

Introduction

According to the elaborate and extremely ingenious psychological theory that Plato presents in the *Republic*, human motivation comes in three distinct forms. Only one of the three forms of motivation originates from reason. The other two are in some sense non-rational. They derive on the one hand from spirit, which motivates us to seek esteem and avoid humiliation, and on the other hand from appetite, which impels us to pursue pleasure, such as the pleasure we tend to experience as we satisfy our bodily needs. Reason has its own attachments, including a desire to discover how things are and why they are the way they are, not with a view to benefits that such understanding may bring, but simply for its own sake. The distinct forms of motivation can interact harmoniously, with each one of them fulfilling its proper function. The person whose motivations are disposed in this harmonious way is, according to Plato's theory, virtuous. But the forms of motivation can also conflict, even in such a way that psychological conflict and division of mind become long-standing and deeply engrained.

The theory serves to describe and explain a variety of dispositions of character, virtuous as well as vicious ones. It enables Socrates, the *Republic's* main speaker, to formulate at least a preliminary answer to one of the dialogue's key questions: what is justice? It also has profound implications for the development and maintenance of good character. It informs and guides the *Republic's* programme of education, with its emphasis not only on intellectual excellence, but also on the early establishment of appropriate habits of attachment and response. Moreover, the theory evidently plays a central role in the *Republic's* condemnation of drama and epic poetry. The discussion of the effects of poetry on the soul, in *Republic* 10, takes into account the fact that human motivation comes in three forms, but strongly emphasizes the contrast between the rationality of one of the forms of motivation and the non-rational, often irrational and destructive, character of the other forms.

This book has two main purposes. One of these is to shed light on the contrast between rational and non-rational motivation in Plato's theory of the tripartite soul. What is distinctive about rational motivation, and in what sense are the other forms non-rational? Non-rational motivation is in some ways the more difficult topic, because it is unclear what cognitive resources the theory makes available to account for it. It may seem that Plato fails to offer a coherent view of it. Many readers of the *Republic* have thought that rational resources are needed to account for the cognitive achievements involved in even the lowest of the theory's three forms of motivation, appetitive desire. I shall concentrate on appetitive desire, in part because its stubborn attachment to whatever happens to give us

pleasure makes for a maximally stark contrast with the desires of reason, which spring from the distinctively human drive to act as is best overall.

Plato likens not only appetite, but also spirit, to a brute animal concealed within the human form (*Republic* 9, 588 C 7–E 2). But he takes spirit to have an affinity to reason that appetite lacks. In a cultural environment that is properly affirmed by the appreciation of genuine value, spirit can acquire and maintain a delicately nuanced practical outlook (note *Republic* 4, 440 B 9–C 4), so that, on that basis, it impels the well-conditioned person to pursue as admirable and praiseworthy those things, and only those things, that reason impels them to pursue as best overall. Spirit may even come to be disposed so as to find it admirable and praiseworthy to be the sort of person who pursues precisely those things that reason selects, and to pursue them precisely to the point that reason prescribes. It is not surprising, then, that Plato assigns spirit to reason as its natural helper and ally (*Republic* 4, 441 A 2–3, 441 E 4–5; *Timaeus* 70 A 2–C 1). It is a brute, at least in part because it cannot itself engage in the distinctively human activity of reasoning about what is best. But it is a highly educable brute, and it can be humanized to a very considerable extent.

Appetite's stubborn and inflexible attachment to whatever happens to give a person pleasure renders psychological conflict ineliminable. What gives us pleasure is under reason's control much less than what is regarded as admirable and praiseworthy in a given cultural environment. For one thing, what gives us pleasure is in large part determined by brute physiological facts about the constitution and condition of our body. Eating something now will give a hungry person pleasure regardless of whether or not they think it is now overall best to eat. Moreover, Plato thinks that appetite has an inbuilt tendency towards excess, in that the pleasures experienced in satisfying appetitive desires tend to engender new, and even more intense, appetitive desires that aim at renewed or amplified pleasurable experiences (*Republic* 4, 442 A 7–8).¹ For these reasons, Plato thinks that even in the well-disposed, virtuous soul, reason and spirit will need to watch over appetite, and will on occasion need to 'weed out' inappropriate desires that appetite will give rise to (*Republic* 4, 442 A 4–B 3; *Republic* 9, 589 A 6–B 6). Appetite's attachment to what in fact gives us pleasure is unreformable. What appetite motivates us to pursue can be reformed only by reforming what in fact gives us pleasure, within the rather stringent limits imposed by physiological facts. There is thus something ineliminably and unreformably brutish about appetite, not only about how it functions, but also about what it motivates us to pursue.

One thing that appetite and spirit have in common—anything on the interpretation that I shall offer—is that both of them are capable of generating fully formed motivating conditions without being capable of engaging in the activity of reasoning. I shall argue that Plato offers a coherent and relatively detailed view of the cognitive resources that are involved in the formation of appetitive desire.

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.12, 1119^b7–10.

These resources are available to spirit as well as to appetite, and I shall from time to time draw attention to ways in which my discussion seems to me to shed light on Plato's conception of spirit as well as on his conception of appetite. However, this book does not offer, and is not meant to offer, anything like a complete study of spirit, either as Plato or as Aristotle conceives of it. It is meant to offer, on the other hand, a reasonably complete study of appetite, as Plato conceives of it. On the view of appetite that I shall present, it is clearly and coherently conceived of as a non-rational form of motivation, in a way that contrasts interestingly and defensibly with rational motivation, as Plato conceives of that.

While the *Republic* is the text in which Plato introduces and argues for the theory of the tripartite soul, it is not the only Platonic dialogue that contains discussion of that theory. The *Timaeus*, a later text, provides an outline of it that is in many ways strikingly similar to its statement in the *Republic*. There is at least one notable difference, though, and I shall consider its significance for and impact on the theory. My view is that the substance of it as it is presented in the *Republic* remains intact. I therefore think that it is legitimate to speak simply of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul.

My second main purpose is to draw attention to what seems to me to be a close connection between Plato's and Aristotle's psychological theories. It is fairly well known that Aristotle adopts Plato's conception of human desire as coming in three distinct forms with little or no modification.² It is less widely appreciated that the key concept Aristotle employs in explaining non-rational motivation—*phantasia*, that is—has significant Platonic antecedents. Aristotle is unfortunately not as clear as one would wish him to be about what *phantasia* is and how it is involved in non-rational motivation. We do not have a comprehensive discussion by him concerning the topic. There are a considerable number of relevant discussions and remarks in the *De Anima*, in the *De Motu Animalium*, and in the collection of texts known as the *Parva Naturalia*. Some of these shed a good deal of light on *phantasia*, so that it is possible to make a reasonably detailed and, I think, plausible case for a rather specific view of what Aristotle takes *phantasia* to be and how he takes it to be involved in non-rational motivation. On this view, it is a powerful cognitive capacity that enables the retention and retrieval of sensory impressions and that is much like thought. One crucial thing that it enables a subject to do is to envisage prospective courses of action, including ones which the subject is, or

² Aristotle accepts that human desire comes in three forms, namely wish (*βούλησις*), spirit (*θυμῶς*), and appetite (*ἐπιθυμία*); see, for instance, *De Anima* 2.3, 414^b2; 3.9, 432^b5–6; *Eudemian Ethics* 2.10, 1225^b24–6; *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.2, 1111^b10–26. Wish is a rational form of desire, springing from thoughts to the effect that something or other is good and worth caring about (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.4; 5.9, 1136^b7–9; *Rhetoric* 1.10, 1369^a3–4); spirit and appetite are non-rational. Appetites are desires that are directed at pleasure, flowing simply from beliefs or representations to the effect that something or other is a source of pleasure (cf. *De Anima* 2.3, 414^b3–6). Unfortunately, Aristotle says little about spirit as a distinctive form of motivation. Like Plato (*Republic* 4, 441 B 3–C 2), he treats anger, conceived of as a distress-involving desire for retaliation, as a case of spirited desire (e.g. at *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.6, 1149^a24–26).

can come to be, motivated to pursue. The Platonic antecedents of *phantasia* include the low-level sensory memory which Socrates in the *Philebus* defines as the preservation of perception and whose role it is to put a hungry, thirsty, or otherwise depleted subject in cognitive contact with the appropriate replenishing process (*Philebus* 34 A 10–35 D 6), but also—though less directly—the non-rational thoughts and beliefs that the *Republic* associates with even the lowest form of motivation, appetitive desire (*Republic* 9, 571 D 1–5; 10, 603 A 1–2).

It is not just, however, that Aristotle's notion of *phantasia* has significant Platonic antecedents, and that a study of these antecedents can illuminate at least some aspects of how Aristotle conceives of *phantasia*. There is also, it seems to me, a rather striking and noteworthy structural similarity between Aristotle's theory of human motivation and Plato's theory of the soul as tripartite, anyhow as it is presented in the *Timaeus*. So as to be able to capture that similarity in a suitably succinct and memorable manner, it will be useful to introduce somewhat schematically two views of what is involved in, and required for, thinking, or at any rate the kind of well-informed and properly guided thinking characteristic of experts when they deal with matters that fall within their field of expertise. Following ancient usage, I shall refer to these two views as Empiricism on the one hand and Rationalism on the other.

Empiricism is the view that thought, even expert thought, rests on nothing other than sensory experience: that is to say, on repeated cognitive encounters with perceptible objects, and on information supplied by the senses and retained by memory. Rationalism is the view that thought, especially expert thought, goes significantly beyond mere sensory experience, in that it involves, and requires, grasping intelligible (and imperceptible) items of some kind or other (for instance, Platonic forms or Aristotelian natures). While the two labels derive from Hellenistic debates between medical schools that primarily concerned the knowledgeable thinking of the expert doctor,³ both of the competing views had deep roots in earlier philosophical conceptions of what is involved in thinking. This is obvious so far as Rationalism is concerned.⁴ In reconstructing the origins of Empiricism, on the other hand, we are unfortunately limited to rather unsatisfactory

³ Galen offers a clear and succinct statement of the disagreement, saying about medical expertise that some say that experience (*ἐμπειρία*) alone suffices for the art, whereas others think that reason (*λόγος*), too, has an important contribution to make; *De Sectis Ingredientibus* 1, translated as in Galen, *Three Treatises on the Nature of Science*, trans. R. Walzer and M. Frede (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1985). Members of the two groups, Galen goes on, are called Empiricists (*ἐμπειρικοί*) and Rationalists (*λογικοί*) respectively. He adds that the Empiricists are also known as *πρωτογενετικοί*—'memorists', to use a term coined by Michael Frede—no doubt because of their heavy reliance on memory in accounting for thought; M. Frede, 'An empiricist view of knowledge: memorism', in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought I: Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 227.

⁴ For discussion concerning some of the philosophical underpinnings of Rationalism, see J. Allen, *Inference from Signs: Ancient Debates about the Nature of Evidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91–7.

evidence.⁵ Nevertheless, it is relatively clear both that Empiricism does have roots in fifth- and fourth-century philosophical theorizing,⁶ and that Plato and Aristotle are familiar with at least some of the forerunners of Empiricism. For present purposes, it will suffice to exhibit the single most important piece of evidence in both regards.⁷ This is a remark Socrates makes in his intellectual autobiography as presented in Plato's *Phaedo*. One thing he was wondering about as a young man, Socrates says, is whether it is blood, air, or fire that we think with, or whether it is none of these, but in fact the brain, which supplies the perceptions of hearing, seeing, and smelling, from which come memory and belief, and from memory and belief which has become stable, comes knowledge? (*Phaedo* 96 B 3–9).⁸ On this last view, both ordinary thought—mere belief—and expert thought—belief that has achieved stability—seem to depend on nothing but sense-perception on the one hand and memory on the other. Socrates does not credit any particular thinker with this theory, but there is some indication that it belongs to Alcmaeon of Croton (in southern Italy), a shadowy fifth- or even sixth-century figure who may have been a practising doctor as well as a philosopher.⁹

There are, moreover, important points of contact between Empiricism and the Atomist tradition beginning in the fifth century with Leucippus and Democritus. Aristotle complains repeatedly that Democritus, among other predecessors, failed to distinguish between thought and perception.¹⁰ Our evidence suggests that Democritus tried to explain all forms of awareness in terms of streams of fine films of atoms—the so-called images (*εἰδωλάα*)—that objects (artefacts, plants, animals, and the like) emit continuously and that, in turn, generate awareness of the object in question when they reach the soul atoms of a living thing capable of awareness. If so, Democritus' theory does not treat thought as *depending on* sense-perception, or on sense-perception and memory. Rather, it treats thought as being *exactly like* sense-perception, the only difference being that in sense-perception images reach the soul after entering the body through the appropriate sense-organ, whereas in thought images reach the soul directly, perhaps because thought-images are finer

⁵ For more detailed discussion concerning the philosophical background of Empiricism, see Frede, 'An empiricist view', 234–40, to which the present paragraph is indebted.

⁶ For what it is worth, Galen records that the Empiricists themselves regard their school as originating with a fifth-century Sicilian physician called Acron, about whom, unfortunately, we know next to nothing (*Subfiguratio Empirica*, 43).

⁷ Further evidence is Polus' view, mentioned in Plato's *Gorgias* (462 B 10–C 3) and in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (A 1, 981^a3–5), that experience produces art or expertise (*τέχνη*)—which in the context of the *Gorgias* is best understood as the view that expertise arises simply from experience. Note that the *Gorgias* indicates that Polus presented this view in a treatise. Socrates' contrasting view is, of course, that genuine expertise requires the ability to offer appropriate explanatory accounts (465 A 2–6). Note also the intriguing first chapter of Hippocrates' *Protreptica*, according to which 'reasoning' (*λογισμός*) is memory which collects things grasped with perception.

⁸ Translations of Plato are taken from Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. J. Cooper (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1997), with some modifications, the more significant ones of which are noted.

⁹ C. Huffman's entry on Alcmaeon in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2004 Edition) contains relevant and valuable discussion; see especially 2.2.

¹⁰ *De Anima* 1.2, 404^a27–31 and 405^a8–13, with 3.3, 427^a17–^b8.

or thinner than sense-images.¹¹ However, one key feature that Democritus' theory seems to have in common with Empiricism is that it makes do without a dichotomy of sense and intellect as two fundamentally distinct cognitive capacities that put us in touch with two fundamentally distinct kinds of objects. For the Empiricist, what is needed to account for cognition in all its forms are simply the senses themselves and the retention by memory of information supplied by the senses. For Democritus, cognition in all its forms can be explained just in terms of streams of images, some finer or thinner than others, reaching the soul in different ways—by different routes, as it were.¹² It is intriguing to note, incidentally, that Aristotle's discussion of prophetic dreams takes Democritus' theory as a starting-point, so as to improve on it (*De Divinatione per Somnum* 2, 463^b31–464^a24).

What is relatively clear, in any case, is that Plato and Aristotle are familiar with theories of cognition that either are Empiricist in character, or at least share Empiricism's aspiration to account for thought without appealing to a specifically intellectual capacity which puts us in touch with items that are fundamentally different in kind from perceptible objects. I can now return to what I take, and shall argue, to be a structural similarity between Plato's theory of the soul as tripartite and Aristotle's theory of motivation. This is that both theories exhibit a conception of human motivation that combines aspects of both Empiricism and Rationalism in one integrated theory. On this conception, it is a fact of human psychology that fully formed motivating conditions can arise with no cognitive resources other than sensory capacities being employed at the time. That is to say, only sense-perception and the retrieval of sensory impressions are in play. Other cases of human motivation, however, are not just, in this sense, a matter of sensory experience, because they crucially involve the active use of distinctively rational resources, such as the ability to apprehend intelligible forms, or the ability to grasp means-end relations. Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of motivation and of the practical cognition involved in it are, I shall attempt to show, remarkably continuous. Writing about them together will, I hope, enable readers to appreciate this continuity, and to achieve a clearer and richer understanding of both of them. Given that the subject matter is difficult and in some respects rather unfamiliar, any increase in clarity will, I trust, be most welcome.

PART ONE

APPETITE AND REASON IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

¹¹ I am following C. Taylor's suggestion in his *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 204.

¹² Note Philoponus' report in his *De Anima* commentary (35, 12): 'Democritus says that the soul is partless and is not a thing equipped with a plurality of powers, claiming that thought and sense-perception are the same thing and that they are manifestations of one power.'

Introduction

In Part I, I shall offer an interpretation of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul as it is presented in the *Republic*. Two groups of claims are central to my interpretation. The first group concerns partition of the soul as such. Plato's theory, I shall argue, holds the embodied human soul to be a composite of a number of distinct and specifiable items. The theory takes it that impulses to act arise, not from the soul as a whole, but, in each case, specifically from some part of it. It is, moreover, part of the theory that while the embodied human soul can give rise to a desire for, and a simultaneous aversion to, one and the same thing, no individual part of the soul can by itself give rise to motivational conflict of this particular kind.

My second group of claims focuses on the lowest of the theory's three parts of the soul, appetite. I shall argue that it is part of Plato's theory that appetite is non-rational in the strong sense of lacking the capacity for reasoning. At the same time, the theory takes appetite, like the other parts of the soul, to be capable of giving rise to fully formed impulses to act, so that it can, all by itself, get a person to behave in some specific way or other. It can, for example, get Leontius to run towards a pile of corpses lying by the side of the road, so as to take a close look at them (*Republic* 4, 439 E 5-440 A 4). The notion of a part of the soul that is incapable of reasoning, but capable of giving rise to episodes of behaviour, even to episodes of human behaviour, sets the scene for the book's central theme: the idea, shared by Plato and Aristotle, that while reason can, all by itself, motivate a person to act, parts or aspects of the soul other than reason are equipped with non-rational cognitive resources that are sufficient for the generation of fully formed motivating conditions.

My main argument for the non-rationality of appetite, as Plato conceives of it, depends on my view of what Platonic soul-partition comes to. My argument, in a nutshell, is this. According to my view of partition, no individual soul-part can give rise to a desire for, and a simultaneous aversion to, one and the same thing. Plato conceives of appetite as being naturally attracted to pleasure (*Republic* 4, 439 D 6-8). If appetite is rational, it is capable of forming reasoned desires for what it takes to be better in the long run, and of forming reasoned aversions to what it takes to be worse in the long run. If so, it is vulnerable to just the kind of motivational conflict that Platonic soul-partition rules out at the level of individual soul-parts. For appetite's nature will saddle it with desires for pleasures that it may, if it is rational, at the same time be averse to, on the grounds that pursuing the pleasure in question would be worse in the long run. Therefore, Plato's theory of the tripartite soul is coherent only if he conceives of appetite as non-rational.

Chapter 1 is introductory. It lays out in some detail what the rest of Part 1 is meant to establish, against the background of recent and not so recent literature on Plato's psychological theory. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth discussion of the Republic's argument for tripartition of the soul. The main purpose of that discussion is to argue for my view of what Platonic soul-partition comes to. Plato's argument for tripartition depends crucially on what is standardly referred to as the Principle of Opposites, which says that the same thing cannot at the same time do opposites in the same respect and in relation to the same thing. I shall argue that the context of the overall argument makes it clear that what this principle is supposed to mean is that the same thing cannot at the same time be the proper subject of opposite predicates that apply in the same respect and in relation to the same thing. I shall show, moreover, that Plato takes desire for, and aversion to, one and the same thing to exemplify a pair of opposite predicates that apply in the same respect and in relation to the same thing. He plainly accepts, furthermore, that it is a common occurrence for someone to desire, and *at the same time* to be averse to, one and the same thing. According to my interpretation, he is committed to the view that such motivational conflicts always reveal a partition of the soul, with one part being the proper subject of the desire, and another part being the proper subject of the aversion. He is also committed to the view that if a part of the soul is incomposite, it cannot itself harbour such motivational conflicts. And it can be shown that he conceives of the three parts of the soul that are argued for in Republic 4 as incomposite.

Chapter 3 defends my interpretation of Platonic soul-partition against the objection that a Platonic soul is not the right kind of thing for it to make sense to say of it that it genuinely has parts. It also addresses the philosophical cost of soul-partition, so understood. It does so by considering Socrates' remark in Republic 10 that 'it isn't easy for a composite of many parts to be everlasting if it isn't composed in the finest way, yet this is how the soul now appeared to us' (Republic 10, 611 B 5-7). The chapter closes with a brief glance at Aristotle's psychological theory, by considering an Aristotelian concern about soul-partition. Aristotle thinks of the soul as, among other things, a principle that accounts for the unity of the organism it ensouls. However, for something to be a genuine principle of unity, it cannot itself be a composite. For composites stand in need of unification by something else. Aristotle's position on soul-partition will be a recurring theme of this book. We shall find that Aristotle is unwilling to commit himself to the view that the human soul is a thing of parts. One question this raises is whether Aristotle can consistently accept the Platonic analysis of human desire into three kinds without accepting the Platonic analysis of the human soul into three parts. I shall turn to this question in the book's conclusion; my answer will be affirmative.

Chapter 4 completes the argument for my view of what Platonic soul-partition comes to. It does so by disarming two *prima facie* reasons against it. One of these is that Plato, in Republic 8 (553 A 1-555 B 2), seems to describe a case of motivational conflict within appetite, and he seems to have in mind just the kind of conflict

that Platonic soul-partition, on my view, rules out at the level of individual soul-parts. There is good reason to think, however, that the motivational conflict that Plato is describing at 553 A 1-555 B 2 is supposed to be a conflict, not *within* appetite, but between reason and appetite, or between reason and spirit on the one hand and appetite on the other. Moreover, many scholars think that, in Republic 9, Plato implicitly attributes to appetite the capacity for instrumental reasoning. If they are right, this not only refutes my claim that Plato's theory holds appetite to be incapable of reasoning. It also throws in doubt my view of Platonic soul-partition. For if appetite is rational, it is vulnerable to motivational conflict of just the kind that, according to my view of partition, Plato's theory rules out at the level of individual soul-parts. So much the worse, one might think, for my view of partition. (Alternatively, so much the worse for Plato's theory.) I shall argue, however, that Plato neither says nor implies that appetite is capable of instrumental reasoning. The chapter ends with some remarks about Plato's theory of human motivation, as it emerges from my interpretation of the argument for tripartition of the soul. One remark is forward-looking. This is that my interpretation presents Plato as operating with a conception of what is distinctive of rational motivation that is not only clear and robust, but also importantly continuous with Aristotle's conception of rational motivation. I shall turn to Aristotle's conception in Chapter 12. The main points of contact between Plato and Aristotle are, first, that rational motivation depends on thoughts to the effect that something or other is good, and, secondly, that it brings into play desires of a very special kind. These spring from, and are informed by, the subject's grasp of means-end, or 'for the sake of', relations. The formation of such desires involves the transmission of desire from A to B in such a way that B comes to be desired specifically as a means to, or for the sake of, A.

Parts of the Soul

In book 4 of Plato's *Republic*, as is well known, Socrates offers a complicated and somewhat problematic argument for the conclusion that the human soul, at any rate in its embodied state, consists of three parts. One question is what Socrates commits himself to in arguing, in the way he does, that the soul is composed of parts—never mind the further questions of how many parts there are, and how they are to be characterized. Now it seems to me that concerning this first question, of what a commitment to parts of the soul in this context comes to, some recent commentators have shown an objectionable tendency to downplay what is involved in the view Socrates argues for, in a way that fails to do justice to the detail of the argument in *Republic* 4,¹ and that obscures what arguably is a significant disagreement between Plato and Aristotle about the nature and constitution of the human soul.

Here is a brief and incomplete statement of the view I shall argue for. The *Republic's* psychological theory amounts to significantly more than the claim that there are a number of different kinds or forms of human motivation. It also involves the further claims, first, that in order to account for the fact that motivations of these different kinds or forms can (and frequently do) conflict with one another, it is necessary to accept that the embodied human soul is not, as one might think it is, a single undifferentiated thing, but is in fact a composite of a number of distinct and specifiable items; and, secondly, that it is specifically from these distinct items, rather than from the soul as a whole, that human motivation, in its various forms, arises. If so, Socrates is not only offering an analysis of human motivation and of human desire. He is also adopting a substantial and problematic position on the nature and constitution of the human soul in its embodied state. Now, we might find the analysis of motivation that the discussion undoubtedly contains a great deal more appealing than the position on the nature of the soul that it argues for. We might even think that Plato made a mistake in arguing,

¹ T. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 327, offers a particularly clear statement of the kind of interpretation that I am meaning to oppose: 'For the purposes of Book 4, then, Plato's general claims about "kinds", "parts", and "things" amount to the claim that there are desires differing in kind unrecognized by Socrates.' Cf. also C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 134, 163-4; and C. Shields, 'Simple Souls', in E. Wagner (ed.), *Essays on Plato's Psychology* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001), 137-56.

not just that there are a variety of different forms of human motivation, but also that there are a corresponding variety of different parts of the human soul. But this should not lead us to ignore or misrepresent the latter position, if we wish to arrive at a clear view of Plato's psychological theory, as well as of the history of ancient philosophical thinking about the nature of the soul.

In addition to the question of what precisely is involved in taking the human soul to be a thing of parts—a question about *partition*—there are of course further questions, perhaps ones that are more interesting to some of us, about how many such parts there are, and what can be said about them—questions about *partition*. One common worry is that, given the criterion for partition that Socrates employs, he might wind up with more parts than just three, so that the human soul may turn out to have a structure that is significantly different from the structure of his imaginary ideal city, as it is described at 372 E–434 C, presumably with the result that his accounts of justice in the city and justice in the soul will fail to be relevantly parallel. In that case Socrates and his interlocutors, as agreed at 434 E 4–435 A 4, would have to revisit, and modify appropriately, their account of the just city. It is important, in this connection, to distinguish between two different worries, both of which envisage a larger number of soul-parts than three, but only one of which arises from concerns to do with the criterion for partition that Socrates relies on. The first worry is that the parts of the soul that Socrates introduces in book 4 of the *Republic*—namely reason, spirit, and appetite—just are not enough to account for the huge variety of psychological phenomena that human beings actually exhibit. It is difficult to see how the Platonic tripartition of reason, spirit, and appetite can explain grief, for instance. Grief is, one might think, not a peculiar function of a single one of these three parts, the way anger, for instance, is a function of spirit, or hunger is a function of appetite. Is it, then, some kind of joint effort of cooperating parts? Or is there a special part, responsible for grief, perhaps among other things, in addition to the other three parts? These seem to be legitimate questions about Plato's psychological theory, and ones that a comprehensive defence of the theory, if it were to be attempted, would have to address.

They are not, however, questions that arise from considerations about the criterion that Socrates employs in arguing for the view that there are parts of the soul. As is well known, Socrates argues for parts of the soul, roughly speaking, by appealing to certain cases of psychological conflict, and to a principle to the effect that conflicts of this kind can only be attributed to things that have distinct parts, so that the conflict in question can properly be described as a conflict between at least two parts. A second worry about too many parts, then, stems from the thought that there appear to be many psychological conflicts that cannot be properly described as conflicts between distinct Platonic parts—say, reason and appetite—but that look rather like conflicts *within* one such part or another, typically appetite. It is, after all, not too difficult to see that 'bodily' desires like hunger, thirst, and sexual arousal can generate psychological conflicts all by themselves, without any involvement of reason or spirit. Moreover, Socrates evidently does

not limit appetite to basic bodily desires like hunger, thirst, and sexual arousal, but also attributes to it relatively more refined desires, such as the desire for money.² But the more variety there is among the desires of appetite, and the more refined its desires can be, the harder it is to believe that psychological conflicts between such desires are not, as a matter of fact, quite common. And indeed several commentators³ think that in Book 8 of the *Republic*, where Plato has occasion to describe and discuss in some detail a number of cases of psychological conflict, he describes just such a conflict between desires that he must take to be desires of one and the same part of the soul, namely appetite (553 A 1–555 B 2). So the worry is that if Plato takes conflicts between desires to reveal a partition of the soul, in such a way that distinct parts are responsible for the conflicting desires in question, he will have to accept a sub-partition at least of the appetitive part. Nor is it easy to see that just one such sub-partition will be needed; it rather seems as if the need for further subdivisions might arise over and over again. If so, the problem is not just that Plato will have to accept more than three parts of the soul, or indeed indeterminately many ones, it will also turn out that at least one of the three parts that he introduces, the appetitive part, is not actually a basic part at all, but itself a composite item, perhaps one with indeterminately many parts.

Now, it is reasonably clear that the argument is meant to demonstrate that the human soul consists of three parts—reason, spirit, and appetite. While Socrates does seem to allow that further parts may come to light in addition to the three parts he introduces (443 D 7–8), he does not even hint at the possibility that any one of the three parts he argues for might turn out to be not a basic part after all, but itself a complex or composite item, reduplicating the complexity of the soul as a whole. Moreover, if Plato thought that the appetitive part might itself be complex, there would be no reason to think that an aversion that conflicts with some desire of appetite must belong to a part of the soul different from appetite. (Likewise, if the soul is complex, there is no reason to think that in cases of conflicting desires at least one of the desires in question must belong to something other than the soul—the body, for instance.) But when the question arises whether spirit, or anger, belongs to the appetitive part, an idea that in fact seems plausible at least to Glaucon (439 E 2–4, cf. 440 E 1), the fact that spirit can oppose, and conflict with, a desire of appetite is taken to establish right away that spirit must be different from appetite (440 A 5–7). It is a presupposition of the argument that the appetitive part is basic or simple, not complex.

It would be desirable, then, to be able to show how Plato could have thought that his argument succeeds in establishing reason, spirit, and appetite as basic, incomposite parts of the human soul. The most satisfactory way of doing this

² 442 A 6–7, 580 E 5–581 A 1, 581 A 3–7, 586 D 4–5; cf. 435 D 9–436 A 3.

³ For instance, Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327; J. Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 1 (1984), reprinted in his *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 123; M. Woods, 'Plato's division of the soul', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73 (1987), 31.

would obviously be to offer an interpretation of the argument such that it does in fact succeed, just as Plato presumably thought it did, in establishing these three parts as basic parts of the soul. Recent writers have attempted to offer such an interpretation, roughly along the following lines.⁴ If conflict between desires of one and the same part of the soul does occur, in fact quite commonly, and is acknowledged to occur by Plato, then it presumably is not conflict as such, or *mere* conflict, that constitutes Socrates' criterion for partition of the soul, but a somewhat special kind of conflict. In fact it is fairly clear that at least one of the examples of psychological conflict that Socrates uses in the argument does exemplify a somewhat special kind of conflict, exhibiting a feature that one might well think sets this kind of conflict apart from ordinary conflicts between competing desires of the appetitive part.

When Leontius attempts to resist his desire to take a close look at some corpses (439 E 5–440 A 4), he is not just experiencing a conflict between two desires, one a desire to take a close look, the other a desire not to. A description of what is going on just in these terms would miss an important feature of the situation: for Leontius seems to have an aversion not just to taking a close look at the corpses, but also to *having the desire to do so*. This latter aversion expresses itself in the anger with which he addresses what he takes to be responsible for the desire, his eyes. If so, the case is somewhat special in that it exemplifies not just a conflict between two desires that, as it were, operate on the same level, but a conflict that also involves a desiderative attitude, an aversion, to one of the conflicting desires. In other words, the conflict in question is not just a conflict between two competing first-order desires. It also crucially involves a second-order desire, namely an aversion to having a desire of the first order. Perhaps, then, it is not just any conflict between desires, but the somewhat special case that involves a second-order desire at least on one side of the conflict, that according to Plato reveals a partition of the soul? This hypothesis at any rate has the advantage that it enables us to make room for ordinary conflicts between first-order desires that belong to one and the same part of the soul; and we have seen that it looks as if Plato might need to have room for such conflicts.

Moreover, it has seemed to most recent commentators that Plato's lowest part of the soul, the appetitive part, which he refers to as non-rational, actually has some features that we, though perhaps not Plato, think of as rational, for instance the capacity for means-end reasoning.⁵ If so, the question arises what precisely Plato is meaning to deny to the appetitive part when he calls it non-rational or, to

⁴ Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327; T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 207–9, 211–13, 216–17; A. Price, *Mental Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1995), 47–8, cf. Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 123.

⁵ J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 129–30; Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 128; Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 282; Price, *Mental Conflict*, 60–1; M. Burnyeat, 'Culture and society in Plato's *Republic*', in G. Peterson (ed.), *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values 20* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 227; C. Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 244.

put it more dramatically, what rationality as Plato conceives of it comes to. Confronting that question, we might with some plausibility hope that Plato's concern with second-order desires could turn out to be crucial to his conception of rationality. The suggestion might be that, for Plato, second-order desires play a role in identifying reason as a part of the soul that is the source of a certain kind of value-based motivation, of first-order desires that are in a certain way sensitive and responsive to desires of a higher order, in a way the desires of appetite are not. The suggestion may seem attractive, but is not without difficulty. One obvious problem is that Plato does not seem to limit second-order desires to reason. In fact, the one passage that most clearly seems to make use of a second-order desire in arguing for a partition of the soul does not, as we have seen, concern reason at all: the partition in question is the one between Leontius' spirit and appetite, and Leontius' second-order desire—or more precisely, aversion—belongs not to his reason, but to his spirit.

