ethics is a large and complex topic, but for

The treatment of the soul in the *Phaedrus* is quite similar to the *Republic's* treatment of stories about the gods. Socrates begins his preferred account of the soul with a bit of dialectic to prove the truth (τἀληθές, 245c4) that the soul is immortal and a self-mover (245c–e), and then switches over to his likely account of the soul's complex structure and history (246a). We may suppose, then, that the soul's being immortal and a self-mover acts as some sort of constraint on what can be included in the likely account, analogous to the gods' goodness in the *Republic*. The account of the soul that follows need not be only Plato's best scientific theory of the soul to date; it may also be a falsehood in words expressing moral truths: that we are in part – and at best – the sorts of creatures that can know the truth, and that we will flourish if we pursue it even though it should cost us in other conventionally valued goods.

In Plato's own categories, then, the accounts of the soul are "likely" "falsehoods in words." I think this means not that Plato never believed that, for example, we have appetitive, thumotic, and rational motivations, but rather that he would have always been open to revising such beliefs, in the light of not only what such motivations do and don't explain, but also how such a self-understanding affects ethical progress. This is quite a different attitude from Aristotle's tolerance of imprecision in psychology done for ethical purposes (with which I began). For Aristotle, the goal of goodness requires only an imprecise ethical psychology; a precise psychology is required only for (a branch of) physics, and physics is not a part of the wisdom that makes us good. However, Plato does not exclude such knowledge from the wisdom that makes us good, so having an accurate and precise psychology would seem to be part of the goal. The ethical psychology offered in the dialogues, then, seems to have the status of a possibly true, provisional, motivationally approved-of way for non-philosophers to understand themselves as they turn towards philosophy. Perhaps a more adequate ethical psychology lies in their future.

my purposes it is sufficient to say that stories about the gods (and similarly stories about the soul) may not conflict with ethical truths. One way to say this is that if it turned out that Zeus and Aphrodite and the others did actually behave as Homer tells us, then they aren't gods.

The nature of the spirited part of the soul and its object

TAD BRENNAN

In this chapter, I invite the reader to approach familiar questions about spirit by taking up an unfamiliar stance: the stance of the Demiurge, or of one of the lesser gods, engaged in psychogony.¹ If you are designing a soul from scratch, why give it a part like the spirited part to begin with? After all, without spirit the world would be a less angry place. It would be a less competitive, aggressive, war-like place. If we can trust the city-soul analogy of the *Republic*, then it seems that without spirit, there would be no armies. If the Demiurge could have avoided all that simply by changing his blueprint for souls, why didn't he?

My answer in this chapter is that spirit is a necessary response to something worse than spirit, namely appetite. But more important to me than the particular answers I give is the method I propose, of trying to understand Platonic psychology from the Demiurgic stance. It does not address all of the interesting questions that there are to be asked about Platonic psychology, but I think it does put some of them in an enlightening frame, and raise some new ones as well.

This chapter never would have seen the light of day without the support and assistance of my collaborators, Rachel Barney and Charles Brittain. I am indebted to both of them for over two decades of friendship and intellectual stimulation. I also want to thank audiences at UNC, Chapel Hill, and Cornell University, where I delivered earlier drafts of this chapter. And as always, my deepest thanks go to Liz Karns.

1 As cosmogony is to cosmology, so psychogony is to psychology. The word is not new in English (the *OED* s.v. cites Sidgwick and Cudworth); in Greek, it was fairly common among Platonists (Plutarch, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus, Philoponus, etc.). In the majority of ancient cases, it refers directly to the creation of the soul by the Demiurge and lesser gods in the *Timaeus*.

I Introduction

The best way to understand psychic parts is to begin from the perspective of a disembodied soul, the perspective quickly sketched out at *Republic* 611–12.² The true soul is the rational soul, which is immortal and not associated with a body. The picture of the tripartite soul presupposed throughout the *Republic* is true of the soul as it appears while it is in a body, and the parts that have been outlined earlier in the book are those that belong to it when it is immersed in a human body.

The appetitive soul is best understood, then, as a response to the crisis of incorporation. You have been enjoying life as a disembodied rational soul, when suddenly one day you wake up in a mortal body again. What do you do? Well, you need to maintain the animal you have suddenly been yoked with, because god has stationed you there.³ But it would be a lot of work to have to consciously think about its upkeep all day long. So you delegate the job. You segregate off all of the psychic subroutines that are involved in animal upkeep – all of the monitoring of bodily status, intake, output, temperature, and so on – and you bundle them together into a separate, semi-autonomous module called “the appetitive soul.”

Now spirit. The spirited part of the soul is best understood as a response to the introduction of appetitive souls into the world. All of its functions involve responding to and relating to appetitive souls. Indeed, just as one can think of the appetitive soul itself as the immortal, rational soul’s response to being faced with a body and the task of tending to a body, so too one can think of the spirited soul as the rational soul’s response to being faced with appetitive souls and the excesses to which they are prone.

II Test case 1: the fevered city

This is signalized through the structure of the *Republic* by the fact that the auxiliaries, who represent spirit in the political allegory, are introduced into the city only after the healthy appetites of the City of Pigs⁴ have been replaced by the unhealthy, non-necessary appetites of the Fevered City.⁵ The City of Pigs is a depiction of a healthy appetitive soul, a picture

2 On this passage see Raphael Woolf, [Chapter 7](#).

3 I assume that this is the rationale against suicide; cf. *Phaedo* 62bc, *Apology* 28d–29a.

4 *Republic* 369–372. Alcinous in *Didaskalikos* para. 34 calls it the “war-free” (*apolemos*) city.

5 372e–373a; cf. also 399e.

(albeit an incomplete and misleading one) of the life of appetite in a fully virtuous person. The citizens of that first city did not need a police force and training in gymnastics because they did not want excess and variety; they did not need an army, because they did not want their neighbors' land, and their neighbors in turn did not want to invade them either (373d).

Because I think the City of Pigs is pretty much the same thing as the city of the producers in the full Kallipolis, the question arises why Plato included the detour through the feverish city. Why not just keep the city of healthy appetites, and add on a healthy spirited army and then healthy philosopher-rulers, without exploring fevers and fluxes? In the discussion as Plato wrote it, Socrates has to take that route in the dialogue because Glaucon interrupts him with the demand for excess and variety in non-necessary appetites; but why did Plato have Glaucon do that? One would hate to think that it is a mere narrative flourish without any philosophical motivation behind it.

I think my view of spirit has a good answer to this line of question, namely that a fully accurate picture of spirit requires you to see it exactly as a response to the dangers and excesses inherent in appetite. If one never saw appetite get out of hand, one would never understand why spirit is needed in the city – needed even in the Kallipolis, where appetites are as a matter of fact laboriously trained and monitored so as to be moderate and unrebelling. If one only saw the semi-stable outcome of spirit's mastery of appetite, i.e., if one only saw a happy, compliant, moderate producer class without seeing its intrinsic potential for discord, excess, and riot, then one would not realize the dynamic role played every day by the presence of spirit in the city, actively keeping the peace. You might infer, mistakenly, that appetites are the sorts of things that are capable of finding their own healthy limits and keeping themselves within the bounds of moderation. You might fall, in other words, for the fiction that is the City of Pigs.⁶ And you might also think that spirit doesn't have much work to do, when in fact it is at work every day in the Kallipolis, even the peaceful days, keeping the producers in line through subtle course-corrections. That's why the illusion of appetite's autonomous moderation has to be dispelled promptly, so that we can see spirit doing its job in restoring order and curing the fever. There really was no better way to show us the structure of a healthy city, with its nearly invisible internal dynamics, its carefully

6 Barney (2002, 217, n. 12) usefully quotes Reeve (1988, 178) who notes that the City of Pigs "is stable only in a fantasy world in which people never pursue pleonectic satisfaction."

maintained balance, than by showing us a city going far out of balance due to appetite, and being brought back into balance through spirit.⁷

III Spirit's two roles

The next thing to understand is that spirit's roles divide sharply in two, corresponding to the fact that the rational soul is forced to confront appetitive souls in two venues: the appetitive souls in the bodies of other people that surround it, and the appetitive soul inside its own body.

It is the first fact, the existence of other appetites in other bodies, that creates the need for a soul that can negotiate with other appetites for the relatively scarce appetitive goods in the world. I need to know how much of these resources I can demand, what others will give me, how I can defend my share, who can I take from and who will take from me, what advantages can I get by cooperating with others, when can I get more in the long run by giving up some now. From all this arise the psychic capacities for competition, aggression, and self-defense, plus generosity, loyalty, solidarity, and self-sacrifice, plus the entire world of status, reputation, and sensitivity to honor, understood as a system for distributing appetitive goods to the members of a social group in accordance with their merit, where merit in turn is originally based on the ability to acquire and defend these same appetitive goods. This is the psychological repertory required of a social animal that hunts in packs, and is essentially the same in dogs and humans. It is also the

7 Barney (2002, 220) argues that Glaucon's role in rejecting the City of Pigs shows that spirit is another moving force behind the transformation, along with non-necessary appetites. The first city's lack of an army is a liability not only because appetite will remain unregulated, but because those humans whose souls are dominated by spirit or reason will be unable to perform their natural jobs within it. This is a plausible view. I believe, however, that Plato blames the fever on appetite, not spirit: Glaucon's "tone" may be spirited, but his actual demands are not for spirited goods. He does not complain that there are no contests or games in the city, or that the weak receive as much honor as the strong. He does not clamor for war in which men gain the prize of valor. War comes only later (373de), as a means to satisfy excessive appetite.

The main difference between Barney's reading and my own, I think, is that she holds that even in the City of Pigs, human souls already have all three parts; that's what leads a spirited soul like Glaucon's to find it incomplete. Because I am asking the psychogonic question, I treat the passage instead as an exploration of the question: what if humans only had one part? So there are no unsatisfied honor-lovers in the City of Pigs, because spirit has not yet been created. What we discover, instead, is that purely appetitive souls would be incapable of living an idyllic life of endogenous moderation. Appetite would naturally lead to excess, and this in turn creates the need for spirit.

psychic analogue of the army and defense-force in the political allegory, i.e., that group of people who defend the external borders of the state and interact with other sovereign states, defending the city from invasion and raiding.

The second fact, that there is an appetitive soul within the individual's own body, is what gives rise to the internal, police-force functions of spirit. Here the source of trouble is not that other people and other appetites will try to deprive me of my necessary stock of appetitive goods. The problem is rather that it is in the nature of all appetite, and so my own appetitive soul in particular, to want ever greater amounts and varieties of appetitive goods, beyond any reasonable standard. I need my spirited soul to protect me from my own appetites.

This job does not directly create the world of reputation and honor, as the first job does, because there is no issue of status or competition between separate individuals. However, spirit is involved in the physical training that is an important component of keeping my own appetites in control. And spirit may also be involved in issues of self-esteem and sense of propriety that play a role in moderating my own appetites, without forming part of the shame and honor system that is created by the existence of other people. I will return to this point later.

First, though, let's look at the evidence that Plato thinks that spirit has two distinct, interconnected jobs, one involving negotiation with other appetitive agents in the world, and one involving my own moderating of my internal appetites. The evidence, not surprisingly, comes largely from comments made through the political allegory. The auxiliaries, who are the political analogue of the spirited part of the soul, are always represented as having two jobs: an external, defense-force job, and an internal, police-force job; see 414b, 415d, *Timaeus* 17b. The psychic payoff is sometimes made explicit, though, as at 422a–b and *Timaeus* 70a. And the fact that we are meant to read all of this evidence together is guaranteed by the very strong overlap in phrasing.

Republic 414b: "Then isn't it truly most correct to call these people complete guardians, since they will guard against external enemies and internal friends, so that the one will lack the power and the other the desire to harm the city?"⁸

Republic 415d: "Let [the guardians] look for the best place in the city to have their camp, a site from which they can most easily control those

8 Translations of Plato are from C.D.C. Reeve's revision of Grube's *Republic* and Donald Zeyl's *Timaeus* in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997), with some modifications.

within, if anyone is unwilling to obey the laws (*katekhoien*, *ei tis mē etheloi tois nomois peithesthai*), or repel any outside enemy who comes like a wolf upon the flock.”

Republic 442ab: “[reason and spirit, working together in dual verb-forms(!)] . . . will govern the appetitive part which is the largest part in each person’s soul and is by nature most insatiable for money. They’ll watch over it to see that it isn’t filled with the pleasures that are called ‘bodily,’ and that it doesn’t become so big and strong that it no longer does its own work but attempts to enslave and rule over the classes it isn’t fitted to rule, thereby overturning everyone’s whole life . . . Then wouldn’t these two parts do the best job of guarding against external enemies, too, protecting the entire soul and body?”

Timaeus 17d–18a: “We said that they alone should be the guardians of the city, if someone from outside or even someone from inside (*ei te tis exôthen ê kai tôn endothen*) were to begin doing evil.”

Timaeus 70a–b: “[the gods located the spirited part of the soul in the heart] nearer the head, between the diaphragm and the neck, so that it might listen to reason (*tou logou katêkoon*)⁹ and together with it control by force the part consisting of appetites, should the latter at any time refuse outright to obey (*katekhai*. . . *hopote mêdamêi peithesthai etheloi*) the dictates of reason coming down from the acropolis . . . if spirit’s might should boil over at a report from reason that some wrongful act involving these members is taking place – something being done to them from outside or even something originating from the appetites within (*exôthen ê kai tis apo tôn endothen epithumiôn*).”

IV Spirit’s first role: the creation of interpersonal diplomacy

Now I want to look more deeply into the first aspect of spirit, the one that is necessitated by the fact that there are many souls in many bodies. If the cosmos contained only one soul in one body, appetite would be needed to help it navigate through the world, to make it properly sensitive to appetitive goods and bads. Since there are many souls in many bodies, and appetitive goods are finitely available, there is competition for them. Spirit is needed to help negotiate the distribution of appetitive goods among multiple agents. Indeed, the system constituted by honor, and

9 Aristotle may intentionally echo this description in *EN* 110b31 when he says that the higher part of the irrational soul shares in reason and is “*katêkoon autou*.” The adjective is a hapax in Aristotle, and quite rare in Plato.

spirit's sensitivity to honor, is for the most part simply a complex system for the distribution of appetitive goods.

Here it is worth looking at the Homeric heroes. The quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles is about honor, surely. And yet it is also about the distribution of various appetitive goods. The hero gets the choice cuts of meat at feast, and a choice of sexual chattels. The distribution system functions correctly, and is seen to function correctly, when it distributes appetitive goods preferentially to those members of the group who have a greater ability to provide appetitive goods to the group as a whole. The system becomes dysfunctional when it distributes goods contrary to this ability, or when judgments about ranking come into dispute (as with Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* I, or Odysseus and Ajax in the contest over Achilles' arms). The determinant of correct distribution might seem to be goodness or nobility but this is routinely explicated in terms of success in the economic sphere. Achilles complains that he is the best fighter, that he has provided the greatest amount of plunder for the Achaians, and receives plunder disproportionate to his efforts.¹⁰

It is also worth looking at dogs and wolves, because pack animals of this sort have a full psychology of honor and shame – I believe this myself, and I believe that Plato believed it. They are capable of conceiving of themselves as members of a social ordering, in which, once again, appetitive goods are distributed preferentially to those members of the group who have a greater ability to provide appetitive goods to the group as a whole. Alpha wolves lead the hunt, and get to eat first. The comparison of spirit to dogs is not an idle joke in the *Republic*: the psychology of dogs really does contain most of the psychology of the spirited part of the human soul.

Distribution in such systems is far from egalitarian. To begin with, it is supposed to occur *kat' axian*, according to merit and desert. But merit is not shared by all persons alike, nor does any person have it merely in virtue of their being a person or a rational agent. Spirit's own views about what merit consists in tend to focus on bravery. There could, of course, be people whose sense of honor tracked the presence of higher virtues – who knows, even people who thought that honor should be distributed according to intellectual virtues. But that judgment would be extrinsic to the cognitive resources and value orientation of spirit itself; the true breed identifies merit with martial bravery (the keynote virtue of spirit, after all).

10 *Iliad* 1.165, 9.316–36.

The second departure from egalitarianism is that the honor system attends to distributions of goods within an exclusive group. The group and group-affiliation, the pack and pack-membership, provide another keynote to spirit: the question of what is *oikeion*, what is familiar, what belongs to me and mine, what do I feel solidarity, kinship, and identity with, as opposed to what is *allotriion*, alien to me.

Before we dig a bit more into spirit's sensitivity to the *oikeion*, I want to say a little more about the status of honor in this picture. I think it is broadly accurate to say that the spirited part of the soul is best characterized by its relation to honor, rather than anger, competition, aspiration, or some of the other ideas that critics have tried to make focal. I don't claim any deep insight here; it seems to me that we are simply following Plato's very clear lead. He calls spirit the honor-loving part, as he calls appetite the pleasure-loving part and reason the wisdom-loving part, and I think these descriptions by value-orientation get to the essence of the parts in question.

But I think there is a way of developing this insight, a way of understanding spirit's orientation to honor, that goes wrong by modeling the relationship on that of a perceptual sensitivity.

Looking at one particular spirited soul growing up in the world – say the soul of young Achilles – it sounds right to say that his spirit makes him attuned to facts about honor in the landscape around him: where it is, who has it, how it is to be acquired and lost. Where his appetitive soul looks around and sees the possibilities for pleasure and pain, and his rational soul, to whatever extent it is functioning, assesses future options for their goodness or badness, seeks the true and avoids the false, his spirit will be sensitive to the honor and dishonor bound up in actions he might take or events that might befall him. That deed is full of glory; do that other thing and you'll be branded a coward; a deed like this one brought your uncle wide renown; and so on.

The mistake that this can lead to is to suppose that there is out there in the world a stuff called "honor" that spirit is sensitive to in the way that eyes are sensitive to light or colors. And this mistake is compounded by comparing spirit's love of honor to reason's love of the good. For Plato surely does think that facts about the good are out there, real features of the cosmos, independent not only of any given observer, but even of the entire race of human beings. Before there are any created souls at all, there is already a Good, and a contoured landscape of goodness that souls must be sensitive to, must discern more acutely or dimly as they navigate through choices.

This is not the case with honor. If we take the perspective of psychogony, set about designing and creating mortal souls and fitting them out with all of the capacities they will need, then what we find is that there is no realm of facts about honor at large in the cosmos that needed to be attended to, prior to the creation of the souls themselves. It is the creation of multitudes of appetitive souls in proximity to each other, in a region where appetitive goods are moderately scarce, that in turn creates a situation in which there are facts about differential abilities to acquire and preserve those appetitive goods, plus possibilities for group sharing and distribution of appetitive goods, plus facts about the biological or ethnic kinship of various groups. There is not, in addition to all of this, some further set of facts about honor in place before spirited souls arrive on the landscape. Rather, it is the spirited souls' sensitivity to these other facts that constitutes the landscape of honor, creates the institutions of reputation, renown, shame, and so on, as a sort of signaling system to encode and transmit these underlying facts. Plato, in other words, is a realist about goodness and something like a projectivist about honor.

Something of the same sort can be said about pleasure and pain, as well, I think. When we decide to put souls into bodies, and try to equip them for their arduous tasks, we need to make them sensitive to light and sound and smells and pressures; we need to make them capable of sensing when their bodies are being damaged or restored, and capable of assessing future actions for their potentials for damage or restoration. But we do not, in addition to all of this, need to make them sensitive to the locations of pleasures and pains in the environment around them. Pleasure and pain are posterior to the creation of appetitive souls, and function as internal signaling systems for processing information about damages and restorations and the real things that are really damaging or really restorative.

So there is certainly something right about saying that spirit pursues honor and appetite pursues pleasure just as reason pursues the good. But there is this deep difference between the three, that reason's relation to the good is more purely perceptual, whereas the other two psychic parts actually constitute their apparent objects of pursuit. Not soul by soul, of course; it is no more up to Achilles alone whether running away is ignominious than it is up to him whether fire is painful. But the totality of spirited souls creates the world of ignominy and fame, the institutions of honor and reputation, out of raw materials that do not include them. Honor isn't out there.

Two things make it look otherwise with Plato, I think, in addition to the misleading verbal parallel between the labels “good-loving” and “honor-loving.” First is the fact that in Plato’s view, some things are really honorable, truly honorable, whereas other things are not, even though they may be widely thought to be so. Entire cities, in Plato’s view, entire continents, can believe that this or that practice or behavior is honorable, sing the praises of those who do it, rebuke those who do not, organize their distribution of appetitive goods in line with those beliefs, and still be wrong about it. This may seem to contradict the claim that Plato is a projectivist about honor, and suggest that he thinks there are facts about the location of honor that go deeper than I am claiming.

We don’t need to say that, though. The additional truth-making anchor which makes it possible to say that one socially embedded custom really is honorable, where another equally embedded custom really is not honorable, will not be independent facts about reified honor, but rather facts about the good, and how institutions do and do not line up with it. “For it is foolish to think that anything besides the bad is ridiculous, or to take seriously any standard of what is fine and beautiful other than the good” (452d). When you try to hunt for honor as a metaphysical constituent of the world, you either wind up with mere opinion, or with a Form. But the Form you find is not the Form of honor, or of the honorable. It is the Form of the Good, perceived directly and accurately by reason, and through a glass darkly by spirit, in its pursuit of honor. If “noble” and “beautiful” name anything in Platonic cosmology, it is the Form of the *agathon* or the *kalon*. But spirit is constitutionally incapable of grasping such things. It is the constant dupe of culture, with no internal capacity to imagine that the noble is other than what its training and environment tell it to admire. Only in the Kallipolis will spirit’s opinions about the beautiful and the ridiculous be properly aligned with the real standard of the good, and that alignment will come by courtesy of reason, not spirit.

The second source of resistance to the idea that honor is posterior to and parasitic on the existence of appetites in bodies comes from the experience of those who ardently and zealously pursue honor and the honorable. When one strives for honor, when one aspires to do what is truly honorable (as one thinks), it does not feel as though one is striving for a greater share of appetitive goods. Quite the opposite; any such consideration seems tawdry, mercenary, ignoble: indeed, dishonorable. In his indignant wrath, which is the outraged protest of his spirit, Achilles cares nothing for food.

And yet this is not an objection to the picture outlined above, but an important part of it. Spirit has the role of regulating appetite, and governing the interactions of competing appetites; to play this role, it had to be designed with a degree of independence from appetite, an indifference to the allures of appetite. Spirit had to be given a value that it would value more highly than appetitive pleasures, so that it would be able to oversee and master the appetites. The world of spirit remains a reaction. A creature that could not feel physical pain would have no use for martial courage; a species that was not inclined to sensual excess would not need the particular sting and sanction of high-minded disgust to counteract appetite. Our reason is divine, and its value is intrinsic; spirit's value is relational, and lies solely in opposing appetite.

V Test case 2: the fall of the Kallipolis

One of the reasons that I think it is important to insist that the institutions of honor are inextricably bound up with the distribution of appetitive goods is because I think it helps us to understand the nature of the decay from the Kallipolis into the first pathological city, the timocracy or timarchy.

We know that the beginning of the end of the Kallipolis arrives when the guardians entrust the rule of the city to unworthy offspring who neglect philosophy and the Muses (546). This will lead to the inclusion within the ruling class of individuals of all psychic types, here represented by their metallic blazons, gold, silver, bronze, and iron. This happens in accordance with the geometrical number (12,960,000), so that part is pretty cut-and-dried. But other aspects are hard to understand.

The timarchic city will arise out of the stasis within that ruling class. The surprising detail is that the moving force behind this evolution is not the desire for honor.

In the later transformations from higher constitution to lower, Socrates makes it clear that the central value of the current constitution always contains the germ of the value that will overthrow it. The timocrat values honor, but since the shortest path to honor is the amassing of wealth, the timocracy turns into an oligarchy (550d). The oligarch's central value is the disciplined and thrifty amassing of wealth, but since the shortest path to vast wealth is to make money on the non-necessary appetites of others, the thrifty oligarchy turns into a democracy in which non-necessary appetites run riot (555bc). The democrat values the individual's freedom to satisfy any appetites they may have, but once freedom is a fetish

the citizens want to be free of laws altogether, and the lawful democracy turns into a lawless tyranny (562b–c).

In these cases, we can see the later value – defiance of the law, riotous appetite, and miserly greed – playing some role in bringing about the city that enshrines them. That pattern is not found in the origins of the timocratic city. Where we might expect to find a nascent or covert love of honor pushing the Kallipolis into timarchy, what we actually find is a straightforward love of property. When stasis first breaks out in 547b, it is the bronze and iron types that are the agitators; the honor-lovers play no active role. And the appetitive agitators drag the city towards the making of money, and the possession of lands, houses, gold, and silver. They do not drag it towards the love of honor, and in fact the love of honor seems to play no more of a role than the honor-lovers themselves do in advancing the first transformation.

It's not hard to imagine how Plato could have written it so that honor and honor-lovers did play this kind of active role. The guardians could have spent less time on philosophy in order to spend more time on athletic competitions, or on awards ceremonies. Instead of actually doing philosophy, they might have spent their time talking about which philosophers had the most prestigious positions. They might have even created an elaborate system of numerical rankings in order to track the prestige of various philosophers. This would have been a clear way for Plato to signal that philosophy was dying and that the love of wisdom was being replaced by the love of honor – perhaps the allegory would have been a bit heavy-handed, but no lighter report could be more clear.

The next thing that is notable about the story here is that the second change from timarchy to oligarchy happens very quickly, because the timocrats were already practically oligarchs (550c–552e). They were already storing up wealth in private treasuries, even during the timarchy – indeed, they were acting far more like money-lovers than like honor-lovers already. The only change that we are told about is that as wealth is honored more, virtue is honored less. But the amassing of wealth had already begun in the so-called timarchy, and was in fact the driving force behind the establishment of the timarchy.

It is noteworthy, in fact, how little of a role honor plays in the origins and nature of the timocratic city. After the fall of the Kallipolis there is a reference to the ruler's being honored in the new city (*timan tous arkhontas*, 547d3), but this is actually cited as a conservative hold-over from the wisdom-loving Kallipolis, not as a characteristic feature of the new city that exalts honor. In 548c the nature of the new city is summed

up by saying that "it is mixed, but because of the predominance of the spirited element in it, one thing alone is most manifest in it, namely the love of victory and the love of honor." That may be true of the city, but it is certainly not true of what Plato has shown us so far. Prior to this summation, we have seen only two forces at work in the city, the conservative force of the gold and silver elements, dragging it towards virtue, and the revolutionary force of the bronze and iron elements dragging it towards money-loving, and property-owning. Those values really belong to the forces of oligarchy and appetite, not to the forces of timocracy and spirit.

My point here is not that Plato has bungled his allegory; quite the opposite, I think he is saying what he should say here in light of how he thinks about spirit and honor. There are contexts in which honor needs to be mentioned in its own right, especially as an explanation of an individual's behavior (e.g., he did this because of his love of honor). But there are other contexts in which it displays a kind of transparency or dispensability; at the level of an entire society, it is sometimes more accurate to say that it is the appetitive goods that are the driving force, rather than the honor involved in their distribution. The further we get from the psychology of the individual, and the closer we get to the perspective of the cosmos, the less work is done by mentioning honor.

The close resemblance between the timocrat and the oligarch is no accident. The fact that it is the love of money and property that is driving the decay of the constitutions, even as early as the timocracy, is no accident.

Instead, it is a reflection of the honor-system's nature as a system for the distribution of appetitive goods. As the ally of reason, spirit can indeed oppose the forces of appetite. And honor can sometimes, on some occasions, act as a value that is opposed to appetite, so that spirit can choose honor instead of pleasure, competition instead of leisure, and so on. But the honor system as a whole does not offer a source of value that is independent of appetitive goods. Spirit may be the natural ally of reason, but spirit's object, honor, is the natural ally of appetite. Anyone who gets deeply involved in caring about honor will necessarily expose themselves to the risk of coming to care about appetitive goods, exactly because the distribution and regulation of appetitive goods is the very point and origin of the system of honor.

Viewed in this light, honor is a sort of medium of exchange, like money. Here too we can see why the step from timocracy to oligarchy is the shortest and simplest in the entire story of decay. Both the timocrat and the oligarch are hoarders, piling up exchange-tokens, and tokens that already implicate them in the value-system of appetite.

VI The *oikeion*

I mentioned earlier that the institution of honor is bound up with the cohesiveness of social groupings, with the sense of kinship, solidarity, and identification that goes under the name of the *oikeion*. You can see Plato drawing this connection in several places in the *Republic*, and the way that Plato discusses the *oikeion* gives us further insights into the spirited part of the soul.¹¹

The *oikeion* appears on the scene almost as soon as spirit does: when Socrates first sketches out the nature of the future guardians in Book II, he notes that they should be spirited and brave, but that this spirit must be accompanied by mildness and gentleness towards their *oikeioi*, where this clearly means their fellow-citizens (375c). The thought is followed up in the pun about dogs: dogs are like this; they bark at strangers, but welcome the people that they know (375d). They divide the world into an in-group and an out-group, us and them, part of the pack and not part of the pack, *oikeion* and *allotrion*, and they are fierce towards the others, but gentle towards their own.

This is not a surprising endowment for a social animal to have. It might even be a necessary part of the psychology of any species that can develop and support the institutions of honor. For, first of all, the goods that honor apportions will be divided among a group. And the honors are given to begin with for accomplishments and abilities related to the ability to provide goods to the group.

But the fact that the spirited part of the soul cares about what is *oikeion* is an important part of Plato's depiction of it. It's part of why spirit is connected to virtues such as loyalty and teamwork. Unlike appetite, spirit can be motivated to act for the benefit of others, ignoring its own pain in order to help the group. The spirited individual is self-sacrificing, and can endure pain and even death in order to achieve something for the group.

This is also why spirit is conservative; the spirited part loves the things it was raised with, purely and simply because it was raised with them. They are familiar, they provide a sense of identity. The values that we are raised with have a kind of hold over us that is very resistant to change, whether that change would be good (e.g., rational criticism of our unreflecting prejudices) or bad (e.g., the erosion of our oligarchic work ethic by the blandishments of a permissive democratic society). At several junctures

11 I argued that the *Republic* influenced the Stoic theory of *oikeiôsis* in Brennan (2005) 159–62.

in the stories of moral decay related in Books VIII and IX (560a1, 560c6, 572e3), Socrates imagines an individual torn between an older, better set of values and some newer, more degraded set of values. The older set are always advocated by the person's father and *oikeioi*, i.e., intimate household friends, people you were raised with, people you identify with.

It is also important that spirit, with its strong sense of the *oikeion*, has severe cognitive limitations. When faced with a dialectical challenge to the traditional values, spirit can cling tenaciously to the folk-ways that are familiar to it, but it cannot defend or justify them philosophically. "This is the way we do it," "This is how we were taught to do it," "Doing it this way is part of what makes us the group that we are" – those are as much justification as spirit can give. And if the sense of affiliation is undermined, the normative force disappears. That's why the plight of someone raised with unreflective values who has them sapped by dialectical questioning is compared to someone who grows up feeling the ordinary allegiance to their family, but discovers he is really an adopted orphan (538b1, c2, e5). Once we feel that our values no longer have the authority of being *oikeioi*, once they are no longer taken for granted as the familiar things we were raised with, they lose all their hold and we may drift into amoral hedonism.

The considerations that spirit can bring forward – it's what our kind of people do, it's traditional, and so on – are fatally insensitive to the actual goodness or badness of the customs in question. Plato indicates this, too, in the very first passage on spirit. He tells us that dogs base their reactions to people on whether they are familiar or strange, known or unknown, and that they love and welcome the people who are familiar, even if they have never received anything good from them, and hate and harass those who are unfamiliar, even if they have never received anything bad from them. It is a very striking way of making the point that spirit is not only incapable of understanding the good, but is incapable of even having thoughts about goodness that go beyond knee-jerk prejudices about what is familiar, what is customary and traditional, what our tribe does.

Now in the ideal case, rulers who do know what is good will bring it about that people are raised with customs that are in fact in line with the good. That way, spirit will feel its unreasoning sense of solidarity and identification with exactly the things that reason knows are really good. Having been raised with good customs and traditions, spirit can endorse as customary and traditional exactly the same things that reason endorses as good. This coincidence between unreasoning allegiance and rational

confirmation is described at 402a. Socrates has been outlining the kind of early cultural immersion that the children of the guardians receive, and how this prepares their non-rational souls to work in alignment with their later rational understanding: “He’ll rightly object to what is shameful, hating it while he’s still young and unable to grasp the reason, but, having been educated in this way, he will welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship (*oikeiotès*) with himself.”¹²

Our feelings of allegiance to what we know, our feelings of identification and solidarity with whatever customs and values we have been raised with, are very powerful determinants of human behavior, not reducible to other kinds of motivation. So powerful, in Plato’s opinion, that it is hopeless to expect a rational appreciation of the good to overcome them if they ever oppose one another in the individual’s soul (cf. 607e).

The only way to ensure that people will act in accordance with the good, is to guarantee that there will be an extensional coincidence between the good and what is familiar to those people. This way, their spirit, moved by what is *oikeion*, will support and not oppose their reason, when it strives for what is good.

This is the project of the second wave in Book V (457b–472a), i.e., to engineer a coincidence between what we feel a sense of allegiance to, and what is in fact the best. It happens in two stages in the second wave, which are figured in the allegory as the abolition of nuclear families and the institution of eugenic breeding lotteries. The point of having children and mates in common is to extend our sense of kinship and solidarity beyond our nuclear family to the entire city (and then later to the whole Greek world): we will feel the most intimate sense of family identity, solidarity, and loyalty with the entire population, calling them “father” and “mother” and so on, and treating them in accordance with these names. The point of the eugenic breeding, within the allegory of the city, is to bring it about that these people with whom we are being raised, with whom we will feel these deep irrational ties of solidarity and belonging, are in fact the best people. You may imagine, if you like, that Plato is also making a non-allegorical political proposal about eugenic breeding in the

12 There are also two other clear verbal reminiscences that tie this to the puppy passage; because the logos is *oikeios*, i.e., because he was raised with its presence in his life, it is *familiar* to him, and so he *embraces* it (402a3 *aspazoit’ an auton gnôrizôn* = 376a6 *hon d’an gnôrimon, aspazetai*). He is acting just like the dog that welcomes what is familiar to it, only in this case what is familiar is also, independently, good. Contrast 409b6, where someone to whom vice was *oikeion* from their youth up would never make a good judge.

city, but at the very least he is making an allegorical proposal about the soul, that we should make sure that we feel an irrational sense of solidarity and allegiance only to customs and values and beliefs that are in fact, on independent rational grounds, the best customs and values and beliefs. The second wave is shot through with the terminology of the *oikeion* and a few other phrases equivalent to it, especially the notion of me and mine, my own and our own.¹³

It's worth saying, by the way, that spirit's sensitivity to the *oikeion* is not in competition with its sensitivity to honor, but rather one of the preconditions of it. They function at different levels in the analysis. My sense of who my *oikeion*-group is (Americans, or Methodists, or Cubs fans, or what have you) will determine whether I take a particular event to be an honorable one or a shameful one; it will also determine the terms in which I assess honor and shame; and it will create the audience of people before whom I myself feel honored or ashamed. This event redounds to the honor of my group, not yours; this is the sort of thing that is considered honorable in my group, not yours; I am honored among the members of my group, not yours. "I would feel deep shame before the Trojans, and the Trojan women with trailing garments," as Hector says, "if like a coward I were to shrink aside from the fighting."¹⁴

All of these roles for spirit are the result of the fact that rational souls are dropped from the heavens, land in bodies, and then find themselves surrounded by other embodied souls, all striving for appetitive goods within various kinship groupings.

VII Spirit's second role: policing internal unrest

But the social aspect of spirit does not exhaust its roles. As I suggested earlier, the spirited part of the soul plays an internal role, apart from its role in society, which we can illuminate by asking a version of the desert-island question here: would Plato think that a single incarnate soul, living in isolation from all other incarnate souls, and provided with an abundance of appetitive goods, had any use for spirit? *Ex hypothesi* this soul would not need spirit to do the things described above, i.e., to distribute scarce appetitive goods to a number of competing consumers. But would there still be other roles for it to play in the psyche of the isolated individual?

13 Three times in 463a–c; four times in 470a–d.

14 *Iliad* 6.441–43, translated by Lattimore (1951).

I think the answer is “yes.” We can give this affirmative answer in several ways, drawing on different Platonic presentations of his psychological theory.

From a purely psychological perspective, what we can say is that a sense of self-esteem plays a role in the virtuous regulation of appetite, even when a sense of social honor plays no role in regulating the distribution of appetitive goods. Even if my desert island offers me unlimited quantities of choice foods, my spirit ought to act to restrain my appetite from indulgence. Gross indulgence is vicious in a way that goes beyond public propriety and does not depend on the opinions of others. It is beneath me, absolutely, and not merely in relation to others.¹⁵

Here’s another way to say that: the drama of the *Phaedrus*, in which the white horse helps the charioteer to restrain the black horse, could just as well have been played out for the case of food and hunger as for the case of sexual appetites. Spirit should still come to the assistance of reason in suppressing appetites that surpass the bounds of reason, even if there are no other persons in the picture, i.e., no members of a social *oikeion*-group (and indeed the other person in the *Phaedrus* myth figures less as a person than as an object of appetite in any case, at least in the eyes of the black horse).

Here’s a third way of saying it which we noticed earlier: in the allegory of the *Republic*, separate persons are represented by separate sovereign cities, and the auxiliaries clearly have war-fighting, expeditionary, and overseas functions, i.e., interpersonal ones. But the auxiliaries also have domestic policing functions. They not only combat the appetites of rival cities, they also combat the appetites that are internal to the city, keeping the producers properly subservient to the philosopher-rulers.

I think it is also worth noticing that spirit’s relation to anger is more general than its relation to the social nexus of insult, injury, and retaliation. Anger, like spirit, can be directed at perceived slights to reputation – the classic cases of the wrath of Achilles or the resentment of Odysseus. But it can also simply act as an enforcer, an executive expeditor.

Anger can be a response to events that are not easily construed as affronts to honor. Anger can be a response to pain – when I accidentally bump my head I often feel a blind and unreasoned rage that does not seem to involve any thought that the door-jamb or tree-branch has treated me

15 The case of Leontius may illustrate this, but it is difficult to be certain. The role of other people (beyond the corpses, who have no lines) is not emphasized in the anecdote – he is not said, e.g., to be ashamed to be seen by others.

contemptuously. Anger can be a response to frustration with a cross-word puzzle or a math problem. The irritation of a Meno or a Lysimachus stuck in Socratic *aporia* may well reflect some loss of face, but it also seems to be a direct response to the intellectual impediment, the inability to reach the truth. Doubtless I can be angered at the frustration of my desire for honor, but it also seems possible to be angered by the frustration of desires for pleasure, comfort, or even truth and wisdom.

Anger can also be a response to confinement – if my hands are bound with ropes and I try to free myself from them, the attempt at disentanglement will often turn into anger when it meets resistance. Here too the appeal to dishonor seems otiose; of course it could be that my bondage stems from or involves some affront to my sense of honor, but I can equally imagine struggling to free myself from some freak confinement that befalls me accidentally in a solitary area, with no possibility of contemptuous intent or invidious witnesses.

Indeed, this should make us think of the struggles of any trapped animal. My struggles, bared teeth, growls, howls, and so on look and sound no different from those of a bear, badger, or what have you. And Plato ought to agree, I think, that my struggles are not merely similar to the animal's struggles, but that they arise from the same psychological source. Plato, of all people, ought to agree that the bear is angry.

And yet we do not think that the bear in a bear-trap is pondering some unmerited slight to its reputation. It wants the pain to stop, it wants to get some food, it wants to return to its den, it wants to get free, it wants a variety of first-order objectives. And as its attempts to pursue these objectives are frustrated, it gets increasingly angry. The anger in this case is inseparable from a sort of intensification of effort, a focusing of one's physical energies on an apparent obstacle. It involves a physical arousal (adrenalin, stress-hormones, connate *pneuma*, that sort of thing) that will allow a greater expense of energy, a reduced sensitivity to pain, a greater willingness to take risks. When you get angry enough at being locked out of your car, you will smash your fist through the window. And in some sense we are still dealing here with the world of Spirit. But references to honor and society seem to be superfluous and misleading for at least some of these cases. More useful, perhaps, to say that anger here is acting to suppress certain kinds of appetitive considerations, for whatever reason.

The social function of spirit, then, the activities that link it to the world of honor, cannot be the single key that gives us the essence of spirit. For here is spirit, once again, but in a distinctive role. How should we

understand spirit now, if we cannot characterize it through its love of honor?

I'd like to approach this question on the bias, by asking why there are exactly three parts to the soul, and how we might show that the number of parts should be three and only three.

VIII An excursus: arguments for threeness

We want a cardinality proof – a proof that there must be exactly N things of kind F .¹⁶ How can proofs like this proceed? Some simply leverage off other cardinalities, e.g., there have to be exactly nine planets, because there are nine Muses. But these are obviously unsatisfying. If there had to be three psychic parts because there are three something elses (the three Graces, perhaps) then we'll still need a reason why there had to be three of those, as well as an argument for the equinumerosity of parts with Graces.

A slightly better sort of proof does some simple math, e.g., the four emotions in Stoicism arise as the Cartesian product of two values, good and bad, and two times of evaluation, present and future. That style of proof will of course be easier with a composite number like four, harder with a prime like three.

In David Reeve's book on the *Republic*, he argued that reason's desires are what he called "good dependent," that appetite's desires are good-independent, and that spirit's desires are what he calls "part-good-dependent."¹⁷ This view of the parts would give us a good argument

16 Rachel Barney has objected that I make Plato more certain than he is that the number of parts is three, citing 443d as evidence that Socrates countenances the possibility of more than three parts to the soul. Some uncertainty at this stage in Socrates' exposition would not trouble me. The view in the later stages, whether in *Republic* IX or in the *Timaeus*, seems to me unambiguous: there are exactly three parts. At the same time, the fully developed view always allows that the lowest part of the soul is composed of a variety of subparts: appetite is a many-headed beast (588c, and see *Timaeus* 91a for the possibility that the genitals, like the brain, heart, and liver, are a locus of ensoulment, realizing a subpart of appetite). My question remains: given the existence of reason on the one side and appetite on the other (multifarious as it may be), why do we need the third part, spirit? The reference in 443d to "any others that may be in between (*kai ei alla atta metaxu tunkhanei onta*)" need not refer to some fourth or fifth part. Socrates, developing a musical metaphor, has just referred to a "highest" (*hupatê*) and "lowest" (*neatê*) part, as well as a middle one (*mesê*). If by "lowest" he had in mind the lowest of the many-headed appetites, rather than appetite as a whole, then the others "in between" can refer to the various other appetitive subparts.

17 Reeve (1988) 135–37.

that there should be three and only three parts, because the threeness would arise from the quantifier-trichotomy of “all/some/none.” In fact I don’t think the notion of good-dependence here can work for other reasons, but it shows us another way to prove threeness. Somewhat similar to that is the proposal that appetite is entirely egocentric, that reason is entirely impartial, and that spirit is concerned with an *oikeion*-group, i.e., the psychic part cares about no other agents, all others, or some others, respectively. Again, I don’t think it’s right in detail, but it has the sort of structure that could work.

Still another sort of proof is exemplified by Euclid 13.18, the proof that there are exactly five Platonic solids. Here, there is no real role for the number in the premises or the conclusion; fiveness, as it were, is not at issue. The argument is simply that you can make a perfect solid this way and this other way, but that way won’t work, and you can make one this way, this way, and this way, but after that you run out. One could fully understand the proof, and the conclusion, without ever noting to oneself that the number of existential quantifiers is in fact five. So with the soul, we might find that there had to be a part like this, and a part like this, and a part like this, and that there can’t be any other parts than those, however many that was, i.e., there was no special work being done by the number three, either in the premises or the conclusion.

I think that’s actually not an uncommon way of reading the argument in Book IV, i.e., that we start with a method of analysis, a method for distinguishing parts by means of psychic conflict, and then apply it until it stops producing new parts, and see how many we get. Or at least, I have sometimes felt, and I think others have too, that this is the most intellectually honest way for Plato to approach the question: just approach it as an empirical question, with no antecedent views about how many soul-parts there should turn out to be, start identifying them by means of conflict, and see where the facts lead. We would no more expect the argument to turn on an explicit invocation of threeness per se in this case than of nineness in the case of the planets; there are simply as many parts as there are, and the way to find out is by looking.

IX My answer: spirit as bond, medium, and middle term

But as attractive as that method might be for making Plato look like an empirical psychologist, I think there is another line of thought that comes closer to capturing his thinking on the matter. I find it in the *Timaeus*, in a discussion of how to bind things together:

But it isn't possible to combine two things well all by themselves, without a third; there has to be some bond between the two that unites them. Now the best bond is one that really and truly makes a unity of itself together with the things bonded by it, and this in the nature of things is best accomplished by proportion. For whenever of three numbers which are either solids or squares the middle term between any two of them is such that what the first term is to it, it is to the last, and conversely, what the last term is to the middle, it is to the first, then since the middle term turns out to be both first and last, and the last and first likewise both turn out to be middle terms, they will all of necessity turn out to have the same relationship to each other, and given this, will all be unified.

(*Timaeus* 31c)

With that principle in mind, let us once again set to the task of psychogony. We begin with a rational soul, suited by its nature for intercourse with the forms, but doomed for a certain term to walk the earth. In response to being incorporated, the rational soul produces an appetitive soul, whose nature it is to tend to and oversee a perishable mortal body. Now we have two souls, holding sway over two spheres, of forms and bodies. But how shall these two be combined so as to form a single, unified thing? There has to be some bond between them. And this bond should function as a kind of geometric mean: what the first is to it, it should be to the last, and so on *alternando*.

Spirit, then, can be seen as the necessary bond between two things that would otherwise lack unity. And for unity you may read causal interaction; on this view, spirit is introduced in order to solve a sort of interaction problem. Appetitive souls are completely deaf to reason; they can be trained, habituated, rewarded, and punished, but they cannot be reasoned with. And the rational soul is simply too feeble in its own bulk – too small, in some quite mysterious psychodynamic sense (428de, 442c4) – to be able to apply this kind of training and punishment directly to the appetite. And here spirit steps in, able to listen to reason as appetite cannot, and able to apply force to the appetite as reason cannot. That's why Timaeus places it between the brain and the liver, obedient to reason, and forcing the appetite to obey in turn. It is the geometric mean between reason and appetite: as spirit stands to reason, so appetite stands to spirit. Spirit obeys reason, and appetite obeys spirit; spirit sees the truth less clearly than reason, and appetite sees it even less clearly than spirit. And this is what it does both in its social roles, and in its non-social, internal enforcement roles, e.g., the ones in which it helps reason to keep appetite in check, completely apart from any concerns about social standing, honor, and reputation.

Spirit, in other words, is the bond between reason and appetite, created to overcome an interaction problem. And like other entities created to solve interaction problems, it really does not help much, since it merely relocates the problem of interaction. If it was unclear how reason and appetite can interact, then it will be unclear how one thing can interact with both; or, if it interacts with both because it has two aspects or sides, a reason-friendly side and an appetite-friendly side, then it will not be clear how those two halves are supposed to interact inside of spirit.

Still, even if we do not find the interpolation of a third thing as a bond very satisfactory, or worry that it will lead to regress, it is a move that Plato himself is fond of. You can see him rehearsing very nearly the same line of thought in the *Symposium*:

Every *daimonion* is intermediate between god and mortal. They are messengers who shuttle back and forth between the two, conveying prayer and sacrifice from men to gods, while to men they bring commands (*epitaxeis*) from the gods and gifts in return for sacrifice. Being in the middle of the two, they round out the whole and bind fast the all to all . . . Gods do not mix with men; they mingle and converse with us through *daimonia* instead.

(*Symposium* 202e–203a)¹⁸

Once again we have the third thing, the intermediate, that acts as a bond to unify the two extremes that cannot interact directly. Indeed, if you consider how soul itself is introduced in the *Timaeus*, it seems to follow the same pattern, acting as a sort of causal intermediary for the cosmos. Consider how soul is constructed in *Timaeus* 35ff. as a blend of the Same and the Different so that it can interact with and form beliefs about both changeless Forms and changing bodies. Consider the view in the *Phaedrus* 246b and *Laws* 897 that soul looks after what does not have soul, viz., mere body, and is responsible for all the order and beauty in the world by causing bodies to participate in Forms. So it seems that when Plato is thinking about souls at the most abstract level (the World Soul of the *Timaeus*, or the “all soul” of the *Phaedrus*) he thinks of them as a *tertium quid*, distinct from Forms and bodies, that can interact with them both.¹⁹ But then when he comes to dividing up the soul in the *Republic*, he has one soul-part, the rational soul, that is especially suited to dealing

18 Translation modified from Nehamas and Woodruff's version in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997).

19 That soul stands as a *tertium quid* between Forms and bodies also seems to me the best way to understand the “resemblance argument” of the *Phaedo* (78b–80b).

with Forms and less able to deal with bodies, and another soul-part, the appetitive soul, that is especially suited for ministering to a body, but is unable to perceive Forms. And that is why he must introduce a third kind of soul, the spirited part, to mediate between the two. It's as though we have reproduced the Form/body dichotomy within the soul itself, and so must reproduce an especially soul-like soul, an especially intermediary soul, as a geometrical mean between them.

X Which came first?

I want to close by asking about a different sort of internal divide within spirit – not the divide between its more rational, reason-receptive side and its more appetitive, brute-force sides, but rather the divide that Plato is very explicit about, between its role as an external, expeditionary force for dealing with other agents, and its role as an internal, constabulary force for dealing with appetitive urges. Both of them, of course, show spirit in its central role of enforcing the dictates of reason against the obstinate urges of appetite, whether in oneself or others. But it would be nice to be able to show some kind of connection between these two spheres of responsibility, in order to avoid the prospect of having spirit fall apart into two separate modules: the interpersonal, social module and the intrapsychic, bare mediation module. Is there a way of seeing these as somehow the same? If not, is there a way of showing one of them to be prior, and the other to be derivative?

In principle, one could imagine the priority running in either direction. Perhaps spirit's original role is that of internal police force, but the police force can be pressed into service as an army. The original role is that of an internal appetite-suppressor, such as even the solitary person must have, but having the inner sense of decorum and propriety, I find myself offended by others' impropriety, too. And once I'm equipped with an inner appetite suppressor, I find I can suppress other people's appetites as well. Or we might have the reverse model, where the jostle of competing bodies requires me to have a sense of "fair," "too little," "greedy," and the like, and then I deploy those same judgments against my own appetites, as though judging myself from outside. On this model, an army designed to repel external threats is redeployed domestically against internal elements that are redescribed as "enemies of the state."

I think the second model is more likely to be true; even the bare mediation module seems to follow dynamics that are somehow implicitly social. By that I mean that it seems impossible to describe even the desert

island cases without saying that spirit feels the excesses of appetite as a matter for shame and indignation, as a trigger for reactive attitudes that seem to have other observers as part of their canonical felicity conditions.

So let's go back to the drawing board and ask our design team this question: if you wanted to create a module that mediates between reason and appetite, why would you give it an endogenous motivational scheme whose currency was social? Suppose you have no interest in the social per se – suppose you intend never to make more than one incarnate soul in any case, and simply want to provide this unique soul with a part that can act as reason's enforcer. Why would the ideal design for that job require a part structured as though it were part of a social system, as though it were one of many similar souls, all regulating their behavior with an eye to the others? Why would you structure a single individual in such a way that what keeps their gluttony in subservience to their reason is a cluster of feelings that look intrinsically social, the feelings that indulgence would be shameful, embarrassing, undignified, beneath them, and so on?

An answer of the right general shape (though I don't know that it is the right answer in detail) would start from the proposal that only appetite can oppose appetite effectually, and reason cannot. The only thing that can forcefully oppose my gluttonous hunger is someone else's gluttony in competition with it, or the threat of their competition. Or, failing the existence of a separately existing person as an owner of the rival appetite, what can effectively oppose my appetite must be a sort of inward representation of other appetitive agents, i.e., an internal representation of other possible appetitive demands and claims. If those demands and claims really had their locus in separate embodied souls, then the other agent would sometimes grab my food away, and we would then compete for it, and soon we would develop the entire apparatus of status, merit, desert, and distribution *kat' axian*. Think away those other persons, but allow reason to fabricate images of such agents, and of a structured hierarchy of such agents, as a method for confronting the appetites.

So the idea here is that reason cannot enforce its will against appetite directly, that nothing other than competing appetites can be the right sort of thing to keep an appetite in check, and so reason has to conjure up other virtual appetites to keep its own appetite in check. But by conjuring up these inward projections of a realm of competing appetites, reason has constituted, *ipso facto*, a space of social reasons within this one soul, which provides it with all of the values and sensitivities that will constitute the social realm should it meet other souls so fashioned.

We started with the thought that reason wants to fashion an enforcer to deploy against appetite, and that only a competing appetite or the threat of a competitive appetite can oppose or affect the original appetite with which reason begins. So reason conjures up the image of a group. And yet in the course of creating this internalized projection of multiple virtual appetites, reason has managed to create something distinct from appetite, and something that can oppose appetite – and, in its final form as an independent psychic part, can oppose reason, too.

So what I want to be able to say – what it would be pleasing, from a structural perspective, to be able to say – is that the two aspects of spirit, the internal and external, the foreign and domestic, war-fighting and police-forcing aspects, are united because the only way to create the internal, police-force spirit, was by channeling the force of appetite against itself in a certain way, i.e., through representations of rival appetites; and that constructing these representations and the systems that integrate them created everything needful for the external, war-fighting aspects, i.e., spirit in its more familiar social and honor-loving role.

But of course souls were not made to live in isolation, and spirit was built into them for social as well as for solitary use. Once reason had created a set of psychic capacities that were adequate for negotiating a world of competing appetitive agents, where these capacities include not only competition and anger but an obsessive attention to status and its perquisites, as well as empathic abilities to imagine oneself and one's status as viewed through the eyes of others – once reason had created modules for spirit in its social role, it had created a part that could enforce reason's dictates against appetite through the internal projections of public opinion, even if there is no public.

Curbing one's appetites in Plato's *Republic*

JAMES WILBERDING

Recent scholarship has provided ample discussion of the question regarding whether Plato intended the moral education outlined in Books II–III of the *Republic* to extend to even the bronze and iron classes of the craftsmen and farmers or whether the silver and gold souled auxiliaries and guardians were meant to be its sole recipients.¹ Very little if any attention has been paid to the parallel question concerning the education of the appetitive part of the soul: are the rational and spirited parts of the soul the only recipients of the education of Books II–III or is the appetitive part also educated? This psychological question deserves serious consideration, since any conclusions reached about the condition of the appetitive part will carry weighty consequences for our understanding of Platonic virtue, and as with the political question, the text of the *Republic* seems to offer competing answers. This is presumably what has encouraged many scholars simply to take a positive or negative answer to it for granted.²

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- 1 See e.g., Grote (1888) 186–87; Hourani (1949); Murphy (1951) 78; Irwin (1977) 330–31 n. 28. Reeve (1988), 186–90, has offered the fullest discussion of the issue, arguing that these lower classes are excluded from the moral education, though they do receive a technical education in their respective crafts. This is also the opinion of Canto-Sperber and Brisson (1997) 99; Bobonich (2002) 48; Kamtekar (2001) 217 n. 75; and Ober (1998), and appears to be the position of Annas (1981) and White (1979) who throughout their accounts of Books II–III refer to the education of the *guardians*.
- 2 There appears to be some tension in the scholarly community regarding the relation between education and appetites. On the one hand, there is a widespread view that the education outlined in Books II–III affects only the philosophical and spirited parts (e.g., Gill (1985) 11; Nettleship (1937) 129; Reeve (1988) 188; White (1979) 178). On the other hand, many scholars seem to assume that the appetites are trained but without specifying

The negative answer seems to follow when one considers only the following. The potential guardians are initially described as having dual natures, namely *to philosophon* or *philomathes* and *to thumoeides*.³ Although when Socrates initially turns to describe the educational system there is no indication that it is supposed to serve the development and promotion of these two natures, when Socrates summarizes the aim of education at the end of the discussion (411e4–412a2), these natures are revealed as its central focus.⁴ Nevertheless, it would be premature to conclude on the basis of this passage alone that the appetitive part is not involved in education, since the tripartite division of the soul has not yet been made, and the appetitive part has not yet been singled out. The real evidence, then, comes in 441e7–442b3. This passage comes just after the soul has been divided into three parts (435c4–441c7) and repeats the claim of 411e4–412a2 that the education affects only the philosophical and spirited parts.⁵ The appetitive part is not said to be educated; rather, it is *ruled* by the philosophical and spirited parts. Moreover, there has been no indication that the appetitive part must be in any way prepared for its submissive role.

This is corroborated by one description of moderation as “the better ruling the worse” (430d5–432b2, esp. 431b6–7 and d7–8). In the *Republic*, however, Plato seems to be offering us a two-tiered account of moderation. On the lower, broader tier moderation is simply a matter of the lower classes being ruled, but according to the higher, narrower conception, the lower classes not only must be ruled, they also have to *believe* that they should be ruled (431c9–e8). It is this belief that allows us to say that moderation is a kind of harmony. In psychological terms, this narrower conception of moderation is defined as the agreement in opinion between all three parts of the soul that the rational part should

when or how this is supposed to take place (e.g., Lear (1992) 180–83). Gill (1985) (which has been extremely helpful to me in this study) has most acutely recognized this predicament and places the blame squarely on the *Republic* itself: there is “an ambiguity in Plato’s theory of desire (and of its educability)” (*id.* 15). Annas (1981, 84–85), and Irwin (1977, 330–31 n. 28), are also aware of the tension. For my own views on the education of the spirited part, see Wilberding (2009).

3 See 375c8, d7, e1, e5, e10, 376b1, c1, c5.

4 There seems to be an abrupt switch at 376c8–9, and there is no further mention of *to philosophon* or *philomathes* until 407c3; similarly with gentleness (*praos* which comes up again in the form of *hēmeron* starting at 410d2) and *thumoeides* (re-introduced at 410b6).

5 The difference between *to logistikon* and *to philosophon* or *philomathes* will be discussed below.

rule.⁶ Socrates repeatedly refers to this conception of moderation as a kind of friendship that exists among all three classes of the city and all three parts of the soul.⁷ This raises the question of how the appetitive part came to be friendly towards the other parts, how it came to have this opinion, and education seems to be the only available answer to this question, since the moral education is supposed to make the soul moderate.⁸

This leaves us in the following predicament. The broader account of moderation along with Plato's explicit statements concerning which parts of the soul the moral education affects suggest that the appetitive part is not a co-recipient of the education described in Books II–III. However, the just soul that corresponds to Kallipolis is surely moderate in the narrower sense, and this seems to imply that the education has created a belief in the appetitive part and in this way made it friendly to the other parts. What is needed to resolve this quandary is a careful study of *what* it means for the appetitive part to be friendly to the other parts of soul, i.e., to have the belief that it should be ruled by reason and spirit, and of *how* it comes to be this way. I consider these problems in the first and second parts of this chapter respectively. The consideration of these questions will show that the appetitive part is indeed shaped along with the other two parts during the education, and in particular through physical training, broadly construed (*gumnastikê*). In the final part of this chapter I shall return to *Republic* 441e–442b and explain why Plato shouldn't be understood as denying here that the appetitive part is educated.

I

It might be helpful to begin again with a look at how this *homodoxia* is produced in the city. This agreement is introduced into the argument without any real account of how it is supposed to arise,⁹ and although much might speak for taking the bronze and iron classes to have received only an education in their respective crafts, the presence of this opinion among them seems to be a major obstacle to this view.¹⁰ Indeed, there is one feature of the education that is explicitly administered to all three classes, and this – not coincidentally – is the one responsible for their

6 The dual τῷ ὀρχομένῳ at 442d1 makes clear that the agreement is not limited to the rational and the spirited part.

7 See *Rep.* 442c9. Cf. 463b1–4, 547c2, 589b5–6 and 590d5–6. 8 *Rep.* 411a1.

9 Cf. 431c9–e8. 10 Reeve (1988, 186–90) overlooks this difficulty.

homodoxia, namely the Noble Lie.¹¹ The basic premise to the Noble Lie is that there are desires that threaten to undermine the order of society if they are left alone and therefore need to be addressed. But these desires are fundamental to humanity and as such ineliminable, and for this reason all one can do to address this problem is to manipulate these desires in such a way that they actually impel us to act in ways that strengthen society and preserve its order. Or to put this more Platonically, one must *persuade* these people to strive towards what is good. The Noble Lie is simply the instrument of such persuasion.

The basic desires at issue concern the well-being and flourishing of ourselves and our kin. In other words, we cannot help but care for ourselves and those we take to be close to us, and this kind of concern leads us to do things that are not in the city's best interest. The different features of the Noble Lie are meant to address the various ways in which these cares and concerns might jeopardize the city. For example, when one's city is under siege and things are at their bleakest, this concern for one's own well-being encourages one to take one's family and flee the city. Hence, the myth of *autochthony*, which by suggesting that the very earth under foot is one's kin turns this desire on its heels and persuades one to remain and fight. Likewise, love for one's kin seems to cause parents to privilege their own children in ways that destabilize the society, notably through nepotism. By working hard to secure highly regarded public offices for children and relatives who are hardly suitable candidates one is putting the order of the city in jeopardy. The *autochthony* myth helps here too, as it makes all citizens members of a single family, but the myth of the metals adds a significant contribution of its own, as it implants in citizens the belief that improper allocations of offices will lead to a swift destruction of the city and its inhabitants,¹² so that this concern we feel for our kin and its accompanying desire to promote their prosperity now encourage us to keep them (and oneself) from any such ill-suited profession.¹³

The myth of the metals is the feature of the Noble Lie that persuades the lower classes of citizens that the philosophers should rule. *Prima facie*, this might just look like the kind of thing that resists the analogy between

11 The Noble Lie is said to be for not just the rulers and military but for "the rest of the city as well" (*kai tēn allēn polin* 414d3–4).

12 *Rep.* 415c5–7.

13 The anonymous community of wives and children described in Book V seems to acknowledge that these familial affections are too strong to be cured by the Noble Lie alone.

city and soul and is without psychological counterpart. I hope to show that this is not the case. In order to do so, I shall need first to give a brief account about what it means for the appetitive part of soul to have an opinion or belief.

It is well known that Plato's treatment of the three parts of soul is at times extremely anthropomorphic. Each part is said to have its own pleasures and desires,¹⁴ and each is even credited with the ability to form beliefs.¹⁵ Yet these claims are notoriously difficult to interpret. What does it mean to say that the appetitive part has a *belief*? One's response to this question will hinge on whether one thinks that there is more to the appetitive part than the sum of one's appetites. A handful of scholars have taken the view that the appetitive part is a kind of *homunculus* with its own capacity to reason, but caution is called for here.¹⁶ It is important to distinguish between two varieties of cognition: conceptualization and reasoning. In light of Plato's repeated characterizations of the appetitive part as *alogiston*, it seems difficult to maintain that it has the capacity to reason.¹⁷ Yet it seems trivially true that the appetitive part is in some sense capable of conceptualization. After all, if an appetite is focused on a particular object, it must in some sense be capable of conceptualizing that object. My appetitive part cannot desire a cupcake without having some idea of what a cupcake is. This amount of cognitive ability seems to be all the appetitive part really needs to do its work.¹⁸ The remaining mechanics of the appetitive part can be accounted for in non-cognitive terms. Indeed, Plato's description of the appetitive part suggests we might do well to think of it in terms of a non-cognitive ethical theory such as emotivism, according to which ethical "beliefs" are not complex judgments or

14 *Rep.* 580d6–7. 15 *Rep.* 442c9–d2, 571d2, 603a1–2, 605c1–2.

16 See Moline (1978) 61; Penner (1971) 100 ff.; Irwin (1995) 217–18; Bobonich (2002) 235–45, and more guardedly Klosko (1988) 347–48. Opposition to this view has most recently been offered by Gerson (2003) 107–11 and Lorenz (2004) 110–11 and (2006) 44–48.

17 *Rep.* 439d7 and 604d8. That the appetitive part does engage in reasoning is the opinion of, e.g., Irwin (1995) 217–19, and Bobonich (2002) 244. In taking the appetitive part not to have this ability, I follow Gerson (2003) 107–11, and Lorenz (2004) 110–11, and (2006) 44–48, to whom the reader should turn for more detailed discussions of the philosophical and textual problems involved in such an attribution.

18 Bobonich points out this cognitive aspect of a desire, but in my opinion he goes too far by concluding that this conceptualization must be "linguistic" (2002, 237–39) and even "propositional" (*id.* 243) because the appetitive part is "assent[ing] and command[ing]." While it is true that Plato nowhere in the *Republic* calls the appetitive part *alogon* (he only refers to it as being *alogiston* at 439d7, 604d8), there is no pressing reason to understand this conceptualization linguistically.

propositions that can be true or false but are rather positive or negative attitudes or “conative-emotional dispositions” towards certain objects or actions. According to this theory, uttering an ethical statement such as “murder is wrong” is not to make an assertion so much as to express one’s attitude towards murder.¹⁹ This allows a minimal amount of cognitive content (conceptualization of the object) but excludes the more complex content that one would expect to be the sole property of reason. On this model we could say that the appetitive part does have beliefs, but this would simply be to say that it has certain representations and certain positive and negative attitudes towards those representations.²⁰

This analysis allows us to understand the appetitive part’s “beliefs” simply in terms of the objects and intensities of its desiderative and aversive attitudes. If this account is right, then the appetitive part’s belief that reason should rule would amount to saying that it has a conception of following reason and a positive disposition to achieve this. Yet one might reasonably wonder whether this *homodoxia* really should be explained in this way, that is to say, that it is a “belief” in the same sense in which it has a “belief” that a cupcake is pleasant.²¹ Such an understanding of

19 For a detailed account of emotivism and non-cognitive ethical theory, see Smith (1998).

20 The account above bears some similarities to Lorenz’s account of appetitive belief, though his account might perhaps be slightly more cognitive than my own. Such beliefs are for Lorenz “mental states of considerable complexity which present things as being one way or other and which, moreover, involve acceptance at a level of the soul below reason” (2006, 72). The complexity of these representational states themselves, i.e., that they represent a thing *as being such*, is meant to account for Plato’s claim that the appetitive part aims at pleasure, so that it will be representing a thing, e.g., a cookie, as pleasant (*id.* 49). These complex representational states, however, need not be linguistic. Lorenz persuasively argues that it will be in terms of “images and appearances” (*id.* 99). Likewise, the acceptance or assent “may be entirely uncritical, and may be no more than a disposition to act on the information contained in the representational state” (*id.* 97). Hence, Lorenz distinguishes between the disposition to pursue the object of desire and a prior representation of it as pleasant, whereas on the emotive theory pleasantness simply is to be the object of such a disposition. The appetitive part has certain positive and negative attitudes towards objects, and we can then identify these appetites as being hedonistic or dolorous in focus. Nothing of what follows, however, hinges on this distinction.

21 Although Lorenz, for example, defines appetitive beliefs in terms of representational states that something is pleasant or painful along with (dispositional) acceptance (see above), he refuses to explain the *homodoxia* of the appetitive part regarding reason’s rule in these terms. Rather than having appetite possess a representation of following reason as something pleasant, this *homodoxia* is simply a matter of “acquiescence.” In other words reason is able to use images and appearances to change some of the appetitive part’s other beliefs and so to redirect its desires, and this is all *homodoxia* boils down to (2006, 109–10). Lorenz’s depreciation of the cognitive aspect of *homodoxia* is surprising given that he sees it as one of the reasons why Plato started talking about the appetitive part

homodoxia might be seen to lead to two major problems. First, the belief that reason should rule, if understood in this way, would be only one belief among many different and incompatible beliefs, and so it would fail to account for the appetitive part's harmonious relationship to reason that it is supposed to provide. Second, while we might be ready to concede that the appetite has positive and negative attitudes towards concrete objects that bear a natural relation to its interest in pleasure such as cupcakes, it perhaps just does not seem plausible that the appetite could develop such an attitude towards something as abstract as following reason.²²

It is, however, possible to outline an account of how this attitude came about that would at the same time address the problem of harmony as well. The genesis of this attitude might be very similar to that of its attitude toward money.²³ Because an individual repeatedly uses money to satisfy his desires, the appetitive part becomes habituated to experience pleasure at the possession of money. This habituation might be likened to an individual growing fond of rain on account of always having been taken for ice-cream on rainy days as a child. Similarly, this same sort of habituation might lead the appetitive part to experience pleasure in an harmonious relationship to reason. In order for this to come to pass, the appetitive part would have to be habituated to experience pleasure in precisely those circumstances where it is not opposed to reason. In this way it could (non-rationally) establish a positive attitude toward being in tune with reason. While it is true that this "belief" or attitude would only be one among many and to this extent would not in and of itself account for a completely harmonious relation between appetite and reason, the manner in which it arises would ensure a certain degree of harmony, since

having beliefs in the first place: "The transfer of expressions such as *homonoia* . . . and *homodoxein* . . . from city to soul naturally brings with it the attribution of thought and belief to each one of the three parts of soul" (*id.* 73). Lorenz sees references to genuine cases of belief not at 442c9–d2 but only at 571d2, 603a1–2, 605c1–2 (see *id.* 4 and 25 n. 16).

22 In addition one might worry that such a belief would require the appetitive part to have some reasoning abilities. For if it is supposed to desire to do *x* because it desires to follow reason and reason desires to do *x*, then the appetitive part would have to perform some sort of deduction in order to locate the resulting objects of its desires. But it is no more necessary for the appetitive part that follows reason to figure out all by itself what reason's aims are, than it is for the dog chasing a car on its way to church to deduce for itself that church is the goal. The idea is simply that the appetite has a conception of when it is in tune with reason and when it is opposed to reason, and the former is pleasant while the latter is painful.

23 The following explanation of the appetite's desire for money was proposed in Lorenz (2004) 110; cf. (2006), 47–48.

it requires the appetitive part be shaped in such a way that it experiences pleasure precisely when it is not opposed to reason.

Our focus then must return to the habituation or education of the appetitive part. The *Republic* makes clear that there are two aspects to it that correspond to the two components of the appetitive part's beliefs, namely intensity and object. The importance of intensity is made clear towards the end of *Republic* IX, where Socrates characterizes an unjust person as "strengthening" his appetites and "weakening" his reason (588e6–589a1). And it is also underlined by the doctrine of conservation of desires' intensity as described in Book VI: "when someone's desires incline strongly for one thing, they are thereby weakened for others, just like a stream that has been partly diverted into another channel."²⁴

When reason is truly ruling, there will be an imbalance in the intensity of one's desires such that the desires of reason are stronger than those of appetite.²⁵ Book IX also makes clear the objects of the appetite's attitudes need to be cultivated. At 589b1–3 Socrates characterizes the just person as promoting certain gentle appetites and eradicating certain savage others. This echoes the goals of the moral education of Books II–III, which were generally to promote gentleness and prevent savagery.²⁶

There is, of course, nothing surprising in any of this. We should expect, if the appetites are to be educated, that this training will proceed by shaping their goals and regulating their intensity. The difficulty lies rather in understanding how Plato's theory of appetite can accommodate such an education. After all, in Book VIII Plato introduces a division of necessary and unnecessary appetites, and the presence of appetites that are necessary and cannot be eliminated might suggest that the appetitive part of the soul cannot be entirely reformed. As I shall presently show, however, it hardly follows from this distinction that there are incorrigible appetites that simply fall outside the scope of education.