For reasons that will soon become obvious, I am not in fact proposing to pursue this suggestion. It will be clear by now that a discussion of what is involved in Plato's tripartition of the soul will, in more ways than one, concern Plato's conception of reason. In what follows, I shall argue against a number of central claims that recent writers have made and that I have already stated or at least alluded to. Part of the upshot will be that second-order desires are *not* needed in specifying the kind of psychological conflict that according to Plato reveals a partition of the soul. In arguing for that conclusion, I shall attempt to show that there is a clear sense in which conflict between desires of appetite is not, as a matter of fact, very common after all, so much so that it is relatively plausible to assume both that it does not standardly occur and that Plato thought it does not standardly occur. I shall also argue that Plato does not, in fact, describe, in book 8 of the *Republic*, cases of conflict between desires that he takes to belong to one and the same part of the soul. Moreover, I shall present reasons for thinking that when Plato denies reason to the appetitive part—and also, for that matter, to the spirited part—he is presupposing a conception of reason that is perfectly recognizable and indeed attractive, though not, of course, uncontroversial.

sure, embedded in a richer psychological framework than it ever was in earlier dialogues, but it would nevertheless be a mistake to think that it is a novel idea that results specifically from the political theory of the *Republic* let alone from Socrates' dialectical concerns in *Republic* 4. It should be clear, then, that Plato, at least, thought there was good psychological reason to identify spirit as a distinct part of the soul, as the source of, for instance, desires for honour and self-assertion, and of anger at slights and insults.

Moreover, the idea of three fundamental kinds of motive, and corresponding psychological tendencies and characters, is an important part of the background to the argument for tripartition of the soul in *Republic* 4. At the outset of the argument, it is already agreed between Socrates and Glaucon that each one of us has within himself the same kinds and characteristics (εἶδη τε καὶ ἦθη) as the city, namely spirit (τὸ θυμοειδές), love of learning (τὸ φιλομαθές), and love of money (τὸ φιλοχρήματον) (435 D 9–436 A 3). What Socrates and Glaucon agree on at this preliminary stage is not just the familiar idea that there are in human affairs three importantly different kinds of motive, and corresponding psychological tendencies and characters. It is the stronger claim that at least for a suitable range of people, which includes Socrates, Glaucon, and others like them, each individual has all of these psychological tendencies within him or her, and so is sensitive to all of these kinds of motive.

Now, it would be a mistake to think that the Platonic analysis of human motivation into three kinds or forms is already in evidence here in a full-fledged form, before the argument for tripartition even gets started. While we do have the idea of three kinds of psychological tendency being present in each one of us, making us sensitive and responsive to three kinds of motive, we do not yet have a full account of what these tendencies are and how they operate and interact. At the same time, if Plato's purpose had been to provide no more, and no less, than an analysis of the different forms or kinds of human motivation, he could have proceeded right away with a statement of the nature and proper functioning of each one of these tendencies, arriving at a conception of three distinctive forms of motivation by fleshing out and deepening our understanding of the three tendencies that have already been identified. This would have involved specifying, perhaps among other things, what the natural objects of pursuit are for each one of these tendencies, what their proper roles are in the life of a human being, and how they involve, or fail to involve, reason. It is very much worth noting and emphasizing that this is not, in fact, how Socrates does proceed at this stage of the discussion.¹ As we shall see, Socrates goes on to argue that in order to account properly for the fact that the embodied human soul has these different tendencies, and in particular for the fact that they can, and frequently do, conflict among themselves, it is necessary to say that the soul, in which they reside, is a thing of

¹ Cf. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327: 'Plato would have done better to introduce his argument about desires at once.'

2

The Argument for Tripartition

Many readers of the *Republic* have felt that Socrates argues for spirit as a third part of the soul simply because the ideal city he has outlined contains three classes of citizens (roughly speaking, philosophers, the military, and businesspeople), and so he needs three corresponding parts of the soul. The identification of reason and appetite as somehow distinct is, on this view, a psychologically valid step, whereas the introduction of spirit rests not on psychological grounds, but on Socrates' dialectical needs in the context. It may be worth pointing out that to think this is very much to get things the wrong way around. The idea that the just city contains these particular three classes of citizens itself rests on familiar ideas about human motivation and character, ones that quite clearly predate the *Republic*. One of these ideas is that there are in human affairs three fundamental kinds of motive or incentive, three importantly different kinds of thing that people focus their attention and desires on and that they structure their minds and lives around: wealth, honour (or esteem), and wisdom; and that, correspondingly, there are three kinds of people, naturally finding themselves leading three kinds of life: the life of business or money-making, the life of political or military excellence and prominence, and, much less commonly chosen, the life dedicated to learning and the achievement of wisdom.

The idea of these three kinds of motive already appears to be in play in Plato's *Apology*, when Socrates asks an imaginary fellow citizen:

Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation, and honours as possible, while you do not care for nor give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul? (*Apology* 29 D 7–E 3)

The idea of three kinds of character corresponding to these three kinds of motive is clearly present in the *Phaedo*, when Socrates says that philosophers, lovers of wisdom after all, abstain from bodily desire 'not for fear of wasting their substance and of poverty, which the majority and the money-lovers fear, nor for fear of dishonour and ill repute, like the ambitious and lovers of honour' (82 B 10–C 8; cf. *Phaedo* 68 B 8–C 3). Thus when Socrates, in book 9 of the *Republic*, classifies human beings in general (not just citizens of the just city) into three kinds—philosophical, victory-loving, and profit-loving (581 C 4–5)—the idea is, to be

parts, in such a way that the different tendencies in question can be attributed to different parts of the soul.

Having answered what he presents as an easy question, whether the soul has in it the same kinds and characteristics as the city, Socrates goes on to raise some difficult questions:

Do we do each of these things with the same [sc. part of ourselves],² or do we do them with three different (parts)? Do we learn with one (part), get angry with another, and with some third (part) desire the pleasures of food, drink, sex, and the others that are closely akin to them? Or do we act with the whole of our soul in each of these cases, when we set out after something? (*Republic* 436 A 8–B 4)

These are questions specifically about motivation, about 'setting out after something' or, as one might translate alternatively, about 'being impelled' (ὄρω ἡσυχίαν, 436 B 3). Socrates envisages three kinds of psychological phenomena as being involved in being motivated or impelled: having bodily desires, being angry, and learning. The first two are relatively straightforward as motivating factors or conditions, but we may be curious about how bodily desire is supposed to be related to the money-loving kind or characteristic in the soul, with which Socrates seems to associate it. Nor is it clear how he takes learning to be relevant to motivation. The thought is presumably that learning something is (or anyhow can be) a matter of actively setting out after something, namely after the knowledge or understanding one wishes to acquire, or the subject-matter one wishes to master and make available to one's understanding.³

It is, however, plain what the heart of Socrates' question is: given that there are, or seem to be, three ways in which humans are impelled to act or are impelled to engage in activity—experiencing bodily desire, being angry, actively learning or working out something—is it the soul as a whole that is on every relevant occasion responsible for motivating conditions of these three different kinds, or is it rather the case that, for each kind of motivating condition, it is specifically some part of the soul that is responsible for it?

The context of Socrates' question allows us to say something more definite about what is, or would be, involved in the soul as a whole, or alternatively some part or other of it, being responsible for motivating conditions of one kind or another. The idea is that it is either the soul as a whole or, on the alternative view, specifically some part of it, that is, strictly and accurately speaking, the bearer or subject of relevant motivating conditions—for instance, of a desire or an emotion. If it turns out that it is, in fact, specifically some part of the soul that is the bearer of (say) a desire, then it follows right away that it is not the soul as a whole that is the bearer of this particular desire. It does not, in that case, follow that the desire in

² Plato's Greek does not here include any word meaning 'part'. Socrates does, however, speak of the items in question as being in us (436 A 10), and in presenting the alternative view he uses the expression 'the soul as a whole' (ὅλη τῆ ψυχῆ). Later in book 4, he uses the word μέρος for parts of the soul (442 B 10, C 4; cf. 581 A 6).

³ I owe this suggestion to John Cooper.

question cannot be attributed to the soul at all. It can be so attributed, but it should be understood that the desire belongs to the soul in virtue of the fact that it belongs specifically to the relevant part of it. Thus we might (in that case) say that the proper subject or bearer of the desire is the relevant part of the soul, and that the desire belongs to the soul derivatively, in virtue of the fact that it belongs to a part of it. To see this, let us consider the context of Socrates' question.

Within the argument for tripartition of the soul (as well as, of course, elsewhere), Socrates attributes desires to the soul that he clearly takes to be desires of specifically some part of it. For instance, thirst is attributed to the soul at 439 A 9–B 3.⁴ He also, of course, speaks of parts of the soul as having desires (e.g. thirst at 439 B 4), and as demanding and prompting action, by pulling and dragging the soul, or the person, in the appropriate way (439 B 3–4; D 1–2). Moreover, there is good reason to think that, on Socrates' view, it is (at least for certain purposes) preferable to attribute a desire to the part of the soul that it specifically belongs to, rather than simply to the soul—in part, I take it, because to attribute it to the part in question is to attribute it to that to which it, strictly and accurately speaking, belongs. Considering the case of thirst and simultaneous aversion to drinking, Socrates says that it must be one thing in the soul that thirsts and a different thing that draws back from drinking; he then offers the following comparison:

In the same way, I suppose, to say of the archer that his hands at the same time push the bow away and draw it towards him is not to speak well (οὐ καλῶς εἶχει λέγειν).⁵ Rather, we ought to say that the one hand pushes it away and the other draws it towards him. (*Republic* 439 B 8–C 1)

Likewise, when there are special reasons to be accurate about what precisely it is that is the bearer of a desire or an aversion,⁶ to say that it is the soul that desires and is at the same time averse to the same thing is not to speak well, though it is not to speak falsely. Rather, we ought to say that it is one part of the soul that desires, and a different part that is averse. In so doing we properly identify the items that the motivating conditions in question, strictly and accurately speaking, belong to. And, to anticipate a bit, once we render the situation perspicuous in this way, we also see clearly that even though it involves opposition, and opposites that in a way belong to the same thing (namely, the soul), it nevertheless does not in fact violate the Principle of Opposites.

⁴ Note also 439 D 6–8: 'We'll call the part of the soul . . . with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites the non-rational, appetitive part.'

⁵ Grube-Reeve in *Plato: Complete Works* overtranslate: 'it's wrong to say'. Cf. 436 C 12–D 1: 'we wouldn't consider, I think, that he ought to put it like that'. Both of these expressions (which occur in closely connected contexts) are carefully nuanced, and they stop well short of claiming that to speak in the relevant way is to speak falsely.

⁶ Note 436 C 6–10: 'Is it possible for the same thing to be at rest and in motion at the same time and in the same respect?—Not at all.—Let's make our agreement more precise (ἀκριβέστερον) in order to avoid disputes later on.'

If this is along the right lines, we can reformulate Socrates' question at 436 A 8–B 4 in the following way. Given that there are three distinct ways in which humans are impelled to exert themselves, is it the soul as a whole that is, in every one of the three kinds of case, the bearer of motivating conditions, or is it rather that, for each kind of motivating condition, it is specifically some part of the soul that is the bearer of motivating conditions of the relevant kind? We can now see this as a question concerning the status of the three 'kinds' in the soul that Socrates and Glaucon have already identified, namely the 'spirited' kind, the learning-loving kind, and the money-loving kind. According to one candidate answer, they are features or tendencies (or something like that) of a unitary soul that, on each occasion, acts or is active as a whole. According to another view, which is the one Socrates is going to argue for, these three 'kinds' are distinct parts of a composite, parts with their own doings or ways of being active, and it is specifically to these parts, rather than to the soul as a whole, that motivating conditions of three different kinds belong. The first alternative allows the view that the embodied human soul is an incomposite item. The second alternative does not. To show the second alternative to be correct, therefore, is to show that the embodied human soul is a composite. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, Socrates makes it quite clear that he takes the argument for tripartition of the soul to show that the human soul, at least in its embodied state, is a composite of a plurality of items (611 B 5–7).⁷

To resolve his question, Socrates appeals to what I shall follow convention in calling the *Principle of Opposites* (PO):

It is clear that the same thing will not be willing to do or undergo opposites in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time. (*Republic* 436 B 8–9)

He adds that 'if we ever find this happening in the soul, we'll know that we aren't dealing with one thing but many'. That is to say that if they ever find the soul doing or undergoing opposites, in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time, they will know that they are dealing with a plurality of items. It would not follow right away that the soul is not a single thing at all, since having unity is compatible with having, or consisting of, a plurality of parts. But it would be the case that if the soul has unity, it has unity in the way composites do.⁸

Having stated PO, Socrates pauses to consider two apparent counterexamples. In doing so, he introduces two ways of analysing apparent cases of simultaneous opposition. As we shall see, only one of the two analyses he offers involves a

⁷ Note also 436 C 1–2, 443 D 6–E 2, 554 D 9–E 1, and 588 D 5–6.

⁸ Plato seems to think, reasonably enough, that (in the embodied state) unity of soul, or anyhow completed unity of soul (note *πᾶν-ἑνότητα* at 443 E 1), is something to be achieved rather than something to be taken for granted. It crucially involves a harmonious ordering of reason, spirit, and appetite. See 443 D 6–E 2. For discussion concerning the importance of structure to Plato's thinking about composition, see V. Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chs. 3 and 4.

partition of the subject in such a way that one part of it turns out to be the bearer of one opposite and another part of it the bearer of the other opposite. We should note that it is this particular kind of analysis that Socrates applies to the opposition between desire and aversion. In doing so he makes it clear that he conceives of the parts of the soul that he is arguing for as being responsible for motivating conditions of three kinds precisely by being the bearers of relevant psychological states such as, crucially, desire and aversion.

The first *prima facie* counterexample that he considers involves a person standing still and moving his arms and head at the same time. Someone might say that this is a counterexample to PO, in that it involves the same thing (a person) doing or undergoing opposites at the same time: the same thing is at once in motion and at rest. (The qualifications 'in the same respect' and 'in relation to the same thing' are employed neither in the example's statement nor in its resolution, presumably because they are inapplicable or irrelevant.) Socrates' response is that this fails as a counterexample to PO: what one ought to say is *not* that the same person is at once in motion and at rest, but rather that part of the person is at rest and part of the person is in motion.⁹ Once one is appropriately precise about what the bearers of the relevant predicates are, it becomes clear that a plurality of items is involved (arms, head, legs, and the like), and that only some of these are in motion while others remain at rest. Thus it is not the case that the person *as a whole* is at rest and in motion at the same time.¹⁰ This analysis, then, involves recognizing that the subject in question is a thing of parts, and identifying relevant parts of the subject as the proper bearers of opposite predicates.

The second *prima facie* counterexample is presented as being more subtle (436 D 4–5) than the first one, and it seems to be designed specifically to block the kind of analysis that Socrates applied to the first apparent counterexample.¹¹ An object rotating on the same spot, e.g. a spinning top, seems to be *as a whole* at rest and in motion at the same time. Having seen the first example resolved as a case of one part of the subject undergoing one opposite and another part undergoing another, Socrates' imaginary opponent produces a second apparent counterexample, which is presented in a way that must, I think, be meant specifically to rule out analysis in terms of parts of the subject as the proper bearers of the opposites in

⁹ Grammatically it would be possible to take τὸ μὲν . . . τὸ δὲ . . . at 436 D 1 as accusatives rather than nominatives, and to construe them as accusatives of respect, yielding something like '[but we should say] that the person is at rest with respect to one part, and in motion with respect to another'. However, comparison with the closely related archer passage, at 439 B 8–C 1, militates against this reading: as in the earlier passage, an expression that predicates opposites of a composite object—the person, the archer's arms—is indicated to be unsatisfactory, and is replaced by a more accurate expression that predicates one opposite of one part of the composite, and the other opposite of another part of it. (Fortunately, ἀνά μὲν . . . ἔχει, ἐρέει δὲ . . . at 439 B 10, *must* be nominatives.)

¹⁰ If so, we should distinguish between saying (about the example under consideration) that the person is at rest and in motion at the same time, and that the person *as a whole* is at rest and in motion at the same time. The former is imprecise but not false, the latter is simply false.

¹¹ I have learned from the extremely illuminating discussion of this passage in Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast*, 226–35.

question.¹² The new example is remarkably well chosen, and it is plausibly described: we presumably do want to say about a spinning top both that the whole of it, rather than specifically some part or other of it, is in motion (rotation, that is), and that the whole of it, rather than specifically some part or other, is at rest (for instance, because it does not incline or 'wobble').

Socrates rejects this second example as a counterexample to PO, in a way that unfortunately is not as clear as one might wish. One thing that, however, is quite clear and that deserves emphasis is that he does *not* resort to analysis in terms of distinct bearers of opposite predicates. Rather, he qualifies the predicates 'being at rest' and 'being in motion'. This allows him to say that the same thing—the spinning top as a whole—is at rest in one respect and is at the same time in motion in another respect. He notes that a spinning top is a complex object, involving (as he puts it) something upright or vertical (ἄθρο) as well as something round (περιφερές). With respect to the vertical, Socrates says, the spinning top is at rest, since it does not incline in any direction. At the same time, he adds (somewhat obscurely), the top is 'in circular motion with respect to the round'; which may mean simply that it is rotating.¹³ If so, Socrates resolves the second apparent counterexample to PO not by distinguishing between distinct parts of the relevant subject as being the proper bearers of opposite predicates, but rather by distinguishing between inclination as motion in one respect and rotation as motion in another respect.¹⁴ As a result, he is in a position to say what presumably we want to say about a spinning top, namely that it as a whole is in motion and at rest at the same time; and he wants to add, reasonably enough, that it does not do or undergo these opposites in the same respect.

The discussion of apparent counterexamples to PO makes available two ways of resolving or analysing apparent cases of simultaneous opposition. The first of

¹² I agree here with Bobonich, *ibid.*, 229.

¹³ As Bobonich, *ibid.*, points out (529), merely to say that the top is in circular motion is not fully to specify the kind of motion that it engages in. Revolution, too, is circular motion. So it might be that 'with respect to the round' is supposed to indicate the direction involved in the top's motion, so as to set its rotation apart from other cases of circular motion.

¹⁴ If this is along the right lines, one might wonder why it seems to Plato worth noting that the vertical' and 'the round' are *in* the top (436 D 9–E 1). One might even think that this seems to suggest that Socrates is meaning to attribute the opposites of motion and rest to distinct parts of the spinning top, namely motion to 'the round' and rest to 'the vertical'. It should be noted, however, that Socrates neither says nor implies that it is specifically some part or other, but *not* the whole, of the spinning top that is in motion or at rest. To do so would be to offer an incorrect analysis, and it would also amount to an entirely unwarranted rejection of the opponent's pointed description of the top as being *as a whole* at rest and in motion at the same time (436 D 5: οἱ γὰρ ὀρθοῦσιν ὁμοῦ ἐστῶσιν ἢ ἅμα καὶ κινῶνται). On the other hand, if Plato's purpose is simply to distinguish between two kinds of motion, it might seem irrelevant that straightness and roundness are somehow internal to the moving object. It certainly is relevant, however, that to be able to do what a spinning top does, an object *must* have a certain kind of complexity. A point or a vertical line, lacking the required kind of complexity, could not at once be in motion and at rest in the way a top can be. Since this may well be what Plato has in mind, his reference to the top's internal complexity is by itself no good reason to think that he is meaning to analyse the case of a spinning top by attributing motion to one part of it and rest to another.

these involves identifying parts of the subject that are the bearers of the predicates in question. The second way relies on introducing different respects in which the subject as a whole is the bearer of both predicates.¹⁵ When Socrates turns to the case of desire and simultaneous aversion towards the same thing (in this case, drinking), he could hardly be clearer about which way he thinks this should be analysed. He says that it must be one thing in the soul that desires and pulls, and a different thing that is averse and pulls the other way (439 B 3, C 8). He then compares this to an archer's arms at once pushing and pulling the bow, which should be analysed, he thinks, as a matter of one arm pushing while the other arm is pulling. Moreover, the 'with respect to' expressions characteristic of the spinning top analysis are absent from Socrates' discussion concerning cases of opposition between desire and aversion. It is clear, then, that Socrates conceives of the parts of the soul that he is arguing for as being responsible for various kinds of motivating conditions precisely by being the subjects or bearers of psychological states such as desire and aversion.¹⁶ Thus we can conclude that Socrates' commitment to parts of the soul is not just a commitment to the view that there are different kinds of desire, or different forms of human motivation. It crucially includes the claims, first, that the embodied human soul is a composite of a number of distinct and specifiable items and, secondly, that it is specifically from these distinct items, rather than from the soul as a whole, that human motivation, in its various forms, arises.

A central part of Plato's argument for tripartition of the soul will be construed as something like this:

- (1) The same thing cannot be characterized by opposites in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time.
- (2) Desiring and being averse are opposites; desiring to ϕ , and being averse to ϕ -ing, are opposites in relation to the same thing.
- (3) It happens that the soul desires to ϕ , and at the same time is averse to ϕ -ing.
- ∴ (4) The soul has at least two parts.

Before we go on, a number of comments should be made about this part of the argument. It is a striking feature of the argument that qualification in terms of

¹⁵ Price, *Mental Conflict*, 40–1, obliterate the difference between these two kinds of analysis; as does Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 204.

¹⁶ T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 204–5, offers an alternative (and incompatible) interpretation, according to which soul-parts are responsible for motivating conditions less directly. On his view, as I understand it, soul-parts are properties 'by which' or 'in respect of which' the soul 'has the properties that were to be explained'. This seems to me unattractive for several reasons. First, it disregards Socrates' careful distinction between two ways of analysing apparent cases of simultaneous opposition (the archer and the spinning top modes of analysis). Secondly, if soul-parts are merely properties, we cannot take literally Socrates' talk of the embodied soul as a composite (610 B 4–6), as one thing composed of a plurality of parts (443 E 1–2). And thirdly, Socrates' (direct) attribution to soul-parts of desires and aversions, pleasures (580 D 6–7), beliefs (571 D 2, 603 A 1–2, 605 C 1–2), and emotions (604 D 7–9, 606 A 3–7) sits awkwardly with a conception of soul-parts as *properties* of the soul (or, for that matter, with a conception of them as capacities or faculties).

different respects entirely drops out of consideration just after its application in the spinning top example. Plato presumably thinks that such qualification is applicable and relevant (for instance) in the case of a spinning top's simultaneous motion and rest, but is either inapplicable or irrelevant in the case of a soul's simultaneous desire for, and aversion to, the same thing. (This is, in fact, a presupposition of the argument.) Why does he think this? The thought might well be that desire and aversion are opposites in precisely the same respect, because they either involve, or are relevantly like, movements of the soul in opposite directions, or the application of force by the soul in opposite directions¹⁷—as with an archer both pushing her bow away from, and pulling it towards, herself. If so, it is reasonable to think that opposition between desire and aversion towards the same thing is like opposition between motion and rest, which cannot (strictly and accurately speaking) both be predicated of the same thing at the same time, and unlike the case, opposition between desire and aversion toward the same thing requires analysis in terms of distinct parts of the subject.

Another remarkable and perhaps somewhat problematic aspect of the argument has already been addressed, but it may be worth revisiting briefly. It might seem that the argument contains a clear counterexample to its first premise, PO. PO says that the same thing cannot do or undergo opposites in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time. Socrates then goes on to show that souls, or persons, sometimes do opposites in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time—namely when they desire, and at the same time are averse to, the same thing. Is a given soul, or person, not one and the same thing? Plato need not deny that a soul, or a person, is, in a way, a single thing,¹⁸ or that, in a way, one thing can at the same time do opposites in the same respect, and in relation to the same thing. Nor need he think that this casts doubt on the truth

¹⁷ Socrates does not offer a detailed and determinate picture of precisely how desire and aversion involve motion of the soul, or application of force by it, in opposite directions. However, the text abounds with suggestive descriptions. For instance, desiring something involves one's soul's pulling the thing toward oneself (προσκεισθαι) (437 C 2), while aversion involves the soul's pushing and driving away (ἀποθεῖναι) (437 C 8)—precisely the pair of words used of the archer at 439 B 10–C 1. Other descriptions are perhaps more promising: in the case of opposition between desire for, and aversion to, drinking, the desiring part of the soul is described as pulling the rest of the soul toward drinking (439 B 4, D 1), while the part that is averse pulls the other way (439 B 3).

¹⁸ I reject the claim made in Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast*, 254, that 'the Republic's partitioning theory commits Plato to denying the unity of the person'. Specifically, Bobonich adds, 'it commits him to denying that there is a single ultimate subject of all of a person's psychic states and activities. To deny that there is a single thing that is the proper, non-derivative subject of all of a person's psychological states is *not* to deny the unity of the person. This is because the first denial (which I agree is part of the Republic's psychological theory) is perfectly compatible with holding that the soul, or the person considered as the subject of psychological predicates, has unity in that it is one thing composed of a plurality of parts. Ordinary intuitions concerning the unity of the person, to which Bobonich appeals, are hardly determinate enough to require specifically that the soul is incomposite, or that there is a single item that is the proper, non-derivative subject of all psychological predicates (applied to a single person).'

of PO. This is because PO may well be a claim that is considerably more specific than it seems at first sight to be. It is arguably a claim about a rather specific way of being characterized by some property or other, namely being characterized by a property as its proper subject or bearer, rather than (for instance) being derivatively so characterized, in virtue of the fact that a part of the subject is characterized by the property in question as its proper subject.¹⁹

To see this, we should recall that Socrates' question is whether we learn, are angry, and desire certain pleasures with relevant parts of our soul or with the whole soul. The subsequent argument is, I take it, meant to answer that question as it stands, rather than to reject the terms in which it is couched.²⁰ It is instructive to consider a restatement of PO at 439 B 5–6. If something, Socrates says, pulls a thirsty soul away from drinking, it would have to be something distinct from that in the soul which pulls it toward drinking. 'For we said', he adds, 'that the same thing could not do opposites about the same thing with the same (part) of itself.' This reformulation is bound to put one in mind of the dative expressions used in the statement of Socrates' question at 436 A 8–B 4: 'with one part in us', 'with another part', 'with the whole soul'. It is exactly this kind of formulation that is needed to allow Socrates to say that one and the same soul can (and all too frequently does) do opposites in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, and at the same time—just not with the same part of itself.²¹ In other words, it is exactly the kind of formulation that is needed to underwrite Socrates' continuing practice of attributing desires, aversions, and the like to subjects such as souls or persons. In effect, then, I am suggesting that we interpret the relevant dative expressions as pinpointing the proper subjects or bearers of the motivating conditions in question.²²

¹⁹ The distinction I have in mind is made by Aristotle on a number of occasions in the *Physics*. For instance, at 8.4, 254^b7–14, he distinguishes between things that effect motion or are in motion incidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) (cf. καὸ ἔρεπον at 4.3, 210^a26–7) and things that effect motion or are in motion in themselves, or in their own right (κατ' αὐτό). Bearing the relevant predicate incidentally or derivatively is a matter of bearing it in virtue either of belonging to something that bears that predicate, or of having a part that bears that predicate. Cf. also 4.2, 209^a31–1. An example that is pertinent to our purposes is at 4.3, 210^a29–30. Things are said to be something or other in respect of their parts (κατὰ τὰ μέρη); which is a matter of καὸ ἔρεπον or incidental predication. For instance, a person is said to be knowledgeable because the rational part of her soul (τὸ λογιστικόν) is. For some clarification, see B. Morison, *On Location: Aristotle's Concept of Place* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59–61. There is no suggestion, here or elsewhere, that incidental predication is mispredication. To call a person knowledgeable is a perfectly respectable thing to do, even if it is true that it is only a part or aspect of her that is knowledgeable 'in itself'.

²⁰ 439 D 4–8 makes this clear.

²¹ Contra Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast*, 530: 'The position of *ye* in 439B5 stresses τὸ αὐτό and emphasizes that Plato's conclusion is that the same thing is not acting.' If Plato's point at 439 B 5–6 were simply that it is not the same thing that is acting in opposite ways, the expression 'with the same part of itself' in B 5 would be otiose. On my alternative reading, the expression does important work: it is the same thing that is acting in opposite ways, just not with the same part of itself. The position of *ye*, does not scuttle this matter.

²² *Theaetetus* 184 C 1–D 5 contains further support for this suggestion. The claim that we perceive perceptibles with the soul arguably is precisely the claim that it is the soul that is the proper subject of perception. See M. Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', *Classical Quarterly*, 26 (1976), 33–6.

We (and our souls) are (derivative) subjects or bearers of such motivating conditions in virtue of the fact that parts of our souls are the (proper) subjects or bearers of these conditions.

Just after PO, Socrates introduces a second principle, one about attributes and their objects or relations—for example, thirst and drink, hunger and food, and larger and smaller. The upshot of it is this: for attributes that are such as to have or imply objects or relations—for instance, desire, knowledge, and being larger—what corresponds to the simple, unqualified attribute is the simple, unqualified object or relation. Thus, what corresponds to 'thirst' is 'drink', what corresponds to 'hunger' is 'food', what corresponds to 'larger' is 'smaller'. At the same time, what corresponds to a complex or qualified attribute is a complex or qualified object or relation: for example, 'hot drink' goes with 'thirst combined with cold', 'cold drink' goes with 'thirst combined with heat', 'much drink' goes with 'much thirst'; and while 'knowledge' goes with 'what can be learned', 'knowledge of housebuilding' goes with 'what can be learned pertaining to housebuilding' (or something like that). While it is not difficult to see what the principle that Socrates is appealing to amounts to, it is unclear what precisely its point is in the context of the argument for tripartition.

One suggestion that has been made by a number of scholars,²³ and that seems to me to be clearly correct, is that Plato is making a point against Socrates' view of human desire, as it is presented in earlier Platonic dialogues (such as the *Meno*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias*).²⁴ It is part of that view that all human desire aims at 'the good' in a certain way—namely, in such a way that when a person has a desire, it always springs from, or consists in, a belief as to what it is good, or best, for them to do in the circumstances in question. If desire fails to be directed at something that is in fact good, this always involves an error of judgement (about what it is good to do) on the part of the person whose desire it is.²⁵ Now, the principle concerning attributes and their objects that Socrates is appealing to in our text requires that what corresponds to 'thirst' is simply 'drink', or 'drinking', but not a complex or qualified object such as 'good drink', or 'drinking as what it is good to do'. It does not, of course, follow from the principle that anyone ever has such a thing as a desire the object of which is fully specified simply as drink, or drinking. But it does follow that if someone has a desire that is fully specified simply as thirst, the object of that desire is fully specified simply as drink, or drinking.²⁶ And presumably there are, as a matter of fact, situations such that a desire is fully

²³ For example, N. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 28–9; T. Penner, 'Thought and desire in Plato', in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato II: Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of Art and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 106–7; Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 206–11.

²⁴ *Meno* 77 B 6–78 B 2; *Protagoras* 358 B 6–D 4; *Gorgias* 468 B 1–E 5.

²⁵ H. Segvic, 'No one errs willingly: the meaning of Socratic intellectualism', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 19 (2000), 34–40, offers a fine discussion of this Socratic view of human motivation.

²⁶ Contrast complex desires such as desires for drink of one kind or another—for instance, hot drink (cf. 437 D 9–E 2). Such desires would precisely not be fully specified as thirst.

specified simply as thirst. If so, the principle requires that there are in fact cases in which a desire occurs the object of which is fully specified as drink or drinking. What such a desire is for is, simply and without qualification, drinking. But this refutes what presumably is part of the Socratic view, namely that since every desire aims at the good, a full specification of what a desire is for must always include the qualification 'good' in some suitable way.²⁷

Therefore, let no one catch us unprepared or disturb us by claiming that no one has a desire for drink but rather good drink (alternatively, drink as good: χρηστόν ποτόν),²⁸ nor food but good food, on the grounds that everyone after all desires good things,²⁹ so that if thirst is a desire, it will be a desire for good drink or whatever, and similarly with the others. (*Republic* 438 A 1–5)

There is in the background a philosophically important point about the relation between desire and belief of a certain kind. This point is not made altogether clear by the discussion here, but it can without much difficulty be made clear enough at least for present purposes. The Socrates of our text is not sufficiently careful or pedantic to be precise about how the qualification 'good' is supposed to enter into proper specifications of what a desire is for. Had he been so, he would have distinguished, perhaps among other things, between specifying what a desire is for as, for example, good food—a good example of its kind—and specifying what a

²⁷ Incidentally, the present passage seems to me to be valuable, and often neglected, evidence for how Plato (anyhow by the time he writes the *Republic*) conceives of Socratic intellectualism and, in particular, of the notion of desire or 'wanting' that it relies on. The key idea is that a complete specification of what any desire is for must always appropriately include the qualification 'good', presumably so that such a specification should look like this: 'going as what it is good, or best, to do (in the circumstances)'. This idea is, to be sure, not stated in so many words in the relevant 'Socratic' dialogues, but it chimes in well with what Socrates is presented as saying in those texts. In fact, it seems to me to be suggested in the *Meno*, and to help clarify what Socrates may have in mind in a much-discussed passage in the *Gorgias*. At *Meno* 77 D 6–E 4, Socrates is meaning to argue for the view that people who desire things that are bad, but that they take to be beneficial, really desire good things: 'Is it not clear, then, that those who do not know things to be bad do not desire what is bad, but they desire those things that they believe to be good but that are in fact bad. It follows that those who have no knowledge of these things and believe them to be good clearly desire good things'. The individuals in question do not know that the things they desire (say, gold obtained in this or that way) are, in fact, bad, and hence harmful to them. What they desire, Socrates is claiming, are *not* bad things, but those things that they thought were good things (gold obtained in this or that way), and so what they desire, what their desires are for, are good things! This suggests that a proper specification of what desires are for should look like this: 'such-and-such an object as good or beneficial'. If this is Socrates' view, it is clear right away why orators and tyrants, in committing acts of injustice, can never be doing what they desire or want to do (*Gorgias* 468 B 1–E 5). For what any desire or want is for is always this or that, or doing this or that, as what is good and hence beneficial, and so every act of injustice cannot but deeply frustrate the very desire that prompted it. More elaborate and, to my mind, rather implausible interpretations of *Gorgias* 466–8 are offered in T. Penner, 'Desire and power in Socrates: the argument of *Gorgias* 466A–468E that orators and tyrants have no power in the city', *Apeiron*, 24 (1991), 182–97, and in Segvic, 'No one errs willingly', 5–19.

²⁸ Note also 439 A 5–6: οὐκ ἄγαθὸν οὐτε κακὸν (neither of something good nor of something bad).

²⁹ πάντες γὰρ ἀρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν. Cf. *Meno* 77 C 1–2: οὐ πάντες, ἄριστοι, σοκοῦσι οὐ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμούν;

desire is for as, for example, food as a practical good, so that the desire in question depends on (or is) a belief to the effect that, in the circumstances, it is good or best to have food. It will become clear that the psychological theory of the *Republic* treats thirst, hunger, and the like as desires that neither depend on, nor consist in, beliefs that are arrived at, or anyhow are controlled by, reason, as the beliefs of persons are. Thus it also becomes clear that the argument for tripartition specifically rejects the Socratic view of desire that is left somewhat diffusely in the background, to the effect that all human desires depend on, or consist in, reason-controlled beliefs about what it is good or best to do in the circumstances. The desires of the appetitive part, it turns out, are such that they can be had without having any such beliefs.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the principle is introduced simply to make a point concerning the relation between desire and belief of a certain kind. In fact it is doubtful, for a number of reasons, that making such a point is the main contribution the principle is supposed to make to the overall argument. First, there is a noteworthy lack of precision, already mentioned, about what exactly the view is that is being rejected—that what any desire is for is always a good example of its kind, or something or other as what it is good to do. If Plato's focus were on Socrates' view of human desire, one would expect that view to be pinpointed with a little more precision. Secondly, 'good' is only one of several qualifications that are rejected as candidates for entering, in whatever precise way, into a proper specification of what a person desires when, and in so far as, they experience 'thirst itself'; the other qualifications that Socrates rules out are hot and cold, and much and little. 'Thirst itself', he concludes, 'isn't for much or little, good or bad, or, in a word, for drink of a particular sort. Rather, thirst itself is in its nature only for drink itself.' This conclusion plainly is broader and looser than specifically a rejection of the Socratic view of desire.

Moreover, the conclusion understood in its full breadth serves significantly to sharpen the argument for tripartition at an important stage, in the following way. Now that Socrates has made available the notion of 'thirst itself', as a desire for 'drink itself', he can offer a highly specific example, so as to reveal the partition between appetite and reason. The example is of someone who experiences 'thirst itself', thirst pure and simple, and so the second principle requires that what this desire is for be specified, simply and without qualification, as drink: 'Hence the soul of the thirsty person, in so far as he's thirsty, doesn't wish anything else but to drink, and it wants this and is impelled toward it' (*Republic* 439 A 9–B 1). At the same time, the person in question is, for some reason, averse to drinking, and since this is supposed to be a case where one and the same thing is both what a person desires and what they are averse to, we know that what they are averse to is precisely what they desire, 'drink itself', drink pure and simple. This immediately rules out a huge variety of cases as irrelevant, cases in which someone has a desire that is, to use Plato's terminology, in some way complex or qualified, and they experience some kind of conflict between desires because there is only a partial

match between what they desire and what is available to them. For instance, some-one experiences 'thirst combined with heat', which is or yields a desire for drink of a certain kind, and is at the same time averse to drinking, because all that is available is streaming hot coffee. It would no doubt be interesting to know what Plato thought about conflicts of this kind, but the fact is that they are not at issue at this stage of the argument. Plato makes it very clear, and his second principle enables him to do so, that the example he is offering concerns a desire for, and an aversion to, a simple, unqualified object, 'drink itself'.

Having offered the example of a desire for, and simultaneous aversion to, drinking, Socrates quickly proceeds to assign the one attitude to appetite and the other to reason. For a number of reasons, it is unclear whether this assignment is justified. Let us, for the sake of the argument, accept that Socrates' example shows that the soul has at least two parts. Why should we accept the further claim that one of the two parts that have come to light is reason, while the other is appetite? One reason why this question might arise is that in Socrates' description of psychological conflict, the two parts that are opposed to one another seem to be doing very much the same sort of thing, except that they seem to act in opposite directions: the one part pulls 'like a brute'³⁰ and bids or prompts the person to drink, the other part 'pulls the other way' and in the end prevents the person from drinking. It is not as if the part that gets identified as reason acts in a distinctively rational way, by relying, for instance, on language and argument: it simply resists and, as it happens, prevails. On another occasion, the roles might be reversed: the part that now resists might bid or prompt the person to act in some way or other, and the part that is now overcome might successfully resist and prevent action. Moreover, given that Socrates is going to recognize three parts of the soul, does he have grounds for thinking that the example he offers reveals the particular parts that he claims it does, namely reason and appetite, rather than, for instance, spirit and appetite? The crucial passage for answering both of these questions is this:

Doesn't that which prevents in such cases come into play—if it comes into play at all—as a result of reasoning, while what drives and drags them to drink is as a result of affections and diseases? . . . Hence it isn't unreasonable for us to claim that they are two, and different from one another. We'll call the part of the soul with which it reasons the rational part and the part with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other desires the non-rational, appetitive part, companion of certain replenishments and pleasures. (*Republic* 439 C 10–D 8)

³⁰ Like S. R. Slings's new *Oxford Classical Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and unlike Burnet's old one, I read *θηπιον* rather than *θηπιον* at 439 B 4. The genitive has much better manuscript support than the accusative. And it is much more appropriate for Socrates to compare appetite to a brute animal than so to compare the thirsty person's soul. In Socrates' elaborate image of the tripartite soul at 588 B 10–E 1, appetite is represented by a multicoloured brute (588 C 7). Note also 588 E 6, 590 B 7, and 591 B 2. S. R. Slings, *Critical Notes on Plato's Politia* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 191, offers further discussion.

It is not only that the aversion to drinking comes about as a result of reasoning. It is also the case that the desire to drink persists regardless. The example must involve a reason for not drinking that the person in question recognizes in virtue of some bit of reasoning—drinking, for instance, would be detrimental to health in the circumstances, and health is a highly valued good. Nevertheless, his desire to drink motivates him to act in spite of this reason. Socrates' formulation in the first sentence just quoted might seem to suggest that, on his view, if a part of the soul resists desires of the appetitive part, that part is always reason. But this cannot be his view, since Leontius' desire to look at the corpses obviously belongs to the appetitive part of his soul, and that desire is resisted by *spirit*. It is probably best to suppose that what Socrates has in mind in speaking of such cases is precisely the kind of case where what is resisted by some aversion is a desire that does not directly elicit a response from *spirit*. If *spirit* is concerned with honour or, more broadly, recognition by others, then there are going to be countless desires, and actions, that *spirit* regards as altogether indifferent, and ordinary bodily desires for food, drink, and sex will be among them. It might be the case that once reason resists a desire that *spirit* initially regarded as indifferent, *spirit* kicks in and takes the side of reason, because it would be dishonourable or disgraceful for reason to be defeated by appetite (440 A 8–B 4); but this does not affect the fact that the desire itself, independently of reason resisting it, is harmless and indifferent so far as *spirit* is concerned. So, the kind of case that Socrates has in mind presumably concerns some ordinary bodily desire, such as thirst when one has not had a drink in a long time, one that is, as such, altogether indifferent to *spirit*. If something resists appetite in such circumstances, then, Socrates is claiming, the aversion belongs to reason.

Socrates assigns the aversion to reason at least in part because it arises directly from reasoning. It might be that the reasoning in question is no more than means-end reasoning, for instance to the effect that abstaining from drinking is the way to promote health in the circumstances. By contrast, desires such as the desire to drink in the example are said to arise from 'affections and diseases' (439 D 1–2)—that is, I take it, from bodily states that the person happens to be in. However, if the reasoning in question is only means-end reasoning, one might suppose that the aversion does not ultimately belong to reason: for one might think that what resists the desire to drink is (say) a desire for health, together with the belief that drinking in the situation is detrimental to health. One might even think that the aversion to drinking arises from desire for pleasure, together with the belief that abstaining from drinking now will result in less pain and more pleasure later, or in less pain and more pleasure overall. Thus the example appears to lend itself to a Humean analysis: what confronts the desire to drink is simply another desire, with reason in its proper role of a motivationally inert slave to passion.³¹

³¹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd edn., ed. P. H. Niddich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 415. 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.'

We should reply on Plato's behalf that what confronts the desire to drink is not a general desire for health or pleasure, but specifically an aversion to drinking. As we shall see, this aversion cannot properly be understood simply as an aversion. For Plato's purposes at this stage of the argument, the aversion to drinking may well result from a desire for health or pleasure, together with reasoning about what promotes such objects of desire. It is not part of what Plato wants to say that reason motivates or resists action without desire being involved; in fact it will be made explicit later on in the *Republic* that reason has its own desires (580 D 6–7). Plato will eventually want to say that reason can generate desires all on its own, without depending in any way on the attachments of other parts of the soul. He is, as it turns out, committed to disagreeing with Hume's famous dictum that reason is, and *should be*, slave to the passions. But if one takes a look at the catalogue of corrupt souls in books 8 and 9 of the *Republic*, it becomes clear that Plato agrees that reason *can* be the slave of non-rational desires, of desires that have their origins in other parts of the soul, such as the desire for money (553 C 4–D 4). In such corrupt cases, reason will presumably still be able to generate desires and aversions, and will be able to resist desires of other parts of the soul, as when there is a temptation to obtain a small amount of money now, though the long-term cost of doing so would massively outweigh the present benefit.

It turns out, then, that Plato disagrees with Hume's conception in more ways than one. It is not just, according to Plato, that reason should not, though it can, be a slave to passion. It is also a mistake to think of reason, even in an enslaved state, as motivationally inert.³² Even in cases where reason's overall goals and attachments are set, as they can but should not be, by non-rational desire (e.g. for wealth or bodily pleasure), it does not follow that reason could not form desires or aversions of its own, based in part on reasoning or calculation (e.g. about how to maximize wealth or pleasure).³³ Socrates' example at 439 B 3–D 2 may well involve a less than perfectly developed reason, whose overall goals and attachments are set by non-rational desire: drinking now would be pleasurable, but reason recognizes (for instance) that the pleasure of the moment would be massively outweighed by future pain, and so it forms an aversion to drinking. What crucially matters for the purposes of the argument is that this aversion arises directly from suitable reasoning. It cannot properly be understood simply as an aversion, or simply as a desire. It is a central fact about desires and aversions of this kind that they flow from and are fully controlled by reasoning. In assigning this aversion to reason, then, Plato's theory does justice to its distinctive character as a motivating condition that is fully and directly under the control of reason. Desires like the desire to drink in the example, by contrast, not only come about independently of reasoning; it is also the case that such desires may persist even when the person appreciates that there is decisive reason not to act on them. (There is

³² According to Hume, *Treatise*, 415, reason is unable to generate any practical impulse, and so is unable either to cause or to hinder any act of volition.

³³ Nor of course is it part of being enslaved that one lacks or loses the ability to form desires.

then a clear sense in which such desires not only are non-rational, but can be irrational: contrary to reason.)

These remarks about the argument for tripartition, incomplete though they are, will, I think, suffice for my purposes. I now want to return to the conclusions that I am meaning to argue for, first concerning partition of the soul in general and then concerning the three parts of the soul that Plato is introducing.

3

Partition

To recapitulate, what Socrates is meaning to establish in arguing for soul-partition is not just the view that human desire comes in three different kinds or forms. It crucially includes the further view that the embodied human soul is a composite object, composed of a number of parts which (strictly and accurately speaking) are the subjects or bearers of different kinds of motivating conditions. A careful reading of the argument for tripartition makes clear, I have argued, that Socrates is, among other things, specifically concerned to reject the idea that the phenomena of human psychology can be accounted for on the hypothesis that the human soul is incomposite. Any interpretation that fails to accommodate that concern fails to do justice to the detail of the argument.

Given that Plato is remarkably careful and explicit about what it is he is arguing for, the question arises why it has nonetheless seemed to commentators permissible, let alone attractive, to downplay Plato's position as amounting simply to the view that human desire comes in a number of different kinds. One consideration is that in speaking of the parts of the soul, Plato rarely uses the language of parthood. In fact, he does not use such language in the argument for tripartition of the soul. In the course of that argument (*Republic* 4, 436 B 6–441 C 6), he uses loose expressions such as 'kinds'. As we have seen, however, he evidently does use the language of parthood a little later on in book 4 (442 B 10, C 4). Moreover, it is already implicit in the initial statement of the question which the argument is meant to settle that according to one alternative, different kinds of impulse to act belong to different parts of the soul, whereas according to the other alternative—and here Socrates is explicit—they belong to the soul *as a whole*. Another consideration is equally inadequate. This is that a Platonic soul is not the right kind of thing for it to make sense to say of it that it literally has parts.¹ For that to make sense, Platonic souls would have to be spatially extended, which they are not. This manages to make two questionable assumptions at once. It is questionable whether only spatially extended objects can have parts. How about mathematical proofs,

¹ R. Robinson, 'Plato's separation of reason from desire', *Phronesis*, 16 (1971), 45, takes the view that the language of parthood can be used in a way that is 'informative' and 'fairly specific' only on the basis of some difference of regions in space or periods in time—and neither, he thinks, is applicable to 'the soul'.

for instance? As for Platonic souls, the *Timaeus* presents souls as spatially extended and in fact as engaging in motion,² and the different parts of the soul as having distinct locations in different parts of the body, with each part having its own motions (*Timaeus* 89 E 3–90 A 2). It is impossible to be entirely confident that Plato intended a literal reading of these various claims about the soul. But there is no good reason to dismiss the suggestion that in the *Timaeus* Plato introduces the idea of parts of the soul located in different parts of the body because he continues to think, for the reasons presented in *Republic* 4, that the human soul has distinct parts, each of which is able to act on its own, and to counteract other parts. For that to be possible, one might well think, the soul must be extended, and its different parts must occupy different places.

Like many good things, soul-partition comes at a cost. One way in which it does is indicated in *Republic* 10. Towards the end of the dialogue, Socrates turns to the immortality of the soul, and to its life after its separation from the body. In that context, he finds soul-partition problematic. 'We must not think', he says, 'that the soul in its truest nature is full of multicoloured variety and unlikeness or that it differs with itself. . . . It isn't easy for a composite of many parts (σύνθετόν τε ἐκ πολλῶν) to be everlasting if it isn't composed in the finest way, yet this is how the soul now appeared to us' (*Republic* 611 A 10–B 7). We should recall Socrates' suggestion in the *Phaedo* that anything that is composite is 'by nature liable to be divided up into its component parts,³ and only that which is incomposite (ἀσύνθετον), if anything, is not liable to be divided up' (*Phaedo* 78 C 1–4). In making that remark, Socrates is taking issue with the view, expressed by his interlocutor Cebes, that the soul is destroyed at about the time of death by being dispersed (*Phaedo* 77 B 3–6; cf. 69 E 6–70 B 4). Socrates clearly accepts that all composite objects are at least in principle subject to decomposition. (He also accepts, I take it, that were a soul to be 'divided up', it would cease to exist. This of course is an assumption implicit in Cebes' picture.) Now it is possible for something to be in principle subject to decomposition, but never in fact to be decomposed, either for some reason or by sheer good luck. The Socrates of the *Phaedo* obviously does not want to say that souls are never in fact destroyed simply by sheer good luck on a massive scale. If he did think that the soul is a composite, we would expect him to be concerned to offer an explanation why our souls, though they are in principle subject to decomposition, nevertheless will not come apart. The *Phaedo* contains no indication at all that he feels any such concern. The best explanation for this, I suggest, is that the Socrates of the *Phaedo* sees no reason at all to think that the soul is a composite, and at the same time takes it that there are a number of admittedly

inconclusive, but nevertheless significant, considerations in favour of thinking the opposite, such as the ones offered in the affinity argument (*Phaedo* 78 C 6–79 E 6).

How can it be, one might ask, that the Socrates of the *Phaedo* sees no reason to think that the embodied human soul is a composite object? The *Phaedo* evidently accepts the possibility of psychological conflict, of a person desiring, and at the same time being averse to, one and the same thing. Socrates in the *Phaedo* acknowledges, and indeed draws attention to, the very types of conflict that the *Republic's* argument for tripartition of the soul relies on.⁴ In fact, he appeals to the same example, quoting the same *Odyssey* passage, which in the *Republic* is used to show the distinctness of spirit from reason: Odysseus addressing his heart as his considered view about how it is best to act clashes with his furious anger at Penelope's maidservants (*Phaedo* 94 D 7–E 1; *Rep.* 441 B 3–C 2). However, the *Phaedo* assigns the lower desires—those which in the *Republic* are assigned to appetite and spirit—not to the soul, but to the body. No doubt Socrates realizes that for a body to give rise to desires even of these kinds it must be ensouled, and that there must therefore be some way or other in which the soul, as it is generally responsible for the organism's life and performance of its vital functions, is also responsible for the formation of the lower desires that he is assigning to the (living) body. Nonetheless, the *Phaedo* evidently does treat the body as the bearer or subject of the lower desires, and at the same time assigns to the soul those desires that in the *Republic* are assigned specifically to reason. As a result, the Socrates of the *Phaedo* need not (and, I suggest, does not) see the occurrence of conflicts between higher and lower desires as a reason to think that *the soul* is a composite object.⁵

The Socrates of the *Republic*, by contrast, accepts that the soul, or anyhow the embodied human soul, *is* a composite. If it is a composite, however, it is in principle subject to decomposition. It should be clear that this raises serious questions about its immortality. Might the soul ever come apart? If not, why not—given that it is, as a composite, the sort of thing that is in principle subject to decomposition? If yes, could it perhaps survive being decomposed? What Socrates says at *Republic* 611 A 10–B 7 leaves open, and draws attention to, the possibility that a composite can be everlasting if it is composed in a suitably fine way. Fineness of composition might be a reason why something that in principle is subject to decomposition will not, in fact, fall apart. There is, moreover, an alternative way of preserving the immortality of the soul in light of the tripartite theory. This is to accept that the soul will be decomposed at the time of death, but to say that it survives its decomposition. It may, after all, not be essential to the soul to be a

⁴ *Phaedo* 94 B 7–C 1: does the soul rule 'by following the affections of the body, or by opposing them? I mean, for example, that when the body is hot and thirsty the soul draws it to the opposite, to not drinking, when the body is hungry, to not eating, and we see a thousand other examples of the soul opposing the affections of the body'. Cf. *Republic* 4, 439 C 3–4.

⁵ For a suggestion as to why Plato, by the time of the *Republic*, comes to assign even the lowest desires to the soul, see Ch. 7, p. 103, n. 19.

² For discussion, see D. Sedley, 'Becoming like god' in the *Timaeus* and Aristotle', in T. Calvo and L. Brisson (eds.), *Interpreting the Timaeus-Critias: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1997), 329–30; and T. Johansen, 'Body, soul, and tripartition in Plato's *Timaeus*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 19 (2000), 90–3.

³ τὸ μὲν συντεθέν τι τε καὶ συνθετὸν ὄντι φύσει προσήκει τούτο παύσασθαι, διασπείσθαι τὰ ἄντη ἢ πλεονεξέσθαι.

nothing but reason. For reason to be separated at death from spirit and appetite might be a bit like having a tumour removed.

The *Republic* does not decide between these options. In *Republic* 10, Socrates confirms the tripartite theory as offering an adequate account of what the soul's condition is and what parts it has when it is immersed in human life' (612 A 5-6). However, to see what it is 'in truth' or 'in its true nature', we must realize, Socrates says, what it would become if it followed its love of wisdom

as a whole, and if the resulting effort lifted it out of the sea in which it now dwells, and if the many stones and shells (those which have grown all over it in a wild, earthy, and stony profusion because it feasts at those so-called happy feasts on earth) were hammered off it. Then we'd see what its true nature is, and we'd be able to determine whether it has many parts or just one and whether or in what manner it is put together. (*Republic* 611 D 8-612 A 5)

Socrates is comparing the embodied soul to the sea god Glaucus, whose body is covered with shells, seaweeds, and stones that have attached themselves to him, so that he looks more like a wild animal than his natural self' (*Republic* 611 D 3-5). According to the picture Socrates is offering, stones and shells attach themselves to the soul during its embodied existence. To grasp the soul's true nature, he says, we must think what it would be like if three conditions were met: if it followed its love of wisdom as a whole; if that effort lifted it out of the sea in which it now dwells; and if the accretions of embodied life were removed from it. The sea presumably stands for embodied life and the cares and concerns it brings with it. What do the soul's accretions, those 'many stones and shells', stand for? They might represent the desires of appetite and spirit that are characteristic of embodied life, resulting in disorderly conditions of the soul that include the various vices. They might also stand for appetite and spirit themselves. In either case, the soul could, after their removal, follow its love of wisdom as a whole, without division: either because appetite and spirit can no longer conflict with reason, or because they have been removed from the soul altogether. In the former case, the soul would be a composite even in its true nature. But it would not, in its true nature, be liable to division and conflict. And so one might think that, were one to see the soul in its true nature, one would realize that its mode of composition is in fact very fine, certainly fine enough not to endanger its immortality.

The *Timaeus* settles the issue. The two lower parts of the embodied soul are mortal, it turns out, and only reason is in fact immortal (*Timaeus* 69 C 5-D 6). At death, reason will presumably be separated, not only from the body, but also from appetite and spirit. Nonetheless, *Timaeus* speaks of incarnate human intellects as souls, rather than as parts of souls (*Timaeus* 41 D 8-42 A 3). The idea appears to be that each human soul in its true nature is an intellect, with appetite and spirit being added on temporarily during periods of embodiment.

Another way in which soul-partition comes at a cost is pointed out by Aristotle in *De Anima* 1.5. The passage that I shall quote, 411^b5-14, makes it clear that

Aristotle is aware of some theorists (λέγοντες . . . τινες, 411^b5) who take the soul to be a composite object. The problem he is raising concerns precisely this view. Towards the end of *De Anima* 1.5, he asks whether the various activities that belong to the soul—such as perceiving, judging, desiring, and the like—belong to the soul as a whole, or whether different activities belong to different parts of it (411^a26-^b3). To put it cautiously, the question is closely related to Socrates' question, at *Republic* 4, 436 A 8-B 4, that the argument for tripartition is intended to settle. Some people, Aristotle continues, say that the soul is a thing of parts (μερῶν), and that it thinks (νοεῖν) with one part and desires (ἐπιθυμεῖν) with another (411^b5-6). If *epithumein* is understood in its technical Aristotelian use, in which it denotes appetitive desire specifically, then anyone who accepts the psychological theory of the *Republic* will in fact accept the claim Aristotle is discussing. Here is the problem that he raises for it:

What then holds the soul together, if its nature is to be a thing of parts? It could not be the body: for it rather seems that, on the contrary, the soul holds the body together, for when it departs, the body disperses and decomposes. If then something else unifies the soul, this thing would most of all be the soul. And again, the question will arise whether this thing is one or a thing of parts. If it is one, why is not the soul one right away? If it is a thing of parts, the question will be asked what it is that holds this thing together, and in this way the argument will continue *ad infinitum*. (*De Anima* 1.5, 411^b5-14)

Implicit in the argument is a distinction between two ways of being one or having unity: on the one hand, having unity by being unified or made to be one thing (μὲν . . . τοῖσι, 411^b9); on the other hand, having unity in a non-derivative way. Being one non-derivatively can be contrasted, as it is at 411^b1, with being a thing of parts. An assumption that the argument plainly relies on is that the unity of composite objects is derivative, in that it depends on something or other that accounts for it. The unity of incomposite objects, on the other hand, is non-derivative. The point of the argument is that if the soul is a thing of parts, its unity is derived. So its unity will have to be accounted for by appealing to some further item, and the question will arise whether this further item does not have a better claim to being the soul than the derivative item that we started out with. An infinite regress of unifiers can be avoided, by saying that the further item that has come to light is in fact non-derivatively one, and hence capable of serving as a genuine principle of unity. But this does not resolve the difficulty. For if you say that this principle of unity is in fact the soul, then the soul will no longer be, as it was held to be, the thing that activities like perceiving and desiring belong to; they will rather belong to the item that is unified by the soul (which is not yet the body). On the other hand, if you retain the idea that it is the soul that these activities belong to, you will be committed to a further item in addition to body and soul, a principle of unity that accounts for the soul's derived unity. This, to be sure, is not a knockdown argument. None of its premisses, however, is to be dismissed lightly. And given how unpalatable the alternatives are that it leaves open, it does manage

to put considerable pressure on the idea that the soul, the thing that activities like perceiving and desiring belong to, is a thing of parts. Why not say that the soul is non-derivatively one right away?

That the soul is incomposite is arguably Aristotle's own considered view. I shall, in due course, discuss the question whether Aristotle can consistently accept Plato's three kinds of desire and reject Platonic tripartition with its commitment to the soul's compositeness.⁶ For now, let us turn to tripartition.

⁶ See Conclusion, pp. 202–4.

The Simple Picture

What has emerged from my analysis of the argument for tripartition of the soul is what I shall call the 'simple picture'. According to this picture, it is the simultaneous occurrence of a desire and an aversion towards one and the same object that, Plato thinks, reveals a partition of the soul. This simple picture is precisely what the Principle of Opposites (PO) makes one expect, and indeed what it requires. Nevertheless, commentators have been unwilling to accept it, for at least two reasons.¹ I shall attempt to describe these reasons in some detail, to disarm them, and in so doing to defend the simple picture.

Several readers of the *Republic* have thought that in the catalogue of corrupt forms of city and soul in books 8 and 9, there is at least one passage in which Socrates describes a conflict between desires that belong to the same part of a person's soul.² The passage in question is 553 A 1–555 B 2, where Socrates characterizes the oligarchic type of person, 'both how he comes to be and what sort of man he is' (note also 558 D 4–6). This is a person whom Socrates presents as being ruled by the appetitive part of his soul, which he also calls the money-loving part (553 C 5). That part's central object of desire—in this case, money—has become the person's central object of desire; and adopting the appetitive part's central object of desire as one's own central object of desire must be, at least in important part, what being ruled by the appetitive part comes to. The oligarchic person is hard-working, thrifty, and generally honest, leading a disciplined life dedicated to the accumulation of wealth. He enjoys a good reputation and is thought to be just by other members of his community (554 C 12).

However, the appetitive part of his soul harbours not only desires that fit harmoniously into the overall fabric of his rather carefully organized life. It also contains desires that are evil and that it would be risky or outright self-destructive to act on, such as desires to enrich oneself in unjust ways. It is characteristic of the oligarchic person, though, to be able to control such desires, so as not to act on them except in circumstances where it is safe to do so, as when he carries out a function that allows him to do injustice and get away with it—for instance, when

¹ For instance, Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327, n. 18, 3; Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 123; Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 205–17; Price, *Mental Conflict*, 45–8.

² Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327; Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 123; Woods, 'Plato's division of the soul', 31.

he serves as a guardian to orphans, who cannot help or defend themselves. The fact that he acts on evil desires when it is safe to do so suggests strongly that when he refrains from acting on such desires, it is not on the basis of appreciating that these desires are evil and disgraceful, or that it would be evil and disgraceful to act in such ways, but rather, as Socrates makes clear, out of fear for his good reputation, his business, his career, his possessions, and the like. But such fears do not make the evil desires go away. The desires persist, even though he is able to control them. 'Then someone like this', Socrates says (554 D 9-E 6), 'wouldn't be entirely free from internal civil war and wouldn't be one but in some way two, though generally his better desires are in control of his worse. . . . For this reason, he'd be more respectable than many, but the true virtue of a single-minded and harmonious soul far escapes him.'

An assumption that commentators have made at this point is that the two parties to the internal civil war that is characteristic of the oligarch are, both of them, desires of one and the same part of the soul, namely appetite. That, after all, is the money-loving part. A related assumption that (I suspect) is also common is that when Plato, in contexts such as this, uses the word *epithumia*, it means 'appetite' and thus must refer to a desire specifically of the lowest part of the soul. So when Socrates says that in the case of the oligarchic character, his better *epithumiai* are generally in control of his worse ones, it may seem as if this very way of putting things in itself makes it clear that the civil war in the oligarch's soul involves desires of the same part on both sides of the conflict.

This, then, is one reason why commentators have been unwilling to accept what I have called the simple picture. It looks as if Plato envisages conflicting desires of one and the same part of the soul—for instance, a desire to steal a large amount of money and a simultaneous aversion to precisely the same thing, stealing the money, on the grounds that, given the circumstances, it would be intolerably risky to do so. However, if there can, on Plato's view, be such conflicts between desires that belong to the same part of the soul, then the simple picture cannot be right, or else Plato would have to accept that appetite is not, after all, a basic part of the soul, but itself a composite item, and hence subject to sub-partition.

Another reason is this. It is not only that Socrates may seem to speak, pretty much in so many words, of conflicts between desires of the lowest part of the soul. It may also seem that given the way he conceives of that part, he must be prepared to accept the possibility of such conflicts. To see this, consider the passage in book 9 in which Socrates explains why he has been calling the lowest part 'appetitive' and 'money-loving' (580 D 10–581 A 1):

As for the third part, we had no one special name for it, since it's multifiform, so we named it after what is biggest and strongest in it. Hence we called it the appetitive part, because of the intensity of its desires for food, drink, sex, and all the things associated with them, but we also called it the money-loving part, because such desires are most of all satisfied through money.

To be able to recognize that it is by means of money that its primary desires—those for food, drink, sex, and the like—are most of all satisfied, and to form an attachment to money on that basis, the appetitive part (one might think) needs to be equipped with (or at least have access to) suitable resources—such as, crucially, the capacity for means-end reasoning.³ However, if it can avail itself of *such* resources, there will be circumstances in which it is bound to generate desire/aversion pairs in relation to the same thing. One and the same thing can, for instance, be an object of aversion, and may at the same time be desired as a means to the achievement of a goal that one desires; all of this can occur at the level of the appetitive part, if indeed it can rely on such resources. The oligarch would characteristically be loath to make a large-scale public donation, but might at the same time desire to do just that, on the grounds that doing so would (say) help him in cultivating a certain reputation, which in turn would open up lucrative business opportunities.

The upshot of these considerations may seem to be that the simple picture of what kind of psychological conflict reveals partition will not do, even though it is the picture that is suggested and indeed required by PO, anyhow on my analysis. An adequate picture, some commentators have suggested, will have to be more complicated. As we have seen already,⁴ the suggestion is that it takes a special kind of conflict to reveal a partition of the soul: at least on one side of the conflict, there must be a desire of a higher order—for instance, an aversion to having the (first-order) desire on the other side of the conflict.⁵ It is, after all, not just that Leontius, according to the description at 439 E 5–440 A 4, both desires to have a look at some corpses and is at the same time averse to doing so. He also seems to have a fiercely negative attitude to his own desire to look at the corpses, a desire that he associates with his eyes—and so he angrily says to them (440 A 3–4): 'Look for yourselves, you evil wretches, and take your fill of the beautiful sight!' Moreover, it may seem plausible that the appetitive part, equipped though it is with considerable cognitive resources, nevertheless is not capable of forming evaluative attitudes of the relevant kind towards desires and aversions.⁶ If so, the civil war in the

³ That the appetitive part of the soul can (by itself) engage in means-end reasoning is the view taken, somewhat tentatively, by Price, *Mental Conflict*, 60–1, and, very firmly, by C. Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast*, 244. See also J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 129–30; Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 128; Burnyeat, 'Culture and society in Plato's *Republic*', 227. Irwin's view is more complicated: the appetitive part may not itself be equipped with the capacity for (means-end) reasoning, but at least it has cognitive access to the rational part's reasoning, so that it can form desires for means to its ends based on its recognition of the efficiency and long-term benefit of the means in question. See Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 282 (cf. 214–20).

⁴ See Ch. 1, pp. 15–17.

⁵ Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 327; Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', 123; Price, *Mental Conflict*, 45–8. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 208 (cf. 212), goes further: what is required is not just an aversion to some first-order desire or other, but an aversion to 'acting on appetite, as such'.

⁶ Cf. Price, *Mental Conflict*, 47–8. Soul-partition requires not just the symmetrical relation of contrariety, but in addition the asymmetrical relation of confrontation; and the appetitive part is not capable of that: 'confronting simply lies outside its repertory'. Cf. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, 207: 'no appetite can itself be opposed to acting on appetite'.

oligarch's appetitive, money-loving part does not undermine its status as incomposite. For such civil war involves no desire of a higher order, just two desires that, as it were, operate on the same level: both of them, one might think, are nothing other than desires for financial gain.