There are a number of difficulties that render an exact account of the necessary-unnecessary distinction arduous at best, but for our purposes

24 485d6–8, in Reeve's version of Grube's translation in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997).

25 The education, however, cannot be explained solely in terms of regulating the intensity of the various appetites, as White (1979, 235) suggests. A successful reduction of appetite's intensity might be sufficient to ensure that reason rules over appetite by, as it were, a mere preponderance of force. But there is still the further question whether reason rules with or without appetite's approval, which now cannot be a mere matter of relative force. So some portion of appetite's education must be aimed at securing appetite's approval of reason's rule, where "approval" cannot be cashed out in terms of relative intensity.

26 *Rep.* 410d6–e3.

the following general characterization should suffice. A necessary appetite is one that fulfills at least one of two conditions:

- (N₁) an appetite that one cannot desist (*apotrepsai*) from (558d11);
- (N₂) an appetite whose satisfaction (*apoteloumenai*) benefits one (558e1–2).

These conditions clearly reflect two different brands of necessity. Behind (N₁) lies a sense of material necessity, i.e., these are appetites that our physical constitution necessitates, whereas the necessity behind (N₂) is what we might call teleological – such appetites necessarily help us achieve a good state.²⁷ These same material and teleological conceptions of necessity are exhibited again in his characterization of unnecessary desires:

- (U₁) an appetite that one might get rid of (*apallaxeien*), if one practiced from childhood on (559a3);
- (U₂) an appetite that, when present (*enousai*), brings no good (or even bad) consequences (559a4).

A (U₁) appetite is not materially necessary, and a (U₂) appetite is one that lacks teleological necessity. A general appetite for food is a necessary consequence of our physical constitutions, and so it is impossible for a human not to have it. And if this appetite is moderated by concerns for well-being, it will also necessarily help humans achieve and maintain a good state. Such an appetite, then, is necessary according to both (N₁) and (N₂). By contrast, our human constitutions do not require that we desire certain delicacies, and so an appetite for these is not materially necessary, but it might be teleologically necessary if it contributes to the

27 I do not think that the necessity involved in N₁ appetites should be described as hypothetical. I want to resist this suggestion in favor of an alternative that I find both consistent with the text and interpretively more illuminating insofar as it offers a helpful parallel to the *Timaeus*, as we shall see below. N₁ appetites are not those that must be *satisfied*, if, say, there is to be a living being, as the hypothetical interpretation would have it; rather, they are appetites that are necessarily *present* given one's material constitution. This fits with the descriptions of these desires in 558d11 (one cannot desist from having them) and especially with 559a3, where unnecessary appetites are described as those that are not necessarily present. 559b4–5 might offer some support for the hypothetical reading, but the text here is difficult, as the critical apparatus shows. I think there's something to be said for Egelie's emendation at 559b4 (see Slings (2003)), which makes this passage more consistent with the preceding, but even the received text can be understood in a manner consistent with my interpretation, since as living things necessarily have such desires, not to have them is to die.

good state for humans. The appetite for such delicacies, then, might be teleologically necessary (N_2) but materially unnecessary (U_1).²⁸

It seems reasonable to assume that the above distinction between “gentle” and “savage” appetites is intended to map onto this division into necessary and unnecessary appetites. If so, then Plato is suggesting that the appetitive education will consist in eliminating unnecessary appetites and “domesticating” necessary appetites, and this must be understood in light of the two senses of necessity outlined above. The elimination of unnecessary appetites is not directed at *all* appetites that could be characterized as unnecessary in any sense. For some materially unnecessary appetites are teleologically necessary and therefore should be promoted rather than eliminated. Rather, eradication is directed at those appetites that are unnecessary in *both* senses.²⁹ Plato makes clear that this eradication is supposed to take place during education, yet the scope of the eradication – it includes *all* unnecessary appetites – is initially surprising.³⁰ For Plato has defined unnecessary appetites to be those that fail to produce a benefit (559a4, b6), i.e., to include those that are merely teleologically neutral, so that one might wonder why we should eliminate an appetite that causes no harm? The answer is presumably to be found in the conservation of desire doctrine that we examined above. Any superfluous appetite, no matter how harmless its direct consequences are, takes away from the intensity of our other desires, including our rational desires. Hence, superfluous desires should be eliminated.³¹

But if spelling out the prevention of wild appetites is relatively straightforward, Plato's injunction to “domesticate” our gentle, i.e., necessary, appetites is more difficult to understand. It would certainly be a mistake to conclude that if an appetite is necessary, it cannot be “domesticated” in

28 Cf. *Rep.* VIII, 559a11–c7.

29 An appetite that is materially necessary but teleologically unnecessary, if such a thing exists, cannot be prevented.

30 Socrates says that an unnecessary appetite can be got rid of “if the desire is corrected and educated (*paideuomenê*) from childhood” (559b9). Therefore, it looks like during the education the appetitive part is being trained so that it will not produce any unnecessary desires (cf. 589b1–3). This appears to be confirmed in *Rep.* VIII, 552e5–8 and 554b7–c2 where drones, who seem to correspond to unnecessary appetites, are said to appear due to a lack of education in the city, and in *Rep.* IX, 571b2–c1.

31 Indeed, it seems that once the conservation of desire doctrine is taken into account, there is no such thing as a completely harmless desire. Even an appetite whose direct consequences are harmless does harm one indirectly by draining strength away from other necessary desires.

any way. As we have seen there will be some appetites that are teleologically necessary but materially unnecessary. And it will be up to education to make sure that they grow and become part of one's desiderative life. The case of materially necessary appetites is less clear. Does it make sense to attribute to Plato the belief that materially necessary appetites can be "domesticated" in any way? There seem to be three possible responses to this question. We might simply insist that according to Plato there is a certain amount of natural providence such that any desire that is materially necessary is also teleologically necessary, but this would seem to saddle Plato with a rather implausible view. For it hardly seems to be the case that we are born into this world desiring only healthy things in healthy quantities. Inborn appetites appear to be more coarse-grained and generic, and to this extent they can only be characterized as teleologically unnecessary, as they do not *necessarily* benefit us over all. If this is right, there remain two options. Either these materially necessary but teleologically unnecessary appetites can be trained and domesticated or they cannot. The latter option might *prima facie* seem more reasonable. After all, if one's physical constitution requires one to have an appetite for a certain thing, it might seem that nothing can be done about it. This view, however, should be avoided, if possible, as it leads to a defective conception of virtue according to which the appetitive part is not entirely in harmony with the other two parts. For this reason the former option is preferable, but only if we can explain how it is possible to "domesticate" materially necessary appetites.

Plato's *Timaeus* offers such an explanation.³² Here Plato famously characterizes the ordering of the universe by the Demiurge as Necessity being persuaded by Intellect:

For this ordered world is of mixed birth: it is the offspring of a union of Necessity and Intellect. Intellect ruled (*arkhontos*) over Necessity by persuading it to direct most of the things that come to be toward what is best, and the result of this subjugation (*hêttômenês*) of Necessity to wise persuasion was the initial formation of the universe.³³

Necessity in the *Timaeus* clearly refers to material necessity. Prior to the Demiurge's ordering activity, matter already exists along with some laws

32 This connection between the necessary appetites in the *Republic* and the necessity of the *Timaeus* has also been made recently by Peter Adamson in an as yet unpublished paper on *anankê* presented in Edinburgh in November 2007. Although we each arrived at our results independently, we seem to be largely in agreement here, and readers interested in this connection are encouraged to look at his treatment of the same topic.

33 *Tim.* 47e5–48a5, trans. Zeyl in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997) with modifications.

governing its behavior, and it is these pre-cosmic material inclinations that Plato calls "Necessity." That fire makes things visible, for example, is a fact of Necessity and established independently of the Demiurge.³⁴ In fact this pre-cosmic necessity extends beyond fire's luminary property to account for several features of the elements. In the pre-cosmic state of the universe the elements per se do not yet exist, rather there are traces (*ikhnê*) of the elements and a shaking motion that forces the heavy traces down and the light ones up. In other words, what Aristotle would refer to as the natural motions of the four elements are in the *Timaeus* a result of Necessity, and so Necessity gives even the pre-cosmic universe the basic configuration of earth at the center followed by water and air with fire at the periphery.³⁵ Hence, the structure of the cosmos and the motion of the elements are roughly predetermined by material necessity.

Although these features of the universe are materially necessary, the Demiurge does not simply leave them unaltered, but neither does he force the universe to take on a radically different structure by, e.g., compelling the light and rare fire-traces to move down instead of up. Rather, he retains these features but improves upon them by making them measured (*ekhein metriôs*).³⁶ For the universe as a whole this means taking what must have been a roughly spherical shape and making it truly spherical.³⁷ Likewise, the Demiurge assigns to each element a measured geometrical form that promotes and regulates its materially necessary features. Fire-traces, for example, were already light in the pre-cosmic state (53a1–2), and the Demiurge reinforces this feature by granting the elemental fire the shape of a pyramid which is "the lightest in that it is made up of the least number of identical parts."³⁸ Such refinement is by no means gratuitous. If left alone, the shaking motion of necessity would have completely separated all of the elemental traces so that that universe would become effectively inert.³⁹ These measured geometrical forms turn this necessary motion from a potential liability into an asset. The cosmic elements will never be completely separated into distinct kinds because thanks to their geometric bodies they are constantly transforming into one another (with the exception of earth) and accordingly being shaken to another place.

34 Cf. *Tim.* 31b4–8. 35 *Tim.* 52d4–53a7. 36 Cf. *Tim.* 53a7–b5.

37 *Tim.* 33b1–7. 38 *Tim.* 56b1–2, trans. Zeyl in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997).

39 Cf. Taylor (1928) 356. To this extent Necessity is analogous to the godless motion of the universe in the *Statesman* that would lead to destruction if the god didn't intervene (270a3–5).

These initial materially necessary inclinations are, therefore, also potentially teleologically necessary to the extent that they can become an important constituent in the cycle of elemental change. If these inclinations could be removed, the cycle would vanish. But these inclinations are not by themselves sufficient for achieving this cycle. They run the risk of going too far by completely separating the elemental traces. This is avoided by making them measured. Once they have been measured, they are still materially necessary, only now these necessary actions are performed in such a way as to necessarily bring about good results. Hence, in the *Timaeus* we find a picture of materially necessary features that are nevertheless refined and so made teleologically necessary, and this refinement is achieved through measurement.

The “domestication” of the necessary appetites seems to follow a similar pattern. Initially we are born with a materially necessary appetite to eat food, but this appetite is still in some sense *ametrios*. Plato seems to think that if left to develop on its own, it will become excessive or perverted, and to this extent it is still a liability. Education, then, must “domesticate” this appetite by making it *metrios*, which in the domain of moral psychology is to say by making it moderate. This moderate desire remains materially necessary, but instead of being potentially destructive it is now sufficient to produce good results. In this way a materially necessary appetite is made teleologically necessary.

Now we are in a position to see that the mechanics of the psychological persuasion that takes place in the city to establish the *homodoxia* concerning who should rule are to be found in the soul as well. For the Noble Lie was premised on the idea that there are basic and ineliminable desires that threaten to destroy society if left alone and therefore need to be manipulated in such a way that they are actually conducive to social order. But this is just to say that *homodoxia* in the city was the result of taking certain materially necessary desires and making them teleologically necessary, and this is exactly what we have discovered to take place in the education of the appetite. In this way we might say that the education of the appetitive part of soul is functionally equivalent to the Noble Lie, even if the instrumental details differ.

II

As we saw above, Plato does make clear at times that he expects the perfectly just person whose psychic structure parallels the political structure of the Kallipolis to be moderate in the narrow sense of having an appetitive

part of the soul that agrees that reason (together with spirit) should be in control. We have also seen that this agreement can be spelled out in terms of the kinds of appetites a person has. The appetitive part's "opinion" that reason should rule results from the elimination of its teleologically unnecessary appetites and the moderation of its materially necessary appetites. It remains to examine *how* and *when* this is accomplished. The answer to the "how" question is fairly straightforward. It is by performing moderate actions that we become moderate: "by over-feeding (*euôkhounti*) the multiform beast one makes it strong" (588e6–7) and it is likewise by "feeding it in a nourishing manner (*trephôn*)" that it is domesticated (589b2–3).⁴⁰ But if this is so, then it would seem that the domestication of the appetites does indeed take place in the moral education described in Books II–III, and in particular through the regimen of physical training, broadly construed (*gumnastikê*).⁴¹

This view dates back to Proclus (fifth-century C.E.) who distinguished three aspects of the moral education in well-governed cities such that each aspect affected a particular part of one's soul:

And indeed in unperverted constitutions children are educated through physical training, musical training and mathematics in order that by physical training they might strengthen the softness of appetite and summon its yieldingness to vigour (for this appetitive part, being close to bodies and as it were deadened by matter, requires something that strengthens and arouses it); by musical training they might soften the impetuosity and savageness of the spirit and make it agreeable and harmonious. For the spirit is a tension of the soul . . . These [*viz.*, physical and musical training] set in order and educate the irrational element in the young, while mathematics and dialectic awaken and train our reason.⁴²

Prima facie Proclus' account of the effects of moral education on the tripartite soul flies in the face of Plato's own statements on the matter. Proclus says that the two disciplines, *mousikê* and *gumnastikê*, that together

40 This is in keeping with the results of Book IV where we are told "just actions produce justice in the soul and unjust ones injustice" (444c11–d1). Cf. 606d4–6.

41 As Tad Brennan has pointed out to me, the remark at 399e4–5 that the restrictions on the musical education contribute to the purging of the city's luxuriousness (*truphê*), which presumably is connected to appetitive excesses, offers some additional support for my general view that the education is trying to establish moderation not merely in the broad sense but in the narrow sense. The musical education does this by attacking some of the rational and spirited causes of such appetites, e.g., false beliefs concerning bodily pleasures (390a ff.). The gymnastic education works on the appetitive part directly. As we shall see below, physical training is not limited to exercise.

42 Proclus, *In Alc.* 193.21–194.17.

comprise one's moral education in Books II–III, are directed at the spirited and appetitive parts of soul respectively, but as we saw above Plato is on record as saying that these two *tekhnai* are aimed not at the spirited and appetitive but at the rational and spirited parts.⁴³ Nevertheless, we should not dismiss Proclus' suggestion until we have carefully considered its interpretive strengths.

First and foremost among these strengths is that Proclus avoids the thorny problem that Plato's apparent identification of the philosophical and the rational parts of soul causes. As Adam and others have complained, the philosophical part of Books II–III seems to function at a more moral and emotional level and the rational part of Book IV at a more intellectual level.⁴⁴ More to the point, Socrates' argument for *to logistikon* as a distinct, third part of the soul rules out its identification with *to philosophon* of Books II–III. For he argues that whereas *to thumoeides* belongs to children from birth, *to logistikon* comes to them much later (441a7–b1). This cannot, then, be *to philosophon* which belongs to one by nature (and which perhaps belongs even to dogs)⁴⁵ and which is the co-recipient of education *in children*.⁴⁶ Moreover, Plato makes it very clear that the musical education is shaping the soul before it becomes rational when he says that the student will:

praise and enjoy the fine things and receiving them into his soul be nourished by them and become fine and good, and the bad things he'll correctly despise and hate when he is young before he is able to receive reason, but when reason arrives he who is raised in this way will greet it, recognizing it through its great affinity.

(401e4–402a4)⁴⁷

Thus it is best to understand the rational part of the soul as the philosophical part of soul in adults who have become rational (not all do, 441a–b), whereas the philosophical part of soul in children (and some adults) is pre-rational. Hence, despite Plato's explicit statement at 441e–2a, it cannot be the case that the *rational* part of the soul is trained in the moral education of Books II–III, and it is rather, as Proclus claims, through the

43 *Rep.* 441e3–2a5. 44 Adam (1902) I: 108 and 254, cf. Irwin (1977) 330 n. 28.

45 376c1–2. Note that Grube (1992, revd. Reeve 1997) omit *phusei* ("by nature") at 376c1.

46 *Paides*, e.g. 377b6, c3; 381e5, 395c4, etc.

47 Trans. Grube (1992, revd. Reeve 1997). Cf. 498b2–7.

mathematical and dialectical education described in Book VII that reason is trained.⁴⁸

The other chief strength of Proclus' analysis is that it provides a solution to the nagging problem of how the appetitive part is educated in such a way that it acquires the "opinion" that reason should rule. As we've seen, Plato's claim that the Kallipolitical soul is moderate in the narrow sense commits him to providing some sort of training for the appetitive part, and where else could such training take place if not in the education described in Books II–III?⁴⁹ In Proclus' view this is provided by physical training, which "strengthen[s] the softness of appetite and summon[s] its yieldingness to vigour." This view is echoed by Olympiodorus, who describes wrestling and gymnastics as aiming "to strengthen the looseness of appetite."⁵⁰ At first this aim looks quite unlike what we would expect. After all, doesn't Plato in Book IX compare the appetitive part to a multi-form beast that we should weaken rather than strengthen?⁵¹ Proclus' own explanation of why the appetitive part needs to be strengthened rather than weakened involves some Platonist metaphysical presuppositions that we might not want to sign up to in this context.⁵² Thankfully, Olympiodorus explains without such metaphysical commitments that what he means by "strengthening" the appetitive part is not what we might initially expect: "the appetite must be unyielding, i.e., it must be drawn toward the desire for benefit."⁵³ Hence, on this account the physical training is doing precisely what needs to be done – it is domesticating our appetites by making them teleologically necessary.

48 Gill (1985) argues this at length, although as I show below I believe he goes too far by saying that the moral education of Books II–III is directed solely at the spirited part to the exclusion of appetite.

49 Gill concedes that "we find later in the *Republic* evidence that Plato believes his educational scheme has also trained the ἐπιθυμητικόν" (1985, 8), but then complains that "Plato does not describe any programme of training for the ἐπιθυμητικόν as such, perhaps because he believes . . . that it cannot be trained but can only be more or less forcibly suppressed" (*id.* 11).

50 The context is a brief discussion not of the education in the *Republic* specifically but of education in Athens, which both Olympiodorus and Proclus take to consist in "letters, lyre-playing, and wrestling" on account of *Alc.* 106e6. However, this does not detract from this passage's relevance since they both also agree that this typical Athenian education mirrors the ideal education of the *Republic* (Proclus, *In Alc.* 195.17, calls the former an εἰδωλον of the latter): both operate on the tripartite soul in roughly the same way, only the ideal education does so more consummately. See *In Alc.* 2.44–8 and 65.20–66.3.

51 *Rep.* IX, 588e6–7. 52 *In Alc.* 194.4–6. 53 *In Alc.* 176.19–20.

These are two powerful advantages of Proclus' and Olympiodorus' reading. Nevertheless, we should only endorse this account of the moral education if a close examination of physical training reveals that this is indeed a better description of how it affects the soul.

Plato makes clear that the moral education of Books II–III consists of two disciplines, musical training (*mousikê*) and physical training (*gumnastikê*). As Plato himself makes explicit, *mousikê* can be further divided into two parts: the verbal part and a part concerned with style, harmony and rhythm.⁵⁴ Plato's description of *gumnastikê* also seems to have two parts, although he doesn't draw much attention to this fact. The first concerns athletic exercise, and the second concerns diet and lifestyle. In light of all the detail Socrates paid to the content and form of *mousikê*, the most striking feature of Socrates' discussion of *gumnastikê* is his literal silence on the topic of athletic exercise. He makes no suggestion as to which exercises will better promote courage and spirit. Instead, he focusses nearly all of his attention on diet and lifestyle.⁵⁵ In fact, it is even reasonable to say that the primary meaning of *gumnastikê* in this section is diet and lifestyle, and that when Plato wishes to refer to exercise, he couples *gumnastikê* or *ta gymnasia* with *ponos* or *ponein*.⁵⁶ This raises a pressing question: if *gumnastikê* is to be credited with arousing the spirited part and promoting courage, how do dietary measures accomplish this? A close examination of this and other relevant passages shows that it doesn't. It is the other aspect of *gumnastikê*, namely exercise, that is directed at the spirited part, while this aspect, diet and lifestyle, has to do solely with the appetitive part.⁵⁷

This can be seen by taking a closer look at the primary discussion of diet and lifestyle in *Republic* III 403d8–404e6 and comparing it to what we have already learned about the appetitive part of the soul. Book III's discussion of physical training and Book VIII's discussion of the appetitive part agree in three fundamental areas: they both (i) focus on the same basic objects, (ii) aim at the same goal, and (iii) seek to reach this goal in the same manner.

54 *Rep.* II, 376e8 and III, 398b6–d2.

55 As Adam (1902) I: 171, notes, Plato "deals here chiefly with the hygienic aspect of gymnastic."

56 Cf. τὰ γυμνάσια καὶ τοὺς πόνους at 410b5 and γυμναστικῇ πολλὰ πονῆ at 411c4.

57 I suspect that something similar is going on in *mousikê*. One aspect, namely its content, is directed at the philosophical part while the other aspect, style, is directed at the spirited part. In this way the three parts of soul are harmonized by two intermediate bonds, *mousikê* and *gumnastikê*.

(i) As we have seen, Plato characterizes the appetitive part as being directed at certain basic objects, namely drink, food and sex,⁵⁸ and these are precisely the topics covered in lifestyle *gumnastikê*: drink (403e4–7), food (404e8–404d4, d8–10), and sex (404d5–7). Moreover, each of these three is in fact an object of a *necessary* desire. They are materially necessary in the sense that we cannot desist from them.⁵⁹ So the object of lifestyle *gumnastikê* appears to be materially necessary desires.

(ii) This brings us to the goal of lifestyle *gumnastikê*. As we saw above, the training of appetitive part involves both eliminating the wholly unnecessary appetites and “domesticating” the materially necessary ones, and the latter activity involves making these appetites moderate. Moderation was seen to be important because the generic desire to eat food is potentially harmful, and it is only the *moderate* desire to eat food (in the right quantities, at the right times, etc.) that guarantees well-being. In other words, the point of “domesticating” necessary appetites and eliminating unnecessary ones is to modify our collection of appetites in such a way that they all aim at health and well-being.⁶⁰ In this short section describing the part of physical training concerned with one's lifestyle, Plato repeatedly emphasizes that its aim is to produce “health” and “well-being.”⁶¹ Hence, the goal of lifestyle *gumnastikê* and the goal of the appetitive education are identical.

58 See *Rep.* 389e, 559a–c, 580e; *Phaedo* 64d, 81b; *Protagoras* 353c; *Hippias Major* 299a; *Laws* 783c ff., 831e, 841a. Cf. Aristotle *EN* 1147b23–31, 1154a17–18, etc.

59 They are also potentially teleologically necessary insofar as they can lead to health and well-being (ὑγίαιας τε καὶ εὐεξίας, 559a11). This is explicitly said of food (559b3–4) and obviously extendable to drink. Plato also extends it to “sex and other appetites” at 559c6: Οὕτω δὲ καὶ περὶ ἀφροδισίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων φήσομεν. Many scholars (e.g., Adam (1902) II: 240, Bloom (1991) 421, and perhaps Irwin (1977) 339–40 n. 64) understand this passage to say that sex is an exclusively *unnecessary* appetite, but this is not the natural reading. In the line that immediately precedes this one, Socrates is not talking exclusively about unnecessary desires; rather, he is reiterating that some desires are necessary and others unnecessary. Consequently, the οὕτω should be referring to this division. Moreover, this would make good sense, since Plato often groups the desires for food, drink, and sex in the same category. And Plato also often emphasizes that one must distinguish between sex per se, on the one hand, and illicit sex or licentiousness in sex on the other; see *Laws* 831e, 874c; *Timaeus* 86d; 7th Letter 326c and 335b; cf. *Laws* 636b, where Plato refers to the “natural” pleasures of sex. Further, this reading would find resonance in Aristotle, who calls the desire for sex “necessary” and “natural and common” as long as it is not pursued in excess (*EN* III.11, 1118b8–11, 15–16; VII.4, 1147b23–8 and 14, 1154a17–18). Finally, as Tad Brennan pointed out to me, sex is necessary for the existence of the city.

60 Cf. ὑγίαια: 559a11; εὐεξία: 559a11, b6.

61 Cf. ὑγίαια: 404a5, b3, e5; εὐεξία: 404c9, d6.

(iii) Moreover, the manner in which this goal of health and well-being is to be attained looks to be the same in each case. As we saw above, Plato says that the appetites are made moderate by performing moderate actions. Hence, it is by continually eating and drinking appropriate amounts that our appetites to eat and drink are made moderate, and conversely indulging in either food or drink would prevent these necessary appetites from becoming moderate and even promote in their place unnecessary appetites for excess. This is exactly the regimen that we find described in *Republic* III 403d8–404e6: physical training seeks to achieve health and well-being by implementing a lifestyle (*diaita*) of simplicity (*haplotês*). This means no excess or luxury in any of the three objects concerned: drunkenness is not allowed, although moderate drinking is;⁶² simple meals of roasted meat are allowed, but no fish, boiled meat, desserts, or “Attic pastries”; some sex is also presumably allowed, but indulging in the luxurious form of prostitution for which Corinth is famous is off limits.⁶³ In all of these areas the prospective guardians are acquiring habits that foster the moderation of their necessary desires and suppress their teleologically unnecessary ones.

This means that the dietary and lifestyle aspect of physical training does *not* serve to arouse the spirited part of the soul nor to promote courage. To be sure, towards the end of his discussion of education Socrates does make some connection between physical training and the promotion of spirit and courage, but in both instances he lays emphasis on exercise (*ponos*).⁶⁴ It is easy enough to see how *exercise* could arouse the spirited part of the soul and promote courage, but how does a simple lifestyle of moderation do this? The answer is: it *doesn't*. Rather, this part of *gymnastikê* habituates the appetitive part of the soul.

The obvious parallels between the description of the part of physical training concerned with one's lifestyle in Book III and the account of the appetitive part of soul in Book VIII provide overwhelming support for Proclus' suggestion that the appetitive part is trained by *gymnastikê*. To be sure, we have seen that Proclus oversimplifies, but we have also seen that what could be called the current standard interpretation oversimplifies as well. For on the standard interpretation, physical training is concerned entirely with the spirited part of the soul, and for Proclus physical training in its entirety is directed towards training the appetitive part. In fact, there are two parts to physical training: lifestyle and

62 *Rep.* 403e4–7; cf. 372d2. 63 Cf. Sommerstein (2001) 143.

64 *Rep.* 410b5–6 and 411c4–5.

dietary training is concerned with the appetitive part, and athletic exercise with the spirited part of the soul. Consequently, because Plato has provided for the education of the appetitive part of soul, there is nothing preventing the Kallipolitical soul from being moderate in the narrow sense.

III

This still leaves several unanswered questions. First and foremost is why in the account of education in Books II–III (376e1–412b3) Plato gives no indication (and in the summary of it in Book IV (441e7–442b3) even seems to *deny*) that the appetitive part is a co-recipient of the education. It is perhaps understandable that Plato would leave the appetitive part's role implicit in Books II–III since he has not yet looked critically at the structure of the soul and isolated appetite as a distinct part, but the omission of the appetitive part from the summary of the effects of education in Book IV seems particularly troubling. Before this is allowed to alter our understanding of physical training's effect on the soul, it should be made clear that the summary itself is in many ways unfaithful to the account of education presented in Books II–III.⁶⁵ As we already noted, *to philosophon* has been replaced by *to logistikon*. Moreover, although both the summary in Book III (410c8–412a7) and the summary in Book IV underline the importance of stretching and relaxing the soul, the details vary – both in terms of *what* is stretched and relaxed and in terms of *how* it is stretched and relaxed. For example, it is made very clear in Books II–III that the spirited part needs to be both stretched and relaxed,⁶⁶ whereas in

65 Gill (1985 12–15) provides an excellent discussion of how the Book IV passage “significantly redescribes” the education. In addition to the discrepancies I list here, Gill also sees a further problem regarding the appetitive part of soul. Whereas in Books II–III the appetitive part is not mentioned at all, Gill points out that 442d1 implies that the appetitive part has been educated. Moreover, this same tension seems to exist within Book IV's summary itself, since 442a–b seems to imply that the appetitive part has not been educated. This is in part what leads Gill to conclude that here “we see evidence of an ambiguity in Plato's theory of desire (and of its educability)” (*id.* 15). But this severe conclusion results partly from Gill's view that “Plato does not describe any programme of training for the ἐπιθυμητικὸν as such” (*id.* 11), which we have seen to be inaccurate. Hence, the “ambiguity” is not as great as Gill suggests because Plato is more or less consistent on the educability of the appetites. One tension that still does need resolving concerns why the appetitive part needs to be ruled if it has in fact been adequately educated. I consider this below.

66 For the stretching or arousal of the spirited part, see *Rep.* 410b2 ff. For the relaxing of the spirited part, see 411a5 ff.

Book IV we are told that the spirited part's training involves only relaxing and no stretching.⁶⁷ Further, according to Book IV the training aimed at relaxing the spirited part is provided by harmony and rhythm with no indication that any other component of the education has any effect on it. This conflicts with Books II–III in two important ways. First, the original account made clear that harmony and rhythm do more than just relax the spirited part. One musical mode and rhythm relaxes it and encourages it to be obedient and to act in accordance with the philosophical part,⁶⁸ while another stretches it and thereby promotes its courageous attitude.⁶⁹ Secondly, according to Books II–III the stretching and exciting of the spirited part is achieved not just through certain harmonies and rhythms but also through physical training. In fact, although the Book IV summary does initially mention physical training as being part of the education, when it proceeds to describe in closer detail how the education affects the soul, physical training is completely ignored.

These two omissions are clearly connected. After all, physical training is responsible for the education of the appetitive part, and so if Plato does not include the former in the details of his summary he cannot effectively explain the latter. On the one hand this is good news. Initially it looked like the summary in Book IV was at odds with our findings that the appetitive part is a co-recipient of the education of Books II–III because at this point in the dialogue the appetitive part has been established as a distinct part of the soul and nevertheless this summary describes the education as affecting only the rational and spirited parts. Now we can see that this summary is not so much incompatible with our findings as it is incomplete, since it was seen to be physical training (or strictly speaking, a part of it) that educates the appetitive part and the summary in Book IV is simply silent on the influence of physical training. On the other hand, this double omission raises a further question: why doesn't Plato seize the opportunity to paint a complete picture of how the moral education affects all three parts of the soul? The answer, I believe, is twofold. First, Plato might well have thought that there is no real need at this point to call attention to the fact that the appetitive part was the recipient of some of the education. What is important is that the education be complete,

67 *Rep.* IV 442a1–2.

68 *Rep.* 399b3–c4; cf. *praxanta kata noun* at 399b7. The rhythms are left to the experts to determine, but they, like the harmonies, should lead to an “ordered and courageous life” (*kosmiou te kai andreiou biou*, 399e9–400a1).

69 *Rep.* 399a5–b3.

i.e., that it does account for the appetitive part of soul. If the education of Books II–III were implemented it would train the appetites of the city's youth, and this will be true regardless of whether it is pointed out or not.

Secondly, by ignoring the effect that physical training has on the appetitive part, Plato can emphasize that the rational and spirited parts must rule over appetite, and this is worth emphasizing even if appetite can be adequately trained.⁷⁰ *Prima facie* it might appear as if there were some tension here. After all, why would the appetitive part need to be ruled if it can be adequately trained? Couldn't it simply desire on its own what it *should* desire and in this way eliminate the need for reason and spirit to rule over it? I suspect that Plato did not want to get bogged down in these issues at this point in the dialogue where he is primarily interested in uncovering psychological accounts for the four virtues and that for this reason he downplayed the education of the appetitive part in the summary. Nevertheless, it is important for us to see that there is no real tension here. One reason why this is so is that while perfectly trained appetites aim only at one's *own* health and well-being, reason is primarily interested in our moral obligations, and these include at times putting the health and well-being of others before our own. Hence, even a perfectly trained appetitive part needs to be ruled by reason together with spirit. This is also why the intensity of the appetite's desires needs to be reduced in addition to establishing the correct goals (e.g., moderate amounts of food). Yet even in such cases the *homodoxia* would remain intact, if the account of *homodoxia* given above is correct. For the appetitive part's positive attitude towards following reason that would develop over the course of its training would persist even in these moments so that it would still feel some pleasure in being ruled.⁷¹

70 *Rep.* IV 442a4–b3; cf. IX 591c, where even the *hexis* and *trophê* of the body are *not* entrusted to the appetitive part but to spirit and reason.

71 For a different recent interpretation of how the reason's rule over the appetitive part can preserve *homodoxia*, see Lorenz (2006) 109–10.

How to see an unencrusted soul

RAPHAEL WOOLF

To the soul's immortality, then, both our recent argument and others would compel assent. But as to what sort of thing it is in truth, one must not view it, as we now do, when it has been maimed by its association with the body and other evils, but it should be scrutinized adequately, by reasoning, in the condition it is when made pure, and one will discover it much more finely and discern more clearly justices and injustices and all the things which we just described. As things are, we have spoken truths about it as it currently appears. But we have viewed it while it is in a state that is like people who see the sea-god Glaucus no longer being able easily to see his original nature, given that some of the pristine parts of his body have been broken off, others have been crushed and altogether maimed by the waves, and other things have grown onto him, shells and seaweed and stones, making him look altogether more like a beast than the way he was by nature. In this fashion we too are viewing the soul in a state that results from myriad evils. Instead, Glaucon, we should look elsewhere.

– Where?

To its love of wisdom; and we should get in mind those things it contacts and the sorts of associations it strives for, since it is akin to what is divine and immortal and everlasting; we should get in mind the kind of thing it would become if such it pursued in its entirety, and were lifted by this impulse out of the sea in which it now is, and had knocked away from it the many stones and shells, earthy and stony and savage insofar as it feasts on earth, that have now grown around it through its so-called happy feasts. Then one could see its true nature, whether multiform or uniform, or however it may be. As things are, we have, I suppose, pretty well described its properties and forms in human life.

(*Republic* X 611b9–612a6)

An earlier version of this chapter was read at the conference on Plato's moral psychology held at the University of Toronto in April 2005. My thanks to the audience for a lively response and to Rachel Barney and Jessica Moss for helpful written comments.

The quantity and quality of the *Republic's* prior psychological investigations may threaten to overshadow the passage, quoted above, that I propose to discuss here, in which Socrates, among other things, compares the soul to the sea-god Glaucus. That would be unfortunate if one bears in mind that by the close of the passage Socrates has informed us that what is at stake at this point is the prospect of our being able to see the soul's true nature. Both the force of the analogy and Socrates' prescription for recognizing the soul as it really is will concern us presently. But it is clear from the way Socrates rounds off the passage that he is himself still agnostic about what the soul's true nature is. He does not conclude that if one approaches the matter correctly then one will see that the soul's true nature is, for example, uniform. He explicitly leaves open the question whether it is uniform, multiform, or whatever may be the case (612a3–4).

There is no reason not to take this agnosticism at face value. Given his insistence in the course of the passage that we have not thus far discerned the soul's true nature, it would be surprising if his conclusion were more determinate than it is. According to Socrates we have captured its embodied rather than its pure (*katharon*, 611c2) state, and so do not yet have an adequate basis on which to make pronouncements about its nature. Socrates would simply undermine his point if he immediately went on to make such a pronouncement. The main purpose of this chapter is not to extract one on his behalf from the text. Rather, its argument will be that the Glaucus passage is primarily a reflection on method, and on the methodological inadequacy that Socrates believes has marked the dialogue's inquiries into the soul thus far. Consideration of the passage may, however, help in assessing the dialogue's view of the soul in both its pure and embodied forms.

I

To begin, though, with the analogy itself: the condition of the embodied soul compared with that of Glaucus. To look at the god in his sea-bound condition, encrusted with all sorts of marine detritus (shells, seaweed, and so forth) is, says Socrates, to be prevented from glimpsing him as he really is. We know there is something under the rubbish, but we cannot tell exactly what. We must strip the encrustation away before we can be in a position to see what lies beneath. So too the soul has been mauled "by its association with the body and other evils" (611b11–c1), its real form heavily obscured by all the debris, identifiable only when it is lifted from the sea and cleaned up (611e3–12a1).

What does this mean? Notice first that, my translation notwithstanding, Socrates nowhere in our passage refers to Glaucus as a god (though he does claim that the soul is akin to the divine, 611e1): the epithet he uses at c6 (*thalattios*) means simply “of the sea”; and “the way he [Glaucus] was by nature” (d4–5) is contrasted merely with resemblance to a beast. It may be significant, then, that in the myth as it has come down to us Glaucus’ “original nature” (c7–d1) was that of a *man* – a humble fisherman who is transformed into a god to become thereafter an inhabitant of the deep.¹ In his choice of image Socrates leaves it open whether our search for the soul’s essence is for something human or divine – or whether, when it comes to essentials, there is any difference between the two.²

If Socrates is understandably somewhat reserved about a nature that remains to be discovered, what should we make of the encrustations themselves? It may be helpful here to amplify slightly the presentation of Glaucus. Imagine a marine biologist who encounters a large object, encrusted with shells and seaweed, moving through the ocean. Let us say that this object is in fact Glaucus! The biologist could reasonably infer that the shells and seaweed were not part of the creature itself, even without (as might be the case) being able to identify what the creature was (even that it was a creature). She could infer this because she knows already that shells and seaweed are separate items, albeit ones that tend to float around and occasionally adhere to other things. The rational response to the apparition would not be that here we have a creature possessing, say, shells and seaweed as regular body parts. That would not be impossible, of course; but neither, given the set-up we are hypothesizing, would it be the obvious inference for a rational inquirer to draw.

But this highlights a difficulty on the soul side of the analogy. Given that Socrates connects the soul’s disfigurement with its embodied state, let us assume for now that its encrustations are, or include, roughly those beliefs and desires characteristic of its lower parts; that is to say, those beliefs and desires that have their source in the fact that the soul is, or gets

1 That Socrates speaks of what Glaucus *was* (ἐν, d5) by nature, rather than is, perhaps alludes to this. In Aeschylus’ lost play *Glaucus Pontius*, which Plato may be drawing on (and would doubtless have known), Glaucus in the water is described as a “beast with human form” (*anthrôpoeides thêrion*, Fr.26 Radt).

2 At IX 589c8–d1 it was suggested that there may not be – that too in the course of an analogy, between the embodied soul and a set of conjoined animals, on which see further section V below.

to be, embodied and thereby interacts with the material world.³ Granted this, we must ask how Socrates can consider himself justified in holding that these *are* mere accretions, and not part of the soul's nature, as our biologist would be justified in so regarding the shells and seaweed that surround Glaucus.

The analogy does seem shaky at this point. We know that shells and seaweed are accretions in a given case just to the extent that we know they have a regular existence that is not constituted by, nor has any special connection with, being part of whatever creature we are choosing to imagine. Equally, though, we know (even if we would not put it quite this way), and Socrates would surely not deny, that the beliefs and desires in question would *not* exist without a soul. Shells and seaweed will float around happily enough without a Glaucus to stick to. Beliefs and desires cannot float freely around without a soul as subject.

Socrates, however, may not be very impressed with this objection. He could respond that the issue is not whether the beliefs and desires can get on without a soul, but whether the soul can get on without such beliefs and desires. If it can, then his claim that these items are not part of the soul's very nature, even if it does not go through at once, gains in plausibility. So we need to work out whether Socrates is entitled to claim that soul *can* exist without them. After all, even the well-ordered embodied human soul still has its spirited and appetitive parts, with at least a range of characteristic beliefs and desires. Socrates pictures the pure soul as one that is dissociated from the body. If spirit and appetite are phenomena of the soul's embodied state, what might ground the implication that souls can, in effect, exist without these parts?

II

Before tackling this question, in part by reference to the immortality argument at 608d–611a that comes directly before our passage and is explicitly connected with it, two preliminary points should be addressed. First, it may seem rather too swift to associate spirit, and not just appetite, with the condition of embodiment. After all, spirit is the part that loves *honor*, rather than material things as such; and in *Republic* IV it is the ally of reason, albeit fighting against the power of appetite,

3 The image of a mass of shells and seaweed clinging to Glaucus more readily suggests these items than it does the parts themselves, which does not mean that the parts would survive their removal.

which may yet suggest that the existence of the latter, and so ultimately the fact of embodiment, is what brings spirit about (cf. Tad Brennan, Chapter 5).

Spirit is somewhat Janus-faced. The oligarchic soul of Book VIII, for example, has a spirited part that comes exclusively to admire wealth and the wealthy (553d). The Glaucus analogy itself is rather non-committal about how the tripartite division of the embodied soul is to be mapped on to the division between pure soul and accretion that it deals in. Since, as we shall see, the soul that attains purity is the one that loves wisdom, at least an aspect of reason should be placed on the pure side. By the same token, Socrates' lament about the soul's "feastings" on earth (612a1–2) suggests that appetite is to the forefront where impurity is concerned. In fact one may rule out with relative confidence the embodied soul as a whole, even in its virtuous state, as a candidate for the purity Socrates is thinking of here.⁴ He is *contrasting* the pure soul with what they have investigated up to now (cf. *nun*, "as things are," at 611c1, 4, and 612a4), whereas the embodied soul in its virtuous condition has been a significant part of their earlier inquiry.⁵ So the unencrusted soul should probably not be regarded as an entity both of whose lower parts endure, even in harmony with reason's rule.⁶

Since a soul lacking just appetite would suffice for a contrast to hold with the soul that has previously been investigated, this does not settle the

4 Notwithstanding that Socrates could earlier refer to the whole (*holê*) soul as having reached its "best nature" (*beltistên phusin*) in becoming virtuous under the rule of reason (IX 591b3–5). That is a claim about the best a tripartite soul can be, not a conclusion about what a soul really is.

5 One might seek to limit the scope of *nun* so that it referred only to a recent segment of the conversation, such as the discussion of the irrational soul at X 602–7 or the study of degenerate souls in Books VIII and IX (if we took a narrow view of that discussion: IX is in fact largely a comparison of the life of the soul ruled by reason with that of others). But Socrates says that though the soul's true nature has not been uncovered, "as things are we have pretty well (*epieikôs*) described its properties and forms in human life" (612a4–6), and this statement seems pointedly unrestricted regarding the possibilities for the embodied soul previously discussed.

6 In this regard, the Glaucus passage will differ from the view of the *Phaedrus* that both appetite and spirit (respectively the black and the white horse in its terms) belong even to disembodied souls. Note, however, the cautionary remark in the latter work that its portrayal of the soul (via the simile of a charioteer and two horses) is said to show "what it resembles" (*hôi eoiken*, 246a5; cf. also tripartition as *to eikos* at *Timaues* 72d7) rather than "what sort of thing it is" (*hoion esti*, a4); and compare the way the Glaucus passage contrasts the aspiration to express "what sort of thing it [the soul] is in truth" (*hoion estin têi alêtheiai*, 611b10) with its appearance in the dialogue thus far. Both texts, then, invite skepticism about whether the soul's nature is accurately captured by the tripartite model.

question of spirit's relation to embodiment. Still, the account of Book IV explicates spirit's proprietary virtue, courage, in terms of ability to maintain beliefs in the face of pleasures and pains (442b–c), with cowardice by implication rooted in a failure to do so. And it seems that Socrates has bodily pleasures and pains chiefly in mind. Thus, when spirit pits itself against injustice, it is said to put up with “hunger and cold and everything else of that kind” (440c) – that is, physical deprivation. Similarly, it is the pleasures of the body that it joins reason in combating at 442a. Leontius the corpse-gazer (439e–440a) is in turn commonly supposed to have been in thrall to a particular sexual pleasure, his sense of honor kicking in rather late and transmuted to self-disgust, his act if not exactly one of cowardice, then at least of “unmanliness.” If spirit is marked off as the subject of courage and cowardice, and its relation to these latter is understood with reference to one's relations with the body, then the existence of spirit may be regarded as dependent on association with the body,⁷ though it will be in keeping with Socrates' general approach in our passage if we retain an open mind about this.

It is also important, to turn to the second preliminary point, not to dwell unduly on the terminology of “parts.”⁸ Doing so may unfairly prejudge the question. For although many things, including human beings, can exist without some fairly important parts (e.g., legs, eyes), we would hardly be inclined to assert on that basis that humans are not by nature such as to have these parts. Though they can get by without feet, humans are by nature bipeds, and so on. If missing some of its parts, a thing might seem inherently deficient – less than whole. This would make it harder to claim that a soul without, say, appetite is no more missing anything than is Glaucus minus shells and seaweed.

That may be one of the reasons why Socrates, in talking about the composition of the soul, uses the terminology of “kinds” (*eidè* or *genè*) in the *Republic* more frequently than he does “parts” (*merè*).⁹ Indeed in the central argument for the threefold division in Book IV, which concludes at 441c, the former is employed on every occasion that Socrates uses a substantive term in this regard, and remains the choice when the threefold

7 See also note 24 below. The *Timaeus* is forthright about spirit (along with appetite and as opposed to reason) being “mortal” (69c–70a).

8 Notwithstanding that “part” itself may be said in many ways. See Shields (2001).

9 *Eidos* is also the term used in the *Phaedrus* (253c8) and *Timaeus* (89e4) to describe the soul's three components; and (together with *genos*) its lower two at *Timaeus* 69c–70d, where of course the separate locations in the body of the various kinds of soul is part of the point (cf. *khôris* at 69d7, 70a1).

division is formally recalled at later junctures.¹⁰ The latter term does not make an appearance until 442b10, well into the account of the composite soul's virtues, and even with it the translation "part" is not compelled.¹¹ If Socrates' preferred model were that of whole to parts, he may already be in difficulty with the idea that what the soul lacks without one or more parts is just accretions. If, on the other hand, he is thinking chiefly not of parts of a thing but kinds or types,¹² there is no problem in principle conceiving one kind existing with integrity independently of another – in the case of, say, mammals, of cats existing independently of dogs, for example.¹³

Now it may be that the species-genus relation should itself be regarded as a variety of part-whole relation; and Socrates, though he does not mention "parts" in arguing for the threefold division, does in setting up the argument speak of the "whole" soul at one point (436b2). Nonetheless, it seems right to say that an individual kind or species within a genus tends to have greater integrity than a conjunction thereof; and this is not true of parts generally. Divide the soul into species, and there is no reason why one of *these* should not exist, whole and intact, without the others; the locus of integrity will lie principally in the individual species.¹⁴ Let us therefore grant Socrates his "kind" terminology, which in fact is what he adopts in our passage when talking directly about the soul. Thus we have *polueidês* and *monoeidês* at 612a4, and *eidê* at a5, though note the rather natural *merê* at 611d1 for the parts of Glaucus' body, which stands in the analogy for the soul *without* its accretions. The usage, if artless, is consistent with Socrates' imminent refusal to affirm that the unencrusted

10 Cf. *eidê* at VI 504a4 and IX 580d2. It therefore seems inadequate to treat occurrences of "kind" terminology with regard to the soul's composition as mere "loose expressions" (Lorenz (2006) 35).

11 Compare, for example, the use of the phrase *en merei* at I 348e2 and IV 424d4, where the sense of *meros* is clearly "class" or "category." Burnyeat (2006, 16 n. 23) cites VII 536a3 as a case (among others in Plato) where, in using the term *meros* (here of the "parts" of virtue), Plato "regards species of a genus as parts thereof." Contrary to the moral that Burnyeat appears to draw, an inclination to speak of parts when referring to species reinforces the point that in the discussion of the soul's composition "kind" or "species" is the dominant notion.

12 The term for the spirited element of the soul (*to thumoeides*) itself incorporates the "kind" suffix.

13 Spirit can evidently exist without reason, as the example of children and animals at IV 441a–b shows; and the *Timaeus* envisages appetite, referred to as "the third kind (*eidos*) of soul," existing on its own in plants (77b).

14 This terminology is in turn more suggestive of diversity and potential conflict in the soul. See Hobbs (2000) 35.

soul is incomposite. It would be reading too much into the analogy to infer that, even without the accretions, such a soul is multiform. Rather, Socrates' final agnosticism on the question reflects, I shall argue, a broader concern that the methods of inquiry applied to date do not warrant a determinate conclusion about its nature.

III

As to the encrusted soul, we have not made much progress. If nomenclature can suggest a certain view, it cannot of course demonstrate its truth. And even as nomenclature, the language of kind or species only goes so far. Referring to kinds rather than parts of soul suggests mutual independence, but fails to capture the evident asymmetry that Socrates has in mind in the Glaucus passage. Accretions and what they adhere to would not necessarily, or even usually, be members of the same genus. His language suggests instead a certain evaluative stance: accretions are bothersome items, ideally ones to be rid of; what they adhere to is something more precious. Meanwhile, according to Socrates himself, the fact is that in this mortal realm (the one in which we are currently embedded) our souls come everywhere in triadic form. We might think, whatever the terminology, that this fact stands as an initial presumption against the thesis that one element is detachable from another.

Here the context of the Glaucus analogy may be important. The analogy is immediately preceded by a proof of the soul's immortality which, in brief, runs as follows (607d–611a): if anything can destroy a thing, it is that thing's cognate evil; the soul's cognate evil – vice – cannot destroy it; therefore, the soul is indestructible, and hence ever existing and immortal. In the case of the body, by contrast, its cognate evil – disease – is quite capable of destroying it. So the soul is indestructible, whereas the body is destructible and in due course tends to get destroyed.

My purpose here is not to analyze this proof in detail, but to see what contribution the conclusion it has argued for can make to the proposition that one or both of the lower parts of the soul are accretions.¹⁵ Let us grant the point that the body is a necessary condition for the existence of appetite (and perhaps of spirit too). Then we can say that without the body, there is no appetite (or spirit). But if soul is indestructible and body is not, then soul is not necessarily embodied; for if it were, there would

15 For a recent sympathetic interpretation of the argument itself, with which I find myself largely in agreement, see Brown (1997).

have to be some body or bodies that had not been destroyed. Since, given the destructibility of body, there is no guarantee of this, it would turn out to be possible, contrary to the hypothesis (or rather, to the conclusion of the immortality argument), that soul cease to exist (be destroyed). So soul, being therefore independent of body, is not necessarily appetitive or spirited either, insofar as we assume that these elements depend for their existence on the body.

Now human bodies do not necessarily have limbs (there can be such bodies without limbs); yet limbs are not accretions. But the relation between the soul, on the one hand, and its appetitive (and perhaps spirited) element, on the other, will now be much weaker than that between, say, human body and human limb. Soul's independence from body, hence from those of its elements dependent on body, is given by its distinct ontological status: indestructible as opposed to destructible. This independence is built into the metaphysical framework that the immortality argument has purported to establish. So those elements are essentially add-ons to the soul that will come and go with the body, not integral parts. In contrast to the case of the limb, their absence or disappearance will simply be a reflection of how reality is structured.

Here we might begin to see some basis for the evaluative asymmetry suggested by the language of the Glaucus analogy. If appetite and (as the case may be) spirit have the status of add-ons, they might be regarded as subordinate to the enduring soul to and from which they become attached and detached. Still, add-ons might nonetheless be welcome. Their addition might serve or enhance that to which they were added; they would be subordinate but useful. An accessory is not the same thing as an accretion. Each is an item the lack of which does not compromise the integrity of its possessor. But given his pejorative description of Glaucus' condition in the water, "accretion" captures what Socrates has in mind. The immortality argument, even if it is sound, can at most help defend the generic, but not the specific, classification appropriate to Socrates' description. It can provide a basis for the view that the soul is essentially independent of, and even superior to, appetite and perhaps spirit, but not that it is better off without them.

IV

I shall postpone for now the question whether Socrates can offer more in support of the latter claim. Let us begin to consider how he thinks we can go about removing the (unwelcome) additions so as to witness

the soul in its unalloyed state. Once again, it should be emphasized that he still regards this as an outstanding task. Socrates says at 611d–e that to see the soul as it is by nature one must look to its “philosophy” or love of wisdom, and get in mind those things to which it is akin (evidently the Forms), and what sort of a thing it would become by pursuing them. It may then be tempting to suppose that what he is offering here is actually a sketch of the soul in its pure state, as a knower of Forms.

There is surely something to this, but given the overt agnosticism to come a few lines later, one should be cautious. If the analogy with Glaucus is to carry weight, then getting to see the pure soul must be a rather arduous process. The accretions on Glaucus have “grown onto” him (*prospephukenai*, 611d3), as the soul’s own accretions are said to have “grown around” it (*peripephuken*, 612a2). Presumably, then, they are not easy to dislodge. What is more, the analogy emphasizes how Glaucus’ body has been damaged by its time in the sea with all the detritus, as the soul is by its association with the body (611b10–11, d1–3).¹⁶ So we are talking of a process both of removal and of healing before the soul’s true nature is discernible.¹⁷ If, as Socrates says, the inquiry to date has only witnessed the soul in its encrusted state, he cannot in the same breath be purporting to discern what avowedly remains hidden – its true nature – which should require a good deal of work to reveal.¹⁸

So what we have at 611d–e is not primarily a *description* of the soul’s true nature, but a *prescription* for how we are to discover what that is.¹⁹ Doubtless Socrates has a view, but he is careful not to go beyond the constraints set by the analogy, in particular that discerning the soul’s true nature is the product of a lengthy process yet to be undertaken. Since he

16 Glaucus has even had some parts “broken off” (*ekkeklasthai*, d2) and one may wonder what the analogue is with the soul in this regard. A reference to reason in the embodied soul being (permanently?) underdeveloped or atrophied, though plausible, would not quite fit the language. Perhaps an attempt to trace too precise a correspondence would presuppose our having established what the nature of the pure soul is.

17 One might read here a distinction between a soul that is “merely” disembodied (say, after bodily death) and one that has been purged of bodily contamination or its effects; see below. It is a familiar enough Platonic trope (important in many of the eschatological myths) that the former does not suffice for the latter.

18 This might not be the case if one, say, already had (in terms of the analogy) an accurate memory or model of Glaucus in his pristine state. But Socrates does not seem to envisage such possibilities here.

19 Cf. *dei*, “we should,” at 611d6, which governs the lines that follow.

obviously did not *have* to proffer such an analogy, one can infer that part of its purpose is to indicate that any view he might possess is not yet, as far as he himself is concerned, properly grounded.

Certainly there is some commitment here on Socrates' part. We are told that the soul is akin to "the divine and immortal and what always is" (611e1–2). But we should be wary of reading too much into this language. Socrates is entitled to regard the soul as everlasting and immortal. He has, after all, just inferred from an argument for its indestructibility that it is everlasting and so immortal (610e10–611a2). Only its divinity adds something new, but to call it akin to the divine may itself be no more than an acknowledgement that its immortality puts it in that category, even if the language of divinity suggests something more substantive.

What is lacking are epithets for the soul in its pure state that would flesh out such a view. It is not, for example, said to be unchanging or uniform, and although some of the language of the analogy might be thought to suggest it, Socrates notably refrains from saying outright that a pure soul is a soul of good character. If I am right that he avails himself of the resources of the immortality argument but without explicitly going beyond what he takes that argument to have established, this should be no surprise. For it is a striking feature of the argument that its proof rests on considerations about the soul in its *bad* state. Even viciousness is quite compatible with indestructibility, hence with immortality. We are thereby offered no assurance that a disembodied soul is necessarily a good or virtuous soul.

Indeed at 611c3–4 Socrates talks of discerning more clearly justices and *injustices*, the plurals indicating cases or types, the context apparently leaving the pure soul as a possible subject.²⁰ For Socrates' idea is that by reasoning (*logismos*, c2) we will adequately discern what sort of a thing the soul is when pure, i.e. discover it more finely²¹ and discern justices and injustices more clearly. He does not say that the pure soul can be unjust. But neither does the way he brings injustice and the pure soul under the same rubric discourage the connection. Socrates is reticent about proclaiming that such a soul will necessarily be just; and this is of a piece with the way vice and immortality have been held together in the preceding argument. What is noteworthy is that, in contrasting purity

20 A more fine-grained account that divided justice and injustice into their varieties might be suggested, but also the concrete instances that a subject might actually commit.

21 I read *kallion* at c3 adverbially rather than adjectivally, retaining grammatical coordination between the two *kai* clauses of c3–4.

with a state of damage caused by bodily association (b10–c2), Socrates seems disinclined to rule out the possibility of injustice *even* for a soul that is or has become undamaged, and not just, say, for a soul that, though disembodied, continues to wear its scars after bodily death.

I shall argue in what follows that this presages an issue more of method than of doctrine. If Socrates believes that a soul free of bodily taint will be just, he recognizes that such a belief does not as yet rest on the most solid of foundations. One may even wonder whether the very notion that an incomposite soul (if that is how we are to regard the soul in its pure state) could *be* either just or unjust has been substantiated, given that these qualities are explicated in the course of the *Republic* in terms of the workings of a composite soul. It seems to me that the dialogue's account of psychic justice is in fact compatible with a soul's being incomposite (see section VI below), but that the way our passage throws up such questions serves to reinforce a sense that the dialogue's prior apparatus for investigating the soul may be under scrutiny.

V

Socrates does permit himself, in line with his general strategy, to draw a significant further corollary from the immortality argument. He tells us at 611b that we should not think that the soul in its truest nature is subject to variety, unlikeness, and internal difference, given that it is “not easy” for what is eternal to be composite. The argument has shown that the soul is, if not eternal, then indestructible and so everlasting; and Socrates apparently reasons that what is composite can in principle be dissolved into its components.²² To that extent it is destructible, and if this does not mean it will necessarily be destroyed, it will at any rate not be easy, given this condition, to avoid that fate at some point. Since soul has been argued to be in fact indestructible, it would have to be incomposite. Socrates then assumes that this would disallow its having internal differentiation, perhaps because the latter already compels talk of parts or components into which a thing might be dissolved.

I am not going to probe further the metaphysical principles that may underlie Socrates' conclusion here. Nor should excessive weight be placed

22 For similar reasoning see e.g., *Phaedo* 78c, *Timaeus* 41a–b. In the latter passage the Demiurge pledges not to allow the destruction of the lesser gods, since it would be a mark of evil to wish to dissolve “what is finely fitted together” (b1). But the pledge arises from acknowledgment, not repudiation, of the maxim that “all that is bound together is dissoluble” (a8–b1).

on the fact that the conclusion is expressed negatively: he tells us what we should *not* think the soul is in its true nature, not what we should think. It may be significant, though, that he does allow himself an escape clause, not just by saying that it is not easy (rather than not possible) for what is eternal to be composite, but by explaining that this itself is so only in the case of that which is composite but lacks “the finest composition” (611b6). In other words it appears that something that was composite but well enough put together could actually, quite easily, last forever.

Why make this concession? If the soul cannot be destroyed, and being composite implies at least the possibility of destruction, why bother tinkering with the idea of a fine composition, which would seem only to reduce, not eliminate, the possibility? Socrates does not do much to spell out what he means by “the finest composition.” He does not even make it clear whether possessing this would then be compatible with internal variety or difference, having in fact stated merely, as a further qualification, that the soul would not in its true nature be “full of much” of this (611b2–3). I want to ask instead why Socrates should end up hedging his bets here at all. He could, it seems, have simply claimed that what is everlasting is incomposite, and what is incomposite is undifferentiated: a provocative but by no means implausible chain of inference. If Socrates’ final agnosticism is a product of the constraints imposed by the Glauco analogy, to the effect that we are not yet in a position to grasp the soul’s nature, it is also true, as we have seen, that he is ready to draw corollaries about the soul that may be inferred from the immortality argument.

Recall, then, that those constraints are in effect a reflection by Socrates on method. The soul’s true nature is to be adequately grasped by reasoning, and I take it that part of what is implied here is that the inquiry into the soul undertaken in the *Republic* thus far has not been by way of reasoning, at least reasoning of the right kind. In fact much of the inquiry seems to have been by way of analogy, most importantly the analogy with the city, though the embodied soul is also compared to a trio of very different but conjoined animals (IX 588b–d) and, of course, to Glauco.²³

Evidently these analogies do a lot of work for Socrates. To cite just one example relevant to this discussion, presenting the soul as a trio of animals helps to bring out that the model of the embodied soul as

23 Socrates’ general fondness for making points by way of “images” (*eikones*) is noted at VI 487e–8a, just prior to his recounting of the famous ship of state analogy.

consisting of kinds or species is one he favors. A species taken separately will generally be more of an integrated whole than a conjunction of species. This applies notably where the conjunction is of human, lion, and mythical monster, even if it is best to aim at harmony between the three whilst they are conjoined, and even if the representation of the appetitive soul as a multifarious, many-headed beast implies it has a somewhat disunified nature itself, barely to be accounted a single species.²⁴

Nonetheless, for all the work it can do in getting a view across, illustration by analogy is not proof. And in the Glaucus passage the methodological worry is, by a not untypical Platonic stroke, raised and virtually without pause exemplified.²⁵ The recommendation that we use reasoning leads straight into the complaint that with the methods actually employed we have only grasped the truth about the soul as it appears (611c4–5).²⁶ To rub the point home it is then lavishly expounded in the form of an analogy!

We can, to be sure, speak of analogical reasoning. But the emphasis here on reasoning as the proper way to proceed must be intended to stand in contrast with *something*. What we are actually presented with is a deductive argument (that the soul is indestructible) followed by an analogy (with Glaucus) about the soul's nature. Sandwiched between the two is a claim that the latter is to be properly grasped by reasoning. The contrast in method is displayed more than described, but is no less conspicuous for that.

Yet if deduction is implicitly privileged over analogy, there is something unsatisfactory too about concluding that the soul is incomposite by way of the immortality argument. And this might explain the qualifications noted above in a more principled manner than the imputation to Socrates of a kind of metaphysical faint-heartedness. For there is a methodological dimension to Socrates' remarks about Glaucus against which the move to declare the soul incomposite because immortal fares less well too.

VI

In setting out the analogy Socrates lays great emphasis, as we have seen, on the objective of viewing the soul in its pure form. There is, I think, an

24 More specifically, given that it is a human being we are talking about, the image encourages the thought that our soul does not of its nature possess spirit or appetite.

25 A similar point is made, in somewhat different terms, by Brill (2005) 311.

26 That Socrates at least grants this much to the inadequate methods is itself a noteworthy feature of his account that I return to in section VII below.

element of self-reference here. One of the obvious dangers of analogy is that instead of directly discerning the features of our object of inquiry, one reads into it features derived from the object we are comparing it with. Analogies are liable to beg the question by determining in advance the character of the one by reference to that of the other. This, presumably, is one reason why Socrates is so careful, in the city-soul analogy, to say that he will not let the conception of the city they have arrived at constrain from the outset his analysis of justice in the soul. The process will, rather, be two way (IV 434d–435a), even if this pledge is honored more in the breach than the observance.²⁷ Sensitivity to the weakness of analogy is also shown earlier in *Republic X* itself (603b–c). Socrates and Glaucon have agreed that visual art has no good effect on the soul. But Socrates warns that, just because poetry is also an imitative art (same genus; different species), they should not immediately infer from the case of painting that the same holds true of it.²⁸ Rather, they must consider in its own right the way the soul is affected by poetry.

From this perspective, the corollaries drawn from the immortality argument line up on the same side as the results of an argument from analogy. They share a certain defect in that, in either case, features of our object of inquiry are inferred rather than observed. The general point, I think, is a straightforward one, if rather murkier when applied to the soul. Let me illustrate with a banal example. I hear loud, fierce barking behind a door, and infer that a large, dangerous dog lurks on the other side. I recklessly open the door to discover nothing more threatening than a chihuahua with attitude. The moral is that observation trumps inference. It is all very well, to return to the soul, to infer that it must be *incomposite* because it is immortal. But that conclusion would have to be withdrawn were one to discover a soul that, in addition to being (as already demonstrated) immortal, is in fact composite. Let us say that this is how the soul actually is. Such a discovery would simply show that the two features are compatible. Socrates' doubts about whether even an immortal soul must be *incomposite* derive more from a methodological

27 Thus one may (with many readers) wonder whether the Principle of Opposites, in theory an independent tool of analysis, really does necessitate a threefold structure of the soul. Even if one accepts Socrates' doctrine that justice must have the same form wherever it occurs as mandating an ultimate structural isomorphism between city and soul (see IV 435a–c), this is consistent with there being a process of mutual adjustment before a final isomorphism is arrived at. Without such a process, analogy is effectively in control.

28 "Let us not simply trust the likeness with painting" (*mê . . . tòi eikoti monon pisteusômen ek tês graphikês*, b10–c1).

qualm than from specific metaphysical reservations. Inference is always defeasible by direct observation. And the latter, as the Glaucus analogy insists, is something we ought to achieve, but have not yet achieved, with regard to the soul.²⁹

How, then, to achieve it? What does direct observation mean in this context? As we saw earlier, Socrates suggests that we will discover the soul's true nature by getting in mind those objects with which the soul is akin – evidently the Forms. Since he had earlier said that we will discover its nature by reasoning, let us combine the two ideas and say that Socrates' prescription is one of dialectical inquiry. Apart from being a fairly natural reading of the text, this gives a good fit with Socrates' view, as expressed in the analogy, that the process he is recommending will be an arduous one.

The Forms in question are presumably those pertaining to the virtues and vices, since these are the qualities fundamental to soul, regardless of what its structure turns out to be. To exclude vices would be to prejudge the outcome of inquiry into the soul's nature: we are not entitled to assume that the unencrusted soul is a just soul. As we noted above, Socrates speaks in the Glaucus passage of reasoning as the means to a clear view of the soul and of justice(s) *and* injustice(s) too. This equal airtime comports with the way the Forms are introduced in the *Republic*. At V 476a they enter the stage in pairs: fine and shameful, just and unjust, good and bad. Later, of course, the Form of Good comes to play a special and much-debated role, consideration of which would take us beyond the confines of this chapter. That aside, we discover what the soul is – we get to observe it directly – by defining its core characteristics. And these, it is suggested, come in pairs.

Now Socrates has also claimed (IV 444d) that the just soul is in accordance with nature, and the unjust soul against, with particular reference to reason governing the other elements. The operative notion of nature

29 To claim that the nub of Socrates' critique here of the earlier account of the soul is "that it is based on *observation* – observation of the way the soul appears in life" (Rowe (2007) 166, his emphasis) underplays the extent to which the Glaucus passage is suffused on both sides (pure and encrusted) with the language of observation, which cannot therefore be the villain of the piece: the question is what the failure to observe the soul's nature has consisted in, from a methodological point of view. One might compare the remark in the *Phaedrus*, on god as an ensouled body, that "we construct (*plattomen*) it without either having seen it or thought about it adequately" (246c7). The verb *plattēin* is used with emphasis in the *Republic* to describe the construction of the analogy between the soul and conjoined animals (IX 588b10, c7, d1).

is clearly a normative one, connected with the idea that justice consists in each component doing its own work, where this is the work it is most suited to. On this view, what is natural is not necessarily what is the case. A similar conception is implied by the Glaucus passage: the soul's natural state does not correspond to its current embodied condition.

It is not the aim of the passage to reject the privileging of justice as natural, nor even the way this has been spelled out. If the soul's ideal state is incompatible with embodiment, one can still speak intelligibly, where the soul is embodied, of one component being the natural (i.e., the most able) ruler. Conversely Book IV suggests (442b7) that reason's core function is not ruling as such but deliberating, a competence that qualifies it to rule but also allows it do its own work in the absence of subordinate elements that need ruling. So our passage is not doctrinally incompatible with earlier conclusions. Rather, its claim is that, methodologically speaking, we cannot rest content with them. Hence we are reminded that while the soul cannot be red or fat, it can be just or unjust, and will be one or the other (or a mix of both). Until we have a rigorously derived account of what justice and injustice are, we cannot pronounce securely on which is the best state of the soul: on which, in the appropriate sense, is natural.

From our definitions we shall perhaps be able to answer the question about whether the soul in its natural state is composite or not. If so, we shall answer it in the right kind of way. In *Republic* IV the account of the soul's virtues comes in the wake of the thesis that the soul is tripartite (similarly before with the city and *its* virtues). But if the soul's nature is to be described by reference to its moral character rather than its number or lack of components, then the answer we give to the question whether it is incomposite should be sensitive to our account of the virtues, not the other way round; and it should not be governed by an analogy.

It may be that our definitions of justice and injustice have no implications for the question whether the soul is incomposite. Perhaps they will turn out to be compatible with either alternative. And it may be that it does not much matter. Socrates does not, after all, say exactly that our inquiry will enable us to determine *that* the soul's true nature is composite or incomposite; he says that the inquiry will enable us to see the soul's true nature, whether multiform or uniform "or however it may be" (*eite hopêi ekhei kai hopôs*, 612a4). There is something a little dismissive about Socrates' final flourish here, enough to suggest that far from *explaining* the soul's true nature in terms of its being composite or otherwise, Socrates is *downplaying* that dimension. One discerns the soul's nature by

grasping the relevant Forms; one understands what sort of thing the soul is by understanding what justice and injustice are. Whether composite or not, that is the main issue.

If so, one may wonder whether Socrates was being entirely ironic when he introduced the *Republic* IV investigation of the soul's composition with the remark that the participants are embarking on a "paltry investigation" (435c4–5), followed by the claim (d1–3), carrying no hint of irony, that the investigation will not be employing the right methods and requires a "longer road" (*makrotera hodos*, d1–3).³⁰ This need is voiced again and spelled out a little more at VI 504–5 (cf. *makrotera periodos*, 504b2); the proper path will certainly showcase the Form of the Good (505a), but even the virtues themselves have only been given a "sketch" (*hupographê*, 504d6) thus far; and we may wonder if this is connected with the idea that the earlier account of the virtues was posterior to the establishment of the soul's threefold division (504a4–6).

None of this is to deny that Socrates takes himself to be drawing correct conclusions about the embodied soul's composition.³¹ In the Glaucus passage, as we saw earlier, he claims to have at least discovered truth about the soul as it appears. Nor does Socrates lack some fairly determinate beliefs about what the real soul, behind the appearance, is like. The analogy with Glaucus suggests that we are to regard it as divine. If this means more than simply everlasting or immortal, which is perhaps all Socrates is entitled to on the basis of the immortality argument, it ought to mean that the soul in its pure form is a good soul, given Socrates' assertion in *Republic* II that god is only good (379b–c). We should note too that there Socrates proceeds to use god's goodness – or, to be precise, perfection – to draw the corollary that god must be simple and uniform (380d–381c).

The Glaucus passage is, of course, more circumspect about uniformity. Being more methodologically self-aware, it may be, as I have suggested, less inclined to place reliance on chains of inference of the sort that characterize both the close of the immortality argument and the demonstration of god's uniformity. But evidently it still has a substantive view of the soul to offer. Glaucus is a god who looks when immersed more like a beast (611d4–5). Immersion in the sea (for the soul, in the material realm)

30 The *Phaedrus* likewise contrasts its forthcoming description of the tripartite soul with the "long exposition" (*makras diêgêsêôs*, 246a5) that would be required to discover what sort of thing it really is (cf. note 6 above).