Now, there are at least three serious objections to this more complicated picture. First, it is incompatible with PO, the principle on which the argument for tripartition is based and which is spelled out and illustrated in great detail right at the beginning of the argument. To see this, we only need to compare the civil war in the oligarch's soul, as described at 554 B 7–E 6, with the example Socrates uses, at 439 A 9–D 2, to reveal the division between reason and appetite. In both cases, there is a desire for something or other, which Socrates thinks of (I take it) as involving part of the soul pulling the rest of it towards the object of desire—drinking, or spending other people's money (554 D 6–7). And in both cases, something else in the soul is averse to the object of desire, counteracts the desire, and gets the better of it (439 C 8, 554 E 2). Moreover, in both cases Socrates takes motivational conflict to reveal that the person in question is twofold, composed of at least two parts or aspects (439 D 4, 554 D 9–E 1). This is precisely what one expects, given Socrates' commitment to PO and given the fact that he takes PO to rule out the simultaneous presence, in a single (incomposite) part of the soul, of a desire for, and an aversion to, the same thing.

Secondly, it is an important part of (at least one version of) the more complicated picture⁷ that the appetitive part has the capacity for means-end reasoning, even though Socrates thinks of the part in question as lacking the capacity for reasoning (*λογισμός*).⁸ If means-end reasoning is not supposed to be a matter of Platonic reasoning, we need a story of what Platonic reasoning is, such that means-end reasoning does not qualify. This seems a tall order, to put it mildly.⁹

⁷ This is part of the version offered in Price, *Mental Conflict*. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, as we have seen, offers a more complicated version of the more complicated picture. Even on this view, though, the appetitive part uses practical reason to identify suitable means to achieve its aims (282), in such a way that it (appetite) forms desires for suitable means based on its recognition of their efficiency and long-term benefit (219–20). One concern is whether this can yield a sufficiently clear and robust sense in which the appetitive part is non-rational.

⁸ ἀλογιστον, 439 D 7; cf. *Tim.* 77 B 5: the third part of the soul has no share in λογισμός.

⁹ One strategy might be to distinguish between (say) 'purely instrumental reasoning' (or calculation) and 'reasoning about the good'—about, that is, how it is good (or best) to act, in the circumstances—and then to suggest that Plato reserves the vocabulary of reason for the latter. However, if 'reasoning about the good' is understood in terms of what appears to be good or best to the reasoning subject, this seems to let in too much. This is because it is hard to see why the means-end reasoning that the appetitive part is taken to engage in fails to count as a case of reasoning about the good (so understood). Satisfying intense 'bodily' desires, or (better) the intense desire of the moment, may well appear to the appetitive part to be very good indeed—which is not to say that the desire in question springs from an antecedent assessment concerning the goodness of its object. If, on the other hand, it is to be understood in terms of a proper, developed conception of the good, this lets in too little: few people will ever succeed in doing a bit of Platonic reasoning. Note also that in that case, Socrates is mistaken when he calls λογισμοῦ what the oligarch's rational part is said to do at 553 D 2–4 (namely, to reason about how to make more money, so as to satisfy the desire to be as wealthy as possible, 555 B 11).

And thirdly, there appears to be not a shred of direct, explicit evidence that it is the presence specifically of a second-order desire at least on one side of a psychological conflict that Plato takes to reveal a partition of the soul, rather than, quite simply, the simultaneity of a desire for and an aversion to the same thing. To show that Leontius does experience a second-order desire, in addition to conflicting first-order desires, is not, of course, to show that it is specifically the addition of this second-order desire that, on Plato's view, requires or warrants the relevant partition of the soul. In view of these objections, it seems (to say the least) difficult to sustain the more complicated picture.¹⁰ We should therefore return to the considerations that have led commentators to reject the simple picture and reflect on whether they are, in fact, cogent. I shall argue that they are not.

The first point that needs to be made is that *epithumia*, in Plato, does not mean 'appetite' (that is, intense desire for pleasure, or—better—for something or other as *pleasant*, typically and primarily food, drink, sex, and the like). In other words, given the way Plato uses the word, it is not part of its meaning that it must refer specifically to a desire of the sort that, according to the psychological theory of the *Republic*, the lowest part alone is responsible for. It is manifestly and demonstrably false that throughout the *Republic*, *epithumia* means 'appetite', until in book 9 Socrates, startling readers with a bold stroke of semantic extension, introduces the idea of 'appetites' of spirit and reason. On the second page of the *Republic* (328 D 3–5), Cephalus tells Socrates that he should visit more often, 'for you should know that as the bodily pleasures wither away, my desires (*ἐπιθυμιαί*) for conversations [or arguments: *λόγοι*] and their pleasures grow'.

A little later (338 A 5–7), Socrates says about Thrasymachus that it was obvious that he thought he had an extremely fine answer and that he (intensely) desired (*ἐπιθυμῶν*) to earn people's esteem by giving it. The object of Thrasymachus' desire here is precisely one of the canonical objects of spirited desire: esteem, or good reputation (*εὐδοκμεσῶν*).¹¹ Cephalus' desires for conversations or arguments may well be ones that belong to his somewhat feebly developed reason.¹² Thrasymachus' desire for esteem seems certain to be not an appetite, but a desire that, according to the *Republic*'s psychological theory, belongs to the spirited part.

A passage in book 5 clearly uses the word *epithumia*, and related words, so as to mean 'to desire' or—better, I think—'to desire intensely'. In the context, Socrates wants to show that when we say that someone desires something, we mean that he desires everything of that kind, as opposed to one part of it but not another (475 B 4–6). This is illustrated by, among other types, honour-lovers and philosophers or

¹⁰ The version of the more complicated picture offered in Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, manages to avoid the second objection—in letter, though not, one might think, in spirit. Irwin's more complicated version is, however, vulnerable to the other two objections, and that is sufficient to cast serious doubt on it.

¹¹ 'What about the spirited part?', Socrates asks at 581 A 9–B 1. 'Don't we say that it is wholly dedicated to the pursuit of control, victory, and high esteem (*εὐδοκμεσῶν*)?'.

¹² Compare the democratic character's occasional desire to philosophize, at 561 D 3. D. Scott, 'Plato's critique of the democratic character', *Phronesis*, 45 (2000), 22–6, offers reasons for thinking that this, too, is a desire of reason rather than, as others have thought, of appetite.

wisdom-lovers. The honour-lover is a 'desirer' of the whole of honour; the philosophical person likewise (intensely) desires the whole of wisdom. We might compare the *Phaedo*, where Socrates says in his intellectual autobiography that when he was young, he strongly (in fact, as he says, to an amazing extent) desired (ἐπιθυμῶν) the kind of wisdom that was natural philosophy (96 A 5-7). Even though it is not, then, part of the meaning of the word *epithumia* that it picks out all and only appetites, or all and only desires of the lowest part of the soul, Socrates still derives the name of that part from that word, simply because of the extraordinary strength and intensity of its desires for such things as food, drink, and sex (580 D 10-E 5). As a result, when we read of *epithumiai* in Plato's writings, and of conflicts between them, we are not automatically entitled to assume that the desires in question, all or even any of them, belong to the lowest part of the soul.

We should now return, briefly, to book 8, and to the oligarchic character. We remember that this is a person who characteristically experiences psychological conflict, though generally his better desires are in control of his worse ones' (554 E 1-E 2). Socrates also says about him that he holds his evil desires in check 'by means of some decent part of himself' (554 C 12-D 1). Moreover, this is a person who leads his life in a disciplined and careful manner, organized and structured around the pursuit of the one thing that he, as a person, is consistently attached to, money or wealth. In this regard as in so many others, the oligarchic person corresponds to the oligarchic city, which has set wealth before itself as the good (555 B 10-11).

Now, it seems difficult to resist the thought that the oligarch's pursuit of wealth has deeply affected the whole of his motivational structure—the whole of his soul, that is—crucially including its rational part, and that it is in fact the latter part that is largely responsible for the order, carefulness, and consistency that so conspicuously characterize his life. Nor is there any reason, I think, to resist this thought. When Socrates speaks of the oligarch's 'decent part', I therefore suggest, he is meaning to refer to (or at least prominently include) that person's corrupt and disoriented rational part, which is in fact the source of at least some of his better, more thoughtful, desires. We can still, on this construal, give force to Socrates' imagery of appetite being ruler and king in the oligarch's soul, and of reason being enslaved: the rule of the appetitive part consists in the fact that its central object of desire has become the person's central object of desire, and reason is enslaved because it is not free to pursue its own natural objects of desire, but is limited to the pursuit of an object that is not appropriately connected to its own proper concerns. Recall now the kind of psychological conflict that is characteristic of this type of person: conflict between desires for quick, but unjust gratification, and careful, prudent, long-term desires for the accumulation of wealth. It is not just open to us to interpret this kind of conflict as involving, on the one hand, desires of the appetitive part and, on the other hand, desires of a corrupt and disoriented reason, perhaps supported by desires of spirit, its natural ally. In fact we have strong reason to opt for an interpretation along these lines, given the background

of the argument for tripartition, and in particular the role that *PO* plays in it. If so, one important consideration against the simple picture has been disarmed.

The second consideration against the simple picture was this. Plato seems to conceive of the appetitive part as being equipped with, or having access to, considerable cognitive resources such as, crucially, the capacity for means-end reasoning. If so, there will be specifiable circumstances in which it is bound to generate simultaneous desire/aversion pairs of precisely the sort that, according to the simple picture, require a partition of the soul. But this time, the partition in question will be a sub-partition within appetite. However, the evidence for the claim that Plato takes appetite to be equipped with (or have access to) the capacity for means-end reasoning is quite inconclusive. It is that Socrates, repeatedly and prominently, attributes to it love of, and (intense) desire for, money or wealth¹³ and, moreover, says that he has been calling it money-loving because its primary desires (for food, drink, sex, and the like) 'are most of all satisfied through money' (580 E 2-581 A 1). Now, recognizing that money is an effective means to the fulfilment of antecedent desires, and desiring money *on those grounds*, does, I take it, require (access to) the capacity for means-end reasoning. However, to desire money is not necessarily to desire it on grounds such as these. Nor is it necessarily the case that when the appetitive part desires money, it desires it on those grounds. Socrates certainly does not say so.

What he does say not only leaves open the possibility, but on consideration suggests strongly, that given suitable habituation and acculturation in the context of a life lived in human society, the appetitive part tends to become attached to money in such a way as to form desires for it which in each case are based on, or consist in, some kind of appreciation of it as a direct source of pleasure. The fact that its primary desires are satisfied most of all through money would not, in that case, be out of place in a statement of how it is that it comes to be attached to it, or of why it is so attached. It is not only that satisfaction of bodily desires through money lends instrumental value to it. The satisfaction of such desires through money also establishes, reinforces, and sustains patterns and habits of attention, response, and attachment, both at an individual and at a communal level.¹⁴ The appetitive part arguably lacks the cognitive resources required to form desires for money specifically as a means to the satisfaction of its primary desires. But there is

¹³ 442 A 6-7, 553 C 5, 581 A 3-7; cf. 436 A 1-3.

¹⁴ I have in mind the developmental and not necessarily reason-involving phenomenon Plato and Aristotle refer to as habituation (ἔθισις, ἄθροισις). Note, for instance, 377 A 11-378 E 4, where Socrates speaks about the crucial importance of the ways in which the souls of young children are first moulded by the stories they hear, giving rise to beliefs 'that are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable' (378 D 7-E 2). This is later referred to as education *by habits* (522 A 3-9). It plainly begins long before the age of reason, which 'some never seem to get a share of, while the majority do so quite late' (441 A 7-B 1). Cf. also 590 B 6-9, about habituating spirit 'from youth on', so as to put up with being insulted, for the sake of money and gratification of appetites. In view of passages like these, it seems reasonable to think that Plato felt it does not need pointing out that a non-rational part of the soul could (and, in the ordinary course of things, would) develop by habituation an attachment to money.

no reason to think that it cannot develop tendencies to form intense desires for things like money as its patterns of attention and attachment are moulded, from early childhood onward, under the influence of the surrounding culture.

In fact, one reason why Socrates is so deeply dissatisfied with the stories that young children are told as part of the traditional upbringing is that the inherited stories represent gods and heroes as being money-lovers and bribable (390 E 8–391 C 6). These stories must be removed, he says, as citizens must not be allowed to be money-lovers or bribable. The clear implication is that the existing culture, such as it is, inculcates an excessive attachment to money at the very beginning of the traditional course of education—at a time when, as Socrates says, young souls are most malleable and take on any pattern one wishes to impress on them (377 B 1–2).

If this is along the right lines, then the appetitive part's desire for money does not directly rest on, and is not controlled by, a proper grasp of relevant means–end relations. Rather, it is, much like its other desires, based on, or consists in, some kind of appreciation of, or attachment to, something or other (in this case, money) as a direct source of pleasure. This picture requires that money is valued directly or non-instrumentally by the appetitive part itself and by the type of person who is ruled by it. And this seems to be the view that Socrates takes of the way money is typically valued by those who, like the oligarch, value it greatly: 'Won't the money-maker say', he asks at 581 C 11–D 3, 'that the pleasure of being honoured and that of learning are worthless compared to that of making a profit, if he gets no money from them?'¹⁵

Socrates, then, neither claims nor implies that appetite can reason or use reason. He admittedly leaves it somewhat unclear how it is that appetite, which is not itself equipped with the capacity for reasoning, comes to be attached to money. But this gap in the *Republic's* psychological theory can, without great difficulty, be filled in a way that avoids attributing to it the claim that appetite is able to reason or to use reason. Plato may well have thought that it goes without saying that the appetitive part, as he conceives of it, can (and usually does) develop a tendency to form desires for money as its patterns of attention and attachment are moulded from early childhood onward, in a way that does not depend on any use of practical reason on its part and that, in any case, precedes acquisition of the ability to reason. If so, we are now in a position to conclude that neither of the two main reasons that have led commentators to reject the simple picture is cogent. We should, then, return to **PO** the central position in the argument for tripartition of the soul that Socrates assigns to it (at 436 B 6–437 A 8).

Tripartition of the soul, we can conclude, is not just the claim that human desire comes in three distinct kinds or forms. Nor is it just the claim that the

human soul in its embodied state is a composite object, composed of three distinct parts, which (strictly and accurately speaking) are the subjects or bearers of motivating conditions of three distinct kinds. To be sure, Socrates is committed to both of these claims. But tripartition also involves the remarkable further claim that while conflict between desires can, and frequently does, occur between soul-parts, it does not and cannot occur within each one of the three parts of the soul that the theory recognizes. Moreover, the precise sort of conflict between desires that is at issue can be specified without any reference to higher-order desires. It is simply a matter of a simultaneous desire for and aversion to the same thing. The theory thus involves the claim that none of the three parts of the soul that it recognizes can at once desire and be averse to the same thing.

It will be helpful to step back from the details we have been attending to, so as to make some remarks about the *Republic's* psychological theory and its overall plausibility (or otherwise), according to the interpretation that I have presented and argued for. Suppose that what I have called the simple picture can indeed be defended effectively. One might still be reluctant to accept it because of the intuition that motivational conflict between and among desires that Plato's theory attributes to the appetitive part is, in fact, a familiar experience that occurs frequently in ordinary circumstances. We are, after all, familiar with the situation that we have intense ('appetitive') desires which cannot, in the circumstances or even in general, be satisfied at the same time. There is, for instance, nothing particularly unusual about being torn, as people say, between a persistent and forceful craving for a cigar and an intense desire to take a nap. Plato's psychological theory no doubt attributes both of these conflicting desires to the appetitive part of the soul. We should note, though, that so far as it goes, this description of conflict is quite compatible, in letter and spirit, with Plato's theory—even on the simple picture of what sort of conflict indicates a partition of soul. This is because it is neither a part nor an implication of the description that in conflicts of this kind, the person in question has, in addition to the conflicting appetites, 'appetitive' aversions to the very same things that he desires appetitively. In fact, he may very well not have.

To see this, we should bear in mind the distinctive character of the motivating conditions that Plato's theory assigns to the appetitive part. Just as appetitive desires go hand in hand with some awareness or representation of their objects as pleasant, so appetitive aversions come with some awareness of their objects as unpleasant or painful. Now, one's appetite for a nap, together with the fact that one cannot at the same time take a nap and smoke a cigar, need not (and does not, I think) make smoking a cigar (now) strike one as an unpleasant or painful thing to do. Regardless of one's intense tiredness, one may still find the thought of (now) lighting a cigar for oneself utterly delightful. One may have to decide between these two courses of action, and the decision may be a hard one to make. But such motivational conflict need not involve, at the level of the appetitive part, the simultaneous occurrence of a desire for and an aversion to the same thing that would require a subdivision of that part.

¹⁵ Socrates (at 581 A 3–7) calls the appetitive part not only money-loving, but also *profit-loving* (*φιλοκερδής*), having said that 'its pleasure and love are for profit'. This, too, suggests direct, non-instrumental appreciation.

A related concern is that it may seem as if my interpretation preserves the integrity of one part of the soul at the expense of the integrity of another. For one might think the following. If reasoning about how to satisfy any desire for A identifies B as the best or most efficient means to A, then a desire for B arises, and it will belong to reason, since it results directly from reasoning.¹⁶ But it is easy to see that there will be all sorts of situations in which such a desire will be opposed by an aversion of reason to precisely the same thing, B.¹⁷ Suppose, for instance, that I have an aversion of reason to smoking, on the grounds that it is bad for me. I also happen to have an intense occurrent desire to have a cigarette. I do not have any cigarettes with me at the moment, but it takes just a spot of reasoning to identify what is, in the circumstances, the most efficient way of obtaining cigarettes, which is to go to the shop around the corner and buy a pack of cigarettes there. Given my aversion to smoking, I form an aversion of reason to going to the shop the moment I think of doing so. So if a desire to go there, as a means to satisfying the desire to smoke, is assigned to *reason*, that will divide it.

On the other hand, according to the interpretation of Plato's theory that I have presented and argued for, appetite is in no position to grasp the fact that going to the shop is a means to satisfying its desire to smoke. So it is hard to see how *appetite* could respond to the situation by forming a desire specifically to go to the shop around the corner.

Perhaps the thing to say on behalf of Plato's theory is something like this. It may well be the case that appetite has *some* kind of cognitive access to reason's judgment that the way to obtain cigarettes in the circumstances is by going to the shop around the corner and buying them there. This may be by way of a representation that in some way or other presents the whole course of action 'going to the shop, buying a pack of cigarettes there, and smoking a cigarette'.¹⁸ Appetite may respond to such a representation by giving rise to a motivating condition that impels me to pursue this course of action, perhaps because the representation prominently includes a representation of smoking, which is the object of an intense, occurrent appetitive desire. This need not—and, anyhow on my view, should not—involve any recognition *on appetite's part* that going to the shop is a means to the end of smoking a cigarette. From appetite's point of view, the representation in response to which it gives rise to the relevant motivating condition need not be articulated in terms of means-end relations. And so it need not be the case that an appetitive desire specifically to go to the shop around the corner is in play. The desire I act on in going to the shop, Plato might say, is simply my appetitive desire to smoke. He might say that what explains my behaviour as I leave the house, walk down the street, and so forth, is, *not* an indeterminately large number

¹⁶ Directly, rather than indirectly; mediated, for instance, by habituation.

¹⁷ Cf. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 193. 'If a desire resulting from deliberation about appetite-satisfaction belongs to the rational part, there will be conflict within the rational part; for this appetite-directed desire may conflict with desire resulting from deliberation about over-all good.'

¹⁸ As for what such representations might be and how they might come about, see Ch. 7.

of desires to leave the house, walk down the street, and so forth, but simply the desire to smoke, together with a complex, behaviour-guiding representation that depends, at least in part, on my judgement about how most easily to obtain cigarettes.

It may well be, then, that Plato's theory (as I have interpreted it) can accommodate, and make good sense of, a broader variety of phenomena than it appears at first sight to be able to. But is this good enough? Consider the possibility of habituating a person in such a way as to come to find painful certain experiences that are naturally pleasant, such as drinking water when being dehydrated. By means of some treatment (electric shocks, or whatever), administered over time and in a carefully designed and controlled way, one could perhaps bring it about that a person comes to regard as painful, and on that basis to be intensely averse to, the very activity of drinking (even when dehydrated)—an activity that humans are naturally constituted to find pleasant and to desire intensely, and so cannot help finding pleasant and desiring intensely. If so, the appetitive part can be manipulated, as it were in the laboratory, so as to generate simultaneous desire/aversion pairs to precisely the same thing. In that case, Plato's psychological theory would have to acknowledge that the appetitive part of this unfortunate person is not in fact incomposite: it has been divided or fractured into two distinct sub-parts, and the division manifests itself whenever the person wants to drink.¹⁹

However, that such a sub-partition can perhaps be effected, in certain highly artificial and invasive circumstances, is not damaging to Plato's claim that the embodied human soul is tripartite. That claim arguably needs to be understood as a claim about the structure that the human soul, in tolerably ordinary and conducive circumstances, naturally acquires and maintains as the person develops and matures, and at the same time about the different kinds of psychological activities and operations that constitute the proper functions of the complex thing that is the embodied human soul. What it may or may not be possible to bring about in laboratory conditions sheds little or no light on the structure or composition that it is natural for a soul to have, and it shows equally little about the kinds of activity in performing which the embodied human soul succeeds in carrying out its various proper functions.

I want to close by signalling an advantage of the present interpretation, namely that it enables us to attribute to Plato conceptions of practical rationality and of motivation by reason that are clear, robust, and, as we shall see, in line with closely related conceptions in Aristotle's theory of motivation.²⁰ In that it allows us to say that the appetitive part of the soul, which Socrates calls non-rational, lacks the

¹⁹ The same point could be made, arguably with more plausibility and interest, about spirit. Perhaps conditions can occur, or can be imposed, such that a person comes to have tendencies to find the same act or response both admirable and shameful, and so she might at the same time feel desire and aversion of spirit towards the same thing. Consider, for instance, the case of a person who spends some of her so-called formative years in one culture, and some in another.

²⁰ Aristotle's conceptions of practical thought and reason will be discussed in Ch. 12.

capacity for means-end reasoning, it relieves us of the task of working out, on Plato's behalf, a peculiar and unfamiliar conception of reasoning, such that ordinary means-end reasoning turns out, on that conception, not to qualify as reasoning. Rather, Plato's psychological theory (we can say) does treat means-end reasoning as an exercise of reason. If all goes well, such reasoning conveys a grasp of a means-end relation. In certain circumstances, though perhaps not in others, it transmits desire from a desired end to a suitable means. Desire will be so transmitted in cases in which the end, or goal, in question is desired by reason itself. Aware both of the goal's goodness or value and of the fact that some act or other may contribute to its accomplishment, reason desires to perform the act. In the same way, aversion is transmitted from undesirable outcomes to acts that, as reason recognizes, promote them or tend to bring them about. When desire is transmitted to a means from an end that is itself desired by reason, what arises in this way is a desire of a very special kind. It is a desire for something or other specifically as a means to something else. It relies directly on, and is fully and immediately controlled by, a grasp of a means-end relation. If and when reason recognizes that the means-end relation has ceased to obtain, or that the means in question is no longer the best one among available options, this desire subsides right away.

None of this is meant to suggest for a moment that Plato's theory limits reason to considering how to accomplish goals that have already been set—for instance, by non-rational parts of the soul. On the contrary, it is a central part of the theory that reason can work out and accomplish its own objectives by relying on its own distinctive resources, which enable it to grasp the true natures of things, prominently including the true nature of goodness. Moreover, it is only by doing so that reason comes to be in a position to succeed fully in performing its proper functions, namely to acquire comprehensive understanding and to direct action in a way that is informed by, and flows from, that understanding. Given a conception of reason along these lines, it is easy to see that there is a good deal of room for desire that does not directly involve the use of reason. We can and do desire things on the basis of thoughts and reflections about how good they are, or what they are good for. But we also desire things (such as food, drink, and sex) as a result of the natural constitution and functioning, in a reasonably conducive environment, of the living organisms that we are. And moreover, we can and do form tendencies to desire certain things (such as money) and be averse to others, not on the basis of our own reflections on their goodness or value, but in the course and as a result of our upbringing, of absorbing and internalizing the beliefs and attachments of the culture that surrounds us.

PART TWO

BELIEF AND APPEARANCE IN PLATO

Introduction

My main purpose in the preceding section was to show that Plato's psychological theory holds the appetitive part of the soul to be non-rational in the strong sense of lacking the capacity for reasoning. On the other hand it is plain that the theory takes appetite to be capable, all by itself, of giving rise to fully formed motivating conditions, and hence to episodes of behaviour, even to episodes of human behaviour. One question this raises is what cognitive resources Plato's psychological theory makes available to the non-rational parts of the soul. Part 2 attempts to answer that question, focusing on the appetitive part. I shall argue that Plato's psychological theory operates with a remarkably rich conception of non-rational cognition. It takes such cognition to be centred on the senses, but not to be limited to what is presented in occurrent acts of sense-perception. Non-rational cognition, as Plato conceives of it, crucially includes memory, which he thinks of as the preservation and re-enactment of impressions originally received in acts of sense-perception. In addition, the non-rational parts of the soul have cognitive access to sensory representations that may be formed under the influence of reason. Although Plato does not offer a fully developed theory of non-rational cognition, I am meaning to show that he does supply the resources for an outline of such cognition that is coherent, defensible, and interesting. In Part 3, I shall present and interpret what I take to be Aristotle's rather more fully developed version of what in Plato remains an outline account of non-rational cognition in terms of the reception, preservation, and re-enactment of sensory impressions.

Chapter 5 is devoted to a much-discussed passage in *Republic* 10's condemnation of imitative poetry. In that passage (602 C 4–603 B 3), Socrates calls attention to various kinds of perceptual illusions, so as to identify the part of the soul that both painting and poetry appeal to. Let us call the passage the argument from cognitive conflict. I shall claim that the division of the soul that Plato has in mind in that argument is meant to divide, not *reason* into two distinct sub-parts, but *the soul* into its rational part and some part or aspect below reason. The centre-piece of my case for that view is a non-standard reading of one of the passage's key sentences (602 E 4–6); that reading is a modified version of a reading proposed by James Adam in 1902. I shall argue that we should accept my version of Adam's reading, as it is linguistically viable and superior to the standard reading from the point of view of philosophical interpretation. Part of my defence of Adam's reading appeals to some evident connections between the argument from cognitive conflict and the discussion of imitative poetry that immediately follows it. So as to state my view fully, I shall offer a detailed discussion of the place of the argument

from cognitive conflict in the overall context of *Republic* 10's long and complicated argument against imitative poetry.

According to the interpretation of the argument from cognitive conflict that I shall press, it attributes beliefs to a non-rational part of the soul. The mental states that Socrates thinks of as beliefs of a non-rational part of the soul crucially involve sensory representations of apparent states of affairs and the uncritical acceptance by a non-rational part of the soul that things are the way the senses represent them as being. On the basis of that characterization, I shall suggest that a commitment to the existence of such mental states coheres well with the rest of the *Republic*'s psychological theory. In fact I think that it should be welcomed as a significant feature of that theory.

That non-rational parts of the soul are capable of forming beliefs is, I shall submit, a view that Plato comes to reject. The evidence for this claim is twofold. On the one hand, it is said in the *Timaeus* that appetite is 'totally devoid of belief, reasoning, and thought' (*Timaeus* 77 B 3-6). On the other hand, a number of later Platonic dialogues, most notably the *Theaetetus*, exhibit a conception of belief that emphasizes the active, reflective aspect of belief-formation or judgment. The *Theaetetus* offers a detailed discussion of what is involved in, and required for, forming beliefs, in a way that makes it clear that Plato has come to accept that forming beliefs requires the use of cognitive resources that belong to reason alone. It is the task of Chapter 6 to present and interpret the twofold evidence for thinking that Plato comes to reject the view that parts of the soul other than reason can form beliefs. Completing that task requires discussing the *Timaeus*' statement of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul. More importantly, it requires clarifying the rather difficult and controversial passage in the *Theaetetus* in which Socrates argues that belief-formation in all cases outstrips the resources of perception (*Theaetetus* 184-7). I shall argue that Socrates in that passage distinguishes between belief-formation and sense-perception as two distinct capacities of the soul, and that he denies that the resources of perception are sufficient for the formation of any belief. This distinction leaves intact a level of awareness and cognition below belief and reason. Such non-rational cognition crucially includes, but need not be limited to, what is presented in occurrent acts of perception.

The central idea behind Plato's view that belief is a distinctively rational capacity, I shall suggest, is that forming a belief is a matter of judging, and being able to judge whether something or other is, say, hard requires being able to grasp such structural facts as that hardness is different from, and the opposite of, softness. And the ability to grasp such structural facts, Plato thinks, belongs to reason alone. The upshot of *Theaetetus* 184-7, as I understand it, is that the use of reason is required for the application of predicates. Plato does not think, on the other hand, that reason is required for the apprehension of perceptual features. And so he can continue to hold that the parts of the soul below reason can be sensitive, and responsive, to what may be presented in acts of perception. He needs to say that non-rational parts cannot themselves apply predicates. But to say this is not to

say that they cannot pick out features of a situation, or that they cannot respond to such features by forming desires or aversions.

In Chapter 7, I shall argue that much, and perhaps all, of the substance of the *Republic*'s psychological theory can survive Plato's recognition that belief is a distinctively rational capacity. The *Theaetetus*' discussion of what is required for belief provides the resources for an economical explanation of the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to appetite. In the *Republic*, Plato is evidently prepared to attribute beliefs to non-rational parts of the soul, including appetite. There is good reason to think, I shall argue, that the *Theaetetus*' conception of belief as a distinctively rational capacity is innovative, superseding a less specific, and less stringent, conception of what is involved in belief that is in play in earlier Platonic writings such as the *Republic*. As a result, we shall be in a position to explain the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to appetite simply in terms of new thoughts about the nature of belief, without assuming any substantive change in Plato's theory of the tripartite soul.

One reason in favour of this interpretive strategy is the fact that the *Timaeus*' statement of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul is strikingly close, in conception and even in language, to the *Republic*'s statement of that theory. In particular, it is part of the *Timaeus*' version of tripartition that appetite can, all on its own, give rise to episodes of behaviour. Moreover, the *Timaeus* also maintains the *Republic*'s distinction between appetite's willing obedience to reason's commands and its forcible subjugation by reason and spirit.

However, the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to appetite, against the background of its robust restatement of tripartition, also calls for clarification of how appetite, as Plato conceives of it, is in a position to do what his psychological theory requires it to be able to do. It must be able to give rise to fully formed motivating conditions, and to receive commands, but also threats, from reason. I shall discuss three passages—one from the *Timaeus* and two from the *Philebus*—that show awareness of this need for clarification, and that collectively shed a good deal of light on how Plato conceives of the cognition of soul-parts below reason. The first passage (*Timaeus* 71 A 3-E 2) is of value chiefly for showing awareness of a problem. I shall call this the *Timaeus*' problem. It is that Plato's psychological theory requires that reason can affect and influence appetite by communicating with it; but that it conceives of appetite as being unable to understand, or anyhow as being such as not to care about, the predicational structures that constitute the discourse of reason. While the passage's attempt to resolve the problem is unsuccessful, I shall suggest that it foreshadows an important development in Plato's psychological theory that resolves the *Timaeus*' problem. The passage speaks obscurely of 'images and appearances' formed under the influence of reason on the liver's shiny surface, and it assumes that appetite can in some way be aware of, and be influenced by, such appearances 'painted' by reason. What the passage is, I shall suggest, groping for is the idea that the sensory imagination can play a mediating role that enables reason to affect and influence appetite by communicating with it. This idea is expressed with admirable clarity in the *Philebus*' simile of the illustrated book

(*Philebus* 38 E 12–40 C 6). I shall discuss that passage in its own right and in the larger context of the *Philebus*. I shall also call attention to its closeness, in language and conception, to the statement and attempted resolution of the *Timaeus*' problem.

Before turning to the simile of the illustrated book, however, I shall bring into play a slightly earlier passage from the *Philebus*, namely its discussion of pleasures of anticipation (32 B 9–36 C 2). That discussion offers accounts of the formation of desire and of the apprehension of prospective situations that avoid any appeal to reason and its distinctive resources. In doing so, it offers an outline account of non-rational cognition in terms of sense-perception and of the preservation and re-enactment of sensory impressions. It enables us to see how Plato can think that the non-rational parts of the soul are able not only to give rise to fully formed motivating conditions, but also to be the bearers of expectations and of forward-looking emotions such as fear (*Timaeus* 69 C 5–D 4).

What emerges from the *Timaeus* and the *Philebus*, I shall close Part 2 by arguing, is a psychological theory that preserves the *Republic*'s conception of appetite as a non-rational part of the soul. More specifically, it preserves, and significantly clarifies, two key claims of the *Republic*'s theory: first, that appetite can, all on its own, give rise to fully formed motivating conditions; secondly, that there are two importantly different ways of overcoming objectionable desires of appetite. The many-headed brute can be forcibly overpowered, or it can be made gentle by reason.