31 Or that the devices he uses for characterizing it may have their own purposes; see Kamtekar (2006) and her Chapter 4.

causes damage and accretion. Socrates' language is hardly neutral. The accretions are ugly and harmful; once hauled out and healed, the soul becomes god-like.

But it is just an analogy. Comparing the soul to Glaucus is a vivid way of expressing a belief that Socrates is unable to ground more firmly. Hence, the vividness notwithstanding, his methodological prescription for coming to see an unencrusted soul leaves undetermined the latter's relation to justice and injustice. Open-mindedness cohabits with optimism. The remarkable feature of the passage is that it expresses a positive view about what the soul is capable of becoming while marking as unsatisfactory the vehicle by which that view is expressed.

VII

There is, though, a little more to be said than this. The right way to inquire into the soul is dialectically. Yet to inquire *into* the soul is at the same time to inquire *with* the soul. One cannot assume in advance that an unjust soul is unnatural. But what the inquiry can do nonetheless, Socrates strongly implies, is improve the souls of the inquirers: "by this impulse," he says (i.e., for knowledge of the Forms), the soul is lifted out of the sea it is currently in (611e3–4). The impulse, as manifested in dialectical inquiry, turns the soul away from the material to the immaterial world.³² If in life some engagement with the material world remains inevitable and necessary, notwithstanding Socrates' idealization of the soul, "in its entirety" (*pasa*, e2), as striving for the Forms,³³ one can still maintain that

32 See also VI 485d–e. Note in this regard how, at VII 518d–e, wisdom (*phronêsis*) as belonging to "something more divine" is contrasted with "the other so-called virtues of the soul" that are inculcated by practice and habit and look akin to the virtues of the body. While probably not intending to rule out genuine virtues other than wisdom (X 613a8–b1, for example, treats justice as godlike), the passage does strongly imply that whatever fails to be grounded in wisdom is not a genuine virtue; see the reference to acquiring justice and temperance *with* wisdom at IX 591b5.

33 An idealization in that Socrates asks us to consider what sort of a thing the soul *would* become (*an genoito*, e2) by pursuing the Forms in its entirety. Evidently the spirited and appetitive components even of a properly harmonious embodied soul, though they would not oppose reason, are not themselves such as to love wisdom or do dialectic. Cf. IX 586d–7a where the result of the entire soul (*hapasês tês psukhês*, e4) following reason is that each part enjoys its own pleasures in the best way, not of course that all parts enjoy the pleasures of philosophy. Compare also the "eye of the soul" passage (another analogy) at VII 518c–d, which implies not that the whole soul can view the Form of the Good (it is the eye not the whole body that can see), but that when the faculty of reason does so, the whole soul is brought with it.

to this extent the soul leaves the body behind, approaching its pure state even as it determines what that state is.

This “double aspect” account – soul as both subject and object of inquiry – may help explain a point I have so far rather skirted around. It is all very well for Socrates to imply that we get a more accurate fix on the soul by dialectical inquiry than by, say, the use of analogy. It also seems fairly unproblematic of him to specify that we see the real nature of the soul by such inquiry. But why should a lesser form of inquiry deliver precisely a picture – and a true one no less – of the soul as it appears in its embodied state? Why would such inquiry not just yield some or other inaccurate view of the soul, as opposed to succeeding in latching onto the state the soul is in when embedded in the material world? In fact, although Socrates’ official position seems to be that it does this but no more, Glaucus unbound is obviously already intended to represent the real soul, albeit in the sketchiest possible fashion. So can we explain the official position?

There is, I suspect, a longer and a shorter answer to this question. The longer answer would involve opening up one of the thorniest issues in the *Republic*, namely the status and role of images. One would need to consider the dialogue’s view of the relation between types of cognition and objects of cognition, with the hope of explaining why, for example, inquiry into some object x that admittedly makes use of an image of x should result in our apprehending an image of x , where the image in each case seems to be of a rather different sort. Thus, Glaucus is an image of the soul – he resembles it in certain relevant respects. The embodied soul is an image of the soul – it is the way the latter, in certain circumstances, appears, but one that does not manifest its true nature.

One might ask whether there is any illuminating correspondence here with the use of images discussed more theoretically in the *Republic*, such as that of the geometers in the Line of Book VI, or the painters and poets of Book X itself. One might also consider whether the dialogue seeks to establish a link between images and the material world that could underpin Socrates’ supposition in our passage that inquiry through images tends to capture what is presented by, or in, the material world.

Taking my cue from Socrates, however, I shall shirk the long road, confining myself to the specific, and perhaps special, case of the soul. As indicated above, a response may be available if one considers the way Socrates treats soul within our passage as both subject and object of inquiry. For it is in pursuing dialectical inquiry that the soul *becomes* a proper object of such inquiry: a soul lifted out of the sea, as Socrates puts

it, thus casting off its accretions and starting to reveal its true nature. We may take it that the connection between soul as subject and soul as object of inquiry is not a contingent one. When a soul inquires into the nature of soul, it inquires into the nature of itself. The inquiry is a process of self-examination and, if properly conducted, self-realization. A soul that is not ready for dialectical inquiry is a soul constrained by its earthly beliefs and desires. It is in this state precisely insofar as it has not awoken to the soul's higher possibilities.³⁴ One would not, then, expect it to be able to conceive of soul as having, still less having realized, those possibilities. It is thus plausible to suppose that the actual state of the inquiring soul will delimit, and be reflected in, the kind of account of soul it can offer. The Glaucus analogy does show an awareness of the soul's possibilities (Glaucus unencrusted) but, avowedly, nothing like a fully worked out conception, and this mirrors the cognitive status of Socrates, its mouthpiece, as one whose soul has turned, but not nearly far enough, towards the intelligible realm.

When it comes to the quest for justice, though, have we not too rapidly set aside a role for earthly concerns? Why should an investigation into the nature of justice require *detachment* from earthly preoccupations?³⁵ One may grant that a soul which accords paramount value to, say, good food or the pleasures of the theater might not be likely to represent the soul as oriented towards dialectical inquiry. Still, it seems plausible that the desire to understand what justice is would be inextricably bound up with a concern for the material conditions of the world, the distribution of material goods, and so on.

Due allowance made for its methodological limitations, we have to remind ourselves how abstract the account of justice in *Republic IV* already is. Being a just individual is famously an internal affair, concerning the correct functioning of the three psychic components, each doing its own work. Socrates claims, of course, that a person with such a well-functioning soul will refrain from conventionally unjust acts, but this behavior is a consequence (also a cause), not a constituent, of the individual's justice. The just society in turn is not conceived primarily in terms of its material conditions, but as that in which each sector performs

34 Socrates is not forthcoming in our passage on how such an awakening may be triggered, though I take this to be a pressing epistemological-cum-ethical issue in the *Republic*.

35 A similar question is raised by the digression of the *Theaetetus*, in which Socrates, in commending the aim of becoming like god, connects the attainment of justice with "the flight from this world to that" (*enthende ekeise pheugein*, 176a9). Shortly after our passage (X 613a8–b1), becoming just is also linked with assimilation to god.

can be addressed together, and they will help point us towards a conclusion about the place of our passage in the wider context of the *Republic*.

The main burden of the *Republic* has been to show that justice is preferable in every case; and Socrates reiterates, resuming the main argument at 612b, that they have indeed shown that it is best for the soul to be just. It seems, though, that the wise soul is happy. And the most straightforward way to maintain the link between *justice* and happiness is perhaps the following. A soul that fully understands justice and injustice, as the wise soul does, would never choose to be unjust.³⁷ That is surely the message of the *Republic* as a whole; and I doubt we are to suppose that the relation between justice and happiness that lies at its heart drops out of the picture once the soul is viewed without its accretions. It is reasserted in the Myth of Er, which Socrates is shortly to narrate, and he insists in the same stretch that all our efforts be devoted to acquiring the knowledge with which to distinguish the good life from the bad (618b–e). The job of wisdom does not end with the attainment of such learning, though this has been an acknowledged element as far back as 409b–e. In the *Republic*, good deliberation also has the role of implementing and sustaining, and thereby being a part of, the just order. But these tasks are predicated on a well-founded decision that justice is to be preferred, based on an unimpeachable account of what justice is. So wisdom is the key to happiness, though justice may be its essence.

The Glaucus passage neither confirms nor undermines the closeness of the relation between justice and happiness. Rather, as ever, it is salutary, equally disinclined to assert or deny that a purified soul could be unjust. The question is *would* it be if it knew what that meant? Socrates suggests that measured by the strictest standards we are not yet in a position to tell. He commends without initiating the right form of inquiry into justice and injustice, and now there is little more to come from the *Republic* except myth.³⁸ So the passage represents, finally, a kind of leave-taking and a challenge. It is for us to press forward with the inquiry and, in restoring our soul to its natural state, gain the wisdom to make the right choice.

37 The objects to which philosophers direct their thought were themselves said at VI 500c4–5 neither to do injustice nor to suffer it at each other's hands.

38 "If Socrates' remarks at 611b–612a might have created an expectation that the myth would project an image of the 'pure' soul . . . it leaves us after all with souls that apparently have much the same features as those posited elsewhere in the dialogue, whether or not we think of them as tripartite" (Halliwell (2007), 462–63). I hope to have shown that reticence about the pure soul marks no incongruity with our passage.

A formidable challenge, not least if one considers that Socrates urges what apparently even he is unable to accomplish: the Glaucus passage is, among other things, a record of unfulfilled aspiration on his part. He classified himself as a philosopher at Book VI 496a–e but, as the mention of his “divine sign” (*daimonion*, c4) there helps emphasize, in a rather negative or attenuated sense, characterized chiefly by the avoidance of corruption endemic to political participation in current society. In including himself amongst those who have “tasted” philosophy (c6), Socrates picks a term that fits one sufficiently self-aware to reflect critically on his inquiry’s limitations. Is it, as 497a–b seems to suggest, that only the training and environment afforded by the ideal city equips one to do more? If so, then the task for anyone wishing to see the soul as it really is will be the task of founding Kallipolis. Given its position in the text, it should be no surprise if a proper response to our passage demands engagement with the social and political blueprint that has gone before.

Psychic contingency in the *Republic*

JENNIFER WHITING

This is my first appearance in a Plato forum and I am a stranger to the way of writing expected here: I am not accustomed to attributing views to an author who never speaks *in propria persona*. It was easier when I was an undergraduate and encouraged simply to assume that Socrates was Plato's spokesman and to apply what I can now, thanks to my graduate education, call "the SSSPT operator": the Socrates-says-so-Plato-thinks operator. But that was before it had dawned on me that there might be problems even with the SSSST operator: irony was not recognized in the Philosophy Department.

Of course I was not so naïve that such questions never occurred to me: I could hardly suppress them when taking courses in the English Department. I still recall my puzzlement when asked to write a series of papers on novels such as *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Story of O*, each answering the question: "What is the morality of the book?" I asked in vain: "What do you mean *the* morality of the *book*? Different characters have different moral views. *The* morality of *The Brothers Karamazov*? You must be joking. Perhaps you mean the morality of the *author*?" And I soon came to feel more at home in the Philosophy Department, where I was at least provided with an algorithm for going from the views of a single character to those of the author himself. For these were the only views that mattered and they could often be determined without

I have learned much from friends, colleagues, and audiences at the Toronto conference, Queens University, the Central European University, and the Universities of Pittsburgh, Dortmund, Frankfurt, and Göttingen; especially from Gábor Betegh, Eric Brown, Logi Gunnarsson, Martina Hermann, Rachana Kamtekar, Gisela Striker, and Iakovos Vasiliou. I also want to thank Christof Rapp and Marta Jimenez for their support in Berlin, and Brad Inwood for his constant help. I am most grateful to Rachel Barney, for demanding a positive story, and to Jonathan Beere for helping me see how to tell it. Last but not least, I want to thank Charles Brittain for his superb midwifery and Tom Berry for more than I can say.

having to read (let alone worry about the meaning of) whole books as such.

Of course I learned in graduate school that there had, naturally, been some oversimplification in my undergraduate education, and that I needed to know of any given Platonic dialogue whether it was (roughly) “early,” “middle,” or “late,” so as to know whether the views expressed by *its* Socrates belonged (again roughly) to the historical Socrates and/or the young Plato, to Plato in his philosophical prime, or to the mature Plato. But I was assured that I could rely on others, including stylometrists, for help with that. I got little help, though, with how to handle apparent discrepancies among the views expressed by Socrates in dialogues widely agreed to belong to the period in which Plato has Socrates express distinctively Platonic views such as the theory of separate Forms: for example, the discrepancy between the *Republic*, where Socrates seems to view the soul as tripartite, and the *Phaedo*, where Socrates seems to view the soul as simple and assigns to the body many of the features assigned in the *Republic* to the lower parts of soul.

Those who take Socrates to express distinctively Platonic views in both dialogues tend to explain this discrepancy in developmental terms. Many take the *Phaedo* to reflect an early stage in Plato’s prime, when he had arrived at the theory of separate Forms but had not yet come to see (as he had by the time he wrote the *Republic*) that he needed to divide the soul, probably in order to account for the possibility of *akrasia*.¹ But I do not myself find this story compelling, perhaps because I do not see the *Republic* as much concerned to account for this possibility. So I propose to take a different tack, one compatible with Plato having written both dialogues without having changed his mind in between about the nature of the human soul.²

My proposal is to read the *Republic* as allowing for what I call “radical psychic contingency.” This involves not just the moderate idea, clearly present in *Republic* VIII–IX, that it is contingent how the parts of any given human soul are *related* to one another, but at least one of the following, more radical ideas: first, that with respect to at least some of the so-called parts, it is contingent *what sort of internal structure* each

1 Shields (2001) refers to this view (which he rejects) as the “standard developmental view.” Lorenz (2006, 103 n. 19) has recently endorsed a version of it.

2 There is of course an easy way Plato could have done so: he could simply have written various parts for the *character* Socrates, whose views do not always (perhaps even never) reflect Plato’s own. My proposal is more conservative.

actually has in any given individual; and second, that it is contingent *how many* genuine parts actually belong to any given individual soul. The first of these ideas, though less radical than the second, may lead to the second if a certain kind of internal structure is required in order for a so-called part to count as a genuine part. If, for example, it turns out that the appetitive element (*to epithumêtikon*) can be either a mere class of individual appetites or an organized unit, and only an organized unit counts as a *genuine* part of soul, then it will be contingent whether or not the *epithumêtikon* of any given individual is a genuine part; so it will be contingent how many genuine parts an individual soul actually has.

Embracing such contingency would allow Plato, without any inconsistency or change of mind, to ventriloquize about differently constituted souls in different dialogues and even in different passages within the same dialogue. If, for example, he accepts the second idea, Plato could think that although the souls of *most* folk have the three parts involved in the so-called state-soul analogy (i.e., the rational, spirited and appetitive parts) it is in principle possible for a *philosophically cultivated* soul (like the one to which the Socrates of the *Phaedo* aspires) to lack the lower parts and to consist simply in the so-called rational part (*to logistikon*). Plato could then have Socrates speak in the *Phaedo* about what he (Plato) takes a *philosophically cultivated* soul to be like, while having Socrates speak in the *Republic* about what he (Plato) takes the souls of *most* folk to be like. Plato could even have Socrates talk in different sections of the *Republic* itself about individual souls with different kinds and different numbers of so-called parts.

But in order to recognize this, we must free ourselves from some deeply entrenched yet misguided views, starting with what I call the “canonical view” according to which the central argument of the *Republic* depends for its success on the idea that each and every embodied human soul has exactly and only the three parts involved in the so-called state-soul analogy. For, whatever twentieth century philosophers may have thought was required for the success of Plato’s argument, it seems pretty clear that Plato did not himself think *this* was. Consider, for example, what he has Socrates say in the culmination of his central argument:

[A]: <Justice> is not concerned with someone’s doing his own externally, but with what is inside him, with what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any [part] of *himself* to do the work of another [part] or allow the *various classes within the soul* (*ta en tê(i) psuchêi genê*) to

its proper role. Material conditions are of interest to Socrates mainly insofar as they conduce to the members of each sector doing their own work.³⁶ In a society of embodied individuals, this work may be intimately bound up with the facts of embodiment, but there is nothing in the principle of justice as the performing of proper function that is necessarily tied to the material world. Nor indeed is the point confined to Socrates' own theory. Unless one has a pretty narrow conception of what counts as a good, there is no essential connection between materiality and, say, justice as a certain distribution or availability of goods, the notion of distribution itself being a structural one.

If so, one may begin to subsume the earlier account of justice under Socrates' more general metaphysical conception of the objects of dialectical inquiry. Given Socrates' credo that study of the mathematical sciences is the best preparation for dialectic, a mathematical example may suffice. To get at the nature of three or triangle, one must strip away the material aspects of their instantiation; we are misled if these inform our considerations. Like three or triangle, justice is instantiated in the material world, but this should not lead us to confuse the application of principles with the principles themselves. Whether we count apples or distribute them, reflecting on their materiality will not deliver us principles of arithmetic or of distribution. An inquiry concerned with material aspects cannot thus succeed in grasping what justice is. A soul that fails to lay aside its earthly concerns is not in a suitable state to discover the nature of justice, or its own nature.

VIII

Let us, then, not altogether defer the question: what is the soul in its true, unencrusted state? Dialectical inquiry successfully completed presumably results in the attainment of wisdom. The soul, after all, is exercising its love of wisdom (*philosophia*) in pursuing such inquiry. Now wisdom is an evident good. So if its attainment requires the soul to leave its earthly preoccupations behind, then we can see to that extent how Socrates can regard the latter as accretions to be as far as possible detached, rather than accessories to be valued. And with his talk of the "so-called" happy feasts of the soul that remains immersed in the sea (612a2–3), Socrates implies by contrast that with wisdom comes real happiness too. But what kind of good is wisdom? And where do justice and injustice fit in? These questions

36 See e.g., III 416b–417a, IV 421d–422a, V 464b–c, IX 591d–e.

meddle with each other.³ He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order and is his own friend, and harmonizes the three [parts of himself] like three limiting notes of a musical scale – high, low, and middle. He binds together these [parts], *and any others there may be in between* (*kai ei alla atta metaxu tunkhanei onta*), and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious.⁴

(*Republic* IV 443c10–e2, trans. Grube and Reeve, slightly modified)

This suggests either that Plato failed to understand what was required by his own argument or that his argument is misunderstood by those who adopt the canonical view. I myself prefer to risk erring with Plato.

I have bracketed occurrences of ‘part’ in [A] because no clear equivalent (such as ‘meros’) appears in the Greek. The same goes in many other places where translators tend to supply the word ‘part’ – as, for example, when Socrates summarizes his analogy by speaking of three *eidê* (i.e., three forms or species) in the soul analogous to the three natural *genê* (i.e., the three natural kinds or classes) of people in the state (*Republic* IV 435b2–436b1). Here and elsewhere we are invited to classify certain psychic entities by form or kind in something like the way we classify individual people by form or kind. The psychic entities in question are pretty clearly something like desires. So the idea seems to be that just as the individuals in each social class are supposed to be the same *in kind* with one another but different *in kind* from the individuals in the other social classes, so too the desires in each class are supposed to be the same *in form or kind* with one another but different *in form or kind* from the desires in the other classes.

Let us look again at [A]. The things bound together here, however many they prove to be, are *anonymous*. But it is natural to suppose that they are the *genê* explicitly mentioned or (what seems much the same)

3 I have substituted “in the soul” for “in him” in the Grube-Reeve translation (printed in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997)) because it is important to my argument when Plato has Socrates talk about *the soul itself* and when he has Socrates talk about *the person* to whom the soul belongs. And I use this translation in spite of the need to correct such flaws because I want to demonstrate how this standard (and not unrepresentative) translation both reflects and perpetuates the account of tripartition challenged here. The translation is misleading, in ways I want readers to see, in almost every passage where it has Socrates speak of a *part of soul*; hence the square brackets, here and elsewhere, where no Greek equivalents of the words bracketed appear. Angular brackets contain non-controversial material I have supplied, mostly for clarification; the important thing to note is how often ‘part’ appears in *square* brackets.

4 Korsgaard (1999) rightly makes much of this passage; but her “constitutional” reading of it seems to me (for reasons explained in sections IV–V below) misguided.

the individual members of these *genê*. So the ideal seems to be one in which desires of different kinds form a unity analogous to the unity of a well-governed state. There is no sign here of the sort of agent-like parts that what I call “realist” interpreters see in the *Republic*: no sign of parts that are themselves the proper subjects of the kinds of psychological states and attitudes (such as beliefs and desires) that combine to bring about action, or of parts from whose psychological states and attitudes those of the person as a whole might be said to derive.⁵ The only agent-like thing in play, and the only proper subject of such states and attitudes, seems to be (as what I call “deflationist” interpreters insist) the *person himself*: he is the one who does not allow the various classes in his soul to meddle in one another’s business, who puts himself in order and who binds together *these things*, whatever exactly and however many exactly they are. And the same is true in many places in the *Republic* where realist interpreters see agent-like parts; hence my frequent talk of *so-called* parts.⁶

I speak also of the *so-called* state-soul analogy because, contrary to what much of the secondary literature suggests, this is not what Plato presents. His official analogy, at 368e, is between an individual man (*andros henos*) and a whole state (*holês poleôs*). So it is strictly speaking the parts of the man and not the parts of his soul that are analogous to the parts of the state: the political analogue of the soul is the constitution (*politeia*) that prevails within a state. Plato’s analogy can thus be described *either* as a state-man analogy *or* as a constitution-soul analogy, and henceforth, so as not to privilege either, I shall call it simply “the political analogy.” The idea is that as a state is just (or unjust) in virtue of the kind of *constitution* it has, so too a man is just (or unjust) in virtue of the kind of *soul* he has. And this is an idea that invites us to think in terms of contingency: there are many ways in which a state might be constituted and Plato himself reminds us of this when he has Socrates speak at the start of Book VIII of the four kinds of corrupt constitution “worth discussing” (544a), which clearly picks up the reference at the end of Book IV to the four forms of vice that stand out (among the “countless” forms there are) as “worth mentioning” (445c).

5 For an extreme version of realism, see Bobonich (2002) especially 219–20. Bobonich follows Irwin (1995) on many points, including Irwin’s arguments against reading Socrates’ agent-like characterizations of the parts as “merely metaphorical” (on which more below). Lorenz (2006) is another realist; but, unlike Bobonich and Irwin, he denies cognitive capacities to the lower parts.

6 Deflationism has long been the default view. Recent defenders include Robinson (1971); Cooper (1984); and Gerson (2003) especially ch. 3.

There are many such nods to contingency scattered throughout the *Republic*, and not just in Book X, where such nods tend to be acknowledged in a way those in earlier books are not. Some commentators worry, for example, about what they take to be Book X's apparent references to parts of soul that are not easily mapped onto one of the canonical three or onto some simple combination of the three: the references to what our translation renders "the pitying [part]" (*to eleinon*, 606b9) and "the [part] . . . that wanted to tell jokes" (*ho . . . boulomenon gelôtopoiein*, 606c6).⁷ And most commentators would allow that Book X's discussion of the sea-god Glaucus reveals Plato's openness, perhaps even commitment, to the idea that a *disembodied* soul might lack one or more of the canonical parts.⁸ But this is not the sort of contingency that interests me here. I am concerned only with signs that Plato recognized contingency in the kinds and number of parts an *embodied* human soul might have. And we need not appeal for such signs to Book X's apparent references to pitying and joking parts: [A] alone suggests not only that Plato is open to the possibility that at least some of the embodied souls discussed in Book IV have other so-called parts *in between* the canonical three, but also that he is open to the possibility that even in *embodied* souls psychic elements that were *previously many* can *become one*.

I Spirit and other possible partly reason-responsive elements: the assimilationist ideal

We can best understand [A] by reading it in its proper context, namely, the accounts given in *Republic* II–IV of the more or less *ideal* state and the corresponding man.

I say "*more or less ideal*" because as Books V–VII reveal, and Glaucon reminds us at the start of Book VIII, Socrates "had a still finer state and man to tell us about" than the ones he was describing before he was interrupted at the start of Book V (543c–544a). There is not space here for a proper discussion of these finer ideals, so we must for the moment bracket the middle books and focus simply on the *more or less ideal* state and man described in Books II–IV, together with the forms of corruption of these ideals that Socrates says in Books VIII–IX are "worth discussing."

7 See Moss (2008). Note that the sort of education described in *Republic* III seems designed to nip the development of such parts in the bud.

8 See Raphael Woolf, Chapter 7.

It is in Book II that Socrates first introduces what eventually appear to be two of the three canonical parts, though he speaks there of natures (*phuseis*) rather than parts of soul: the spirited nature and the philosophical nature, which are difficult to combine but must be combined, as they are in well-bred dogs, in the guardians of a well-governed state (374e–376c). Socrates maintains his focus on these two natures throughout Books II–III, and summarizes towards the end of Book III as follows:

[B]: SOCRATES: It seems, then, that a god has given music and gymnastics to human beings not, except incidentally, for the body and the soul but for the spirited and wisdom-loving [parts of the soul itself] in order that these might be in harmony with one another (*hopôs an allêloin sunarmosthêton*), each being stretched and relaxed to the appropriate degree.

GLAUCON: It seems so.

SOCRATES: Then the person who achieves the finest blend of music and physical training and impresses it on his soul in the most measured way is the one we'd most correctly call completely harmonious and trained in music, much more so than the one who merely harmonizes the strings [of his instrument] <with one another> (*ton tas khordas allêlais sunistanta*).⁹

(*Republic* III 411e5–412a7)

There is no talk here, and has been none yet, of parts of soul as such: Socrates speaks simply of *to thumoeides* and *to philosophon*. Nor is there any mention here of appetites as such; it is only in Book IV that they begin to attract attention of their own.

There is, however, a potentially significant transition from the dual 'allêloin' in Socrates' reference to the ideal where *to thumoeides* and *to philosophon* are in harmony with one another, to the plural 'allêlais' where Socrates conjures up the image of someone tuning her own psychic strings in something like the way a musician tunes the strings of his lyre.

9 There is no explicit reference here to any instrument; hence the square brackets. But it is natural to think of a lyre. I have added "with one another," which *is* in the Greek, but in the plural and so clearly contrasted with the preceding dual. The plural leaves it open, in precisely the way [A] leaves it open, how many strings are involved. But lyres often had seven strings: not just the *nêtê*, *hupatê*, and *mesê* (corresponding to the high, low, and middle in [A]), but also the *paranêtê*, *parahupatê*, *paramesê*, and *likhanos* (corresponding perhaps to [A]'s "and any others there may be in between"). So the contrast is between two-part harmonies, on the one hand, and harmonies involving various numbers of parts, on the other. It is even possible that the two-part harmonies here involve octaves, which are said in the Aristotelian *Problemata* XIX.14 to be perceived as unison. Cf. *Republic* 399c–d on the absence of any need in a well-ordered state for polychorded or polyharmonic instruments: the ideal is clearly a kind of unison.

The idea seems to be that the sort of two-part harmony effected by the finest blend of musical and gymnastic training is superior to the various multipart harmonies that may in the end be the best more complicated characters can achieve. Here, as in [A], contingency with respect to the number of parts is acknowledged: the idea of harmony may require *at least two* parts, but it certainly admits of *more*. And the *epithumêtikon* has not yet been identified as such, so it is not clearly among the envisaged parts.

More importantly, Socrates takes the proper combination of the spirited and philosophic natures to begin with musical training (which includes what we now call “literature”) and he may even take reason itself to emerge from such training:

[C]: anyone who has been properly educated in music and poetry will sense it acutely when something has been omitted from a thing and when it hasn’t been finely crafted or finely made by nature. And since *he* has the right distastes, *he* will praise fine things, be pleased by them, receive them into his soul, and being nurtured by them, become fine and good. *He’ll* rightly object to what is shameful, hating it while he’s still young and unable to grasp the reason <for its being shameful>, but having been educated in this way, *he* will welcome [the] reason when it comes, and recognize it easily because of its kinship with *himself*.¹⁰

(*Republic* III 401e5–402a4)

I cannot defend my reading of [C] in detail, but I have added “<for its being shameful>” so as to clarify how I understand the final (and most important) lines. I take Socrates’ points to be (1) that the right sort of upbringing enables a young person to *recognize that* certain things are fine and so to *love* these things, and to *recognize that* other things are shameful and so to *hate* these things, *before* she is able to grasp the reasons *why* the former are fine and the latter shameful; (2) that these affective dispositions to love and hate the right things are part of what enable her eventually

10 I have italicized “he” to show how misguided it is to read this passage as evidence that *Republic* III treats the lower parts (and the appetitive part in particular) as able to recognize reason’s kinship with themselves and so as having the sort of cognitive capacities, including a self-conception, required for such recognition (contra Irwin (1995) 217–18). There is no mention here of parts of soul: it is the *person* who is said to recognize the kinship of reason, or reasons, with *himself*. And even if a part were involved because (as Irwin thinks) the attitudes of the whole person derive from those of his parts, it would presumably be to *thumoeides* (which is associated with the sort of shame operative here and has, unlike to *epithumêtikon*, actually been introduced by this point: the argument for partition, like the first reference to the *epithumêtikon* as such, comes only in Book IV).

to grasp the reasons *why* the former are fine and the latter shameful; and (3) that coming to grasp such reasons is what is involved in coming to have the *logistikon* proper (as distinct from the sort of partly but not fully reason-responsive tendencies from which the *logistikon* develops).

The most controversial point here is (3), but this receives some support from the passage where Socrates endorses Glaucon's claim that *thumos* is present in children from birth, while *logismos* (or reasoning) comes, if at all, quite late (441a7–b1). Even if young children are prone to excessive or unwarranted anger, they are often provoked to anger by things that *do* in fact warrant it. In this sense, even young children have tendencies that are partly responsive to reasons of the sort mentioned here. And the proper training of a child's *thumoeides* presumably involves taming her individual tendencies to anger in ways such that they become increasingly responsive to such reasons, which is part and parcel of acquiring reason itself.

It would, of course, be only in the highly idealized case of someone like the Stoic sage that a person's tendencies to anger would ever be *fully* reason-responsive in the sense that she *always and only* became angry *to the extent and only the extent* warranted by her situation. But were such a case to arise, we might speak of the person's *thumoeides* as having been completely *absorbed by* or *assimilated to* reason: to the extent that she has *no* tendency to become angry in ways other than those reason prescribes, Republic IV's famous argument for dividing the soul is no argument for assigning to *her* soul a spirited part distinct from reason. For, at least as far as anger goes, *her* soul suffers no opposites of the sort that need, *according to this argument*, to be ascribed to different subjects: for example, no tendency to experience a certain form of anger that is simultaneous with an opposed tendency to suppress precisely that form of anger with respect to the same aspects of the same objects, etc.

In non-idealized cases, which may include all *actual* cases, human subjects will experience some tendencies to become angry in ways or degrees other than those prescribed by reason. But to the extent that these subjects are responsive to reason, they will *also* experience some tendencies to suppress that very anger. Such subjects will thus suffer opposites of the sort that must, *according to the argument* of Book IV, be assigned to different subjects. It seems doubtful, though, that the sort of tendencies associated with spirit are the *only* sort of partly but not fully reason-responsive tendencies to which human beings are prone. The examples Socrates mentions in Book X should come as no surprise. When pity tempts me to give money to a panhandler even though reason tells

me he is likely to spend it on drugs, it is surely neither appetite nor spirit that leads me on and needs to be restrained by reason. And when at my grandfather's funeral I had to suppress laughter at the ridiculous things the preacher said, it was surely something other than appetite leading me on (something at least partly reason-responsive) and something other than reason holding me back (something more like the sort of sense of family honor that might be associated with spirit).

These examples show how *Republic IV*'s famous argument might lead Plato to recognize the possibility that a subject should have more than one partly but not fully reason-responsive element between reason and the appetites (which are, unlike spirit, completely indifferent to reason). For in these cases, I seem to suffer precisely the sort of opposite tendencies that must, according to that argument, be ascribed to different subjects. But in an idealized case where I come, for example, to feel pity when and only when – and to the extent but only to the extent – reason prescribes, there is no longer any argument for assigning to *my* soul a pitying part distinct from reason. Note, however, that neither here nor in the previous case does it follow that I have no tendencies *to feel* pity or anger: it is just that these tendencies have, in *my* soul at least, been thoroughly rationalized. And that, of course, is a contingent matter.

We have now seen why Plato might leave open, in [A] and [B], the possibility of *other* partly reason-responsive elements *besides spirit*. Still, there is an important feature of reason that helps to explain why Plato might nevertheless think that well-ordered souls harbor *few if any* such elements *besides spirit*: namely, that reason by its very nature requires a kind of unity among its inhabitants that the other so-called parts do not. We shall discuss appetites more fully below; but it seems clear from the outset that my individual appetites need not stand in *rational* relations to one another either to *be* what they are or all to count *as mine*. In this respect my appetites differ from the inhabitants of my *logistikon*, which *must* stand in *rational* relations to one another, not just in order all to count *as mine* but in order even to *be* what they are. For part of what *makes* something a *belief* are the rational relations in which it stands to the *other* beliefs with which it, so to speak, cohabits. I cannot simply add beliefs to my *logistikon* in the way I might add appetites to my *epithumêtikon* (which is more like adding coins to a bank). If I believe some proposition *p* and then acquire a belief in some proposition that clearly (or even not so clearly) contradicts *p*, the status of *p* as a belief of mine is threatened – unless, of course, my *logistikon* can itself be divided. But insofar as the very existence of something deserving the title of reason is constituted by

a kind of rational coherence among its residents, it is difficult to regard reason itself as divided.

This difficulty explains why Plato regards spirit (and any other only partly reason-responsive element there might be) as distinct from reason and not as part of it. But this difficulty also helps to explain why Plato might think that well-ordered souls will end up with relatively *few if any* only partly reason-responsive elements *besides spirit*. For reason is inherently imperialistic: there is pressure on every such element, insofar as it is even partly reason-responsive, not just to become *more* reason-responsive but also to cohere with other such elements to the extent that it recognizes *them* as reason-responsive. This, in fact, is part and parcel of their becoming more reason-responsive. For the more insulated from other reason-responsive elements any given pretender to reason-responsiveness seems to be, the more it needs to worry about its own status *as reason-responsive*.

Plato may think of spirit as an exception here, perhaps because it is the hardest to assimilate and/or because it has important jobs to do. Ambition may serve society better when it is not completely reason-responsive. And as long as external threats are present, every agent, no matter how otherwise rational she is, may sometimes benefit from having a spirited element that is only partly reason-responsive.¹¹ But this is a special case. In general, the more rational an agent is, the more the partly reason-responsive elements in her soul will be under pressure to “get along” with one another; and the more they come to cohere with one another, the less autonomous they will be, not simply of one another but of reason itself.

We can now see something Plato might have had in mind in having Socrates speak of psychic elements that were *previously many becoming one*. Children start off with various partly reason-responsive tendencies, each more or less capable of developing (as envisaged in [C]) into an aspect of reason itself. The ideal (except perhaps for *thumos*) is complete assimilation; and even *thumos*, insofar as it *is* reason-responsive, is under pressure to assimilate. So the general ideal is for the individual, having started off as (roughly) a bundle of such tendencies, to become “entirely one, moderate and harmonious.”

11 Just as a state must (at least in non-utopian circumstances) have some minimal defense forces, so too an individual requires protection, if not from internal enemies at least from external ones. And the need for some relatively automatic responses to perceived threats may explain why the *thumoeides* is not the sort of thing that can be expected to respond infallibly as reason would on reflection prescribe.

II Two conceptions of *to epithumêtikon*

But what about the appetites? The paradigms here are our more or less biologically driven desires for food, drink, and sex, which are generally agreed to be minimally (if at all) responsive to reason. Unwelcome appetites, if they cannot be eradicated, must be handled by more “mechanical” means: diversions, *Clockwork-Orange*-style modification, meditation, diet pills, cold showers, and the like. Assimilation to reason, even partial assimilation, seems out of the question. Isn’t the best Plato can reasonably hope for the appetites that they should come to *obey* reason?

This is not, I think, how Plato sees things. For there are signs (even in *Republic* IV) that he sees obedience to reason as a kind of *deuteros plous*.¹² He seems to think that a proper upbringing can bring it about that a person’s appetites do not simply obey her reason, but spontaneously, as it were, and of their own accord *sing the same tune with it*. To see this consider how, once appetites are center-stage, Socrates describes *sôphrosunê* (i.e., temperance or moderation):

[D]: <*Sôphrosunê* resembles a kind of harmony> because, unlike courage and wisdom, each of which resides in one part, making the city brave and wise respectively, moderation spreads throughout the whole. It makes the weakest, the strongest, and those in between – whether in regard to reason, physical strength, numbers, wealth, or anything else – *all sing the same song together*. And this unanimity, this agreement between the naturally worse and the naturally better as to which *of the two* should rule both in the city and in each one is rightly called *sôphrosunê*.

(*Republic* IV 431e8–432b1)

Here, however, there is a puzzle (especially for proponents of the canonical view who take the parts to be agent-like). Why, now that appetites are on the scene, does Plato have Socrates ask “which *of the two* should rule”? Why does he not have Socrates treat *sôphrosunê* as involving agreement among the *three* canonical parts?

One simple answer is that Socrates has not yet introduced the third canonical part, nor even anything corresponding as clearly to it as the philosophical and spirited natures correspond to the other two: the “naturally better” and the “naturally worse” here are most plausibly taken *either* as reason, on the one hand, and spirit, on the other (as in Books II–III)

12 The corollary of this is that ruling is itself a *deuteros plous*: the ideal for reason is to philosophize, *not* to rule. So I think the emphasis in Cooper (1984) on reason’s “innate taste for ruling” is misguided. Plato’s ideal is ultimately anarchic (on which more below).

or (perhaps better here) as reason, on the one hand, and spirit, taken on the other together with any other psychic elements there prove to be.¹³ But the fact that Socrates has not yet introduced the third canonical part belongs in the end more to the *explanandum* than to the *explanans*: the principal question is why he (or rather Plato) did not introduce an appetitive element, alongside reason and spirit, from the get-go.

The answer, I think, turns partly on the way in which appetites differ from the inhabitants of reason or of any even partly reason-responsive element. As we have already seen, there is not the same sort of pressure on individual appetites, in order either to be what they are or to belong to the same subject, to stand in any particular relations (especially rational relations) to one another. It may be inconvenient or even disastrous for a subject if her various appetites pull her in different directions. But the fact that they do so does not by itself impugn any individual appetite's status either as an *appetite* or as *hers* in anything like the way in which the doxastic analogue would impugn the status of at least some of her purported beliefs either as *beliefs* or as *hers*. That is no doubt why Plato finds it so easy to represent *to epithumêtikon* as involving multiplicity – as he does, for example, at the end of Book IX (where he explicitly represents it as a kind of multiheaded beast) or in Book IV (where he implicitly compares it to a flock of sheep). It is also, I think, why Plato does not in fact worry, as some proponents of the canonical view think he should worry, about having to subdivide the third canonical part: he sees in the case of appetite none of the sort of constitutive demand for unity that he sees in the case of reason or even in the case of partly reason-responsive parts. In other words, he sees no obstacles in principle to a person's appetites being just a motley crew.

But Plato's ideal clearly requires more than this. Note, however, that it does not seem to require the *epithumêtikon* to display anything like the sort of unity constitutive of reason or of partly reason-responsive elements.

13 Even if moderation requires agreement among *all* the elements, however many there are, agreement between two parties in cases where there are *in fact* only two may suffice for moderation in a way in which it would not suffice for justice, which requires agreement among the *three* canonical parts. For justice may be a remedial virtue requiring agreement among the three canonical parts, and so *available* only in agents who in fact have these three parts (but also *needed* only in such agents). And this might help to explain the distinction between justice and moderation, which can be difficult to distinguish insofar as *each* seems to involve a kind of harmony or agreement among the so-called parts: for Plato may think that justice *requires* three-part harmony in a way that moderation (which however *admits* three and more part harmonies) does not.

The ideal *epithumêtikon* seems to be something like a collection of the sort of necessary appetites that Socrates contrasts with unnecessary ones. As Socrates explains in Book IX, an unnecessary *epithumia* is one “that *most people can get rid of, if it is restrained and educated while they are young*, and that is harmful both to the body and to the wisdom (*phronêsis*) and moderation of the soul” (559a11–c1). Here Socrates refers back to Book II’s distinction between a healthy city and a feverish one (372e–373a). And he makes it clear that in the case of *unnecessary* appetites, the ideal is not obedience to reason, which is ultimately a form of what Aristotle calls “continence,” but rather eradication.¹⁴

We are now in a position to make better sense than our translation makes of the passage where the apparently singular referring expression “to *epithumêtikon*” first surfaces in Plato’s *Republic*:

[E]: SOCRATES: Now would we assert that sometimes there are thirsty people who don’t wish to drink?

GLAUCON: Certainly it happens often to many different people.

SOCRATES: What, then, should we say about them? Isn’t it that there is in their soul something bidding them (*to keleuon*) to drink and something different, forbidding them (*to kôluon*) to do so, that masters the thing that bids (*kratoun tou keleuontos*)?

GLAUCON: I think so.

SOCRATES: Doesn’t that which forbids (*to men kôluon*) in such cases come into play – if it comes into play at all – as a result of rational calculation (*ek logismou*), while the <things> that drive and drag them to drink result from feelings and diseases (*ta de agonta kai helkonta pathêmâtôn te kai nosêmâtôn paragignetai*)?¹⁵

GLAUCON: Apparently.

14 Or better yet, contraception: it is clear from the lines immediately before [C] that exposure to evil images, which is compared to grazing in bad grass, gives rise to unhealthy appetites, whereas exposure to fine images, which is compared to taking in healthy breezes, prevents unhealthy appetites from arising in the first place (401b–d). Here, as elsewhere in *Republic* II–IV, the nature and etiology of various psychic conditions is compared, via images familiar from the Hippocratic corpus, to the nature and etiology of various bodily conditions. For more on this, see section IV below.

15 The Grube-Reeve translation renders this in the singular – “*what* drives and drags them to drink is *the* result of feelings and diseases” – but this is problematic for reasons explained below. Please note, *pace* Lorenz (2006) 21, that it does not seem to be the so-called parts that pull and drag the agent here: it seems rather to be the agent’s individual desires and beliefs. Note also that it does not follow from the fact Plato uses the singular in referring to that which forbids that he *must* be talking about a part of soul. For the fact that he speaks of what forbids as coming into play, if at all, as a result of calculation suggests that he may have in mind something like a mental tokening of the sort of imperative that is ordinarily taken to be the upshot of a bit of practical reasoning – something like a mental tokening of

SOCRATES: Hence it isn't unreasonable for us to claim that they are two, and different from one another. We'll call that [part] of soul with which it calculates [the] rational [part] (*logistikón*) and the [part] with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by the other appetites [the] irrational appetitive [part] (*alogistón te kai epithumêtikón*), companion of certain pleasures and indulgences.

GLAUCON: Yes . . .

SOCRATES: Then, let these two forms (*eidê*) be distinguished in the soul. Now, is the spirited [part] by which we get angry a third [part] or is it of the same nature as either of the other two?

GLAUCON: Perhaps it is like the appetitive [part] (*tô(i) epithumêtikô(i)*).

(*Republic* IV 439c1–d5)

There are two things to note here, starting with the fact that it is Glaucon, not Socrates, who first uses the apparently singular referring expression, '*to epithumêtikón*': Socrates himself, though he goes on to make his own use of this expression, has thus far used only the predicate adjective (back where he describes what lusts, hungers, thirsts, etc., as "*alogistón kai epithumêtikón*"). Note also that I have altered the Grube-Reeve translation so as to reflect Plato's use of the plural. Plato does not have Socrates speak, as the translation has it, of "*what* drives and drags [agents] to drink"; he has Socrates speak rather of "*the* <things> that drive and drag them to drink." The translators no doubt invoke the singular because they take Socrates to be talking about the canonical part of soul that goes by the name '*to epithumêtikón*.' But consider how odd Socrates' claim here would be if he were in fact speaking of the canonical part, which is supposed (according to the canon) to be part of the natural endowment of any embodied human soul: Socrates would be saying that the *part itself* comes to be as a result of feelings and diseases.¹⁶

As far as this passage goes, Socrates seems to be speaking simply about a *genos* or (as he says here) an *eidos* of appetitive desires. And he seems to be saying that while *some members* come to be as a result of the sort

a command such as "don't drink" or "don't drink this." See *Nicomachean Ethics* 1147a25–b3 (translated and discussed in Pickavé and Whiting (2008)): Aristotle speaks here as if it is individual beliefs that command and prohibit, and individual appetites that lead the agent on.

- 16 Although I argue below that Plato may regard the existence of an appetitive part (*meros*) of soul, as distinct from a mere collection of individual appetites, as pathological, I do not think that is what he is talking about here. The point here seems to be that the things (mainly desires) that drive and drag us to act against reason may come about *either* as a result of natural and even healthy affections *or* as a result of diseased ones. It is a separate question (discussed below) how, if at all, such desires are organized.

of natural and healthy affections required to keep the species going, *other members* may come to be as a result of various diseases. In other words, he seems to have in mind something like a *class*: one that *should* include only natural and healthy appetites, but often *in fact* includes unnatural and diseased ones. So [E] seems to require only a deflationist conception of the *Republic's* so-called parts of soul.

But realist readers resist this reading of [E]. They point, for example, to passages where Socrates speaks of “handing over rule to spirit” or “setting appetite on the throne” and argue on the basis of such passages that the lower parts, including the appetitive part, must be agent-like entities, capable not only of agreeing or disagreeing about who should rule but even of ruling (in some sense) the other parts. I say “in some sense” so as to flag an important issue that remains to be addressed: the issue of what to take “metaphorically” and what to take (as the realist reader Irwin puts it) “seriously.”¹⁷

Consider the following passage, which in Irwin’s view both must be taken “seriously” and shows (so taken) that Plato conceives of the parts as agent-like.

[F]: SOCRATES: The <timocrat’s> son sees all <that his father suffers>, suffers from it, loses his property, and, fearing for his life drives from the throne in his own soul the honor-loving and spirited [part] (*philotimian te kai to thumoeides*) that ruled there. Humbled by poverty, he turns greedily to making money, and, little by little, saving and working, he amasses property. Don’t you think that *this person* would establish his appetitive and money-making [part] (*to epithumêtikon te kai philochrêmaton*) on the throne, setting it up as a great king within himself. . . ?

GLAUCON: I do.

SOCRATES: *He* makes the rational and spirited [parts] sit on the ground beneath [appetite], reducing them to slaves. *He* won’t allow the first to reason about anything except how a little money can be made into great wealth. And *he* won’t allow the second to value or admire anything but wealth and wealthy people or to have any ambition other than the acquisition of wealth. . .¹⁸

(*Republic* VIII 553b7–d7)

But suppose that a proper reading of [F] does in fact show that Plato takes the *epithumêtikon* of an oligarchic character to be agent-like. Why

17 Irwin (1995) 222.

18 Once again, I have italicized “this person” and “he” to show that it is the person himself, rather than a part of his soul, that seems to do these things. See n. 10 above.

suppose that this shows us anything about what the *epithumêtikon* of a well-ordered soul, or even an akratic one, is like? Why read [E] in light of the realist reading of [F]? Why not read the other way round? Why not take the apparently deflationist view we find in [E] to support reading [F] and other such passages, as John Cooper reads them, as “highly metaphorical” and even “potentially very misleading”?¹⁹

III Methodological interlude: a widespread but arguably false conception of what is required for the consistency of the *Republic* taken as a whole

It is worth noting that most commentators tend simply to assume that we must read [E] and [F] the *same* way, whichever way, realist or deflationist, that is. Deflationists tend to see their view as all that is warranted by the argument of Book IV and so to *generalize forward*, reading Books VIII–IX as largely metaphorical. Realists tend, on the other hand, to *generalize back*: they read the agent-like language and images that dominate Books VIII–IX as showing that we should read Book IV as implicitly committed to the realist view. So much of this generalization occurs without comment that it seems to be driven largely by tacit assumptions about what is required for a consistent reading of the *Republic* taken as a whole. But it is not obvious that these assumptions *justify* such generalization.

One such assumption seems to me as dubious as it is widespread. Most commentators seem to assume that the consistency of the whole requires what is said of any given part of soul in one passage of the *Republic* to apply equally to all homonymous entities in all other passages, both within the same book and across books. This “homogenizing” conception of what is required for consistency is perhaps most salient among realists. This may be because it is more difficult for them, once they insist on taking some arguably metaphorical passages “seriously,” to dismiss others as “merely metaphorical” (which may help to explain why realists are somewhat more prone than deflationists to charge Plato with inconsistency). But the salience of the homogenizing conception among realists may also be due to the fact that deflationists seem to have more independent arguments for ruling out a realist reading of *any* passage whatsoever than realists have independent arguments for ruling out a deflationist reading of *any* passage whatsoever. What I mean here are arguments driven primarily by considerations independent of the demand for consistency simply as

19 Cooper (1984) n. 18.

such: for example, the deflationist argument that Plato would never allow something immaterial, like the soul, to have genuine parts, and so *must* be speaking simply of three kinds of desires; or the deflationist argument that the realist view involves the dubious supposition of some “mysterious self,” beyond the three so-called parts, to adjudicate among them.²⁰

But even if deflationists do have more independent arguments here than realists, I think we can sometimes see the demand for consistency and the homogenizing conception of what is required for it bearing weight in deflationist arguments: for example, when deflationists argue that realist views undermine the unity of the person and so treat *akrasia* not (as it should be treated) as a form of conflict within a *single* agent, but rather as a form of conflict between *distinct* agents.²¹ To the extent that this argument is aimed to rule out a realist view not just in Book IV, where *akrasia* is treated, but also in Books VIII–IX, where the focus has shifted to vicious agents, the argument seems driven largely by a concern with consistency and a homogenizing conception of what is required for it. For the master premise is that *akrasia* is a form of conflict *within* a single agent, which is what the deflationist account in Book IV is supposed to secure. But even if an adequate account of *akrasia* requires a deflationist conception of the so-called parts, it does not follow that an adequate account of any and every *vice* requires the same conception: Plato could still treat at least some of the forms of vice discussed in Books VIII–IX as involving a kind of division of the agent into parts that interact in ways more like those in which distinct agents interact. Moreover, there is evidence that Plato does in fact take some such division to distinguish at least some forms of vice from mere *akrasia*, for example, when he has Socrates describe the oligarchic character as “not one but in some way two” (554d9–10). So it seems plausible to suppose that a deflationist whose concern with the sort of unity required for an adequate account of *akrasia* leads him to reject a realist conception of the parts in an oligarchic soul is leaning on something like the homogenizing conception of what is required for consistency. For some such supposition seems required to explain why he discounts as mere metaphor relatively clear signs that Plato takes at least some forms of vice to differ from mere *akrasia* at least partly insofar as these forms of vice involve something like conflict among distinct agent-like parts.

20 See Gerson (2003) section 3.1.

21 Even some realists worry about this: Bobonich (2002) 254–67, argues that Plato himself was sufficiently moved by this worry that he abandoned tripartition in the *Laws*. Cf. Gerson (2003) 6.3.



The converse error would be made by any realist who took signs that Plato thinks we need agent-like parts in order to account for the forms of vice discussed in Books VIII–IX to show that Plato must be assuming agent-like parts back in Book IV. Here too, the homogenizing conception of what is required for consistency threatens to occlude evidence that Plato takes the emergence of distinct agent-like parts of soul to be part of what sets at least some vicious agents apart from merely akratic ones. And realist readers show themselves vulnerable to such threats when, for example, they argue that passages like [F] support reading Book IV as implicitly committed to a realist conception of the so-called parts. Consider, for example, the relatively generic application of the homogenizing conception in the following passage from *Plato's Ethics*, where, in his chapter devoted to interpreting *Republic* IV, Irwin appeals to the famous image at the end of *Republic* IX:

we cannot, however, understand the nature of a part of soul simply by understanding the character of its component desires. For Plato *also* conceives of the parts of the soul as analogous to agents; he compares the rational part to a human being, the spirited part to a lion, and the appetitive part to a many-headed and multifarious beast (588c7–c5).

(Irwin (1995) 217, my emphasis)

It is worth noting that Irwin appeals here to the very image that Julia Annas proposes to “ignore” on the ground that it fails to fit not only the ideal propounded in Book IV but also the ideal in Plato’s Socratic dialogues. But what drives the argument seems to be the same in each case: the homogenizing conception of what is required for consistency. And this conception is (as we shall soon see) so powerful that Irwin and Annas would rather charge Plato with confusion than abandon it.

Annas argues that Plato does not speak in the *Republic* in one voice, but rather portrays a single idea – the idea of the divided soul – in different and mutually incompatible ways in different places. Plato’s ideal, as Annas first describes it, sounds deflationist: “a harmonized, integrated person, all of whose motivations are, without conflict, in line with reason” (136).²² But Annas says a sentence later that “Plato *also* sees *the idea* at times in a different way, one in which the person isolates his ‘true self’ in his reason and then externalizes the parts other than reason as something

22 This and all other page numbers in brackets are from Annas (1999); the emphasis is all mine.

subhuman, rejected and kept under harsh external control" (136). And Annas marks no difference here between a shepherd's relationship with his dog (Book IV's image for the relationship between reason and spirit) and a lion-tamer's relationship with his lion (Book IX's image for the relationship between reason and spirit): she speaks as if each of these relationships involves the *same sort* of external control. Annas also speaks as if Plato himself failed to see what "seems obvious to us" – namely, the lack of unity that characterizes agents who are "*supposedly unified* in this [external] way."

But there are clear signs that Plato does *not suppose* that the agents in question are in fact unified – for example, his description of the oligarchic character as "not one but in some way two." Annas simply fails to see these signs for what they are. And the culprit seems to be her homogenizing conception of what is required for the consistency of the *Republic* taken as a whole. For she appeals explicitly to what is required for consistency when she recommends that we "*ignore* Plato's vivid metaphor of a human as a little lion-tamer" on the ground that this metaphor fails to fit the ideal propounded in Book IV and in Plato's Socratic dialogues (136).

But even leaving aside the vexed issue of consistency with what Socrates says in *other* dialogues, there is reason to worry about any reading of the *Republic* that proposes to ignore descriptions of what are explicitly presented as *corrupt* souls on the ground that these descriptions do not "fit" the author's (or the speaker's) account of what an *ideally* constituted soul is like. Are we really to suppose that Plato sees no relevant difference between a shepherd's relation to his dog and a lion-tamer's relation to his lion? Mightn't Plato think that the dog obeys the shepherd *willingly* in a way the lion does *not willingly* obey the lion-tamer, perhaps because the dog's own desires are shaped partly by its affection for its master in a way the lion's desires are not? Mightn't Plato's point be (as [B] perhaps suggests) that a properly trained dog-like spirit will love reason and want to follow it? The appetites, which are of course analogous to the flock of sheep in Book IV and to the many-headed beast in Book IX, are a different matter. But it seems clear that we should think twice before assimilating a flock of sheep to a beast of many (both gentle and savage) heads.

The point of using these different images is surely to allow for different sorts of cases: some in which a person's appetites are in fact like wild animals, capable of being controlled, if at all, only by force, and some in which a person's appetites are in some sense "domesticated," presumably

by a kind of persuasion.²³ And I suspect that Plato wants to allow for similar variation in the relations between reason and spirit. For there is room for variation even within human-dog relationships, as Socrates suggests at 563c, where he complains about the freedom granted to animals in a democracy, where horses and donkeys wander freely, bumping people who get in their way, and dogs are allowed to become like their mistresses. Real men do not allow their dogs to become like this; their problem is to prevent their dogs becoming like wolves, which Socrates says is “the most terrible and most shameful thing of all for a shepherd” (416a).

In general, then, we should not be too quick to dismiss some of Plato’s metaphors or images on account of their apparent inconsistency with others. We should attend to *which* images, whether intended metaphorically or not, he uses in connection with which *kinds* of subjects. For it may be significant if Plato tends to anthropomorphize (or to bestialize) more in some contexts than in others. And it may be significant *which* beasts he introduces in *which* contexts. Such differences arguably reveal different but complementary ideas rather than one idea that Plato confusedly describes in different ways in different places. For there are clear signs that what we find in *Republic* IV and what we find in *Republic* VIII–IX are not (as Annas suggests) competing moral psychologies but rather complementary aspects of a single psychology, one intended to accommodate different kinds (or at least different conditions) of soul, both the more or less ideal ones discussed in Books II–IV and the increasingly corrupt ones discussed in Books VIII–IX.

IV The shift from medical/musical models to political ones

The clearest such sign comes in a relatively neglected passage towards the end of *Republic* IV. This is passage [J], which (as we shall soon see) signals an important difference between the sort of model on which Socrates’ accounts of more and less well-ordered souls are based and the sort of model on which Socrates’ accounts of corrupt souls are based. [J] thus

23 Note that the multiplicity here seems to be associated with fear and compulsion, as distinct from persuasion. So Plato may *not* in fact take persuasion as sign of the genuine distinctness of the subject persuaded from the subject doing the persuading. And this is intuitive: insofar as persuasion involves the giving and accepting of reasons, and we can give ourselves reasons that we may then accept, persuasion does not presuppose distinct subjects in quite the way force seems to presuppose the distinctness of what forces from what is forced.

epitomizes an important shift that occurs towards the end of Book IV; and so it provides an important key to reading the *Republic* as a whole.

The shift begins late in Book IV, when Socrates for the first time speaks explicitly and unambiguously of a '*meros*' or 'part' of soul: this is after the main argument has been consummated in [A] and scarcely more than a Stephanus page before the end of the book:

[G]: Surely <injustice> must be a kind of civil war between the three [parts], a meddling and doing of another's work, a rebellion of some part against the whole soul (*epanastasin merous tinos tô(i) holô(i) tês psuchês*), in order to rule it inappropriately. The rebellious [part] is by nature suited to be a slave, while the other [part] is not a slave but belongs to the ruling class (*genos*).

(*Republic* IV 444b1–5)

Here, however, Socrates is no longer speaking about souls that are more or less *well-ordered* (including ones more and less plagued by *akrasia*): he is launching the discussion (which is interrupted at the start of Book V and resumed in Books VIII–IX) of *corrupt* souls. And what we find in those books supports Joseph's claim that the talk of *merê* of soul is a political metaphor.²⁴ But Joseph, perhaps because he is concerned to defend the deflationist view, stresses the mere *fact* of the metaphor at the expense of what seems to me its *point*, which is to identify psychic equivalents of political *factions*. For taking this to be the point helps to explain a curious fact that is often noted but never in my view adequately explained, namely, that we do not find Socrates speaking explicitly of a *meros* of soul until [G], where he seeks to launch the discussion of *corrupt* souls. We can easily explain this if we take the point of the metaphor to be that a well-ordered soul should no more house such *merê* than a well-ordered state should house political factions.

It may help to think here of what members of the ruling class generally fear. It is *not* that there should be individual members of the working class each doing his or her own job: that is what the rulers *want*. What members of the ruling class fear is that the members of the working class should organize themselves, or be organized by outside agitators, into something like a political party; that members of the working class should start functioning as an *integrated unit* capable of imposing *collective* demands either on the ruling class or on the state as a whole.

24 See Joseph (1935) 47.

It seems clear that Socrates worries in *Republic* VIII–IX about the *psychic analogues* of just such political phenomena. The problem is not individual appetites each doing their own jobs; the problem occurs when the appetites get *organized* into something like political factions making *collective* demands. Consider, for example, the passage where Socrates compares the transition from a timocratically constituted soul to an oligarchically constituted one to the transition from a timocratically constituted state to an oligarchically constituted one, and speaks of the oligarchally constituted soul as one in which *only necessary appetites* are allowed to be satisfied: all other appetites (except that for wealth) are enslaved and the agent pursues wealth to the exclusion of everything else (553b–554a). Or consider the following passage, where Socrates describes the degeneration from an oligarchically constituted soul to a democratically constituted one:

[H]: SOCRATES: And just as the city changed when one party (*meros*) received help from like-minded people outside, doesn't the young man change when one form of his desires (*eidous epithumiôn*) receives help from external desires that are akin to them and like them.²⁵

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: And I suppose that, if any contrary help comes to the oligarchic [party] within him . . . then there's civil war and counter-revolution within him, and he battles against himself.

ADEIMANTUS: That's right.

SOCRATES: Sometimes the democratic [party] yields to the oligarchic, so that some of the young man's appetites are overcome, others are expelled, and a kind of shame arises in his soul, and order is restored.

ADEIMANTUS: That does sometimes happen.

SOCRATES: But I suppose that, as desires are expelled, others akin to them are being nourished [unawares] and on account of his father's ignorance about how to bring him up, they grow numerous and strong.

ADEIMANTUS: That's what tends to happen.

SOCRATES: These desires draw him back into the same bad company and in secret intercourse breed a multitude of others.

ADEIMANTUS: Certainly.

25 I have substituted "one *form* of his desires" for Grube-Reeve's "one *party* of his desires," but I have no objection to the use of 'party' for *meros* in the first line. I am however struck by the fact that here, where Socrates actually uses '*meros*,' Grube-Reeve declines to use 'part,' which they use so liberally in passages where '*meros*' does not occur.

SOCRATES: And, seeing the citadel of the young man's soul empty of knowledge, fine ways of living, and words of truth (which are the best watchmen and the finest guardians of the thoughts of those men whom the gods love), they finally occupy that citadel themselves.

ADEIMANTUS: They certainly do.

SOCRATES: And in the absence of these guardians, false and boastful words and beliefs rush up and occupy the same place (*ton auton topon*) in him.²⁶

ADEIMANTUS: Indeed, they do.

SOCRATES: And if some help comes to the thrifty [part] of his soul from his household, won't these boastful words close the gates of the royal wall within him to prevent these allies from entering and refuse even to receive the words of the older private individuals as ambassadors? . . . And won't they persuade the young man that measured and orderly expenditure is boorish and mean, and, joining with the many useless desires, won't they expel it across the border?

ADEIMANTUS: They certainly will.

SOCRATES: . . . Isn't it in some such way as this that someone who is young changes, after being brought up with necessary desires, to the liberation and release of useless and unnecessary pleasures?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that's clearly the way it happens.

SOCRATES: And I suppose that after that he spends as much money, effort, and time on unnecessary pleasures as on necessary ones. If he's lucky, and his frenzy doesn't go too far, when he grows older, and the great tumult within him has spent itself, he welcomes back some of the parties that have been expelled (*merê tôn ekpesontôn*),²⁷ ceases to surrender himself completely to newcomers, and puts his pleasures on an equal footing. And so he lives, always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot . . .

(*Republic* VIII 559e4–561b5)

It seems clear that '*meros*' is used at the start of [H] to refer to a political faction – a democratic or oligarchic faction whose members might receive support from other democrats or oligarchs *as such*. And it seems clear that Socrates envisions psychic analogues of such factions making collective demands based on principles such as "All appetites are equal and should be treated as such" (in the democratic soul) or (in the oligarchic

26 I have substituted "the same place in" for Grube-Reeve's "this part of."

27 I have substituted "*parties* that have been expelled" for "*parts* that have been expelled" simply so as to match Grube-Reeve's rendering of *meros* in the first line. It does not matter much which we use as long as we understand that Socrates is not referring to any of the canonical parts: what has been expelled are pretty clearly certain beliefs (and perhaps also desires).

soul) “The appetite for wealth is privileged and should be treated as such” or “Apart from the necessary appetites, which should be tolerated in moderation, only the appetite for wealth should be indulged.” This suggests that Socrates treats the *epithumêtikon* of at least some of the corrupt souls discussed in Books VIII–IX as a different (and arguably more agent-like) kind of thing from the *epithumêtikon* of any of the more or less well-ordered souls discussed in Books II–IV. More specifically, Socrates may treat the *epithumêtikon* in a well-ordered subject as a collection of moderate and mostly necessary appetites each of which spontaneously and of its own accord sings the same tune with reason, while treating the *epithumêtikon* in an akratic or merely enkratic subject as a collection of appetites some of whose members fail to sing the same tune with reason but are more (in the enkratic case) or less (in the akratic case) obedient to it, and treating the *epithumêtikon* of a vicious subject as (at least by the time we get to the oligarchic character) something like an organized political faction capable of *ruling* reason rather than *being ruled* by it.

The idea that Socrates recognizes some such range of possibilities is not ruled out by the fact that he uses the apparently singular referring expression ‘*to epithumêtikon*,’ nor even by the fact that he uses the same expression both in discussing more or less ideal subjects in Book IV and in discussing increasingly vicious ones in Books VIII–IX. To see this, consider ‘*to hippikon*,’ which Plato and his contemporaries could use in place of ‘*hoi hippikoi*’ in the same range of ways in which we ourselves might use ‘the cavalry’ in place of ‘the cavaliers.’ They could use it *both collectively*, to say things like “The cavalry advanced on the village,” where the idea is that the cavalry functions as an integrated unit; *and distributively*, to say things like “The cavalry ran amok,” where the idea is that each individual member does what he or she does independently of what the others are doing, even if it happens to match what the others are doing. Similarly with ‘*to epithumêtikon*’: Plato could have used it *both* to say things like “The *epithumêtikon* of Trump subordinates everything to the pursuit of wealth” (meaning that Trump’s *epithumêtikon* is organized around the pursuit of wealth) *and* to say things like “The *epithumêtikon* of Henry VIII never met a sensual pleasure it didn’t like” (meaning that the *epithumêtikon* of Henry VIII was filled with various diverse appetites). Plato could even have used ‘*to epithumêtikon*’ in different ways in different passages of the *Republic*. But in that case, he would have left himself vulnerable to being misread by homogenizing commentators.

Let us return to Book IV. I have said that [G] is the first place where Socrates speaks explicitly and unambiguously of a *meros* of soul as such.

But this is controversial. There is one passage earlier on where many readers take him to speak in this way. It seems to me, though, that the earlier passage is ambiguous in a way that supports taking the shift of which I speak to begin only in [G]. The earlier passage runs as follows.

[I]: SOCRATES: And it is because of *this part* (*toutô(i) tô(i) merei*), I suppose, that we call a single *individual* courageous, namely, whenever his spirit (*autou to thumoeides*) preserves through pains and pleasures the declarations of reason (*to hupo tôn logon parangelthen*) about what is to be feared and what isn't.

GLAUCON: That's right.

SOCRATES: And we'll call him wise because of *that small part* [of himself] (*ekeinô(i) tô(i) smikrô(i) merei*) that rules in him and makes those declarations and has within it the knowledge of what is advantageous for each [part] and for the whole [soul], which is the community of all three beings (*tên tou sumpherontos hekastô(i) te kai holô(i) tô(i) koinô(i) sphôn autôn triôn ontôn*).²⁸

GLAUCON: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: And isn't he moderate because of the friendly and harmonious relations between these same <beings> (*tê(i) philia(i) kai sumphônia(i) tê(i) autôn toutôn*), namely, when the ruler and ruled believe in common (*homodoxôsi*) that the rational [part] (*to logistikon*) should rule and don't engage in civil war against it (*mê stasiazôsin autô(i)*)?

(*Republic* IV 442b11–d1)

Note that the parts mentioned here are not clearly parts of *the soul*, as distinct from parts of *the person* whose soul is in question: Socrates may be speaking simply about parts of *the person*, which is congenial to deflationists, who happily allow that persons can have parts (such as bodies) that their souls do not.²⁹ And even if Socrates *is* talking about parts of soul as such, there is no clear reference here to an *appetitive* part as such: when he speaks of the whole as a community of three things, he speaks not (as the Grube-Reeve translation would have it) of three *parts*, but only more generically of three *beings* (as I have revised their

28 I have substituted “beings” for “parts” both here (where the noun itself appears) *without* brackets, and in the next sentence (where the noun does not itself appear but the anaphora is relatively clear) *in* brackets.

29 It is true that Socrates has just been speaking of reason ruling on behalf of “all the soul” (*hapasês tês psuchês*, 441e5) and reason together with spirit protecting “all the soul and the body” (*hapasês tês psuchês te kai tou sômatou*, 442b5–6). But it may be significant that Plato's use of ‘*hapasê*’ is predicative rather than attributive (which would have cast the soul clearly as the sum of its parts). His point may be simply about *all* the soul, *whatever* it involves (where this may be contingent).

translation to say). But it would have been so natural given the first two occurrences of ‘*meros*’ to use ‘*meros*’ here as well that we should at least consider the possibility that Plato is reluctant to have Socrates speak of the *epithumêtikon* (at least in this context) as a *meros* of whatever it is he is talking about.

There is more than one possible explanation of this. It could be, as deflationists sometimes assume, that Plato is reluctant to allow that something immaterial should have genuine parts. But this fails to explain [I]’s *differential* treatment of the *epithumêtikon*. For *either* Socrates is speaking about parts of the individual (as distinct from her soul) and so, on this assumption, has no reason not to treat *to epithumêtikon* (along with the other things) as parts of her; *or* Socrates is speaking about the soul itself and so, on this assumption, should be as reluctant to speak of *to thumoeides* and *to logistikon* as parts of it as he is to speak of *to epithumêtikon* as a part of it. We need a more discriminating explanation.

Fortunately, [G] taken together with [J] hints at the sort of discrimination we need. For these passages show Socrates finally speaking in [G] of a *meros* of soul as such and then immediately abandoning this language, only a few lines later, just where we might expect him to use it.

[J]: SOCRATES: To produce health is to establish the [components] of the body (*ta en tô(i) somati*) in a natural relation of mastering and being mastered (*kratein te kai krateisthai*), one by another, while to produce disease is to establish a relation of ruling and being ruled (*arkhein te kai arkhesthai*) contrary to nature.

GLAUCON: That’s right.

SOCRATES: Then, isn’t to produce justice to establish the [parts] of the soul (*ta en tê(i) psuchê(i)*) in a natural relation of mastering and being mastered (*kratein te kai krateisthai*), one by another, while to produce injustice is to establish a relation of ruling and being ruled (*arkhein te kai arkhesthai*) contrary to nature.³⁰

(*Republic* IV 444d3–11)

Here, as in [A], the elements in question are *anonymous*. This is at least partly because different sorts of elements are involved in the bodily and psychic cases. But Plato may also see a difference in each case between the nature of the elements involved when things *go well* and the nature of the elements involved when things *go wrong*. For it seems at least potentially significant that he has Socrates use different pairs of verbs for

30 For reasons that should become clear, I have rendered *kratein kai krateisthai* here as “mastering and being mastered” rather than as Grube-Reeve’s “control and being controlled”.

the normative and the pathological cases: when things (whether bodily or psychic) *go well*, he has Socrates say that the elements in question *kratein kai krateisthai* one another; but when things (again bodily or psychic) *go wrong*, he has Socrates say that the elements in question *arkhein kai arkheisthai* one another.

This shift in verbs, together with the anonymity of their respective subjects, epitomizes a fundamental difference between the models dominating *Republic* II–IV and those dominating *Republic* VIII–IX. The model of health invoked in Books II–IV is familiar from the Hippocratic corpus, where health tends to be identified with the proper blend (*krasis*) of various fluids or humors contained in the body. The elements involved here tend to be stuff-like and their names tend to function in mass-logical ways. As long as the proper blend is maintained, none of the humors is (individually) evident (*phanera*), though each contributes, in virtue of its characteristic powers, to the properties of the whole. But when the proper blend is disturbed and one or more of these humors is separated from the others (in a way likened to the curdling of milk by fig juice) then some humors – no longer diluted, so to speak, by others – begin to dominate, as a result of which disease and other pathological phenomena arise.

The idea that imbalances can lead to a kind of separation of some elements from others may indicate the kind of separation involved in political factionalism, a kind of separation that is *not supposed* to occur in a *well-ordered* state. But the sort of mastering and being mastered involved in the medical model, on which the idea of justice as a kind of harmony is based, is very different from the sort of ruling and being ruled involved in political models, where a separation of powers is required and one party rules over the others in the sense that it establishes laws or issues commands that the others are supposed to obey. The sort of mastering and being mastered involved in the medical and musical models do not require anything like the sort of separation of powers involved where one party issues commands or laws and then either persuades or forces the other party or parties to obey: such mastering and being mastered involve rather something like a mixture of stuffs, or of musical tones, standing in the right proportions to one another.

The difference between these models may help to explain the anonymity in [J] of the things said either to rule and be ruled, or to master and be mastered, by one another. Plato may leave the *relata* unspecified because he thinks that different *kinds* of things are related in the different cases – not just in the bodily as distinct from the psychic cases, but also in the normative as distinct from the pathological cases of each of these

(bodily and psychic) kinds. For we have seen evidence that Plato takes the *epithumêtikon* in a well-ordered soul to be something like a class of moderate and mostly necessary *epithumiai*, each doing its own job, while taking the *epithumêtikon* in (for example) an oligarchically constituted soul to be an organized unit on a par with a political faction, where different members hold (for example) different offices. And Plato may think it more apt to speak in the first sort of case of a mere *genos* (or *eidos*) of appetites, while speaking in the second sort of case of an appetitive *meros* of the soul. In other words, Plato may leave the *relata* in [J] anonymous because he lacks terms equally well suited not just to the bodily and the psychic cases, but also to the more or less ideal cases that Socrates has just been discussing and to the pathological cases to which Socrates now proposes to turn.³¹

If this is right, then treating Socrates' talk of *merê* of soul not just as a political metaphor but as one associated with the sort of factions that *should not exist* in a well-ordered state allows us to explain the curious combination of [G] and [J]: it allows us to explain *both* why [G] is the first place where Socrates speaks explicitly of a *meros* of soul as such *and* why Socrates then in [J] (only a few lines later) abstains again from this language. But [J] alone arguably contains an important key to reading the *Republic* as a whole: for in saying that the elements of *healthy* bodies and souls *kratein kai krateisthai* one another, while saying that the elements of *diseased* bodies and souls *arkhein kai arkhesthai* one another, [J] points to a fundamental difference between *Republic* II–IV, where medical-cum-musical models are used to illuminate more or less *well-ordered* souls, and *Republic* VIII–IX, where governmental models are used to illuminate the various forms of *corrupt* souls that are “worth mentioning.”

V The plausibility of a hybrid reading and Plato's anarchic ideal

We are now in a position to see the plausibility of a hybrid reading, i.e., one according to which deflationists are more or less right about the appetitive part of the well-ordered souls discussed in *Republic* II–IV, while realists are more or less right about the appetitive parts of the various corrupt souls discussed in *Republic* VIII–IX. Some such hybrid would have many

31 Aristotle may make similar use of anonymity when he contrasts *akratic* subjects, who sometimes fail to draw from their beliefs conclusions they should draw, with *virtuous* subjects, who exhibit no such failure. See Pickavé and Whiting (2008) especially n. 41.

advantages. It would allow us not just to explain why intelligent commentators have lined up on both sides of the realist-deflationist dispute, but also to accommodate the good points made by each side. It would thus allow us to do greater justice to a wider range of passages than either an exclusively realist or an exclusively deflationist reading can do: for it would allow us to explain some of the apparent differences between the earlier and the later books without having *either* to discount significant portions of the latter (as deflationist readers often do) as largely metaphorical *or* to charge Plato with confusion (as realist readers sometimes do).

The ostensible advantages of a hybrid reading raise the question why its possibility has been hitherto ignored, even by a commentator astute enough to trip over it, not just once but twice. In a note in *Plato's Moral Theory*, Irwin more or less concedes that "for the purposes of Book IV" a deflationist account will do. For he thinks both that Plato's primary purpose in Book IV is to establish the possibility of *akrasia* and that all Plato needs for this purpose is "the claim that there are desires differing in kind in a way unrecognized by Socrates" (327).³² And Irwin calls attention in his main text to apparent differences between the division of soul in *Republic* IV and the division in *Republic* VIII–IX: he says explicitly that "it is not clear that [the parts in Books VIII–IX] are the same parts of the soul as the parts with the same names in Book IV" (227). But Irwin does not pause long enough to give serious consideration to the hybrid possibility. And what keeps him moving is pretty clearly the homogenizing conception of what is required for consistency. For his argument is explicitly aimed to show that the parts discussed in Books VIII–IX are in fact the same as the parts discussed in Book IV: the parts are simply put to different but "equally legitimate" uses in the two places (231).

Irwin trips again over hybrid possibilities in *Plato's Ethics*. And here again the homogenizing conception keeps him up and running. Consider, for example, the following passage, where after laying out various possible conceptions of the relation between a person and the parts of her soul, Irwin seeks to determine "which *one* fits [Plato's] remarks best."

32 This and other page references in brackets are from Irwin (1977). Irwin's concession may also to some extent rest on the thought that this claim is *all* that is actually warranted by the argument of *Republic* IV. For he points out that the Principle of Opposites (on which Book IV's argument is generally agreed to turn) requires so many restrictions of scope that it is of little use to the argument and then claims that Plato should have moved directly to his argument about the three kinds of desire.

These difficulties about the role of the person in relation to the parts of his soul might be resolved in one of three ways: (1) the reference to the person is not to be taken seriously: Plato means only that the domination of one part is replaced by the domination of another; (2) the reference to the person is to be taken seriously because Plato has a conception of the person as something beyond the three parts of soul; (3) the reference to the person *is* to be taken seriously, but it refers to a special role of one (or more) of the three parts of the soul.

Admittedly, Plato may well fail to distinguish these answers, *or he may shift confusedly from one to the other*. Nevertheless, it is worth asking which *one* fits his remarks best.³³

Irwin argues (very roughly) that (1) does not do justice to the intentional sounding language of “handing over rule” etc., and that (2) involves the unacceptable idea of a mysterious self beyond the three parts. He concludes that it is (3) that best fits Plato’s various remarks, and not just (3) but the version of (3) in which the person is identified in *every* case with the *rational* part of his soul. This requires Irwin to “modify” the political analogy on Plato’s behalf by removing from the psychic side an important form of contingency found on the political side. But Irwin defends this modification by appeal to passages like [F] and [H].³⁴ And he concludes as follows (287):

Plato is not being careless in suggesting that the transition from one stage to another is a rational process involving the person who hands over control. *If this is correct, then one aspect of the political analogy has to be modified when it is applied to the individual soul.* In the sequence of political changes, one government is turned out and another is installed, and there is no single source of authority that consents to all the changes of the government. In the individual, however, Plato seems to intend the person to remain the permanent source of authority.

33 Irwin (1995) 285 (my emphasis) and, for the next bit, 287 (my emphasis).

34 Irwin’s appeal to [H] is especially precarious, for it is difficult to see the person himself (*qua* identified with his rational part) as actively involved in the sorts of change described there. Irwin’s appeal to the final lines (“if he’s lucky . . .”) (285) is also weak, since the text surely portrays a kind of a coup d’état in which appetite rather than reason ends up in office. But from the fact that a ruler lucky enough to be reinstated can *later* be said to make certain decisions, it does not follow that he himself endorsed the steps leading to his initial demise. In general, Irwin’s use of the intentional sounding language of “handing over rule,” etc. in support of taking the relevant processes to have “psychological reality” seems misguided: for [H] clearly fingers the sort of subpersonal mechanisms that Irwin’s talk of “psychological reality” seems aimed to rule out.

But suppose for a moment that the texts *do* in fact portray Socrates shifting among Irwin's three options. Why suppose that Plato's portrayal rests on *confusion*? Why not take the political analogy at face value and ask how *it* might inform our reading of the *psychic* transitions?

For example, why not consider the possibility that Plato thinks the oligarchic character's transition to a democratic condition is different in kind from (perhaps less rational and orderly than) the aristocratic character's transition to an oligarchic condition? For Plato may well have introduced the political analogy partly in order to call attention to the *diversity* of forms of transfer of *psychic* power: he may have wanted readers to recognize the psychic analogues not only of orderly succession but also of anarchic rebellion and tyrannical backlash. And even if we accept Irwin's basic arguments for (3), why accept the version of (3) that takes the special role to be played in *every* case by the *rational* part? Is it not part of the manifest content of Books VIII–IX that different parts rule in different sorts of characters?

Irwin may eschew a hybrid version of (3) because he worries that taking a choice made by any one of the three (realistically conceived) parts to count as the *person's* choice will return us to (1), according to which the reference to the person is not to be taken seriously and it is the parts themselves that do *all* the work. But this would be the case only if Plato rejected a form of contingency in which (a) different parts govern the souls of different characters and (b) only a choice stemming from the part that *actually governs* a given soul counts as the choice of the *person* whose soul it is. For if Plato accepted such contingency, he could allow that a timocratic person, for example, occasionally acts against her governing *thumos* because she is overwhelmed by some especially strong appetite. This would be a form of *akrasia* in which the timocrat acts against her (admittedly corrupt) decision and so does *not identify* with whatever leads her to act in the way that she *identifies* with her *decisions* (however corrupt they may be). But there is plenty of room left here for the sort of principled adherence to appetite required if Plato is to distinguish the various forms of vice "worth mentioning" from mere *akrasia*.

This somewhat Aristotelian way of putting the point reveals the plausibility of a version of (3) that allows different parts of soul to play the special role in different characters without, however, collapsing into (1). On this sort of view, what distinguishes vicious souls in general from more or less ideal souls (including *akratic* ones) is that vicious souls harbor faction-like parts of a sort that should no more exist in a well-ordered soul than political factions should exist in a well-ordered state; and what distinguishes

the different forms of vice from one another is *which* faction-like part rules in each case and how that part is *actually organized*. The *thumoeidos* will rule the soul of a timocratic character, while the *epithumêtikon* will rule the souls of oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical characters; and the latter will differ from one another insofar as the *epithumêtikon* of each will be organized according to different principles or “platforms.”

In sum, I see no reason to start modifying the political analogy on Plato’s behalf, or charging Plato with other forms of confusion, until hybrid readings have been ruled out. For the hybrid territory remains at this point largely unexplored: deflationist readers, taking the path of least resistance, have floated past the *Republic*’s jungle of metaphor and image, while realist readers, powered by the homogenizing conception of what is required for consistency, have simply tunneled through. What we need is an all-terrain method, one equipped to deal not only with the arguments – which analytically inclined readers of both realist and deflationist stripes have tended to privilege – but also with the metaphors and images that frame the arguments, casting light here and shadows there.

It is important, in exploring this territory, to keep in mind that Socrates does not represent ruling as the true ideal, either for the rulers in any given state or for the *logistikôn* in any given individual. It is not just that he makes it clear in Books V–VII that the best activity of which the *logistikôn* is capable is philosophizing, and that having to rule interferes with this activity – which means the rulers in any given state, no matter how much they happen to like ruling, could be doing something better instead. Even in Book IV, Socrates represents ruling as less than ideal: he says not only that with proper education and upbringing men do *not need* to be ruled (423e–424a), but also that it is *not worthy* (*ouk axion*) to give commands to men who are fine and good (425d7–e2). And the psychic corollaries are clear: moderate appetites do *not need* to be ruled and there is in fact something *unworthy* about commanding them, perhaps because the commander could be doing something better instead.

I think it significant that Socrates goes on to describe legislators in badly constituted states as constantly passing and then amending legislation without realizing that this is like cutting off the head of a Hydra (426e). For this surely anticipates the famous image at the end of *Republic* IX. Socrates thus hints, even in Book IV, that the true ideal is ultimately anarchic and that the need for ruling and being ruled is already problematic. And taking the ideal to be anarchic helps to explain the fundamental differences there seem to be between the medical and musical models (with their talk of *kratein kai krateisthai*) that dominate the discussion of

well-ordered souls in Books II–IV, and the political models (with their talk of *arkhein kai arkhesthai*) that dominate the discussion of corrupt souls in Books VIII–IX. These models are no doubt metaphorical, but that does not make them mere literary embellishment: they are the models or metaphors around which Plato chose to *organize* the *Republic*. We should thus be reading the *Republic's* arguments by their (arguably different) lights.

VI Postscript: the *Phaedo* revisited

Suppose then that the *Republic* allows for, as one among other possibilities, a character whose spirited and other partly reason-responsive tendencies have been thoroughly assimilated to reason and whose appetites are a mere collection of various individual appetites, each necessary and moderate and tending its own business. Although such a character has appetites, his soul lacks an appetitive *meros*. But what about these appetites? Do they belong to his soul or not? If not, is his soul exhausted by his *logistikon*?

Here it is worth recalling something Socrates says at *Phaedo* 83d:

every pleasure and every pain provides, as it were, another nail to rivet the soul to the body and to weld them together. It *makes the soul corporeal*, so that it believes the truth is what the body says it is.

Socrates' idea, I think, is that the relevant pleasures and pains, together with the sorts of desires with which they are associated, belong to the soul *only if* the soul *itself* comes to believe that their causes (in the case of pleasures and pains) and their objects (in the case of desires) *are* in fact the way the body presents them as being – that is, only if the soul itself comes to believe that these things are in fact good and so to be pursued, or in fact bad and so to be avoided. As long as the soul dissociates from the body in the sense that the soul is not tempted to accept the appearances presented by the body, these appearances, together with the desires, pleasures, and pains that are consequent upon them, will belong strictly speaking to the body. But when the soul is tempted to *believe* that what the body says is true, the soul comes under the sort of pressure that can lead it, so to speak, to crack. For, as we have seen, the *logistikon* is not – indeed *cannot* be – a mere collection of beliefs: the beliefs of any given *logistikon* must for the most part cohere with one another. So beliefs introduced by the body that are incompatible with those already settled in one's *logistikon* must either displace those already settled there or settle elsewhere. When

displacement occurs, the *logistikon* is simply corrupted; but when they settle elsewhere, the soul comes to have faction-like parts of a sort the soul should not, ideally speaking, have.

In other words, Plato may think that a subject's failure to dissociate fully from what her body presents as true is partly responsible for the sort of psychic partition of which the *Republic*-Socrates speaks. In cases where the subject comes to *believe* that what the body says is true, she (or her soul) must *either* lose any resident beliefs incompatible with what the body tells it *or* suffer some sort of division within itself, the very sort of division that might lead Plato to speak of the soul itself as having parts. If this is right, then the conflicts of which the *Republic*-Socrates speaks are not *mere evidence* of psychic partition but rather partly *constitutive* of it: the soul of a subject who suffered no such conflict would suffer no such division. What I have been suggesting here is that Plato may treat the soul of the true philosopher – of whom his paradigm is Socrates – as differing radically, albeit contingently, from the three (or more) parted souls of most folk. For as we learn from Alcibiades, towards the end of Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates is radically dissociated from his body. He thus approximates the *Republic* ideal: Socrates has become "entirely one, moderate and harmonious."

PART III

After the Republic

Erôs before and after tripartition

FRISBEE SHEFFIELD

The nature of desire (*erôs*) is explored centrally in two Platonic dialogues, the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. One might wonder why this is the case, and whether it is an indication that Plato is rewriting certain features of his account of *erôs*. It has been argued, for example, that the *Phaedrus* is a supplement to the poverty of certain aspects of Socrates' account of *erôs* in the *Symposium*, and that it is specifically the tripartite soul, first introduced explicitly in the *Republic* and employed in the *Phaedrus*, that gives Plato the conceptual tools to revisit the topic with greater complexity than his earlier intellectualism had allowed. Although scholars sometimes talk rather loosely about "intellectualism" to refer to a general Platonic tendency to overestimate the role of reason at the expense of the emotional and appetitive aspects of the human being, it typically involves the following specific claims: (a) that the desires of the soul are rational ones in the sense that they involve, or consist in, a belief about what is good for an agent to pursue in any given situation, and (b) that virtue is exclusively a property of the intellect. These claims often appear in dialogues where the soul is held to be a simple unity (e.g., in the *Phaedo*). It has been argued that the appearance of the divided soul in the *Phaedrus*, with its recognition of non-rational components to the human soul, allows Plato to recant the excessive rationalism of his earlier account of *erôs* or, at the very least, to compensate for the deficiencies of his earlier view.¹ Such views explain why Plato, *Republic* in hand, made *erôs* a theme of another dialogue. And they consider tripartition to have had a substantive impact on a significant area of Plato's thought.

I wish to thank the seminar group at King's College London and Robert Wardy for lively discussion of the *Phaedrus*, Suzanne Obzdralek for showing me unpublished work on the *Phaedrus*, and the editors of this volume for many helpful comments.

- 1 See Nussbaum (1986) 203, and Price (1989) 55–58, 85, respectively. See also Santas (1988) 58, 64, and Nehamas and Woodruff (1995) xxxix. Cf. Penner and Rowe (2005) 306, who argue that Plato is adapting his account of *erôs* to a new account of the soul in the *Phaedrus*.

One might question whether the reoccurrence of this theme is an issue that requires explanation. The unity of the *Phaedrus* is debated and much of this revolves around locating the central theme of the work; some have argued that the *Phaedrus* is about rhetoric.² If *erôs* is not the central theme, but the content of the rhetorical specimens whose form occupies centre stage, then we have no more reason to ask of the *Phaedrus* why it revisits *erôs*, than we do for the *Republic*, say, where *erôs* also appears as a theme. Even if one adopts such a view though, it is still worth considering whether Plato's views on *erôs* are consistent, or whether they change, and, if so, whether these changes are explicable in light of novel views about the nature of the soul. So, one does not need to take a stand on the issue of the unity of the *Phaedrus* for the purposes of this chapter. But the objection will not do in any case. Arguably, the *Symposium* is as much concerned with the proper methods of praise, as the *Phaedrus* is with the proper methods of rhetoric more generally. In both dialogues, reflections on method are intertwined with a larger discussion of the nature and aims of interpersonal love relationships; and this for good reason. The context for much of Plato's discussion of *erôs* in his works is the institution of pederasty. Pederastic relationships were, at least ideally, educational ones, and – in an oral culture and largely democratic society where public speaking was crucial – rhetoric, be it of the dinner party or the law courts, was central to a young man's education. This educational dimension to erotic relationships goes some way towards explaining Plato's interest in them and why conversational aims and practice are central to such discussions.

This chapter compares the accounts of the nature, aims, and activity of *erôs* in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* and assesses the evidence for the impact of tripartition.³ These developmentalist views can be divided into a strong and a weak version. A strong version is that the accounts of *erôs* are incompatible in important respects, and that Plato recants the former view of *erôs*, in part, by employing the divided soul.⁴ A weaker view is that the *Phaedrus* supplements the intellectualism of the *Symposium*, but does

2 See Thompson (1868) xiv; Rowe (1986a) *passim*.

3 When referring to the *Symposium*'s account of *erôs* I am referring primarily though not exclusively to Socrates' speech. This does not imply that the other speeches are irrelevant to an understanding of *erôs*, just that the various components of the dialogue are best understood with this as the centrepiece. I take this to require argument and I provide such in Sheffield (2006) 207–15.

4 Nussbaum (1986, 202, 212, 214, 218–19, 222) argues that Socrates establishes the value of erotic madness in the *Phaedrus* by means of a re-evaluation of the non-rational elements and their role in the good life. Cf. Nehamas and Woodruff (1995) xxxix.

not contradict its account of desire.⁵ These are amongst the positions I consider.⁶

Some or all of the following claims appear in arguments for both the strong and weak view.

- (1) The *Symposium* is a dialogue in which Socrates is committed to the view that all desires are rational ones, in the sense that they depend on, or consist in, a belief about what is good for an agent to pursue in any given situation.⁷
- (2) The *Symposium* functions with an account of the soul as a simple unity.
- (3) Virtue is exclusively a property of reason in the *Symposium*.
- (4) The *Phaedrus* postulates three distinct desires, at least one of which operates independently of thoughts about the good.
- (5) It functions with a view of the soul as divided into three parts.
- (6) This view of the soul is significantly similar to the *Republic*.
- (7) These views (i.e., 4–6) significantly modify the account of *erôs* presented in the *Symposium*.
- (8) So, Plato is either revising or recanting his earlier view.

I will assess the evidence for each of these claims.

(1) The *Symposium* is a dialogue in which Socrates is committed to the view that all desires are rational ones, in the sense that they depend on, or consist in, a belief about what is good for an agent to pursue in any given situation.

In the *Symposium* Socrates argues that “the whole of desire (*epithumia*) for good things and happiness is the supreme and treacherous *erôs* to be found in everyone” (205d1–3; trans. Rowe (1998a)). He also says that everyone always desires (*eran*) to possess good things (205b1, 206a11–12) and, finally, that “there is nothing else that people desire (*eran*) except the good” (205e7–206a1). These claims are often taken to be indicative of an intellectualist account of desire.⁸ Whether they amount to such a

5 Price (1989) 56, 58; Ferrari (1992) 263, 268. Cf. Reeve (2006) 302.

6 My aim in this chapter is to assess the afore-mentioned views that assume that the *Phaedrus* was written after the *Symposium*. The positive aspects of my argument do not rely on chronological claims, and indeed my conclusion (insofar as it downplays tripartition) might be taken to undermine a reason often cited for a later (post-*Republic*) dating of the *Phaedrus*.

7 This is all I mean by the notion that they are rational desires. For this reason, I also use the phrase “good dependent” desires.

8 See e.g., Santas (1988) 60; Price (1989, reprint 1997) 254–55; and Rowe (2006) 20–21.

view depends on how one interprets the scope and implications of these claims. The second claim might be taken to mean only that at any given time everyone has a desire for the good, and not that this is the only desire that they have. If so, then Socrates is not committing himself to an intellectualist account of desire in general, just to the claim that at any given time our desires (*epithumiai*) include a desire for the good (which is a case of *erôs*). A stronger sense of the claim whereby it means that everyone always has a desire for the good and *only* for the good gains support from the third claim that “there is nothing else that people desire (*eran*) except the good.” For if everyone always desires the good, and there are no desires other than those for the good, then this will be an intellectualist account of desire. But caution is required. All that is implied by the claim that “the whole of desire (*epithumia*) for good things and happiness is the supreme and treacherous *erôs* to be found in everyone” (205d1–3) is that whenever one has a desire (*epithumia*) for good things and happiness this is a case of *erôs*. This suggests that *erôs* is a special kind of *epithumia* (for good things and happiness), a species of the larger genus *epithumia*. This restricted claim is quite different from the claim that each and every desire (*epithumia*) that we have is for the good, or that this desire for good things and happiness is the only desire (*epithumia*) that we have. In none of the above claims does Socrates make, or imply, either of those further claims. He says only that *erôs* is for the good, and that the desire (*epithumia*) for good things is *erôs*.⁹ If we cannot establish the claim that *all* desire is for the good then we cannot establish that the account functions with an intellectualist account of desire as such. It may well be the case that there are other desires (more basic appetitive *epithumiai*, for example) in the human soul that Plato entertained at this point in his career, but these are not held to be instances of *erôs* here and so will not be relevant to the topic under consideration.

What we can say is that the Socrates of the *Symposium* focuses on the desire for good things and happiness, and that by making this the exclusive property of *erôs*, he operates with an intellectualist account of *erôs*. There are no doubt significant reasons why the *Symposium* focuses on the desire for the good, but assuming that this is due to an intellectualist account of desire is not the only option here; nor is it warranted by

9 Socrates does not stick to *eran* and cognate words exclusively when describing the workings of *erôs*; he uses *erôs*, *epithumia*, and *boulêsis*. See e.g., 200a2 for *epithumia*, 205a2 and 205a5 for *boulêsis*, and the elenchus of Agathon for the use of these terms interchangeably (cf. 199e6–7 with 200a2–3 and 200b4, b9, c4). These occurrences show only that *erôs* is a case (species) of desire, and not that all desire is a case of *erôs* and so after the good.

Socrates' claims. We have evidence only in favor of the more modest claims (a) that Plato explores a narrower range of desires in the *Symposium* than he does in the *Phaedrus*, and (b) that he uses the term *erôs* exclusively of these good-dependent desires. Plato might have chosen to focus on desires for good things and happiness because he is, after all, an intellectualist and denies that there are other desires in the soul. Or he might have had no committed thoughts about the issue at this point. Or he might have considered such thoughts to be irrelevant to his overall project in the *Symposium*. Socrates' concern with a particular area of human desire need not be indicative of a broader intellectualist commitment.

(2) The *Symposium* functions with an account of the soul as a simple unity.

Unlike the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium* contains very little about the nature of the soul. A brief passage explains how the bodies and souls of mortals are different from those of the gods because we are subject to flux and change (207b5–208b5). This passage says nothing about the composition of the soul, however. Some scholars have, in fact, argued for a *divided* soul in the *Symposium*, precisely the sort of model that might be thought to be surprising in a dialogue espousing intellectualism.¹⁰ It will be worth our while to examine this view because if there is evidence in its favor we will have reason to reject claim (2), and to be suspicious about claim (1).

Socrates argues that the desire for good things and happiness manifests itself in creative activity in the presence of beauty because this is the distinctively mortal way in which we can achieve a share of happiness (207b5–208c5). It is the account of the creative activities of different desiring agents as they try to achieve that aim that has suggested to some the tripartite soul familiar from the *Republic*. Socrates argues that there are some people who desire beautiful women and produce physical children (208e3), others who desire beautiful bodies or souls and produce offspring of the soul, such as poems or laws (209d1–210d5), and others who desire wisdom and engage in a philosophical practice that leads to knowledge (210d5–212a5). This threefold division of lovers appears to echo the appetitive, honor loving, and wisdom loving types familiar from the *Republic*. Those who engage in productive activity of a physical nature, it is claimed, manifest the appetitive tendencies of the soul familiar from the *Republic*. Those who produce psychic offspring for the sake of honor

10 See, e.g., Hobbs (2000) 251; Nehamas (2007) 6; and cf. the suggestive remarks in Price (1989) 89.

manifest the drives of the spirited part, and those who pursue wisdom are dominated by their rational part. So Hobbs, for example, argues that these aims “undeniably overlap with those of appetite, *thumos* and reason.”¹¹

This view does not sit easily with the text, however. The operative distinction in the so-called Lower and Higher Mysteries of *erôs* is between honor lovers and philosophers (see 208c3 and compare with the goal of the ascent at 211d). The love of honor (variously specified as desire for “immortal virtue,” “*kleos*,” and “fame”) manifests itself in child-bearing, poetry, and law-making, which are various ways in which “honor-lovers” try to secure an “undying memory,” or “*kleos*,” or fame (208d5, 8, 209d3).¹² If the production of children is being considered as a way in which one can secure *honor*, then the body lovers cannot be separated out as examples of the appetitive type familiar from the *Republic*. Those associated with the body here are concerned not with the gratification of appetite, but with “immortality and memory,” which they believe will provide them with “*eudaimonia* for all time to come” (208e4). That is the reason why they are included among those who manifest *erôs* for good things and *eudaimonia* (206a11–12). I am not claiming that bodily pregnancy is rational in the sense that it involves the cultivation of reason, but simply that it is being considered here as a way in which a desire for a particular good (honor) is manifested (by the production of children to provide an “immortal memory”), and as such, it is not being considered as a manifestation of an appetitive desire. Not only are such desiring agents sensitive to considerations of value, but their desires are best described as ones that depend on, or consist in, the belief that a certain course of action, for example, “creating offspring with X” is good and will secure them *eudaimonia* (208e4). This was not a characteristic of the appetitive types in the *Republic* (cf. 438a1–5).

Desiring agents are distinguished in the *Symposium* not by being dominated by a distinctive part of the soul, but by different specifications of the good central to the happy life (honor or wisdom), and in the different ways in which they try to secure that good (by the production of physical rather than psychic offspring, or laws, rather than philosophical conversation).¹³ So, we cannot determine three distinct aims

11 Hobbs (2000) 251.

12 In the *Laws*, too, the desire to be remembered by one’s descendants is cited as a reason for marriage and the production of offspring (721b–d; cf. *Rep.* 618b).

13 The latter has something to do with the richness or poverty of one’s psychic and bodily resources: those more pregnant in body than in soul choose to have offspring of the flesh (209a3).

characteristic of tripartition in the *Republic*, as opposed to three different ways in which one aim – for the good – is manifested. Even if we could, it would still need to be shown (a) that each individual has all of these psychological tendencies within him, and (b) that there is some criterion of partition assumed (such as the Principle of Opposites in the *Republic*) that would result in a division of the soul into three parts. And there is not evidence for either of these claims.

Although the evidence in favor of tripartition in the *Symposium* is weak, there is no claim, or alternative psychological commitment, that is incompatible with it, however. It could be the case that there are psychological reasons why certain sorts of desiring agents pursue honor, for example, and were Socrates to explore those here such reasons might include the view that certain sorts of people have an overactive *thumos*. The strong impression one gets from reading the *Symposium*, though, is that Socrates is concerned with how certain sorts of cognitive development affect our ability to discern what is of value and worthy of our desire for the good. The climax of Socrates' speech is concerned with a cognitive ascent to understanding of the Form of Beauty, and in its final lines Socrates emphasizes the gulf between erotic activities grounded in truth and reality and those based on mere appearance (212a1–5). Desiring agents are distinguished in the end by their ability to question appearances and seek unity behind their various experiences of beauty. This concern fits well with an intellectualist account (as in the *Protagoras*, for example), but it is a distinction that is perfectly compatible with other psychological divisions, and indeed it sits happily alongside other such divisions in the *Republic*. In the *Republic* Socrates treats money lovers and honor lovers together as types who enslave their reason and are concerned with becoming as opposed to being (583b, 585b–587c). This is not presented as an alternative and incompatible account to the psychological divisions of Book IV, and we need not take the dominant distinction in the *Symposium* to be one that is incompatible with tripartition either. There is not enough evidence here to clarify Plato's thoughts on the soul.¹⁴

(3) Virtue is exclusively a property of reason in the *Symposium*.¹⁵

Although the evidence for claims (1) and (2) is weak, there is a case to be made for (3). The aim of desiring agents is to achieve whatever good, or excellence, they believe to be central to happiness (206a11–12), and the

14 As Frede (1993a, 403 n. 15) also notes.

15 I.e., virtue properly speaking belongs to the rational part, or reason, only.

desiring agents who achieve this are those who reach an understanding of what is of genuine value. It is only the person who makes the intellectual ascent to an understanding of the Form of Beauty who is able to generate something truly good: “grasping an image one gives birth to an image, but grasping the truth one gives birth to true virtue” (212a3–5). A state of understanding – “grasping the truth” – appears to be sufficient for virtue; nothing further is required for the activity of giving birth to true virtue. This is borne out by the description of the encounter with the Form as the *telos* of *erôs*: “Here is the life that a human being should live, contemplating the Form of Beauty” (211d). Although some scholars have tried to argue that there is some further activity required for the production of true virtue, for example, generating virtue in other souls, such activities and other persons are notoriously absent from the final stage of the ascent.¹⁶ The philosopher contemplates the Form of Beauty, and *this* is said to be the life worth living (211d3). He is also said to produce true virtue (212a3–5). Since nothing further is required for the production of true virtue beyond the activity of contemplation, it is suggested that the virtue in question is an excellence of soul that resides in engaging in this activity. If we are to take seriously the claim that contemplation is the *telos* (and there is every reason that we should) this suggests that such intellectual activity is sufficient for virtue.¹⁷

Since I have argued that there is nothing in the account that is incompatible with tripartition, there is nothing to rule out the possibility that whatever other parts of the soul there may be possess their own distinctive virtues. Perhaps all that Socrates is committed to is the claim that *rational desire* finds its best expression in the life of contemplation, that this is the distinctive virtue of *this* desire. The claim that the *telos* of a human life is to be found in the contemplation of the Form of Beauty suggests that Socrates is considering human life as a whole rather than a distinct aspect of that life, but the fact that he says nothing about other parts of the soul, or whether or not they possess some measure of virtue, does not show that there are not such parts with their own distinctive virtues. What it does show is that whether there are such is not relevant to this account. This suggests that Socrates believes either (a) that (the whole of) virtue just is the kind of intellectual activity he describes in the ascent, or he believes (b) that whatever other virtues may be had by other parts of

16 See Price (1989) 54; and White (2004) 366; cf. Hackforth (1950) 44; Irwin (1977) 342–43; and Rowe (1998b) 257. Contrast Sheffield (2006) 137–53.

17 Further arguments for this claim are provided in Sheffield (2006) ch. 4.

the soul are held derivatively. In either case, since virtue will be, strictly speaking, a property of reason, he can claim that contemplation – a virtue of reason – is the *telos* of a good and happy human *life*.

In sum, Socrates' claims about *erôs* are restricted in scope, so we do not have the evidence for the sort of intellectualism involved in claim (1), for he makes no claims about desire as such. There is little explicit material about the nature of the soul, and what is implied is not enough for claim (2). There is some evidence for claim (3). So, if there is an argument that the *Symposium* exhibits excessive intellectualism, and that this is either supplemented (weaker view) or recanted (stronger view) in the *Phaedrus*, it had best be a restricted argument directed towards Plato's conception of *erôs*, which avoids more general claims about his view of desire as such, or an argument made on the basis of claim (3). However the *Phaedrus* is interpreted, it will be difficult to make general claims about the effect of tripartition on Plato's account of desire by comparing the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. The upshot of the view for which I have argued is that the *Symposium* provides no general account of desire; it provides an account of a particular kind of desire (for *eudaimonia*) and how that is best satisfied (in intellectual activity of a certain kind). If one is after a general account of desire one could indeed come to the conclusion that the *Symposium* is deficient and that this paves the way for the richer *Phaedrus*. But this is just not what the *Symposium* is about.

The *Symposium* is concerned to explore the role of *erôs* in the *good life* – each speaker is to *praise erôs* (177c5). Each speaker prizes certain things as valuable and worthy of desire and pursuit and describes their centrality to a happy human (and sometimes divine) life. There is a self-referential aspect to the discussion; the symposium was an institution designed, in part, to shape *erôs* towards certain beneficial ends through the erotic relationships with the young that took place there. Plato's concern is with the kinds of ends perceived to be valuable and worth advocating to the young and, in Socrates' speech, to assess two of the main contenders – honor and wisdom. Now if the *Symposium* is concerned with *eudaimonia* and the role that loving relationships play in shaping our conception of the good and happy life, then two things follow from this. First, it will necessarily be about rational, that is, good-dependent desire; for the desire for happiness just is a desire for good things, the acquisition of which we believe to be constitutive of, or central to, happiness (205a). Second, one might think that whether or not we also have brute desires as well as a desire for happiness is not relevant to an examination of the proper ends of the sort of educational relationship with which Plato is here concerned.

Rational desires are sensitive to the kind of discussions lovers had with each other, and with their beloveds, at symposia like this one, about the nature of virtue and the good life. Desires that are deaf to the call of reason are by their very nature not amenable to the sorts of educational practices Plato explores here.

This fact, namely that Plato pays no heed to non-rational motivation in his account of desire for the good, may show only that this desire is one that operates independently of whatever other motivations may be going on in the soul and not that this desire is the only desire with a part to play in the good life. To say that we all desire good things and happiness – that we all have this rational desire – is perhaps to say that we have a desire to work out what the ends of life are, and how to achieve *eudaimonia* without reference to anything other than the fact that a given course of action is the best overall thing to do. In the *Republic*, at least, this is part of what makes a rational desire an example of that kind. As Cooper argues, with reference to the *Republic*, it is a distinctive part of Plato's theory of human motivation that reason determines its own ends independently of the other parts.¹⁸ This is not to say that a desire for my good won't have any relation to my nature as a human being; the *Republic* suggests that the desire for the good has something to do with organizing non-rational desires. It is simply to urge that "the power of reason wants to think out, *on purely rational grounds*, what goals to pursue in life, and to achieve those goals" (*ibid.*). The very nature of rational desire is such that it can – and (for Plato) ought to – determine what to do independently of other considerations. Ignoring other considerations in the *Symposium*, then, may be reflective of this conception of the nature of rational desire and not necessarily indicative of intellectualist commitments (e.g., claims (1) and (2)).

Without clear evidence to rule out other desires, the *Symposium's* account of virtue and happiness remains underdetermined. It may be the case that contemplation is sufficient for virtue because this is the fulfilment of the rational part and there are no other facts about human nature to be taken into consideration. Or it may be the case that contemplation is the fulfilment of the rational part *and* an activity which orders the soul parts and bequeaths to them their own distinctive virtues. The argument for the former is an argument *ex silentio*. If we opt for the latter (a claim for which there is no evidence but nothing to rule it out) we cannot conclude that virtue is *exclusively* a property of reason.

18 Cooper (1984) 125–26.

We are left, either way, with a weaker claim (3) and, since we have seen insufficient evidence for claims (1) and (2), the case for intellectualism in the *Symposium* is weak.

(4) The *Phaedrus* postulates three distinct desires, one of which at least operates independently of thoughts about the good.

In Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates argues that *erôs* is a kind of beneficial divine madness (245c1). It is within this argument that he postulates three distinct desires. He claims that it is first necessary to understand the nature of the soul and he argues that the soul, as a self-mover and principle of motion, is immortal (245c ff.). He goes on to imagine what it is like (246a):

Let it resemble the combined power of a winged team of horses and their charioteer. In the case of the gods, horses and charioteer are all both good and of good stock, whereas in the case of the rest there is a mixture. In the first place our driver has charge of a pair; secondly one of them he finds noble and good and of similar stock, while the other is of the opposite stock, and opposite in its nature; so that the driving in our case is necessarily difficult and troublesome.

(246a6–b5, trans. Rowe (1998a))

The charioteer is identified later as *nous* (247c7–8). It yearns for “the plain of truth” as “the pasturage fitting for the best part of the soul” (248b6–7). The white horse is a lover of honor (253d6). It is obedient to the charioteer and it is capable of moderation and shame (253d6–e1). The black horse is drawn towards sexual pleasure and immediate gratification (254a3–7). It is deaf to the call of reason (253e3–5), “evil-speaking” and has no shame (254e8). Such a horse is restrained, if at all, by force. The fact that these desires are described as coming into conflict with one another shows that they are distinct desires. Socrates, then, appears to be postulating three distinct desires, or sources of motivation, in the soul: one for rational activity, one for honour, and one for sexual gratification. The black horse shows no concern for the good, comes into conflict with desires for the good (those of the charioteer), and is not swayed by considerations about the good (it requires the “whip and goad”).¹⁹ This provides good evidence for claim (4).²⁰

19 The status of the white horse is not always clear. It cooperates with the charioteer (246b2–3), and yet the charioteer is disturbed by both horses (plural: 248a1–5, 4–6, noted by Price (1989) 83).

20 Though neither of the horses views the Forms in the celestial circuit (247c, 248a), it is a further question what cognitive resources one ascribes to the black horse. It is said

(5) The *Phaedrus* functions with a view of the soul as divided into three parts.

(6) This view of the soul is significantly similar to the *Republic*.

Much of the above will seem familiar to readers of the *Republic*.²¹ We should be wary of interpreting the *Phaedrus* in light of the *Republic*, however. This is not just because the three desires of the *Phaedrus* do not map exactly onto those of the *Republic*.²² The *Phaedrus* never talks of parts of the soul, but of kinds, or forms (*eidê*) of soul. Though the main bulk of the argument in the *Republic* makes no use of the term “part” (*meros*) either, the terminology in the *Phaedrus* is vague, and since we have no extended argument of the sort offered in *Republic* IV, it is not clear what Plato is committing himself to in the *Phaedrus*.²³ What is clear is (a) that Socrates postulates three distinct kinds of movement in the soul (246a), and (b) that these come into conflict with one another in the soul of human beings. The black horse is characterized as being opposite (*enantios*) to the white horse, which is described as “beautiful and good” (246b2–3). This is borne out in the description of their different reactions to beauty: the black horse desires to mount the boy while the charioteer experiences reverence and restrains the sexual impulse (250e–251a). The soul experiences opposing tendencies in relation to the same thing at the same time (254a ff.). Although this is just the sort of conflict that drove the division of the soul in the *Republic*, in that work it is the

to revile the charioteer and to remind him and the white horse of former agreements (254c). It has perception and memory: it sees the beautiful boy and feels afraid because it has been restrained many times in a violent way (254e), and has now come to associate pain, rather than the pleasure of sexual gratification, with the boy. Perhaps the resources associated with this desire involve no more than sensory capacities, and memory, which impress themselves on the soul when this motivational state is dominant. In the *Philebus*, memory is conceived simply as “the preservation and re-enactment of impressions originally received in acts of sense-impressions” (Lorenz (2006) 55). This is not incompatible with “deafness” to reason (*Phdr.* 253d), since reason involves contact with Forms (which brings with it the capacity to engage in complex reasoning processes, such as bringing things together under universal concepts), and the ability to reflect on the soul’s overall good.

21 On the similarity of the parts of the soul to those of the *Republic*, see Ferrari (1987) 185, 205, though he is cautious about an exact match, as is Price (1989) 75.

22 Vices given to spirit in the *Republic* are given to appetite in the *Phaedrus*, see *Phdr.* 254c8 with *Rep.* 560d3 and *Phdr.* 254c7 with *Rep.* 441c2 with Price (1989) 76–77.

23 Scholars such as Archer-Hind take it that the lack of precise terminology is an indication that Plato is not committed to the notion that the soul literally has three parts; rather, the soul is to be understood as having three distinct modes of activity. See Archer-Hind (1894) xxxiv. Cf. Crombie (1962) 1:343–59; Guthrie (1987) 4:421–425; Grube (1958) 136; Taylor (1926), 281–82.

Principle of Opposites (436b) that generates partition, when combined with the notion that the soul contains conflicting desires of this sort.²⁴ This principle may be assumed, but it does not occur here. The commitments pointed to above ((a) and (b)), do no more than postulate three distinct psychic phenomena. We need more detail about these motivations and how conflict between them is understood to divide the soul in the manner of *Republic* IV.

The details of the psychology of the *Phaedrus* are sketchy. This is to be expected, given its role in the context. Socrates employs a certain image of the soul as part of a larger argument for the claim that *erôs* is a beneficial kind of madness (245b with 249d4–e4). He starts with the view that all soul is immortal and self-moving (245c), and then attempts to explain “why some living creatures are called mortal and others immortal” (246b). The explanation is that though the soul was once whole and winged, and traversed the heavens in a state of perfect knowledge (250c1, 251b7), it lost its wings after a fall (248c8) and now exists in a state of cognitive deficiency. In this state it acquires conflicting desires. The image is used to illustrate the condition of the mortal soul as it struggles with conflicting desires. If the experience of earthly beauty is used to recollect intelligible realities seen in that previous state (249d5–e1), this regrows the wings of the soul (251b6–7) and allows us to glimpse Forms. The divinity of the gods themselves is nourished by their proximity to Forms (247d), and inspiration by Forms can make us godlike (253a). This experience is a possession by the divine, which lifts the soul out of its mortal concerns (249d). And this is the true *erôs*: “When he partakes in this madness [i.e., recollection] he who loves the beautiful is called a lover (*erastês*)” (249e3; cf. 252b2). Since this madness fosters the perfection and divinity of the soul, Socrates draws the conclusion that *erôs* (contrary to the earlier speeches) is a beneficial kind of madness. Nothing in this sketch of the argument relies on a strong claim that the soul is divided into parts. All he needs for this argument is the contrast between the mortal and the immortal – a contrast which drives the argument (245c) – which is made primarily in terms of knowledge and the lack thereof (246a–b, 247d1–2, 249e). The psychology provides a vivid illustration of what it is like to inhabit a cognitively deficient soul with all its unruly confusions, but whether these are manifested in robust and separate parts is not the central issue.

24 On the importance of the Principle of Opposites for the partition of the soul in the *Republic*, see Lorenz (2006) 25. Cf. Shields (2001), who argues that this principle does not establish more than three distinct psychic phenomena.

Although there are passages that are suggestive of claims (5) and (6), we do not have strong evidence for these. The image of a charioteer and horses could simply be a way of representing three distinct kinds of movement, or desire, in the soul.²⁵ This image is, at any rate, not designed to capture the *nature* of the soul, but *how it seems* (246a). What Socrates is committed to is the idea that the soul is a self-mover (246e3 where this is said to be the *ousian te kai logon* of the soul), and this is nicely captured by the image of a charioteer and horses.²⁶ This idea does not rely on the claim that the soul has parts.²⁷ The point might simply be that we are able to move ourselves (like charioteer and horse teams), and some (gods and possibly philosophers) move in unified and harmonious ways, while others (the majority of mortals) are not able to move themselves in a unified manner. This latter motion is figured by the image of a charioteer and an unruly horse. Downplaying the idea that the soul has *Republic*-like parts has the benefit of dealing with the worry that the souls of the gods would then have to be tripartite in a similar way, since they too drive winged chariots (246e ff.). This is at odds with what Plato says elsewhere about the divine.²⁸

(7) These views significantly modify the account of *erôs* presented in the *Symposium*.

Some might argue that the above discussion misses the point. What scholars mean when they say that the *Phaedrus* recants or revises an earlier intellectualism is that in the *Phaedrus* Plato gives value to non-rational desires and drives wherever these happen to be located, and however they are conceived. This is related to the characterization of *erôs* as a form of madness, which falls under the genus of the irrational (265e3–5). So Bett argues that “the ideal state is no longer one where the lower two parts of the soul (represented by the horses) are transcended. On the contrary, they are just as important as reason itself to the soul’s fulfilling of its final

25 And this is just as compatible with the reading of the Platonist Hermeias, for example, who argued that these movements in the soul all belong to the *rational* part (its *dianoetic* and *doxastic* capacities respectively) which are the paradigms of *thumos* and *epithumia* on the rational plane. Thanks to Charles Brittain for drawing my attention to this.

26 That this is not just a stipulative claim can be seen from the *Laws* (896a1–2).

27 Cf. Bett (2001) 347.

28 Cf. Taylor (1926) 306 n. 2: “It would be rash to say that its introduction [the present argument] shows that we are dealing with a post-Socratic development of Plato’s own thought, since in principle the argument is that of Alcmaeon of Crotona. The soul is immortal because it ‘is like immortal things and is like them in the point that it is always in motion’ (Arist. *De Anima* 405a30).” For scholars who downplay the claim that the gods have two horses, see Hackforth (1952) 69; de Vries (1969) on 246a7.

destiny.”²⁹ Nussbaum argues that the non-intellectual elements of the soul, “the passions, and the actions inspired by them” are “intrinsically valuable components of the best human life.”³⁰ Or one might take it (with the weaker view), that the inclusion of non-evaluative responses in the account supplements the excessive rationalism of the *Symposium*. If either of these views are right, we might expect the account of the aim and activity of *erôs* to have changed from the *Symposium*. Is this the case?

(a) *The aim(s) of erôs* In the *Symposium* *erôs* has one aim: for good things and happiness (205d). This is manifested in a variety of ways, but honor lovers and philosophers alike are in pursuit of good things and happiness, and they are considered as such. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates postulates a desire for “the plain of truth” (248b–c), one for honor (253d6), and another for sexual pleasure (245a). The latter at least does not appear to show any consideration for the good. If these desires are all manifestations of *erôs*, then the account will differ from the exclusively good-dependent aims of *erôs* in the *Symposium*. Whether or not the desires represented by the horses are cases of *erôs* is not, in fact, clear. It was an issue earlier how *erôs* was to be defined given that it seemed clear that *erôs* was some kind of *epithumia*, and yet “men desire the beautiful even when they are not in love” (237d). This should alert us to the fact that just because we have three distinct responses to beauty, this does not necessarily mean that we have three distinct kinds of *erôs*. Socrates makes explicit reference to *erôs* when he considers philosophical (*rational*, i.e., good dependent) desire. He sums up the results of his account of the fourth kind of madness – erotic madness – by referring exclusively to recollection: “When he partakes in this madness [i.e., recollection] he who loves the beautiful is called a lover (*erastês*)” (249e3; cf. 252b2). It is clear that the true *erôs*, at any rate, is a very particular response to beauty, one which involves recollection of the Form of Beauty and the regrowth of soul feathers (*erôs* is a “winged power,” 252b). This makes it tempting to suppose that Socrates only ascribes good-dependent desire to *erôs*, which would be in accord with the *Symposium*.

It is notable that Socrates nowhere ascribes *erôs* to the black horse, which is repeatedly described as *akolastos*, *kakos*, *ponêros*, and *hubristês*. He does describe the white horse as a lover (*erastês*) of honor, “when [it is] joined with restraint and a sense of shame” (253d6). In this passage

29 Bett (2001) 348.

30 Nussbaum (1986) 214, 218–19. Cf. Ferrari (1987) 194.

it is emphasized that this horse is functioning as an ally of reason (it is “beautiful and good” at 246b2–3), so perhaps it is the alliance with the charioteer that warrants its consideration as a case of *erôs*. If so, then ascribing *erôs* to this desire is not at odds with understanding *erôs* as a specific kind of desire – for the good. Certainly Socrates’ argument for the claim that *erôs* is a *beneficial* kind of madness would be weakened if he were to count as cases of *erôs* desires which were repeatedly characterized in negative terms (as e.g., those of the black horse). For the point Socrates is arguing for is that *erôs* is sent by the gods *for our benefit* (244a3–8).³¹ What motivates his second speech is the requirement to do justice to the fact that *erôs* is a god, or something divine, and as such he could not be responsible for evils (*erôs ouden kakon*, 242e). It is far from clear how the desires of the black horse could illustrate that. Such desires will still be an important part of this account of *erôs*, but not by being illustrative examples of *erôs*. Rather, they will form part of the explanatory backdrop against which this divine-sent *erôs* functions – with difficulty.³² Socrates appears to fluctuate between claiming that the earlier negative account of *erôs* said nothing “healthy or true” (242e–242a), and claiming that it described an *erôs* of a kind – a “left-handed *erôs*,” as he puts it (266a).³³ This suggests that desires for, say, mere sexual gratification are either not cases of divine-sent *erôs* (the “true *erôs*”) or they are bastard forms of it. Either way the distance from the *Symposium* is not great.

(b) *The activity of erôs* Though Socrates’ view is that it is in the achievement of the aim of rational desire that happiness resides (*Phaedrus* 248b–c), it may be the case, as some have argued, that non-rational desires help to cultivate the good and happy life. This would be a novel feature of the account when compared to the explicit remarks in the *Symposium*. One might take it (with Bett and Nussbaum), for example, that non-rational desires play a positive role in two senses. The first is that they could be important sources of motivation, and the second is that their

31 As Rowe (1986b) 166 (on 242e2–3), notes: “that the gods are causes only of goods is axiomatic for Plato (cf. *Republic* 379a ff.).”

32 The sense of struggle the horses add to the account of *erôs* is well brought out by Ferrari (1987) 185–204.

33 But note that Socrates’ claim that the speeches divided *erôs* and *mania* and described a left-handed kind does not imply anything about whether he thought they were *right* to make this division. What he praises is the use made of division. The speeches achieved “clarity and consistency” because they “defined what *erôs* is, whether rightly or wrongly” (265d).

responsiveness to beauty could provide information about beauty helpful for the pursuit of the good.³⁴ I take each in turn.

The description of the soul as “grown together” (*sumphutos dunamis*, 246a) suggests that each kind of desire plays some role – they function *together*. It is also true that the horses move the soul. What stands in need of clarification is the kind of movement this is, and the direction in which it moves. The activity of the charioteer as he pursues his aim – to understand his experience of beauty – moves the soul towards the good (*viz.*, contemplation). The aims of the other parts, for honor and gratification, appear to pull in a quite different direction. The black horse desires sexual gratification as he “[surrenders] himself to pleasure” (250e), and the white horse desires honor (253d).³⁵ It is not clear how either of these movements contribute towards the goal of contemplation. Perhaps this is to miss the point, though; the horses may provide *motivation*, even though they lack the relevant sense of *direction*. The movement required for the soul to reach its good is figured by the regrowth of wings. The issue then becomes to specify what aspect, or aspects, of the soul are responsible for the wings. If it is the case that the horses are winged (as Rachana Kamtekar argues in Chapter 4) then we will have reason to think that non-rational desires play a motivational role. If the charioteer alone is responsible for the winged motion proper to the soul’s pursuit of its good, then the horses will not play either a directional *or* a motivational role.

When the wings are introduced it is not clear what aspect of the soul is winged (246a2). The Greek could refer to a team of winged horses, or to the compound of the team of winged horses and a charioteer. I follow Rowe and Hackforth in taking the phrase to refer to the compound.³⁶ The reason is that the whole soul is referred to later as winged (251b7). It is also said that the *dianoia* of the philosopher becomes winged (249c), a description which best fits the charioteer (247c4–8). One way to make these claims compatible is to say that the whole soul becomes winged (251b7) due to the activity of reason (*viz.*, *dianoia*/the charioteer), for

34 So Nussbaum (1986) 214, claims that: (a) “the role of emotion and appetite as guides is motivational; they move the whole person towards the good.” And she also claims that: (b) “it is also cognitive; for they give the whole person information as to where goodness and beauty are, searching out, and selecting themselves, the beautiful objects.” Griswold (1986, 121, 136); Thompson (1868) 73; and Ferrari (1987) also ascribe positive attributes to the black horse.

35 It is not clear in the *Phaedrus* how this aim is supposed to manifest itself in an encounter with a beautiful boy. In the lower mysteries of the *Symposium* educating a beautiful boy is one way in which honor lovers seek “an immortal memory of their virtue.”

36 Hackforth (1952) 69 n. 3; Rowe (1986b) 177.

his experiences affect the whole soul (253e5–6). Now if the compound is winged, and the charioteer is responsible for the growing of the wings, then it may indeed be the case that the whole soul needs to function together, but the relevant motivation will be provided by the rational part. This suggests that one does not need horses to gallop to the Forms but wings, provided by the charioteer, to ascend to them.³⁷ Indeed, note the oddity of the different images for the movement of the soul here: we are told explicitly that the natural tendency of the horses is for downward motion (247b3–5, 248a4), and yet the natural motion of a wing is to ascend (246d6–e1). The motion of the wings and the horses are by their nature *at odds*, and it requires sophisticated work on the part of the charioteer to bring them into unity. By means of these two conflicting images, perhaps Plato is trying to figure the conflict he sees as an essential part of the human condition. What he is surely not trying to indicate is that the horses, whose motion tends downwards, provide the necessary motivational impetus to ascend to the Form. So, although it is correct to say that the soul will not achieve its aim to reach the plain of truth without it functioning together, this cannot be because the other desires provide necessary sources of motivation.

In light of these considerations, the phrase “grown together” is best taken as an indication of the soul’s capacity for unified movement.³⁸ This is achieved by the other desires relinquishing control to reason and being restrained from pursuing goals other than those set by reason. Consider, for example, the following passage, which describes an encounter with a beautiful boy:

The charioteer undergoes the same thing yet again, as if falling back from a starting line . . . he forcefully wrenches the bit back from the teeth of the hubristic horse, bloodying its evil speaking tongue and jaws, and thrusting its haunches and legs to the ground, gives it over to pain. When it has undergone this many times, the evil horse ceases from its *hubris*; now humbled, it follows the charioteer’s foresight, and when it sees a beautiful boy, it dies of fright.

(254e; trans. Rowe)

The black horse can be trained to fall in line with reason, but this is not a description of a desire whose motivation, or direction, is valued as a

³⁷ As Rowe (1990) 241, argues.

³⁸ I owe this suggestion to Suzanne Obzdralek. As Ferrari (1987, 183), notes, the fact that the soul as a whole has to make its way to heaven could be a cause for regret, for the bad horse will weigh us down there too (246b3–4).

component of the good life. The black horse pulls us towards embodiment, and away from the contemplation that is the proper nurture of the soul (247 b3–5, 248a4). The horses distract the charioteer from his course (248ab), and indulging in their desires inhibits the growth of wings. The best outcome is that the black horse “dies of fright” and ceases to hinder the charioteer. Such numbing of appetitive desire implies that it is a hindrance to the achievement of the good life.

There is an alternative. Since these desires are responsive to beauty, perhaps they provide important information to the charioteer, at least at the initial stages. The whole soul is evidently affected by the experience of beauty (253e5–6), and it has different responses determined in part by whether a vision of the forms is recent and vivid (250e–251a). The black horse forces the soul to approach the boy for sex (254a3–7), while the white horse holds back (254a1–3) and experiences shame (254c4). The charioteer has his own response: a state of confusion at first when he is unclear what is happening to him, and then “his memory is carried back to the nature of beauty” (254b4–5). Now in the description of the various responses undergone by the soul it is not clear that the charioteer needs the horses to respond to beauty so that he can have his memory jogged. Socrates describes *the charioteer* seeing the beauty of the beloved: the sight of him flashes upon the driver (254b4–5 with 253e6–7), which “causes a sensation of warmth to suffuse the whole soul” (253e5; trans. Hackforth (1952)). If so, then we cannot even ascribe to the black horse the positive role of offering directions to the whereabouts of beauty.³⁹ It is not even clear that the black horse perceives in the relevant way here: what he sees is the boy as an object of pleasure and sexual gratification (250e, 254a5–7, d5–6). The relevant perception is a confused grasp of beauty – had by the charioteer – which prompts the attempt to understand (254b5–7).

Perhaps (with Ferrari) we might take it that the daring of the black horse provides the proximity required to prompt recollection.⁴⁰ We might then say that there is a sort of causal dependency of recollection on sexual response. Consider the following. After the charioteer first sees the boy, the black horse is said to lead the charioteer and the white horse to the boy: “[N]ow they come close to the beloved, and see the flashing of his face. As the charioteer sees it his memory is carried back” (254b; trans. Rowe (1998a)). But the charioteer, who first catches sight of the boy, is already

39 Rowe (1990) 236–37.

40 Ferrari (1987) 192 with 185–203, esp. 194.

“filled with pricks of longing” *before* the black horse feels the effects of the charioteer’s perception and drags the soul towards the boy (253e5–6). *This* longing, triggered and experienced by the charioteer, leads to “his memory [being] carried back.” Recollection for both lover and beloved begins with the longing of reason to understand the experience it has when it perceives a beauty it fails to understand (253e5–6, with *aporei* at 255d3). It is not the case that one has a sexual response, reacts strongly (and rationally) to *that* response and then desires to understand that reaction; rather, one has (at least also) a *rational* response to the beauty of the boy – the lover sees true beauty imaged in the boy (251a–b, 254b) – and the attempt to understand *that* triggers recollection.

If the experiences of the black horse are neither important motivationally, nor in providing information, or productive triggers, then we cannot conclude that non-rational desires are an integral part of the experience of ideal *erôs* in either a constitutive, or an instrumental, sense. This is borne out in Socrates’ description of the ideal lovers (256a). They “enslave that part by which evil attempted to enter, and free that through which goodness enters” (256b1–3). The reason for this is that the proper object of the lover’s *erôs* is not the boy, but Beauty itself, reflected in the boy, and it is only “that through which goodness enters” which perceives the Form. The desire to outdo and the desire to be gratified are not useful desires in the search for truth. If it is appropriate to ascribe virtue to the horses at all, it would be the virtue of obedience in the one case and restraint in the other, cultivated by the emotions of shame (254a, 254c) and fear (254c) respectively, as their characteristic emotional states. The whole soul is involved in the acquisition of virtue and happiness in the sense that the soul needs to function together as one, but they are involved, not by motivating, or by cognizing, or by triggering appropriate responses, but because the charioteer has to deal with a mortal nature.⁴¹

We should not assume (in either the *Symposium* or the *Phaedrus*) that because the perception of (bodily) beauty is a trigger for a philosophical process that an appetitive or sexual response is an essential feature of philosophical progress. This quite often accompanies the view that such accounts describe some kind of non-rational drive in action which is then “sublimated” into a more intellectual kind. A rational *erôs* may also be elicited in an encounter with bodily beauty and arguably *this* is the relevant response in action in both the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*

41 See Rowe (1990) 245.

when the lover begins his journey to understanding the Form(s).⁴² This is borne out in the former work by the fact that *erôs* manifests itself, even on the level of bodily beauty, in intellectual appreciation. One *reflects* on what is “one and the same” about a class of beautiful bodies (*Symposium* 210a–b). It is apparent in the latter work by the emphasis on intellectual *aporia*, and the attempt to understand the experience of beauty. Just because the perception of physical beauty is the initial stage of attraction, it does not follow that one must begin the philosophical journey with a *sexual* response. In neither text does Socrates advocate the latter. This would be a hindrance to the reverence and sense of puzzlement required to prompt consideration of what grounds the value of the object in question. And it is from *this* experience – the desire to understand – that the human good (*viz.*, contemplation) can begin to be cultivated.

There is little to suggest that one needs to have a sexual, or an honor loving, response to, or relationship with, the boy as a necessary precondition for, or part of, philosophical activity. The *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* are in agreement that pederasty and philosophy go hand in hand (cf. *Phaedrus* 249a, *Symposium* 211b5), and their articulation of this ideal focuses on rational activity as the proper basis for, and activity of, a loving relationship. The philosophical pair of lovers live a life *homonoêtikon* (256b). As Rowe notes, “if it turns into a marriage of minds, which leaves the body entirely behind, then the account of the *Phaedrus* begins to look fairly close after all to that of the *Symposium*.”⁴³ There is, to be sure, more material about the interpersonal nature of the relationship between lover and beloved in the *Phaedrus*, but this is not part of trying to account for the intensity of *erôs* in a way that Plato failed to do in the *Symposium*, nor does it have anything to do with the tripartite soul.⁴⁴ If either of these factors were responsible we would expect the ideal relationship to involve appetitive or honor-directed drives. This is not the case, as we have seen. The factor responsible for the increased interest in the ongoing nature of the relationship between the lovers is the interest in *philia* in the *Phaedrus*. All the speeches are concerned with whether *erôs* is compatible with *philia* as part of their deliberations about whether to gratify a lover or a non-lover (231b7–c7; 232d1–4; 232d7–e2; 233a1–4; 237c6–8; 253c5; 255b5–7). This increased emphasis on the ongoing relationship between

42 A lover might also, of course, experience sexual desire; the point is simply that the relevant response for the start of the philosophical journey (and the pursuit of the good) is a rational one.

43 See Rowe (1990) 241.

44 As Santas (1988, 70), and Nussbaum (1986, 219), suppose.

lover and beloved, alongside the account of the proper orientation of their desires, is not evidence of a revision or change in the account of *erôs* in the *Symposium*; rather, it is indicative of the introduction of a different (though related) topic, *philia*, under which we would expect an account of interpersonal relationships, and which is just not on the agenda in the *Symposium*.⁴⁵

The description of *erôs* as a kind of beneficial madness, a species of the irrational (256e3–4), has little to do with a revision of the role of non-rational desires either. Nothing in the account connects philosophical madness to non-rational desires. Indeed what is striking is the idea that this madness is a recollection of the Forms (249c–e). The objects of this possession are rational ones (*viz.*, the Forms) and the subject of this possession is rational (the intellect). Though it is true that Plato gives value here to an experience characterized as irrational, it is not irrational by being grounded in non-rational drives. Arguably, it is irrational in the sense that reason is possessed and inspired in a way it does not fully comprehend.⁴⁶

(8) So, Plato is either revising or recanting his earlier view.

Scrutinizing some of the claims involved in a developmentalist view of the relationship between the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* has, I think, shown the position to be weak. There is a substantial degree of continuity between the two works, which suggests that tripartition (however weakly or strongly construed) has little impact on the account of the aim and activity of *erôs*. In particular, there is little evidence for the strong view that the *Phaedrus* recants the rationalism of the account of *erôs* in the *Symposium*. Although non-rational drives are integrated within an account of *erôs* in the *Phaedrus*, the account of the aims and activity of *erôs* does not differ substantially between the two works. Such desires play a role as the backdrop against which philosophical *erôs* must struggle, but they do not modify the account of virtue and happiness. In both dialogues the aim of *erôs* is the good, which is had by contemplating the Forms (*Phaedrus* 247c1–3 with *Symposium* 211d.). Both dialogues advocate the practice of

45 It was suggested in the *Symposium* that erotic relationships can generate *philia* relationships (209c6–7), but this was not developed into a theme as it is in the *Phaedrus*. For a discussion of *philia* in the *Phaedrus*, see Sheffield (forthcoming).

46 Exploring this is outside the scope of this chapter, but see Price (1989) 66 and Rowe (1986b) 170. Philosophy is also characterized as a possession (215c) and madness (218b) by Alcibiades in the *Symposium*. It is also an activity that involves the disdaining of the human in favor of the divine (210b, 211e with *Phdr.* 249c). This is not developed into a theme in the *Symposium*, but then the speeches there are not dialectically motivated by the suggestion that *erôs* is madness and, as such, a sickness (*Phdr.* 245b1).

using earthly examples of beauty to be put in mind of the fact that there is such a thing as Beauty itself (*Symposium* 210–12 with *Phaedrus* 249c6–7). This activity begins with the stirrings of a rational desire to understand. The impetus for this activity originates with reason, and the only sense in which other psychic drives are characterized as sharing in the soul's good is by ceasing to hinder the intellectual activity which constitutes it by obedience and restraint, which is imposed by an increased understanding of what is appropriate for such drives. The sense in which other drives partake of the soul's good, then, is both minimal and derivative. And in that sense the account of *erôs* is still intellectualist.

The weak view of the relationship between the two accounts of *erôs* fares better. Tripartition in the *Phaedrus* (however construed) might be said to supplement the following from the *Symposium*.⁴⁷ The *Symposium* tells us much about the proper *telos* of *erôs* and why it is such (this is the issue that structures the division of the lower and higher mysteries of *erôs*),⁴⁸ and the *Phaedrus* provides more information about the *aitia* and the *pathos* of *erôs* (252c). The *Phaedrus* explains that we are sensitive to different kinds of motivational pull and struggle to achieve the unity required to pursue our good. "It is not easy for the soul to be reminded" (249e4–250b1). There is a significant difference between gods and mortals in this respect (246b3; 249e4–250b1). Human beings must struggle not only to achieve, but also to maintain, the good life.⁴⁹ There was little sense of this in the *Symposium*. Socrates' argument for the claim that the best human life is the life of contemplation (211d) and not honor (208c3) made no reference to conflicts in the soul between "non-evaluative responses and responses that derive from the selection of a way of life," as Price notes.⁵⁰

But we should not overstate the explanatory force of non-rational desires even here. For though they account for the fact that the experience of *erôs* is a tricky one, it is not the case that these play an ultimate explanatory role. The original fall and condition of the soul is explained by some accident, or mischance, which fills us with "forgetfulness and incompetence" (240c6). In this state of cognitive deficiency we lose our wings and are trapped in a cycle of rebirth with an unruly horse. We acquire

47 There is no need to take "supplement" here as implying a developmental thesis.

48 On which, see Sheffield (2006) 137–63.

49 As Ferrari (1987) 264 n. 16, notes: "There is no tenure in Plato's paradise."

50 Price (1989, 56) argues with reference to the *Symposium*: "There is no room for a coarser conflict between non-evaluative responses (notably sexual) and responses that derive from the selection of a way of life. The result is a certain unreality which undermines one's confidence in the triumphalism of the ascent passage."

non-rational drives as a result of some kind of cognitive deficiency, prompted by some mischance.⁵¹ Psychological conflict is maintained by a deficient cognitive state too: the bad horse weighs us down “*if any of the charioteers has not trained him well*” (247b5). The condition of our souls is ultimately determined by reason. This is borne out by the fact that our souls were originally in a perfect condition, whole, pure, and untouched by evils (250c, 251c), *when we saw the Forms* (249e). The perfection of the gods resides in their proximity to the Forms (247d1–2); knowledge and understanding nourish the condition of *all* souls (247d2–3). Once we have the horses they make viewing of the Forms difficult: “[W]e rise and sink because of the force exerted by the horses” and so we “see some things but not others” (248a5), but the condition of these is determined by one’s cognitive state. Such drives, then, play a secondary role in the account.

It is perhaps because Plato continues to hold that virtue is, strictly speaking, a property of reason that tripartition (however weakly or strongly construed) is not a fact of our existence that Plato accommodates by substantive revisions to his erotic-cum-ethical theory in the *Phaedrus*. It is not the case that psychological divisions (however conceived) ground and inform the account of virtue; it is rather the case that a particular conception of virtue as a form of knowledge informs – and determines – the psychology. Seen from this perspective it is still the case that intellectualism of a kind wins the day, that “wisdom and knowledge are the most powerful things in human affairs” (*Protagoras* 352d1–3).⁵² How we live does not depend on the state mortal beings happen to find themselves in – divided and partly non-rational – but rather what we are, that is, whether we are typhonic or more simple natured (cf. *Phaedrus* 230a3–6), will ultimately depend on how we live and choose to love. And the life worth living and loving in the *Phaedrus* is the very same life that was advocated in the *Symposium*. Read in this way, whatever supplementations may be found in the *Phaedrus* read more like a further articulation and defense, rather than a revision, of the *Symposium*.

And Plato’s intellectualism takes such a distinctive form that there was no need for him to revise his view to account for human motivation

51 As Burnyeat (unpublished, 14, 16), and Price (1989, 73), note.

52 I am here adapting Burnyeat (unpublished), 24: “The relative strengths of charioteer and horses in a given soul at a given time is to be explained by the degree of knowledge and understanding the soul has achieved and not the other way round.” And so “[t]he suggestion is that if you take a sufficiently cosmic view of our existence you will come to see that, ultimately, virtue is knowledge after all.”

towards the good. Although the likes of Lysias (and Socrates in his first speech in the *Phaedrus*) held that desire was opposed to judgment, it was not part of Socrates' conception of *erôs* in the *Symposium* that reason and desire were separate in this way. It was always part of his conception of rational desire that it can set its own ends and has motivational impetus, its own distinctive and driving passion towards things of real value. Consider Socrates' analysis of *erôs* into two component parts or functional aspects in the *Symposium*. There is the experience of a lack of some determinate object and initial motivational impetus, which derives from his mother Penia in the story of Erôs' parentage (203–4), and a deliberating and scheming component which derives from his father Poros, which finds the means to remedy this lack ("Erôs is a schemer," 203d4). Rational desire sets its own ends, has its own source of movement, and its own characteristic states, such as longing for the Forms (*Phaedrus* 253c–254b), and reverence and awe for the objects that arouse that longing (*Phaedrus* 251a).⁵³ Platonic intellectualism of this kind is not against passion, or the emotions as such. It is harsh towards particular passions – that of the appetites, for example, which are conceived as little more than physiological urges in some works (e.g., *Republic* 473d). The point is surely that we should live and love in accordance with the best thing in us and with all the passion that we can – a passion whose impetus and determination is set by our ability to reflect and to choose which desire to celebrate and which to fear. The appetites, and the emotional states associated with a desire for honor, may be part of what we are but how we live and love should not, for Plato, be motivated or determined by such phenomena. This view may underestimate sex, or our drive for honor, but it does not devalue the passions or the emotions as such. For the passion and longing of the Platonic philosopher is no mere metaphor. Nor, crucially, is it sublimated from sexual desire. The distinctive point Plato is making – and one that enables him to render reason independent from other desires – is that the desire to understand has its origin in reason itself, and not in a sublimated sexual desire which somehow provides it with force, or insight. Reason has no need to borrow from, or depend on, desiderative movements elsewhere in the soul, and thus Plato had no need to correct his theory of human motivation, in this respect, with tripartition.