Imitation and the Soul

5

Plato's psychological theory plainly equips the two non-rational parts of the soul, appetite and spirit, with some cognitive resources. The motivating conditions that Socrates ascribes to them are, as we have seen, not limited to blind, undirected cravings, but prominently include fully formed impulses to pursue or avoid specific things. Leontius' appetitive part, for instance, comes to be the bearer of an intense desire to have a close look at some corpses by the side of the road, a course of action that his spirited part is vehemently averse to. In another striking passage, Socrates speaks about what appetite thinks it is doing while the person it belongs to is asleep and his reason is at rest:

Then the brutish and savage part, full of food and drink, casts off sleep and seeks to find a way to gratify itself. You know that there is nothing it won't dare to do at such a time, free of all control by shame or reason. It does not shrink from trying to have sex with [sc. the person's] mother, as it thinks (ὡς οἰεῖται), or with anyone else at all, whether man, god, or brute. It will commit any foul murder, and there is no food it refuses to eat. In a word, it omits no act of folly and shamelessness. (*Republic*, 571 C 5–D 5)

As this passage makes clear, Socrates is willing to attribute thoughts to appetite. He also characterizes temperance as friendship and agreement among the parts of the soul, which obtains when the ruler and the ruled believe in common (ἁμοδοξῶσι) that reason should rule, and they don't engage in civil war against it' (442 C 9–D 2). He needs some idea of agreement among the parts of the soul, so as to contrast the harmonious, perfectly unified condition of soul that is justice with inferior conditions, such as the oligarch's, which involve division, conflict, and disunity. The attribution of thoughts to non-rational soul-parts seems to find its culmination in book 10 of the *Republic*, where Socrates appears to attribute beliefs to a non-rational part,¹ and to speak of it as a part or aspect of thought (διάνοια) (603 C 1–2).²

I want to argue in this chapter that this seems to be the case for the excellent reason that it is in fact the case. In other words, I shall try to show that the division of the soul that Socrates argues for at 602 C 4–603 B 3 is a division between reason on

¹ 602 E 8–603 D 2. The words in question are simply δόξα and δοξάζειν, rather than the compound verb ἁμοδοξεῖν that Socrates uses in book 4.

² Cf. also ἁμολογητικῶς at 603 C 11.

the one hand and a non-rational part on the other. There are two main reasons why this matters for present purposes. First, if book 10 divides reason into two parts, as some have thought,³ this will yield a psychological theory that is notably different from, and in fact incompatible with, the theory that is set out and argued for in book 4, at least as I understand it. For according to that theory, reason is one of three incomposite parts of the soul. Secondly, if *Republic* 10 is indeed where Socrates' tendency to attribute quasi-intellectual states to parts of the soul below reason finds its culmination, then this makes it a good place to reflect on that aspect of the *Republic's* psychological theory, or anyhow of its presentation.

The main text that we shall be concerned with is 602 C 4–603 B 3. This text is in many ways connected to other parts of an extraordinarily complicated argument for the conclusion that imitative poetry should not be accepted into the ideal city. Before we turn specifically to our main text, then, a few remarks should be made about the overall argument. It is long and complicated but not, I think, unclear or confused.

Imitative poetry is poetry that involves impersonation. This covers drama, both tragic and comic, as well as epic poetry, Homer prominently included. Socrates makes it clear from the start that his argument against imitative poetry relies on his psychological theory: 'Now that we have separated the parts of the soul', he says at the beginning of book 10, 'it is even clearer, I think, that imitative poetry should be altogether excluded' (595 A 5–B 1). This is the first of several references to the *Republic's* theory of the tripartite soul, which was introduced and argued for in book 4. The first part of the present argument (595 C 8–602 C 2) is meant to establish the preliminary conclusion that neither tragic nor epic poets have any significant knowledge concerning the various sorts of things they depict or represent. The second part focuses on the harm that drama and epic poetry do to the soul (602 C 4–606 D 7).

Socrates begins that part of the argument by asking 'on which of a person's parts does it [sc. imitation] exert its power?' (*Republic* 602 C 4–5). Glaucon asks Socrates to clarify the question. Socrates does so by showing which of a person's parts it is that painting exerts its power on. In talking about painting, he is not for a moment losing sight of poetry. Nor is this mere analogy. The point that he wants to make about the specific case of the imitative art of painting is supposed to be generally valid for all forms of imitation,⁴ which includes imitative poetry as well

³ For instance, N. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), app. B, 239–43; A. Kenny, *The Anatomy of the Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 22; A. Nehamas, 'Plato on imitation and poetry in *Republic* 10', in J. Moravcsik and P. Temko (eds.), *Plato on Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982), 65–6; M. Burnyeat, 'Culture and society in Plato's *Republic*', in G. Peterson (ed.), *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 20 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 223–6; D. Sedley, *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 113.

⁴ 603 A 9–B 3: 'This, then, is what I wanted to get agreement about when I said that painting and imitation as a whole (ἡ γράσις) καὶ ὁμοίως ἡ μιμήσις) produce work that is far from the truth, namely, that imitation really consorts with a part of us that is far from wisdom.'

as painting. His point is that imitation in general appeals to a base, non-rational part of the soul. This is supposed to be seen fairly easily in the case of painting, which is why he begins with it. But the point is supposed to apply to imitation in all its forms. If it does, then it is reasonable to think, on general grounds to do with imitation, that imitative poetry too appeals to a base part of the soul. But rather than relying merely on what it is reasonable to think, Socrates wants to show this to be in fact the case by detailed and specific consideration of imitative poetry in particular. Furthermore, it is not just that he thinks that imitative poetry appeals to some base part or other of the soul, as does painting. He plainly wants to go further than that, since he wants to say, as we shall see, that it is the *same* base part of the soul that both painting and imitative poetry appeal to.

Socrates next presents his long and carefully argued answer to the question which part of the person imitative poetry exerts its power on (603 C 5–605 C 3). His answer does include a characterization of the subject matter of imitative poetry, but that does not mean it loses sight of the question it is meant to answer.⁵ What imitative poetry imitates, he says, is 'human beings acting voluntarily or under compulsion, who believe that, as a result of these actions, they are doing either well or badly and who experience either pleasure or pain in all this' (*Republic* 603 C 5–8). He then asks Glaucon whether a person is 'of one mind' in the varied circumstances of action—whether, that is, his thought is disposed in a single, uniform way (ἁμονοητικῶς δάκενται, 603 C 11–D 1). Uniformity of thought is contrasted with the kind of psychological conflict and opposition that has just come to light in Socrates' discussion of painting. Is it, he asks, that 'just as a person is at war with himself in matters of sight and held opposite beliefs about the same thing at the same time, so also does he fight with himself and engage in civil war with himself in matters of action?' (*Republic* 603 D 1–3).

It is worth noting carefully how he answers that question. He says that there is no need to reach agreement about the matter now, because, as he remembers, an adequate conclusion about it was attained in earlier arguments, to the effect that 'our soul is full of a myriad of such oppositions at the same time' (603 D 5–6). This would seem to be another reference to the argument for tripartition of the soul in book 4. As early in that argument as 439 C 5, Glaucon already accepts that

⁵ According to Nehamas, 'Plato on imitation', 66–7, the discussion of painting distinguishes between two aspects of reason, having 'little if anything to do with the irrational elements in the soul'. He acknowledges that the discussion of poetry, by contrast, emphasizes the idea that poetry appeals to the 'irrational elements'. There is no real inconsistency, he suggests, because Plato has in fact changed the topic: the discussion of painting concerns its effect on the spectator, whereas at 603 B 7–605 A 6 Plato is concerned 'not with the effect of poetry on its audience, but with the subject matter of the poem itself'. However, the central concern of the discussion of painting is not what it does to the spectator, but which part of the spectator it appeals to (602 C 4–5; 603 B 1–B 3). It is precisely the same question that Socrates raises about poetry at 603 B 10–C 3, and answers at 605 A 8–C 3, to the effect that painting and poetry appeal to the same part of the soul. As we shall see, this answer is supported and prepared for by the remarks about the subject matter of poetry, at 603 B 7–605 A 6. The key idea expressed by those remarks is that it must be a non-rational part of us that takes pleasure in dramatic representations of non-rationally driven behaviour.

it happens to very many people, and very frequently, that they are, for instance, thirsty and, at the same time, averse to drinking.

Another thing that is worth noting is that Socrates treats the motivational conflicts familiar from earlier books of the *Republic* as being very much like the conflicting beliefs of book 10: both of these are cases of civil war and opposition in the soul. He does not offer the slightest indication of any theoretically significant difference or discontinuity between the conflicting beliefs of book 10 and the conflicting desires of earlier books. Furthermore, Socrates clearly contrasts, again with no notice of any difference, both conflicting desires and conflicting beliefs with having one's thought disposed uniformly.⁶ At least in the case of conflicting desires, the underlying idea of what constitutes a person's mind or thought must include not just the soul's rational part, but the whole of the tripartite soul. In other words, language that one might expect to be reserved for, and limited to, the rational part of the soul is in fact used broadly and generously so as to include the whole range of human awareness and desire.

Having reminded Glaucon of the psychological conflicts that afflict people in the varied circumstances of life, Socrates proceeds to pinpoint the parts of the soul involved in such conflicts that are going to be salient to what he wants to say about imitative poetry. He does so by revisiting book 3's example of a decent man confronted with the loss of a son, brother, or friend (387 D 4-E 8). As he said then, such a person would least give in to lamentations, and bear misfortune most quietly when it strikes. The psychological theory that was not available then, but is available now, allows Socrates to add a significant detail to the picture presented in book 3. The decent man's facade of calmness and control conceals an inner struggle. He is pulled towards remembrance of the loss he has suffered, and towards grief and lamentation. He is also pulled the other way, especially so, as Glaucon agrees emphatically (604 A 4), when he is seen by his peers. Socrates can now apply the Principle of Opposites: when there are in a person two opposite pulls (ἐναντίασ . . . ἀγωναίης) in relation to the same thing and at the same time, we say that the person must have two parts (604 B 1-2). The decent man's better part follows reason and deliberation (604 D 4-5), but it is also motivated by a sense of shame: that is why it pulls away from grief much more when he is among his equals than when he is alone. It is natural, then, to suppose that this part includes both his reason and its natural ally, spirit; and so one expects the part that pulls towards grief to be appetite. Socrates eschews such specificity, for a reason that will become clear in a bit.

It is entirely appropriate for Socrates at this stage to return to the example of a bereaved decent man. It enables him to pinpoint something in the soul that in

⁶ The adverb ὁμοθυμαδὸν derives from the verb ὁμοιοῦν, which means 'think alike', 'agree', and is cognate with the political term ὁμόνοια ('unanimity', 'concord'). The word is sometimes used to contrast with words denoting civil war (εἰρήνη). The application of such words to all of the soul, not just reason, may well stem from the city/soul parallel, which perhaps weakens their impact somewhat. But it is hard to believe that Plato could have been oblivious to the presence of the root word 'οὐστὴρ', 'think', 'understand'. (My heavy-handed paraphrase is of course meant to draw attention to that presence.)

certain circumstances pulls people towards grief and lamentation. It also enables him to show that, in the case of a character-type that Glaucon can easily recognize as respectable and indeed identify with,⁷ what pulls him towards lamenting is just one part of his soul, and in fact a base and non-rational part, one that is unimpressed by the demands not only of reason and custom (νόμος) (604 B 4-C 3), but even of shame (604 A 6). Given that his emphasis in discussing imitative poetry is firmly on tragedy,⁸ the centrality of grief as an emotional, non-rational force in the soul is readily understandable.

Having distinguished between two relevant soul-parts, Socrates distinguishes, plainly on the basis of the former distinction, between two corresponding kinds of character: an excitable character on the one hand and a sensible, calm one on the other (604 E 1-3). The excitable character is one whose behaviour, in appropriate circumstances, is strongly influenced by the base part of soul that has been identified, at the expense of the better part. The sensible person, by contrast, is one whose better part maintains control, either because it remains victorious or because it meets no opposition. Imitative poetry focuses heavily on imitation of the excitable character-type, both because it is easier to imitate and because 'the many' greatly prefer what strikes them as familiar and readily understandable to what does not. Imitation of human action and passion in dramatic enactment on the theatre stage can obviously be enormously engaging and enjoyable. An idea that Socrates is clearly relying on, though he does not express it in so many words, is that when the action imitated is such as normally to derive from the excitable part of the soul, the part of us to which such imitation is especially engaging and enjoyable is our own excitable part. No doubt this, too, is supposed to be obvious. Reason finds nothing worth appreciating in a grown man's lamentations. From spirit's point of view, it is a disgrace for a man to behave that way (cf. 605 E 4). Any enjoyment we may get out of *such* imitation therefore must belong to a part of us below reason and spirit.

Socrates is now in a position to answer specifically with respect to poetry the question first asked at 602 C 4-5 about imitation in general, and then restated at 603 C 2-3 about imitative poetry in particular: which part of the soul does it appeal to? His answer is that it appeals to a base, non-rational part. In fact he goes out of his way to make it clear that he takes imitative poetry to appeal to the same part that painting appeals to.⁹ In what must be a back-reference to 602 C 4-603 B 3,

⁷ The respectable man is, of course, very much like Glaucon. Witness his emphatic answer, already noted, at 604 A 4; there is only one way in which Glaucon can be sure about what the decent man does when he is *all by himself* (note the heavy emphasis at 604 A 3: ἐν ἑπημετέρῳ μόνος αὐτῶς καθ' αἑαυτόν). Recall Adeimantus' not altogether flattering suggestion elsewhere that the timocratic, spirited character-type will be much like his (and Plato's) brother Glaucon (548 D 8-9).

⁸ He famously treats Homer as the first of the tragedians, 607 A 2-3.

⁹ Burnyeat, 'Culture and society', accepts that poetry appeals to a non-rational part (best seen, he thinks, as an enlargement of book IV's appetitive part', 224). He also holds that it is reason that undergoes division in the discussion of painting, and therefore that it is an inferior part of *reason* to which painting appeals. How, then, can Socrates identify the two parts? As often in Plato, Burnyeat suggests, 'what begins as a parallel or analogy ends with one term dominating the other' (225). Thus

he says that imitative poetry gratifies a part of the soul 'which cannot distinguish between the large and the small but takes the same things to be large at one time and small at another' (*Republic* 605 C 1-3). It is, however, not just that imitative poetry offers enjoyment to a part of the soul that is non-rational and excitable. The same can be said about painting as well. What makes imitative poetry especially harmful, and what justifies its exclusion from the ideal city, is that it offers enjoyment to the excitable part of our nature precisely by exciting and arousing it intensely, providing it with an opportunity to assert and exert itself. In this way, Socrates says, imitative poetry feeds and strengthens the excitable part. Moreover, in doing so, he says, it destroys the rational part of the soul (605 B 4-5). This of course is an overstatement,¹⁰ but one, I think, with precise cash value. The idea, I suggest, is that by strengthening the excitable part, imitative poetry promotes the rule in the soul of something that is not naturally suited and equipped to rule, at the expense of reason. When reason is subordinated to other parts of the soul, it cannot realize and manifest what it is, a principle to rule and direct a person's life. Thus, imitative poetry destroys reason as a ruling and directing principle, which is what it really is.¹¹

Socrates' greatest charge against imitative poetry (605 C 5-606 D 7) returns to decent people (*εἰσυκτεῖς*) and concerns them specifically. The charge is that imitative poetry harms the souls not only of 'the many', but even of decent people, except for a very small number of individuals (605 C 5-7). Even the best of us, he says, enjoy a good tragic performance, giving ourselves up to following it, sympathizing with the hero and taking his sufferings seriously' (605 D 3-4). He is evidently not speaking of people the best part of whose soul is in an optimal state. It is only because their best part has not, he says, been adequately educated by reason or habit' that it wrongly relaxes its guard over 'the lamenting part', as he now calls it (606 A 7-B 1; cf. 606 B 3-7). Moreover, it is worth noting that the character type Socrates is describing is not in fact one who has achieved the harmonious, unified disposition of the soul that is justice, but is divided and conflicted exactly like the decent man reintroduced at 603 E 4. The part of the soul that imitative poetry gratifies is one that is forcibly held down (*βίαι κατεχόμενον*) in his own private misfortunes, and has come to be hungry for the satisfaction of weeping and wailing, 'being by nature such as to desire such things' (606 A 5-6). One thing this suggests is that Socrates takes imitative poetry to be dangerous primarily to morally imperfect individuals like Glaucon. We should note in this connection Socrates' strong emphasis, towards the end of the discussion, on its relevance not only to the ideal city but also to the constitution Socrates ends up, at 605 B 7-C 3, applying language to the non-rational part that is not in fact appropriate to it (226). This is ingenious but unconvincing. It rests on the view that 602 C 4-603 B 3 is best understood as yielding a division between a superior and an inferior part of reason. I shall shortly dispute that view.

¹⁰ Cf. 589 A 1. λιποκτονεῖν literally means 'starve to death'.

¹¹ For an alternative (and not incompatible) interpretation, see D. Scott, 'Platonic pessimism and moral education', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 17 (1999), 35-6.

and well-being of each individual soul,¹² culminating in a direct and forceful appeal to Glaucon, in which he reminds him of the huge importance of the struggle to be good rather than bad (608 B 4-5).¹³ If Socrates is right about what imitative poetry does to the soul, enjoying a tragedy has precisely the same effect on the soul as performing an act of injustice. It makes you worse and more wretched instead of better and happier.

Before completing his greatest charge, Socrates amplifies his central point—that imitative poetry strengthens non-rational forces in the soul—beyond grief to other emotional and desiderative tendencies, such as the pleasures of humour and laughter (606 C 2-9), sexual desire, and anger (*θυμὸς*) (606 D 1). All of these, he says, are forces in the soul which imitative poetry nourishes and whose rule in the soul it promotes. We can now see why Socrates never says that it is specifically the appetitive part of the soul to which imitative poetry appeals. He quite clearly wants the base and non-rational part which imitative poetry gratifies and strengthens to include, at least on occasion, the soul's spirited part. It may be somewhat surprising all of a sudden to find spirit included in the soul's inferior part, when earlier on in the argument it seemed to belong to the decent person's better part. But there is no inconsistency or confusion here. Spirit is reason's natural ally, and it will typically support reason in such conflicts as may arise between reason and appetite. It is, however, a non-rational part of the soul, and to strengthen it beyond due measure is to endanger and ultimately to overthrow reason's rule and the proper order of the soul. It is perhaps worth pointing out, then, that when Socrates in book 10 speaks of better or worse parts or aspects of soul, he is clearly not concerned to identify incomposite or basic soul-parts. Nor need he be. The fact that reason and spirit are two distinct parts of the soul that can conflict with one another does not exclude the possibility that they cooperate harmoniously on many occasions, acting in concert as a person's better part. And while spirit and appetite frequently manifest their distinctness by pulling someone in opposite directions, it remains the case that they both are distinct from reason and jointly make up the worse part of a person's soul. It is a mistake, then, to suppose that book 10 offers bipartition of the soul as a rival theory to book 4's tripartition. It is the business of book 4 to distinguish reason, spirit, and appetite from one another, laying bare the structure of the embodied human soul. Nothing in book 10 contradicts or revises any of the distinctions made in book 4.

We come at last to 602 C 4-603 B 3. As we have seen already, Socrates wants to show what kind of part or aspect of the soul it is that imitation exerts its power on. He does this, naturally enough, by demonstrating a division of the soul. The same magnitude, he says, appears 'through sight' (*διὰ τῆς ὀφθαλμοῦ . . . φαίνεσθαι*) not to be equal from nearby and from far away (602 B 6-8). He adds other visual appearances, such as the same things looking bent when in water and straight

¹² 605 B 5-7, 606 B 5-8, 606 D 4-7.

¹³ Note also the sense of urgency created by Socrates' switch, at 606 C 3, from first-person plural to second-person singular.

when out of water, or both concave and convex. Painters in various ways exploit our natural tendency to obtain false appearances through sight. Fortunately, we are not condemned to lead our lives in a way that is guided and ruled only by how things appear through the senses. We can rely on measurement, arithmetic, calculation, and the like so as to discover how things *are*.¹⁴ Socrates assigns this task of discovery to reason. His next two sentences (602 E 4–9) are difficult and crucially important. Sentence 1: 'it often happens', Socrates says, 'that when this part [sc. reason]¹⁵ has done the measuring and indicates that some things are larger or smaller than or the same size as others, the opposite appears to it at the same time about the same things [alternatively: about these things]'.¹⁶ Glaucon agrees, and Socrates says Sentence 2: 'we agreed that it is impossible for the same thing to believe opposites about the same thing at the same time'. Glaucon agrees again, and Socrates concludes that the part of the soul whose belief is contrary to the measurements could not be the same as the part whose belief is in accordance with them. The part that is opposed to measurement and reasoning is one of the base parts or aspects in us or, as he also puts it, the thing in us that is far from wisdom.¹⁷ It is this part of our nature, Socrates thinks, that painting and imitation as a whole appeal to.

In Sentence 2, Socrates is again referring back to the argument for tripartition in book 4. It is not said explicitly there that the same thing cannot at the same time believe opposites about the same thing. What is said, though, is close enough, as has been seen by others.¹⁸ The Principle of Opposites says that the same thing cannot, at the same time, do opposites in the same respect and towards the same

¹⁴ Note the contrast, which is background to the present passage, between how things (e.g. a couch) appear from one perspective or another, and how they *are* at 598 A 5, and 598 B 2–3.

¹⁵ τὸν νοῦν must refer to reason, the reference of τούτου in the preceding line; Schleiermacher's conjecture τῷ will not do, in view of ἀνακρίνοντι. It is reason that *indicates*, not the person.

¹⁶ Our editions read πρὸς ταῦτά (about the same things) at 602 E 6. However, πρὸς ταῦτα ('about these things') is a perfectly feasible alternative. (Plato, readers may recall, did not use accents. Greek accents are an invention of the Hellenistic period, standardly attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium. They were not systematically added to ancient texts until the tenth century AD.) It may be helpful to anticipate the reading of the sentence that I shall favour: read πρὸς ταῦτα and take the reference of 'these things' to be the various sorts of things that feature in the sensory appearances. Socrates is interested in: for instance, a stick half submerged in water, or an object that appears now concave, and now convex. (Items of these sorts have again been referred to at 602 D 6–7 as 'what appears larger or smaller, or more numerous, or heavier'.) Understand the sentence as follows: 'when reason has done the measuring and indicates that some things are larger or smaller than or the same size as others, the opposites [sc. of what on each relevant occasion appears through the senses] appear to it at the same time about these things'.

¹⁷ Nehamas ('Plato on imitation', 66), who thinks that the part that is opposed to measurement is an inferior part of reason, denies that the derogatory language Socrates applies to it undermines this view, pointing to *Philebus* 55 E 1–3, where Socrates asks, 'if one were to set apart from each art arithmetic, measuring, and weighing, might we say that the remaining part of each would be base?' It is not just, however, that Socrates calls the part in question 'base'. He also says about it that it is 'the thing in us which is far removed from wisdom' (νόσθη... φρονήσεως ὄντι τῷ ἐν ἡμῶν, 603 B 1–2), and later that it is 'the soul's foolish part' (τῷ ἀνοήτῳ αἰσθηῖς, 605 B 7). It is hard to believe that Plato wrote in such ways of a part of reason.

¹⁸ Price, *Mental Conflict*, 44; Burnyeat, 'Culture and society', 224.

thing, and *assenting* and *rejecting* are agreed, at 437 B 1, to be opposites. So believing opposites about the same thing is presumably understood as assenting to and at the same time rejecting the same thing—how things appear through the senses, or the results of measuring.¹⁹ There is, then, a reasonable path from opposite beliefs, via the Principle of Opposites, to partition of the soul. The real question is, of course, why Socrates thinks that opposite *beliefs* are involved in the circumstances he has in mind. In some way or other, he gets from opposition between what reason indicates and how things appear through the senses to opposition between beliefs. Which parts of the soul do these opposite beliefs belong to? And is it reasonable to think that the sensory appearances Socrates has in mind are or involve beliefs?²⁰ To answer both questions, we need to know how to interpret Sentence 1. There are at least two possibilities.

According to the standard reading of Sentence 1, it says that (it often happens that) while reason indicates that (for example) these two trees are of equal size, it at the same time appears to it that one of them is bigger than the other.²¹ On this reading, the sentence says that (it often happens, that) the opposite of what reason indicates appears, and continues to appear, to reason through the senses. It is easy to see, as we read Sentence 2, that reason accepts the results of its own measuring activities, and believes that things are as it itself indicates them to be. However, Socrates thinks this kind of case involves two beliefs that are opposite to one another. And one naturally expects that the opposition between beliefs, mentioned in Sentence 2, belongs to the same thing—or pair of things, as it turns out—as the opposition between measurement and sensory appearance envisaged in Sentence 1. So if Sentence 1 assigns the sensory appearance to reason, as it does on the standard reading, one expects *both* of the opposite beliefs mentioned in Sentence 2 to belong to reason. On this view, reason believes that things are as it itself indicates them to be and, at the same time, that things are as they appear through the senses. But it is extremely difficult to see why reason would accept a sensory appearance that it has just shown to be false. All of reason, Socrates says elsewhere, is such as always to strain to know where the truth lies (581 B 6–7). Why would it, or even just part of it, accept an appearance it knows to be false: a mere appearance, an illusion? This difficulty seems sufficiently grave to send us back to Plato's text.

¹⁹ We may note that Socrates once again presupposes that the qualification 'in the same respect' is either inapplicable or irrelevant. He thus treats believing opposites like desire and aversion, and movement and rest, rather than like rotation and non-inclination. The key idea may well be that the disagreement between the two soul-parts is complete and unqualified: one part simply accepts that things are as they appear, the other part simply rejects that this is the case.

²⁰ I take it to be clear that appearance does not always involve belief. Belief requires acceptance or, to echo Plato's language, assent; appearance does not. Our better part, Plato no doubt thinks, is aware of sensory appearances; but it does not always accept them. Note τὸ ἴσθαι at 603 A 4. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.3, 428^a19–24.

²¹ It is how the sentence is understood by, among others, Nehamas, 'Plato on imitation'; S. Halliwell, *Republic X* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1988); P. Murray, *Plato on Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Burnyeat, 'Culture and society', 223.

Back to Sentence 1, then. There is another possible reading, though it is easy to miss.²² When reason has done its measuring and is indicating that the trees are of equal size, what appears to it to be the case—the view *it* takes of the matter—is simply that the trees are of equal size. What appears to it to be the case, however, is the very opposite of how the same things appear, and continue to appear, through the senses.²³ What Sentence 1 is saying, in other words, is that (it often happens that) when reason is indicating this or that, what appear to reason are the opposites of the simultaneous sensory appearances about the things in question.²⁴

As we read on, there is, as before, nothing surprising about reason putting its trust, to use Socrates' words, in measurement and calculation (603 A 4–5). It is simply going with the view it takes of the matter. But part of the soul, Socrates clearly assumes, is unmoved by measurement and calculation, and disagrees with reason about the matter at hand. His assumption is then not only that the relevant sensory appearances persist. Of course they do. He also assumes that some part of the soul assents to, or accepts, these sensory appearances. (As we have seen, this seems in fact to be required for the Principle of Opposites to be applicable.) Why assume that? On the second reading of Sentence 1, the part of our soul that goes with sensory appearances is, or may well be, non-rational. Its distinctness from reason, we can say, is made manifest by its opposition to it.

A moment's reflection on Plato's psychological theory should make it clear how natural it is to assume that the parts of us below reason *accept* sensory appearances. Non-rational soul-parts are not disengaged contemplators, but centres of motivation. They motivate a person to act energetically and decisively in pursuit of food, drink, sex, and the like, and so as to acquire, maintain, and defend a social position of esteem and respect. They could never begin to perform those functions effectively without being supplied with tolerably good information about the person's environment and, crucially, without being ready to act on that information. The text before us suggests that, just as one would expect, one way in which they get the information they need is by sensory appearances. Moreover, the lower parts cannot do what *we* can do, namely resort to measurement, arithmetic, and the like, so as to discover how things really are. For these are the resources of reason. Unlike us, then, the lower parts *are* at the mercy of how things appear through the senses (cf. 602 D 6–9). They cannot help being taken in by sensory appearances.

²² A reading along these lines was proposed and argued for by James Adam in 1902. It has received little or no attention since. Note that the excision of ἄμα πρὸς ταῦτα at 602 E 6, attributed to him in both Burnet's and Slings' *Oxford Classical Text* editions, is not his last word on the matter. He came to seem to me easier to read the text in Adam's way if we read πρὸς ταῦτα rather than, as he ended up doing, πρὸς ταῦτα.

²³ That the sensory appearance in question persists is made clear by the word ἄμα ('at the same time') at 602 E 6.

²⁴ Reading τῶν αὐτῶν φαίνεσθαι ἄμα πρὸς ταῦτα.

On the second reading of Sentence 1, then, book 10 does not divide reason into two parts. It divides the soul into reason and a non-rational part. It seems to me that in the context of 602 C 4–603 B 3, and against the general background of Plato's psychological theory, it is fairly clear that it is in this second way, or at any rate in some such way, that the sentence is meant to be understood. The result that book 10 divides the soul into reason and a non-rational part can be corroborated by additional considerations of two kinds: considerations to do with, on the one hand, the coherence of what Socrates says in book 10 alone and, on the other hand, the overall coherence of the *Republic's* psychological theory.

I begin with book 10 by itself. We have seen already that Socrates goes out of his way (at 605 B 7–C 3) to make it perfectly clear that painting and imitative poetry 'consort with' the same part of the soul. This, of course, is precisely what he indicates as early as 603 A 9–B 3, saying that 'this is what I wanted to get agreement about when I said [sc. at 602 C 1–2] that painting and imitative art as a whole produce work that is far from the truth, namely, that [painting and imitative art as a whole] really consort with the part of us that is far from wisdom'. At the same time, Socrates leaves very little or (as I think) no room for doubt that the soul-part that imitative poetry appeals to is non-rational. He pinpoints that part by recalling (at 603 D 3–6) the motivational conflicts of earlier books, and by drawing attention to conflicting desires in the soul of a 'decent man' confronted with the loss of a son, or someone or something else he very much values. The conflicts discussed in earlier books are conflicts between, not within, soul-parts.

Nor is this one the least bit different. It is a conflict between the man's best part, which wants to follow a particular course of reasoning (604 D 4–5), and a non-rational part that cannot get its fill of remembering the loss and lamenting (604 D 7–9), and that is said, a little later, to have grown hungry for weeping and lamenting, being naturally such as to desire such things intensely (ἐπιθυπεῖν) (606 A 3–6). Presumably it does not always and in all circumstances of life naturally desire such things, but in particular kinds of circumstances, such as ones that involve some significant loss or bereavement. And no doubt its desires for weeping and lamenting will grow especially intense if, in such circumstances, it gets 'held down forcibly'. What motivates it then, I take it, is simply the pleasure²⁵ it expects to get out of satisfying its pent-up hunger for weeping and lamenting. Its intense desire for these things, which it desires simply because it expects them to be pleasant, is quite insensitive to considerations of advantage and even of propriety. There is only one part of the soul, according to Plato's psychological theory, which desires in this particular way: the appetitive part.

When Socrates steps back from tragedy and says what imitative poetry in general appeals to, he both confirms the central role of the appetitive part and includes

²⁵ Note ἡδονήν at 606 B 4 (this pleasure must belong primarily to the soul-part that imitative poetry gratifies). Note also the other pleasure words used in the context: χαίρω at 605 E 5 and 606 A 7 (where it is applied specifically to the soul-part that poetry appeals to), χαίρειν at 605 B 7, ἡδέεσθαι at 605 A 3, and of course the pleasant and painful things mentioned at 606 D 2.

anger, an emotion that belongs to the spirited part and that can oppose reason no less than the desires of the lowest part can:

And in the case of sex, anger, and all the desire-involving pains and pleasures (πρότυπων τῶν ἐπιθυμητικῶν τε καὶ λυπηρῶν καὶ ἡδέων) in the soul that we say accompany all our actions, imitative poetry has the very same effect on us. It nurtures and waters them and establishes them as rulers in us when they ought to wither and be ruled, for that way we'll become better and happier rather than worse and more wretched. (*Republic* 606 D 1–7)

As I have suggested, the inclusion of anger, which belongs to the spirited part, explains why Socrates never says, throughout the discussion of what imitative art does to the soul, that the part of the soul it appeals to is specifically the appetitive part. He takes the reach of imitation to be wider than that.

The upshot of my remarks on the argument of *Republic* 10 is this, then. Socrates raises and answers the question of which part of the soul imitative poetry 'consorts with'. Initial appearances suggest that the part in question is specifically the appetitive part, but as he completes his attack on imitative poetry, he includes at least some spirited tendencies as well. He also makes it quite clear that he takes imitative poetry to appeal to the same part as does the imitative art of painting, and indeed imitative art in all its forms. He is in a position to say this consistently and legitimately only if the division of the soul argued for at 602 C 4–603 B 3 is meant to be a division between reason and a non-rational part.²⁶

Moreover, it should be clear, at any rate on reflection, that if Socrates accepts in book 10 that reason is a composite of two parts, this undermines his arguments in book 4 for the distinctness of reason from appetite and spirit.²⁷ If reason is composed of two parts, it can at the same time be characterized by opposites in the same respect and in relation to the same thing. If so, it can not only simultaneously believe opposites about the same things, it can also desire something and at the same be averse to it. Consider the impact this would have on the argument of book 4. An especially pertinent stage of that argument is 440 E 6–441 C 6.