53 Compare the fear experienced by the black horse and the sense of shame by the white horse, which are emotional states that might accompany these desires (see further above).

A more modest proposal

Although tripartition does not lead to substantive revisions in Plato's account of *erôs*, it plays a significant role in the account of rhetoric in the second half of the dialogue. It shows the *pathêmata* to which the soul is susceptible and the arguments suited to different kinds of soul (271c10–272b2). This is the dialogue that expresses the idea that effective rhetoric, the leading of souls, must be alert to the specific nature of different souls (277b8–c2). And this provides a plausible explanation of why fundamentally the same ideas are revisited in different ways in different dialogues. It need not be (and I have argued is not) indicative of a shift in doctrine, but marks a shift in rhetorical practice designed to appeal to the sensibilities of interlocutors who set different agendas in different works.⁵⁴ The *Symposium* is a gathering of the intellectual elite of the day, the kind of men who were lovers and educators of the young, and whose erotic practices they are justifying to one another in their praise of *erôs* as a beneficial force.⁵⁵ These were not speeches designed for the likes of the wavering youth such as Alcibiades, who, significantly, was absent from these proceedings. But youth and uncertainty dominates the *Phaedrus*. The speeches are directed towards a young man unsure of which sort of lover to gratify, and Phaedrus is wavering between the competing values of Socrates and Lysias (257b).⁵⁶ So dialectically motivated is this work that Socrates claims that his first speech is, in fact, *by* Phaedrus (244a). It is a speech framed in terms that Phaedrus understands – similar to those used by Lysias in the speech that so enamored him at the start of the dialogue (228a; 234c). It draws on the sorts of common assumptions about predatory, sick, mad lovers which were designed to keep young men on their guard, and in which we know Phaedrus, as a lover of Lysias' speech, is well versed.⁵⁷ Socrates' second speech is also part of this

54 Rowe (2007) has recently argued for a unified reading of *all* the dialogues on this basis. "Almost any statement Socrates or other main speakers make may need to be understood as representing a particular perspective . . . Platonic variety more often reflects variety of strategy than variety of – changes in – thinking" (Rowe (2007) 51).

55 Note that none of the symposiasts, not even the comic poet, reduce *erôs* to a desire for sexual pleasure. Indeed pleasure as a central goal of *erôs* is practically absent as a theme in the speeches, something which reflects not only the emphasis on praising *erôs* (i.e., picking out its best bits), but also the educated nature of the speech-makers.

56 It is clear that Lysias' speech is addressed to a young boy deciding whether to gratify a lover or a non-lover, and that this is a concern for Socrates is explicit (243e).

57 It is full of the sorts of views about *erôs* familiar from the Greek lyric corpus and tragedy and comedy. See Carson (1986) 148, and Nightingale (1995) 158.

dialectical enterprise; its expressed aim is to rebut a claim made by Lysias – that *erôs* is a kind of madness and as such a sickness and a bad thing (245b1 ff.). Socrates appropriates such assumptions, draws them into his account and reworks them for his own distinctive ends. Such assumptions were not at the top of the agenda for the lovers at Agathon's symposium whose investment in erotic practices would hardly be justified by these sorts of views. It is not only the content of this work, but also its form which is adapted for Phaedrus, a self-confessed lover of *logoi* (242a–b). It is not just that the dialogue is presented as a speech-making competition with Lysias and that Socrates' rhetorical charms could rally the keenest devotee of rhetoric. It is also that the decision faced by the wavering Phaedrus – about whether to follow Lysias, or Socrates (257b) – will not just be described, but exemplified for him, in *logoi*. Lysias is a lover of honor (257d) whose speech is motivated by a desire to outdo others and win acclaim for himself by arguing in an ingenious way for a very peculiar thesis. Socrates' first speech is motivated by a desire for honor – from Phaedrus, who promises to erect statues in his honor if he outdoes Lysias (235d, 236b). But Socrates is immune to the external rewards promised by Phaedrus and feels shame. His second speech is motivated by a desire for the truth. The speeches are the products of domination by different desires and as such show Phaedrus the effect in *logoi* of orientating one's life around these goals.⁵⁸ Both the content and the form of the ideas about *erôs*, then, are articulated in a specific way given the particular nature and concerns of the interlocutor. This suggests that Plato himself was a master leader of souls; what it does not provide evidence for, in my view, is revision or recantation of the *Symposium's* view of *erôs*.

58 Cf. Ferrari (1987) 102 and Nightingale (1995) 144.

The cognition of appetite in Plato's *Timaeus*

HENDRIK LORENZ

I Introduction

According to the anecdote on which Socrates, in *Republic* IV, relies in attempting to show the distinctness of spirit from appetite, Leontius once saw some corpses lying by the side of a public road. He formed an intense desire, probably sexual in character, to take a close look at them. He struggled for a while, trying to resist that desire. He then ran towards the corpses, overcome, as Socrates says, by desire: overcome, that is, by his appetitive desire to take a look at the corpses. The appetitive desire that gets Leontius going is by itself a fully formed motivating condition. Once he is in that condition, all that has to happen for him to start running is for the appetitive desire to overcome the resistance of spirit and, perhaps, reason. Appetite, as it is conceived of in the *Republic*, needs no assistance from any other part of the soul to get people going. It is equipped with, or has access to, whatever resources are needed to initiate action.

Moreover, what Socrates says in the *Republic* suggests strongly that he thinks that one can deal with objectionable appetites not only by forcible repression, but also by persuading one's appetitive part that acting on appetite now would not be better, or by taming appetite by reason, whatever exactly that may amount to (554c11–d3). If reason is to be able to persuade appetite not to pursue some course of action, or at least to induce a state of calmness in appetite, there must be some form, or forms, of communication between reason and appetite. For instance, reason might call appetite's attention to some painful aspects or consequences of

The present chapter revisits the texts and topics discussed in Lorenz (2006) ch. 7. It is meant to supersede that chapter. I have come to find the psychological theory of the *Timaeus* to be a good deal more satisfactory than I found it when I wrote the book chapter. Sections II, IV, and V of the present paper are lightly revised versions of parts of the book chapter. Section III.C is a heavily and substantially revised version of material in that chapter (2006, 99–101). The rest is new.

a given course of action, or to an agreeable prospect which might take its attention away from some objectionable pleasure that attracts it.

The psychological theory of the *Republic* seems to equip the non-rational parts of the soul with rather considerable cognitive resources. It ascribes to appetite thoughts about one's dream experiences (571d1–5), and it ascribes to a part of the soul other than reason beliefs about, say, the size of objects that one sees in one's environment (603a1–2). If appetite is capable of thought and belief, in some sense of "thought" and in some sense of "belief," we only need to assume that Plato's theory allows some kind of information sharing between reason and appetite to make sense of the idea that reason can persuade or mollify appetite by, for instance, calling its attention to some aspects or consequences of a given course of action.

As we turn to the *Timaeus*' version of tripartition of the soul, we confront the fact that it denies to the appetitive soul-part not only reasoning and understanding, but also belief or opinion (77b3–6). One might think that this indicates a rather dramatic change in Plato's psychological theory. One recent writer, Christopher Bobonich, takes the view that it undermines the theory.¹ My own view is that the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to appetite probably stems from Plato's adoption, in the later dialogues, of a narrower, more demanding conception of what is involved in and required for belief-formation, rather than from any substantial change in Plato's conception of the appetitive part of the soul and its cognitive abilities.² On this narrower conception of belief, forming any belief involves framing a statement or account, and even framing basic statements of the form "This is F" requires having grasped at least some basic facts about being F, such as the fact that being F is different from being the opposite of F, if being F has an opposite. Moreover, it requires having grasped such facts in a way that involves rational sensitivity to logical relations such as entailment and incompatibility. For instance, it requires having grasped that if, say, being hard and being soft are two things, they must be separate and not the same, since otherwise they would not be two things but one. The upshot is that the capacity for belief, so conceived of, is a rational capacity, and is therefore limited to subjects that are equipped with reason. The appetitive part of the soul is not such a subject.

1 See Bobonich (2002) 293–331.

2 The remainder of the present paragraph summarizes claims defended in Lorenz (2006) 55–97.

In the present chapter, I do not mean to defend the view that in the later dialogues Plato comes to adopt a narrower, more demanding conception of belief, along the lines I have just now sketched. What I want to do, rather, is the following. In section II, I describe some of the cognitive accomplishments with which appetite in the *Timaeus* is credited. I then address the question how the *Timaeus* can account for those accomplishments in terms of the cognitive resources that it ascribes to the mortal soul-parts. In answering that question, in sections III to VI, I call attention to what I think are theoretically significant points of contact between the *Timaeus* and the *Philebus*, and in fact I use two passages in the *Philebus* to get some guidance with regard to questions that the *Timaeus* leaves unanswered or does not answer clearly and determinately. In section VII, I describe the conception of appetite and its cognitive resources that emerges from my reconstruction.

II Appetite in the *Timaeus*

The non-rational soul-parts, as they are conceived of in the *Timaeus*, are not only able to generate their distinctive kinds of motivating condition. Timaeus also seems to think of them as being capable of bringing about actions all by themselves, as of course they are in the *Republic*. Spirit's role is to unleash its might when reason reports that someone else is acting unjustly, and also, Timaeus says, when it reports that an unjust act that originates "from the desires within" is coming to pass. There is no suggestion, here or elsewhere, that the appetitive part, to be able to initiate actions, needs the support or assistance of some other part of the soul – for instance, the soul's rational part.

Moreover, it is plainly part of Timaeus' account of the tripartite soul that there can be some form, or forms, of communication between reason and the non-rational parts. Reason makes announcements to spirit (for instance, that someone is wronging the person) and spirit receives them and acts appropriately on them. Furthermore, Timaeus does not say that whenever appetite wants to do something objectionable, reason and spirit are jointly to overpower it. What he says is something rather more nuanced and interesting, namely that this is to happen "should it [*viz.*, the appetitive part] in no way want to obey willingly the directive and account coming down from the citadel" (*Timaeus* 70a6–7).³ It would be

3 Translations of Plato are from Dorothea Frede's *Philebus* and Donald Zeyl's *Timaeus* in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997), with some modifications.

pointless or worse to say this if it were not possible for appetite willingly to obey such directives. But for that to be possible, appetite must be able to receive reason's directives, and to grasp their significance at least to some extent. Thus, there is good reason to think that the *Timaeus*' version of tripartition allows and indeed requires communication between reason and the non-rational parts: reason can share information with spirit (and perhaps with appetite as well), and it can issue directives to both of the non-rational parts, which they may or may not obey.

The question then arises how Plato, or Timaeus, can account for the cognition of the mortal soul-parts. For the purposes of the present chapter, I want to focus on the appetitive part. What cognitive resources does the *Timaeus*' version of tripartition make available to appetite, and how might those resources interact so as to account for the cognitive achievements of the appetitive part of the soul? A number of cognitive resources can be excluded right away. At 77b3–6, Timaeus informs us that the part of the soul that resides between the midriff and the navel is totally devoid of belief or opinion, reasoning, and understanding. I now turn to the cognitive resources that remain in play.

III Forms of cognition available to the mortal soul-parts

A Perception

Timaeus takes both the rational part of the soul and the non-rational soul-parts to be capable of perceptual awareness. In forming beliefs about perceptibles, reason can rely on what Timaeus refers to as “non-rational perception” (28a2–3). He also says that the created gods construct the mortal soul so as to have in it, among other things, “non-rational perception” (69d4). The point of calling perception non-rational, I take it, is to indicate that perceiving is not in itself an operation that brings into play distinctively rational resources, the way, for instance, deliberating does. But this, of course, is compatible with holding that reason can be aware of what is presented in acts of perception.

Timaeus has quite a bit to say about what happens in acts of perception. Vision, for instance, involves the formation of a unified body composed of a special kind of fire, which establishes contact between visible objects, on the one hand, and the person's eyes and body, on the other. “Because this body of fire has become uniform throughout and thus uniformly affected,” he holds, “it transmits the motions of whatever it comes in contact with as well as of whatever comes in contact with it, to and through

the whole body until they reach the soul. This brings about the perception we call seeing" (45c7–d3). Sound, Timaeus says, is "an impact of air by way of the ears upon the brain and the blood and transmitted to the soul." Hearing, he adds, is "the motion caused by that impact, which begins in the head and ends in the place where the liver is situated" (67b2–5). He offers an explanation of how suitable materials, like fire and air, conduct or transmit even small motions by one portion of matter imparting the motion in question to neighboring portions (64b3–6). Elsewhere he says that in acts of perception, certain motions that travel through the body "strike against" (43c5) the soul. At least in some cases, but probably in every case of perception, he takes such impact on the soul to bring about some kind of disturbance in the soul (43d1). That impact on the soul presumably brings about a contentful experience, sensory awareness of some perceptible feature or features.

It seems worth making two points about these remarks about perception in the *Timaeus*. First, they are strikingly close, both in conception and in language, to the brief account of perception in general that is offered at *Philebus* 33d2–34a5. According to that account, perceptions are affections or disturbances undergone jointly by body and soul, which come about if and when the body undergoes an affection that extends all the way to the soul, in such a way that it imparts a disturbance to the soul (33d5). In this account, awareness arises if and when the soul is affected or disturbed in some suitable way. The relevant kind of affections or disturbances of the soul are meant to be awareness-involving: they are or involve sensory experiences with certain contents.

Secondly, it is clearly part of Timaeus' picture that in acts of perception, suitable affections produced by sense-objects travel through the body so as to reach the three regions in which the three parts of the soul reside. In vision, the motions that originate from visible objects are transmitted "through the whole body" (45d2), and the motion that is hearing extends from the head down to the liver (67b4–5). It may well be part of the picture, then, that in a given act of perception, a suitably powerful affection reaches the head, the heart, and the liver, and as it impinges on reason, spirit, and appetite, there arises in each of the parts of the soul perceptual awareness of the sense-object in question. It is important to note that this picture is compatible with a robust commitment to the unity of the perceiving subject, as one finds it at *Theaetetus* 184d. Timaeus can hold that the perceiving subject is the whole soul, which is a unified subject that is composed of reason, spirit, and appetite. Each of the soul's parts, on this picture, is uniformly affected in an act of perception, and thus the whole

of the soul shares in a joint sensory experience with a certain content. On this picture, perception crucially involves the transmission of motions or affections from the relevant parts of the body to the soul, rather than specifically to some part or other of the soul, e.g., to appetite or spirit. It is worth calling attention to the fact that, in all of Timaeus' remarks about perception, it is always simply to the soul that motions or affections of the relevant kind are said to be conducted, never specifically to some part or other of the soul.

B Forward-looking states

Among the terrible, but necessary, affections that the mortal soul houses within it (69c8–d4), there are the forward-looking psychological states confidence, fear, and expectation. This makes clear that the cognition of the non-rational soul-parts is not limited to what is presented to the person in occurrent acts of perception. This is an important point. Expecting that something will happen involves envisaging a situation or occurrence that does not currently obtain. It also involves a sense that the situation or occurrence is going to come about. It is thus a contentful experience of considerable cognitive complexity. Timaeus does not explain how such experiences can arise in the non-rational soul-parts. He does not offer an account of what cognitive resources are involved in this and how they interact. The *Philebus*, on the other hand, does offer such an account. I will turn to that account in a short while.

C Imagination: Timaeus on the liver (1)

Timaeus 71a3–e2: this continues Timaeus' account of how the created gods put together the mortal parts of the soul and fit them into the human body. It is a difficult passage. One concern that it addresses is how reason might be able to communicate with, or even to have any effect at all on, the lowest part of the soul. As we saw, what Timaeus says about spirit at 70a2–7 suggests that appetite is in some way able to receive reason's "directives and accounts," and in fact to obey them willingly. He now says that the gods knew right away that appetite "was not going to understand [reason's] account, and even if it were to have some awareness of some accounts or other, it was not going to be in its nature to care about them" (71a3–5). In emphatic juxtaposition, Timaeus then contrasts "accounts" with images and appearances, by which, he says,

the appetitive part would be very much enticed by night and day. It is with a view to exploiting appetite's tendency to be enticed by images and appearances, Timaeus says, that the gods construct the liver as and where they do. They construct it as a smooth and shiny organ and place it in the region in which the appetitive part of the soul is located. They equip it with bitterness and sweetness, and with the abilities to contract and relax, as appropriate. It is shiny so that "the force of thoughts carried down from the intellect might be impressed on it as on a mirror that receives impressions and provides visible images" (71b3–5). By means of the liver, Timaeus says, "the force of thoughts" can, when appropriate, strike terror into the appetitive part and, on other occasions, make it "gracious and well behaved" – depending on whether, among other things, it makes the liver bitter and rough, causing pain and nausea, or whether it makes it sweet and smooth.

It seems clear that the liver's role is not limited to the generation of painful and pleasant feelings of some sort or other. Timaeus speaks of impressions and images, and of "appearances painted by a gentle inspiration from thought" (71c3–4), but unfortunately he tells us very little about what such appearances represent, how they arise, and how the appetitive part can be aware of them. We have been led to expect that they move and entice the appetitive part in a way that "accounts" could not. Presumably they are supposed to convey undesirable or, when appropriate, desirable prospects – as is strongly suggested by what Timaeus says at 71b7, where he speaks of the force of thoughts striking terror into appetite by, among other things, issuing a threat or warning. He also speaks of the force of thoughts making bilious colors appear in or on the liver (71b7–8), which suggests that images or appearances of the requisite kind are in some way formed on the liver's shiny surface.

Timaeus associates the liver not only with communication downward from reason to appetite, but also with divination (72b6–7). Divinatory appearances (71e8) occur when a person's "power of understanding is bound in sleep or by sickness, or when some sort of possession works a change in him" (71e4–6). Such appearances serve to signify "some future, past, or present good or evil" (72 a1–2). It would seem that at least some of them occur in dreams (71d3–4; 71e7). Again it seems to be part of what Timaeus has in mind that appearances that represent something or other appear on the liver's shiny, mirror-like surface (72b7–d3). Again, Timaeus leaves it indeterminate what exactly is supposed to appear in or on the liver. Nor does he explain how the soul can have awareness of such appearances.

However, so far as dreams are concerned, we should bear in mind that we were given a brief, but helpful account that seemed to be added as an afterthought to the account of the auxiliary causes of vision at 45b–d.⁴ When the eyelids are closed, Timaeus says there,

they shut in the power of the internal fire, which then disperses and evens out the internal motions, and when these have been evened out, a state of quietness ensues. And if this quietness is deep, one falls into an all but dreamless sleep. But if some fairly strong motions remain, they produce appearances similar in kind and in number to the kind of motions they are, and the kind of regions in which they remain – appearances which, though they are internal likenesses, are recalled upon waking as being external.

(45e1–46a2)

Certain motions or disturbances carried by the internal fire, which as we recall also plays an important role in vision, are such as to bring about the contentful experiences that are dreams. Presumably the thought is that as these disturbances reach the parts of the soul, their impact produces suitable appearances. Timaeus' remarks about perception suggest strongly that he takes the internal fire to be diffused throughout the relevant parts of the body both in sleep and in waking. He seems to think that fire of some suitable kind is what, in vision, conducts the motions that originate from visible objects (64c5–7), and he holds that in acts of vision those motions are transmitted to the whole body (45d 1–2). But now it becomes easy to see why Timaeus feels no need to explain how the appetitive part of the soul can be aware of images and appearances on the surface of the liver. Given the presence of internal fire that is ready to transmit the motions of whatever it enters into contact with, such images would generate disturbances that would impinge on the appetitive part of the soul, thereby bringing about suitable experiences.

This answers one of the three questions I noted: how can appetite be aware of the images that appear on the liver's shiny surface? Two questions remain. First, what sorts of thing do these images depict? Though Timaeus does not say so, it seems fair to surmise that such images are meant to include visual illustrations that correspond to the accounts formulated by the soul's rational part, including, for instance, accounts that amount to threats or warnings. As we will see, the *Philebus* introduces the idea that it is a fact of human psychology that at least some of our beliefs, such as beliefs about prospective pleasures, tend to be accompanied by

4 I am indebted to Carrie Swanson for calling my attention to Timaeus' remarks about dreaming at 45d3–46a2.

visual representations that illustrate them. We will see that the *Philebus*' conception of such visual illustrations is very close, both in conception and in language, to the *Timaeus*' conception of the images that, in suitable circumstances, appear on the liver's surface. This makes it seem reasonable to turn to the *Philebus* in order to learn more about what such images might depict. I will do this in a moment. Before doing so, however, I want to address a third and last question about the *Timaeus*, which is how Timaeus' images on the liver's surface are supposed to arise. I will sketch two rather different answers to that question. Although I do not think that we can definitively settle the question which of these (if either) Timaeus has in mind, there is in any case some reason to prefer one to the other.

Begin by noting that one thing that reason does, according to Timaeus' picture, is to formulate accounts, including ones that are, or come with, directives or commands (70a6–7). Then there is the idea that some force or power of thoughts, "carried down from the intellect," somehow comes to be in or on the liver, "as in a mirror that receives impressions and provides images." What comes to be in or on the liver in this way are appearances (71c3), the sorts of things that appetite is enticed by, rather than accounts, for which it has no regard (71a4–5). Thus, Timaeus' story presupposes that at least some of the accounts that reason formulates are accompanied by images or appearances that in some way depend on them – for instance, to repeat my conjecture, in that they are visual representations that illustrate those accounts. Suppose, for example, that reason formulates the warning that, say, stealing some money is likely to result in a prison sentence. If my conjecture, which is inspired by the *Philebus*, is along the right lines, then reason's warning would typically be accompanied by suitable images in which the person envisages himself, say, being miserable in a prison cell. The question is what is meant to account for the formation of such images.

One *prima facie* possibility is that it is the liver that forms them. On this view, which I should right away note I am not inclined to accept, the rational part of the soul formulates accounts when and as appropriate, and it is the liver's task to supply suitable images, so as to stir the appetitive part to action or, as the case may be, discourage it from action. On this view, when reason forms a given practical account, that account is in some way transmitted to the liver, say by way of a disturbance traveling down from the head, and the liver then forms a suitable image. Notice that this view assigns a rather active role to the liver: it makes the liver responsible for the formation of images that correspond in some suitable way to the accounts formulated by the soul's rational part.

However, precisely this feature of the view seems to me to make it implausible as an interpretation of what Timaeus is saying. This is because he evidently compares the liver's role in the formation of the images on its surface to that of a mirror in or on which images appear in suitable circumstances. In the story that he offers, what makes colors appear on the liver (71b7–8), and what thereby “paints appearances” (71c3–4), is not the liver itself, but something or other that travels downward from the intellect: the force or power of thoughts (71b3–4) or, as he also puts it, an inspiration from thought (71c4). The liver with its smooth and shiny surface seems to play a passive role in this transaction, like a mirror or screen.

Timaeus' account of the auxiliary causes of vision includes some remarks about mirror images that may be helpful for our purposes. Mirror images come about, according to Timaeus, when objects with smooth and shiny surfaces unite the fire that emanates from a given visible object (cf. 67c) with the fire that emanates from the perceiver's eyes. In this way there comes about a united body of fire which conducts suitable affections or motions from the visible object to the perceiver, so that vision can come about. The role of the mirror's smooth and shiny surface is to unite streams of fire that do not encounter each other head-on, so that affections can be transmitted from sense-object to perceiver. In a way, the mirror's surface receives such affections and, by transmitting them to the perceiver, provides visible images.

The comparison between the liver and a mirror thus suggests a second view as to what might account for the formation of images on the liver under reason's influence, one in which the liver plays a rather more passive role. On this second view, what travels down from the intellect on suitable occasions are affections or motions of the kind that, in cases of vision but also of dreaming, are transmitted by the internal fire to the parts of the soul. On this view, the intellect is capable of forming such affections. As they reach the liver's surface, suitable images appear on it. These images, in turn, set off disturbances in the internal fire which, when they reach the appetitive part, generate suitable contentful experiences. On this picture, the liver might play the role not so much of enabling reason to communicate with appetite, as of, so to speak, amplifying and underlining reason's messages. As the relevant affections travel down from the head, they may reach the appetitive part directly, so as already to generate suitable experiences quite independently of what happens on the liver's surface. As the corresponding images appear on the liver, they, so to speak, reassert reason's message, and at this stage the message gets

underlined by further effects, such as a sense of bitterness or sweetness, as appropriate, and painful contraction or agreeable relaxation.

This second interpretation of how images may appear on the liver under reason's influence requires that the soul's rational part is capable of generating affections or motions of the same kind as those that, in vision, travel from visible objects to the perceiver's eyes, and then are transmitted to the relevant parts of the body, so that they reach the parts of the soul, at which stage they bring about suitable sensory experiences. This is a point that I will want to revisit in a short while, once we have had a look at two passages in the *Philebus* that seem to me, among other things, to shed light on the question how reason can generate such affections. I now turn to the *Philebus*, hoping to persuade you that it provides resources that shed light on a number of indeterminacies left open by Timaeus' remarks about the operations of the tripartite soul. In particular, it offers an account of how memory enables humans and other animals alike to form desires and expectations; it offers a clear and explicit view of sensory representations formed as illustrations of accounts formulated in the soul; and, taken together with certain remarks in the *Timaeus*, it makes it rather easy to see how the soul's rational part is supposed to be able to generate affections in the body that carry determinate sensory contents. In using the *Philebus* to illuminate, and fill in, some of the indeterminacies left open by the *Timaeus*, I want to remain agnostic about the relative chronology of the two dialogues. I assume only that both dialogues are relatively late and hence belong to roughly the same period of Plato's life, and that in both dialogues, Plato is confronting, in a more or less circumspect and thoughtful way, certain questions that his conception of the soul raises. Given these fairly weak assumptions, it seems reasonable to look for ways in which what is said in the one dialogue might shed light on what is said in the other.

IV Desire, memory, and expectation in the *Philebus*

Philebus 32b9–36c2: one thing that should be pointed out right away is that throughout the passage, Socrates is at pains to emphasize that the discussion applies not only to humans, but to other animals as well. A passage that I would like to highlight in this connection is 36b4–9. In that passage, Socrates first describes the condition of expecting to be filled up and hence experiencing anticipatory pleasure, and at the same time being in a painful state of depletion. He then says that in this situation people and other animals are in pain and at the same time take

pleasure. The text clearly implies that at least some non-human animals are capable of forming expectations that they are about to be filled up, and of experiencing anticipatory pleasure on that basis.

Socrates' main concern in the passage is to introduce for discussion and clarification the pleasures of anticipation. These will be taken up for further consideration in the simile of the illustrated book (38e12–40c6), where Socrates relies on pleasures of anticipation to show that some pleasures are false. The present passage also includes a rather elaborate discussion of desire and its dependence on memory, culminating in Socrates' assertion that the account has shown that "every impulse and every desire and the rule over every animal" belongs, not to the body, but to the soul (35d1–3). He begins by introducing pleasures of anticipation as a distinctive kind of pleasure, to be distinguished from the kind that accompanies the occurrent restoration of an organism's natural state of harmony when that restoration involves affections in the body that are strong enough to reach and affect the soul. Socrates asks Protarchus to accept:

the anticipation by the soul itself of these two kinds of experiences [*viz.*, destruction and restoration of the harmonious state]; the expectation before the actual pleasure will be pleasant and will inspire confidence, while the expectation of pain will be frightening and painful.

(32b9–c2)

Protarchus replies that "this turns out to be a different kind of pleasure and pain, a kind that belongs to the soul itself separately from the body and that comes about through expectation" (32c3–5; cf. 39d1–3). It is worth recalling that the *Timaeus*, at 69d1–6, assigns to the mortal part of the soul not only perception, pleasure, and pain, as well as anger and lust, but also confidence, fear, and expectation. The present passage offers a relatively detailed view of what these last three psychological states are, how they arise, and how they are related to pleasure, pain, and perception.

When Socrates returns to the newly identified kind of pleasure – pleasure of the soul itself, as he calls it (33c5–6) – he makes a somewhat surprising claim about it: it depends in all cases on memory. Protarchus does not understand this right away, and Socrates proceeds to explain it by providing accounts of perception, memory, and desire. Perception is or consists in a joint affection of soul and body (33d2–34a5). Memory is the "preservation of perception" (34a10–11). Socrates next turns to desire, presumably because an account of desire will make clear how it is that pleasures of anticipation depend on memory. Desires like hunger

and thirst, he points out, involve not only depletion, but also a desire for its opposite, being filled up. Forming that desire requires some cognitive "contact" with its object, with what the desire is for. As Socrates says, "something in the person who is thirsty must necessarily somehow be in contact with being filled up" (35b6–7). Perception could not serve to provide the required "contact" with being filled up, given that the organism's current situation is one of depletion. The only option we are left with, Socrates asserts, and Protarchus agrees, "is that the soul makes contact with being filled up, and it clearly must do so through memory" (35b11–c1).

It is part of Socrates' account, not only that the ability to form desires depends on the ability to preserve sensory impressions, but also that the ability to form desires of a particular kind depends on the actual possession of suitable impressions, as preserved by memory. Socrates seems to be fully prepared to accept a consequence of his account, namely that newborn babies could not form desires like hunger or thirst, insofar as they do not yet possess the impressions that would enable them to make cognitive contact with the relevant kinds of being filled up. If someone is depleted for the first time, he asks, "is there any way he could be in touch with being filled up, either through perception or memory, since he has no experience of it, either in the present or ever in the past?" (35a6–9).

Moreover, he takes himself to have shown in the discussion of desire that it is memory that drives or directs (35d1–2) towards the objects of desire. This suggests that memory plays a key role not only in providing "contact" with the relevant object of desire, but also in guiding the organism's action or behavior in pursuit of it. This is, to be sure, an extension of what Socrates has actually said, but a natural and easy one. If memory can supply awareness of what it is the subject wants, it is reasonable to suppose that it can also supply awareness of how to obtain the object of desire, given its possession and preservation of suitable sensory impressions.

Finally, Socrates returns to his main topic, pleasures of anticipation. Since the expected affection is not one that the organism is currently undergoing, perception could not supply cognitive contact with it. Sensory impressions preserved by memory have to serve this function. In this way, pleasures of anticipation depend on memory, and on suitable stored sensory impressions, just as desires like hunger and thirst do. They also depend on the subject's expecting that an appropriate replenishing process will in fact come to pass (36a7–b1, b4). In that case, the subject, the human or other animal, takes pleasure in remembering the affection

of being filled up (36b4–6) – or, as we might say, in envisaging being filled up through sensory impressions stored by memory.

Throughout the passage, Socrates is plainly at pains to provide a unified account of desire and anticipatory pleasure that applies equally to humans and non-human animals. This objective yields an account that is remarkable for strictly avoiding any appeal to specifically intellectual or rational resources. An account along these lines is, of course, exactly what one would expect against the background of the *Timaeus*' psychological theory. It makes available to the parts of the soul below reason not only desires, but also a variety of other forward-looking states, as they should be if Timaeus is right in assigning to the soul's mortal part such states as confidence, fear, and expectation (*Timaeus* 69c5–d6). It also provides a highly suggestive outline indicating how the soul's lower parts, in spite of their limited cognitive abilities, can nonetheless generate fully formed motivating conditions and, by doing so, originate actions all on their own.

As noted already, Socrates introduces pleasures of anticipation at least in part with a view to showing that some pleasures are false. In the second *Philebus* passage that I want to discuss, in which he compares the soul to an illustrated book, he points out a connection between beliefs, which obviously can be false, and pleasures of anticipation that depend on beliefs. The suggestion then is that in some way or other, the falsity of a belief can infect a pleasure that depends on it, so that the pleasure in question, even though a real case of pleasure, is false (40d7–10; 42a7–9).

V Imagination in the *Philebus*

Philebus 38e12–40c6: it is immediately clear that the simile of the illustrated book applies, not to the souls of all animals, but specifically to “our souls” (38e12–13). The point of comparison between the human soul and an illustrated book is twofold. Memory, perception, and further affections that Socrates leaves unspecified form accounts or statements in our souls, much in the way a scribe writes sentences into a book. Depending on whether “the scribe in us” writes true or false sentences, we find ourselves with true or false beliefs and (uttered) statements. In addition, Socrates thinks, the introduction of a further artisan, responsible for a different kind of product, is called for: a painter or illustrator, “who follows the scribe and paints images in the soul of the things spoken of [sc. in the scribe's writings]” (39b6–7). The painter's products are in

evidence, Socrates says, when in some way one “sees” in oneself images of the objects of one’s beliefs and statements. Although Socrates seems to think of these images as having been “taken away,” or derived, in some way or other from “sight or some other sense” (39b9), it is important that they are not simply stored or preserved impressions received in acts of perception. In the case that Socrates is mainly interested in, someone forms a false perceptual belief, misidentifying a man in the distance as a statue (38c5–e7). He then continues to think of, and visualize, the matter, as he travels on and is, I take it, no longer able actually to perceive it (38e6–7). In this case, the painter’s work depicts, not what the person in fact saw (a man), but what he falsely believes he saw (a statue). As Socrates says, the painter follows the scribe, and what the painter paints is true or false depending on what the scribe writes (39c4–5, with 39a3–7). The painter’s works thus involve interpretation of what one saw or perceived otherwise. They depend on one’s perceptual beliefs.

The pair of artisans in the soul having been introduced, Socrates returns to pleasures of anticipation, referring back to the first *Philebus* passage we looked at (32b9–36c2). The pleasures and pains of the soul “through itself” are concerned with the future, he reminds Protarchus, and then asks him whether “those writings and paintings which come to be in us, as we said earlier, are concerned only with the past and the present, but not with the future?” (39d7–e2). They agree that there are in the soul both writings and paintings concerning the future. These are, or include, people’s expectations. Here is Socrates’ example of a “painted appearance” (40a9) associated with, or involved in, an expectation: “[A] person often sees himself in possession of an enormous amount of gold, and of many pleasures because of it. And in addition he also sees in this inner picture himself, beside himself with delight” (40a9–12). If the person will not in fact get the pleasure she is expecting to get, then a belief that she will get it is false. And Socrates then claims that, in this case, falsity affects not only the visualization or sensory representation that corresponds to the belief, but also the anticipatory pleasure that is involved in envisaging the pleasure she falsely believes she will get.⁵

There may well be several reasons why Socrates, at this stage in the dialogue, introduces not only a scribe in the soul, who is responsible for the formation of accounts or statements, but also a painter who follows the scribe, generating visualizations or other sensory representations that depend on the scribe’s accounts. One consideration is that it is simply a fact revealed by introspection that, as Socrates says, “this is something that

5 For discussion of what precisely Socrates’ claim amounts to, see Frede (1997) 242–60.

is going on in us" (39c1–2). Moreover, a role for sensory representations is required by Socrates' general claim, made in the first passage we looked at, that pleasures of anticipation arise in all cases "through memory," the preservation of perception (33c5–6). In that context, the claim makes it clear that pleasures of anticipation, on Socrates' view, always involve visualizations or other sensory representations. He then turns to the rather special case of anticipatory pleasures that depend on false beliefs, because he wants to show that such pleasures are false. The scribe in the soul dramatizes the formation of belief. The painter is needed to preserve the connection, to which Socrates has already committed himself, between pleasures of anticipation and sensory representations. The painter's works – the products of the sensory imagination – will no doubt rely heavily on perceptual impressions preserved by memory, at least using them as materials, though they will also involve combinations, extensions, subtractions, and the like, as required by the scribe's accounts that the painter follows. The painter's illustrations thus enable Socrates to claim consistently that all pleasures of anticipation come about through memory, even those that also depend on beliefs.

From the point of view of Plato's psychological theory, we can see another reason for the presence in the human soul of a painter as well as a scribe. The pleasures of anticipation that Socrates is discussing in the two *Philebus* passages we have looked at concern satisfactions of bodily desires such as hunger, thirst, and the like, as well as the acquisition of wealth. Hunger, thirst, and the like are assigned both in the *Republic* and in the *Timaeus* to the appetitive part of the soul. The *Republic's* statement of the theory attributes to appetite a strong tendency to become attached to money, a characterization that the *Timaeus* neither repeats nor repudiates. In any case, all or most of the pleasures of anticipation that are at issue in our two passages concern satisfactions of desires that, according to both versions or statements of Plato's psychological theory, belong to the appetitive part of the soul, though not necessarily to that part alone. (After all, one might also form desires of reason for, say, obtaining some money or grabbing a bite now, based on thoughts about what it would be best for one to do or obtain in the circumstances.) Moreover, Plato's theory assigns to the soul's appetitive part not only desires of this kind, but also pleasures involved in satisfying them. It seems natural, then, to expect that the appetitive part will also experience anticipatory pleasure, if and when the person comes to believe that an appetitive desire is about to be satisfied.

From the point of view of Plato's psychological theory as it is presented in the *Timaeus*, then, there is a question about the kind of case that

Socrates is concerned with in the simile of the illustrated book – namely, appetitive pleasures of anticipation that depend on false beliefs to the effect that something pleasant will come to pass. The question is how the agreeable prospect in question is going to be communicated to appetite so as suitably to excite and delight it. This, of course, is a version of the question that the *Timaeus*' psychological theory raises by itself: how is reason able to convey directives, warnings, and the like to the mortal parts of the soul, especially to appetite?

Suppose that beliefs are accounts or statements of certain kinds, as the *Sophist* tells us they are (at 263e–264a), and that the appetitive soul-part does not understand, or anyhow has no regard for, accounts or statements of any kind, as the *Timaeus* tells us. On this picture, it becomes unclear how beliefs, say, about the imminent satisfaction of some appetitive desire could make a difference to appetite. If someone works out by some suitable bit of reasoning that one of their appetitive desires is about to be satisfied, it is hard to see, on this picture, how the appetitive part of their soul is going to cotton on to this piece of good news, let alone be suitably excited about it. The *Philebus*, with its simile of the illustrated book, resolves this difficulty with admirable clarity and elegance. On the picture that the *Philebus* offers, the human soul is so constituted that the accounts or statements in which our beliefs consist tend to be accompanied by sensory representations that depend on them and that illustrate them. Thus reason can, for instance by forming suitable beliefs, bring about sensory experiences in which appetite shares and by means of which it can be informed about, say, the imminent availability of some source of pleasure or the imminent threat of some intensely painful experience.

VI *Timaeus* on the liver (2)

Comparing the *Philebus* passages that we have looked at with the *Timaeus*' statement of tripartition of the soul, we should note what I submit are two important points of contact between the two dialogues. Both dialogues make desire and other forward-looking states such as expectation and fear available to non-rational subjects: non-human animals, in the one case, the mortal part of the soul, in the other. The *Philebus*, moreover, goes at least some way towards explaining the cognitive aspects of such psychological states in terms of memory, the preservation of perception. Both dialogues employ the idea, and in fact the rather striking language, of “painted” images or appearances that in some way or other depend on

certain accounts or statements formulated by the soul. Again, the *Philebus* goes further than the *Timaeus* in making it quite clear that such images are meant to be sensory representations that illustrate the relevant accounts or statements formed in the soul. There is, to be sure, a significant difference between the *Timaeus*' and the *Philebus*' conceptions of the images painted under the influence of the accounts or statements in question. The *Philebus* treats these images as internal to the soul: it seems to conceive of them simply as sensory experiences. The *Timaeus*, by contrast, envisages images and appearances being formed on the liver's surface, apparently presupposing that the appetitive part of the soul can in some way be aware of what such images represent. But this difference between the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* need not be a matter of one view being replaced with another, or of Plato trying out two incompatible alternatives. Plato can have the *Philebus*' images in the soul *and* the *Timaeus*' images on the liver's surface!

In fact, if we read the *Timaeus* with the *Philebus*' simile of the illustrated book in mind, it might be easier than it would otherwise be to see how, as *Timaeus* puts it, the force of thoughts descending from the intellect can make images appear on the liver's shiny, mirror-like surface. For the *Philebus* simile suggests an idea that in the context of Plato's tripartite psychology is in any case natural, namely that the rational part of the soul is by itself capable of generating sensory experiences which illustrate the accounts or statements that it formulates. On this view, reason is not only something that formulates accounts or statements, that weighs considerations for and against, that draws conclusions, and so forth. It also supports at least some of its operations by illustrating its thoughts with suitable sensory representations, which derive at least in part from past sensory experience preserved by memory. One idea with which this picture chimes in nicely is that the rational part of the soul shares perceptual awareness with the other parts of the soul. This is an idea which is clearly in play in *Republic* X, where the soul's rational part is presented as being aware of misleading sensory appearances, but as rejecting them on the basis of measuring and reasoning. It is also, as we have seen, strongly suggested by *Timaeus*' remarks about what happens in acts of sense-perception.

On my favored interpretation of how, according to *Timaeus*, images may appear on the liver under reason's influence, the soul's rational part must be capable of generating affections or motions in the body that carry sensory contents. If and when such affections reach a given soul-part, they in turn may bring about suitable sensory experiences. If and when such

affections, conducted by the right kind of fire, arrive at a suitably smooth, shiny surface, such as the liver's, they may, if they are powerful enough, produce visible images.

For Timaeus to have a complete story of how this might come about, he still needs to tell us how sensory experiences generated by the soul's rational part can in turn generate affections in the body that carry sensory contents. He does not tell us how that might happen, but we may speculate that just as certain disturbances in the body can impart corresponding disturbances to the parts of the soul, so a suitably powerful disturbance in a given soul-part, such as reason, can impart a corresponding disturbance to adjacent parts of the body – for instance, to the internal fire in the region of the brain. After all, Timaeus does tell us that just as the bodily motions associated with nutrition and perception, if powerful enough, affect the rotations of reason, so those rotations can affect the motions that occur in the body. As the orbits of reason were first placed in the body, they neither mastered the flow of bodily motions, “nor were they mastered by it, but tossed it violently and were violently tossed by it” (43a6–b2). To put it succinctly, Plato in the *Timaeus* subscribes to bidirectional body-soul interaction. And in speaking of the power or force of thoughts that descends from the intellect, and again of an inspiration of thought that paints appearances on the liver, I now submit, he has in mind disturbances in the internal fire imparted to it by the soul's rational part – disturbances which, in turn, carry sensory contents that illustrate reason's accounts.

VII The resulting psychological theory

I asked three questions about the *Timaeus*' images on the liver's surface. How are they meant to arise, what are they meant to represent, and how can the appetitive soul-part be aware of what they represent? The *Timaeus* itself provides the resources we need to answer the third question with a fair measure of confidence. On Timaeus' view of the human organism, a certain kind of fire is diffused throughout the relevant parts of the body, crucially including the regions of the three parts of the soul; any images that might appear on the liver would effect disturbances in the internal fire, which, if they were powerful enough, would be conducted to the parts of the soul, where they would bring about suitable sensory experiences.

While Timaeus is less explicit than we would wish him to be about my second question, what those images are meant to represent, what he says gives us reason to think that in speaking of images on the liver, he has in mind representations that are meant to convey messages to the appetitive part – for instance, warnings, agreeable prospects, and directives as to

how to act. After all, Timaeus says, among other things, that the force of thoughts on suitable occasions warns or threatens the appetitive part, and that on other occasions it paints appearances of an opposite character. Moreover, what Timaeus says about spirit strongly suggests that appetite can receive, and somehow grasp the significance of, directives issued by reason, which it may or may not obey willingly (70a6–7). Since he also says that appetite does not understand reason's accounts, or anyhow has no regard for any accounts, whereas it is greatly moved by images and appearances, we are led to expect that images and appearances will be the vehicles by which reason communicates to the soul's appetitive part warnings, prospects, directives, and so forth.

As for my first question, how those images on the liver are meant to arise, Timaeus' comparison between the liver and a mirror suggests that what, on suitable occasions, travels down from the head to the liver are disturbances in the internal fire that are the same in kind as the disturbances in the internal fire involved in vision, as well as in dreaming. As a mirror receives certain impressions and provides visible images, the liver's shiny surface receives certain disturbances and passes them on to the appetitive part of the soul, so as to bring about suitable sensory experiences. Thus, what Timaeus says suggests that the rational part of the soul can in some way generate disturbances in the body that make images appear on the liver's surface and that convey to the appetitive part messages such as warnings, agreeable prospects, and directives. For such messages to be of interest and concern to the appetitive part, they must take the form of visual or other sensory representations.

In addition, Timaeus presupposes that the appetitive part of the soul can by itself form desires that bring about actions, and also, it would seem, that it can have other forward-looking states such as expectation and fear. This requires that the appetitive part is equipped with cognitive resources that go beyond perceptual awareness of what is currently present to the person's senses. Timaeus says that the mortal part of the soul is equipped with "non-rational perception," but does not explain how appetite or spirit can form desires, expectations, and the like. One suspects that memory might play a role in this, but Timaeus does not say so.

If we choose to read the *Timaeus*' statement of tripartition of the soul strictly by itself, what we get, I think, is a psychological theory that is coherent, interesting, and highly suggestive, but in a number of important respects rather indeterminate. The *Philebus* goes a long way towards resolving the indeterminacies left by the *Timaeus*. It does so by providing at least an indication of how past sensory experience can account for, among other things, the formation of desires for specific

things that one presently lacks and for expectations that something or other is about to happen. It also helps by introducing the idea that it is a fact about the constitution of the human soul that suitable accounts formulated in it tend to be accompanied by sensory representations that illustrate them.

Once we allow ourselves to use the *Philebus* to fill in some of the details left open by the *Timaeus*, what emerges is a conception of the soul's appetitive part along the following lines: the appetitive part is incapable of forming beliefs, at least in important part because forming beliefs involves formulating statements or accounts, which in turn requires cognitive resources that appetite lacks. While appetite is unable to grasp the significance of statements or accounts, it is highly sensitive and responsive to sensory appearances and representations. Sensory experience allows it to form desires to do or undergo specific things the person did or underwent in the past, e.g., eating some quite particular kind of food. Sensory experience also enables it to develop a rather finely tuned feel for what tends to happen after what, so that it can, in suitable circumstances, come to expect quite confidently that something or other is about to happen. Remarkable though this is as a cognitive accomplishment, it is not, Plato thinks, an accomplishment that requires the use of any distinctively rational resources. It can be adequately explained, Plato thinks, in terms of suitable exercises of the senses and of sensory memory, and so it is open to at least some non-human animals as well as to humans, including, in principle, very young children, say, two-year-olds.

Moreover, the psychological theory that emerges takes reason and appetite to be closely integrated with one another. The thought processes of reason, the theory holds, tend to be accompanied by exercises of the sensory imagination which illustrate reason's accounts, assertions, and denials in a sensory mode. Appetite is highly sensitive and responsive to the resulting sensory representations. They can convey to it situation-specific information, for instance, that there is a huge chocolate cake waiting just around the corner. They can communicate to appetite warnings and agreeable prospects, and they can make appetite aware of what reason directs the person to do. Appetite may willingly go along with such directives, but it may also struggle against them, even to the point of causing the person to act contrary to them, so that reason and its natural ally, spirit, are reduced to issuing helpless protestations as the person acts on appetite.

Pictures and passions in the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*

JESSICA MOSS

It is generally held that Plato's *Republic* gave ethical theory its first and most influential philosophical formulation of the division between reason and the passions. If we look closely at the *Republic*, however, one half of that division is surprisingly hard to find.

Elsewhere in the dialogues Plato groups together, and opposes to rational calculation, a set of states that any modern philosopher would recognize as paradigm passions: anger, fear, pleasure, pain, lust, *erôs*, and the like.¹ At some points he even refers to them as *pathê* or *pathêmata*, the Greek roots of our "passions."² When we turn to the *Republic*, we see that these states are the definitive traits of the non-rational parts of the soul, explaining those parts' distinctive characters, their inferiority to the rational part, and the necessity of keeping them under rational control. (Indeed, each non-rational part is named for its characteristic passion, the appetitive part [*epithumêtikon*] for appetite [*epithumia*] and the spirited part [*thumoeides*] for anger or "spirited emotion" [*thumos*].)

Yet there appears to be a serious obstacle to regarding the *Republic's* non-rational parts of the soul as the seats of what later philosophers call the passions. The problem is not simply that the dialogue divides these states between the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul, suggesting that they might have no fundamental features in common. More worrisomely,

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1 See *Protagoras* 352b–c, *Phaedo* 83b–84a, and three passages I discuss below, *Timaeus* 69c and *Philebus* 40e and 47e.

2 See especially *Timaeus* 69c–d, quoted below (*pathêmata*) and *Phaedo* 83c (*paschein*, to suffer: the verbal root of *pathos*). For use of the terms to refer to one or another member of the group, see e.g., *Phaedrus* 252b and 265b and *Gorgias* 481d on *erôs*, and *Philebus* 32a and *passim* on pleasure and pain.

it assigns some of them – desire, pleasure, and even *erôs* – to all three parts of the soul, including the rational part, the very part that we supposed to be contrasted with the passionate parts.³

Perhaps, then, it is anachronistic to look to Plato for the distinction between reason and passion, and to regard the non-rational parts of the soul in the *Republic* as the seat of the passions. Perhaps Plato had the insight that there are forces in the soul opposing reason, but left it to others, most notably Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, to develop a theory that identifies those forces as a class and shows what they have in common: a theory of the passions.

The aim of this chapter is to show that Plato does after all have a theory of the passions, and in fact one that closely anticipates what Aristotle offers in the *Rhetoric*. Plato has an implicit account which unifies anger, fear, appetite, and the other desires, pleasures, and emotions of the non-rational parts of the soul, and which marks them as fundamentally different from (and inferior to) the desires, pleasures, and emotions of the rational part. We find the account most clearly outside the *Republic*, in passages in the *Philebus* and *Timaeus*; nonetheless the account is compatible with, and indeed a natural development or elaboration of, the *Republic's* characterization of the desires, pleasures, and emotions of the non-rational parts of the soul. Thus, it is correct after all to regard the *Republic's* view that there are non-rational parts of the soul as it is generally regarded: as entailing that there is a miscellaneous but fundamentally unified set of psychological forces that direct many of our actions, and can oppose reason or be guided by it; as the view that there is a division in the human soul between reason and the passions.

I Aristotle's passions

I am going to work backwards, beginning with Aristotle's account of passions in the *Rhetoric*. I want to show that here, as so often, Aristotle takes on ideas from his teacher, making systematic and elaborate what Plato leaves at the level of suggestion and metaphor, and thus that we can use the account of the passions we find fairly explicit in Aristotle to help us recognize and understand the one implicit in Plato. What I have to say about Aristotle's view is not new, and I will not spend much time discussing or defending it: my aim is to use an established (although somewhat contentious) interpretation of Aristotle to argue for a new reading of Plato.

3 See e.g., 580d on desires and pleasures, and 485b and 490b on *erôs*.

The *Rhetoric* offers one general definition of the passions:

The passions (*pathê*) are those things on account of which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their discernments (*kriseis*), and which are attended by (*hois hepetai*) pain and pleasure; for example, anger, pity, fear, and other such things and their opposites.

(*Rhetoric* 1378a19–22)

We learn much more about what all passions have in common, however, from the individual definitions that follow. Here is a representative sample:

Things hoped for [are pleasurable] that, when present, appear (*phainetai*) to confer great delights or benefits and to benefit without giving pain.

(1370b7–9)

Anger is desire, accompanied by pain, for revenge for an apparent (*phainomenên*) slight.

(1378a30–31)

Fear is a pain or disturbance arising from the appearance (*phantasias*) of a destructive or painful future evil.

(1382a21–22)

Confident expectation of safety is accompanied by the appearance (*phantasias*) of it as being close, while fearful things are absent or far off.

(1383a17–19)

Pity is a pain taken in an apparent (*phainomenôi*) evil, destructive or painful, befalling one who does not deserve it.

(1385b13–14)

There are some notable differences between these definitions: fear and pity are identified with pains, for example, while anger is merely “accompanied by” (*meta*) pain, and passions in the general definition are “attended by” pleasure and pain; confident expectation is accompanied by an appearance, while fear arises from an appearance, and anger and pity have something apparent as their objects. While these differences may reflect indeterminacy in Aristotle’s view, however, the definitions have enough in common to justify us in inferring from them – as various scholars have done – a unified account of the passions as a class, as follows:

- (1) Passions essentially involve pleasures and pains.
- (2) They are responses to quasi-perceptual appearances (*phantasiai*) of their objects.
- (3) These appearances represent the objects as good or bad: they are evaluative appearances.

Passions are, in sum, pleasant or painful responses to evaluative appearances. These responses are belief-like (i.e., they have contents like “safety is near” and they are something like assents to or acceptances of their contents), but they are not full-fledged rational judgments. Indeed, they cannot be, for they belong to the non-reasoning part of the soul.⁴ Instead, they are exercises of a lower cognitive faculty responsive only to quasi-perceptual appearances: what Aristotle calls *phantasia*, “imagination” or appearance-reception.

I will not argue for this interpretation here: good defense and discussion are offered by recent work on the *Rhetoric*.⁵ The most controversial claim is (2). Some protest that Aristotle’s talk of appearance is broad or loose: he does not mean that passions involve exercises of *phantasia*, but in fact thinks they involve rational belief.⁶ There is, however, excellent textual evidence that the talk of appearance is narrow and technical – that Aristotle is characterizing the passions as involving the same faculty that he describes in the *De Anima* and other psychological works as operative in perceptual illusions, dreams, memory, and other quasi-perceptual activities.⁷

In the next sections I argue that Plato develops an implicit account of the passions, in the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*, which anticipates all of (1)–(3).⁸

II Pictures and passions in the *Philebus*

There is one passage from Plato that has been recognized to offer a theory of the passions: *Philebus* 47d ff., which defines “anger and fear and longing

4 See e.g., *EN* 1105b21–23 and 1106b16 with 1103a3 ff. and 1111b1.

5 See especially Achtenberg (2002); Cooper (1996); Nehamas (1992); Nieuwenburg (2002); and Striker (1996); I defend the view at length in chapter 4 of my *Aristotle on the Apparent Good* (forthcoming).

6 See Fortenbaugh (1975).

7 See especially Achtenberg (2002); Nieuwenburg (2002); and Moss (forthcoming). The continuities I show below between Aristotle’s definitions of the passions and what we find in Plato should count in favor of this reading. As I interpret them, both Aristotle’s and Plato’s views of the passions also have much in common with the Stoic view, with the crucial difference that on the Stoic view all passions are rational. This is not the place to go into the details of the Stoic view, but those familiar with it will recognize similarities, and I think these continuities between the three views count in favor of my interpretations. For discussions of proto-Stoicism in these views of the passions, see Striker (1996) and Gill (1997).

8 In finding antecedents of Aristotle’s *phantasia* in the passages discussed below from the *Philebus* and *Timaeus* I follow Lorenz (2006), although he does not discuss these passages as accounts of the passions.

and sorrow and *erôs* and jealousy and malice and however many other such things there are" (47e1–2) as mixtures of pleasure and pain that the soul experiences "without the body" (47d5–9).⁹ The *Philebus*, notably, makes no explicit distinctions between rational and non-rational parts of the soul, nor rational and non-rational desires and emotions. Dialogues that do make such distinctions, however, place the group of states listed at 47e firmly on the non-rational side;¹⁰ this suggests that, despite the lack of indication of how to relate its psychology to that of the *Republic* or *Timaeus*, the *Philebus* can illuminate what those dialogues classify as the desires and emotions of the non-rational parts of the soul.

The passage at hand, however, does not tell us very much about these states. Socrates offers a detailed account of only one: malice, which he characterizes as pleasure in bad things that happen to people close to us (48b11–12). He begs off going through the rest of the cases (50d–e), so we are not told what unifies the passions as a class. Are *all* mixed psychic pleasures passions? And is this their only essential characteristic, or are there other important conditions on what counts as a passion?

What has not been widely recognized is that an earlier passage of the *Philebus* has already offered a fuller account of the passions, an account compatible with this one but more detailed and more unifying. The passage I have in mind is 37e–40e, where Socrates gives an argument that pleasures can be false. The passage is mostly concerned with hope, which it defines as a pleasure of anticipation which may be true or false, and it has received an enormous amount of attention as a discussion of false pleasure. At the end of the discussion, however, Socrates takes himself to have established that not only hopes but also "fears, spirited passions (*thumôn*), and all things of that sort" can be false (40e2–4). This suggests that the passage aims to give an account of all the states Plato mentions at 47e, and thus that we should take its analysis of hope to offer a model

9 Translations from the *Philebus* are loosely based on those of Frede (1993b) (reprinted in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997)). I take the point of the last clause to be not that passions have no bodily component, but rather that these mixed pleasures are not triggered by bodily replenishments or depletions; this is what distinguishes them from states like the hungry person's pleasurable anticipation of eating, discussed earlier in the dialogue.

10 See especially *Republic* 603e–605c: this passage, just like *Philebus* 47d ff., focuses on passions induced in the audience by comedies and tragedies. *Erôs* does occasionally show up on the rational side in the *Republic*, as I mentioned in the introduction, but it is for the most part treated as non-rational (it is the tyrannical appetite in *Republic* IX, and one of the main *pathêmata* distinctive of the non-rational parts of the soul at *Timaeus* 69d). I will return to the subject of rational desires, pleasures, and emotions in the final section.

that applies to other passions as well. When we do, we will find something very close to what we have seen in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

First, by presenting its account of hope as relevant to all the passions, the passage implicitly defines the passions as pleasures or pains; this is confirmed by the explicit definition at 47d–e. So here we have a strong version of (1) in Aristotle's theory: passions *are* pleasures and/or pains.

The present passage, moreover, goes far beyond 47d ff. in filling in details about these pleasures and pains. It begins by connecting them closely with beliefs, *doxai* (37e10–11): they “come to be with” beliefs. (I think that this is intentionally vague: for now Plato wants to leave open the relation between passions and beliefs.) A common, and compelling, interpretation holds that Plato is here claiming that pleasures like hope must have something like propositional content. They are a species of propositional attitude: pleasures *that* such-and-such is the case.¹¹ When Socrates goes on to describe belief-formation as the process of memory and perception “inscribing words (*logous*) in our soul” (39a1–3), and adds that when these words concern the future they *are* hopes (40a6–7), he seems to be identifying being hopeful – that is, experiencing the particular kind of pleasure that is hope – with the acceptance of certain propositions. (The identification of the *logoi* as hopes leaves plenty of room for confusion, but I take Plato's thought to be that hope the passion, i.e., the feeling or state of being hopeful, is the entertaining of *a hope*, a proposition (*logos*) to the effect that, e.g., one will soon get a lot of gold.)

If this is right, then the *Philebus* puts forth a version of what is nowadays called a cognitivist view of passions: a passion is a judgment that something is the case.¹² I think it should be beyond dispute that Plato was a cognitivist about passions from first to last. To take the clearest cases, consider the *Protagoras*' definition of fear as an “advance-belief” (*prosdokia*, often translated “expectation”) about a future evil (*Protagoras* 358d5–6), and the *Laws*' very similar definitions of fear, confidence,

11 See Penner (1970) 166–78, which introduces the view that some pleasures are propositional attitudes, and Frede (1985), which uses that idea to show that at least some pleasures depend on one's taking their objects under certain descriptions. The propositional attitude view is attractive as an interpretation of the passage because it allows Socrates to show – as he aims to do in the passage as a whole – that pleasures and pains can be literally true and false. If certain pleasures and pains are themselves attitudes toward propositions (rather than, e.g., brute feelings), this claim looks much more promising.

12 To this extent it is similar to the Stoic view of passions. Modern-day cognitivists include Solomon and Nussbaum; the latter calls her own view neo-Stoic.

and hope (*elpis*)¹³ as beliefs (*doxai*, *Laws* 644c9–d1). (Several entries in the Platonic “Definitions” lend further support by suggesting that such cognitivism was standard doctrine in the Academy.)¹⁴

Cognitivism identifies passions with beliefs: hope, for example, is a belief that something good will happen. The *Philebus*, as I understand it, offers a nuanced version of this view, by putting conditions on what the beliefs that constitute passions must be like. In doing so, I will argue, it allows Plato’s cognitivism about passions to accommodate the insights behind Aristotle’s view that they are exercises not of our faculty for rational judgment, but rather of our faculty of *phantasia*.

The first condition is that the beliefs must ultimately derive from perception. (They derive from memory and perception [38b12]; memory has earlier been defined as “the preservation of perception” [34a10].) Indeed, 38b implies that *all* beliefs arise in this way: “[I]s it not memory and perception that lead to belief?” (cf. 39a). Is Socrates relying on the claim of, e.g., *Republic* V that all belief is about perceptibles? Arguably yes, but it will serve our purposes as well to assume that he is instead implicitly restricting the discussion to beliefs that can constitute passions, holding that these at least must be about objects of perception. This looks reasonable: we get angry and hopeful and jealous about particular, worldly objects and events, not Forms or numbers.¹⁵ (There is more to be said here; I return to the general links between passions and perceptions in section IV.)

Next comes a crucial detail. Socrates began by characterizing the formation of belief as the inner writing of *logoi* (39a); now he adds:

There is another craftsman at work in our souls at the same time . . . A painter who, after the scribe, provides pictures (*eikonas*) of the words in the soul . . . [This happens] whenever a person takes away (*apagagôn*) the things believed and stated from sight or any other sense-perception and then somehow sees in himself the pictures of the things believed and stated.

(39b3–c1)

13 *Elpis* is the word translated as “hope” in our *Philebus* passage; in the *Laws*, however, the Stranger distinguishes between *elpides* for things good and for things bad, and so “anticipation” would be a better translation.

14 See fear, consternation (*ekplêxis*), and shame, all involving expectation of something bad (415e4–8, 416a9), and hope, “the expectation of good” (416a21).

15 Rational desires can have Forms as their objects: see e.g., the philosopher’s *erôs* for the Forms at *Republic* 490b. As I am using the term, however – following Aristotle and, I am arguing, Plato – “passions” refers only to states of the non-rational parts.

The beliefs that constitute passions are accompanied by inner *images* (*eikones*, 39c1, 4; *zôgraphêmata*, 39d7; *phantasmata ezôgraphêmena*, 40a9). What does Plato have in mind here? One question is, does this happen whenever the belief is a perceptual one, or are the illustrated beliefs a narrower class?¹⁶ In either case, he is pointing to something logically separable from acquiring a belief based on perception. Something extra happens, whether sometimes or always: we get a sensory representation along with the belief. This is based on the belief (the painter comes *after* the scribe, 39b6), and corresponds to it as an illustration does to the appropriate words: the picture, that is, inherits the representational content of the words. In these cases, one has not only a belief about the external world, but also a vivid impression, a mental image. Let us say that in these cases one has an “illustrated belief.”

Socrates and Protarchus agree that such beliefs arise in connection with things past, present, and future (39c–d). An illustrated belief of something past (*qua* past) would be a vivid memory; one of something future (*qua* future) a vivid expectation. One of something present would evidently be a vivid imagining of something presently occurring.

This last is particularly odd. It cannot be that perception itself is mediated by internal images, because the pictures come *after* the perceptually based beliefs. Why then does Plato posit “illustrations” even of beliefs about the present?

I propose the following: Plato wants to identify the kind of belief that can constitute a passion, and his idea is that passions involve not just representations of the world (bare *logoi*, propositions), but vivid, quasi-perceptual representations. While Socrates first identifies hopes both with *logoi* and with pictures (at 39e–40a), and never details the different roles of the two, the emphasis switches at 40a–b to pictures alone. The implication is that pictures are always involved in passions: for a *logos* in our soul to provoke a passion, it must be illustrated. Thus, Plato is describing passions not simply as what we ordinarily think of as propositional attitudes, but as what we might more informatively call pictorial attitudes.¹⁷

This is a nice point, one missed by straightforward cognitivist accounts. The idea is that when I am moved to anger or fear or excitement by some

16 Part of the vagueness is due to the ambiguity of *apagagôn*: it could mean “receives,” in which case this happens with all perceptual beliefs, or it could mean “abstracts,” which implies some special extra mental effort.

17 This might be just what Penner (1970, 171–72), has in mind when he says that the *Philebus* treats pleasure as a propositional attitude, since he equates this with the claim that it treats pleasure as “a kind of *perceiving that*.”

memory of the past, reflection on the present, or anticipation of the future, the object or event at issue cannot be one I am abstractly contemplating but must be one I am (as we would say) *imagining*. Contrast the thought “I am mortal, and thus will some day die” with the vivid imagining of one’s death, or the thought “My spouse might be cheating on me” with the vivid imagining of a tryst taking place right now behind one’s back: it is at least plausible that only the imaginings will provoke sorrow, fear, anxiety, anger, and the like. This is also, I would argue, part of what Aristotle has in mind when he attributes emotions to the workings of *phantasia* rather than rational thought. At any rate, we now see that the *Philebus* gives us the equivalent of Aristotle’s (2): passions involve quasi-perceptual appearances of their objects.

There may nevertheless seem to be a crucial difference between the two accounts: on the interpretation I gave of Aristotle’s account, passions involve a kind of cognition that belongs to a non-rational part of the soul and is sub-doxastic, while on the *Philebus*’ account passions are *doxai*, albeit of a special kind. But is the cognition at issue in our *Philebus* passage really rational cognition of the kind Aristotle would call *doxa* rather than *phantasia*? There is a significant reason for doubting that it is, which comes out when we try to map the *Philebus*’ account of passions onto the divided soul psychology we find in other dialogues.

There are two ways to attempt this. First, we might suppose that the *logoi* belong to the rational part of the soul and only the images to the non-rational.¹⁸ This would mean, since Plato identifies both the *logoi* and the pictures as hopes (and by extension other passions), that the rational part’s hopes (etc.) are *logos*-based beliefs, while the non-rational parts’ are image-based cognitions of the kind Aristotle would call *phantasiai*. This would suffice to show that there is some continuity between the *Philebus*’ account of passions and Aristotle’s, but in fact I think the similarity is stronger. Our *Philebus* passage rather casually identifies passions with *logoi* and pictures interchangeably, as if there were no significant psychological difference between them. Meanwhile, dialogues that do distinguish parts of the soul attribute the *Philebus*’ passions to the non-rational parts alone. And while it may sound strange to attribute awareness of *logoi* to something non-rational, we noted above that the passage characterizes beliefs (*doxai*) as the product of “memory and perception,” so that the

18 This is the strategy of Lorenz (2006); he supports his argument by pointing out the strong similarity between this *Philebus* passage and *Timaeus* 71a–d, a passage on appetitive passions that I discuss below.

beliefs in question do not transcend the level of the perceptible.¹⁹ It is thus arguable that this passage deals entirely with the kind of cognition that the *Republic* consigns to the lower parts of the soul. (For more discussion of this idea in the *Republic*, see below.) If this is right, then the tension between the *Philebus*' view and Aristotle's is merely verbal: what Plato here calls *doxai* Aristotle would characterize as exercises of *phantasia*.

Now we are ready to consider a final detail about the passions suggested by this *Philebus* passage. This one is not explicit in the text, but is crucial to the account, and strongly implied by the one example Plato offers of an illustrated *logos*:

Someone often envisages himself in the possession of an enormous amount of gold and a lot of pleasures as a consequence. And in addition (*kai dê kai*) he also sees an inner picture of himself (*enezôgraphêmenon auton*), beside himself with delight.

(40a10–12)

It is in the viewing of such a picture that the person feels the pleasure which is his hoping. This entails that the picture must, trivially, be of a kind such as to produce pleasure (or pain, in the case of negative emotions like fear or anger). What does a picture have to be like to meet this condition? Consider the first clause of the description, the part that precedes the "And in addition." One could in principle imagine oneself having lots of money and the attendant "pleasures" – that is, objects that generally provide pleasure (courtesans and fishcakes) – and yet be utterly unmoved by the picture, perhaps because one is depressed or anhedonic, or simply because that is not the sort of thing one likes. So a crucial function of the second clause, "And in addition he also sees an inner picture of himself, beside himself with delight," is to show that the picture not only represents a scenario, but represents it *as pleasant*, as enjoyable. The person not only sees himself possessing gold, but also sees this as a pleasant thing, as something that makes him extremely happy.²⁰

19 There are, of course, also the mysterious "related *pathêmata*" (39a2), and it is in principle possible that these represent some reasoning or calculation, or a contribution from the rational part of the soul – but that is sheer speculation.

20 I am here glossing over an important question as to whether, on Plato's view, the pictures always represent events as pleasant or painful, or whether (the interpretation I favor) the pleasures and pains we take in them – our passions – may also be responses to representations of other kinds of value. Unfortunately there is little in the text to help us here. I conjecture that this is an artifact of the *Philebus*' silence on the issue of the parts of the soul: given the psychic division we get in the *Republic*, appetitive passions would be responses to pictures of things as being pleasant or painful, thumoeidic passions to

Seeing such a picture of oneself is not a neutral experience: it has affective and motivational consequences.

This makes the *Philebus*' definition of hope look very similar to Aristotle's: hope is a response to something that "appears (*phainetai*) to confer great delights or benefits" (*Rhetoric* 1370b7–8). It also gives us the equivalent of Aristotle's (3): passions are responses not simply to vivid appearances of states of affairs, but to appearances of those states of affairs as having positive or negative value – evaluative appearances.

Plato does not make explicit the distinction between representing something that is in fact pleasant (or otherwise good), and representing it *as* pleasant (or otherwise good); neither, for that matter, does Aristotle. This passage of the *Philebus*, however, gives us grounds to credit Plato with being aware of the distinction, and with holding that passions are responses to representations of the latter sort. (It is reasonable to attribute the same idea to Aristotle: when he says that pity, for example, is taken in an "apparent evil" (*Rhetoric* 1385b13–14), he surely means not that we pity people for something that (a) is in fact evil, and also (b) appears to us in some way or another, but rather that we pity them for something that appears evil.)

The mention of fear, anger, and "all things of that sort" at 40e encourages us to extend the *Philebus*' account of hope to the other passions, although Plato does not do that work here. Fear will be a painful response to an illustrated *logos* of something as bad and about to happen; anger will be a painful response to an illustrated *logos* of something as bad done to oneself by another, and so on. Passions in general, as on Aristotle's view, turn out to be pleasant or painful belief-like responses to quasi-perceptual evaluative appearances.²¹

pictures of things as being fine (*kalon*) or shameful (*aiskhron*). Rational desires, aversions, pains, and pleasures, meanwhile, would be responses to things *qua* beneficial or harmful – but in this case no pictures would be involved.

- 21 A note on how this interpretation of this passage of the *Philebus* bears on its explicit task, the demonstration that pleasures and pains can be false: on the view I have presented, to feel a passionate pleasure in *x* is to hold that *x* is good (or in some more determinate way valuable), and thus such a pleasure will be false just in case *x* is not good, true just in case *x* is good. (For a related interpretation see Harte (2004).) I admit that on the straightforward reading of the passage, hopes are false if they represent something as about to happen when in fact it will not happen. But there is much to be said against the straightforward reading. Most pressing, does Socrates really think that virtuous people often hope that they will get a lot of gold, and that these hopes are true because the gods will in fact give them lots of gold? We can make the passage fit much better with his understanding of virtue elsewhere by inferring that the difference between the hopes of

III Pictures and passions in the *Timaeus*

Even though it contains no general definitions of the passions, the *Timaeus* is promising ground for us, since here more explicitly than anywhere else Plato both designates a group of states as *pathêmata* (a close verbal cousin of Aristotle's *pathê*) and characterizes them as essential attributes of the non-rational parts of the soul:

Having taken the immortal origin of the soul [*nous*, the rational part], they [the lesser gods] proceeded next to encase it within a round mortal body, and to give it the entire body as its vehicle. And within the body they built another kind of soul as well, the mortal kind, which contains within it those dreadful but necessary *pathêmata*: pleasure, first of all, evil's most powerful lure; then pains, that make us run away from what is good; besides these, boldness also and fear, foolish counselors both; then also *thumos* hard to assuage, and hope easily led astray. These they fused with unreasoning sense perception and all-venturing *erôs*, and so, as was necessary, they constructed the mortal type of soul.

(69c7–d6)²²

This passage tells us two notable facts about the states it calls *pathêmata*. First, they belong to the “mortal” soul – the appetitive and spirited parts. Second, they are somehow bound up (“fused”) with sense-perception and *erôs*, which also belong to these parts. This is not a very elaborate account. The mention of perception, however, might seem to point loosely in the direction of the model of passions we have seen in the *Rhetoric* and *Philebus*. I want now to show that a later passage in the *Timaeus* offers an account of one particular class of passions that very closely fits that model:

[The gods knew that the appetitive part] was not going to understand *logos*, and even if it were in one way or another to have some perception (*aisthêsis*) of some *logoi*, it would not have an innate regard for any of them, but would be much more persuaded by images and phantoms (*eidôlôn kai phantasmatôn . . . psukhagôgêsoito*) night and day. The god conspired with this very tendency by constructing a liver, a structure which he situated

the virtuous and the hopes of the vicious parallels, e.g., the difference between courageous and cowardly fears in the *Protagoras* (352b–360d). There the courageous fear only what is genuinely bad, while the cowardly fear what appears bad but in fact is not; here, I have suggested, virtuous people hope for what is genuinely good, while vicious people hope for what appears good but in fact is not.

22 Translations from the *Timaeus* are based on those by Cornford (1937) and Zeyl (2000) (reprinted from Cooper and Hutchinson (1997)).

in the dwelling place of [the appetitive] part of the soul. He made it into something dense, smooth, bright and sweet, though also having a bitter quality, so that the force of the thoughts sent down from the mind might be imprinted upon it as upon a mirror that receives the imprints (*dechomenoi tupous*) and returns images (*eidōla*). So whenever the force of the mind's thoughts could avail itself of a congenial portion of the liver's bitterness and threaten it with severe command, it could then frighten this part of the soul. And by infusing the bitterness all over the liver, it could project bilious colors onto it and shrink the whole liver . . . causing pains and bouts of nausea. And again, whenever thought's gentle inspiration should paint quite opposite pictures (*phantasmata*), its force would bring respite from the bitterness by refusing to stir up or to make contact with a nature opposite to its own. It would instead use the liver's own natural sweetness on it and restore the whole extent of it to be straight and smooth and free, and make that portion of the soul that inhabits the region around the liver gracious and agreeable, conducting itself with moderation during the night when, seeing that it has no share in reason and understanding, it practices divination by dreams.

(*Timaeus* 71a3–d4)

The passage is very condensed, but we can extract from it the following account.²³ The appetitive part of our souls often experiences passions like hunger, lust, and fear. As creatures equipped with a higher, rational part, we have a special ability: we can approve or disapprove of these passions, accept them or try to counteract them, let our appetitive part have its way or try to stop it. This passage details a means by which the rational part can gain control over the appetitive: it can counter existing appetitive passions by inducing new ones. If appetite is craving some base pleasure, the rational part can frighten it with the threat of painful consequences; if appetite is shrinking in fear from some noble duty, the rational part can embolden it with talk of rewards.

There is, however, a difficulty about communication. The rational part, being rational, has rational cognitions – thoughts (*dianoiai*) – which it would naturally communicate as rational accounts (*logoi*). The appetitive part of the soul, however, is not responsive to *logoi*: perhaps it has no awareness of them whatsoever; certainly it will not be persuaded by them (71a). So the good gods devised a solution: they designed our bodies in such a way that the rational part's thoughts reflect off the shiny surface of

23 The analysis of this passage that I present here is an extended version of the one I give in Moss (2008). My reading of this passage has much in common with Lorenz's in this volume; it differs mainly in insisting on the evaluative nature of the images in question.

the liver, yielding images. These images, unlike *logoi*, can directly influence the appetitive part. The responses they induce, the passage strongly implies, are passions: fear, aversion, and calm, and presumably others as well. Let us consider what the passage reveals about these passions.

First, part of fear is the painful contraction of the liver, part of calmness the sweet relaxing of it. This gives us a version of (1) above: perhaps passions are not here identified with pleasures and pains, as in the *Philebus*, but they do essentially involve them.²⁴

Second, the passage clearly implies a version of Aristotle's (2): these passions are responses to quasi-perceptual images. Note that the constitution of the liver, smooth and dense, is just like that of the eyes, as described at 45b–c: this encourages us to take it that the images at issue here are very similar to those that play a role in sight. Moreover, we are told that liver-images also play a crucial role in dreaming (71d–72b); earlier Timaeus has described dreaming as a kind of quasi-perception, involving the same inner processes as perception (45d–46a). Here the parallel with Aristotle is striking: *phantasia*, to whose exercise the *Rhetoric* attributes passions, is also the faculty operative in dreams (see *De Insomniis* 459a18–21 and throughout).

Third, consider the content of these passion-inducing liver-images. As we have seen, they are reflections of thoughts that the rational part wants to communicate to the appetitive part. These are thoughts about what to do or avoid; in particular, they are thoughts about what is beneficial to do or avoid (see 71a1–2). If these thoughts were expressed as *logoi*, the *logoi* would be exhortations, threats, warnings, or reassurances. If thoughts can be reflected as images, we should expect to see the same phenomenon here. While some images are evaluatively neutral, others can be threats or reassurances: they can present things as good or bad, to be done or to be avoided. It is this fact that lets images stand in for *logoi* in influencing the appetitive part of the soul: the rational part cannot explain to the appetitive part why it is best to pursue or refrain from some course of action, but by means of liver-images it can bring it about that the course of action simply *looks* good or bad, the way something can look good or bad in a picture. Thus, we find here an alternative to the *Philebus*' way of expressing the idea that, as in Aristotle's (3), the quasi-perceptual appearances that prompt passions are evaluative in nature.

24 Here the pleasures and pains are physical, but I think this makes for only an apparent tension with the *Philebus*' definition of passions as mixed pleasures the soul experiences "without the body" (47d). There the point was that passions like fear and the rest are psychological, in that they are not caused by bodily events like fillings or depletions; here the point is to show that psychological states like fear have physical aspects.

These similarities aside, there may seem to be a significant difficulty in assimilating this passage to the *Philebus*' view of passions. That view, I argued, is a cognitivist one: passions are beliefs. Granted, they are beliefs of a special kind, i.e., vivid and imagistic. But on the *Timaeus* account, one might object, appetitive passions must be much more primitive, responses to pictures only, for in this dialogue Plato denies that the appetitive part can understand *logoi* (71a, quoted above), and denies that it has any share in *doxa*, belief (77b, quoted below). This would seem to show that the *Timaeus*' account of appetitive passions cannot be a cognitivist one.

Whatever powers Plato means to be denying the appetitive part when he denies it *doxa* and the ability to understand *logoi*, however, it cannot be the ability to have contentful impressions. 71a–d shows that its passions are responses to images of *logoi*: images that present things as being a certain way. Appetitive fear involves the acceptance of an image that presents something as imminent and bad. If we do not want to call this acceptance a belief we can find some wider and more neutral term; I have suggested “cognition.” (Why does Plato resist calling it belief? 71a strongly suggests that he has in mind the appetitive part's inability to be persuaded directly by reasoning, but I cannot defend that interpretation here.)²⁵ Aristotelian *phantasia* is a prime example of contentful cognition that falls short of *doxa*; so too, I would argue, is the image-reception of the appetitive part in the *Timaeus*. Therefore, we can call the Aristotelian and Timaeian accounts of passions cognitivist while respecting their denial that passions involve full-fledged rational judgments.

This is not to say that there are no important differences between the *Timaeus*' view of appetitive passions and the *Philebus*' account of hope, fear, anger, and the rest. Perhaps Plato is loose enough with his use of *doxa* and *logos* that we need not posit any substantive difference between the accounts, but perhaps the *Timaeus*' appetitive passions are indeed more cognitively primitive than the *Philebus*' illustrated beliefs. I hope to have shown, however, that in either case the views are similar enough to count as two expressions or versions of an underlying view of the passions as cognitions involving quasi-perceptual, evaluative appearances. I suggest that the best explanation of the differences is as follows: while Plato was committed to this broadly cognitivist view of passions throughout

25 If I am right then Plato is again anticipating Aristotle, who grants animals contentful discernment or cognition (*krisis*) in the forms of perception and *phantasia*, but denies them *doxa* precisely on the grounds that *doxa* must be the result of persuasion through *logos* (*De Anima* 429a19–24).

the dialogues, he experimented with different accounts of the cognitive capacities of the non-rational parts of the soul, or (and?) with different views of the cognitive demands of grasping *logoi* and forming *doxai*.²⁶

Thus far I have confined my discussion of the *Timaeus* to the account implied by a single passage's discussion of a single species of passion, rationally induced appetitive passions. Can we extend that account to cover all the passions belonging to the non-rational ("mortal") parts? The *Timaeus* says nothing explicit on this question, but there is reason to think that we can.

Let us begin with ordinary appetitive desires, ones that arise not through the mediation of reason but instead in direct response to external objects: hunger at the sight or smell of tasty food, lust at the sight of a beautiful body, and so on.²⁷ My argument about these has only two steps.

One: the *Timaeus*' account of rationally-induced appetitive passions implies that passions involve evaluative cognition, awareness of things as to-be-gone-for or to-be-avoided, good or bad. This is in keeping with the account of passions we found in the *Philebus*, and also with other instances of Plato's cognitivism: the *Protagoras*, as we have seen, defines fear as an expectation of some evil, the *Laws* as the expectation of pain. (The argument I gave above about Aristotle's definition of pity applies to these definitions as well: they are most charitably interpreted as saying that we fear what we expect *as* painful or bad.) Given this view, even when the appetitive part feels a passion without the guidance of the rational part, it must be having an evaluative cognition, e.g., a cognition to the effect that the food is tasty or the body beautiful.

Two: in a passage I have mentioned, the *Timaeus* claims that the appetitive part "has no share at all of belief (*doxa*) or reasoning (*logismos*)

26 For an argument that Plato narrowed his use of *doxa* from the *Republic* to the *Timaeus*, without changing his view of the cognitive powers of the appetitive part of the soul, see Lorenz (2006); Bobonich (2002) defends the converse view.

27 The *Timaeus* gives no account of such passions, and one might conclude from this that there are none – that on the *Timaeus*' view, all appetitive passions must be mediated by reason – but this would surely be a mistake. First, we know that plants have some appetitive passions (appetites, pleasures, and pains [77b]), even though they lack a rational part altogether; presumably the same applies to animals. Second, consider the newly embodied soul, i.e. (on most interpretations), the soul of a newborn: here *nous* is completely lacking (44a–b), but passions are immediately present (42a). Third, consider the claim that when a person is experiencing intense pleasure (a paradigmatic appetitive passion), reasoning is paralyzed (86c). All these entail that one can have appetitive passions without any input from the rational part of the soul. (The second consideration also applies to spirited passions, although in this case too we get an explicit account only of rationally induced passions [at 70a–c].)

or understanding (*nous*), but instead of perception (*aisthêsis*)” (77b5–6); thus the cognition involved in appetitive passion can only be perception or quasi-perception. In keeping with 71a–d, the appetitive part cannot believe or reason or understand that something is the case (e.g., that a course of action is bad), but can only perceive that it is so. (Indeed, 71a seems to tell us that the only way for appetite to be moved – the only way for it to experience a passion – is via some sort of image: it is “persuaded night and day by images and phantoms,” and by these alone. We might even speculate that in the case of ordinary appetitive passions, perception of external perceptible objects [the food one hungers for, the water one thirsts for] produces images on the liver.)

As to the passions of the spirited part, the text gives us insufficient resources to determine whether or not they fit our account. What we do have confirms that they involve evaluative cognition: in the one example Plato gives of a spirited passion, spirit gets angry at a report from the rational part that “some unjust act is being done” (70b3–4), which suggests that its anger involves the awareness of something as bad (wrong, unjust). What kind of cognition is involved, however, is less clear. Plato strongly implies that both parts of the mortal soul exercise perception (see 69c–d, quoted at the beginning of this section, and 61c–d), but he never explicitly restricts spirit to perception in the way he does with appetite at 77b.²⁸ This leaves open the possibility that spirited passions involve some higher form of cognition, perhaps *doxa*.²⁹ This might seem to imply a departure from the *Philebus*, where passions the *Timaeus* (and *Republic*) would count as spirited get grouped with other passions as involving images. On the other hand, the *Timaeus* distinguishes sharply between rational thought (*noêsis meta logou*) on the one hand, and “belief with perception” (*doxa met’ aisthêsêôs*) on the other (28a1–3); because spirit is a mortal, non-intellectual part, we may surmise that even if it is capable of belief its beliefs are tightly bound up with perception, and may even be like the “illustrated beliefs” of the *Philebus*.³⁰

28 69c–d could be read as listing perception as an ingredient that will be housed in one or the other division of the mortal soul (with 77b–c settling in favor of appetite), but Plato lists perception along with *erôs* as two elements that are “fused” (*sugkerasamenoi*) with all the rest, and this implies that these two features belong to both parts of the mortal soul.

29 This is arguably implied by the description of a spirited passion cited above: spirit gets angry when “a *logos* is announced” (*tou logou paraggeilantos*, 70b3–4), which may entail that spirit can directly grasp the *logos* without the mediation of images.

30 *Timaeus* never delineates the respective roles of belief and perception in “grasping” what becomes (although he does distinguish between the two, in saying that the appetitive part has perception but not belief [77b]). Given Plato’s similar looseness in the *Republic*,

IV Passions and the non-rational soul

The *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* give us strong evidence, then, that Plato held a proto-Aristotelian account of some desires and emotions; they also indicate, if inconclusively, that he meant this account to extend to all the desires and emotions of the non-rational parts of the soul. In this final section I want to show that this account of the passions is not a free-standing bit of psychologizing. Two features of the account reveal it to be not only compatible with, but a natural extension or elaboration of, Plato's general characterization of the non-rational parts of the soul, both in the *Timaeus* and in the dialogue whose treatment of these parts is best known, the *Republic*.³¹

First, we have seen that Plato is a cognitivist about emotions and desires. He thinks that to be afraid or lusty is to cognize something as being some way or another. (In particular, I have argued, he thinks that it is to cognize it as being good or bad.) If the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul are the sources of desires and emotions, and if desires and emotions are cognitions, it follows that cognition is not a privilege reserved for the rational part; instead, each part is a cognizer. This fits very well with the characterization of the parts of the soul in the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, where they can communicate with one another, persuade and be persuaded by one another, and agree or disagree with one another on important subjects.

This last point is crucial, for it allows Plato to meet an important objection to the cognitivist view of passions: that one can fear something while believing it to be safe, or be angry about something while believing it fair. If we take the *Philebus/Timaeus* account in isolation it looks vulnerable to this objection, but when we place that account in the context of Plato's

where the lower half of the line is sometimes referred to as the visible realm, sometimes as the opinable, the object of *doxa* (compare e.g. 509d with 510a), it is a fair guess that his claim is something like the following: we access the realm of becoming through perception, which can give rise to beliefs, and beliefs have no other source, i.e., all beliefs are perceptual. Compare the implication that all beliefs are derived from perception at *Philebus* 38b.

31 For much fuller discussion of the *Republic's* views of non-rational cognition, non-rational motivation, and the connections between them, see Moss (2008). In that paper I argue that the defining feature of the non-rational parts of the soul is their unreflective acceptance of appearances. This explains why these parts are the seat of sense-perception, both veridical and illusory. It also explains their passions, as follows: pleasure, honor, and the like *appear* good, and so parts of the soul that cannot reason beyond appearances unreflectively accept that they are good, and desire them.

tripartite psychology, the problem disappears. To be in one of these conflicted states is to have one's rational part believing one thing, and one's appetitive or spirited part the opposite.

One might protest this extension of the *Timaeus/Philebus* account on the grounds that those dialogues give no indication of how one's passionate cognition of images could diverge from one's rational cognition of *logoi*. In the *Timaeus* passage (71a–d), the images that influence the appetitive part are copies of reason's thoughts. In the *Philebus*, meanwhile, the images are copies of the scribe's *logoi*; this similarity to the *Timaeus* passage does seem to suggest that, despite my arguments above to the contrary, the *logoi* belong to the rational part of the soul and only the images to the non-rational. This would entail that non-rational passions are always modeled on rational beliefs.

If this is right, then Plato has a problem: because it is a crucial part of his view that passions can conflict with rational judgments, he cannot consistently hold that the non-rational parts' passions are always reflections of the rational part's judgments. Given that he has a cognitivist view of passions, he ought to think that passionate cognition can conflict with rational cognition, and thus that passionate cognition is to a significant degree independent of rational cognition.

Here I propose that we help Plato by turning to Aristotle. On the interpretation of Aristotle's theory that I have relied on here, passions belong to the non-rational part of the soul and involve a form of cognition belonging to that part: *phantasia*. *Phantasia* is independent of rational cognition: a creature who lacks thought or reasoning (a non-human animal) can have fully formed *phantasiai*, and a creature who does have rational cognition (a person) can have *phantasiai* even when her rational part is inoperative.³² For this reason, in rational creatures *phantasia* can disagree with rational judgment – and not only about matters of fact (e.g., the size of the sun), but also about matters of value (e.g., the goodness of pleasure). Given this independence, passions can conflict with rational judgments – one can, for example, have an appetite for a pleasure one judges bad – without the cognitive character of passions being impugned.³³

32 "Animals do many things in accord with *phantasiai*, some because they have no intellect (*nous*), i.e., beasts, some because intellect is sometimes covered over by passion (*pathos*) or diseases or sleep, i.e., people" (*De Anima* 429a5–8).

33 For the sun case, see *De Insomniis* 460b16–20, for the pleasure case see *Eudemian Ethics* 1235b26–29. I discuss the parallels between these cases in Moss (2009).

I propose that we offer this part of Aristotle's theory to Plato, either as an explicit version of what we should charitably judge to be implicit in Plato's view or as an implication of his views that he should have recognized even if in fact he did not. Doing so will render Plato's proto-Aristotelian, cognitivist view of the passions a good fit with his presentation of the lower parts of the soul as the sources of reason-independent cognition.

Now we can turn to the second feature of the *Timaeus/Philebus* account of passions that makes it a good fit with Plato's general presentation of the non-rational parts of the soul: its construal of passionate cognition as image-based. In *Republic* X, Plato strongly implies that the lower parts of the soul are image-responsive: they are not only affected but in fact strongly influenced or persuaded both by the visual images involved in optical illusions and visual art and by the poetic images involved in tragedies and the works of Homer.³⁴ This is supported by the *Timaeus'* characterization of the appetitive part as being "persuaded night and day by images and phantoms"; given the *Timaeus'* metaphysics, on which all perceptible objects are mere images and phantoms, ontologically dependent copies of imperceptible Forms, it is also supported by the dialogue's characterization of both non-rational parts as perceivers.³⁵

Thus, both dialogues characterize the lower parts of the soul in a way consistent with the proto-Aristotelian account of their passions: these parts of the soul are generally aware of and responsive to mere images and appearances. But why would Plato hold this view? Because he is drawing a sharp contrast between reasoning about things and simply going with how things appear. The lower parts of the soul do not respond to explanations or arguments or accounts: they respond only to how things look, how things strike them. We saw in the *Philebus* that the *logoi* that provoke passions must be accompanied by images because passions involve vivid imagination rather than abstract reasoning; in attributing

34 I argue for this reading of *Republic* X in Moss (2008).

35 For the non-rational parts as perceivers see 69c–d, 77b, and the claim that the entire mortal part of the soul "cannot be adequately spoken about in separation from perceptual properties" (61c7–d2), which implies that these parts are essentially perceivers. For the characterization of perceptibles as mere images and phantoms, which is even more explicit in the *Timaeus* than in the *Republic*, see especially 28b–29b and 52c. The consequent similarity between ordinary perception and what we would more readily recognize as image-perception is emphasized by striking verbal parallels between the passage in which *Timaeus* describes perceptibles as copies of Forms imprinted on a receptacle (48e–52d) and the passage on liver-images that we have seen above: an ordinary physical object is, like a liver-image, a perceptible copy of an intelligible original, imprinted on a receptive medium.

passions to the lower parts of the soul, Plato is characterizing these parts as imaginers rather than reasoners. They have no patience for, nor perhaps even understanding of, arguments, for they are too impulsive, too ready to judge by appearances, and too cognitively limited to search beyond them.³⁶ The notion of evaluative appearances I developed above ensures that this epistemic fact has ethical import: the lower parts of the soul go for what looks good or pleasant or honorable or to-be-pursued, rather than reasoning out what is best.

To return to the problem we began with in the introduction, this account of non-rational passions ensures that the rational part of the soul can experience desires and pleasures without any real threat to the identification of the non-rational parts of the soul as the seats of the passions. Rational desires, pleasures, *erôs*, and the like will be constituted by cognition that is not image-based but rational, cognition of the kind Aristotle would call full-fledged *doxa*, belief (or, in the best souls, knowledge). The rational part goes for learning, for example, not because learning quasi-perceptually appears good, but because it reasons that it is so.

One final point: the *Philebus*/*Timaeus* account of passions is consistent with the general presentation of the non-rational parts of the soul in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* as image-responsive, but it also goes beyond it. When we say that the lower parts of the soul respond to how things look or appear, we have not yet said anything about the psychological mechanism of being-appeared-to. In introducing the painter's pictures in the *Philebus* and the liver-images in the *Timaeus*, Plato is, I submit, working out a theory of the psychology of appearances. One can – and Plato often does – loosely speak of things appearing in various ways to people where this implies no special, quasi-perceptual psychological state: to say that *x* appears *F* to *S* may simply mean that *S* thinks or sees some reason to think that *x* is *F*. There is also, however, a narrower use on which to say that *x* appears *F* to *S* implies nothing about *S*'s rational beliefs, but rather about how things perceptually or quasi-perceptually strike *S*.³⁷ When this latter kind of appearing is at issue, Plato implies in

36 As Posidonius puts it, in what looks like an allusion to *Timaeus* 71a, “How could anyone activate the irrational by means of reason, unless he set before it a picture like a perceptual impression? Thus some people have their appetite roused by a description, and when someone vividly tells them to flee the approaching lion, they are frightened without having seen it” (Fr. 162 EK, trans. Long and Sedley (1987) I:417).

37 These two senses of “appearance” correspond roughly to what are sometimes called the epistemic and non-epistemic senses of the word, with a crucial caveat: on the *Republic*'s view a non-epistemic appearance – one that does not entail *rational* belief, and thus in a

our *Timaeus* and *Philebus* passages, for x to appear F to S is for S to have an inner representation – an inner image, an inner appearance – of x as F . Thus, we can say not simply that getting lots of gold appears delightful to the hopeful person, but that the hopeful person has an inner appearance (*phantasma*) of getting lots of gold as delightful.

Aristotle develops this kind of theory in detail in *De Anima* III.3. He isolates a strict sense of “appearance,” the perceptual, non-belief-entailing sense. He illustrates it with an example straight from our *Philebus* passage: one sees something in the distance and is not sure whether or not it is a man, and so says “It appears to be a man.” In these cases, he says, what is at work is neither ordinary perception nor rational belief (*doxa*), but our faculty of *phantasia*. This faculty, moreover, works by way of inner images: it is “the faculty in virtue of which we say that some *phantasma* arises for us” (428a1–2; cf. *De Insomniis* 460b18), where a *phantasma* is an inner state of the agent, an affection of the sensory system (see especially *De Insomniis* II). Here once again, then, we find Aristotle following Plato, and showing us more clearly what is there to be found in Plato once we know to look for it.

well-ordered soul one that does not entail belief for the agent as a whole – may (must?) nonetheless be belief-entailing for the lower part of the soul. See *Republic* 602e–603a, on optical illusions, for a clear statement of this point.

Soul and state in Plato's *Laws*

LUC BRISSON

Did Plato radically change his positions on ethics and politics between the *Republic* and the *Laws*? Did he renounce his division of the soul into three functions, and of the city into three functional groups?¹ These are the two questions that I would like to answer here, placing all my cards on the table at the outset (see the Appendix to this chapter). After indicating the objective of the *Laws* and recalling the two definitions of the law that are proposed in it, I will try to show how three distinct parts of the soul are to be found in the *Laws*: intellect, spirit, and appetite. These parts are placed in relation to three distinct groups that accomplish a particular function in the city: that of the ordinary citizens, which produces food; that of the Country Wardens, which ensures the security of the territory; and that of the Watch Committee, which enables knowledge to accede to power. The *Laws* do not repeat the *Republic*, but they pursue the same goal by other means.

I Politics as care for the soul in the *Laws*

The starting point for all reflection on Plato's *Laws* must be the recognition of its unusual position as far as the definition of politics is concerned. As early as Book I, the Athenian Stranger declares: "So this insight into the nature and disposition of a man's soul (*psukhê*) will rank as one of the most useful aids available to the art which is concerned to foster a good character – the art of statesmanship (*politikê*), I take it?"

This chapter was translated from French by M. Chase. It bears a title similar to Trevor Saunders' article "The Structure of the Soul and the State in Plato's *Laws*" (Saunders (1962)), and defends similar theses; yet the details and differences are numerous and considerable. I thank Tad Brennan and his colleagues for their rigorous reading of this chapter: they have saved me a great many errors and imprecisions.

1 Bobonich (2002) thinks that he did, while Kahn (2004) and Brisson (2005b) have tried to show that he did not.

(I 650b).² This definition of politics recalls the remarks in the *Statesman*, according to which the political science must select natural psychic inclinations toward virtue, in order to weave them together (308d), and above all it takes up a recurrent definition from the dialogues, which is already found, in particular, in the *Gorgias* (464b).³

In the first book of the dialogue, these presuppositions introduce the thesis that is to be verified throughout the twelve books: the law's goal is to make the city as a whole achieve the whole of virtue. This is affirmed quite explicitly at Book I 630d–632d, a passage which confides this mission to legislation, and also specifies the hierarchy of goods that must preside over the evaluation and choice of conduct in the city. In the course of its terrestrial existence, however, the soul lives in a body that needs an environment favorable to its birth, its harmonious development, and its reproduction. This is why politics must also take the body and its environment into consideration, resituating this totality within a hierarchy of goods to be pursued, a hierarchy that places at its summit the divine goods constituted by the four cardinal virtues. The dialogue will return to them in Book III, to state in other terms that excellence can only be achieved if the order of priority of three constitutive aspects of human life is not reversed: care of the soul, care of the body, and care of bodily goods or wealth (III 697a–c, V 743d–e). The Stranger gives the following classification of human and divine goods:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: These goods fall into two classes, “human” and “divine.” The former depend on the latter, and if a city receives the one sort, it wins the other too – the greater include the lesser; if not, it goes without both. Health heads the list of the lesser goods, followed by beauty; third comes strength, for racing and other physical exercises. Wealth is fourth – not “blind” wealth, but the clear-sighted kind whose companion is good judgment – and good judgment (*phronêsis*) itself is the leading “divine” good; second comes the habitual self-control (*sôphrôn*) of a soul that uses intellect. If you combine these two with courage (*andreia*) you get (thirdly) justice (*dikaïosunê*); courage itself lies in fourth place. All these take a natural precedence over the others, and the law-giver must of course rank them in the same order. Then he must inform the citizens that the other instructions they receive have these goods in view: the “human” goods have the “divine” in view, and all these in turn look towards intellect, which is supreme (*noun hêgemonia*).

(I 631b–d)

2 Translations are from Cooper and Hutchinson (1997), with modifications. The translation of the *Laws* is by Trevor Saunders (sometimes modified).

3 On this definition, see Pradeau (2002), and Brisson and Pradeau (2007).

It is this classification – set forth authoritatively, but with no excess justification – whose priorities the legislator must follow. The dialogue itself, moreover, will conform to it, since its plan follows this hierarchy of goods exactly by choosing, in the exposition of the legislation (Books VI–XII), to deal first with questions concerning the soul (discussing at length the education of the citizens in Book VII), then the body (dealing with food in Book VIII and physical violence in Book IX), and finally with material possessions (dealing with property in Book XI and exchange in Book XII). Here, the Stranger states precisely what the law must promote among the citizens: a reflective mastery over one's passions. More exactly, the law must encourage all citizens to agree with one another in their passions. This gives it a considerable field of extension, which explains, in a sense, how it alone enables the city to achieve the whole of virtue.⁴ Obviously, every citizen of the city of the *Laws* must practice these four virtues, including good judgment or wisdom, but this does not mean that all citizens possess wisdom in the same way, as Christopher Bobonich would have it.⁵ As we shall see in what follows, it is a divine intellect that guides the movements initiated by the world soul, and it is the Watch Committee which, having understood the permanence and regularity of these movements, impresses them upon the city, through the intermediary of the law and the magistrates who ensure its application. For his behavior to be in conformity with the regulations of the intellect, it is enough for the ordinary citizen to obey the law and not impede the action of the magistrates.⁶

The four virtues are naturally associated with the tripartition of the soul. The term *aretê*, which we translate as “virtue,” designates the excellence of an entity that accomplishes the function that is proper to it in the best way possible. Good judgment is the virtue of the intellect and of reason, which must keep spirit and appetite under its domination, as

4 See I 630c, 631c–d, 641b–c, 647c–d; VII 705e–706a, 707d, 731e–732b, 734e–735a, 742c–743c, 770c–771a, 790b, 807c–e, 817b–c, 818c–d, 822e–823a; IX 853b–c, 876c–d, 878a–b; XI 913b–c, 921d–922a; XII 945b–e, 946e–947b, 963a. For this inventory, see Bobonich (2002) 521 n. 126.

5 “The late dialogues thus seem to agree that the training of spirited emotions and appetitive desires is not enough to produce a good state of character and a good life. Given the sort of creature that we are, the perfection of our non-rational faculties by themselves is not sufficient for a good life. This is precisely what we should expect on the basis of the Dependency Thesis and the two passages at *Laws* 631b–d and 660e–661e that make the possession of wisdom a necessary condition of benefiting from one's Dependent Goods” (Bobonich (2002) 197).

6 In Brisson (2005b) I have tried to show that the debate about whether moral autonomy is or is not to be attributed to the citizen of the *Laws* is meaningless in the context of the work.

a function of the genuine reality that is its object. Spirit's function is to resist not just fear, associated with the perception of danger, and hence to ensure the defense of the living being against aggressions that come from without – in the *Laws*, it must also know how to resist pleasure and pain, in order to keep them under the intellect's domination. Finally, self-control or moderation is the virtue that sets a limit to the pleasure and pain whose object is food and drink, sex and wealth, thereby ensuring the survival and reproduction of the living being. When spirit and appetite are under the command of the intellect, the concord known as justice reigns in the citizen as in the city. The goal of the *Laws* is to promote complete virtue, that is, the four virtues of justice, temperance, courage, and good judgment, rather than one single virtue, courage, like the constitutions of Lacedaemonia and of Crete.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: And I remind you again – to recollect the beginning of our discussion⁷ – of what you two recommended: you said that the good legislator should construct his entire legal code with a view to war; for my part, I maintained that this was to order him to establish his laws with an eye on only one virtue out of the four. I said he ought to keep virtue as a whole in mind but especially and pre-eminently the virtue that heads the list – judgment (*doxa*) and intelligence (*nous*) and wisdom (*phronêsis*), such that sexual passion (*erôs*) and appetite (*epithumia*) are kept under control.

(III 688a–b)⁸

7 See I 625d ff.

8 Christopher Bobonich interprets this passage as follows: "What this passage suggests is that the cognitive condition that is to play the role of the leader of the other virtues and that is a condition of the Dependent Goods being valuable for their possessor includes both some kinds of true opinion, as well as more epistemically advanced states. Nevertheless, insofar as 'wisdom' is the name of a virtue, it is partly honorific and applies in a strict sense only to the highest sort of cognition. But since some sorts of true opinion are sufficient to make the Dependent Goods valuable for their possessor, Plato is quite willing to call such a state 'wisdom' and to hold that the goal of Magnesia's laws is to bring about at least such a state in all the citizens" (Bobonich (2002) 198). To reach this point, Bobonich is obliged to make the following distinction: "Plato pursues two distinct strategies that he does not distinguish sharply. First, he allows true belief, as well as knowledge, to be a satisfactory leader of the other virtues: *Laws* 688b1–4, cf. 689b2–3, 653a7–b1, and 644d1–3 (also see *Ep.* 7, 342c5). Second, he sometimes allows that some form of true belief can qualify as wisdom: 689c6–e2, cf. 710a5–b2. See the helpful discussion in [Irwin (1995), 347–53]. The important question is whether the *Laws* accepts that true belief of the right sort can embody an appropriate grasp of non-sensible value properties, and I defend this claim in Ch. 3 and 4" (Bobonich (2002) 520–21 n. 124). This subtle distinction concerning Plato's strategies is meaningless and useless if one admits the following. (1) Every citizen, since he is a human being and therefore has a soul, is endowed with an intellect. (2) This intellect

The *Laws* are much less explicit than the *Republic* on the subject of virtue; above all, they define it less precisely, probably because they take for granted what was said in the preceding dialogues. Yet what of the law that is to ensure the establishment of the whole of virtue?

II A twofold definition of the law

The term *nomos*, which we render by “law,” has a great many uses and meanings. It can mean such-and-such a particular law, but also the system of laws, that is the ordered ensemble of laws, at the same time as the common principles on which they all rest, since the legislator has organized his work in accordance with them. When *nomos* is used in its general sense, to designate the totality of law, it also denotes the totality of prescriptions that are imposed on the city, to the point that the term can be synonymous with *politeia*. This testifies in the simplest possible way to the intermixture of juridical and institutional considerations, as well as to the way in which, for the Greeks, discourse on law is always, and immediately, a discourse on the civic community and its constitutional organization. On this point, Plato does not break with the usages of his time, and he chooses to link the destiny of the city to that of its legislation, to the point of fusing them together.⁹ This link is sealed from the moment of the first definition of *nomos* given by the *Laws*.

A The law as the city's decree

The Athenian Stranger criticizes the legislations of Crete and Sparta, oriented only toward courage, which are supposed to promote temperance indirectly by fleeing from pleasures (I 636a–637b). Yet not only does this flight not suffice to eliminate loose morals, but it does not promote true courage, which must be defined as the domination of pleasures and pains:

enables him to accomplish some abstract operations and to carry out certain concrete acts. (3) To maintain control over his spirit and his appetites, it is enough for him to follow the instructions of the magistrates, and to obey the law, which represents in the city the intervention of the intellect that guides the world. Yet this is precisely what Bobonich rejects, since he claims that in the *Laws*, each citizen determines himself in the context of a Kantian autonomy. On this point, see Brisson (2005b).

9 On “law” in classical antiquity, see Faraguna (2007).

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Here is a further point on which we agreed some time ago;¹⁰ those who can control themselves are good, those who cannot are bad.

C.: Perfectly correct.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Let's take up this point again and consider even more closely just what we mean. Perhaps you'll let me try to clarify the issue by means of an illustration.

C.: By all means.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Are we to assume, then, that each of us is a single individual?

C.: Yes.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: But that he possesses within himself a pair of witless and mutually antagonistic advisers, which we call pleasure (*hêdonê*) and pain (*lupê*)?

C.: That is so.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: In addition to these two, he has opinions about the future whose general name is "expectations" (*elpis*). Specifically, the anticipation of pain is called "fear" (*phobos*), and the anticipation of the opposite is called "confidence" (*tharros*). Over and against all these we have "calculation" (*logismos*), by which we judge the relative merits of pleasure and pain, and when this is expressed as a public decision of a state (*dogma koinon poleôs*), it receives the title "law" (*nomos*).

(I 644b–d)¹¹

The law is thus defined, in a general way, as a rational calculation imposed upon the entire city. The interest of this definition unquestionably lies in the way it gathers together and anticipates the various statuses that the rest of the dialogue will reserve for the law: it is first and foremost a process of reasoning, fashioned as such by an intellect at the same time as it is to be set forth in a rational, demonstrative way. This rational thought is addressed to the soul, which is subject to both pleasures and pains, fear and confidence, but can also perceive a process of reasoning. Here, we find once again the functional tripartition of the soul expressed very clearly in the following passage from the *Timaeus*:

TIMAEUS: They¹² imitated him: having taken the immortal origin of the soul, they proceeded next to encase it within a round mortal body [the head], and to give it the entire body as its vehicle. And within the body they

10 See I 626e. 11 This passage is cited and commented on in Bobonich (2002) 94.

12 The progeny of the demiurge. On the question of the mortality of certain parts of the soul, see Brisson (2007).

built another kind of soul as well, the mortal kind, which contains within it those dreadful but necessary passions (*pathēmata*): pleasure (*hêdonê*), first of all, evil's most powerful lure; then pains (*lupê*), that make us run away from what is good; besides these, boldness (*tharros*) also and fear (*phobos*), foolish counselors both; then also the spirit of anger (*thumos*) hard to assuage, and expectation (*elpis*) easily led astray. These they fused with unreasoning sense perception and all-venturing lust, and so, as was necessary, they constructed the mortal type of soul.

(*Timaeus* 69c–d)¹³

These passages are parallel, even if the strategy of Timaeus and the Athenian Stranger are not the same. Timaeus associates a tripartition of the soul into intellect, spirit, and appetite, interpreted as the duality of immortal part vs. mortal part, with a spatial distribution of the soul in the body, which is also tripartite: head, heart, and liver (although it implies a bipartition, since the head is separated from the rest of the body by the neck). The Athenian Stranger, in contrast, wishes to make this representation of the soul serve to criticize the constitutions of Lacedaemonia and Sparta, which promote only courage. He therefore seeks to show that true courage cannot be reduced to confronting enemies, whether they come from within or without, but must also and above all involve resisting the attractions of pleasure and fear, where confidence is defined as the expectation of pleasure, and fear as that of pain.¹⁴ As far as the individual is concerned, four ways of life are envisaged, which take the soul's excellence and the good state of the body into account:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Let us list them: there is the life of self-control (*sôphrona bion*) for one, the life of wisdom (*phronimon*) for another, and the life of courage (*andreion*) too; and let us treat the healthy life (*hugieinon*) as another. As opposed to these, we have another four lives – the licentious, the foolish, the cowardly, and the diseased. Now anyone who knows what the life of self-control is like will describe it as gentle in all respects, with mild pleasures and pains, light appetite, and sexual passions without frenzy; the licentious life he will say is violent through and through, involving extreme pleasures and pains, intense and raging appetites and sexual passions of extreme fury.¹⁵ He will say that in the life of self-control the pleasures outweigh the pains, and in the licentious life the pains exceed the pleasures in point of size, number and frequency. That is why we inevitably and naturally find the former life more pleasant,

13 Translated by Donald Zeyl in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997).

14 See I 634a–b, and 647c–d.

15 On the various kinds of pleasure, see Schöpsdau (2001).

the latter more painful, and anyone who means to live a pleasant life no longer has the option of living licentiously.

(V 733e–734b)

The inventory of these four modes of life corresponds roughly to that of goods.¹⁶ The one that corresponds to health corresponds to the good of the body, while the other three correspond to the good of the soul, according to its functions of wisdom, courage, and moderation. Plato insists here on the life of moderation, that in which appetite is moderate, seeking pleasures and pains that exhibit mildness (VI 770d). It is because the poets tend toward excess and not moderation that they must be subjected to control (VII 802a) on the occasion of competitions (VIII 835c, e). The history of cities that is then proposed verifies the ethical argument of the first two books by showing, for instance, the inevitable defeats that befall cities whose constitutions have privileged only a part of virtue, that is, courage independently of moderation. The considerations on war in the first Book (I 628e–632d) find their historical illustration in the third. The best example is no doubt provided by the reasons which, according to the Athenian Stranger, brought about the ruin of the Dorian cities. At Book III 688e–689e, the Stranger explains that the fall of the Dorian kingdoms was the inevitable consequence of the most deplorable form of ignorance there could be:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: So when the soul quarrels with knowledge or opinion or intellect, its natural ruling principles, you have there what I call “folly.” This applies both to the state in which people disobey their rulers and laws, and to the individual, when the fine principles in which he really believes prove not only ineffective but actually harmful. It’s all these examples of ignorance that I should put down as the worst kind of discord in a state and individual, not the mere professional ignorance of a workman.

(III 689b–c)¹⁷

In their own way, these remarks are a lesson in Platonic history. Historical events are ordained toward the verification of the hypothesis of Book I,

¹⁶ See [section I](#) above.

¹⁷ I interpret this passage in the sense in which Christopher Bobonich refuses to interpret it: “If all that Plato requires for wisdom is consonance between one’s judgment of what is overall fine and good and one’s appetites, then he seems to count as wisdom cases in which these judgments are entirely unreflective and do not involve any appreciation of their rational basis . . . But as we have seen, we have good reason not to attribute such a view to Plato.” Bobonich (2002) 199.

and they also serve a programmatic political lesson, since the demand set forth here will be one of those that must be satisfied by the legislators of Magnesia, as is recalled at Book I 631d–632a. To orient pleasures in the direction of conformity with the law is the objective of education (I 643c–d). Even courage must be ranged on the side of reason (II 688b–c) in order to subjugate pleasures (I 647c–d). In this way, mankind will find itself on the side of the gods (V 732e), imitating the way of life under the reign of Kronos (IV 714a). It is perhaps this critique of the constitutions of Lacedaemonia and Crete, inducing Plato to place courage in the last place in the list of virtues, that explains why we hear so little of *thumos* in the *Laws*. This reasoning or calculation in which the law consists is intended to dictate to all citizens a judgment on what must or must not be appreciated, that is, in this instance, desired or felt. The rational discourse that teaches all souls what pleasures and what pains they must praise or blame in their interest: such is the first definition of law in the *Laws*.

B *The law as the regulation of the intellect*

Yet this definition of the law opens onto another, which alone gives meaning to the totality of the *Laws*:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: The lesson is that we should make every effort to imitate the life men are said to have led under Kronos;¹⁸ we should run our public and our private life, our homes and our cities, in obedience to what little spark of immortality lies in us, and dignify this regulation of intellect (*tên tou nou dianomên*) with the name of “law” (*nomon*). But take an individual man, or an oligarchy, or even a democracy, that lusts in its heart for pleasure and demands to have its fill of everything it wants – the perpetually unsatisfied victim of an evil greed that attacks it like the plague – well, as we said just now, if a power like that controls a state or an individual and rides roughshod over the laws, it’s impossible to escape disaster. This is the doctrine we have to examine, Clinias, and see whether we are prepared to go along with it – or what?

(IV 713e–714b)

The decree of the city, which is prescriptive, is thus based on the regulation of the intellect (*tên tou nou dianomên*). The legislator of the *Laws*

18 The time of Kronos was also the reign of the intellect. I have written quite a lot on the meaning of this myth, which is reported in the *Statesman* (268d–275a) and mentioned in the *Laws* (IV 713c–714b): see Brisson (1995), (2005a), and (2005c).

has a twofold task: (a) to establish a proportional order in the soul of each individual, which means making the intellect reign, and making the citizen a reasonable being, particularly through the intermediary of education; and (b) to establish a proportional order among the citizens, by ensuring the rule of the most deserving and the most virtuous, that is, of those who make the best use of the highest faculty of their soul, intellect (*nous*), over those who do so to a lesser degree. Thus guided by the most virtuous among them, the citizens cannot help but become virtuous, as the law recommends. It is the written law that serves as a tool for realizing these tasks, and this is why the law, when well established, is understood as a “regulation of intellect.” This regulation concerns not only the orientation of conduct, but also honors and therefore magistracies, that is, the establishment of a power structure. This is why the law issues decrees in both these fields. In both cases, it must be the result of the principle that holds the first place in mankind and in the city, namely, intellect (*nous*).

In the very text of the law, which must be preceded by a prelude, the theory of which Plato sets forth in Book IV (715e–723e), we find the three parts of the soul associated with virtue. The formulation of the law itself represents the intellect (*nous*), followed by the penalties incurred by miscreants, which involve violence, whether physical (*bia*) or civic (blame and the loss of honors), which is on the side of spirit (*thumos*). In Plato, a prelude (*prooimion*) is first and foremost an exhortation. By means of a play on words, Plato assimilates the exhortation (*paramuthia* or *paramuthion*) to the “myth that precedes the law” (*ho pro tou nomou muthos*) (XI 927c).¹⁹ However, this play on words does not correspond exactly to reality, since not all preludes are myths. Some are rhetorical exhortations that manipulate blame and praise, and Book X of the *Laws* develops a demonstration (*apodeixis* 887a5, 893b2; *epideixis*, 892c6) that involves arguments (*logois*, 887a5). This last type of prelude, addressed exclusively to young people who have not been persuaded by the myths and rhetorical exhortations, and who take pleasure in speculations on nature, will not be taken into consideration here.²⁰

19 *Paramuthia* is also used in IV 720a1; *paramuthion* in I 632e5, IV 704d8, 705a8, VI 773e5, IX 880a7, X 885b3, XI 923c2; and *paramutheomai* in II 666a2, IX 854a6, XI 928a1, XII 944b3. Note also the occurrence of the verbal adjective *paramuthêton* at X 899d6 and of the derivative adverb *aparamuthêtôs* at V 731d3. See further in Brisson (1999a).

20 On the status of this “preamble,” see Brisson (2000b) esp. 237–51. For a different view, see Laks (2005) 111–63, a response to Brisson (2000b) and Bobonich (1991). The utopia proper to the *Laws*, which A. Laks qualifies as a “legislative utopia,” consists according to him in the desire to make the prelude to the law coincide with philosophical

When adding a prelude to the bare law, Plato has two objectives in mind. On the one hand, his goal is not to address the miscreant either exclusively or in the first instance, as does the law, which contents itself with enumerating penalties. On the other, he seeks to replace the violence of penalties by the gentleness of persuasion. Yet this persuasion is an imperative that must lead to the impossibility of envisaging disobedience;²¹ hence the image of man as a puppet obeying the pull of a string maneuvered by the intellect, whose role is certainly prescriptive. To anchor this reflex within the citizen, the legislator will have recourse either to myth, which plays on appetite (*epithumia*) by providing pleasure and inspiring fear, or to rhetoric, which because of the praise and blame associated with the search for honors (*philotimia*) is on the side of spirit (*thumos*). The demonstration that involves the intellect plays a role only for those who have not been immediately convinced by myth or rhetoric.

This second definition of the law as the regulation of the intellect thus appeals to the spirit and to appetite, and it can be considered the basis of the first definition as rational calculation that becomes the common decree of the city. It is based on numerous presuppositions that are far from being exclusively Platonic, since they express rather faithfully, albeit in compressed form, the features that are characteristic of the representation of law shared by all those who expressed an opinion on the subject in the classical period, although they may do so from differing perspectives or to defend opposing political arguments. Indeed, we may concede that the definition of the law as a prescriptive discourse imposed on all in the interest of the city, and which in particular prescribes forms of conduct, is a current definition.²² Similarly, we can agree that an educative conception of the law is not specifically Platonic: it is ancient and common, and it has been rightly noted that the law "has always, in the eyes of the Greeks, had a function not only of prohibition and supervision, but of

dialogue – hence the importance of finding a preamble that is a demonstration. At the limit, according to this interpretation, the law should be abolished in favor of philosophical argumentation. Bobonich's position is different, because his goal is to show that the psychology of the *Laws* rejects the partition of the soul, and thus promotes a democratization based on the possibility for all citizens to use the soul's higher activity, inseparable from the rest of its activities.

21 As is noted in Bertrand (1999) 278–87.

22 It was one of the lessons of J. de Romilly's classic study on law to show to what extent, in the very midst of the debate on nature and law promoted by the Sophists at the turn of the fifth-fourth centuries, this common definition of the law was preserved, although the necessity of the law, its content, or its modalities of redaction were controversial; see de Romilly (2001) 73–114.

education”²³ – the law was commonly conceived as the discourse that teaches the citizen who obeys it the path of virtue. If Plato distinguishes himself from his predecessors or contemporaries, it is in the way he seeks to gather together and to ground these different characteristic features on the same principles, and again in the way he chooses to give them an original form of extension or of depth. Indeed, what emerges from the extracts from Book I and Book IV is that Plato chooses to designate the soul as the addressee of the law.²⁴ This is an intention that, once again, could no doubt be imputed to other contemporary Greek authors, but for which Plato’s texts provide a genuine doctrinal justification and a development without equivalent. When, in the *Gorgias*, Plato defines legislation as the equivalent of a gymnastics of the soul (and justice as its medicine: 464b), he suggests that legislation must exercise the soul so as to make it virtuous, and that the citizen who obeys the laws finds in this obedience the occasion for the improvement and education of his soul. Far from being incidental or imagistic, this definition is assumed in all its coherence by the Platonic doctrine, which develops with precision a “psychological” definition of the law, by explaining how it informs human conduct by exerting a form of persuasion and constraint on souls, the mechanisms of which are described at length in the *Laws*.

III *The partition of the soul*

In this section, I will adopt the argumentative strategy of Trevor Saunders, with whom I agree.²⁵ I will first try to show how a bipartition of the

23 De Romilly (2001) 227 (cf. 227–50).

24 By virtue of the definition of politics as the care of the soul; see [section I](#) above.

25 See Saunders (1962) 37–41. On this point, Saunders and I oppose Bobonich (2002), who maintains that the psychology of the *Laws* differs from that of the *Republic*, to which it is superior particularly because of its political consequences. According to Bobonich, in the *Republic* the soul has parts that can be considered as agents in the full sense of the term; in the *Laws*, by contrast, various forces coexist within one and the same soul, which alone can be considered as an agent. Thus, knowledge and power are no longer reserved to those whose intellect can acquire genuine knowledge. Laks (2005, 85–92), gives a point by point response to Bobonich’s position. In Brisson (2005b), I tried to explain why the political consequences that could have derived from this new psychology are not to be found in the *Laws*. In fact, the real question concerns the interpretation of the representation of the parts of the soul in the *Republic*. When applied to the soul in the *Republic* or even in the *Timaeus*, the terms “parts” or “species” must not be understood as if the soul were a body. The soul is an incorporeal entity, which, while remaining one, accomplishes certain specific functions when it is attached to a body: spirit (*thumos*) and desire (*epithumia*), which are intended to ensure the survival and reproduction of that body. As such, these functions cannot be declared to be distinct from the entity constituted by the soul. The

soul, far from excluding a tripartition, in a way implies it.²⁶ Second, I will try to show how *thumos* may be considered a source of authority intermediary between intellect and appetite, and able to tend in both directions.

A Bipartition

One of the major themes of the *Laws* is the recommendation, both for the city and for the individual, of self-mastery. This recommendation presupposes a division of the soul into a higher and a lower part. This basic conviction is illustrated admirably by the famous image of the puppet.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: I suggest we look at the problem in this way: let's imagine that each of us living beings is a puppet of the gods. Whether we have been constructed to serve as their plaything, or for some serious reason, is something beyond our ken, but what we certainly do know is this: we have these affects (*pathê*) in us, which act like cords or strings and tug us about; they work in opposition, and tug against each other to make us perform actions that are opposed (*enantias praxeis*) correspondingly; back and forth we go across the boundary line where vice and virtue meet. One of these dragging forces, according to our argument, demands our constant obedience, and this is the one we have to hang on to, come what may; the pull of the other cords, we must resist. This cord, which is golden and holy, transmits the power of "calculation" (*logismos*), a power that in a state is called the public law (*tês poleôs koinon nomon*);²⁷ being golden, it is pliant, while the others, whose composition resembles a variety of other substances, are tough and inflexible. The force exerted by law (*nomos*) is excellent, and one should always cooperate with it, because although "calculation" is a noble thing, it is gentle, not violent, and its efforts need assistants, so that the gold in us may prevail over the other substances. If we do give our help, the moral point of this fable, in which we appear as puppets, will have been well and truly made; the meaning of the terms "self-superior" and "self-inferior" will somehow become clearer,²⁸ and the duties of state and individual will be better appreciated. The latter must digest the truth about these forces that pull him, and act on him in his life; the state must get an account of it either from one of the gods or from the human expert we've mentioned, and incorporate it in the form of a law to govern both its internal affairs and its relations with other states. A

quality of existence of the soul separated from the body depends, moreover, on the care it has devoted to a specific function.

26 On bipartition, see e.g., Cornford (1912) and (1929); Rees (1957), and Penner (1971); on tripartition, see e.g., Cooper (1984); Kahn (1987); and Irwin (1995) 203–22.

27 See the second definition of the law in [section B](#) above. 28 See I 620d ff.

light cast on that problem will perhaps in turn help to clarify the subject of education and the various other practices, particularly the business of drinking parties . . .²⁹ Well then, tell me: if we give drink to this puppet of ours, what effect do we have on it?

CLINIAS: What's your purpose in harking back to that question?

ATHENIAN STRANGER: No particular purpose, for the moment. I'm just asking, in a general way, what effect is exerted on something when it is associated with something else. I'll try to explain my meaning even more clearly. This is what I'm asking: does drinking wine make pleasures and pains, angers and desires, more intense?

CLINIAS: Very much so.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: What about sensations, memory, opinions and thought? Do these too become more intense? Or rather, don't they entirely desert a man if he fills himself with drink?

CLINIAS: Yes, they desert him entirely.

(I 644d–645e)

As we can see, in this passage we move from a bipartition to a tripartition of the soul. In it, we find first an opposition between a golden cord that is supple, because it represents the calculation (*logismos*) which represents the law (*nomos*) in the city, while the other cords, which are made up of a variety of other substances, are tough and inflexible. Then, when the Athenian suggests giving wine to this puppet, we find a very clear distinction between (1) pleasures and pains, (2) angers and desires, and (3) sensations, memory, opinions, and thought, that is, between appetite (*epithumia*), spirit (*thumos*), and intellect (*nous*). Moreover, this passage seems to take up, while situating it in another context, the myth of the metals mentioned in the *Republic* (III 414b8–415d6), where philosophers are associated with gold, the guardians with silver, and the producers with bronze. Books I and II of the *Laws* choose to illustrate this need for mastery over pleasures and pains by means of the extreme example of banquets and drunkenness, introducing a reflection on gymnastics and music. The mastery over pleasures and pains, and hence also of the expectation of pleasures and pains, that is, over confidence and fear, depends in the last analysis on calculating reason, represented by the law once this calculation has become the decree of the city (I 644d). In order that the citizen may, like a puppet, obey reason's string pulling, he must be trained to do so from childhood, and throughout his life. This is the role of education, based on gymnastics and above all on music, which are combined in the constitution of the three choruses: the chorus of the Muses for children,

29 The passage to this point is discussed in Bobonich (2002) 260–65.

the chorus of Apollo for those less than thirty years old, and the chorus of Dionysus for those older than thirty.³⁰

B Tripartition

However, this fundamental bipartition, which involves on the one hand rational calculation (*logismos*) and on the other appetite (*epithumia*), does not, as we can observe by re-reading the parallel passage from the *Timaeus* (69c–d) cited previously, preserve the existence of a tripartition in which spirit (*thumos*) is defined not only as resistance to fear, but also as resistance to pleasure. Spirit (*thumos*) thus takes its place between intellect and appetite. For each of the parts of the soul, I will try to show (1) how it can be considered distinct, (2) what kind of actions it can cause, (3) what its object is, and (4) to what virtue it can be attached, both within the individual and within the state.

(a) Appetite (*epithumia*) and its virtue, moderation (*sôphrosunê*)

The objects whose possession provides pleasure and whose absence implies pain, or the affects that cause appetite or repulsion, are three in number, food, drink, and lust:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Observation tells me that all human actions are motivated by a set of three needs and appetites. Give a man a correct education, and these instincts will lead him to virtue, but educate him badly and he'll end up at the other extreme. From the moment of their birth men have a desire for food and drink. Every living creature has an instinctive love of satisfying this desire whenever it occurs, and the craving to do so can fill a man's whole being, so that he remains quite unmoved by the plea that he should do anything except satisfy his lust for the pleasures of the body, so as to make himself immune to all discomfort. Our third and greatest need, the longing we feel most keenly, is the last to come upon us: it is the flame of the imperious lust to procreate, which kindles the fires of passion in mankind. These three unhealthy instincts must be canalized away from what men call supreme pleasure, and towards the supreme good. We must try to keep them in check by the three powerful influences of fear, law, and correct argument; but in addition, we should invoke the help of the Muses and the gods who preside over competitions, to smother their growth and dam their tide.

(VI 782d–783b)

30 See Jouët-Pastré (2006) ch. 2.

The appetite for food and drink is scarcely represented in the *Laws*, except insofar as wine is concerned (I 637b–650b). In contrast, one finds many elements concerning sexual passion in general (VIII 837a–c, 838b–d, 841c, 842a). Plato even evokes the facets of sexual passion in the private sphere (VII 788a–b).³¹ To these first two objects of appetite, we must add that of wealth (IX 870a–c).

Appetite is one of the causes of injustice (IX 863e–864b), and it even incites people to commit crimes (XI 934a) and murder:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: First of all, we ought again to make as complete a list as possible of their sources of crime. The chief cause is lust (*epithumia*), which tyrannizes a soul that has gone wild with appetite. This lust is most usually for money, the object of most men's strongest and most frequent longing. Because of the innate depravity of men and their misdirected education, money has the power to produce in them a million cravings that are impossible to satisfy – all centering on the endless acquisition of wealth. The cause of this incorrect education is the pernicious praise given to wealth by the public opinion of Greeks and non-Greeks alike. In fact, wealth takes only third place in the scale of goodness;³² but they make it pre-eminent, to the ruination of posterity and themselves. The best and the noblest policy for all cities to follow is to tell the truth about wealth, namely, that it exists to serve the body, just as the body should be the servant of the soul. Although the ends which wealth naturally serves are indeed "good," wealth itself will take third place, coming after the perfection of the soul and the body. Taking, therefore, this argument as our guide, we shall find that the man who means to be happy should not seek simply to be wealthy, but to be wealthy in a way consistent with justice and self-control. Murders needing still more murders in expiation would not occur in cities that had taken this lesson to heart. But as things are, as we said when we embarked on this topic, we have here one cause, and an extremely prominent cause at that, of the most serious charges of deliberate murder.

(IX 870a–c)

It is also the quest for wealth that drives the pillaging of temples (IX 854a). Appetite is a part of the soul that is one of the causes of human action.

31 Plato also speaks of the passion for hunting (VII 823d), and of the concern expressed by the dying with regard to their children's future (XI 922b). It is also appetite that explains a life of impiety (X 886b).

32 See III 697b ff. and V 743e.

(b) Spirit (*thumos*) and its virtue, courage (*andreia*)

As we have seen, courage in the *Laws* comes last in the ranks of the virtues, probably because of the critique of the constitutions of Lacedaemonia and Crete, which promoted only that virtue known as courage. This critique carried out by the Athenian Stranger modifies the very notion of courage. Although the goal is still to confront enemies from within and without, since there are police forces and an army in the city of the *Laws*, courage is valued primarily as resistance to pleasures and pains. This, I think, is the main difference between the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Nevertheless, *thumos*, or spirit, is indeed considered as a distinct part of the human soul that is one of the causes of human action.

Book IX investigates more serious misdeeds, and Plato broaches the subject of what could be called penal law. This exposition presents an astonishing specificity, for it seeks to reduce crimes to their motives, in order to enable the legislators to cure the offender.³³ The knowledge of the faculties of the soul and their various relations is indispensable as soon as punishment is considered as a psychic therapy. One of these faculties, the spirit (*thumos*), is called a tendency (*pathos*) or a part (*meros*) of the soul:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: I must try to meet your request and explain these points. Doubtless in the course of conversation you make at least this point to each other about the soul: one of the constituent elements (whether “part” [*ti meros*] or “state” [*ti pathos*])³⁴ to be found in it is “the spirit of anger” (*thumos*), and this innate impulse, unruly and difficult to fight as it is, causes a good deal of havoc by its irrational force.

CLINIAS: Yes, indeed.

ATHENIAN STRANGER: The next point is the distinction we make between “pleasure” (*hêdonê*) and “spirit of anger” (*thumos*). We say pleasure wields her power on the basis of an opposite kind of force; she achieves whatever her will desires by persuasive deceit that is irresistibly compelling.

CLINIAS: Quite right.

(IX 863a–b)

Note that in this passage we find both a distinction between appetite and spirit and a mention of a possible interaction between them: spirit

³³ See Saunders (1994).

³⁴ See Saunders (1962) 38–39 n. 2 on the meaning of these terms. In his philosophical lexicon, Aristotle states that the first meaning of *pathos* is simply *poiotês* (*Met.* 4 ch. 21, 1022b 15–22).

acts on appetite by violence, whereas appetite mobilizes persuasion to circumvent spirit. In the first case, spirit is on the side of the intellect against appetite:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: You've put it all very well, my Spartan friend. But what is to be our definition of courage? Are we to define it simply in terms of a fight against fears and pains only, or do we include appetites and pleasures, which cajole and seduce us so effectively?³⁵ They mold the heart like wax – even the hearts of those who loftily believe themselves superior to such influences.

(I 633c–d)

In the second case, appetite acts on spirit to turn it away from the intellect. We can thus understand how appetite can make spirit, which is described as a disgraceful beast,³⁶ “melt”:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: In gratifying this ugly emotion, anger, and in thus disgracefully stoking the fires of his fury, the speaker drives back into primitive savagery a side of his character that was once civilized by education, and such a splenetic life makes him no better than a wild beast; bitter indeed, he finds, are the pleasures of anger.

(XI 935a)

This is why spirit, like pleasure, must be dominated by the intellect (IX 863d6). When spirit and/or pleasure are dominant (IX 863e7, 864b3, and XI 934a5), injustice is the result. The spirit of anger is obviously the cause of specific actions, and can therefore be considered as a motive, either negative or positive. In the *Laws*, spirit displays a primarily negative role.³⁷ This text on the motive for murders is particularly interesting:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: The chief cause is lust (*epithumia*), which tyrannizes a soul that has gone wild with appetite. This lust is most usually for money, the object of most men's appetite . . . Second, an ambitious cast of mind: this breeds feelings of jealousy, which are dangerous companions

35 The point that courage applies more broadly than to martial contexts is made at *Laches* 191 d–e.

36 This may be a conscious correction of Homer's claim that anger is sweeter than honey (*Iliad* 18, 108).

37 Spirit is associated, in IX 864a–b, with one of the five causes of faults. The three causes of fault pertaining to the upper part of the soul are simple ignorance; ignorance accompanied by the illusion of knowledge among the powerful; and ignorance accompanied by the illusion of knowledge among the weak (see 863c–d). If we add the pains constituted by “anger” and “fear” (see 934a) and pleasure (see 934a), which must be attached to appetite, that makes five. For the details of the distinctions proposed here, see Schöpsdau (1984).

to live with, particularly for the person who actually feels jealous, but potentially harmful to the leading citizens of the state as well. In the third place, many a murder has been prompted by the cowardly fears of a guilty man. When a man is committing some crime, or has already committed it, he wants no one to know about it, and if he cannot eliminate a possible informer in any other way, he murders him.

(IX 870a–d)

Three motives are enumerated: first comes love of wealth, the second is the quest for honors, and the third is the concern not to leave behind any witnesses. The quest for wealth is quite obviously linked to appetite (*epithumia*), whereas the search for honors (*philotimia*) and fear (*phobos*) is linked to spirit (*thumos*). The spirit of anger is responsible for several types of murder: murders, voluntary or not, under the impulse of anger (IX 867a, 867c, 868a), murder of parents by their children (IX 869a),³⁸ and murder of children by their parents (IX 868c). A murder may unleash the anger of a family against the murderer (IX 873a), or even of the victim against the guilty party (IX 865d). Spirit is also responsible for other crimes, such as insults (XI 934d),³⁹ and more or less rash disinheritances (XI 929a).

In the cases just mentioned, anger is a source of vicious behavior, a negative force that needs to be moderated by gentleness. However, anger can play a positive role, on two occasions: when one enters into a competition in the practice of virtue (V 731b), or when the time comes to punish the unjust (V 731b) or the evil (V 731d), and particularly atheists in Book X of the *Laws*. Finally, it should be noted that wine is a good revealer of the presence and depth of that virtue known as courage (I 645d, 649d).

(c) Intellect (*nous*) and its virtue, good judgment (*phronêsis*)

The absolute pre-eminence of the intellect in the city is forcefully affirmed in this passage on whether this pre-eminence is to be ensured by the laws or by an exceptional man:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: But if ever by the grace of God some natural genius were born, and had the chance to assume such power, he would have no need of laws to control him. Knowledge is unsurpassed by any law or regulation; reason, if it is genuine and really enjoys its natural freedom, should have universal power: it is not right that it should be under the

38 Children must put up with their parents' anger (IV 717d).

39 Insults are associated with comedy (XI 935d–936a).

control of anything else as though it were some sort of slave. But as it is, such a character is nowhere to be found, except a hint of it here and there. That is why we need to choose the second alternative, law and regulation, which embody general principles, but cannot provide for every individual case.

(IX 875 c–d)

However, this criticism must be understood with caution: Plato does not set up an opposition between the perfect king and recourse to the laws as mutually exclusive terms, but he notes the rarity of a wise king (as he does at *Statesman* 292e–293a) and suggests that in his absence, good legislation must replace him as a means of government. Such legislation is by no means exclusive of wisdom or of “divinity,” as is recalled at the end of the dialogue (XII 957c).

It is thus intellect (*nous*) that is needed by both the individual and the city (III 687e), although man is bereft of good judgment in his childhood (II 672c). He will thus be able to imitate the divinity (X 906b).

Children, like animals, can display moderation without good judgment (IV 710a), and this shows that appetite is different from the intellect. Likewise, intellect is distinct from spirit, just as judgment is distinct from courage:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: Here’s the question for you to put to me: “Why is it that after calling both by the single term ‘virtue,’ in the next breath we speak of two ‘virtues,’ courage and wisdom?” I’ll tell you why. One of them, courage, copes with fear, and is found in wild animals as well as human, and notably in the characters of very young children. The soul, you see, becomes courageous by a purely natural process, without the aid of reason. By contrast, in this absence of reason a wise and sensible soul is out of the question. That is true now, has always been true, and always will be true; the two processes are fundamentally different.

(XII 963d–e)

We must therefore conclude that a threefold division of the soul is found once again in the *Laws*. And since virtue in its totality – that is, excellence – is sought not only in individuals but also in the city (III 687c, 689c; IX 875c), it is legitimate to wonder whether this tripartition may not also be found in the city.

IV The tripartition of the city

I would now like to show, rather too rapidly, that in the *Laws*, one finds the same parallelism between the parts of the soul and those of the city as

in the *Republic*, even if the institutions are different.⁴⁰ To appetite, whose object is the pain and pleasure that must be mastered, correspond the ordinary citizens, or the people; to spirit, characterized by the courage that must resist pain, corresponds the magistracy of the Country Wardens; and to intellect or good judgment corresponds the supreme magistracy of the Watch Committee. This tripartition implies a bipartition, insofar as the people as such is distinguished from two magistracies, the Country Wardens and the Watch Committee, the latter indicating a governing body.

A The ordinary citizen, equivalent to the producers in the Republic

There is a passage in the third book of the *Laws*, in which appetite (*epithumia*) as a part of the soul is explicitly associated with the people (*dêmos*), or the multitude (*plêthos*) of citizens:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: The kind involved when a man thinks something is fine and good, but loathes it instead of liking it, and conversely when he likes and welcomes what he believes is wicked and unjust. I maintain that this disaccord between his feelings of pleasure and pain and his rational judgment constitutes the very lowest depth of ignorance. It is also the most "crass," in that it affects the most extensive element in the soul (*tou plêthous . . . tês psukhês*) – the element that experiences pleasure and pain, which corresponds to the most extensive part of a state, the common people (*dêmos te kai plêthos poleôs*).⁴¹

(III 689a–b)

The whole question turns on defining what a citizen is in the *Laws*. Generally speaking, a citizen is responsible for a lot, but he does not own it, for this lot is not transmissible. He has no salaried occupation, nor does he engage in commerce. He occupies himself exclusively with political affairs, and participates in common meals and religious festivals, which take place daily. All citizens (even women, under certain conditions) must bear arms to defend the city; this is a major difference from the *Republic*, where the military function was reserved for the separate group of the guardians. As we shall see, however, there exists within the city of the *Laws* an elite group that takes the place of the guardians of the *Republic*.

40 The details of the account sketched here will be filled in a forthcoming article.

41 Note the play on the word *plêthos*, which refers first to the soul, and then to the city.

B The country wardens (agronomoi), equivalent to the guardians in the Republic

One of the major differences between the *Laws* and the *Republic* consists in the fact that in the *Laws*, all the citizens, men and even women, must fight in the army, which is led and trained by specific magistracies (VI 755b–756b). Here, therefore, the military function is no longer reserved to a small, specialized group. However, a meticulous study of all the magistracies reveals the existence of a limited group, which, separated from the totality of the citizens as full-time magistrates, seems to constitute a reserve of specialists appointed to tasks of surveillance of the territory.⁴² From it are drawn the members of the supreme authority, the Watch Committee, which, as we shall see, is equivalent to the corps of philosopher-kings in the *Republic*.

In the first book of the *Laws*, in the context of the argument intended to show that courage, defined as resistance to pain, must not be considered as the only virtue worthy of being sought by the city, we find a passage in which Megillus gives the following praise of courage, the virtue pursued in priority by Lacedaemonia and Crete:

MEGILLUS: Well, I might try to add a fourth: the endurance of pain. This is a very conspicuous feature of Spartan life. You find it in our boxing matches, and also in our “raids,” which invariably lead to a severe whipping. There is also the “Secret Service,”⁴³ as it is called, which involves a great deal of hard work, and is a splendid exercise in endurance. In winter, its members go barefoot and sleep without bedclothes. They dispense with orderlies and look after themselves, ranging night and day over the whole country. Next, in the “Naked Games,” men display fantastic endurance, contending as they do with the full heat of summer. There are a great many other practices of the same kind, but if you produced a detailed list it would go on pretty well forever.