Socrates has just shown the distinctness of spirit from appetite, as well as spirit's natural tendency to side with reason in conflicts within the soul. The question is then whether it is nevertheless different from reason, or whether it is a part or aspect of reason (λογιστικῶν τι εἶδος), so that the soul contains not three, but two parts, reason and appetite' (440 E 6–8).²⁸ Socrates' main argument for the

²⁶ This problem is only mitigated, not solved, by Burnyeat's interpretation ('Culture and society', 224–6). It is part of Burnyeat's view that Socrates gets carried away by the analogy or parallel between painting and poetry and ends up, at 605 B 7–C 3, misdescribing the non-rational part that poetry appeals to.

²⁷ This point is missed by Burnyeat. What he takes to be book 10's division of reason into two parts is, he claims, 'neither the same as, nor inconsistent with, the motivational division of book IV. The new division is an addition, meant to work alongside the earlier one' ('Culture and society', 224).

²⁸ It is clear, and worth pointing out, that Socrates does not want to rely merely on the experiential or phenomenological difference between rational desire and anger. He is prepared to entertain, and take seriously up to a point, the thought that (for instance) Leontius' anger at himself might be a manifestation of his *reason*!

distinctness of spirit from reason is another argument from conflict. In a verse where Odysseus is said to strike his chest and speak to his heart, Homer represents, according to Socrates, 'the part that has reasoned about better and worse as rebuking the part that is angry without reasoning, as one thing does to another' (*Republic* 441 B 6–C 2). The thought is that reason could not desire something and at the same time rebuke itself for desiring to do it, no doubt because that would involve doing opposites at the same time, in the same respect, and in relation to the same thing. (In this Homeric case, both an angry desire to punish the maids forthwith and a reasoned aversion to doing so are in play.) It is a presupposition of the argument that reason is incomposite. If it were not, there would be no reason why it could not desire something and at the same time rebuke itself for desiring it. This could simply be a matter of one part of it doing the desiring and another part doing the rebuking.

Thus, if Socrates commits himself, in discussing painting at 602 C 4–603 B 3, to the view that reason is composed of two parts, this also introduces a serious inconsistency into the psychological theory of the *Republic*. This is even more serious than it may seem, in that book 10, as we have seen, contains a number of back-references to the argument for tripartition of the soul in book 4, all of which suggest continuity and none of which as much as hints at revision.²⁹ I conclude, then, that an interpretation of 602 C 4–603 B 3 on which Socrates argues for a division of the soul into reason and a non-rational part is not only called for by that passage in its own right, against the general background of Plato's psychological theory. It is also required by charity. On the alternative view, Plato would have made a mess not only of *Republic* 10 by itself, but also of the psychological theory that the *Republic* as a whole presents.

I close with some comments which presuppose (reasonably, I trust) that book 10 consistently divides the soul into reason and a non-rational part and, crucially, that it attributes beliefs not only to reason, but also to a non-rational part of the soul. The argument at 602 E 4–603 A 2 assumes not only that the non-rational part that Socrates is meaning to identify is capable of acceptance, but also that it accepts sensory appearances, so that it believes that things are as they appear through the senses. This is exemplified by the belief contrary to measurement that Socrates mentions at 603 A 1. Its acceptance of sensory appearances would seem to be quite uncritical. For between appearance and acceptance there is, in its case, no room for critical reflection, for checking whether things really are as the senses present them as being. Socrates says about it that 'it cannot distinguish between (δωκνύν-ώσκειν) the large and the small, but takes the same things at one time to be large and at another time to be small' (*Republic* 605 B 7–C 3). Your non-rational will part take a tree to be large when you stand right before it, simply because that is how things then appear through sight from that point of view. As you look back at the same tree from far away, your non-rational part takes it to be tiny, again

²⁹ I have noted and discussed 595 B 1, 602 E 8–9, and 603 D 3–6.

simply because that is how it then appears through sight. There is thus some sense in which the non-rational part can tell apart the large from the small. When you look at a large piece of chocolate cake and a smaller one located on a table right in front of you, your non-rational part will have no trouble, and will lose no time, in distinguishing the large from the small. In a more obvious and important sense, the non-rational part really is unable, as Socrates says it is, to distinguish between the large and the small. This is because it has no idea what it really is to be large, or small, which is obviously not the same thing as appearing through sight to be large, or small, or taking up a great deal of space, or very little space, in someone's visual field.

Throughout the discussion of imitative art, Socrates refrains from highlighting just how rich and powerful non-rational cognition is or can be. The reason is obvious, of course: he wants to compare it unfavourably to the superior achievements of reason. But this agenda should not blind us to the fact that he relies on a remarkably generous notion of what in fact appears to us through the senses. He plainly does not take this to be limited to the bare presentation of sensory qualities (e.g. 'red'), but to include more complex contents, for instance that 'this is the same size as that'. Moreover, what he says leaves open the possibility that some of the ways things appear to us through the senses are acquired. We may, for example, have to learn to hear that one sound is of slightly higher pitch than another.

In attributing beliefs to the non-rational part of the soul, Socrates has in mind mental states of considerable complexity which present things as being some way or other and which, moreover, involve acceptance at a level of the soul below reason. On consideration, we may not (and will not, I think) want to call them beliefs. They do not qualify as beliefs on Plato's own considered view of belief, which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is presented in the *Theaetetus*. According to the *Republic's* theory, they occur at a level of the soul at which it is unable to distinguish properly even between such simple things as the large and the small, because it has no adequate idea of what these things really are. So even when the non-rational part of the soul seems to say that 'this is larger than that', it does not understand what this means. On Plato's considered view of belief, I shall argue in the next chapter, the ability to form beliefs depends on the ability to grasp relations such as difference and opposition, and this in turn requires reason. If grasping the differences and oppositions between things and features requires reason, then it is only to be expected that a non-rational part of the soul is unable to distinguish properly between such things as the large and the small. However, once it becomes clear that belief is a rational capacity, it also becomes clear that only the rational part of the soul can form beliefs. This arguably is the view we find in the *Timaeus*,³⁰ to which we shall turn shortly.

But even if the 'beliefs' of the non-rational part in *Republic* 10 do not, on consideration, qualify as beliefs, Socrates' use of language is nevertheless readily

³⁰ Cf. Ch. 7, pp. 95–7.

understandable. They are very much like beliefs. They involve the soul's acceptance that things are some way or other. To be precise, the soul accepts that things are this way in virtue of the fact that a part of it does. We should, moreover, bear in mind the possibility that the terminology of belief and thought finds its way to the lower parts of the soul under pressure from the city–soul parallel. The transfer of expressions such as *homonoiā* ('concord'; literally, 'likeness of thought') and *homo-doxein* ('to agree'; literally, 'to believe alike')³¹ from city to soul naturally brings with it the attribution of thought and belief to each one of the three parts of soul. Finally, it is worth noting that the *Republic's* conception of two distinct forms of cognition—one that employs the resources of reason, and one that does not—is a bold and ground-breaking innovation. It is hardly surprising that its author is not yet in possession of terminology that is sufficiently nuanced to do full justice to the complexities of the subject matter.

³¹ The word *ἁμοδοξείν* occurs in Socrates' statement of what temperance is, at 442 C 9–D 2. *ἁμοδοξείν* between the ruler and the ruled that reason should rule is contrasted with civil war (*στρατιδικεῖν*) against reason. Glaucon replies that temperance is nothing other than what Socrates says it is, 'both in the city and in the individual' (442 D 3–4).

As in the *Republic*, it is spirit's role to act as reason's ally and helper in such conflicts as may arise between it and appetite.⁷ It seems to be especially responsible for threats and the use of force,⁸ and Timaeus evokes spirit's warlike and military associations⁹ in speaking of its location, between midriff and neck, as 'the guard-house' (70 A 7-B 3). Moreover, spirit is said to be victory-loving (φιλόνικον, cf. 90 B 2), as of course it is in the *Republic* (*Republic* 9, 581 C 4, cf. 581 A 9-B1), and it is referred to as that in the soul which shares in courage.¹⁰

The appetitive part's function, according to Timaeus, is to give rise to desires for 'food, drink, and for things that humans require due to their bodily nature' (*Timaeus* 70 D 7-8). Similarly in the *Republic*, the lowest part primarily accounts for desires for food, drink, and sex.¹¹ We may wonder why Timaeus does not explicitly mention sex among its objects of desire.¹² The answer may be that in the narrative framework of the *Timaeus*, reproduction awaits the creation of women, which is not described until near the end of the dialogue, at 90 E 1-91 D 6. Moreover, the reason why Timaeus does not mention appetite's tendency to become attached to money may well be an emphasis on biological rather than cultural facts that is dictated by his assignment: to begin with the origin of the universe and conclude with the nature of human beings (*Timaeus* 27 A 3-6). It will be Critias' task to speak of human beings in their roles as citizens, and in doing so he will rely both on Timaeus' account of the origin of human beings and on Socrates' account of 'how some of them came to have a superior education' (*Timaeus* 27 A 7-B 6).

Given, then, that the conception of the soul as tripartite that we encounter in the *Timaeus* is in many ways remarkably continuous with the conception introduced in the *Republic*, it is all the more striking to find a rather dramatic innovation embedded in the conception of the soul that Timaeus presents. This is that now belief is explicitly denied to the part of the soul which is located between midriff and navel (*Timaeus* 77 B 3-6)—that is, to appetite (cf. *Timaeus* 70 D 7-E 5): 'this part', Timaeus asserts, 'is totally devoid of belief (δόξα), reasoning (λογισμός), and thought (νόος)'. What motivates this innovation?

I shall argue for an answer along the following lines. In a number of dialogues that are later than the *Republic*, Plato examines the *Republic's* divisions between

⁷ *Timaeus* 70 A 2-7: 'The part of the mortal soul that shares in courage and anger, being victory-loving, they settled nearer the head, between the midriff and the neck, so that it might listen to reason and together with it restrain by force the part consisting of desires, should it in no way want to obey willingly the command and account coming down from the citadel.'

⁸ Threats are mentioned at 70 B 7. Spirit will no doubt contribute vigorously to the use of force (βία) mentioned at 70 A 5. Note the parallel between *Republic* 8, 554 D 1, βία κάρτερι . . . ἐπιθυμίας, and *Timaeus* 70 A 5-6, βία, τὸ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν γένος κάρτερον.

⁹ *Republic* 4, 440 B 3, συμπλοχῶν; 440 E 3-4, τὸ ἄνω.

¹⁰ Recall *Republic* 4, 442 B 10-C 2: 'It is because of spirit that we call a person courageous, namely, when it preserves through pains and pleasures the declarations of reason about what is to be feared and what is not.'

¹¹ For instance, *Republic* 4, 439 D 6-7 (cf. 436 A 10-B 2); *Republic* 9, 580 E 2-5.

¹² Note, however, the presence of εἶπος among the terrible and necessary affections of the mortal part of the soul: 69 C 7-D 6. Cf. Chapter 7, p. 100, n. 10.

6

Belief and Reason

The *Timaeus* begins by refreshing our memories of the *Republic*. As Socrates summarizes what was said on the preceding day, each item in his summary points back to material in the *Republic*, although he is not offering an exhaustive summary of the *Republic*.¹ This quasi back-reference encourages the expectation that the *Timaeus* will have significant points of contact with the *Republic*. As far as the soul and tripartite are concerned, that expectation is in many ways borne out.

The tripartite soul reappears when Timaeus describes, at 69 C 5-72 D 3, how the created gods construct the human body and add the mortal parts of the soul to the immortal, rational part, which they have received from the demiurge. Timaeus specifies the functions of the three soul-parts² in ways that are strikingly similar to the corresponding statements in the *Republic*, even as far as linguistic detail is concerned.

According to Timaeus, reason is supposed to deliberate about what is advantageous for all parts of the soul, jointly and individually (*Timaeus* 71 A 1-2).³ According to Socrates in *Republic* 4, a person is wise in virtue of a properly developed rational part, which contains knowledge of what is advantageous to each of the three parts of the soul, and to the whole of them jointly (442 C 4-7);⁴ this knowledge it is supposed to put to use in deliberation (442 A 7). Located in the head as in an acropolis (*Timaeus* 70 A 6; *Republic* 8, 560 B 7), reason makes announcements to the spirited part,⁵ and spirit acts on these announcements, obediently yet fiercely.⁶

¹ Nor does the *Timaeus* suggest that what was said on the preceding day was, or included, precisely Socrates' long narration of his conversation with, among others, Glaucon and Adeimantus that is the *Republic*. The *Timaeus*' occasion is 'the festival of the goddess', which must refer either to the Greater or the Lesser Panathenaea. The *Republic* is set just after the festival of Bendis, which is months away from either one of the Panathenaea. M. Burnyeat, 'Plato on why mathematics is good for the soul', in T. Smiley (ed.), *Mathematics and Necessity. Proceedings of the British Academy*, 103 (2000), 65-6, plausibly suggests that this is Plato's way of placing the *Timaeus* at a slight distance from the *Republic*, required by differences in the character and calibre of Socrates' interlocutors and the manner of exposition that is appropriate to them.

² These functions belong to them as a result of the purposive organizing activities of the gods that Timaeus describes. T. Johansen, 'Body, soul, and tripartition' in Plato's *Timaeus*, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 19 (2000), 100, appropriately points out the passage's ὅτι ('so that') clauses as markers of divine purposiveness.

³ περι τοῦ πᾶσι κοινῆ καὶ ἰδίᾳ συμφέροντος . . . βουλευσθεῖα (accepting Burnet's emended text).

⁴ ἐπιτομήν . . . τῆν τοῦ συμφέροντος ἐκαστῶ τε καὶ ὅλω τῷ κοινῷ.

⁵ παρεγγέλλειν: *Timaeus* 70 B 4; *Republic* 4, 442 C 2, C 5.

⁶ κατήκοος: *Timaeus* 70 A 5; ἰσθήκοος: *Republic* 4, 441 E 5.

intelligibles and perceptibles and between corresponding modes of cognition. These texts prominently include the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. One of the results of this work is an account of belief (δόξα) which makes plain that forming any belief involves, or anyhow presupposes, a grasp of intelligibles such as being, difference, and opposition, items that can be grasped by reason only. It is not that this is a new philosophical account of belief that supersedes an earlier one. There is no earlier account. But once it becomes clear that a proper account of what is involved in and required for belief shows it to be a rational capacity, it also becomes clear that cognitive states of parts of the soul other than reason cannot be beliefs, however much like beliefs they may seem to be.

The key text is *Theaetetus* 184–7. The argument contained in that text is, in a number of places, rather difficult to interpret. Though it has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, much of its interpretation remains controversial.¹³ As I understand it, it distinguishes between belief-formation and sense-perception as two distinct capacities of the soul, denying that the resources of perception are sufficient for the formation of even the most basic forms of belief. It offers an account of what is involved in, and required for, the capacity for belief, in a way that makes perspicuous that only rational subjects are capable of belief. At the same time, it leaves intact a level of awareness and cognition below belief and reason; this includes, but need not be limited to, perception.

Already my first claim about what the argument does is controversial. According to several recent interpretations, it is part of the argument that perception can by itself yield simple perceptual beliefs.¹⁴ Now it may well seem that there is some support for this view in the text. After obtaining Theaetetus' agreement that the soul is the single thing that perceives perceptibles *through* the senses,¹⁵ Socrates next turns to the task of persuading Theaetetus that while there may be all sorts of

¹³ Important contributions include J. Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception and knowledge: *Theaetetus* 184–186', *Phronesis*, 15 (1970), 123–46, repr. in his *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 43–64; M. Frede, 'Observations on perception in Plato's later dialogues', in his *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3–8; J. McDowell, *Plato: Theaetetus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); M. Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', *Classical Quarterly*, 26 (1976), 29–51; C. Kahn, 'Some philosophical uses of "to be" in Plato', *Phronesis*, 26 (1981), 105–34; D. Modrak, 'Perception and judgment in the *Theaetetus*', *Phronesis*, 26 (1981), 35–54; D. Bostock, *Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Y. Kanayama, 'Perceiving, considering, and attaining being (*Theaetetus* 184–186)', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 5 (1987), 29–81; D. Frede, 'The soul's silent dialogue: a non-aporetic reading of the *Theaetetus*', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 205 (1989), 20–49; A. Silverman, 'Plato on perception and "commons"', *Classical Quarterly*, 40 (1990), 148–75. Though I have benefited greatly from this body of literature, my own interpretation differs from the views put forward by all of the above, in most cases significantly. I shall signal agreements and disagreements where appropriate.

¹⁴ One version of this is in Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception', 131–4. I take what he calls 'labelling' to involve forming a belief as to the identity of the feature in question: 'in order to decide whether something is red one does not need to reflect, but to use the mind at the perceptual level only' (132). Another version is argued for by Modrak, 'Perception'.

¹⁵ Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', 29–46, offers a detailed and wholly persuasive explanation of the distinction between the 'with' and the 'through' idioms at 184 B 8–E 1.

things that we can perceive through the senses, as of course he would think that there are, there are at least some things, or 'features' of things,¹⁶ that can be grasped through none of the senses. This task has been completed by 186 A 1, where Theaetetus accepts Socrates' suggestion that 'while the soul considers some things through the bodily powers, there are others which it considers alone and through itself' (*Theaetetus* 185 E 6–7). A bit earlier Socrates presents, as evidence supporting his conclusion, the fact that Theaetetus would readily know how to answer the question of which sense one would use to check whether some things are salty—the sense of taste, of course—whereas he would be unable to say through what sense one would consider whether some things have being, are like or unlike one another, are one or two, and so forth.

In light of this contrast, one might be inclined to credit the activity of the soul through the senses, mentioned at 185 E 7, with the ability to form simple beliefs which involve no more than applying a suitable predicate (e.g. 'salty') to something or other. As the argument continues, however, it becomes clear that its contrast between two kinds of activity of the soul is supposed to be a contrast between, on the one hand, perception as it is present, to humans and non-human animals alike, right away from birth (186 B 11–C 2) and, on the other, an activity that is capable of attaining truth (186 D 2–5) and that is correctly identified as belief-formation (δοξάζω) (187 A 7–8). (For the sake of simplicity, let us call the latter type of activity 'thought'.) Applying any predicate is, I take it, well beyond the cognitive reach of newborn infants. And Socrates' denial that perception can attain truth is reasonable only if he withholds from it the ability to form even the simplest beliefs.¹⁷

So the question arises whether the argument operates with a coherent conception of perception and its cognitive reach.¹⁸ One might think that the contrast expressed at 185 E 6–7 is meant to be, not indeed between thought and what is about to be identified (at 186 D 10–E 1) as perception, but rather between two modes of thought: the soul's consideration of things through bodily powers can and typically will yield perceptual beliefs, whereas its consideration of things 'alone and through itself' concerns 'common' predicates such as being, not-being, sameness, difference, and so forth. But this cannot be what Socrates has in mind, as he will in a moment go on to contrast the activity of the soul 'itself by itself' (187 A 5–6),¹⁹ not with some other form or mode of thought, but with *perception*,

¹⁶ What we need for present purposes is a broad notion of something that can be grasped about, or with regard to, something, including that it has being in that it is something or other, or is with regard to something or other, or both. In using the word 'feature', I am meaning to capture that notion.

¹⁷ Contra Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception'. His preferred interpretation involves the idea that perception forms beliefs (131–2) but can yield neither truths nor falsehoods (143). Note the unannounced shift from 'is F'—deciding 'whether something is red' (132)—to 'appears to be F': 'in perception one notices only the colour (etc.) a thing appears to have and says nothing about what its real colour is' (143).

¹⁸ Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception', 132, answers in the negative: 'the most one can do is to try to render the inconsistency palatable'.

¹⁹ I assume—naturally and reasonably, I think—that the activity of the soul 'itself by itself' (αὐτῆ καὶ αὐτῆ) mentioned at 187 A 5–6 is precisely its activity 'itself through itself' (αὐτῆ δὲ αὐτῆς) referred to at 185 E 6–7.

endorsing Theaetetus' suggestion that this independent activity of the soul is belief-formation. Socrates and Theaetetus are agreed, then, that belief-formation is in all cases a manifestation of the soul's independent activity. They think that without that activity no belief can be formed, and no truth attained.

It is in fact clear, anyhow on reflection, that Socrates never in the argument endorses a conception of perception which attributes to it any ability to form beliefs of any sort. To see this, we need to bear in mind the dialectical character of the argument. At its outset, Theaetetus will presumably still take it that, at least within certain limits, perception is knowledge.²⁰ He will quite definitely be strongly inclined to think that one can perceive all sorts of things through one's senses, that perception can yield all sorts of beliefs, and that at least in certain circumstances these beliefs are true and indeed constitute knowledge. Socrates' purpose at 184 E 4–186 A 1, which I shall call Stage 1, is not, I suggest, to persuade Theaetetus right away that perception by itself can form no belief and attain no truth. That is a hard lesson for Theaetetus to learn. Rather, Stage 1 establishes the preliminary conclusion that while the soul does certain things through the senses—which may or may not include the formation of suitable beliefs—there are features of things, crucially including being (οὐσία, 185 C 9), to which the senses provide no access. These features are not therefore grasped (λαμβάνω, 185 B 8) through the senses, but rather by the soul's independent activity. It will be the task of the next section—Stage 2, starting at 186 A 2—to show that perception by itself can form no belief, because cognitive access to being is in fact required for the formation of any belief, including perceptual beliefs to the effect that something or other is hard, soft, or salty. Or so I shall argue in a moment, when I turn to that section of the argument.

If this outline of the overall argument is along the right lines, Socrates' remark at 185 B 9–C 2 falls readily into place. He has just claimed that one could not grasp either through hearing or through sight certain things that a sound and a colour have in common (such as being, being self-identical, and being one thing). He goes on to offer Theaetetus another piece of evidence for the view that such common features of things cannot be grasped through the senses. If it were possible, he says, 'to raise the question whether both are salty or not, you'd be ready to say (ἔχεις εἰπεῖν) what you would investigate it with: and this would appear to be neither sight nor hearing, but something else'. Being the good student he is, Theaetetus in replying substitutes a 'through' expression for a 'with' expression,

²⁰ That view has, in any case, not been disproved. At 179 C 2–D 1, Socrates acknowledges that it has not been ruled out yet: so long as we keep within the limits of that immediate present experience of the individual which gives rise to perceptions and to perceptual beliefs, it is more difficult to convict these latter of being untrue—but perhaps I'm talking nonsense. Perhaps it is not possible to convict them at all; perhaps those who profess that they are perfectly evident and are always knowledgeable may be saying what really is. The subsequent argument against the claim that 'all things are in motion' is not decisive against the view that, perhaps within certain limits, perception is knowledge. Socrates indicates this at 183 C 1–3, saying that 'we are not going to grant that knowledge is perception, nor at any rate along the line of inquiry which supposes that all things are in motion.'

answering that the sense in question is, of course, the one that operates through the tongue. No doubt Theaetetus, at this stage in the argument, thinks that perception (taste, in this case) is all that is needed to settle questions about whether suitable things are or are not salty. And no doubt Socrates is perfectly aware that Theaetetus thinks this. But Socrates himself is non-committal, at this stage, about just what perception on his own view can do. What he wants to show Theaetetus is that while he knows through which senses we perceive things like sounds and colours, he is at a loss as to what sense we use in grasping common features like being, identity, and difference.²¹

Even though it is not the task of Stage 1 to show that perception by itself cannot form any belief, that outcome is nevertheless already foreshadowed by Socrates' remark about investigating whether a couple of things are, or are not, salty (ἄρ' ἔσόν ἀλαπὼ ἢ οὐ). The first thing one would think about a sound and a colour, he has just said, is that they both are, or have being (ὄν ἀμφοτέρω ἔσόν). In his next few sentences, at 185 A 11–B 5, the verb 'to be' does not occur again, but the predicates used—'different', 'the same', etc.—are to be heard as complementing ἔσόν ('they both are') at 185 A 9.²² Socrates' imaginary question whether the two of them are or are not salty thus looks back to the first thought one would have about a sound and a colour. In his next question to Theaetetus (185 C 4–7), the expressions 'is' and 'is not' are lifted from, and put one in mind of, ἔσόν ἢ οὐ ('the two of them are or are not') in the question about saltiness.²³ 'Is' and 'is not' are paraphrased by Theaetetus, doubtless with Socrates' approval, as being (οὐσία) and not-being (τὸ μὴ εἶναι). Both are agreed to be among the features of things which the soul considers, not through the senses, but by itself. Socrates thus signals, already at Stage 1, that even simple perceptual beliefs of the form 'x is F' (where the value of F is a perceptual predicate like 'salty') involve at least one common feature, being, a feature that is grasped only by the soul's independent activity.

²¹ 185 C 1: ἔχεις εἰπεῖν ('you'd be ready to say') contrasts with 185 D 6–7: οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιμι εἰπεῖν ('I couldn't say').

²² I take as read L. Brown's seminal work on the complete (or, as I would put it, bare) use of εἶναι, 'to be' ('Being in the *Sophist*: a syntactical enquiry', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 4 (1986), 49–70). The crucial point is that the bare use allows complementation, as paralleled by the way 'Jane is teaching', which is *not* elliptical, allows complementation into 'Jane is teaching French'. Just as the former allows the follow-up question 'teaching what?', so a sound and a colour ἔσόν (185 A 9) allows the question 'are what?'. To capture the complete, non-elliptical character of sentences of the form 'x ἔστί', it is sometimes useful to translate the verb as 'have being'. It should be borne in mind, though, that such sentences, while complete in themselves, allow appropriate predicates as complements. This is precisely what occurs at *Theaetetus* 185 A 8–B 5: ἔσόν at 185 A 9 is complete, but subsequently receives a number of predicates as complements. One might compare the far less elegant analysis offered in Kahn, 'Some philosophical uses', 121–3. Kahn takes ἔσόν at 185 A 9 to signify existence: 'that sound and colour are, with no predicate in sight, must mean that they exist' (his emphasis). But the verb at the same time provides the copula for the verbless predications that follow. So he diagnoses 'overdetermination', proposing what he calls a 'double reading' of ἔσόν.

²³ This is seen by Kanayama, 'Perceiving', 55. Cf. Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', 43, n. 40.

There is no indication, though, that Theaetetus has cottoned on to this. Near the end of the section, he says that as for the common features of things, 'it doesn't seem to me that for these things there is any special instrument at all, as there is for the others. It seems to me that it is through itself that the soul investigates the common features with regard to all things' (*Theaetetus* 185 D 6-E 2). On the view at which Theaetetus has now arrived, investigation of the common features of things requires the soul's independent activity. This is because no sense seems to provide cognitive access to them. On the other hand, the senses do provide access to such things as sounds and colours. So Theaetetus will continue to think that perception is sufficient to investigate such things, and presumably he takes this investigative activity to include the application of suitable predicates and the formation of suitable beliefs. Rather than right away taking issue with Theaetetus' newly arrived-at view, Socrates is delighted to have got him this far. As he says, Theaetetus has saved him a vast amount of talk if it seems to him that 'while the soul considers some things through the bodily powers, there are others which it considers alone and through itself' (*Theaetetus* 185 E 5-7). Once again, Socrates remains non-committal about just what, *on his own view*, the soul's consideration of things through the senses consists in or amounts to. It is not until Stage 2 that his own view becomes clear.

So as to reinforce my suggestion as to what Socrates intends to accomplish at Stage 1, it will be useful to have a somewhat more careful look at how he proceeds. Close to the beginning of Stage 1, Socrates asks Theaetetus whether he is willing to agree that 'the things you perceive through one power, you can't perceive through another? For instance, the things you perceive through hearing, you couldn't perceive through sight, and similarly those you perceive through sight you couldn't perceive through hearing?' (*Theaetetus* 184 E 8-185 A 2). Theaetetus accepts this with no hesitation (185 A 3). What they agree on is, it seems, the strong and, in fact, rather implausible claim that nothing could be perceived through more senses than one. Once that claim is accepted, sense-perception is limited to things that, like sounds and colours, are perceived specifically and exclusively through some sense or other (call them 'special sensibles'). It has rightly been pointed out²⁴ that what Socrates actually makes use of in what follows is something much weaker than the very strong claim that one can perceive nothing but special sensibles. What he wants to show in what follows immediately is that one could not apprehend either through hearing or through sight that a sound and a colour share certain features, because hearing provides no access to colour while sight provides no access to sound. This plainly does not require that perception is restricted to special sensibles. It only requires that there are sensibles that are in fact special sensibles and that belong to different senses.²⁵

²⁴ Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', 47-8.

²⁵ As will be seen shortly, at no point of Stage 1 does Socrates employ *as a premiss* the claim that perception is limited to special sensibles.

In fact it may be that, in the context, the agreement at 184 E 8-185 A 3 is meant to amount to this weaker, but much more plausible, claim. In arguing for the view that we perceive perceptibles through the senses rather than with them, Socrates mentions various objects of perception: white and black (184 B 7-8), high and low notes (184 B 8), hot, hard, light, and sweet (184 E). When he speaks generally about 'all the things of *this kind*' (184 E 2), it is natural to take him to have in mind the various things that are perceptible specifically through some sense or other. And perhaps it is just with regard to 'all the things of this kind'—special sensibles, that is—that Socrates and Theaetetus readily agree that the things you perceive through one sense you could not perceive through another.²⁶ This would certainly make it easier than it would otherwise be to see why Theaetetus seems to find Socrates' suggestion quite uncontroversial.

What Socrates wants to show at 184 E 4-185 E 9 is, in his own words, that 'while the soul considers some things through the bodily powers, there are others which it considers alone and through itself' (*Theaetetus* 185 E 6-7). In the context this clearly amounts, not to the claim that there are certain thoughts which require some independent activity of the soul, but to the stronger claim that there are certain features that can *never* be grasped by perception, but only by the soul's independent activity. At 185 C 4-D 3, Socrates and Theaetetus mention a number of features (being, not-being, the different, the same, and so forth) which Theaetetus refers to as 'the common things' (τὰ κοινά) and which the soul seems to him to consider 'itself through itself' (185 D 8-E 2), in contrast to those things, mentioned earlier, for which there is, in each case, a special sense or sense-organ (185 D 7-8). Socrates' formulation at 185 E 6-7 picks up this distinction made by Theaetetus between two sorts of features. The distinction made, Socrates can go on to ask, in the argument's next section, which sort being, likeness, and so forth belong to. To say that being, for instance, belongs to the second sort, then, is to claim that it can never be grasped by perception, but only by the soul's independent activity.

Socrates offers two arguments for the view that consideration of certain features requires the soul's independent activity. The first one (184 E 4-185 B 9) draws attention to thoughts that are explicitly about objects of more senses than one, to the effect that 'these two things'²⁷ (a sound and a colour), taken separately or together, share some feature: having being, being different from the other, being self-identical, being two things, being one thing. Socrates is plainly right that no one sense taken singly could account for such thoughts. However, it seems clear in the context that he is taking himself to be offering evidence for thinking that such thoughts cannot be accounted for by perception *at all*, but require some activity of the soul that is additional to and distinct from its activity through the senses.²⁸ Even

²⁶ This is also suggested by J. McDowell *ad loc.*

²⁷ Note the duals at 185 A 9, B 2, 4, 7.

²⁸ 185 E 7-9 seems to me to show this.

if such thoughts cannot be accounted for by any one sense taken singly—more precisely, by the soul's activity through any *one* sense—it does not follow right away that they cannot be accounted for by perception *at all*. One might think instead that the soul can think thoughts of this kind by operating through two (or, if necessary, more) senses at once, in this case through hearing and sight. But it is not very hard to see how such a view might be resisted, so as to reach Socrates' conclusion. Two or more senses do not simply 'add up' so as to form a path of cognitive access through which the soul receives an integrated, 'synoptic' representation of the variety of things that both or all of the senses involved provide access to. That integrated representation is precisely something that the soul has to *achieve*, and it makes good sense to distinguish the soul's activity involved in and required for achieving it from its activity through the senses.²⁹

The second argument (185 B 9–E 2) starts with thoughts about the same two things—a sound and a colour—that feature in the first argument.³⁰ It does not repeat that they are the objects of two different senses. Rather, it emphasizes that 'is' and 'is not', or being and not-being, are shared as common features not just by these two, but indeed by *all things*. Theaetetus accepts this dramatic widening of perspective when he says that in investigating the common features with regard to all things, the soul seems to him to function through itself. The key point of the second argument is that there is no sense or sense-organ that features like being, sameness, and difference can be assigned to—as there is with features like saltiness—and that this is so not only in cases that involve the apprehension of such shared features as belonging to objects of more senses than one, but quite generally in all cases.