(I 633b–c)

Through the intermediary of courage, this passage associates the exercise of the part of the soul known as spirit primarily with the *krupteia*, a Spartan institution intended to train young people’s souls to resist pain. In the *Laws*, where courage is defined as resistance not only to pain but also to pleasure, the way of life associated with the *krupteia* is led by the

42 On this point I disagree with Saunders (1962), who takes this second group to be the Guardians of the laws (*nomophulakes*).

43 *Krupteia* in ancient Greek. On Sparta and its institutions, see Lévy (2003); 63–66 concern the *krupteia*.

agronomoi, who thus correspond to the guardians of the *Republic*. This correspondence is based on the following points: (1) the qualifications that serve to designate the *agronomoi*; (2) their way of life; and (3) the trials to which they seem to be subject, as well as their age upon their entry into function and their retirement.

The study I have devoted to this magistracy has led me to discern strong links between the Country Wardens (*agronomoi*) and the members of the Watch Committee (*nukterinos sullogos*), with regard to the following two points: their task, and the trials they are liable to undergo to accede to the supreme magistracy.⁴⁴

The silence surrounding the choice of the Commanders of the Guard in each tribe and the type of recruitment by cooptation of the young Country Wardens by the Commanders of the Guard constitutes an important distinctive feature, which brings to mind the Watch Committee. Neither the Commanders of the Guard nor the members of the Watch Committee are elected. They are designated, the former by their tribe and the latter by law. In both cases, recruitment seems to remain at the discretion of the Country Wardens and the members of the Watch Committee. It should be noted, moreover, that in the former case we have to do with young men between twenty-five and thirty years old, whereas in the latter case we have to do with young men who are between thirty and forty. We can therefore ask ourselves whether these are not the same individuals, creating, in a context of cooptation, an elite apt to accede later on to the highest magistracies, and above all to become members of the Watch Committee. Indeed, we note that the young Country Wardens will have a concrete and complete knowledge of the rural territory they have developed, and that they will have accomplished military, police, and judicial tasks. Yet they have to be chosen to become members of this elite.

*C The watch committee, equivalent to the philosophers in the Republic*⁴⁵

The Watch Committee constitutes the ultimate governmental authority evoked by the Athenian Stranger:

ATHENIAN STRANGER: And that means, Clinias and Megillus, that we now have to consider whether we are going to add yet another law (*nomon*) to

44 This section is based on Brisson (2003).

45 This section is based on Brisson (2000a).

the code we've already expounded, to the effect that the Watch Committee (*nukterinon sullogon*) consisting of magistrates (*tôn arkhontôn*), duly primed by the course of studies (*paideias*) we've described, shall be constituted the protector (*hôs phulakên*) of the safety of the state (*kharin sôtêrias tês poleôs*). Or is there some alternative course for us to take?

(*Laws* XII 968a–b)

According to this second passage, the Committee must be made up of the following members: (1) the ten oldest Guardians of the laws; (2) all those who have received the greatest distinctions; (3) observers who have traveled overseas, have returned safe and sound, and who, after examination, have been judged worthy of being members of the Committee; (4) an equal number of young men of at least thirty years of age. Let us examine each of the groups mentioned in these two texts, beginning with those that are common to both.

Once the necessity of the instrument for safeguarding has been admitted, it is fitting to consider the conditions under which this safeguarding can be ensured. This can occur only if the goal that must guide the city is well defined, with the principles that must preside over its constitution, and the means that will best ensure its efficacy (*Laws* XII 962b–c). Unlike other cities, of which a quick and brief inventory is proposed here (962d–e), the city of the Magnesians (962e) must have only one single goal (*heis skopos*), which is the totality of virtue (*pasa aretê*). This objective is not easy to achieve, for we have seen that there are four types of virtue (963a–964a), which must be reduced to unity under the aegis of the intellect (964a). This is what Jean-François Pradeau expresses in these terms: “The goal of the *Laws* is perfectly identical to that of the other dialogues that deal with the city, first among which is the *Republic*. As in the latter, the goal conferred upon political reflection, the conception of the constitution and the government of the city is to make all citizens accede to the totality of virtue. And this, in the *Laws* as in all Plato's dialogues, is only possible in a city governed by intelligence.”⁴⁶ The relation established between virtue and intelligence derives from the equivalence between virtue and knowledge.

When all is said and done, the *Laws* is more than a legislative treatise, even more than a work of political philosophy, for it appears as the realization of the project of Plato's work, which seeks to account for the whole of reality: individual, city, and universe. This discourse (*logos*)

46 See Pradeau (2002) 138.

in which the law (*nomos*) consists finds its origin in the intellect that represents what is most akin to the divine (*theos*) in mankind. In the *Laws*, the Watch Committee is assimilated to the intellect of the city. We can therefore understand why it can be qualified, in the last lines remaining to us of the *Laws*, as a divine Committee (*theios sullogos*) (969b). Through this Committee, the city becomes aware that it is an integral part of a universe that is not left to chance, which, because of the order it reflects, provides it with the model it must follow if it wants to achieve virtue, a virtue which therefore coincides with the contemplation of the order in the universe. In view of what has been said, it is hard not to find in the Watch Committee an equivalent of the philosopher-kings of the *Republic*.

I believe I have shown that in the *Laws*, Plato does not abandon his ethical doctrine, which implies a tripartition of the human soul into three distinct functions of intellect, spirit, and appetite, whose respective excellences are linked to the virtues of wisdom, courage, and moderation. In turn, the respective objects of these virtues are knowledge, fear, and pleasure, and they are the causes of specific actions (always good in the case of the intellect, good or bad in the case of the other two functions). Nor does Plato alter his political doctrine: it associates each of the three parts of the human soul with a virtue that characterizes three functional groups within the city: the ordinary citizens, who ensure agricultural production, should be moderate; the Country Wardens who, playing the part of the Guardians of the *Republic*, specialize in the security of the territory and have to be courageous; and the Watch Committee, which plays the part of the philosopher-kings of the *Republic*, is to provide a higher education for its members and for the city. Power is anchored within knowledge, thus ensuring the durability of a city that presents the regularity and the permanence of the movements of the celestial bodies. The *Laws* thus constitute not the renunciation of the political project formed by the *Republic*, but its culmination. Other means are used, but the goal remains the same: to give power to knowledge, both in the individual and in the city, and to ensure the durability of that domination over appetite and the totality of the citizens by means of a controlling authority.

Appendix: interpretative presuppositions

It may be useful to mention six methodological and interpretative presuppositions to which I adhere in my research on Plato.

(1) I am interested here not only in the *Laws*, but also in many other dialogues, which differ in their theme and their date of composition.⁴⁷ Some interpreters of Plato refuse to proceed in this way, considering that each dialogue must be analyzed in and for itself, without taking the others into account.⁴⁸

(2) In addition, I believe that Plato always expresses his own views through the dialogues, even if he does so through the intermediary of a variety of characters: Socrates, the Eleatic Stranger, Timaeus, and the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*. Even if we accept that Plato is not a philosophical author in the sense of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, but first a literary author, in the absence of explicit indications to the contrary we may attribute to him the doctrines that these characters set forth.⁴⁹

(3) I read the dialogues as the expression of a series of doctrinal positions which may have been modified in the course of Plato's life, but which exhibit a very great stability. This way of reading Plato, which was, it seems, that of the Old Academy and therefore of Aristotle, continues to be widely practiced.⁵⁰

(4) Considered from a general perspective, in Plato's works the soul is regarded as a reality intermediate between the sensible and the intelligible.⁵¹ It is not therefore perceptible either by the intellect (*nous*), since it is not a Form, or by any sense organ, since it is not a sensible particular thing. From this perspective, the type of discourse available for it cannot be verified and hence is very often mythical.⁵²

(5) According to the interpretation I defend, a particular soul cannot be reduced to a process or an activity; it is a distinct entity that has a personality and a history, at least for a certain period of time.⁵³ In order for a retributive system like the one proposed by Plato to work, it is

47 I have shown elsewhere that the *Timaeus* is among the last dialogues written by Plato; see e.g., Brisson (1999b) 72–75.

48 I do not share this position, although it has been defended by good interpreters of Plato. With regard to the soul, see Robinson (1970).

49 The problem of anonymity is a question I view as anachronistic. It was raised on the basis of a modern and contemporary perspective that takes for granted the existence of a “philosophical” genre, and as a function of a Romantic representation of the author, whose works are supposed to reveal his personality and his ideas.

50 This was the sort of reading adopted by Paul Shorey and Harold Cherniss, and in more recent times by Charles Kahn. I am hesitant about the use of the term “unitarian” to qualify this type of interpretation, but this is the overall orientation of my own interpretation.

51 This is implied by the “description” of the demiurge's mixture in the *Timaeus*, which is at the origin of the soul of the world (35a–b) and the soul of other particular living beings (41d).

52 See Brisson (1994). 53 See Dixsaut (2003) 196 ff.

necessary that an autonomous entity exist when death intervenes, and that this entity be transported from one body to another.

(6) As distinct entities, souls have parts; but since soul is incorporeal, these parts are to be understood neither as pieces of matter nor as *homunculi*. Soul is to be considered as a sort of self-moving source of energy devoted either to knowledge, spirit or appetite. The more this energy is devoted to knowledge, the better the soul is.

PART IV

Parts of the soul in the Platonic tradition

Plutarch on the division of the soul

JAN OPSOMER

If we want to establish Plutarch's views on the soul and its parts, the first place to look, I believe, is the works in which he expresses his own views directly, and not in the form of dialogues or myths. That is why I shall focus on the *Platonic Questions*, *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus*, and *On Moral Virtue*.¹ Other relevant texts, such as *On the Face on the Moon* and *On Socrates' Daemon* will then be used to complete the picture.²

I The world soul

What is a human soul? What are its functions? Does it have an origin? Does it have parts, and if so, what are they? In order to find an answer to these questions, Plutarch thinks, it is best to start by looking at the world soul. For in his view the human soul is "some portion (*meros ti*) or imitation (*mimêma*)"³ of the world soul. The idea is derived from *Timaeus* 41d4–7, where Plato says that human souls are composed in the same way as the world soul, yet made from inferior material, and *Timaeus* 69c5–9 (and 42e8), where the lesser gods are said to fabricate the human soul by imitating the demiurge's creation of the world soul. This puts us in the context of Plato's *Timaeus*. Plutarch offers an interpretation of this dialogue that is at the same time self-consciously idiosyncratic and honestly intended as an accurate account of Plato's views. According to that interpretation "soul itself" (*psukhê kath' heautên*) is an irrational cause of disorderly motion, upon which the demiurge has bestowed rationality as a part of himself,

1 I have set out my interpretation of Plutarch's *De Animae Procreatione in Timaeo* in Opsomer (2004). My interpretation of *De Virtute Morali* can be found in Opsomer (1994) and (2005) 180–83.

2 In my view there is no evidence that Plutarch changed his views on the soul in any significant way in the course of his philosophical career. Small differences are better explained by the differences of literary genre and of dialogical and philosophical context.

3 *De virt. mor.* 3.441f.

which resulted in its becoming a *cosmic* soul in the true sense, i.e., a well-ordered soul. Because of this double provenance the world soul has two aspects or parts, a rational and an irrational one. Its motion is therefore a combination of regularity and irregularity. For the same reason its cognitive faculties extend to both intelligible and sense-perceptible reality.⁴ Motion and cognition are indeed the two chief cosmological functions of the soul, or rather they are two aspects of a single activity: cognitive motion.⁵ Although its cognitive and kinetic rationality and irrationality are explained by the original constituents of the soul, this does not necessarily mean that what Plutarch calls the rational and irrational parts of the created soul are *identical* with these constituents. In fact Plutarch emphasizes Plato's idea that the constituents are blended together so as to form a harmonious whole. In a second step this blend is ordered with the use of additional harmonies. After the blending, however, the original constituents are no longer present in their pure state. The original ingredients may be the *principles* of opposite powers,⁶ but this does not mean that they should be equated with the rational and irrational parts of the created soul.

The irrational "soul itself" is supposed to correspond to what Plato in *Timaeus* 35a calls "the being that becomes divisible in the realm of bodies," whereas the "indivisible being" mentioned in the same passage is said to explain the rationality acquired by this original soul.⁷ Apart from chance flashes of contact with the intelligible (it is not clear what explains their occurrence) the pre-cosmic soul was turned entirely towards matter. It had a confused and dream-like perception of it and caused a chaotic motion in it. As soon as it became a well-ordered cosmic soul, however, it started to move the material world in a regular way, thereby imparting structure to it. At the same time its perceptions became articulate and clear and started to result in stable and true opinions.⁸ Even now the cosmic or "world" soul perceives the material world by reaching out to it in what is called a "motion of perception" (*aisthêtikê kinêsis*), that stems from the original soul.

Plutarch does not seem to worry about the question how the world soul can perceive in the absence of sense-organs. Apparently the world soul

4 *De an. procr.* 23.1023e–f. 5 *De an. procr.* 9.1016c; 24.1024e.

6 *De an. procr.* 7.1015e.

7 *De an. procr.* 6.1014d–e. At 7.1015c, Plutarch quotes Plato *Polit.* 273d6–e1, where the ancient state of the universe is held to be responsible for things that go wrong in it, whereas everything that is good comes from its maker.

8 *De an. procr.* 23.1024a–b.

has images by being in direct contact with the perceptible.⁹ Its cognition somehow involves becoming divided and extending itself alongside matter. Supposedly this is why Plato calls the irrational soul the “being” or “nature” that “becomes divisible in the realm of bodies.” Contrariwise, intellect is undivided and remains the same.¹⁰ Yet that is true, strictly speaking, for the divine (demiurgic) intellect only.¹¹ The intellect that has become part of the cosmic soul shares in its motion and accomplishes with it the circular motion by which it remains “in contact with true being.” It turns the soul towards it (*epistrephei*), letting it partake of knowledge of the intelligible.¹² Even though the intellect of the soul probably maintains its undividedness and unchanging being, it is at any rate moved along with the soul.

II World soul and human soul

The world soul is thus composed of two constituents, one of which, namely the irrational “soul itself,” is the principle of motion and capacity to cognize the sense-perceptible world, whereas the rational component is the principle of order that also constitutes the capacity for knowledge of the intelligible. As a result the created soul has two circles, one characterized by regularity, the other by irregularity. This analysis can now be transposed to the level of human souls. They too essentially consist of two parts, the superior of which is of divine origin.¹³ Just like the world soul, human souls have a kinetic and cognitive aspect. As we have seen, Plutarch holds that the world soul and human souls are structurally the same, although in the human soul the relative strength of the irrational element is greater.¹⁴

9 The cognitive capacity of the soul, even that of the pre-cosmic soul, is referred to both as perception and imagination. See *De an. procr.* 9.1016c (τῷ αἰσθητικῷ); 1017a (φανταστικῆς καὶ δοξαστικῆς φορᾶς καὶ ὁρμῆς); 22.1023c; 24.1024e–f.

10 Cf. *Tim.* 35a. The entire first part of Plutarch’s treatise *De Animae Procreatione* is a commentary on this passage. Plutarch’s interpretation rests on the identification of the divisible and the indivisible nature mentioned by Plato with soul itself and intellect (or the intelligible), respectively.

11 Even in this case there is room for doubt. Cf. Opsomer (2007) 297–98, 302–3.

12 *De an. procr.* 24.1024c–d. Plutarch refrains from specifying the exact relation between the (separated) intellect and the intelligible. They certainly belong to the same realm, but are probably not identical; at any rate, he nowhere endorses the “Middle” Platonist view that the intelligible Forms are the ideas of god. Cf. Ferrari (1995) 187–269; Opsomer (2005) 185–86.

13 Cf. *De an. procr.* 27.1026d. 14 Cf. Baltes (2000) 257–58; (2005) 88.

The main problem with this interpretation would seem to be that Plato intended the composition of the world soul to be structurally parallel to the *immortal* part of the human soul alone, not to the whole human soul.¹⁵ In other words, the world soul of the *Timaeus* would seem to have no “mortal part” such as is fabricated by the younger gods for the human soul later on in the *Timaeus*. That is not, however, how Plutarch sees things. World soul and human soul are structurally identical as far as the relation between an irrational part and reason is concerned. In other words, the part added by the lesser gods is structurally the same as the “divisible being” used by the demiurge.¹⁶ Hence the so-called mortal parts of the human soul are probably not really mortal, since they are “soul itself.” Plato’s reason for calling them “mortal” was probably their close relation to body.¹⁷

This structural parallel is emphasized both in Plutarch’s treatise on the *Timaeus* and in his tract *On Moral Virtue*. Having explained that the two parts of the world soul derive from even higher principles – Sameness and Difference¹⁸ – Plutarch examines how these powers (*dunameis*) interact when they enter (*pareisiousai*) into mortal bodies. In human souls the irrational part deriving from Difference is stronger than it is in the world soul.¹⁹ Yet there is nothing in the soul that is unmixed and pure.²⁰ This duality can be witnessed throughout, in all of its activities. Thus the soul is both contemplative (*theorêtikê*) and practical (*praktikê*): on the one hand, it contemplates universals, that is, it thinks them intellectually (*noein*), and, on the other, it acts on particulars.²¹ “Shared reason,” viz., reason that is both practical and contemplative (*ho koinos logos*), is capable of recognizing sameness in difference and difference in sameness.²² With definitions and divisions it tries to separate unity and plurality, and the divided and the undivided, but fails to grasp any of them in their purity, because all of these polar principles – Dividedness and Undividedness, Difference and Sameness (*Timaeus* 35a) – are intertwined in soul’s nature. This can also be seen in the domain of moral psychology. We would be

15 Cf. Robinson (1995) 85, 89, 105. 16 Cf. *De an. procr.* 28.1026e–1027a.

17 Cf. *De an. procr.* 27.1026d. 18 See, once more, *Tim.* 35a.

19 *De an. procr.* 26.1025d. On this difficult passage, see Ferrari and Baldi (2002) 307–8 n. 188.

20 *De an. procr.* 27.1026c: “Of the soul, however, nothing remains pure or unmixed or separate from the rest” (trans. Cherniss (1976)). Cf. *De virt. mor.* 4.443bc; *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008c.

21 This text may be fruitfully compared to Alcinous *Didask.* 2.

22 *De an. procr.* 26.1025e.

hard put to find either an emotion or passion (*pathos*) devoid of reason (*logismos*), or a motion of the mind (*kinêsis dianoias*) in which there is not also present some desire or ambition (*epithumia, philotimia*).²³ This situation, says Plutarch, has led to two different errors of judgment: some claim that all passions are reasons, more precisely mistaken judgments, whereas others think that virtues are situated *in* the emotions.²⁴ Plutarch is referring here to the Stoics and the Peripatetics, respectively. Both have erred, but in different directions. They have been misled by the inseparability of passion and reason characteristic of human life into thinking that the soul can be reduced to one of these two aspects. The Platonist view, on the contrary, acknowledges both aspects or parts (the irrational and rational, that is) yet emphasizes their interaction. The imagery is in the first place that of the *Timaeus*: reason is mixed with necessity, which it steers using persuasion.²⁵

Just as the original soul is the source of evil in the world – although in the cosmic state it is not a separate soul, but a constituent part of the world soul – the irrational principle in the nature of our souls is the source of trouble. Despite there being a strong tradition in Platonism for making matter or the body the source of evil, Plutarch insists that “soul itself” is the culprit.²⁶ For the duration of our earthly existence this is not a second soul we have, but a constituent of our souls which is the source of the passions. The irrational is a part of our human nature we have to be aware of and keep an eye on if we want to lead a good life, i.e., a morally good and therefore happy life.

III *Apatheia* vs. *metriopatheia*

This insight also turns out to be essential to Plutarch’s views on how to cure the soul of its illnesses, i.e., of vice. Plutarch wrote quite a lot of works in which he gives practical moral advice. The key to success consists in remaining sharply aware of the fact that our soul has these two aspects. Hence it would be foolish to think we can get rid of the irrational and the passions. In Plutarch’s opinion it is mandatory that we always keep an eye on our passions and that we should never be misled into believing that we have become completely rational. For the passions are always there, even if they lurk in the dark, and are always ready to overtake us

23 *De an. procr.* 26.1025d. Cf. Plato *Phil.* 15e2–4. 24 *De an. procr.* 26.1025d.

25 *De an. procr.* 27.1026b. Cf. Plato *Tim.* 47e5–48a5.

26 *De an. procr.* 6.1014e–1015b.

if we drop our guard.²⁷ They are an intrinsic part of our soul. What is more, in a sense they are caused by the “soul itself,” whereas reason²⁸ comes from outside, literally as a divine gift, as we have seen. Without the principle of irrationality we would be dead, at least in the sense that we would not be able to live our earthly lives.²⁹ The (irrational) soul is the principle of motion and hence life; but it is also the source of the passions. Therefore the passions are ineradicable, and hence the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* or complete insusceptibility to passion is misguided. That is why Plutarch in his works of practical ethics develops a “therapy of the soul” that constitutes an alternative to the Stoic model.³⁰ The Stoics are indeed his main rivals in a debate in which the Peripatetics are actual allies of the Platonists (the Peripatetic mistake of considering moral virtues as belonging to the passions themselves can be corrected relatively easily, claims Plutarch, by pointing out that the *logos* or “measure” is in fact a higher principle that harmonizes the passions). The same anti-Stoic strategy can be observed in Plutarch’s theoretical work *On Moral Virtue*, which is heavily indebted to a tradition of Peripatetic works on this very topic.

The doctrine of *metriopatheia* is interpreted by Plutarch as being in essential agreement with Platonism. It says that we do not need to rid ourselves of our emotions or passions, but merely of their extremes. In other words, we have to establish the right mean (*mesotês*) or proportion (*logos*). This is something, however, that is done by reason (*logos*). The Aristotelian mean or proportion (*logos*) is realized by the activity of reason (*logos*)³¹ which as it were installs itself into the passions. This agrees with

27 Cf. *Quomodo adulator* 61d: “The one mode of protection, as it would seem, is to realize and remember always that our soul has its two sides: on the one side are truthfulness, love for what is honorable, and power to reason, and on the other side irrationality, love of falsehood, and the emotional element” (trans. after Babbitt (1927)).

28 In this context *logos* (reason, rationality) is equivalent to *nous* insofar as the latter designates human intellect (itself an offshoot of the divine intellect). More strictly speaking *logos* here denotes the mode of existence of *nous* when the latter is joined to the soul: cf. *De an. procr.* 26.1025e and *De facie* 28.943a (with Bernardakis’ emendation cf. n. 38 below). *Nous* then is more readily used for intellect in its disincarnate and even “disensouled” state.

29 Intellect can only come to be in this world through the intermediary of a soul. Cf. *Tim.* 30b3: “it is impossible for anything to come to possess intelligence apart from soul,” quoted in *Quaest. Plat.* IV 1002f; see also *Tim.* 46d5–6; *Soph.* 249a4–8; *Phil.* 30c9–10, with Opsomer (2004) 154–55.

30 The classic work on the ancient *Seelenheilungslehre* is Rabbow (1914). For Plutarch, see Ingenkamp (1971). See also Foucault (1984); Hadot (1995).

31 Plutarch’s play on the polysemy of *logos* is discussed below.

Plutarch's interpretation of the *Timaeus*, according to which reason is something divine added to the original soul.³²

IV The soul in Plutarch's philosophical myths

Before we turn to *On Moral Virtue* I would like to point out that the view of the soul as essentially bipartite has an interesting counterpart in Plutarch's theory of double death as told in the myth in *On the Face on the Moon*: whereas the first death consists in the separation of soul and body, the second death occurs when intellect (*nous*) takes its leave from the (irrational) soul (*psukhê*). What is called "soul" in this myth is apparently the same as what Plutarch calls "soul itself" or "irrational soul" in his interpretation of the *Timaeus*. The myth contains the remarkable doctrine³³ that souls stem from the moon, whereas intellect stems from the sun. To what extent is this to be taken literally? I tend to think that Plutarch wanted this doctrine to be understood as part of a myth, and not too literally, since in several other texts he says, on the one hand, that the intellect of the soul stems from the highest god,³⁴ and on the other, that the highest god may be associated with the sun, but is not identical with it.³⁵ If the intellect does not really stem from the sun, I do not think the souls literally stem from the moon either.³⁶

Be that as it may, the strong distinction between intellect and soul is the truly remarkable thing about this myth. Sulla, its narrator, even explicitly denies that intellect (*nous*) is a part of the soul. It is as distinct from the soul as soul is distinct from the body.³⁷ This doctrine agrees with the view that intellect is bestowed on the soul from outside, as something that originally belongs to the demiurge, as a part of himself – an idea we have encountered in the strictly exegetical texts. If an emendation by Bernardakis is correct, in the passage at hand Sulla specifies that reason (*logos*) is the result of the mixture of intellect (*nous*) and soul (*psukhê*).

32 Cf. Opsomer (1994).

33 It may in part go back to Xenocrates. Cf. Dillon (1999). In earlier scholarly discussions, Xenocrates but especially Posidonius have often been mentioned as a possible source for the myth in the *De facie*. In essence, however, Plato's *Timaeus* was the main source of inspiration for the myth. See Görgemanns (1970) 80–81 n. 117; Cherniss and Helmbold (1957) 23–25.

34 Cf. e.g., *Quaest. Plat.* II 1001c; *De sera num. vind.* 16.559d; Opsomer (2007) 290–92, 96–97.

35 Cf. *De E* 21.393d; *De Pyth. orac.* 12.400d; *Amat.* 19.764d.

36 See also *Amat.* 9.764d; Cherniss and Helmbold (1957) 25 n. a.

37 Cf. *De facie* 28.943a.

Analogously, “the irrational and passionate” would be said to be the outcome of the mixture between the soul and the body.³⁸ There may not be a big doctrinal difference with the texts examined previously. Indeed, I take the difficulty to be mainly terminological: in *On the Face on the Moon* the term “intellect” is apparently reserved for the separate intellect, whereas “reason” designates what is elsewhere usually called “intellect” in the soul. And while the idea that the combination of “soul” (itself) and body gives rise to the passions is not exactly the same as that expressed in the exegetic works (where Plutarch merely says that the original soul is the principle of the passions),³⁹ it is not fundamentally different from it either. As regards the connection with body, human souls differ from the universal soul. For unlike the universal soul, human souls are not always connected with body. Indeed, as the myth tells us, in between incarnations they are separate from body. And when they are – and certainly when they are separated from intellect as well – they should be called souls, not “the irrational” or “the passions.” At any rate, in this text too “reason,” i.e., ensouled intellect, is a part of the compound soul, just as “the irrational” or “the passionate part” is.⁴⁰

A related doctrine can be found in the myth of Timarchus in *On the Sign of Socrates*, although there Plutarch expresses himself less clearly. Every soul, says Timarchus, participates in intellect, but also mingles with body. Whereas some people sink entirely into the body, others mingle in part and leave their best part outside like a buoy attached to the top. Now the part submerged in the body is called soul (*psukhê*), whereas the part left free from corruption is called intellect (*nous*) by the multitude, falsely believing that it is in the soul, just as they think objects reflected are *in* the mirror. Those who understand the matter correctly, however, call the higher part a *daemon* and consider it to be outside.⁴¹

In part, again, the problem is terminological. “Soul” is said to be the name for the irrational passions, yet Timarchus is not always careful to restrict it to that part. “Intellect” refers to an entity internal to the soul, but the idea that the best part is internal to the soul amounts to a mistake, claims Timarchus. The multitude, however, choose to call it intellect *because* they think it is internal. What Timarchus calls *daemon* is identical

38 Cf. *De facie* 28.943a: ποιεῖ δ' ἡ μὲν ψυχῆς <καὶ σώματος μῖξις τὸ ἄλογον καὶ τὸ παθητικόν ἡ δὲ νοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς> σύνθετος λόγος. Bernardakis' emendation is supported by 943d and adopted by Cherniss in Cherniss and Helmbold (1957). I would prefer to drop the article before παθητικόν.

39 See, however, *De virt. mor.* 11.451a.

40 Cf. *De facie* 28.943d. 41 Cf. *De genio* 22.591d–e.

with what is called *nous* in *On the Face on the Moon*. The view that our best part is, in some persons, untainted by the body is not in disagreement with the texts discussed above. Yet to say that it is “outside” even during our earthly existence is a claim Plutarch did not make in those other texts. But of course, Timarchus does not deny that the best part remains attached to the rest of the soul during that time. It is only after death that the *daemon* floats around freely.⁴² It cannot be ignored that in the myth of Timarchus soul and intellect are not as sharply distinguished from one another as is the case in other texts. On the one hand, the phrase “soul participated in intellect” implies an original distinction between two entities.⁴³ On the other, Timarchus even seems to suggest that intellect, when it descends into body, *becomes* soul in the body: in other words, that “soul” would be a transformation⁴⁴ or degeneration⁴⁵ of intellect. We may conclude that Timarchus’ doctrine is certainly in agreement with Plutarch’s view of the soul as consisting of reason and the irrational, but is ambiguous with regard to the origin and proper nature of the two parts.⁴⁶ In itself, that is not a problem, since Plutarch has the habit of incorporating in his myths material from other sources that are not always perfectly compatible with his own considered views.

V Moral virtue and the tripartite soul

The chief aim of Plutarch’s treatise *On Moral Virtue* is to attack the (orthodox) Stoic “monolithic” view of the soul which entails the moral ideal of *apatheia*. The treatise is probably meant for students, who are confronted with the Stoic alternative to Platonism and need to be strengthened in their faith. As he does in his works of practical ethics, Plutarch appeals to introspection, i.e., to our vivid experience of conflicting parts or powers within ourselves, in order to prove the Stoics wrong.⁴⁷ Among other things, he explicitly addresses the problem of the number of soul-parts. There can be no doubt that Plutarch regards the bipartition as fundamental; but of course, when a Platonist expressly discusses soul-division he has to take into account what Plato says about the *three* parts of the soul.

42 Cf. *De genio* 22.591f. 43 Cf. Hamilton (1934) 179.

44 Cf. Jones (1980) 58 n. 148; *De genio* 22.591d: ἄλλοιοῦμενον τρέπεται . . . εἰς τὸ ἄλογον.

45 Cf. Cherniss and Helmbold (1957) 203 n. a; *De genio* 22.591e: τὸ μὲν οὖν ὑποβρύχιον ἐν τῷ σώματι φερόμενον ψυχὴ λέγεται· τὸ δὲ φθορᾶς λειφθὲν κτλ.

46 Cf. Deuse (1983) 45–47. 47 Cf. Ingeknamp (1999).

First, Plutarch presents a doxography of Stoic views.⁴⁸ All the Stoics consider passion to be perverted reason and speak of “irrational” only in the sense of an excess in the impulses⁴⁹ resulting in the doing of something outrageous, which contravenes the choice of reason. Plutarch rejects these views: they result from a fatal failure to understand the duality of the soul. At this point Plutarch introduces a different and far superior philosophical tradition, that of Pythagoras,⁵⁰ Plato, and Aristotle, who all recognize “some twofold nature and dissimilarity of the very soul within itself.”⁵¹ Since two heterogeneous parts are joined together, some use of force is required, but at the same time their association is natural. That is why Plutarch calls the join both “necessary” and “natural” (*anagkêi tini kai phusei*).

According to Plutarch, Plato’s doctrine of the partition of the soul is most clearly explained in the *Timaeus*, more particularly in the description of the composition of the world soul. The forces of Sameness and Difference show themselves in the movements and circles of that soul. In the human soul these forces are called reason or intellect (*to noeron kai logistikon*), on the one hand, and the passionate and irrational (*to pathêtikon kai alogon*), on the other.⁵² As we have seen, this fundamental duality between reason and passions ultimately stems from the original constituents. These constituents are essentially the same in the case of the

48 *De virt. mor.* 2.440e–441b. For an excellent reconstruction of these different positions, see Cooper (1999a) 90–107.

49 Cf. Zeno fr. 205, SVFI 50.

50 Plutarch relied on an existing doxographic tradition which made Pythagoras the precursor of Plato, not just in general but also concerning the bipartition of the soul in particular. Cf. ps.-Plutarch *De plac. phil.* 898e (= Aëtius IV 4.1, DG 389a10–390a4; see also Theodoretus *De Graec. aff. cur.* V, 19) and Cicero *Tusc.* IV 5.10. Galen (*On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates* IV 425, 290, 1–5 De Lacy; cf. 334.30–33) claims that Posidonius not only regarded the duality of the soul as a view held by Pythagoras and further developed by Plato (= Posidonius fr. 165.168–172 = Test. 95 Edelstein–Kidd), but also invoked this tradition against Chrysippus. In the *Gorgias* (493a–b) Plato appears to ascribe the view that the passions are in a separate part or aspect of the soul to “men from Sicily or Italy.” The author of the *Magna Moralia*, however, draws a contrast between Plato’s treatment of virtue based on the bipartition of the soul and Pythagoras’ numerological views on virtue (1.1.1082a10–26). Further parallels are listed by Babut (1969) 135–36 n. 23. See also Bellanti 2007 (229–30); Vander Waerdt (1985a) 376. For Posidonius’ own strategy, which was probably different from the one attributed to him by Galen, see Tieleman 2003, 284–85. For Posidonius’ interpretation of Plato’s tripartition, see Vander Waerdt (1985a) 385–88. Vander Waerdt argues convincingly that Posidonius may have been the source of the doxographic tradition that makes Pythagoras the father of the bipartition doctrine, worked out and completed by Plato.

51 *De virt. mor.* 3.441d.

52 *De virt. mor.* 3.441e–442a.

world soul and the human soul, so Plutarch thinks, and moreover give rise to basically the same faculties or parts: like the world soul, the human soul has a rational and an irrational part, although in the human soul the power balance shifts somewhat more towards the latter, which is not the case for the cosmic soul. This model leaves no room for a separate third part of the soul. Any function or power of the human soul must be attributable to one of the two main parts or to both. There can be a greater complexity *within* the main parts, however, and this is a difference between human souls and world soul, and the reason why it is after all possible to include “the spirited.”

When Plutarch moves to tripartition the background is the moral psychology of the *Republic*.⁵³ The irrational part, he says, is itself split in two: the appetitive and the spirited element. The first is characterized as being by nature and invariably inclined to serve the body, whereas the second at some times consorts with the appetitive element, at others with reason.⁵⁴ Plutarch does not here say, as the *Republic* does (IV 440a6–441a3), that the spirited element is the natural helper of reason, but rather begins by describing it as being in the middle and always ready to switch alliances. The next sentence, however, betrays his true conviction: in fact Plutarch believes the spirited element is more closely related to the appetitive, for he emphasizes the opposition between the two irrational parts, on the one hand, and reason, on the other. The constant struggle shows that they are really different forces (and not just conceptually different).⁵⁵ The idea that struggle can be used in an argument that purports to show the real difference of parts is derived from the *Republic*, yet Plutarch apparently disregards the fact that there it was introduced in the first place to show the difference between the two lower parts.⁵⁶ Given that Plutarch considers the bipartition more fundamental and the distinction between the spirited and appetitive element as a subdivision of the irrational part, it is only natural for him to put less emphasis on the alliance between the spirited and reason.

Plato too (or rather, Socrates in the *Republic*, but Plutarch would not want to distinguish between the two now) starts from a bipartition⁵⁷ and then poses the question whether *thumos* may be a third part.⁵⁸ Yet,

53 Yet the *Timaeus* too contains an account of tripartition, but only in the physiological part of the work (69d–71a; 73b–d).

54 *De virt. mor.* 3.442a.

55 *De virt. mor.* 3.442a. Cf. 7.447c; *De an. procr.* 27.1026d; *Quomodo adulator* 61d–f; Galen, *PHP* IV 7.288.30–31 De Lacy.

56 Cf. *Rep.* IV 439e5–440b7. 57 *Rep.* IV 439e1–2. 58 *Rep.* IV 439e2–3.

whereas Glaucon, led by his intuition, at first believes that the spirited element is more closely related to the appetites than to reason, Socrates argues that this view is erroneous and claims that in a healthy and just soul spirit is the helper of reason. Or in other words: that it is its helper by nature.⁵⁹ This idea is something Plutarch passes over. However, there is not necessarily a contradiction with the *Republic*. The difference is rather a question of emphasis. After all, in the *Timaeus* Plato himself combines the view that the appetites and spirit are both situated within the “mortal part” of the soul (69c5–d6) with the idea that spirit is the helper of reason (69e5–70a7).

Plutarch’s account of Plato’s tripartition is followed by a much debated and somewhat confusing description of Aristotle’s views on the division of the soul. First, Plutarch draws attention to the similarity with Plato: “Aristotle made use of these principles” (i.e., the Platonic threefold division)⁶⁰ “for quite a long time” or “to a large extent” (*epi pleon*).⁶¹ This is “obvious from his writings” (Plutarch may be thinking of the *Topics*, with which he was familiar).⁶² “Later, however, he assigned the spirited to the appetitive, in as much as anger (*thumos*) is a sort of appetite (*epithumia*) and desire to return pain for pain (*orexis antilupêseôs*).”⁶³ Notwithstanding the shift from tripartition to bipartition, however, Aristotle has “continued to the end” (*mekhri pantos* . . . *diotelesen*) “to treat the irrational and passionate part as distinct from the rational.”⁶⁴ The rational/irrational division is indeed typical of Aristotle. As a matter of fact, Plato does not use this terminology even in those texts where he distinguishes merely two parts: in those cases he usually opposes the *logistikon* (or *logos*) to the passions, or, in the *Timaeus*, calls one part mortal, the other divine or immortal.⁶⁵

59 *Rep.* IV 439e3; 440e1–441a3.

60 Possibly the tripartition as *resting on* a more fundamental bipartition (as it is presented in the sentence immediately preceding the reference to Aristotle). But at any rate the view attributed to Aristotle here is opposed to a later view of his according to which there are just two parts, since the spirited element is now regarded as a mere variation of the appetitive: ὅστερον δὲ τὸ μὲν θυμοειδὲς τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ προσέειμεν.

61 *De virt. mor.* 3.442b. See Babut (1969) 137–41 n. 35–36.

62 Cf. *Top.* V 4.133a30–32 and Babut (1969) 138; Vander Waerdt (1985a) 378–79 n. 23.

63 *De virt. mor.* 3.442a. Compare pseudo-Plutarch, *De Libidine et Aegritudine* 1, where two different views are mentioned: either it is a sort of *epithumia*, says the author while referring to the same Aristotelian definition of *orgê*, or “something different and distinct, an affection (*pathos*) that, as Plato supposed, often positively conflicts with desire (*epithumia*)” (trans. Sandbach 1969). See also *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1008c–e (below).

64 *De virt. mor.* 3.442b.

65 Cf. Vander Waerdt (1985b) 284–86. Vander Waerdt persuasively argues that the Peripatetic interpretation of Plato’s psychology and the concomitant transformation of

There can be little doubt that Plutarch is indeed speaking about a development in Aristotle's thought, although some scholars have denied this. Yet Plutarch is not so much interested in the philosophical biography of Aristotle. The distinction between the two stages turns merely on the question whether the spirited element is itself a "part" (*morion*) or "force" (*dunamis*) of its own or merely a "sort of appetite" (*epithumia tis*). In an ethical context, however, the more relevant distinction is that between reason and the passions.⁶⁶ This division is indeed essential to the Aristotelian *Ethics*, as the distinction between ethical and intellectual virtues is based on it. It also played a significant role in the exoteric writings, as Aristotle himself indicates.⁶⁷ (Aristotle's remark here or the availability of the esoteric works may have given rise to Plutarch's claim that Aristotle throughout his entire career remained faithful to the distinction between reason and the passions.)

Plutarch's own psychology is, as we have seen, essentially bipartite. The further distinction between the spirited and the appetitive part plays no role of significance for him. If it is mentioned in his works on moral virtue at all the spirited is usually treated as being on a par with the appetitive, as belonging to the passionate, irrational part of the soul.⁶⁸ Its excess is

Peripatetic doctrine in the *Magna Moralia* dominated virtually all subsequent discussion of soul-partition. Plutarch appears to disregard the fact that Aristotle in *De an.* I.5, 411a26–b30 rejects the idea that these functions constitute *parts* (Aristotle objects to the view that there are locally distinct parts, but does not deny that the different faculties are really, as opposed to merely conceptually, distinct). Aristotle admits that this distinction between parts and functions makes no difference for ethics: *EE* II.1, 1219b32–36; *EN* I.13, 1102a28–32. Plato usually speaks of *eidê* or *ideai*. On the terminology, see Vander Waerdt (1985b) 286 n. 9. See also pseudo-Plutarch, *Utrum Pars An Facultas Animi Affectibus Subiecta Sit* (translated in Sandbach (1969) 60–71).

66 Compare the summary of Peripatetic ethics attributed to "Didymus" in Stobaeus 2.7.20, 137.15–18 Wachsmuth ("doxography C"), where it is claimed that the Aristotelians treat the soul as consisting of two parts "for the sake of the present discussion" (πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν θεωρίαν), i.e., in an ethical context, more precisely, in the context of moral virtue. At the beginning of the doxography the soul is presented as fundamentally bipartite, while the lower part comprises the two lower Platonic soul-parts (2.7.13, 117.11–18). It is also useful to compare the *Magna Moralia*, where in I.4 1185a21, the spirited seems to be distinguished from the appetitive, whereas in I.5 1185b1–12, where the author discusses the moral virtues, the distinction is that between reason and the irrational, followed by the qualification that by "the irrational" is meant the part that is able to serve reason. For the psychology of the *Magna Moralia*, see Vander Waerdt (1985b).

67 *EN* I.12 1102a26–28. Cf. *Protr.* fr. 6 Walzer/Ross (= Iamblichus *Protr.* 7 41, 15–43, 25). Cf. Moraux (1973) 230.

68 An exception is of course the third, doxographic chapter of *De Virtute Morali*, where Plutarch explicitly discusses tripartition. This is also the case in *Quaest. Plat.* IX

rashness, its deficiency cowardice, whereas its virtuous, moderate disposition is called courage. Plutarch thus applies the Aristotelian analysis of courage to Plato's *thumoeides*,⁶⁹ but the fact that the latter is supposed to be a separate part of the soul is of no consequence. Moreover, as a matter of fact Plutarch's claim that the human soul is structurally identical to the cosmic soul leaves no room for a third, intermediate part of the soul.⁷⁰ Yet Plutarch also wants to account for Plato's view of the spirited as a separate part. Hence the solution that consists in making it result from a subdivision of the irrational part, for which it was possible to find justification in the fact that in the *Timaeus* both lower soul-parts belong to the mortal part of the soul.⁷¹

This solution is not new. It figures already in doxographic sources⁷² and in Neopythagorean pseudepigraphic texts on moral virtue. Plutarch's treatise is indeed part of a larger tradition of tracts on moral virtue to which these Neopythagorean texts also belong and which ultimately goes back to Aristotle's treatment of the issue. In particular the resemblances of Plutarch's text with Metopus' *On Virtue* and Theages' *On Virtue* are striking. Like Plutarch, Metopus regards the distinction between reason and the irrational as fundamental and the distinction between the appetitive and the spirited as a subdivision of the irrational soul-part.⁷³ Theages is closer to the *Republic* than either Plutarch or Metopus: he

1007e–1009b (cf. *infra*). The spirited is further mentioned in Plutarch's *Coriolanus* 15.4. In *De E* 13.390f and *De def. or.* 36.429e Plato's three soul-parts are supplemented by Aristotle's vegetative (*phutikon* or *threptikon*) and perceptive (*aisthêtikon*) parts. In both cases a character in the dialogue tries to list as many occurrences of the number five as possible; the doctrines and views reported are not necessarily Plutarch's.

69 *De virt. mor.* 6.445a. Cf. also Plato *Rep.* IX 590a10–b1; Metopus, *De virt.* 118,10 Thesleff (= Stob. 3.1.115, 69.13–14 Hense).

70 There is no tripartition in the world soul, *pace* Baltes (2000) 256; (2005) 87.

71 Compare Alcinous *Didask.* 23.176.8–11; 24.176.37–39 Whittaker-Louis. Cf. Deuse (1983) 86; Vander Waerdt (1985a) 378.

72 Cf. ps.-Plutarch *De plac. phil.* 898e = Aëtius IV 4.1, *DG* 389a10–390a4: κατὰ μὲν τὸν ἀνωτάτω λόγον, the soul is bipartite according to Pythagoras and Plato; κατὰ δὲ τὸ προσεχὲς καὶ ἀκριβές, it is tripartite. A similar distinction between two levels of explanation is made by Eudorus in his account of the *Pythagorean* doctrine of the highest principles (*ap. Simplicius in Phys.* 181.10–13). For Eudorus, however, the “highest account” is also clearly the best. Whether that is also so for the author of the doxography is less clear; the highest account may simply refer to the first (but therefore also the most fundamental) division of the soul. A text like ps.-Plutarch *De Vita et Poesi Homeri* 129 (II 1437–44 Kindstrand: τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς ἐχούσης, ὡς καὶ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις δοκεῖ, τὸ μὲν λογικὸν ἐνιδρυμένον τῇ κεφαλῇ, τὸ δὲ ἄλογον, καὶ τούτου τὸ μὲν θυμικὸν ἐνοικοῦν τῇ καρδίᾳ, τὸ δὲ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐν τοῖς περὶ γαστέρα) presumably echoes the doxographic tradition.

73 Metopus *De Virtute* 117.5–14; 117.28–118.6 Thesleff = Stobaeus 3.1.115, 67.10–68.5; 69.1–9 Hense.

starts from the tripartition of the soul, linking the “cardinal” virtues to the three parts and their harmonious cooperation, and in a second move subsumes appetite and spirit under the heading “irrational part.”⁷⁴ A further element these texts have in common with Plutarch is that in their interpretation of Plato’s psychology they separate – more strictly than Plato⁷⁵ had – the cognitive from the orectic, locating the latter exclusively in the irrational, desiderative part. This is a common feature in Pythagorean and Peripatetic texts, and is to be regarded as the outcome of a process of harmonizing Plato’s and Aristotle’s psychology.⁷⁶ This indeed agrees with Plutarch’s explanation of the composition of the soul, according to which the irrational stems from the original soul, i.e., the source of motion and striving.⁷⁷

VI Moral virtue and the bipartite soul

The irrational soul can either be in agreement or in disagreement with reason, both to various extents. When there is agreement, the soul is virtuous. The relation between the different parts is described in various ways. Plutarch is keen on the metaphors of obedience and disobedience. He regularly refers to the image of the charioteer and the two horses in the *Phaedrus*⁷⁸ (see below) and occasionally uses the metaphor of an internal (political) strife, or conflict in general.⁷⁹ If all goes well, reason

74 Theages *De Virtute* 190.8–26 Thesleff = Stobaeus 3.1.117, 77.3–78.13. See also Bellanti (2007) 230; Centrone (1990) 197; Moraux (1984) 656–57.

75 Cf. *Rep.* IX, 580d6–7; 583a1–10. Conversely, Plato seems to attribute some form of cognition to the lower soul-parts. For a fine discussion of this issue, see Gerson (2003) 107–11.

76 See e.g., Didymus (Doxography C) ap. Stobaeus 2.7.13, 117.11–12: Τῆς γὰρ ψυχῆς τὸ μὲν εἶναι λογικόν, τὸ δ’ ἄλογον· λογικὸν μὲν τὸ κριτικόν, ἄλογον δὲ τὸ ὀρμητικόν. Compare Aristotle *EN* I. 13, 1102b30, where the non-vegetative irrational part is equated with τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικόν. Cf. Vander Waerdt (1985b) 286 n. 9; (1985a) 373–74. Pythagorean parallels: Metopus *De Virtute* 117.9–10 Thesleff = Stobaeus 3.1.115, 67.15–16; Theages *De Virtute* 193.8–14 Thesleff = Stobaeus 3.1.118, 84.4–12.

77 For a Platonic parallel, see Alcinous *Didask.* 25.178.39–46 Whittaker-Louis, equating τὸ ὀρμητικόν with the spirited part. Cf. Deuse (1983) 86.

78 Explicitly, as in *Quaest. Plat.* IX, or implicitly through the use of words like εὐήνιος. Cf. e.g., *De Is. et Os.* 45.369c; 49.371a–b; *De virt. mor.* 6.445b, 445c; *De gen. Socr.* 20.588f; *De fac.* 28.943d; *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008c, 1008d; 2.1009b; X 4.1011a; *De an. procr.* 6.1015a; 28.1026e.

79 Cf. e.g., *De virt. mor.* 3.442a; 7.446f, 447c; *De an. procr.* 27.1026d.

“rules” and the passions “follow” and “obey.”⁸⁰ Of particular importance is the harmony metaphor. The latter not only pertains to the relation between reason and the passions, but also to the internal constitution of the irrational part. When the latter is harmonious it automatically obeys reason. Plutarch connects the harmony metaphor with the Peripatetic doctrine of moral virtue as a mean (a theory that was also adopted by other Platonists⁸¹ and in the tradition of Pythagorean *pseudepigraphica*): the passions become virtuous when a right mean between deficiency and excess is found.

Yet a certain tension between the cosmological and the ethical perspective on the soul should not be overlooked. This shows, for instance, in Plutarch’s use of the word *logos*. It can express both the right proportion of the passions, but also that to which the passions should obey, i.e., reason. In the latter case it is a different part of the soul, in the former it is a disposition of the irrational. Similarly, one could say that the irrational, when it is ordered, becomes rational; but of course, it also remains what it is. Plutarch sometimes shifts from one meaning of *logos* to another in a single sentence.⁸²

In the first lines of his treatise on moral virtue, Plutarch even proposes a hylomorphic interpretation of moral virtue according to which the passions are the matter and reason (*logos*) the form. The hylomorphic definition of moral virtue can also be found in the Pythagorean *pseudepigraphica*.⁸³ It is not Aristotelian, but probably originated in the Platonic tradition.⁸⁴ One could be tempted to think that Plutarch’s espousal of this definition, just as his apparent refusal to disambiguate his use of *logos*, means that he believed the *virtuous* soul to be completely one: a single entity with two different aspects, but no longer separate parts. However, this is not what Plutarch thinks. Not only does he often warn his reader to remain aware of the duality of our soul (the passions are always there, with an ineradicable propensity towards excess), in *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* he also explicitly condemns the view that

80 Cf. e.g., *De virt. mor.* 3.441e, 442b, 442c; 4.442c; 7.446e; 9.449c; *De gen. Socr.* 22.592c; *Quaest. Plat.* IV 1003b; IX 1.1008b–c, *De an. procr.* 33.1029e.

81 For the late Hellenistic debates on *apatheia* and *metriopatheia*, see Bonazzi 2009.

82 Cf. the first paragraph of *De virt. mor.* (1.440d).

83 Cf. Metopius *De virt.* 119.8; 17–18 Thesleff = Stobaeus 3.1.115, 71.16; 72.11–12 Hense (τὰ δὲ πάθη τᾶς ἀρετᾶς ὕλα). The commentator Aspasius (in *EN* 42.15–26) has a different hylomorphic interpretation of moral virtue: whereas the passions are matter, the role of the Form is played not by reason, as in Plutarch and the *pseudepigraphica*, but by moral virtue itself. Cf. Moraux (1984) 280 n. 190.

84 Cf. Donini (1974) 92–105; Centrone (1990) 204–5.

makes virtue something *of* the passions.⁸⁵ Moral virtue on the contrary consists in the fact that the passions are controlled by a force superior to them. The target of this criticism is Aristotle, who, it is implied, errs in the opposite direction from the Stoics, who reduce the vices to judgments of reason.⁸⁶

Already in the first paragraph of *On Moral Virtue*, where Plutarch introduces the hylomorphic interpretation of moral virtue, it is clear that he does not really regard moral virtue as some kind of hylomorphic substance or structure in the Aristotelian sense. If anything we have hylomorphism in a Platonic fashion, in which a superior principle imparts form upon an underlying matter. This becomes clear if we read on. For Plutarch also says that the relation between the passions and reason is one of participation. In order to do so he did not even need to go back to Plato, for Aristotle himself more or less provides the terminology used by Plutarch. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, more particularly in the passage immediately preceding the distinction of virtues into moral and intellectual, Aristotle says that the passions “share in” reason and are “obedient” to it.⁸⁷ In the same spirit Plutarch specifies what he himself meant by the term “participation” in this context: he rejects the view that the relation of the two faculties is that of two equal parts being mixed into a whole that is better than the parts, and adopts the view that a hierarchical relation obtains between the two faculties, whereby the lower part obeys the higher. In the introduction this is done in the form of questions; in [Chapter 3](#) (441c–442c) Plutarch makes positive assertions confirming what he merely suggested in the introduction. All things considered, the first chapter of *De Virtute Morali* is strongly reminiscent of the end of the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, indirect though Plutarch’s knowledge of that work may be.⁸⁸ All the same, being the faithful Platonist he is, Plutarch will certainly have understood his hylomorphist remark as being in perfect agreement with the moral psychology of the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*⁸⁹: the irrational is subordinate to a superior part that imposes its rule. The idea of an

85 Cf. *De an. procr.* 26.1025d: οἱ δὲ τὰς ἀρετὰς ἀποφαίνουσι παθητικός. See also *De virt. mor.* 6.444e: οὔτε μῖγμα τῶν κακῶν ἐστίν.

86 Cf. *De an. procr.* 26.1025d; *De virt. mor.* 3.441b–c.

87 EN I, 13.1102b30–31. Cf. *De virt. mor.* 3.442b–c. If Donini (1974) 67–68, is right, Plutarch did not have first-hand knowledge of Aristotle’s text, but rather relied on a Peripatetic tradition.

88 See Donini (1974) 67–68.

89 Dirlmeier (1983) 292–94, shows that Aristotle’s account in EN I.13 draws on various ideas found in Plato and that it adopts the latter’s vocabulary.

imposition of form onto matter is more Platonic than Aristotelian. It fits Plutarch's ideas of a Platonic *Prinzipienlehre*, the sources for which were certainly the ontological passage of the *Philebus*⁹⁰ and Aristotle's reports on the Platonic doctrine of principles.

In one passage,⁹¹ Plutarch distinguishes three states of the (irrational) soul: *dunamis*, *pathos*, *hexis*.⁹² Whereas in all three *Ethics* of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* the threefold division *pathos*, *dunamis*, *hexis* merely serves classificatory purposes, Plutarch has changed the order and applies a hylomorphic schema whereby at each stage the lower state is the matter for the next state up. Thus his classification amounts to a genetic account of psychic states.⁹³ The pure dynamic force is called *dunamis*. Irascibility, bashfulness, and temerity, i.e., instinctive drives that blindly tend toward a certain extreme, are situated at this level. *Dunamis* constitutes the matter for *pathos*. Here we find, for instance, the specific forms of anger, courage, or shame. The more permanent state that through habituation arises out of the *pathê* is called *hexis*, and is a vice when the disposition is bad, a virtue when it is good. The latter case is one in which *pathos* is "educated in a good way by *logos*."⁹⁴ This additional hylomorphic differentiation shows that Plutarch indeed distinguishes between, on the one hand, reason as a faculty that is extrinsic to the passions and, on the other, the good disposition of the passions that is, as it were, the immanent form of the virtuous disposition.

VII Harmony and the charioteer: the ninth *Platonic question*

In order to complete the picture let us now take a brief look at the ninth *Platonic Question*, in which Plutarch addresses an issue that is directly related to tripartition. Plutarch refers to a passage from the *Republic* where the harmony between the soul-parts is compared to that obtaining between the three main notes of the Greek tone system, named after the strings "topmost," "intermediate," and "nethermost" (*hupatê*, *mesê*,

90 Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 24a–30b. On Plutarch's use of this dialogue, in particular its analysis of the product of the action of limit on the unlimited (the structuring and ordering of unlimited motion brought about by a demiurgic cause), see Opsomer (2004) 150–52.

91 *De virt. mor.* 4.443d.

92 Aristotle uses the order: *pathos*, *dunamis*, *hexis*. See *EN* II.5 1105b20–28; *EE* II.2 1120b10–20; *MM* I.6 1186a10–11; Stobaeus 2.7.20, 139.3–4 Hense; Babut (1969) 148 n. 70.

93 Cf. Donini (1974) 72–73. 94 *De virt. mor.* 4.443d.

nêtê).⁹⁵ The question raised by Plutarch concerns the exact correspondences in the comparison: is the rational soul-part meant to be associated with the “intermediate” or the “topmost”? Plutarch answers this question by pointing out that reason assumes the leading function of the musical “middle note”⁹⁶ (on the basis of which the other notes are defined⁹⁷) and makes the soul harmonious and concordant by controlling the two irrational parts. Although the problem discussed in this *Question* pertains to the traditional *three* parts of the soul, by the end of the *Question* Plutarch tacitly but unmistakably reduces the tripartition to a more fundamental bipartition, just as he did in *On Moral Virtue*. This notwithstanding, a special place is granted to the spirited part when Plutarch claims that it is “not purely irrational but has a mental image of what is fair, though one commingled with what is irrational, the yearning for retribution.”⁹⁸ Accordingly he stresses the idea that, of the two irrational parts, the spirited is more tractable to reason and has a natural alliance with it⁹⁹ (something one may have thought he had forgotten about in *On Moral Virtue*). Yet at the same time he emphatically claims that the spirited is more closely related to the appetitive than to reason, pointing out that some philosophers even regard the spirited and the appetitive as identical, given their similarity.¹⁰⁰

The (slightly) more positive appreciation of the spirited part in the ninth *Platonic Question* is explained by the reference to the allegory of the chariot in the *Phaedrus*.¹⁰¹ Plutarch simply equates the charioteer with reason and the two horses with spirit and appetite (we do not know what Plutarch made of the fact that Plato applies the image also to the souls of gods). In the final part of the *Question* Plutarch uses the image in order to support the view that the position suitable to reason is in the middle,¹⁰² just as the middle note is the lead note.

Both in *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* and in the ninth *Platonic Question* Plutarch refers to harmony, but not quite in the same way. In the first text harmony enters into the very composition of the

95 Plat. *Rep.* IV 443d6–7. See also Plut. *De virt. mor.* 6.444e–f.

96 Cf. *Quaest. Plat.* IX 2.1009a.

97 See *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008b, 2.1009a, and the references in Bellanti (2003) 26–27, n. 80, and Bellanti (2007) 231–32 n. 27.

98 Cf. *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008c (trans. Cherniss (1976) slightly modified). Compare *De virt. mor.* 3.442a (see note 63 above).

99 Cf. *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008c. 100 *Quaest. Plat.* IX 1.1008d–e.

101 Cf. *Phaedr.* 246a6–d5; 248a1–b5; 253c7–255a1. 102 *Quaest. Plat.* IX 2.1009b.

world-soul, and hence of the human soul as well. For in the *Timaeus* the demiurge structures the world soul according to numbers defining harmonic intervals.¹⁰³ In the ninth *Platonic Question*, however, the harmony metaphor applies to the *virtuous* soul, as in Plato's *Republic*.¹⁰⁴ The two perspectives can be reconciled by regarding the disharmony of the vicious soul as a distortion, yet not a complete destruction, of its original harmonious proportions. Since the soul contains in itself two heterogeneous elements that are mixed in such a way that neither of them preserves the purity it had prior to the mixture, its harmony will never be perfect.¹⁰⁵

The two parts of the soul are both powers of their own. There will inevitably be tension between them and they will continuously undergo each other's influence. Yet in a virtuous person they can coexist relatively peacefully and harmoniously.

103 Cf. *Tim.* 35b. Referring to the *Phaedo*, Plutarch explains that the soul is not identical with harmony, yet is constituted harmonically: *De an. procr.* 3.1013c–d.

104 See also *De virt. mor.* 6.444e–f.

105 Cf. *De an. procr.* 27.1026c; 28.1026e–1027a.

Galen and the tripartite soul

MARK SCHIEFSKY

I Philosophy, medicine, and the soul

Of all the philosophical doctrines advocated by Galen in his vast *oeuvre*, the Platonic theory of the tripartite soul is among those to which he is most strongly committed. In a wide range of works both philosophical and medical, Galen endorses the theory that the human soul has three “parts” (*merè, moria*) or “forms” (*eidè*): the rational, spirited, and appetitive, situated in the brain, the heart, and the liver, respectively. He identifies these parts of the soul as responsible for various physiological as well as psychological activities and functions, and claims Platonic and Hippocratic authority for the doctrine. Despite the fact that Galen suspends judgment on a number of questions concerning the soul, including its “substance” (*ousia*), corporeality, and immortality, he consistently affirms that the theory of the tripartite soul is both firmly established and an essential basis of the doctor’s therapeutic activity.¹

To understand why the tripartite theory was so important for Galen we need to consider some of the larger strategic goals of his work. Galen famously argued that “the best doctor is also a philosopher,” as the title of

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- 1 For a concise statement of these claims see *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (*De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, PHP) 9.9.7–10, 5.793–94 K. Note on citations: in referring to PHP I give the book, chapter, and section numbers in the edition of P. De Lacy (*Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (CMG), vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1–3, Berlin 1978–84), as well as the volume and page numbers of Kühn’s edition (*Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 22 vols., Leipzig, 1821–33). For all other Galenic works I give the volume and page references in Kühn (K) unless otherwise noted.

one of his short programmatic works puts it.² This claim has at least two distinct senses. First, it means that medical theory and practice must be based on the correct philosophical theories of logic, physics, and ethics. Secondly, however, Galen holds that the doctor, like the philosopher, must engage in the care of the soul, for its condition can affect the condition of the body.³ The practice of medicine thus demands a theory of the soul, especially one that emphasizes its role in accounting for physiological functions. But if Galen's conception of medicine is philosophical, his conception of philosophy, at least in its more practical aspects, is also a very medical one. Galen claims in various treatises that medical treatment is able to affect the condition of the soul and is therefore a key component of psychic therapy. The most striking example comes in the treatise *That the Soul's Powers Follow the Body's Temperaments*, where Galen argues that certain foods and drugs can directly influence psychological traits.⁴ By bringing together the psychological and physiological aspects of the soul, Galen's version of Platonic tripartition breaks down the distinction between treating the soul and treating the body; hence its central place in his project of making medicine more philosophical and philosophy more medical.

Platonic tripartition is not the only model of the soul's activities to appear in Galen's works.⁵ And in some of his more philosophical discussions the physiological basis of the theory recedes into the background.⁶

2 *Quod Optimus Medicus Sit Quoque Philosophus* 1.53–63 K; English translation in Singer (1997) 30–34.

3 See e.g., *On the Preservation of Health* (*De Sanitate Tuenda*) 6.40 K.

4 *Quod Animi Mores Corporis Temperamenta Sequantur* (QAM) 4.767–821 K; English translation in Singer (1997) 150–76. Cf. *On the Exercise with the Small Ball* (*De Parvae Pilae Exercitio*, 5.899–910 K; Singer (1997) 299–304), a short treatise that describes a form of exercise useful for training both body and soul.

5 In particular, Galen often operates with a model in which “soul” (*psukhê*) is responsible only for cognitive and voluntary motor activities, while all other activities of the organism (e.g., nutrition, growth, etc.) are controlled by its “nature” or *phusis*. This conception of the soul's activities can be traced back to the early Hellenistic doctors Herophilus and Erasistratus, whose pioneering investigations of human anatomy in the third century BC established the nerves as conduits for sense perception and voluntary motion; it is also associated with the Stoics. Despite Galen's emphatic assertions to the contrary, his tripartite theory is difficult to reconcile in all its aspects with this “soul-nature” model. See von Staden (2000) 79–116.

6 See the two connected works on the diagnosis and cure of the soul's passions and errors (*De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione* (*Aff. dign.*) and *De Animi Cuiuslibet Peccatorum Dignotione et Curatione* (*Pecc. dign.*), ed. W. de Boer (1937), CMG 5.4.1.1, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner; English translation in Singer (1997) 100–49), as well as the Arabic summary of *On Moral Character* (*De Moribus*) as translated by Mattock (1972) 235–60.

Yet Galen never wavers in his affirmation of the tripartite theory, and the link between its physiological and psychological aspects is fundamental to his most extended attempt to establish it in *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (PHP), Books 1–6. Indeed, a crucial feature of this work is Galen's use of anatomy and physiology to prove the theory, according to the rigorous standards for scientific demonstration that he sets out in PHP and elsewhere. Galen's handling of the two primary sources for Platonic tripartition, the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, is instructive in this regard. Galen considers the argument for psychic division in *Republic* IV to be a scientific demonstration (*apodeixis*) establishing that there are three distinct "powers" (*dunameis*) in the soul, but not that they are located in different parts of the body.⁷ He recognizes, of course, that Plato discusses the location of the parts in the *Timaeus*. But he also emphasizes the provisional status explicitly granted to the theories put forth in that work, especially those concerning the substance of the soul and the construction of the body.⁸ In sum, Galen's view seems to be that Plato had grasped the essentials of the tripartite theory and proved as much of it as he could; on the other hand he, Galen, is able to complete the task because of his superior anatomical knowledge. One could hardly ask for a clearer illustration of the Galenic claim that medical knowledge can contribute to philosophical understanding.

My main purpose in this chapter is to explain and assess Galen's argument for the tripartite theory as presented in PHP Books 1–6. I turn to this in section IV, after discussing the basis of Galen's division of the soul (section II) and describing the psychological and physiological aspects of his theory (section III). Finally, in section V, I address some of the problems raised by the theory and suggest some ways to address them.

II Parts, powers, and the division of the soul

Galen's goal in PHP is to prove that the soul is divided into three "parts" (*merè, moria*) or "forms" (*eidè*). In PHP 6.2 he explains that there is no significant difference between the two notions, and quotes various texts to show that Plato uses both *meros* and *eidos* of the soul's three

7 PHP 5.7.1–9, 5.479–81 K.

8 PHP 9.9.3–6, 5.791–93 K. In general Galen explains the differences between the *Republic* and *Timaeus* as due to the different purposes and audiences of the two works, rather than to any development in Plato's thought. See esp. PHP 5.7.9, 5.481 K and *De Propriis Placitis* 13, 186.17–25 in Boudon-Millot and Pietrobelli (2005) 168–213.

elements.⁹ Despite this talk of parts, however, much of the debate in *PHP* turns on the claim that the soul has three *powers* or *dunameis*. Galen typically writes of the rational, spirited, and appetitive powers, and only occasionally remarks that in fact the issue concerns distinct forms or parts. By calling the parts *dunameis*, Galen emphasizes their ability to produce certain effects; he consistently uses *dunamis* in the active sense of “power” or “capacity to affect,” rather than the passive sense of “capacity to be affected” (or Aristotelian “potentiality”).¹⁰ Each of the three primary organs – the brain, heart, and liver – is said to be or to contain the source (*arkhê* or *pêgê*) of one of the three powers.¹¹ Where Galen does make clear that he is talking of parts rather than powers, each part is said to be a separate substance (*ousia*) that is the source of many powers, corresponding to its various activities.¹² The distinction between powers and parts is reflected in Galen’s choice of imagery. Where the three-power model is foremost, Galen often appeals to the *Phaedrus* image of reason as charioteer and spirit and appetite as more or less recalcitrant horses.¹³ But when he wishes to emphasize that the three parts of the soul are substances “different in kind” (*heterogenês*), he remarks that the Platonic comparisons of the soul to mythical beasts compounded of different kinds of animal (e.g., Scylla, Chimera, or Cerberus), or to the combination of man, lion, and many-headed beast, are more apt than the charioteer model, in which the two horses are similar in form.¹⁴

The distinction between parts and powers is crucial for understanding the basic argumentative structure of *PHP*, for it is in terms of powers that Galen sets out the various positions in the debate. According to this schema, Plato and Hippocrates adopt the correct view of three powers with their sources in the brain, the heart, and the liver; directly opposed

9 5.514–19 K. Cf. *In Plat. Timaeum Comm.*, 11.21–12.21 (ad 76e7–77c5) in Schröder (1934).

10 At *PHP* 9.9.40–41, 5.802–03 K Galen says that the term *dunamis* always has the active sense of “power,” and moreover that Plato always uses it in that way (a remarkable claim in light of passages such as *Phaedrus* 270d, which clearly recognize both active and passive senses). Galen perhaps has *Republic* V, 477c–480a, in mind, where faculties such as sight are described as active *dunameis*.

11 For *arkhê* linked with *pêgê* see *PHP* 2.4.49, 5.239 K; 6.8.39, 5.573 K. For *pêgê* alone see *PHP* 2.3.7, 5.220 K; 3.6.5, 5.334 K; 7.1.19, 5.592 K. Cf. *PHP* 2.8.22, 5.277 K: Galen is concerned with “the beginning that pertains to power” (*tên kata dunamin archên*), not that which pertains to “origin” (*tên kata genesin*).

12 See e.g., *PHP* 6.3.7, 5.521 K.

13 See e.g., *PHP* 3.3.4–6, 5.302–3 K; 3.3.12–15, 305–6 K; 5.5.34–35, 5.466–67 K; 6.1.17, 5.510 K.

14 *PHP* 6.2.3–4, 5.514–15 K; *In Plat. Timaeum Comm.* 11.36–12.7 Schröder (ad 76e7–77c5). Both passages draw on Plato *Rep.* IX, 588b10–e3. For the soul as a combination of man, dog, and beast see *De Moribus* 3 250–51 Mattock.

to them is Chrysippus (a single power with a single source, the heart), while Aristotle and Posidonius are said to adopt a middle view (three powers with a single source, the heart).¹⁵ It is chiefly by showing that the three powers have their sources in separate bodily organs that Galen demonstrates their character as separate parts.

As powers, the three elements of the soul are viewed primarily as sources of motivation. This is clear from a brief review of the considerations that Galen adduces to show that there are in fact three powers in the soul. First, there are cases of psychic conflict that involve simultaneous, opposed motivations, such as the thirsty person who resists the urge to drink, or Medea, whose spirit impels her to do what she knows is wrong.¹⁶ That such cases indicate the presence of different powers in the soul follows directly, Galen thinks, from the principle enunciated at *Republic* 436b9–10: “[I]t is clear that the same thing will not consent to do or undergo opposite things at the same time, in the same respect and in relation to the same thing.”¹⁷ Galen focuses on the question of what produces the opposed motivations: assuming that each impulse is produced by some power in the soul, and that the same power cannot bring about opposite effects at the same time, the soul must contain more than one power. Second, Galen cites what he claims to be the evident fact that animals and children experience the passions. Since they cannot be motivated by rational considerations (for the rational part of their souls is either non-existent or undeveloped), the cause of their apparently passionate behavior must be some power in the soul other than reason: namely, spirit or appetite.¹⁸ Third, there is the explanation of passion in adults, the main topic of discussion in Books 4 and 5 of *PHP*. Echoing Posidonius’ criticisms of Chrysippus, Galen repeatedly claims that the latter has given no account of the cause (*aitia*) of the “excessive impulse” (*pleonazousa hormê*) of reason that is passion on his account.¹⁹ Whether or not Posidonius himself actually rejected Chrysippus’ theory of the passions in favor of a Platonist account, this criticism is not in itself unfair, and Galen cannot be accused of misunderstanding in seizing on

15 See e.g., *PHP* 6.1.1–2, 5.505–06 K.

16 For the thirsty person see *PHP* 5.7.34–42, 5.488–90 K (quoting Plato *Rep.* IV, 439a9–d8). Medea is discussed (along with Odysseus) in *PHP* 3.3, 5.302–10 K.

17 Quoted (with slight deviation from the standard Platonic text) at *PHP* 5.7.12, 5.482 K and (as a principle that is “evident to the mind”) at 9.9.23, 5.797 K.

18 *PHP* 3.7.11–12, 5.337–38 K; 5.7.74–82, 5.499–501 K; *De Moribus* 1 236, 239–40 Mattock; *QAM* 2, 4.768–69 K.

19 See e.g., *PHP* 4.3.3–8, 5.377–79 K; 4.4.36–37, 5.389–90 K.

it.²⁰ In Galen's view it is impossible that reason, conceived of as a power, could be the cause of psychic impulses that are contrary to reason (*para logon*) and violate its limits.²¹ Galen's discussion in *PHP* 4 and 5 is long and rambling, and it certainly does not do justice to the Stoic theory of the passions. But his arguments for the claim that the soul has three powers do at least show clearly that he understands the division of the soul to be based on a distinction between different sources of motivation.

III Psychology and physiology

This conception of the parts as sources of motivation is fundamental to Galen's understanding of Platonic tripartition as a psychological theory. Following *Republic* IX, Galen conceives of the appetitive part as moving the soul towards the enjoyment of bodily pleasures such as food and sex, the spirited part as moving it towards honor and victory, and the rational part as moving it towards the good.²² In *PHP* Galen expresses this by saying that each part has an "affinity" (*oikeiôsis*) for its proper objects.²³ In *Quod Animi Mores Corporis Temperamenta Sequantur* (QAM) he says that each part possesses a "desiderative power" (*epithumêtikê dunamis*) that aims at the attainment of its objects; the appetitive part or *epithumêtikon* is so named from the number and variety of its desires.²⁴ Psychic harmony is understood as a balance of strength between the three parts; the best state is when reason is in charge, the spirited part is strong and obedient, and the appetitive part is weak.²⁵ Galen recognizes the possibility that either of the two lower parts can become too strong and dominate the soul; in such a situation reason may go along either willingly or unwillingly.²⁶

20 Cooper (1998, 71–111) has argued that Posidonius did not reject the central Stoic claim that the passions are (mistaken) judgments of reason; his point, rather, was that it is necessary to posit the existence of certain non-rational elements in the soul (analogous to the spirited and appetitive powers of the Platonic soul) to account for reason's being led to endorse such judgments. This may well be correct, but if so it would mean only that Galen drew a different conclusion than Posidonius from the alleged weakness in Chrysippus' account, not that he misunderstood or misrepresented Posidonius' charge itself.

21 *PHP* 4.5.16, 5.395 K.

22 Cf. *Rep.* 580d6–581e4, where each part is associated with certain pleasures (*hêdonai*), desires (*epithumiai*), and a certain kind of life.

23 *PHP* 5.5.8, 5.460–61 K.

24 QAM 2 4.770–72 K. Cf. *PHP* 4.7.35, 5.424 K; *De Moribus* 2 247 Mattock.

25 See e.g., *De Moribus* 1 238 Mattock; *De Moribus* 2 247–48 Mattock. Neither spirit nor appetite can be allowed to become too weak: *PHP* 5.5.34, 5.466–67 K.

26 *De Moribus* 2 247 Mattock. In *PHP* 4.2.39–42, 5.375–76 K, Galen distinguishes between cases where reason endorses the motivations of the lower parts and those where it

Galen sometimes describes the activities of the three parts without making direct reference to their role in moving the soul to action. In *PHP* 7.3.2–3 he distinguishes between the “works” or “functions” (*erga*) performed by the three “sources” (*arkhai*) “by themselves” (*kath’ heautên*, the psychological side of the theory) and those performed “in relation to” the body (*en tōi pros ti*, the physiological side). The works of the rational part by itself are cognitive activities such as thought, memory, and imagination; those of the spirited part are the maintenance of the strength or “tone” (*tonos*) of the soul, constancy in obeying reason’s commands, and the “boiling, as it were” (*hoion zesis*) of the innate heat in states of passion; and that of the appetitive part is the enjoyment (*apolausis*) of pleasure, which produces licentiousness (*akolasia*) when it is immoderate.²⁷ A sharp distinction is drawn between the rational part, with its sophisticated cognitive abilities such as thinking, memory, and imagination, and the two lower parts, to which no such activities are ascribed.²⁸ In keeping with this the virtue of the rational part is said to consist in knowledge, while the virtues of the lower parts are certain “states” (*hexeis*) or “powers” (*dunamis*) that do not involve knowledge.²⁹

resists. If reason endorses the motivations of the *epithumêtikon*, the person is “licentious” (*akolastos*); if it resists but eventually prevails, the person is “self-controlled” (*enkratês*); if it resists but is defeated, he is “incontinent” (*akratês*). On the problems raised by *akrasia* for Galen’s theory see section V below.

27 *PHP* 7.3.2–3, 5.600–01 K. Galen’s references to the “tone” of the soul and the “boiling” of the innate heat in connection with the spirited part reflect a tendency towards a physical understanding of psychological activities, despite his official agnosticism on the question of the substance (*ousia*) of the soul. The notion of psychic strength as tone (*tonos*) is ascribed to Chrysippus in *PHP* 4.6.1–11, 5.403–06 K; Galen appropriates the term but associates it with the innate heat rather than the Stoic *pneuma*. Cf. *De Moribus* 1 238 Mattock, which identifies the innate heat as the essence of the strength provided by the spirited part. At *PHP* 6.8.74, 5.582 K, Galen quotes the description of anger in the *Timaeus* as a state in which “the strength of spirit boils” (*hote zeseie to tou thumou menos*, 70b3), and says that later philosophers defined anger as the boiling of the heat in the heart. Galen perhaps has Aristotle *De Anima* 403a29–403b1 in mind: the dialectician will define anger as the desire (*orexis*) for revenge, while the natural philosopher will say it is the boiling (*zesis*) of the blood and the heat around the heart. Cf. *De Sanitate Tuenda* 6.138 K: the “boiling, as it were” (*hoion zesis tis*) of the heat in the heart is the essence (*ousia*) of anger, while the desire (*orexis*) for revenge is only a concomitant (*sumbebêkos*).

28 Cf. *PHP* 5.7.68, 5.498 K: in a case of perceived injustice, the opinion (*doxazesthai*) that one has been wronged belongs to the rational part, while the work of the spirited part is to assist (*epamunein*) against the wrongdoer. For the restriction of imagination (*phantasia*) to the rational part see *De Symptomatum Differentiis* 7.55–62 K, where it is grouped with memory and thought among the soul’s “hegemonic” activities, and section V below.

29 *PHP* 7.1.22–32, 5.593–95 K. The virtue of the spirited part is courage (*andreia*), that of the appetitive part is temperance (*sôphrosunê*), and that of the rational part is knowledge or wisdom (*epistêmê*, *sophia*, *phronêsis*).

The restriction of higher cognitive activities to the rational part is also reflected in the different kinds of training appropriate for the three parts: while the training of the rational part is intellectual, the lower parts are trained by habituation.³⁰

The physiological basis of the theory may be described more briefly. Galen holds that the brain, heart, and liver are the sources (*arkhai*) of the three principal duct systems of the body: the nerves, the arteries, and the veins, respectively. Each of these organs also contains the source (*arkhê*) of a power or faculty (*dunamis*) which “manages” (*dioikei*) the particular system in question. The source in the brain transmits the power of sensation and voluntary movement through the nerves, that in the heart transmits heat and the power of pulsation through the arteries, and that in the liver controls everything to do with nutrition, including the production of blood in organisms that have it.³¹ At first the fact that each of the three powers manages or regulates (*dioikei*) the physiological system under its control might seem to conflict with the Platonic demand that reason must rule over and control the lower parts. But in fact there is no conflict here. The appetitive desires for food, drink, and sex are under the control of the liver, as a slave’s actions are controlled by his master.³² But *virtuous* control, aiming at the good rather than the pleasant, requires a standard of moderation that can only be imposed by the rational part. The proper physiological functioning of the liver is necessary but not sufficient for the virtuous control of bodily desires.

On both the psychological and the physiological side, then, Galen’s division of the soul is based on the distinction between different sources (*arkhai*): sources of motivation, on the one hand, and of bodily activities on the other. Galen therefore has some justification to claim that the physiological and psychological aspects of the theory are two sides of the same coin. In *PHP* 6 he writes that Plato and Hippocrates divided the labor between them, as it were, with the former discussing the powers

30 *PHP* 5.5.32–5, 5.466–67 K; *De Moribus* 1 238 Mattock. The spirited part is trained by music and competitive activities such as hunting (*PHP* 5.6.20–22, 5.472–73 K; *De Sanitate Tuenda* 6.40–42 K; *De Parvae Pilae Exercitio* 5.899–900 K; *De Moribus* 3 252 Mattock). In *Aff. dign.* (note 6 above) Galen describes a method for long-term management of passions such as anger, as well as appetites for food, drink, and sex.

31 *De Methodo Medendi* 10.635–36 K; *PHP* 7.3.2–3, 5.600–01 K (the activities “in relation to” the body; see discussion above with note 27).

32 Cf. *PHP* 6.4.6, 5.534 K: the liver is not like a servant that prepares material for his master, but rather like the master himself, with authority to distribute the material as he sees fit.

of the soul and the latter the bodily organs.³³ Yet in evaluating Galen's argument for the theory it is important to keep the two aspects distinct. For even if one accepts the physiological theory of three powers flowing from the brain, heart, and liver, there is no *a priori* reason to suppose that the sources of these powers can be identified with the three elements of the Platonic soul. I turn now to Galen's efforts to establish both the physiological theory and its close link with the psychological.

IV Anatomy and demonstration

Galen's argument rests on a theory of scientific demonstration (*apodeixis*) that he describes and deploys in a wide range of works.³⁴ According to this theory, the premises of demonstrations must pertain to the essence (*ousia*) of the subject matter under investigation; otherwise they are merely dialectical, rhetorical, or worst of all sophistical.³⁵ Furthermore, the starting points (*arkhai*) of demonstrations must be evident to either the senses or the intellect. In Galen's view, the human intellect and sense organs when functioning normally serve as "natural criteria" that yield facts or propositions that are self-justifying (*ex heautou pistos*).³⁶ Not all premises of Galenic demonstrations are *prima facie* evident to either reason or perception. However, Galen is committed to the claim that all such premises can be derived from starting points that possess the requisite self-evident character; much of the discussion in *PHP* is devoted to showing how the premises of demonstrations about the soul can become evident through conceptual analysis and empirical investigation. Where no evident facts are available for deciding a particular question, nothing more than conjecture is possible; this is the basis for Galen's dismissal of questions such as whether there is a void outside the universe as inherently speculative.

In *PHP* 2 Galen presents his discussion of the brain and heart as a model of the demonstrative method. He takes off from the Stoic claim that the "governing part" or *hêgemonikon* of the soul is in the heart. Galen claims that the essence (*ousia*) of the governing part, as the Stoics

33 *PHP* 6.8.57–58, 5.577 K. Cf. *De Methodo Medendi* 10.635 K: the human being is governed by three powers (*dunameis*), which Plato called three souls (*psukhai*).

34 *PHP* itself is an important source for Galen's views on demonstration; see also *De Methodo Medendi* 10.27–46 K and *passim*, and *Pecc. dign.* (note 6 above). The fundamental modern account is Barnes (1991) 50–102.

35 For the fourfold classification of premises see *PHP* 2.3.8–11, 5.220–22 K; 2.8.1–2, 5.273 K; 3.1.4, 5.286 K.

36 *PHP* 9.1.10–13, 5.722–23 K; 2.5.5, 5.241 K; *De Methodo Medendi* 10.33 K.

themselves admit, is to be the source of perception and voluntary motion. Thus to determine whether the heart contains the governing part requires determining whether it is the source of such activities. And that is best done, Galen says, by looking for anatomical structures connected to the heart that transmit the power of sensation and motion.³⁷ But it is evident from anatomical investigation both that the nerves transmit such power and that they have their origin in the brain; hence the brain, not the heart, is the source of the power of sensation and motion.³⁸ Galen presents the results of vivisectionary experiments designed to isolate the contributions of the brain and the heart to the organism's activities. For example, ligation of the arteries results in cessation of the pulse on the side of the ligation away from the heart, but the animal continues to breathe and can move its muscles; hence the heart is responsible for the pulse but not voluntary motion. On the other hand, exposing and compressing the brain, or cutting the nerves, deprives the animal of respiration, voice, sensation, and voluntary motion, but the pulse continues without interruption; hence the brain and nerves are responsible for sensation and voluntary motion but not the pulse.³⁹ These facts, Galen claims, establish both the respective contributions of the brain and heart and their independence from one another.⁴⁰ Galen's method in the case of the brain and heart fits his theory of demonstration quite well, and it is reasonable to conclude that he has indeed shown these organs to be distinct sources of certain physiological activities.

The physiological role of the liver is more problematic. Here an experimental demonstration of function is impossible, since the liver is not a source of evident motion like the brain and heart. As a result, Galen says that he must infer its function from the "properties peculiar" to it (*ek tôn toutôi sumbebêkotôn idiai*); these turn out to be observable structural

37 *PHP* 2.3.1–7, 5.219–20 K.

38 Cf. the concise formulation of the argument at *PHP* 8.1.22, 5.655 K: "Where the source (*arkhê*) of the nerves is, there is the governing part. The source of the nerves is in the brain. Therefore, the governing part is there."

39 For these experiments see *PHP* 2.4.42, 5.237–38 K; 3.4.4, 5.333–34 K; 6.3.3, 5.519–520 K. It is, of course, crucial that the ligation of arteries and nerves results in loss of function on the side *away* from the heart and brain, respectively.

40 In *PHP* 2.6, 5.262–67 K, Galen explicitly considers the possibility that the heart might transmit power to the brain or vice versa; thus the heart could be the ultimate source of perception and voluntary motion, even though the brain is the source of the nerves. To rule this out he describes the consequences of severing the arteries that connect heart and brain (loss of pulse on the side away from the heart, but voice is unimpeded) and of severing the associated nerves (loss of voice, but heartbeat and pulsation continue).

features that serve as indications of its function.⁴¹ In *PHP* 6.2–8 Galen offers a number of arguments that the liver is the source of the veins and therefore of the nutritive power. He likens the arrangement of the liver, which is connected to the stomach and intestines via the portal vein and to the rest of the body via the vena cava, to that of the “root-growth” (*rhizôsis*) in plants: the center of the root system which sends roots downward and branches upward, and which is also (Galen claims) the obvious source of the power that governs plants. The underlying assumption is that similarity of structural arrangement reflects similar function; the comparison with plants is especially revealing, Galen says, since they possess only the appetitive soul.⁴² A further sign that the liver is the source of the veins is the fact that it is the only organ to which all the veins are connected.⁴³ That the liver is responsible for blood production is indicated by the peculiar consistency of its flesh, which is more bloodlike than that of any other organ.⁴⁴ Galen’s arguments here obviously rely on more sweeping background assumptions than in the case of the brain and heart; in particular, he appeals to the notion that “nature does nothing in vain” to justify some of the conclusions reached.⁴⁵ While such assumptions are of course open to question, there is no reason to conclude that Galen fails to live up to his own methodological requirements in claiming demonstrative status for some of the arguments concerning the liver. For Galen takes such assumptions to be truths which are, or which should be, evident to the mind upon reflection and empirical investigation, and he elsewhere provides extensive support for them.⁴⁶

So much for physiology. But what reasons, apart from Platonic authority, did Galen have for identifying the brain, heart, and liver as the locations of psychological activities?⁴⁷ Galen is on relatively firm ground where the

41 *PHP* 6.3.1–6, 5.519–21 K. 42 *PHP* 6.3.10–42, 5.522–32 K.

43 *PHP* 6.5.16–20, 5.542–43 K. 44 *PHP* 6.8.8–36, 5.565–73 K.

45 See esp. *PHP* 6.4, 5.532–39 K, where Galen argues against the view that the liver provides only the matter for nutrition, while the heart supplies the power.

46 In *De Usu Partium* (*UP*), for example, which is a sustained argument for the maximal economy and efficiency of nature’s design. In *PHP* 8.1.25–45, 5.655–60 K, Galen claims demonstrative status for the arguments based on the analogy with plants and on the liver’s unique property of connection with all the veins. Cf. Hankinson (1991) 223–29; Tieleman (1996) 55–65.

47 In fact the *Timaeus* is rather less precise on this point than Galen acknowledges. It locates the spirited part “between the midriff and the neck” (70a4) and the appetitive part “in the area between the midriff and the boundary of the navel” (70e1–2; cf. 77b4). At 71d2 *Timaeus* refers to the portion of soul situated “around the liver” (*peri to hēpar*), but Galen writes of the appetitive part as situated “in the liver” (*kata to hēpar*) at *In Plat. Timaeum Comm.* 11.27 Schröder (*ad* 76e7–77c5; cf. *ibid.* 12.12).

heart and brain are concerned. He takes it as evident that the heart departs from its natural activity more than other organs in cases of passion; since the spirited part is also particularly excited in states of passion, he infers that the heart is the seat of the spirited part.⁴⁸ The association of the passions with the heart was a traditional view that had been given further support by Galen's adversaries, especially Chrysippus. Galen is happy to accept these arguments, with the proviso that the presence of the spirited part in the heart does not imply that the rational part is located there as well.⁴⁹ But Galen also elaborates the traditional association between the heart and the passions into a richly detailed system in which variations of the pulse are correlated with different emotional states.⁵⁰ Since the heart according to Galenic physiology transmits the power of pulsation to the arteries, and this power evidently varies with the passions, the link between the physiological and psychological is especially close here. As for the brain, the link between perception and such activities as imagination (*phantasia*), memory, and thinking provided strong evidence for locating these activities there, once it was established that the brain is the source of perception and voluntary motion.⁵¹ Further evidence was provided by diseases involving impairment of faculties such as memory; such diseases, Galen claims, typically follow damage to the brain and are cured by treating it.⁵²

Once again the liver presents what appears to be the greatest challenge to Galen's project. Granted that the part of the soul in the liver is responsible for controlling nutrition and blood production, why should it be identified with the Platonic *epithumêtikon*? As the source of the

48 *PHP* 6.3.4, 5.520 K; 8.1.23, 5.655 K.

49 See e.g., *PHP* 2.7.7–8, 5.268 K; 3.5.40–47, 5.330–33 K.

50 At *PHP* 6.8.45, 5.574 K, Galen quotes Hippocrates, *Epid.* 2.5.16 (5.130 Littré), which asserts that the person with a throbbing vein in the elbow is high-spirited (*oxuthumos*). Cf. *PHP* 6.1.15, 5.509 K: anger (*thumos*) in the motion of the spirited part is like an abnormally large pulsation in the arteries, and faint-heartedness (*athumia*) is like an abnormally small pulsation (on the "motion" of the spirited part cf. note 27 above). For a more detailed correlation between the passions and the pulse see e.g., *De Pulsibus ad Tirones* 12, 8.473–74 K (English translation in Singer (1997) 335).

51 For the idea of memory, opinion, and knowledge arising out of sense perception, see Plato *Phaedo* 96b, where these activities are all ascribed to the brain. Cf. *De Propriis Placitis* 3 173.27–35 Boudon-Millot and Pietrobelli: Galen "dares to affirm" (*tolmô apophainesthai*) that memory, thought, and logical reasoning take place in the brain, but is even more certain that it is the source of perception and voluntary motion.

52 Cf. *PHP* 3.6.6, 5.334 K. In *De Locis Affectis* 8.147–60 K, Galen criticizes the Pneumatist Archigenes for inconsistency in applying treatment to the head in a case of memory loss, when in fact on Archigenes' own theory memory is located in the heart.

nutritive power, the liver is responsible for attracting food and drink from the stomach as necessary to nourish the organism; it is thus natural to identify it as the source of desires for food and drink. The urge to eat something that tastes pleasant but we know is not good for us must, Galen thinks, have a source other than rational judgment; the further claim that this source is the same power that moves us to eat when hungry and abstain when full is hardly unreasonable. Moreover, Galen holds that the part of the soul in the liver controls reproduction as well as nutrition, making it the source of the desire for sex as well.⁵³

But what exactly does it mean to say, as Galen sometimes does, that the appetitive part *has* desires? Since Galen restricts all higher cognitive activities such as thought to the rational part, he cannot mean that it has conscious desires. Galen's remarks on a puzzling passage of Plato's *Timaeus* may help to explain what he has in mind. Commenting on *Timaeus* 77b, Galen endorses Plato's claim that plants, which possess the appetitive soul, consequently share in "sensation (*aisthêsis*), pleasant and painful, with desires (*epithumiai*)" (77b5–6). But he explains that they have *aisthêsis* only in a very limited sense: they possess a capacity to discriminate (a *gnôristikê dunamis*) between what is appropriate and foreign to them. That is all that is necessary to explain the fact that they attract appropriate nutriment and repel foreign substances.⁵⁴ The attribution of *epithumiai* to plants, and to the appetitive part, can be understood in a similarly limited way: to say that the appetitive part has *epithumiai* is just to say that it attracts what is appropriate to it; in other words, its striving to attain its objects is its *epithumia*.⁵⁵ Thus at *PHP* 6.8.52, 5.576 K, Galen takes the fact that Plato describes the appetitive part as "desirous (*epithumêtikon*) of food and drink" (*Timaeus* 70d7) to indicate that he also endorsed Galen's physiological theory that the liver attracts food and drink from the stomach; this suggests that to be "desirous" of food is closely linked with, if not limited to, attracting it.

53 Galen claims that Plato and Aristotle agreed in attributing control over growth and reproduction, as well as nutrition, to the appetitive soul: *PHP* 6.3.7, 5.521 K.

54 *In Plat. Timaeum Comm.* 11.9–20 Schröder (ad 76e7–77c5). In *De Propriis Placitis* 15 189–90 Boudon-Millot and Pietrobelli, Galen distinguishes the *gnôristikê dunamis* in plants from ordinary sense perception: plants cannot grasp any of the objects of sight, sound, taste, smell, or touch, but can only discriminate between what can and cannot nourish them.

55 Drawing on the same passage of the *Timaeus*, Porphyry argues in *Ad Gaurum* that plants have *aisthêsis* and desire (his term is *orexis*) only "homonomously" (ch. 4 of the text as edited by Kalbfleisch (1895) 33–62). I am grateful to Charles Brittain for this reference.

The resulting picture is as follows. The appetitive part exerts an attractive pull on the stomach when it senses a lack of food; that pull is an urge to eat or *epithumia*. It belongs to the rational part, with its vastly superior cognitive abilities, to translate this urge into a conscious, articulate desire – “I want this cake” – and also to impose limits on the appetitive part according to what is good or bad, not just pleasant or painful.⁵⁶ Thus, the appetitive part is both the locus of desires, in the limited sense of bodily urges, and the source of conscious desires in the rational part.

So Galen’s identification of the three parts of the Platonic soul with the physiological powers governing the body is not as implausible as it might at first appear. Indeed a clear line of thought runs through *PHP* 1–6 despite Galen’s rambling exposition and sometimes bitter polemic. Galen accepts the Platonic argument that the soul has three powers, conceived of as sources of motivation, and makes effective use of Posidonius’ criticism of Chrysippus to support it. By any reasonable standard his physiological experiments demonstrated the presence of independent sources of motion in the brain and heart; further evidence suggested that the liver was also such a source. The traditional association between the passions and the heart, bolstered by the theory of the pulse, seemed to establish that the passions arise in the heart; and the brain’s higher functions were naturally associated with its role as the source of perception and voluntary motion. Finally, the liver’s role as both the locus and source of desires follows directly from its physiological role in the management of nutrition and reproduction. Galen, then, had good reason to claim that he had provided strong support to the Platonic theory by drawing on the results of his anatomical and physiological investigations.

Perhaps the most glaring flaw in Galen’s procedure is that he seems to have ignored certain possible options in the debate. He does not grant serious consideration to what is arguably the basic intuition underlying the Stoic and Peripatetic theories that he attacks, *viz.*, the idea that there

56 Cf. *De Symptomatum Causis* 7.130–31 K, which describes how the evacuation of certain parts leads to a “natural desire” (*phusikê orexis*) for replenishment. Eventually this results in the veins drawing food from the stomach; the perception (*aisthêsis*) of this suction is hunger, a “psychic desire” (*psukhikê orexis*). Here Galen operates with the *psukhê-phusis* model mentioned above (note 5) rather than the tripartite theory. But he often identifies *phusis* with the appetitive part of the soul, and the functions of *psukhê* correspond broadly to those of the rational part. Thus the passage can be taken as describing a process by which desires in the appetitive part, which are closely associated with physiological attraction, lead to desires in the rational part. On the importance of the stomach here cf. note 63 below.

must be a unified center of all psychic activities, regardless of the organ in which it is located. Indeed, Galen's convincing demonstration that the source of perception and voluntary motion is in the brain could be combined with the argument for a unified center of psychic activities to yield the conclusion that all such activities have their source in the brain. Galen never considers this option, though it is a view espoused in a text that *prima facie* had good Hippocratic authority: *On the Sacred Disease*.⁵⁷

Yet it should be clear what Galen's response to this objection would be. Since he considers the existence of three powers in the soul to be firmly established, he is able to take on board the traditional arguments that the passions are connected to the heart while rejecting the conclusion that reasoning takes place there as well. Combined with the physiological evidence for the brain and heart as independent sources of motion, this seemed to rule out the possibility that the brain could be the source of the passions. And this in turn undermined any argument for a single center of all psychic activities.⁵⁸ While this does not excuse Galen for failing to consider all the options in the debate, it does help to explain why he did not think there was any need to do so.

V Problems and conclusion

Although Galen's general line of argument for the tripartite theory can thus be defended, problems and tensions remain. First of all, Galen needs a physiological mechanism to explain communication between the parts. In Galen's view all voluntary motion is produced by the rational part of the soul in the brain; this sends impulses through the nerves, which in turn move the muscles, the "instruments of voluntary motion."⁵⁹ But Galen also says that the lower parts of the soul are capable of producing voluntary

57 Galen mentions *On the Sacred Disease* rarely (never in *PHP*) and never attributes it to Hippocrates himself (see Grensemann (1968) 48). His position is at least consistent, even if there is a strong suspicion that the judgment of inauthenticity is prompted by the very point at issue here, *viz.*, the treatise's identification of the brain as the locus of the passions as well as thought (see ch. 14, 6.386–88 Littré).

58 Cf. *PHP* 3.5.45–47, 5.332–33 K.

59 For the theory and the phrase (*organa kinêseôs tês kath' hormên*) see *De Motu Musculorum* 4.367 K and *passim*. Galen recognizes no relevant distinction between *hormê* and *proairesis* in connection with action; the phrases *kinêsis kath' hormên* and *kinêsis kata proairesin* are thus interchangeable (*PHP* 8.1.1, 5.648–49 K; cf. *De Motu Musculorum* 4.372 K). For the phrase *kath' hormên* in the general sense "voluntary" (a typical usage in later philosophical literature), see Inwood (1985) 250–57.

motion.⁶⁰ Clearly, then, they must be able to transmit their impulses to the brain in some way. The lower parts also need a way to receive the commands of reason. Galen recognizes the need for communication between the parts, and indicates that it is provided by the nerves which link the brain to the heart and liver.⁶¹ Yet no details are supplied. Furthermore, it might be thought that the nerves to the heart and liver would endow them with the limited cognitive abilities that they have; for according to Galen's understanding of the nervous system, the brain transmits the power (*dunamis*) of perception to the organs to which it is connected in such a way that they become endowed with that power in their own right.⁶² Yet Galen does not explain the cognitive abilities of the lower parts in this way.⁶³ In these respects, then, his physiological theory is somewhat underdeveloped.

A more fundamental problem is raised by the explanation of *akrasia* or weakness of will. Galen holds that spirit and appetite can and sometimes do move us to act over the objections of reason: reason may either follow the impulses of the lower parts, resist them and prevail, or resist and be overcome (i.e., *akrasia*).⁶⁴ But since the rational part initiates all voluntary motion, Galen seems committed to saying that it approves of all such motion. If that is so then it is unclear, on both the physiological and the psychological levels, how a person could voluntarily act in a way that reason did not approve.

One way to address this problem would be to distinguish between reason's role as a source of motivation and its function of deciding on action. Action contrary to one's reasoned judgment would then be possible if the "deciding faculty" of the rational part chose to follow the impulses of the

60 PHP 5.7.1, 5.479 K: "the parts of the soul that move us by volition (*kath' hormên*) are three in number."

61 For the nerves from brain to heart see PHP 1.10.1, 5.206 K and 2.6.4, 5.263 K. For the nerve from brain to liver see UP 4.13, 1.226–28 Helmreich (3.308–11 K), where the need for communication is explicitly linked with the demands of the tripartite theory: the three parts are connected by "offshoots" (*apophuseis*) so that they may "heed" (*epaiein*) one another.

62 PHP 7.7.17–19, 5.641–42 K.

63 At UP 4.13, 1.226 Helmreich (3.308–09 K), Galen remarks that insofar as the liver is the seat of the nutritive soul, which also exists in plants, it needs no nerve at all. At UP 4.7, 1.201–03 Helmreich (3.275–77 K) the stomach is said to be able to perceive that food is lacking by means of a power transmitted through large nerves from the brain (cf. *De Symptomatum Causis* 7.128–31 K and note 56 above). It is remarkable that Galen does not mention the liver in this connection, given his view of its physiological role as set forth in PHP. Cf. De Lacy (1988) 61–62.

64 PHP 4.2.39–42, 5.375–76 K (note 26 above).

lower parts rather than the intellect. Galen sketches out such a conception of the rational part near the end of *De Moribus* (ch. 4 253 Mattock). The intellect is said to stand in the same relationship to the rational soul as the eye stands to the body; in addition to the intellect, the rational soul possesses the faculties of “feeling” (i.e., perception), “imagination,” “memory,” and “the faculty by which deliberate movement is produced.” “Thought and scrutiny,” the activities of the intellect, are said to investigate what is “represented in the imagination”; this leads to a decision, the desire to act, and the movement of the muscles and limbs. But Galen goes on to explain that not all action results from thought:

Most action, thought and scrutiny is caused by a faculty in us that perceives that something is compatible with something else or that a particular speech or action must necessarily follow it, or that something is incompatible with something else and that the two things are contradictory. Division and composition and investigation of crafts and arts come only from this faculty, which is that by which the rational animals are most particularly distinguished. Other animals share the rest of the faculties with the rational animals, for they move, desire to perform actions, and imagine them. What I mean by “imagination” is every movement that is produced in the soul because of the movements that happen in it when a change occurs in the body.

(*De Moribus* 4 253 Mattock)

Since animals can move although they lack the capacity for thought and deliberation, their ability to do so evidently depends only on imagination and the “faculty by which deliberate movement is produced.” A similar explanation holds for infants, in whom the rational soul is not yet developed.⁶⁵ Despite some uncertainty, the Arabic summary makes it reasonably clear that Galen is offering an account of action as flowing from a faculty of decision in the rational part.⁶⁶ Since this faculty is stimulated by what occurs in the imagination, imagination has a crucial role in producing action.⁶⁷ To explain *akrasia*, then, we need only suppose that a

65 *De Moribus* 1 239 Mattock: Every infant “has in its imagination an image of that which suits it and that which does not suit it,” as well as a love of the former and a hatred of the latter; this leads it to seek the former and avoid the latter.

66 For “choosing” (*proaireisthai*) as one of the activities of the governing part of the soul in addition to thinking (*ennoein*), remembering, and reasoning (*logizesthai*), see *De Locis Affectis* 8.127 K. Voluntary motion (*kata proairesin*) is characteristic of animals as opposed to plants: *De Naturalibus Facultatibus* 1 2.1 K.

67 The idea is Aristotelian; see *De Motu Animalium passim* and *De Anima* 3.9–11, with the discussion of Nussbaum (1978) 221–69. For *phantasia* in Galen as a faculty that involves mental images such as might be produced by sense perception see *De Symptomatum*

person's deciding faculty is poorly developed and susceptible to following the impulses of the lower parts rather than the results of rational thought and deliberation.

The problem of animal movement is in fact analogous to that of *akrasia* in humans. Here also there is an apparent contradiction. For Galen frequently states that animals are irrational or do not possess the rational soul; but if the rational soul is responsible for perception and voluntary motion, then it is unclear how animals can perceive or move voluntarily. As the above-quoted passage shows, what the denial of the rational soul to animals really amounts to is the claim that they do not possess the higher rational faculties of thought and deliberation (it is by such faculties that man is "most particularly distinguished"); *a fortiori*, rational considerations cannot motivate their behavior.⁶⁸

The role of the imagination in producing action suggests that it may be crucial in mediating the communication between the rational part and the lower parts. As for the transmission of impulses from the lower parts, we need only suppose that the rational part perceives the excited states of the lower parts, leading to the formation of a mental image or impression that results in action. And granting the lower parts access to mental images formed in the rational part could explain both how they can have access to sense impressions and how reason is able to command them. In *PHP* 5 Galen quotes with approval a passage of Posidonius in which the latter explains that a vivid impression or image (*phantasia*) is much better able to produce the passions (i.e., in Galen's terms, affect the lower parts of the soul) than rational persuasion.⁶⁹ The notion that reason communicates with the lower parts by means of images of course recalls reason's projection of images (*eidôla* or *phantasmata*) on the liver in the *Timaeus* (71a–e). Galen's point in limiting *phantasia* to the rational part may have been to stress that the lower parts have the power only to receive such images, not to produce them.

None of this is worked out by Galen in any detail. But it suffices, I believe, to show that the problems of the physiological connection between the parts, and of weakness of will, are not in themselves fatal objections

Differentiis 7.60–61 K, which describes the delusional visions that result when *phantasia* is affected by disease.

68 Cf. the beginning of *Adhortatio ad Artes Addiscendas* (1.1 K; Singer (1997) 35), where Galen remarks that while "the so-called irrational animals" clearly do not possess the kind of reason that results in speech, it is possible that they possess "internal" (*endiathetos*) reason within their souls.

69 *PHP* 5.6.24–26, 5.473–74 K = Posidonius fr. 162 Edelstein-Kidd.

to Galen's theory of the tripartite soul, as has sometimes been claimed.⁷⁰ I hope in any case to have shown that Galen succeeds in articulating a coherent Platonic theory that can serve as a basis for his work in medicine and therapy of the soul, and that he makes powerful use of anatomy to support it. To that extent, Galen's bold project of bringing philosophy and medicine together might fairly be judged a success.

70 Mansfeld (1991) 138–45.

Plotinus and Plato on soul and action

EYÓLFUR KJALAR EMILSSON

In the treatise “On Free Will and the Will of the One” (VI.8.[39]) [chapter 6](#), Plotinus says in connection with human self-determination:

so that also in practical actions self-determination and being in our power is not referred to practice and outward activity but to the inner activity of virtue itself, that is, its thought and contemplation.¹

In this chapter I wish to comment on this remark. It seems to me that despite its brevity this passage is indeed quite revealing about more than one aspect of Plotinus’ thought. First, it shows something about the application of Plotinus’ so-called doctrine of double activity, which distinguishes between an inner and an outer activity. This doctrine has mostly been associated with metaphysical activities such as the generation of Intellect from the One. We see here, however, that it is also applied in the context of the soul, virtue, and action. This is in itself quite interesting and I shall come back to its significance later on. Secondly, it seems to me that our short passage shows us something remarkable about how Plotinus reads and uses Plato, in this case in particular how he reads *Republic* IV 443c–d. As we shall see, he takes a Platonic remark that has to do with the relationship between the soul, virtue, and action, and puts it into a new context, probably fairly remote from Plato’s original concerns. Nevertheless, there may well lie a plausible understanding of Plato behind Plotinus’ application of the Platonic phrase.

I wish to express thanks to Charles Brittain and Øyvind Rabbås for helpful comments and criticism of earlier versions of this chapter. An even earlier and in several respects quite different version has appeared in Icelandic in Emilsson (2003).

- 1 *Ennead* VI.8.6 19–22: ὥστε καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτεξούσιον καὶ τὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν οὐκ εἰς τὸ πράττειν ἀνάγεσθαι οὐδ’ εἰς τὴν ἔξω, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὴν ἐντὸς ἐνέργειαν καὶ νόησιν καὶ θεωρίαν αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρετῆς. Translations of Plotinus in this chapter are based on A.H. Armstrong’s versions in the Loeb edition, Armstrong (1966–1988).

I shall proceed as follows: first I present some context for the quotation above (otherwise, it may be quite unintelligible to readers not already familiar with this Plotinian treatise). In the second section I discuss the Platonic origin of the quotation and in the third I give an account of Plotinus' doctrine of inner and outer activity with a special focus on this doctrine's (by Plotinus' lights) Platonic origins; this will reveal some interesting points about Plotinus' interpretation of Plato's views on the soul quite generally. In the fourth, last, and longest section I shall consider whether the understanding of Plato on the relationship between soul and action revealed by this and other Plotinian passages is at all plausible as an interpretation of Plato's account of the relationship between the soul and action in the *Republic*.

I The context of *Ennead* VI.8.6 19–22

Porphyrus gave Plotinus' treatise VI.8, in which our passage occurs, the title "On Free Will and the Will of the One." This title is a fairly accurate indication of the content of the treatise: in the first six chapters Plotinus discusses human autonomy (*to eph'hêmin, to autexousion, kurios einai*) in order to discover, in the remainder of the treatise, whether autonomy can be attributed to the higher principles, and in particular, to the One. In [chapter 5](#) he raises the question if "self-determination (*to autexousion*) and being in one's own power" is "only in intellect when it thinks, i.e., in pure intellect," or whether it is "also in soul when it is active according to intellect and engaged in practical actions according to virtue."² He responds to this by noting that at least the success of the action (*hê teuxis*) is not up to us. What he has in mind is presumably cases of the kind when someone or something interferes with the action: a sudden wind sways the arrow off its course, for instance. Someone might say, however, that even if success is not up to us, self-determination may be attributed to us with respect to how we act, whether we act well (*kalôs*) or not. Against this, Plotinus points out that virtuous action depends on external circumstances. Courage, for instance, requires a certain situation such as war in which it may be exercised, and the same is true for justice. These

² It is customary to write "Intellect" and "Soul" with initial capitals when these words refer to the second and third hypostases. I refrain from doing so unless I am absolutely certain that this is what is meant. In this sentence "intellect" may be Intellect or, more likely, it may be not the hypostasis but the human intellect.

contingent external circumstances, Plotinus notes, are in general not up to us, and, hence, it is not up to us to engage in courageous or just actions at will.³

Plotinus also points out that when the situation arises, virtue demands a certain action from us. So, not only is it the case that we depend on situations and events over which we may seem to have little or no control for our exercise of virtue in action, we may seem to be compelled to specific actions by virtue when such situations arise. However, he doesn't think virtue enslaves us. He notes that virtue is "a kind of other intellect" (5 34–35) and intellect is not forced by external circumstances or passions. Even when these occur, it "will retain its autonomy (*to eph'hautê*)" (6 13). To illustrate this he says that virtue, i.e., the virtuous soul, "will not follow the lead of the facts (*tais pragmasin*), for instance by saving the man who is in danger, but, if it thinks fit, it will sacrifice him and command him to sacrifice his life and property and children and even his fatherland, having in view its own excellence and the existence of what is subject to it" (6 14–18). The quotation we started out from follows immediately and is presented as something that follows from what has just been cited: "so that also in practical actions self-determination and being in our power is not referred to practice and outward activity but to the inner activity of virtue itself, that is, its thought and contemplation."

I take it that the main point of the illustration is to bring home the point of the remark from the Myth of Er (*Republic* X 617e) that "virtue has no master" – a Platonic text Plotinus has referred to a few lines above in the discussion. He wishes to insist that virtue considers only itself, i.e., in acting virtuously it is only concerned with its own excellence, which the context shows to consist primarily in rationality. But how does it follow from this that self-determination belongs primarily to the "internal activity" of virtue and not to practice and its external activity? Plotinus' answer, put succinctly, is that internal activity is free because the activity itself is identical with the agent; the external one may be said to be self-determined too insofar as it flows from the internal one, but its freedom or autonomous character is parasitic on that of the internal activity.

3 Plotinus' reasoning concerning virtuous actions' dependence on external circumstances here concords with the views of Nagel (1976).

II Plotinus and *Republic* 443c9–d1

In *Republic* 443c9–d1 Plato writes: “And in truth justice is, it seems, something of this sort. However, it isn’t concerned with doing its own as regards the external action (*praxis*), but as regards the internal one [i.e., the internal action], with what is truly oneself and one’s own.”⁴ I wish to suggest that this passage from the *Republic* lies behind the Plotinian quote we have been considering. Plotinus’ quotes from Plato are often inexact and brief. There may be only a word or two that occur within an otherwise Plotinian sentence. When the words or phrase somehow stand out, it is, however, possible to see that he has a specific Platonic text in mind. I do not wish to suggest that our passage is even to be considered as a quotation from the *Republic* passage. I do, however, agree with Plotinus’ modern editors, Henry and Schwyzer, who refer to these lines in the *Republic* in their *index fontium*, that there is an allusion to the latter here: in both texts a distinction is made between some kind of internal virtue and virtuous action (in Plato the virtue in question is specifically justice); these are referred to in a similar way: *hê exô praxis tôn heautou* and *hê entos praxis tôn heautou* in Plato; Plotinus speaks of *praxeis* but rephrases Plato’s *exô* and *entos* in terms of internal and external *energeia*. In this part of the *Republic* Plato is giving an account of justice in actions and of how it relates to justice in the individual soul. He is not directly concerned with questions of autonomy as Plotinus is. I find it likely, however, that Plotinus relates the part of Plato’s sentence that speaks about “what is truly oneself and one’s own” to his own concerns with autonomy. Not that he necessarily sees Plato as referring to self-determination and autonomy here. Rather he may see that which is “truly oneself and one’s own” as a reference to something he takes to be an absolutely necessary condition of autonomy, namely, that there be a self whose work is internal to itself and identical with itself.⁵

4 Τὸ δὲ γε ἀληθές, τοιοῦτόν τι ἦν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἀλλ’ οὐ περὶ τὴν ἔξω πράξιν τῶν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν ἐντός, ὡς ἀληθῶς περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ. Many common English translations of the *Republic* such as Jowett’s, Shorey’s, and Grube’s revised by Reeve are imprecise in that they fail to show that Plato is here committed to some kind of internal action of doing one’s own: the word *praxis*, “action,” is necessarily implied after the word *entos*, “internal.”

5 Cf. VI.8.6 34 where it is said about the intellect that “it is all turned to itself and its work is itself.”

III Internal and external activity and Plotinus' views on action

As already noted, Plotinus replaces Plato's "external and internal action" with "external and internal activity." The notion of a twofold activity, one internal and another external, is well known from metaphysical contexts in Plotinus.⁶ Our passage shows that he is also willing to apply it to the relationship between virtue and action: virtue as an internal feature of the soul stands in the place of internal activity of which the virtuous action is an external expression. In order to fully apprehend the significance of this, we should briefly consider Plotinus' notion of internal and external activity in general.

Each stage in the Plotinian hierarchy from the One downwards is characterized by an internal activity which in turn is accompanied by an external activity. The internal activity constitutes the given stage, while the external one constitutes the basis for the next stage below. At the metaphysical level, such a process of internal and external activities continues until a level is reached where there is no more productive power. The two acts are usually described by the aid of physical analogies: the internal act is, e.g., likened to a fire and the external one to the heat it gives or to a source of light and the emitted light. Or the two acts may be illustrated by a spring that overflows. This is the so-called "doctrine of emanation" in Plotinus. In truth there is no emanation literally speaking but such physical metaphors or analogies are frequently used to illustrate the two acts.

Plotinus conceives of these cycles of activities from the One as a process towards ever increasing multiplicity: the external act is always less unified than the internal act that causes it. He integrates the Platonic notions of paradigms and images into this two-acts doctrine: the external act is an image or imitation of the internal one; it bears a resemblance to the internal one but it is more diffused. The two acts are distinct as paradigms and images are bound to be and the external act is indeed said to be the product of the internal one (V.4.2 29–30). It is, however, important to note that there is, so to speak, only one exertion: it is not as if there is an exertion that constitutes the internal act, which then, in turn, does something extra in order to produce the external act. Rather, the external act is a kind of byproduct of the internal activity.

6 The most extensive passage about internal and external activity in Plotinus is V.4.2 20–37. For a fuller account of double activity in Plotinus and its sources, as well as references to secondary literature, see Emilsson (2007) 22–68.

There has been considerable speculation and disagreement about the sources of Plotinus' double act doctrine: the Stoics, Aristotle, and Plato have all been mentioned. I shall not relate the pros and cons of this debate here.⁷ Let it suffice to say that I take the doctrine to contain both Platonic and Aristotelian elements: the central notion, activity, *energeia*, is of course Aristotelian, but this Aristotelian notion is somewhat revised and integrated into what Plotinus saw as a Platonic view. Again, I shall refrain from going into details and state, dogmatically, that the double act doctrine is Plotinus' interpretation of Platonic causality. I take it that he sees elements of this doctrine in various Platonic passages.⁸ At the same time he reads Platonic passages in the light of this doctrine. In particular cases it is not easy to judge if he is interpreting Plato from the perspective of the double act doctrine or if he is seeing confirmations of it in the passages he invokes or alludes to.

The crucial points about the notion of causality involved are the following: Platonic causes are something in their own right quite independently of their effects. They can be studied and understood (except of course in the case of the One, which is beyond knowledge) in themselves without recourse to their effects; this is, however, not to deny that our route to the causes must start from the effects. The causes are such that the effects become intelligible in their light: if one knows the causes, one understands that their images are such as they are. Furthermore, the causes, which as already noted have "their own life," as it were, don't have to do anything in addition to being what they are in order to bring about their effects, their images: these effects flow from them, from their superabundance. Hence, the causes are not in any way reduced or affected by having the effects they have (cf. *Symposium* 212b).

Returning to the primary concerns of this chapter, Plotinus evidently sees his two activities at work in the relationship between virtuous action and internal virtue. Indeed, he sees external human actions in relation to soul-states quite generally in the same way (cf. III.8.4–6). I do not know whether (or even how one might argue the case one way or the other) our *Republic* passage, and more generally the distinction between internal virtue and virtue in actions Plato develops in Book IV of the *Republic*, is one of Plotinus' Platonic sources for his double act doctrine,

7 Armstrong (1937; 1967, 240) and Hadot (1968, 229) have for instance suggested Stoicism; Rutten (1956) and Lloyd (1987, 167–70; 1990, 98–101) Aristotle; and Gerson (1994) Plato.

8 See Emilsson (2007) 60–68.

or whether he is just interpreting a Platonic passage in terms he has come to independently. At any rate, it is clear that Platonic passages that resound in the context of double activity in Plotinus are often used in quite different contexts from those in which they occur in Plato. The passage that is most widely cited or alluded to is presumably *Timaeus* 42e 5–6, where Plato says that the demiurge takes his leave and “remains in his own customary way of life.” Plotinus cites or alludes to this passage to note that the internal activity remains unaffected, loses nothing, by producing the external one. He applies this to the internal activity of the One or Intellect or Soul; in other words he does not restrict the application to demiurgic activities. The message he reads out of the passage is a perfectly general one. Similar considerations apply to *Phaedrus* 245c–d, where Plato describes the soul’s self-motion as “the spring (*pêgê*) and beginning (*arkhê*)” of all other motion. This passage is probably the main Platonic source of emanation metaphors for Plotinus. The soul’s self-motion spoken of here is interpreted as an internal activity, and as in the *Timaeus* case, he takes the point to be a general one, i.e., not at all restricted to the workings of soul. Thus, nothing would stand in the way for him in drawing a general lesson about causality from the theory of internal virtue in the *Republic*. Moreover, this latter theory can be seen as invoking the kind of causality Plotinus is after in his double activity doctrine: Plato describes the virtuous soul in *Republic* IV as an independent mechanism, since the account of the relationships between the components or “parts” of the soul doesn’t refer to anything external to the soul itself. (To be more precise: the account of the virtuous soul doesn’t presuppose anything about external actions or anything “lower” than the soul itself; it will presumably ultimately rely on the Ideas, though they have not been invoked in Book IV of the *Republic*.) Similarly, the cardinal virtues are defined totally by reference to the internal relationship of the parts, not with reference to external actions. Nevertheless, it is clear that Plato regards so-called virtuous external actions as a consequence of the internally defined virtuous state of the soul: after applying the common or vulgar (*phortikon*) test to his new definition of internal justice, asking whether the internally just person would neglect parents, steal, betray comrades, forsake oaths, and so forth, he asks rhetorically: “And is not the cause (*aition*) of this [i.e., of the internally just person’s avoidance of such behavior] to be found in the fact that each of the parts within him does its own work in the matter of ruling and being ruled?” I shall return to this point in a little while.

In any case, the lesson Plotinus can draw from *Republic* 443c and the surrounding discussion is that Plato posits two kinds or levels of virtue, one in actions and another one internal to the soul. Moreover, it is clear that the latter kind is the real virtue and that virtue in action is something that follows from it. Plotinus evidently thinks that the kind of causality involved is his double-act kind of causality.

In another context in Plotinus we see that he indeed regards external actions (in this case not particularly virtuous actions) as a kind of byproduct of thought and an image or a “lower manifestation of it.” In III.8.4 he writes:

For men, too, when their power of contemplation weakens, make action (*praxis*) a shadow of contemplation and reasoning . . . Everywhere we shall find that making and action are either a weakening or an accompaniment of contemplation; a weakening, if the doer or maker had nothing in view beyond the thing done, an accompaniment if he had another object of contemplation better than what he made. For who, if he is able to contemplate what is truly real, will deliberately go after its image (*eidōlon*)?⁹

(III.8.4 30–45)

In this passage Plotinus declares that action in general is an image, *eidōlon*, of thought. He also calls action an accompaniment or byproduct (*parakolouthēma*) of thought, an expression suggesting external activity. In the next chapter, III.8.5, we see the typical terminology of double activity in an unambiguous way that makes clear that he sees external action as an external activity of thought, which, according to him, turns action and production themselves into a kind of thought (III.8.5 17–37). So, for Plotinus external action is an external act of the soul’s thought and an image of it.

The question I now wish to address is whether we can see evidence of the same or similar kind of view in Plato, even considering Platonic passages that are not explicitly reflected in the *Enneads*. Might Plotinus have a point in thinking that according to Plato too actions are something like secondary activities of internal psychic activities and images or reflections of the states of the soul?

9 ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄνθρωποι, ὅταν ἀσθενήσωσιν εἰς τὸ θεωρεῖν, σκιὰν θεωρίας καὶ λόγου τὴν πράξιν ποιοῦνται. . . πανταχοῦ δὴ ἀνευρήσομεν τὴν ποιήσιν καὶ τὴν πράξιν ἢ ἀσθένειαν θεωρίας ἢ παρακολούθημα· ἀσθένειαν μὲν, εἰ μὴδὲν τις ἔχει μετὰ τὸ πραχθέν, παρακολούθημα δέ, εἰ ἔχει ἄλλο πρὸ τούτου κρείττον τοῦ ποιηθέντος θεωρεῖν. Τίς γὰρ θεωρεῖν τὸ ἀληθινὸν δυνάμενος προηγουμένως ἔρχεται ἐπὶ τὸ εἶδωλον τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ.

IV *The Republic* on the soul and external actions

Just before the passage about external and internal actions we considered above from *Republic* 443c Socrates says:

SOCRATES: Then the dream we had has been completely fulfilled – our suspicion that, with the help of some god, we had hit upon the origin and pattern of justice right at the beginning in founding our city.

GLAUCON: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Indeed, Glaucon, the principle that it is right for someone who is by nature a cobbler to practice cobblery and nothing else, for the carpenter to practice carpentry, and the same for the others is a sort of image (*eidōlon*) of justice – that is why it's beneficial.

(443b–c)¹⁰

For our purposes the important feature of this passage is that the principle of division of labor in the city is a sort of image, *eidōlon*, of justice. What does Plato mean by that claim? Shorey (1930 note) thinks that “image” here means something like “adumbration.” The idea seems to be that the original division of labor in the state introduced in Book II 369e ff., fails to fully meet the standard of justice in the state, which consists in the three classes each doing their job, not merely in each person's doing what he or she is best fit for. That is why the original principle is a mere adumbration of justice. Something can be said for such an interpretation. However, I find the suggestion in Adam's commentary (1902), which Shorey explicitly rejects, more plausible: Adam takes the contrast between the *eidōlon* and true justice implied here to be the contrast between justice exhibited in external actions and the internal justice within the soul itself. Indeed, the immediately following sentence, the lines 443c9–d1, considered above, would rather suggest that. For, as we see from these lines, Plato rephrases the point of the passage just cited in terms of a contrast between “doing one's own” internally and doing it externally. Moreover, he refers to the former kind of justice as what justice “in truth is,” the natural contrast being with the kind of justice that is a mere “image.”

The passage we have been considering from *Republic* 443c–d, with the contrast between “doing one's own” externally and internally, is actually the beginning of a very long sentence which in the Greek text runs all

10 The translations of the *Republic* in this chapter are drawn from Grube's version as revised by Reeve, in Cooper and Hutchinson (1997).

the way down to 444a.¹¹ Even if the internal, true justice mentioned at the beginning of the long sentence is thus contrasted with the image of justice mentioned a little earlier, it is also contrasted with the justice of external actions which is brought up towards the end of the long sentence. In summary the long sentence claims: (1) True justice is doing one's own internally, i.e., each part of the soul doing its own job. (2) With the aid of musical metaphors of harmony and attunement Socrates elaborates on what this consists in and how it is achieved. (3) Once internal justice is achieved and, it seems, only then, the just person may engage himself in mundane affairs, such as gaining wealth, tending to the body, going into politics or private business. (4) In so doing, the internally just person calls just and noble the action that preserves and supports his state of soul, i.e., his internal justice, and unjust the act which upsets it; he calls wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions. The internally just person believes the action which destroys the harmony of the soul to be unjust and the belief behind it he regards as ignorance.

Plato seems here to be giving a kind of criterion for calling an action just: one that "preserves and helps achieve" the soul's orderliness.¹² It is noteworthy that this is a criterion of what the internally just person calls just actions. Plato does not say that a person has to be internally just in order to perform an action the internally just person would call just. In fact, if it suffices for calling an action just that it helps achieve internal

11 The sentence continues (in the Grube-Reeve translation): "One who is just does not allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale – high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. And when he does anything, whether acquiring wealth, taking care of his body, engaging in politics, or in private contracts – in all of these, he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions. And he believes that the action that destroys this harmony is unjust, and calls it so, and regards the belief that oversees it as ignorance."

12 Myles Burnyeat has pointed out to me in conversation that this criterion of the justice of actions fails to satisfy the definition of justice in the soul or that of justice in the state, both of which invoke parts of a whole doing their job. The criterion of just actions proposed here is, however, derived from the definition of justice in the soul. The justice of actions here, Burnyeat suggests, is to be seen as a case of *pros hen* homonymy: the justice of the soul is the primary sense of justice but actions that preserve and help achieve justice in the primary sense are to be called "just" too, though in a derived sense.

justice, the person who engages in such an action presumably is not just yet: the agent would not have to achieve this.

Does it follow from what has been said that Plato regarded the just acts which “preserve and help achieve” the soul’s orderliness as *images* of internal justice? He doesn’t say so explicitly here. However, if Adam is right in seeing the contrast between the *eidôlon* in 443c4 and true justice as the contrast between justice in outward behavior and internal justice, it is natural to take the just actions referred to here at the end of the long sentence as *eidôla* too. We would then have to see the criterion of just actions proposed at the end of the long sentence as an elaboration on the theme of the image of justice.¹³

There is in any case reason to believe that Plato did regard external actions in general as a kind of image of the soul or of psychic states. Let us first consider some passages from *Republic* III 399e ff., where Socrates is discussing which forms of poetry, melodies, rhythms, and, indeed, craftworks in general are fit to be admitted into Kallipolis. Here we find the language of image and imitation all over the place: Socrates speaks of kinds of rhythms as imitations (*mimêmata*) of certain sorts of life (400a) and good and bad rhythm “follow by way of assimilation” (*hepetai homoioumenon*) fine and disgraceful diction (400c–d). Socrates summarizes his position by stating that rhythm and harmony follow the words in poetry and the words, in turn, follow a “good and fair disposition of the mind” (400d–e). A few lines below, after adding painting, weaving, embroidery, architecture, furniture, and plant and animal bodies to the list that started with rhythm, harmony, and diction (since in all these there is grace and gracelessness) he concludes: “And gracelessness and evil rhythm and disharmony are akin to bad words and bad character, while their opposites are akin to and are imitations (*mimêmata*) of the opposite, a moderate and good character” (401a). Further examples of imitations of character or states of soul are to be found in the subsequent discussion: the craftsmen are to be forbidden to make an image (*eikôn*) of evil character in sculpture, architecture, and any other product of

13 What is said to be an *eidôlon* of justice at 443c4 is the principle that it is right for each person to do what his nature is fit for and nothing else. How can this be harmonized with justice in action as that which preserves and helps achieve internal justice? A full discussion of this question would take us to deep and intricate issues about the *Republic*, such as in what sense the cardinal virtues can be attributed to other citizens than the philosophers. I shall refrain from going into this. Let this, however, be said: a person who is engaged in something his nature isn’t fit for is presumably engaged in something that is detrimental to his soul and doesn’t bolster his inner harmony.

art – clearly “image of evil character” here means not “statues of wicked people” but “anything graceless.”

The passages we have just been considering show very clearly that Plato is willing to describe certain human products, and no doubt implicitly also the activities involved in making them, as imitations of states of soul or character. It is noteworthy that phenomena in the sensible world are said to be imitations of the human soul. It may, however, be objected that these passages do not amount to an affirmative answer to the question raised above whether Plato may have regarded actions quite generally as some kind of imitations of states of soul and just actions in particular as imitations of internal justice. For, it might be said, the emphasis in this part of Book III is on the products rather than the actions and, moreover, it is here a question of a rather specific kind of products, *viz.*, artistic products. Even if Plato may regard such products as imitations of soul-states, it does not follow that he regarded human actions in general so.

I grant that these passages in Book III do not amount to a confirmation of the hypothesis that actions are imitations of soul-states. They do, however, speak for such a view. The following fact supports this: in justifying the extension of his account of musical phenomena as imitations of soul-states to all sorts of artistic and even natural products, Plato notes that “in all these [i.e., painting, weaving, etc.] there is grace (*euskhêmosunê*) and gracelessness (*askhêmosunê*)” (401a); he goes on to add that gracelessness and bad rhythm are akin to bad words (*kakologia*) and bad character (*kakoêtheia*), whereas the opposites of gracelessness and bad rhythm are akin to, and imitations (*mimêmata*) of, the opposite character, a moderate and good one. Since for Plato the notions of grace and gracelessness certainly also apply to actions in general, one would think that according to him actions, quite generally, exhibit forms of grace and gracelessness that are imitations of corresponding soul-states.

At the end of Book IX of the *Republic*, where Plato works out the simile of the threefold beast, there is a passage on the very same topic as the one dealt with in the latter part of the long sentence we considered earlier ending at 444a: how does the internally just person act outwardly? The account of unjust actions that in the previous passage was stated in terms of destroying the orderliness of the soul is now vividly described in terms of feeding the beast so that it takes over the rule of the whole soul. The line of thought here is in most respects the same as what we encountered in the passage in Book IV 443c ff., but there are some interesting new details

in addition. Socrates first discusses how “the sensible person” (*ho ge noun ekhôn*) deals with his own body and asserts that he will direct all his efforts to attaining [the harmonious inner state]” (591c), and he will do this by cultivating “the harmony of the body for the sake of the consonance (*sumphônia*) of the soul.” The internally just soul is harmonious and consonant. This much is indeed clear from 443d–e, where internal justice is described by the aid of musical metaphors of harmony and consonance. What we have here in addition is the view that the sensible person attends to his body so as to make it harmonious too.

The next case Plato brings up is that of the businessman: if he is sensible, he will “keep order (*suntaxis*) and consonance in his money-making pursuits” (591d). He will “look to the constitution within him and guard against disturbing anything in it, either by too much money or too little.” Plato explains this further by saying that he will “fix his gaze (*apoblepôn*) on the constitution within him and guard against disturbing anything in it.” The same account holds for the person who goes into public life.

In these examples Plato is clearly taking up the theme of how the virtuous person goes about everyday life and the examples are more or less the same as the ones we saw in the previous passage in Book IV: tending to the body, doing business, and political or public activities. The virtuous soul is internally well-tempered, as we saw in 443d–e. Here in Book IX, however, Plato emphasizes that the actions too are orderly and harmonious; that is to say, being orderly and harmonious, the external action resembles the well-tempered soul.

Plato’s choice of the word *apoblepôn*, “fixing the gaze,” in this context, is worthy of note. It is as if the constitution of the soul is a kind of model that guides the action, which reflects the nature of the model. This is the same sort of language as we find in the description of the soul’s gaze at the beautiful and orderly realm of Ideas. At *Republic* 500b–c the philosopher “looks (*blepei*) at and sees and contemplates things that are ordered and always the same, that neither do injustice to one another nor suffer it, being all in a rational order; he imitates them and tries to become as like them as he can. Or do you think that someone can consort with things he admires without imitating them?” As a result the philosopher becomes “orderly and divine” insofar as a human being can. Even if there are bound to be significant differences between the virtuous person in action and that of the philosopher acquiring internal virtue by gazing at the Ideas, Plato’s account of the two is relevantly parallel: in both cases there is a model of a higher rank that is being looked at and in both cases

the outcome is imitations in a different material that somehow reflect the orderliness of the model.¹⁴

The account of the constitution of the soul serving as a model of action that we have seen at the end of Book IX, taken together with the account of the philosopher's gaze at the Ideas at 501, suggests that for Plato the Ideas, the soul, and action are three different levels, where the second imitates the first and the third the second. Plato's cosmological account in the *Timaeus* suggests the same: the demiurge and his model, the living being, constitute one level; the soul, a product of the first, a second; and the products of soul in the sensible realm are yet another level. Plotinus' account suggests the same kind of picture: there is Intellect, containing the Ideas; this produces Soul, which in turn produces the sensible world. In the human case too, the soul is a realm in its own right that produces actions that reflect the soul's state.

If the preceding account of the Platonic passages we have considered is right, the common picture of Platonic ethics according to which a virtuous person has to take a good look at the Idea of Justice or Goodness in order to act righteously and well is based on a misconception. The just person does no such thing. Rather, the soul of the just person has already been fashioned by the Ideas in such a way that it has become an independent agent. Such a soul is dependent on the level above, the Ideas, for its constitution, but once constituted it leads its own life at least insofar as action is concerned. It need not consult the Ideas for acting. Rather, for acting the person consults his own psychic constitution, which becomes a kind of model for the actions.

So Plotinus may have a point in interpreting the *eidôlon* of justice in 443c as an external act of internal virtue. As we have seen, there is considerable evidence also elsewhere that Plato was willing to regard action as an image or imitation of a soul-state. In particular we have seen that he believed that the harmonious, orderly character of the virtuous soul, which it owes to the orderliness of the Ideas, is preserved in its external doings. It is not so clear, however, that Plato's account is in all respects compatible with Plotinus' double activity interpretation. Let me, finally, explore this question.

14 The account of the gaze at the Ideas the philosopher is engaged in here in *Rep.* 500c–e is surprisingly non-intellectual. Presumably, Plato conceived of the gaze as acts of understanding the Ideas and their relations, but this is not what he emphasizes at all in explaining how the gaze results in virtue; rather, it is the beauty and orderliness of the Ideas that attract the philosopher and that he seeks to internalize.

If virtuous action as an image of an internally virtuous soul-state came about in the manner of external acts in Plotinus' double act theory, we would have to suppose that the action is something that flows from the soul-state like a reflection. The agent may be virtuous without doing anything at all, but were he to do something his action should be caused by his soul-state as a kind of byproduct of the state. The action is the "reflection" or "stamp" that this kind of state naturally makes externally. Is something along these lines Plato's view too in the *Republic*? Is such an account even compatible with what Plato says?

The answer to these questions is not so clear. Plato surely agrees that internal virtue doesn't depend on action; the virtuous person may not do very much at all and be virtuous all the same (this is implied, e.g., by 443e). He does also say, as we noted earlier, that the reason why the internally virtuous person would be the last one to commit adultery, disrespect his parents, or neglect the gods, is that each part of his soul does its job with respect to ruling and being ruled. It is as if this inner state guarantees that the virtuous person does no such thing. So far this is quite compatible with Plotinus' view. Taken together with the evidence we have seen for actions being images of soul-states, an account along these lines may even suggest itself: a virtuous action reflects the well-tempered soul and a vicious act a disorderly one, one in which passion or temperament have taken over the rule.

There are some complications, however. Someone might, for instance, object to such a reading of Plato by pointing out that the double act model suggests some kind of activity internally on the part of the soul, whereas Plato speaks of virtue primarily as a state which is a matter of the correct ordering of the parts of the soul; the fact that Plato speaks of an "internal *praxis* of what is one's own" should not distract us into thinking that internal justice involves any real activity. I would not find such an objection very powerful. Plotinus actually uses the word *energeia*, "activity," in a very wide sense. Usually a Plotinian internal activity doesn't indicate any genuine motion or turmoil at all (at least not motion observable by the senses). Snow, for instance, has an internal power that amounts to internal activity by virtue of which it cools its surroundings (V.1.6 34; V.4.1 31). The crucial feature is that the internal state is positively characterizable in its own right and that in virtue of its characteristics it has effects outside itself.

Furthermore, as we saw in the presentation of the context of our initial quotation from Plotinus, VI.8.6, Plotinus identifies virtue with intellect or reason: "virtue itself is a kind of other intellect (*nous tis allos*)" he says at

VI.8.5 34–35, and at 6 24–25 he cites Plato, this time *Republic* 518d10–e2 (again quite freely), saying that “the affections (*pathê*) that serve or are moderated by reason (*logô*) are somewhat close to the body and corrected by habit and exercise.”¹⁵ What Plato says in the corresponding passage is that the virtues other than knowledge (*epistêmê*) are acquired by habit and exercise; they are not there at all to start with; knowledge or reason, on the other hand, is innate but it has to be turned towards the right things. This suggests that for Plato reason is the core of virtue and at the same time the core of the real human being.¹⁶ At any rate, the picture suggested by Plotinus’ account in VI.8.5–6 as well as by Plato in various passages is that right reason or wisdom is the core of virtue and, moreover, that it actively exercises its rule of the whole virtuous soul. Not that it has to hold the other parts by force – it has tamed them and made them like itself – but its rule nevertheless consists in some kind of activity.

Another objection might run as follows: both in the passage in IV 443c ff. we considered above and at the end of Book IX (see especially 589d5 ff. and 592a1–4) Plato suggests that bad actions may bring ruin to a well-tempered soul. He also holds that some actions “preserve and help achieve” internal virtue. These are, as we have seen, exactly the actions that the internally just person is going to call just and fine. This might suggest that the connection between the just soul and just actions is simply that some actions tend to damage internal justice, some tend to preserve it, and what motivates the internally just person to do the just actions and avoid the unjust ones is simply these effects. It is true that Plato does not explicitly say that the just person is so motivated but he comes close, e.g., at 592a.¹⁷ If it was the case that the just person performed the so-called just acts only in order to bolster his psychic constitution or to make sure that it isn’t damaged, the kind of causality involved would seem to be rather different from anything the Plotinian double act model suggests. For on this account, there is no sense in which the just act is a natural

15 It is not clear whether by these affections that serve or have been moderated by reason Plotinus has in mind courage, moderation, and justice. He may, even if he calls them *pathê* or “affections.” Plato, in speaking about “the other virtues,” clearly seems to have these virtues (and perhaps others) in mind.

16 Confirmation of this view can be had from various Platonic passages: *Republic* IX 588a ff. (about the threefold beast, where reason is identified with the man); X 511d–12a (the story about Sea-Glaucus); and *Phaedo* 69a–c (about wisdom as the *sine qua non* for the other virtues).

17 Here he says that the sensible person “will avoid any private or public honour that might overthrow the established condition of his soul.” It sounds as if avoiding this is his main concern when acting.

reflection of internal justice; there is no internal connection between the internally just soul and the just actions, which renders the just actions a natural consequence of having a soul in this sort of state.

This view is for various reasons unsatisfactory. Let us suppose that we have a person who already has become internally "entirely one, moderate and harmonious" (IV 443e) and thus is internally just. The present account suggests that such a person might reason as follows: "If I accept this offer, I see the possibility of becoming even richer, a real millionaire; I admit that I find this quite tempting; however, I realize that in doing so I'd risk ruining my soul; so I shall refrain." We might say that this person has reason in command, which is shown by the fact that he decides to refrain: that is reason showing its control. There is, however, something fishy about the supposition that the Platonically just person could be at all like this. Given that he is tempted by greed, he is hardly "entirely one, moderate and harmonious." Moreover, if the sole motivation the just person has for acting justly is the maintenance of his well-tempered soul, there is no clear link between the nature of the well-tempered soul and the nature of the action: it simply so happens that some actions and activities bolster and preserve internal harmony while others have the opposite effect. The reason why just these actions bolster and preserve, while those others harm, is left unaccounted for. Furthermore, on this account we might have a person who is perfectly just internally but happens to fail to know that a certain action or course of actions is detrimental to his healthy psychic constitution. It seems to be possible to be initially internally just and still choose the bad alternative; the consequence of that may indeed be that the person no longer will be internally just, but this account gives no reason why one should expect an internally just person to choose the just action in the absence of knowledge of its consequences for his soul. There is no way in which the just action is shown to be the natural action for such a person.

Now, as we have seen, there are some indications that Plato held this unsatisfactory view. He does, however, give some positive characterization of just actions: they are harmonious. This may not be particularly informative in itself and would need an elaboration that I shall not attempt here. Still, this is something, and it may be possible to use it to come up with a rather different and philosophically better interpretation of just action in Plato. That account would also bring him closer to Plotinus' way of thinking about these matters. We might then say that the internally just person produces an image of his internal constitution in his actions, the key feature of which is harmony. This is what the actions of such a person

are naturally like: he acts harmoniously because he is harmonious internally. He will model his actions on his own constitution, and this is the natural thing for him to do. As an agent he will be informed by his own psychic constitution and reflect this in what he does. On this account, we should read Plato's remark about just action as the one that preserves and helps achieve the well-tempered soul in the light of this view of harmony. The reason why certain actions preserve and help achieve internal justice is simply that these actions preserve the character of the just soul because they are harmonious. This is the kind of action that naturally reflects the internally just soul.

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