Should Theaetetus have accepted the generalizing step? It is one thing to accept that perception cannot account for apprehending that a sound and a colour are different from one another (185 A 1). It is another matter to accept that by itself it provides no cognitive access to the fact that one colour is different from another colour. Perhaps it is true that, as Myles Burnyeat puts it, there is no such thing as an impression of being.³¹ But has Socrates given Theaetetus a reason to think that there could not be a purely auditory impression of one sound being different from

²⁹ It may be objected that Socrates is missing an important distinction between two *sorts* of independent activity of the soul: on the one hand, the construction of an integrated sensory representation of one's environment, which includes the representation of common (by which I mean 'cross-modal') features such as shapes and sizes as well as, perhaps, of objects such as houses and trees; on the other hand, the construction of an integrated *conception* of things, which includes the application of suitable predicates and the formation of suitable beliefs. This, I think, is correct about the argument as it stands. However, the argument's basic commitment that perception can neither form beliefs nor attain knowledge because it does not discern being could survive a more fine-grained articulation of the soul's independent activity, distinguishing between belief-formation (strictly speaking) on the one hand and the construction of an integrated sensory representation on the other, which might then be treated as an extension of perception as Socrates conceives of it here. Notice that Socrates will shortly speak of seeing, touching, hearing, or otherwise perceiving Theodorus and Theaetetus (*Theaetetus* 192 D 3–9); so he will in fact need an extended, more generous conception of perception.

³⁰ These are the two things referred to as ἀμφοτέρω at 185 B 10.

³¹ Burnyeat, 'Plato on the grammar of perceiving', 49.

another (cf. 185 B 4–5)? Presumably Socrates is relying on something like this: grasping that something or other has being or is different from something else (etc.) crucially involves grasping something that is one and the same thing in each and every case (namely, being, difference, etc.); and if grasping the thing in question can clearly be seen to require the soul's independent activity in some cases, this in fact shows that it must do so in all cases.³² If so, it is plain why the second argument begins with, and then expands on, the first argument, drawing attention to the fact that 'is' and 'is not' are shared as common features not only by the two things mentioned in the first argument, but in fact by all things.

It should, in any event, be clear now that Socrates does have reason to be glad that Theaetetus accepts his conclusion on the basis of the arguments he has offered. Theaetetus has indeed saved him a considerable amount of work. On the basis of the first argument, he appears to accept, not only that features shared by objects specific to different senses cannot be grasped through any one sense, but also that they cannot be grasped through the senses at all. Further, he also seems to accept the second argument's generalizing step, which places the common features of the first argument beyond the reach of the senses quite generally in all cases. The steps Theaetetus is willing to accept are neither unintelligible nor, I think, unreasonable. They could be defended robustly and plausibly. The point is just that Theaetetus accepts them without being given arguments specifically for them, perhaps because he can see right away that and why they are correct.³³

I now turn to the overall argument's second stage, which begins at 186 A 2. At Stage 1, as we have seen, Socrates makes available a distinction between two sorts of features, those that the soul considers through the senses and those it considers through itself. He can now rely on this distinction, so as to ask which sort being (ἡ οὐσία) likeness and unlikeness, and sameness and difference belong to. This of course is recapitulation: all of these features were mentioned at Stage 1. Without hesitation, Theaetetus assigns them, once again, to the soul's independent activity. Socrates then asks about fine and disgraceful (καλὸν καὶ ἀσχηρὸν), and good and bad. Theaetetus' answer is significant, in that it conveys an important clue concerning the difficult question how the word 'being' (*ousia*) is used in the remainder of the argument. These things too, he says, belong to the soul's independent activity: 'They, too, seem to be pre-eminently things whose being the mind

³² Cf. McDowell, *Plato: Theaetetus*, 186: 'It follows from the principle of 184e8–185a3, together with an implicit assumption about the unity of the act of thinking, that if one thinks the same thing about two items, each of which is a proper object of a different sense, then the thinking of that thing, about anything, cannot be an exercise of either of the two senses in question.' This seems to look beyond the argument at 185 A 4–9, which focuses on thoughts specifically about 'these two things', anticipating the generalizing step indicated at 185 E 1–2: 'the thinking of that thing, about anything'.

³³ We should recall that Theaetetus is a budding mathematician (note his introduction of the predicates 'odd' and 'even' at 185 D 1–2), and that the dialogue is written to eulogize him, as its preface makes clear. Theaetetus' ability to see easily and quickly that there are all sorts of things to which the senses provide no access nicely illustrates the remarks in the *Republic* as to why mathematics is good for the soul: it promotes the soul's ascent from the 'becoming' of the visible world (524 C 13) to the immutable being of intelligible reality.

considers in relation to one another, reasoning³⁴ about things past and present with a view to things in the future' (*Theaetetus* 186 A 10–B 1).³⁵ The word *ousia* is introduced into the argument by Theaetetus at 185 C 9, clearly as an abstract noun corresponding to the verb *esti*, 'is', the way to *mē einai* corresponds to *ouk esti*, 'is not'. (So he might equally well have used *to einai* instead of *ousia*.) In the context there is both an uncomplemented use of *einai* (at 185 A 9) and a complemented use (at 185 B 10): a sound and a colour both have being, and if it were possible to ask whether both of them *are* salty, Theaetetus would be able to say which sense we would use to check. In this way the word *ousia* is connected, via the verb *esti*, both to something's having being (uncomplemented use) and to something's being something or other, e.g. salty (complemented use).

What does Theaetetus have in mind in speaking of the soul considering the being of such things as goodness and badness? Given the way the word *ousia* enters the discussion, we should try to understand this in terms of uncomplemented or complemented uses of 'to be'. Moreover, throughout the argument's first stage, what gets identified as the soul's independent activity is always a matter either of thinking *that* something is, or is something or other (185 A 8–9, 11–12, B 2), or of considering *whether* something is, or is something or other (185 B 4–5, 185 B 10). Against that background, we should try to understand considering the being of something in terms of considering whether it is, or is something or other. No complemented use seems relevant at 186 A 10–B 1, since we are not given a complement. Could it be, then, that considering the being of (say) goodness is considering whether it is, or has being?

For this to begin to seem plausible, one more step is required. So far in the argument, grasping features, both special sensibles and common or shared features, has always been a matter of grasping a feature 'about', or with regard to, something or other. Thus Socrates says that you could not grasp either through hearing or through sight what is common (*τὸ κοινόν*) with regard to the two things in question (*πρὸς αὐτῶν*). This is a moment later picked up by Theaetetus, when he says that with regard to all things (*πρὸς πάντα*) the soul seems to consider the common things (*τὰ κοινά*) 'through itself'. In the context, this must mean that it belongs to the soul's independent activity to raise and settle questions of whether something or other bears any one of the common features. We may assume, then, that when Theaetetus, just after that, speaks of the soul's 'reaching out' for such things as being, likeness, sameness, etc. (186 A 2–7), he has in mind raising and settling questions involving such common features, with regard to something or other. In other words, he has in mind considering whether something or other is

³⁴ I translate ἀναλογίζεσθαι and related words as 'reason', rather than 'calculate', simply to make perspicuous the connection of these mental acts to the rational part of the soul (λογικόν). I trust that nothing hangs on this: ἀναλογίζεσθαι here, and at 186 C 2–3, is in any case not a literal case of doing arithmetic; so if 'calculate' is used as a translation, this must be understood broadly and loosely, so as to mean 'reason' or 'deliberate'.

³⁵ This is based on McDowell's translation, which is closer to the Greek than Levert's. In particular, it captures the significance of καί at 186 A 10.

or has being, is like something else, is the same as itself, etc. These questions correspond precisely to the assertoric thoughts mentioned at 185 A 8–B 5.³⁶ So when we come to 186 A 10–B 1, the context certainly allows us to supply some things or other with regard to which the soul considers the being of fineness and disgracefulness, and goodness and badness. Once one sees this, it becomes attractive to think that what the soul considers in considering the being of the features in question is whether they are or have being with regard to something or other—say, with regard to a person or a law.³⁷ In other words, it considers whether someone or something is fine or disgraceful, or good or bad.

This construal of considering the being of (especially) goodness and badness is exactly what is needed to make sense of what Theaetetus takes to be involved in such considerations. In saying that they involve reasoning about things past and present with a view to the future, Theaetetus clearly has in mind the point made earlier in the discussion, that claims about what is good (*τὰγαθά*, 177 D 2) or useful³⁸—for instance, concerning a piece of legislation (177 E 5)—crucially involve a view of the future (178 A 5–10). For a law to be good or useful is in important part for it to prove to be good and useful in the future. Against this background, it makes excellent sense for Theaetetus now to say that considering whether something or other is good or bad involves reasoning with a view to the future. In fact it is difficult to see any remotely plausible alternative to the current construal of what Theaetetus means by considering the being of goodness and badness, in a way that involves reasoning with a view to the future.³⁹

³⁶ Those thoughts, of course, were thought with regard to a sound and a colour. The corresponding questions here are asked with regard to anything whatsoever, on the basis of the generalizing step taken at 185 B 9–186 A 1.

³⁷ For this use of 'is', see *Sophist* 263 B 11–12 (cf. 256 E 6–7). Sitting is something that is with regard to Theaetetus (*πρὸς αὐτόν*); flying is not. This is the converse of the use in play in statements of the form 'x is F'. For discussion, see M. Frede, 'Plato's *Sophist* on false statements', in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 417–23. Note also that the *Sophist*'s discussion of false statement includes a use of the word *οὐσία* that is a precise parallel to the use that, on my view, is in evidence at *Theaetetus* 186 A 11, B 6, and B 7: at *Sophist* 262 C 2–5 the visitor says that sounds like 'lion stag horse' would not 'indicate either an action or an inaction or the being (*ὄντων*) of something that is or of something that is not'. In the context, the latter must mean indicating that a feature or its negation has being with regard to the item in question—for instance, that it is hard or not-hard.

³⁸ ὄφελος, 177 D 4. This is echoed at 186 C 2–3, ἀναλογίζεσθαι πρὸς . . . ὄφελος (reasonings with a view to usefulness).

³⁹ Kahn, 'Some philosophical uses', 124, suggests that considering the being of something here is meant to be considering its *nature*. But if one wanted to consider something's nature, why reason about past and present with a view to the future? (I agree here with Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception', 137.) The *Theaetetus*' digression (172 C–177 C) strongly suggests what one expects in any case, namely that on Plato's view, thinking about natures involves complete disregard (in fact, *disrespect*: 173 E 4–5) for things that are specifically in past, present, or future, and focusing instead on immutable truths. The philosopher, whose thought 'tracks down by every path the entire nature of each whole among the things that are and never descends to what lies near at hand' (173 E6–174 A2), is said neither to see nor to hear the city's laws and decrees (173 D 3–4), and scarcely to know whether his next-door neighbour 'is a man or some other kind of creature' (174 B 1–4). He will doubtless care equally little about such matters pertaining to individuals in the past and in the future. Another implausible possibility is that considering the being of something is considering quite generally whether it has being at all.

Moreover, what Theaetetus says at 186 A 10–11 is not just that it belongs to the soul's independent activity to consider the being of the things Socrates asks about at 186 A 9. What he says is rather that their being, too (καὶ τοῦτων . . . τῆν οὐσίαν), is considered by the soul by itself.⁴⁰ He must have in mind not only fine and disgraceful, and good and bad, but also the features mentioned just before at 186 A 6–7, like and unlike, and same and different. As we have seen, when we get to 186 A 6–8, what Socrates and Theaetetus agree on is plainly that it belongs to the soul's independent activity to raise and settle questions of whether something or other is like or unlike something else, is the same as itself, and is different from other things. As we come to Theaetetus' next answer, he speaks of considering the being of things and applies this expression retrospectively to like and unlike, and to the same and the different. This only makes sense if 'considering the being of like and unlike (etc.)' means much the same thing as 'reaching out for like and unlike (etc.)'. I can see only one plausible way to interpret the former expression so as to be equivalent to the latter, and it is the one I have suggested.

Socrates now has all the materials he needs in order to make the crucial move that restricts the soul's activity through the senses to awareness of perceptual features, placing the formation of any belief beyond the reach of perception.⁴¹ The soul, he says, will perceive through touch the hardness of what is hard, and likewise the softness of what is soft. 'But their being—that they are—and their opposition to one another and, again, the being of this opposition the soul attempts to discern (κρίνω) for us by rising to compare them with one another' (*Theaetetus* 186 B 6–9). Theaetetus agrees with this very heartily (186 B 10). What it must mean in the context is that even attempting to discern or grasp that something is (say) hard belongs to the soul's independent activity and is therefore beyond the reach of its activity through the senses. We may recall that at Stage 1, it very much looks as if Theaetetus assumes that perception by itself is perfectly capable of dealing with questions of the form 'is x F ?', where the value of F is a perceptual predicate like 'hard'. What has he seen now that he missed then?

The first thing to say is that Socrates has drawn his attention to the fact that forming beliefs always involves making claims to the effect that something or other has being. Forming the belief that something is hard, for instance, involves affirming that hardness is or has being with regard to the thing in question. And it has been clear to Theaetetus all along that the senses provide no access to being, and that perception does not even do as much as considering whether something or other has being, let alone answering such questions affirmatively or negatively.

But to say this is plainly not yet to do justice to two prominent features of Stage 2: first, that the soul considers, or tries to grasp, the being of opposites in

⁴⁰ This is noticed and rightly emphasized by Kanayama, 'Perceiving', 67.

⁴¹ $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$ $\delta\eta$ at 186 B 2 indicates, not (as McDowell suggests ad loc.) that Socrates thinks Theaetetus is getting ahead of himself, but that he is now ready to take a decisive step. Compare *Gorgias*, 460 A 5, with E. R. Dodds' note: 'The exclamation indicates that Socrates has now got what he wanted, the lever which will overturn Gorgias' position.'

relation to one another;⁴² secondly, that the soul's independent activity includes reasoning concerning both being and usefulness.⁴³ Theaetetus sees right away that considering whether something is good calls into play one's grasp not only of goodness, but also of badness—and the other way around (186 A 10–B 1). After all, judgements about goodness more often than not are comparative judgements about better and worse. What Socrates points out just after that is not only that perception is aware of perceptual features, but applies no predicates. It is also that perception is *not* aware of the opposition between even perceptual features. Attempting to discern opposition, and to recognize it *as what it is*,⁴⁴ belongs to the soul's independent activity just as much as attempting to discern the being of perceptual features. It seems unlikely that Socrates simply lumps together attempting to grasp the being of hardness and softness and attempting to grasp their opposition, as though they were two unrelated things that the soul's independent activity just happens to account for. Rather, he presumably thinks that the point about opposition makes it easier to see why it is that sense-perception by itself cannot account for the application even of perceptual predicates. And surely this is, in fact, so. To be able to do as little as considering whether something is (say) hard, let alone to settle the question, you must have some grasp of the fact that hardness is the opposite of softness. This is a very basic fact about hardness. A subject that has no grasp of it is simply incompetent with regard to questions of hardness and softness. Put more generally, what I take Socrates to be drawing attention to is the fact that the ability to raise and settle questions of whether something or other bears some feature is inseparable from the ability to grasp that the feature in question is related to certain other features, and how it is related to them, for instance by opposition.

Once we appreciate the connection between being able to apply predicates and being able to grasp structural features such as opposition, it becomes perspicuous, I shall now try to show, that only rational subjects are able to apply predicates. Socrates makes it clear that he takes reasoning ($\delta\upsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$) to be prominently

⁴² 186 A 10–11: $\pi\rho\delta$ $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\alpha$ $\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\tau\epsilon$ $\epsilon\theta\epsilon\alpha$, $\tau\eta\nu$ $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu$ ($\tau\iota$ to examine their being in comparison with one another'); 186 B 6–7: $\tau\eta\nu$ $\epsilon\kappa\omega\tau\iota\sigma\tau\eta\tau\alpha$ $\pi\rho\delta$ $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\alpha$ (their opposition to one another'); 186 B 8: $\sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ $\pi\rho\delta$ $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\alpha$ (comparing them with one another).

⁴³ 186 C: $\delta\upsilon\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ $\pi\rho\delta$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\delta\iota\phi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma\alpha\nu$ (reasonings with a view to both being and usefulness'); 186 D 2–3: $\epsilon\nu$ $\delta\epsilon$ $\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$ $\delta\epsilon\sigma\iota\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\nu$ $\sigma\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\omega$ ('in reasoning about those things').

⁴⁴ This, I take it, is the force of the distinction between two cognitive steps concerning opposition indicated at 186 B 6–7: [sc. $\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\nu$ $\pi\epsilon\alpha\phi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$] $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\tau\eta\nu$ $\epsilon\kappa\omega\tau\iota\sigma\tau\eta\tau\alpha$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\tau\eta\nu$ $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu$ $\alpha\upsilon$ $\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\epsilon\kappa\omega\tau\iota\sigma\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (sc. the soul attempts to discern) their opposition and, again, the being of this opposition). The soul first attempts to discern the opposition between hardness and softness, and then to discern that opposition has being with regard to them. This is exactly parallel—hence the word $\alpha\upsilon$ ('again')—to the distinction between perceiving (or discerning) a perceptual feature ($\tau\eta\nu$ $\sigma\kappa\epsilon\lambda\eta\phi\omicron\tau\eta\tau\alpha$. . . $\alpha\iota\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\tau\epsilon\alpha$, 186 B 2–3) and discerning that the relevant property has being with regard to the object in question ($\tau\eta\nu$ $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu$. . . $\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\nu$, 186 B 6–9). This suggests what may seem an attractive strategy for demystifying the transition from perceptual content (perceiving hardness) to low-level propositional content ('this is hard'). The same kind of transition recurs at a purely intellectual level, between discerning an intelligible object such as (say) a certain relation and recognizing it *as the relation it is*, where the latter act, but not the former, involves applying the relevant predicate. If this can be made sense of, then the transition from perception to thought might be understood in much the same way.

(mentioned at *Theaetetus* 186 B 6–9) to grasp the opposition between them. It is simply whether hardness and softness, for instance, are one or two things (or features). The passage suggests a number of ways in which reason is involved in raising and settling even such very simple questions. There is, to begin with, the soul's puzzlement at what the senses are saying when they report the same thing to be both hard and soft. We should note that this puzzlement comes well before it grasps that hardness and softness are opposites, and indeed before it grasps that they are two separate things. Socrates evidently assumes that the soul has some inchoate sensitivity to the opposition between such features as hardness and softness before it begins to reason about the matter in question. Moreover, it is not just that the reports of the senses puzzle the soul. They also stir it to activity, as it tries to find out how things are, beginning with the simple question of whether hardness and softness are one or two things.

Within the psychological theory of the *Republic*, the soul's impulse to find out how things are belongs to its rational part; it is a desire of reason. As Socrates says elsewhere in the *Republic*, 'it is clear to everyone that the part with which we learn is always wholly straining to know where the truth lies' (*Republic* 9, 581 B 6–7). To have reason, according to Plato's theory, is among other things to be impelled to achieve a clear and intelligible view of how things are—directly, for its own sake, and regardless of whatever may or may not result from it.⁴⁸ No doubt it is also reason that accounts for the soul's being puzzled by the confusing reports of the senses, in a way that reveals an inchoate sensitivity to structural features such as opposition. Presumably to have reason is also to have that kind of sensitivity in at least an inchoate form.

Further, in trying to find out how things are, the soul from the start shows itself to be sensitive to logical relations such as consequence and incompatibility. This is nicely illustrated in *Republic* 7. The soul right away has some awareness that if A and B are two things, they are different from each other.⁴⁹ So if it realizes that A and B are two things, the soul will understand (νοήσει) that they are separate from one another (κχωριούμενα). Presumably it is aware that plurality entails difference and separateness; so it accepts separateness together with plurality. It would not think, Socrates goes on, that A and B are non-separate (ἀχώριστα) from one another and yet two things, no doubt because it is aware that A and B being non-separate from one another is incompatible with their being two things. Again, the soul's sensitivity to logical relations belongs, I take it, specifically to reason.

Now, it is altogether clear that there are significant differences between this *Republic* 7 passage and *Theaetetus* 184–7. For instance, perception in the former

⁴⁸ 524 C 6–8: 'in order to get clear about all this, understanding was compelled to see the big and the small, not as mixed up together, but as separate—the opposite way from sight.'

⁴⁹ 524 B 7–8: οὐκ οὐκ ἔστι δύο χωριούμενα, ἕρποντες καὶ ἐν ἐκείρον φαίνεσθαι; ('If they appear to be two, won't each appear to be distinct and one?'). The subject of the appearances in question is, I take it, in both cases the soul. The thought of 'two' comes with the thought that one is distinct from the other and either is one.

involved in the soul's independent activity; so prominently, in fact, that he can restate or echo the distinction between the soul's activity through the senses and its activity through itself in terms of, on the one hand, perceiving and, on the other, reasoning about what one perceives, with a view to both being and usefulness' (186 C 3).⁴⁵ The reference to being as well as usefulness indicates that he takes reasoning to be involved not only in settling the practical questions that *Theaetetus* had in mind a short while ago (at 186 A 10–B 1), but in some way or other in all cases where one asks a question and tries to answer it.⁴⁶ Now, it is of course true that one normally does not have to reason in order to be able to tell whether something is hard or soft. How, then, might reason be involved in raising and settling questions even of this sort? A number of important hints can be found in what may seem an unlikely place.⁴⁷

In book 7 of the *Republic*, Socrates explains how it is that mathematics, if it is pursued and studied properly, has the power to draw the soul away from the domain of becoming, towards being (οὐσία) and truth. In part because of this power, he assigns to various mathematical disciplines a huge role in the education of the guardians. In order to show the beneficial effects on the soul of studying 'number and the one', Socrates distinguishes between things, or features of things, which 'summon thought' and things which do not. His examples of the former are features like largeness and smallness, thickness and thinness, hardness and softness, and lightness and heaviness.

With regard to each of these pairs, perception reports, or says (λέγει, 524 A 7), that the same thing is both opposites. For instance, it says about the same finger that it is large and small. Let your eyes rest on your little finger for a while, then switch to your ring finger, and it looks large. If you switch to the same finger from your middle finger, it looks small. Experiences like these, Socrates says, induce puzzlement (ἀπορροῦν, 524 A 7) in the soul. Then it is likely, he goes on, that in such cases the soul, summoning reasoning and thought (λογισμὸν τε καὶ νόησιν), first tries to investigate (περιᾶται ἐπισκοπεῖν) whether each of the things announced to it is one or two' (*Republic* 7, 524 B 3–5). If they appear to be two, he continues, each of them appears to be different from the other and one thing. 'So if each is one, and both are two, the soul will understand (νοήσει) that the two are separate, for it would not understand the non-separate to be two, but rather one' (*Republic* 7, 524 B 10–C 1).

The question about pairs of opposites that the soul is trying to investigate in this passage is plainly an extremely simple one, preliminary to the attempt

⁴⁵ Note also 186 D 2–5, where the distinction between the soul's two kinds of activity is re-perceived in terms of affections (παθημάτων) on the one hand and reasoning about them (περὶ ἐκείνων συλλογισμῶν) on the other; it is in the latter, not in the former, that being and truth can be attained.

⁴⁶ I assume that οὐσίαν at 186 C 3 primarily picks up the two occurrences of the word at 186 B 6 and 7. Thus Socrates is broadening the involvement of reason from questions of goodness or usefulness to absolutely all questions.

⁴⁷ It used to be thought—for instance, by Cornford and Cherniss—that the passage I am about to turn to says much the same as *Theaetetus* 184–7. Cooper, 'Plato on sense-perception', contains a highly effective and in fact devastating attack on that view.

passage *says* rather elaborate things (for instance, 'this finger is large'), whereas it is a central concern of the latter text to make it plain that perception does not even form the simplest predications. Moreover, the passages use the term 'being' (ὄντῳ) in importantly different ways. The *Republic* passage uses it to refer to the Forms, and that it is not so used at *Theaetetus* 185-6 is one thing about that difficult text that has by now become uncontroversial. However, the *Republic* passage does seem to me to shed a good deal of light on why it is that Socrates proceeds in just the way he does at *Theaetetus* 186 A 2-C 5. In particular, it sheds light on why he seems to think in that passage that reason is involved, in some way or other, in the application of any predicate and in the formation of any belief.

As we have seen, Socrates runs together attempting to discern being and attempting to discern opposition (186 B 6-9). What he wants to show is that discerning being is always beyond the reach of perception. Opposition is presumably brought in to help make that point. And rightly so: to discern the being of (say) hardness with regard to something involves judging that the thing in question is hard, and being competent to judge whether something is hard requires some awareness of the opposition between hardness and softness. But any such awareness, indeed even any attempt to attain it, belongs to the soul's independent activity. The same goes for attempting to find out that one perceptual feature is different from its opposite: difference, too, is a common feature that the soul investigates through itself.

The *Republic* 7 passage provides a relatively clear picture of how recognizing the difference between one perceptual feature and its opposite is a task that calls into play reason and thought (or understanding, νόμῳ). Recognizing the difference between (say) hardness and softness involves, to begin with, raising the question of whether they are one or two features (by which I mean, whether they are one or two types of feature); it involves recognizing that they are in fact two features, perhaps as an inference from the observation that hardness is sometimes perceived without softness being perceived at the same time, and vice versa; it also involves recognizing that hardness and softness being two features entails that they are separate and different from one another.

Now, these are cognitive acts of a very special kind. They crucially depend on, and manifest, sensitivity to such logical relations as consequence and incompatibility. And to recognize the difference between opposite features is plainly not yet to recognize their opposition. Recognizing the opposition between hardness and softness presumably involves understanding that the same thing cannot be hard and soft at the same time.⁵⁰ The recognition of opposition then both rests on antecedent reasoning—for instance, as it is involved in recognizing difference—and supports reasoning from it to the conclusion that the same thing cannot at the

⁵⁰ This, in any case, is suggested by the fact that Socrates takes the truth of the Principle of Opposites to be clear without argument: δηλον ὄντι... ('it is clear that...') (*Republic* 436 B 9-C 2). (The discussion that follows immediately, 436 C 9-437 A 9 is not argument for, but specification of, the principle: ἀκριβέστερον ἀπολογισώμεθα. ('let's make our agreement more precise'), at 436 C 9.) Note also *Republic* 375 C 6-D 1. Cf. *Theaetetus* 189 C 11-D 3.

same time bear the two features in question. Such insights, it may be worth pointing out, are very much part of ordinary cognition. They are achieved by all rational subjects in the normal course of their development. But this is not, of course, to say that they do not involve a great deal of time and effort. It is with a view to the effort involved in the ordinary cognitive development of rational subjects that Socrates says that 'reasoning regarding the being and usefulness [sc. of what is perceived] comes, when it comes,⁵¹ with difficulty and over time, involving much trouble and education' (*Theaetetus* 186 C 2-5).

The upshot, then, is that even the simplest predications are beyond perception. If so, it is a mistake to speak of perception as *seeing* things, the way the *Republic's* main speaker does. Another result is at least as striking, against the background of the *Republic*. Even as humble an achievement as forming a belief about a perceptible object requires a contribution from reason and understanding, in part because it requires cognitive access to intelligibles such as difference and opposition. This perforates the *Republic's* careful distinctions between 'the visible' and 'the intelligible', and between the corresponding modes of cognition (509 D 1-511 E 5). It is a magnificent piece of irony that to secure this result, Plato relies on a point made in the central books of the *Republic*: that attaining a clear view of perceptual opposites as different from one another is a task that requires reason.

I close with some remarks about the conception of belief that emerges from the overall argument. One question that arises from the distinction between perceiving and discerning being at 186 B 2-9 is the following. Suppose we accept that to be able to form the belief that something or other bears some feature, you have to have *some* grasp of such relations as difference and opposition, and *some* grasp of the feature in question being different from, and opposite to, its opposite (if it has an opposite). But this raises the question of what kind or level of grasp is minimally required for the ability to form beliefs. Obviously one does not need to have a well worked out theory of opposition in order to be able to form the belief that some rock is hard. We should note that Socrates is appropriately circumspect in formulating what is involved in the soul's independent activity. He speaks, not of grasping or knowing (for instance) the opposition between hardness and softness, but of *attempting* to discern it. The point is that perception by itself does not contain the cognitive resources needed to account even for attempts to grasp such relations, let alone for any successful grasp at whatever level of proficiency. This, of course, is all he needs in order to show that perception by itself could never amount to knowledge. He can afford to be non-committal on how much understanding is minimally required to be able to form beliefs at all. That Plato is aware of the problem is strongly suggested, it seems to me, by the long and intricate discussion of false belief at 187 C 7-200 D 2. One reason why false belief is problematic is that for something to feature in one's beliefs at all, it may seem, one has to have knowledge or understanding with regard to it. How then can one go wrong

⁵¹ Reasoning does not come to all perceivers: these include non-human animals, which have just been mentioned at 186 C 1.

about it? In other words, the very grasp that is a necessary condition for belief in the first place may seem to be at the same time a sufficient condition for true belief. The problem arises in part, I suggest, from the insight that belief is an intellectual capacity in that some understanding is required for any belief. Without an account of how much understanding is needed, there is no principled way of resisting the demand that full understanding or expertise is in fact required. Plato never provides such an account.⁵²

Furthermore, it may be worth pointing out that the conception of belief as a rational capacity that emerges at *Theaetetus* 184–7 fits in well with Plato's statements of what belief is at *Theaetetus* 189 E 4–190 A 7 and *Sophist* 263 D 6–264 B 4. In both cases, the main speaker—Socrates or the visitor from Elea—emphasizes the connections between belief on the one hand and thought (*διάνοια*) and language (*λόγος*) on the other. In the *Theaetetus* passage, Socrates begins by describing thought as

a talk (*λόγος*) which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration (*ἑσπῶν ἂν σκοπῆ*) . . . It seems to me that the soul when it thinks is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them itself, affirms and denies. (*Theaetetus* 189 E 6–190 A 2)

He goes on to describe belief (*δόξα*):

And when thought arrives at something definite, either by a gradual process or a sudden leap, when it affirms one thing consistently and without divided counsel, we call this its belief. So, in my view, to form a belief (*δοξάζειν*) is to make a statement (*λέγειν*), and a belief is a statement which is not addressed to another person or spoken aloud, but silently addressed to oneself. (*Theaetetus* 190 A 2–7)

Similarly, in the *Sophist* the visitor defines thought as a silent conversation (*διάλογος*) that the soul has with itself (263 E 3–5), and belief as the conclusion or completion of thinking (*διανοίας ἀποτελευτήσις*, 264 B 1) in assertion or denial (263 E 10–264 A 2). In both the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, then, belief-formation is viewed as a reflective activity, as a matter of thinking about something or other in a way that yields a considered view. Moreover, by linking belief to language (*λόγος*) in the way he does, Plato limits belief to views that one makes explicit to oneself by articulating them in language. We may not find this account of belief satisfactory, at least as it stands. Surely there are many beliefs that are not the results of any reflective activity at all, of raising and considering a question and answering it in light of a variety of relevant factors. And presumably one can believe something without making what it is one believes explicit by articulating it

⁵² The discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* raises epistemological as well as ontological problems that a satisfactory account of false belief must address (see *Theaetetus* 188 C 10–D 1). The *Sophist* solves the ontological problem by offering an account of false statement (*Sophist* 261 D 1–263 D 4). Plato never returns to the epistemological problem.

for oneself. No doubt a suitably qualified and refined version of Plato's account could be developed and defended. For present purposes, though, there is no need to do this. All I want to point out is that the conception of belief as a rational capacity that, I have argued, emerges at *Theaetetus* 184–7 coheres well with what Plato's main speakers elsewhere in the *Theaetetus*, as well as in the *Sophist*, have to say about belief.⁵³

We should note in addition that the reflectiveness of belief that Plato emphasizes requires, at any rate within Plato's psychological theory, that belief is rational, by which I mean that it is a capacity specifically of the rational part of the soul. But belief can be rational in this way without being reflective in all cases. In other words, beliefs can be states or dispositions of the soul's rational part without having been arrived at by reflection. Just as reason can without reflection take up attachments and desires that have their origins in parts of the soul below reason, so presumably it can also take up 'views' or representational states that originate below reason and that present something or other in, for instance, a highly attractive way. In fact, for reason to take up, or take over, the appetitive part's attachment to wealth, for instance, will, I think, typically involve reason's taking it, independently of antecedent reflection, that wealth is good (cf. *Republic* 8, 555 B 9–1).

Moreover, Plato's recognition that belief is a specifically rational capacity is not simply a result of recognizing its connections to language and thought. In the *Republic*, even perception is presented as being able to say things (524 A 7), and a non-rational part of the soul is referred to as a part or aspect of *thought* (*διάνοια*, 603 C 1–2). In fact, the passage in *Republic* 7 about things that summon the soul to being plainly assumes that the ability to say things (for instance, 'this finger is large') does not require the resources of reason. A key insight that is operative in the later dialogues is, I suggest, that saying something, or anyhow making an assertion, always requires and manifests cognitive access to intelligibles like being, difference, and opposition. In the *Republic*, as we have seen, Plato seems to think that grasping features like difference and opposition does require employing cognitive resources that belong specifically to the rational part of the soul. But he does not seem to conclude from this that only reason can make assertions, think thoughts, and form beliefs. He does not arrive at this conclusion, I suggest, because he has not arrived at the view that making assertions, thinking thoughts, and forming beliefs in every case requires and manifests cognitive access to features like being, difference, and opposition.

⁵³ Note also that the *Timaeus* assigns belief to the wholly rational world soul on the one hand and to the human's soul's immortal part on the other. Both are composed of forms of being, sameness, and difference that correspond, in each case, to intelligible and perceptible reality (35 A 1–8). When the world soul comes to be in contact with intelligibles, understanding and knowledge result; contact with perceptibles produces true belief (37 A 2–C 5). The circular motions of the human soul's immortal part are at first in severe disarray, as a result of the agitations of birth and early development. It is this disarray of reason that accounts for the occurrence of false beliefs, especially at first of false perceptual beliefs (42 E 6–44 B 1).

We should briefly return to the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to the lowest part of the soul. As we saw earlier, *Timaeus* says that it 'is totally devoid of belief, reasoning (*λογισμός*), and understanding (*νοῦς*)' (*Timaeus* 77 B 5). We can now see that in denying belief to it, *Timaeus* is at the same time indicating the grounds on which belief is being denied to it. The ability to form beliefs requires reason and understanding, and the appetitive part of the soul has neither of these.

A question that arises now is what impact, if any, Plato's recognition of the rationality of belief has on his psychological theory as it is presented in the *Republic*. Once one accepts the rationality of belief, one should obviously refrain from attributing beliefs to parts of the soul that one holds to be non-rational. It should go without saying, though, that to deny the capacity for belief to parts of the soul other than reason is *not* to deprive them of awareness and cognition.¹

I shall argue that much, and perhaps all, of the substance of the *Republic*'s psychological theory can survive Plato's recognition that belief is a rational capacity. My argument will proceed as follows. I shall begin by making some preliminary remarks, to the effect that the *Timaeus*' denial of belief to the lowest part of the soul is primarily motivated by new thinking about the capacity for belief, rather than about the cognitive abilities of the appetitive part. I shall then go on to discuss the *Timaeus*' robust commitment to tripartite psychology. Tripartition clearly survives the recognition that belief or judgement is rational and hence unavailable to the parts of the soul below reason. However, tripartition requires that each one of the three soul-parts is equipped with the resources needed to generate its distinctive kind of motivating condition. Since these resources must in all three cases include cognitive ones, the denial of belief to non-rational soul-parts calls for clarification of what cognitive resources are available to them. I shall draw attention to passages in the *Timaeus* and in the *Philebus* that show or suggest awareness of this need for clarification,² and that in fact seem to me to shed a good deal of light on the cognition of the non-rational soul-parts. We should then revisit the *Republic*'s psychological theory, so as to reflect on how much (if any) of it can be preserved.

The claim in the *Timaeus* that the lowest part of the soul is altogether incapable of belief—a claim that undeniably revises what is said in the *Republic*—can on the face of it be taken in a number of ways. One way of taking it is as a revisionary

¹ Contra, apparently, C. Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). It looks as if he is meaning to infer the denial of *contentful* mental states from the denial of 'conceptualized' mental states, claiming that the appetitive part of the soul in the *Timaeus* is not, and cannot be, a subject of 'contentful desires' (320), apparently just because it is not capable of 'conceptualization'. Cf. 296: the lower parts of the soul 'are no longer subjects at all, since they can no longer have conceptualized states'.

² Namely: *Timaeus* 71 A 3–E 2, *Philebus* 32 B 9–36 C 2 and 38 E 12–40 C 6.

claim about the cognitive abilities of that part of the soul: as denying to it something that, conceived of in much the same way, is attributed to it in the *Republic*. This view assumes that at least roughly the same conception of belief is in play in both dialogues.³ Another way of taking it is as a revisionary claim about belief: as denying that belief is such as to be within the cognitive reach of something that only has the limited abilities that Plato's psychological theory assigns to the appetitive part. On this view, it may well be the case that substantially the same conception of the lowest soul-part and its cognitive abilities is in play in both dialogues.

As we have seen, Plato articulates a conception of belief as a rational capacity in dialogues that are later than the *Republic*. There is no reason to suppose that when he wrote the *Republic* he was operating with that conception. In fact there is very good reason to think the opposite. If he had been operating with that conception, Plato would hardly have attributed beliefs to a non-rational part of the soul, as he does in *Republic* 10, except perhaps as a convenient shorthand. Moreover, Plato comes to accept that belief is a rational capacity by accepting that forming any belief requires cognitive access to intelligibles, crucially including being, which are accessible to reason only. Few considerations could be more deeply foreign to the metaphysics and epistemology of the *Republic*.⁴ Furthermore, the ability to say things in assertion or denial is a rational ability. Plato comes to think, for the same reason that belief is: to assert or deny something always involves attributing being, and so assertion and denial require cognitive access to intelligibles just as much as belief does. If this conception of what is involved in and required for saying something had been available to Plato when he wrote the *Republic*, he would not have written that sense-perception says something or other; only to contrast what perception says with how the soul reflects on it with the aid of reasoning and understanding. And if it had been clear to Plato when he wrote the *Republic* that the ability to form beliefs is inseparable from the ability to discern opposition, he would not have attributed any belief to a part of the soul that is unable to distinguish between (διαιτυνῶσκεν) the large and the small, let alone to grasp their opposition (*Republic* 10, 605 B 7–C1).

³ A view along these lines is taken by Bobonich in *Plato's Utopia Recast*. According to his interpretation of the *Republic's* psychological theory, it involves three distinct rational centres, not only of motivation, but also of belief.

⁴ It is worth noting, however, that this consideration is reflected in the *Timaeus*: the world's wholly rational soul includes portions not just of sameness and difference, but also of being (οὐσία), as they are divided among bodies (τῆς . . . περί τῶν σόμματα γυνομένης μεμετρητής) (35 A 1–6). The presence of the 'divisible' forms is plainly supposed to account for beliefs about perceptibles (37 A 2–C 3); this is an application of the principle that like is known by like. The idea is no doubt that the perceptible world manifests a certain kind of being, and that the world soul must incorporate being of the relevant kind if it is to be able to apprehend such being, and to form beliefs on the basis of that apprehension. The world soul also includes portions of 'indivisible' being, sameness, and difference, presumably to account for its ability to apprehend the intelligible world-order, which Plato takes to exist separately from the perceptible world. The human soul's rational part is composed from the same ingredients as the world soul.

These considerations defeat the view that the conception of belief as a specifically rational capacity that emerges at *Theaetetus* 184–7, and that is reflected in the *Timaeus*, is already in play in the *Republic*. Rather, it very much seems that Plato in the *Republic* uses the term *doxa* ('belief') and related terminology more loosely and broadly, so that having a *doxa* may simply be a matter of being in a representational state, a state that presents something as being some way or other, and accepting that the thing in question is that way. Neither the representational state nor its acceptance need be rational; both can belong to the soul in virtue of belonging to any part of it. The acceptance that such a 'belief' involves may be entirely uncritical, and may be no more than a disposition to act on the information contained in the representational state. ~~If so, the inference from having 'beliefs' to being rational is illegitimate.~~ This of course is as it should be: the *Republic's* non-rational parts of the soul really are non-rational, though they are capable of 'belief'.

The *Timaeus* makes clear that Plato's commitment to tripartition of the soul survives his recognition that belief is a rational capacity. *Timaeus* assigns belief to the world soul and to the immortal, rational part of the human soul and denies it to the appetitive part. Against the background of Plato's psychological theory and the recognition of belief as rational, it is plain that spirit too is incapable of belief. At the same time, tripartition is, as we have seen, very much in evidence in the *Timaeus*.

The non-rational soul-parts of the *Timaeus* are not only able to generate their distinctive kinds of motivating conditions. *Timaeus* also presents 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.⁵ There is no suggestion, here or elsewhere, that the appetitive part needs any support or assistance from reason so as to originate an action. Consider also *Timaeus'* account of the origins of land animals:

Land animals in the wild came from men who had no tincture of philosophy and who made no study of the universe, because they no longer made use of the circular motions in their heads but instead followed the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest. (*Timaeus* 91 E 2–6)

The circular motions in people's heads are the movements of the same and the different that are characteristic both of the world soul, as described at 36 B 6–D 7, and of the immortal part of the human soul. Not to make use of them is not to make use of one's reason. It should also be noted that for a considerable period in the development of human beings, the immortal parts of their souls are not,

⁵ *Timaeus* 70 B 4–5: ὡς τις αἰκνός . . . γένηται· πρῶξις ἐξέωθεν ἧ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐνδοθῶν ἐπιθυμῶν.

according to Timaeus' account, in functioning order, and during this time their souls are devoid of understanding. It is as a result of the disturbances of birth and early development, he says, that

even today and not only at the beginning, whenever a soul is bound within a mortal body, it at first lacks understanding (ὄνους ψυχῆ γίνεσθαι). But as the stream that brings growth and nourishment diminishes and the soul's orbits regain their composure, resume their proper courses, and establish themselves more and more with the passage of time, their circular motions are set straight . . . They then correctly identify what is the same and what is different, and render intelligent (ἐπιφρονῶν) the person who possesses them. (Timaeus 44 A 7–B 7)

Thus for a considerable period in their development, the behaviour of children will depend on the functioning of their soul's non-rational parts.⁶ The non-rational parts not only generate desires of distinctive kinds, but are also the bearers of emotions and other mental states such as pleasure, pain, confidence, fear, and expectation (Timaeus 69 D 1–4). The desires they generate are not, then, limited to blind cravings or undirected urges. Rather, they can be sufficiently determinate to be acted on. As a result, non-rational soul-parts can generate actions all on their own, so much so that humans can do much of what they do without making use of their soul's rational parts. This, at any rate, is what Timaeus says or implies.

Moreover, it is plainly part of Timaeus' account of the tripartite soul that there can be some form 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* simply 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 [sc. the appetitive part] in no way want to obey willingly (ὀπὸ τ' ἐπιτῆγματι καὶ λόγῳ) πείθεσθαι ἐκὸν ἐθέλει) the command and account (τῷ τ' ἐπιτῆγματι καὶ λόγῳ) coming down from the citadel' (Timaeus 70 A 6–7). It would be pointless (or worse) to say this if it were not possible for appetite willingly to obey such commands.⁸ But for that to be possible, appetite must first of all be able to receive reason's commands. Thus there is good reason to think that the Timaeus' version of

⁶ Cf. *Republic* 4, 441 A 7–B 1: children are full of anger (as well as, of course, appetite) immediately after birth; reason arrives later if at all.

⁷ Zeyl translates the dicrates of reason'. But the command and the λόγος are syntactically coordinate, and they are both said to come 'from the citadel'—which is to say, from the rational part of the soul. Given the τ' . . . καὶ construction, we should take 'command' and 'account' closely together; reason's command is, or comes with, a practical account, which indicates the thing to do in the circumstances, perhaps in a way that makes perspicuous why it is the thing to do (for instance, because it is what justice requires).

⁸ This passage thus contains the resources needed to refute an argument against the Timaeus' account of tripartition in Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Reexamined*, 317. The distinction between appetite willingly obeying reason and being overpowered jointly by reason and spirit underwrites and preserves the *Republic's* distinction between the true virtue that is temperance and the oligarch's self-control.

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),⁹ and it can issue commands to both of the non-rational parts, which they may or may not obey.

The Timaeus' version of tripartition, then, calls for clarification of how the soul's non-rational parts can generate fully formed motivating conditions so as to be able to originate actions all on their own, and how they can receive both commands and information from reason. I now turn to three passages—one in the Timaeus and two closely related ones in the Philebus—that seem to me to shed a good deal of light on these questions.

Passage 1 is Timaeus 71 A 3–E 2. 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 and ultimately, I think, unsatisfactory passage, but one that is nonetheless significant and illuminating, especially when read together with the second of the two Philebus passages to be discussed in the present chapter (that is, Philebus 38 E 12–40 C 6). One concern that the passage clearly 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 70 A 2–7 suggests that appetite is able not only to receive reason's 'commands and accounts', but also to obey them willingly. He now says that the gods knew right away that appetite 'was not going to understand [sc. reason's] account (λόγος), and even if it were to have some awareness of some accounts or other (τῶν ἄλλων . . . λόγων), it was not going to be in its nature to care about them' (Timaeus 71 A 3–5). In emphatic juxtaposition, Timaeus then contrasts 'accounts' with images (εἰδωλα) and appearances (φαντάσματα), by which, he says, the appetitive part would be very much enticed by night and day. It is this tendency to be enticed by images and appearances, Timaeus says, that the gods exploit so as to ensure that reason can have beneficial effects on appetite. They construct the liver as a smooth and shiny organ and place it where the appetitive part of the soul is also located. They equip it with the abilities to take on bitterness and sweetness, and to contract and relax, as appropriate. It is shiny so that 'the force of thoughts carried down from the intellect (τῶν διανοημάτων ἢ ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ φερομένη δύνάμις) might be impressed on it as on a mirror that receives impressions (τύπους) and returns visible images (εἰδωλα)' (Timaeus 71 B 3–5). By means of the liver, Timaeus says, 'the force of thoughts' can, when appropriate, frighten the appetitive part and, on other occasions, make it 'gracious and well behaved'—depending on whether it makes the liver bitter and rough, causing pain and nausea, or whether it makes it sweet and smooth.

⁹ If spirit can receive information from reason about injustices, appetite should be able to be informed by reason about pleasures. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.6, 1149^b32–^b1 (a passage that will be discussed in some detail in Ch. 13): spirit may be informed of an insult or slight by reason or phantasia; appetite may learn about the availability of something pleasant from reason or perception.

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' (71 C 3-4), but unfortunately he leaves it strikingly unclear what they might represent and how the appetitive part can be aware of them. Yet we have been led to expect that they move and entice the appetitive part in a way that 'accounts' could not. And presumably they are supposed to convey undesirable or, when appropriate, desirable prospects—as Timaeus indicates at 71 B 7, where he speaks of a *threat* issued by the force of thoughts.¹⁰ He speaks of the force of thoughts making bilious colours appear in or on the liver (71 B 7-8), which suggests that images or appearances of the requisite kind are in some way generated on the liver's shiny surface. But this will do little or no good, unless there is some way in which such appearances are actually *seen*.

Timaeus associates the liver not only with communication downward from reason to appetite, but also with divination.¹¹ This involves some kind of grasp of truth that does not depend on reason. It occurs 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' (*Timaeus* 71 E 4-6). Timaeus takes appearances (φαντάσματα, 71 E 8) to play a role in at least some cases of divination, where they serve to signify 'some future, past, or present good or evil' (72 A 1-2). Presumably at least some such appearances are dreams (71 D 3-4; 71 E 7). 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 (72 B 7-D 3). And again, Timaeus leaves it obscure what exactly is supposed to appear in or on the liver, and how the soul can have awareness of such appearances.

Nonetheless, a few things seem clear enough. Plato is aware of the need to clarify how reason can convey commands, threats, and the like to appetite—how it can communicate to it something that it cares about, that can stir it to action or, as the case may be, prevent it from action. This need, I suggest, arises as follows. On the one hand, Plato wants to retain appetite's ability to obey reason's commands, in order to preserve a distinction between willing obedience and

being overpowered. On the other hand, appetite is unable, given its limited cognitive abilities, to grasp the significance of reason's 'accounts', arguably because doing so requires cognitive access to intelligibles. The problem this raises is serious. One thing that is at stake is the distinction between true virtue and mere self-control.¹²

The *Timaeus*' attempt to solve the problem is less than successful. Timaeus draws attention to appetite's tendency to be engaged by 'images and appearances', which presumably include sensory experiences such as exercises of sense-perception and of the sensory imagination as, for instance, in dreaming. This coheres well with the assignment of perception to the mortal part of the soul (69 D 4-6). It also brings to mind the non-rational part's acceptance of sensory appearances in *Republic* 10. However, the *Timaeus* fails to provide a clear account of how appearances 'painted'¹³ by 'the force of thoughts issuing from the intellect' can serve to make possible the communication between reason and appetite that Plato's psychological theory requires. The root of this failure is, I suggest, that Timaeus thinks of the appearances that reason generates as being *external* to the soul, being formed in some way on the liver's shiny surface. For this to work, he would need a story about how appetite can see the pictures that reason paints, a story he is, of course, unable to provide. But Timaeus' failure suggests a solution to the problem. The appearances that reason generates should be thought of, not as modifications of bodily organs, but as forms of awareness of a certain kind. In other words, reason's paintings should be *internal* to the soul. This, to anticipate a bit, is in fact where the *Philebus* seems to locate them. In the *Philebus*, as we shall see, Socrates presents a picture of the human soul as being constituted so that at least some of reason's accounts—ones to do with future pleasures and pains, for instance—are accompanied by sensory representations¹⁴ that depend on them.

The main topic of the *Philebus* is 'the good' or 'the human good'. *Philebus* holds that what is good for humans is the same as what is good for all animals, 'to enjoy oneself, to be pleased and delighted' (11 B 4-6). Socrates' argument against this view and for his own account of the *human* good requires distinguishing between different kinds of pleasure, and showing that there are false pleasures as well as true

¹² Plato's psychological theory seems to presuppose—reasonably enough, I think—that the appetitive part's liability to give rise to objectionable desires and aversions is all but ineliminable. Even *lawless* desires, Socrates says, are 'probably present in everyone', adding that 'in a few people they have been eliminated entirely or only a few weak ones remain' (*Republic* 571 B 3-C 1, 572 B 2-7). What appetite cares about are pleasures and pains, and there simply is no way of guaranteeing in advance that what strikes one as pleasant and painful in the varied circumstances of life will always accurately track one's reasoned evaluations of good and bad. Thus there is an ongoing need for appetite to be watched over by reason and spirit, as Socrates makes clear at *Republic* 442 A 4-B 3; cf. 589 A 6-B 6. However, if it is indeed part of the ordinary course of things that everyone forms objectionable desires and aversions at least every once in a while, then Plato's theory does require a 'friendly' way of alloying them that leaves intact the harmonious relations among the parts of the soul that are characteristic of true virtue. ¹³ 71 C 3-4; φαντάσματα ἀποζωρησασθῶν.

¹⁴ Indeed, painted appearances' (φαντάσματα εἰζωρησασθῶν), as Socrates calls them at *Philebus* 40 A 9.

¹⁰ Cf. 70 B 6-8, where Timaeus speaks of 'prescriptions and threats' coming from reason and spirit, which 'everything in the body that is perceptive' (πᾶν ὄσων αἰσθητικὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι) is supposed to perceive and obey. In speaking of 'everything in the body', Timaeus may already have in mind the idea that the appetitive part is not spatially limited to the region around the digestive organs, but also especially animates and motivates the reproductive apparatus, once that is added to the organism in the second generation (90 E 6-91 D 6). Perception and desire belong primarily to the soul and its parts, I take it, but can be attributed derivatively to the ensouled organism and also, perhaps, to the parts or regions of it that are especially associated with one soul-part or another. Thus Timaeus speaks of 'the nature around the private parts' as 'unruly and self-willed, like an animal that will not be subject to reason and, driven crazy by its desires, seeks to overpower everything else' (91 B 4-7). More strikingly still, he says that the woman's womb 'is a living thing within her with a desire for childbearing' (91 B 7-C 2). Cf. Aristotle, *De Motu Animalium* 11, 703^b 20-6.

¹¹ *Timaeus* 72 B 6-7: 'This, then, explains why the liver's nature is what it is, and why it is situated in the region we say—it is for the sake of divination.'

ones. His discussion of pleasure includes a passage (32 B 9–36 C 2) in which he argues that one kind of pleasure—the pleasure of the soul by itself, which arises through expectation (προσδοκία, 32 C 4–5)—involves and depends on memory, which was included in Socrates' initial list of goods, but absent from Philebus'. This discussion, to which I turn now, offers significant clarification of how cognitive resources below belief and reason can, on Plato's view, account for the formation of determinate desires and, by doing so, for the origination of action.

Passage 2: *Philebus* 32 B 9–36 C 2. 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 all animals.¹⁵ His main concern in the passage is to introduce and clarify pleasures of anticipation. These will be taken up for further consideration in the simile of the illustrated book (38 E 12–40 C 6), where Socrates relies on pleasures of anticipation to show that some pleasures are false. The passage also includes a rather elaborate discussion of desire (ἐπιθυμία)¹⁶ 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 (35 D 1–3). 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 [sc. destruction and restoration of the harmonious state]; the expectation before the actual pleasure will be pleasant and will inspire confidence (θαππαλέον), while the expectation of pain will be frightening (φοβερὸν) and painful. (*Philebus* 32 B 9–C 2)

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' (*Philebus* 32 C 3–5).¹⁷ It is worth noting that the *Timaeus*, at

¹⁵ 32 E 4; 35 C 9–10, D 3, E 3; 36 B 8–9. Strictly speaking, the discussion applies to such animals as are equipped with memory, the preservation of perception (34 A 10–11). This excludes molluscs and shellfish: see 21 C 1–8. Interestingly, such creatures will turn out to lack not only expectation, fear, and pleasures of anticipation, but also the ability to form desires (ἐπιθυμία). Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.11, 433^b31–434^a5.

¹⁶ What Socrates offers at 34 D 10–35 D 6 is not, and is arguably not meant to be, a general account of desire, but of 'bodily desire, where what is desired is the opposite of the affection currently undergone by the body' (35 C 9–10). This restriction seems to be indicated at 34 D 10–E 1, where Socrates (referring back to 31 E 6–32 A 8) speaks of hunger, thirst, and the like as desires of one kind (ἕνας ἐπιθυμίας). Note also his indication, at 31 E 3–4, that hunger, thirst, and the like, and the corresponding fillings or restorations, are among the 'most ordinary and well known cases' of pains and pleasures. (Contrast the more refined and less accessible pleasures mentioned at 50 E 5–52 B 8.) The discussion here plainly concentrates on pleasures that consist in anticipating and envisaging the satisfaction of bodily desires.

¹⁷ A fuller formulation is at 39 D 1–3, where Socrates refers back to the present passage. The contrast there is between pleasures and pains of the soul 'through itself', and ones 'through the body'.

69 D 1–6, assigns to the mortal part of the soul not only perception, pleasure, and pain, as well as anger and lust, but also 'confidence' (θάππος), fear (φόβος), and expectation (ἐπι(s)). 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 (33 C 5–6)—he makes a somewhat surprising claim about it: it depends in all cases on memory.¹⁸ 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 (33 D 2–34 A 5). Memory (μνήμη) is the 'preservation of perception' (σωτηρία αἰσθήσεως, 34 A 10–11). 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, replenishment. 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 replenishment' (*Philebus* 35 B 6–7). Perception could not serve to provide the required 'contact' with replenishment, 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 the replenishment, and it clearly must do so through memory' (*Philebus* 35 B 11–C 1).¹⁹

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, in so far as they do not yet possess the impressions that would enable them to make cognitive contact with the relevant kinds of replenishment. If someone is depleted for the first time, he asks, 'is there any way he could be in touch with

¹⁸ διὰ μνήμης πᾶν ἐπιθυμῶδες: 33 C 6.

¹⁹ Socrates takes the discussion to show, not only that desire requires memory, but also, and thereby, that it is the soul, not the body, that desires belong to, even bodily desires like hunger and thirst (35 C 6–7, 35 D 5–6). Protarchus, with characteristic slowness of mind, does not immediately understand: 35 C 8. What convinces him in the end is Socrates' stress on the thought that desires, or anyhow desires of this kind, are for affections opposite to the ones that the body is undergoing at the time. Protarchus seems to think (despite the preceding account of perception) that while the body might have awareness of an affection it is currently undergoing, it could not have awareness of an affection it is not actually undergoing. It is tempting to think that Plato is re-enacting, as it were in slow motion, his own recognition that it is in all cases the soul, not the body, that is the subject of desires—the recognition, that is, that leads to the replacement of the *Phaedo's* psychological theory with the *Republic's*. See my *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on 'Ancient theories of soul', 3.1–2, for discussion of the two theories, and of the relation between them; in, E. N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2003 Edition).

being replenished, either through perception or memory, since he has no experience of it, either in the present or ever in the past' (*Philebus* 35 A 6-9).

Moreover, Socrates takes himself to have shown in the discussion of desire that it is memory that drives or directs (ἐπιφέρειν, 35 D 1-2) 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 behaviour 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, provided the 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 (36 A 7-B 1, B 4). In that case, the subject—human or other animal—takes pleasure in remembering the affection of being replenished (36 B 4-6)—or, as we might say, in envisaging replenishment through sensory impressions stored by memory.

Throughout the passage, Socrates is clearly 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 being resolutely Empiricist,²⁰ 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 pleasures and pains of anticipation available to parts of the soul below reason, as they should be if *Timaeus* is right in assigning to the soul's mortal part such states as confidence, fear, and expectation (*Timaeus* 69 C 5-D 6). 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 (40 D 7-10; 42 A 7-9).

²⁰ See Introduction, pp. 4-6, for a brief account of Empiricism.

Passage 3: *Philebus* 38 E 12-40 C 6. It is immediately clear that the simile of the illustrated book applies, not to the souls of all animals, but specifically to 'our souls' (38 E 12-13). The point of comparison between the human soul and an illustrated book is twofold. Memory, perception, and further affections that Socrates leaves unspecified form sentences or accounts (λόγοι) 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 (δόξαι) and (uttered) statements (λόγοι).²¹ In addition, Socrates thinks, the introduction of a further artisan, responsible for a different kind of product, is called for: a painter or illustrator (ζωγράφος), who follows the scribe and paints images (εἰκόνες) in the soul of the things spoken of [sc. in the scribe's writings] (*Philebus* 39 B 6-7).

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.²² 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' (39 B 9), 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 (38 C 5-E 7). 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 (38 E 6-7). 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 (39 C 4-5, with 39 A 3-7). The painter's works thus involve interpretation of what one saw or perceived otherwise. They depend on the rational states or dispositions that are one's perceptual beliefs.

The pair of artisans in the soul having been introduced, Socrates returns to pleasures of anticipation, referring back to Passage 2 (32 B 9-36 C 2). 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 (ζωγραφήματα) which come to be in us, as we said earlier, are concerned only with the past and the present, but not with the future?' (*Philebus* 39 D 7-E 2). They agree that there are in the soul both writings and corresponding paintings concerning the future. Socrates overstates himself when he says that *all* of them are expectations (39 E 4-5); this is true only of those among them that concern prospects that one thinks will, or may well, come to pass (cf. 36 A 7-B 2). Here is

²¹ The word λόγος thus does double duty here, as it naturally can: it denotes, first, the mind's articulation of its experience; secondly, the person's utterance of a belief in speech.

²² 39 B 9-C 1: ὄραν ἂν ὄψεως ἢ τινος ἀλλῆς εἰσθήσεως τὰ τότε δοξαζόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα ἀπαγγέλλῃ τις τὰς τῶν δοξαζομένων καὶ λεχθέντων εἰκόνων ἐν αὐτῷ ὁρᾷ πῶς. ('When someone has taken away from sight or some other sense the things then judged and spoken of, and in a way sees in himself the images of the things judged and spoken of.')

Socrates' example of a 'painted appearance'²³ associated with, or involved in, such 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' (*Philebus* 40 A 9–12). 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.²⁴

There are 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 sentences or accounts, 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 is going on in us' (39 C 1–2). Moreover, a role for sensory representations is required by Socrates' general claim, made in Passage 2, that pleasures of anticipation arise in *all cases*, 'through memory', the preservation of perception (33 C 5–6). In the context, that 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. Furthermore, just after Passage 3 Socrates turns to 'inflated' pleasures, which appear greater or more intense than they really are, especially when compared with pleasures and pains in the more distant future. He likens this phenomenon, familiar from the *Protagoras* (356 A 5–E 4), to distant objects looking smaller than they really are. This point is, to say the least, much helped by the introduction of the painter in the soul. With the painter in place, prospective pleasures and pains cannot only be described in sentences and accounts, but anticipated vividly and, as it were, 'pre-enacted'²⁵ through the sensory imagination.

²³ φαντάματα ἐξοργισμένηα, 40 A 9.

²⁴ For discussion of what precisely Socrates' claim amounts to, see D. Frede, *Platon: Philebus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 242–60.

²⁵ D. Frede, *ibid.*, 235, writes of 'vorauserteben'.

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 Passages 2 and 3 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 which the *Timaeus* neither repeats nor repudiates. In any case, all or most of the pleasures of anticipation that are at issue in Passages 2 and 3 concern satisfactions of desires that, according to both versions or statements of Plato's psychological theory, belong to the appetitive part of the soul. Not only that: Plato's theory assigns to the soul's appetitive part, not only desires of this kind, but also the pleasures involved in satisfying them. It is entirely natural, then, to expect that the corresponding pleasures of anticipation will also be assigned by the theory to the appetitive part. If it is appetite that takes pleasure in the body's replenishment or restoration, it should also be appetite that takes pleasure in the anticipation of such replenishment.

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 Passage 3—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 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 commands, threats, and the like to the mortal parts of the soul, especially to appetite? Passage 1 strongly suggests that Plato is aware of the question and attempts to answer it, by introducing the idea of images or appearances of some sort that are in some way 'painted' under the influence of reason's thinking (*Timaeus* 71 C 4–5; B 3–5). This answer, however, is unsatisfactory, I suggested, because it makes the appearances that reason generates external to the soul, apparently conceiving of them as modifications of some sort on the liver's shiny surface. In Passage 3, by contrast, Socrates introduces appearances generated under reason's influence, not as modifications of some bodily organ, but as forms of awareness of a certain sort. To be more specific, these appearances are conceived of as distinctively *sensory* forms of awareness. The introduction of such appearances is a significant development in Plato's psychological theory. It resolves the *Timaeus'* problem about appetite's ability to enjoy the benefits of receiving communications from reason.

Given the rather striking similarity both of conception and of language between Passages 1 and 3, it seems unlikely that Plato could have been unaware of the connection. It also seems unlikely that when he wrote the *Timaeus*, or anyhow Passage 1, Passage 3's conception of the human soul as containing a scribe and a painter was already available to him. In that case, there would have been no

need for Passage 1's elaborate and unsatisfactory construction. We should note in passing, then, that we seem to have identified a reason for thinking the *Philebus* to be later than the *Timaeus*.

We should, to conclude, briefly revisit the *Republic's* psychological theory, to reflect on how much of it can be preserved in the wake of the recognition that belief is a rational capacity. The *Timaeus*, as we have seen, takes that recognition fully into account, and yet it seems to retain much or all of the substance of the *Republic's* theory. It preserves the *Republic's* commitment to the view that all three parts of the soul can form, not just blind, undirected cravings, but fully formed motivating conditions, so that each one of the three parts can by itself account for actions. This commitment of the *Timaeus* is underwritten, I have suggested, by the *Philebus'* resolutely Empiricist accounts of bodily desire and the pleasures and pains of anticipation at *Philebus* 32 B 9–36 C 2—accounts that eschew any appeal to distinctively rational resources such as belief (as Plato has come to conceive of it) and instead rely exclusively on perception and the preservation of sensory impressions.

Moreover, the *Timaeus* plainly allows communication between reason and the non-rational soul-parts. Reason shares information with spirit and, presumably, with appetite. It issues to appetite both threats and commands, which appetite may or may not obey willingly. *Timaeus* is evidently at pains to indicate how it can be that reason can communicate in such ways with the mortal part of the soul—in particular with appetite, its cognitively more primitive part. What he says about the subject is intriguing, though not wholly successful. One thing that is fairly clear about the inordinately long and difficult sentence that extends from 71 A 3 to 71 D 4 is that *Timaeus* is attempting to explain the possibility of communication from reason to appetite in a way that assigns a mediating role to the sensory imagination. I have suggested that the simile of the illustrated book, at *Philebus* 38 E 12–40 C 6, indicates an important development in Plato's thinking about the sensory imagination, and about the interaction and communication between reason and appetite. If we are prepared to accept the new conception as an emendation to the *Timaeus'* psychological theory, we end up with a theory that renders intelligible how the sensory imagination can play a mediating role so as to enable reason to communicate with appetite. An account along these lines will also be available for communications between reason and spirit.

As we have seen, the *Timaeus* indicates that appetite *can* willingly obey reason's commands, though *Timaeus* fails to explain satisfactorily how this may come about. Appetite may also refuse to do so, in which case it is incumbent on reason and spirit jointly to overpower it.²⁶ This gives us the distinction we need in

²⁶ *Timaeus* 70 A 2–6: 'The part of the mortal soul that exhibits courage and spirit, the ambitious part, they settled nearer the head, between the midriff and the neck, so that it might listen to reason and together with it hold down by force the part consisting of appetites (βίη τὸ πῶν ἐπιθυμητῶν κατέχει γένος).'

order to retain the *Republic's* contrast between the truly virtuous person and the oligarch, who

forcibly holds down his other desires, which are evil (βία κατέχει ἄλλας κακὰς ἐπιθυμίας). He does so, not by persuading them that it's better not to act on them or taming them by reason (ὄν περὶ θῶν ὅτι οὐκ ἄμεινον, οὐδ' ἡμερῶν λόγῳ), but by compulsion and fear, trembling for his other possessions. (*Republic* 8, 554 C 12–D 3)

This contrast does not require the idea that the appetitive part can be persuaded by *arguments* that it should abstain from some objectionable course of action. In fact, that would be very much the wrong idea to employ, as it would result in a sub-partition within the appetitive part by introducing the possibility of lack of self-control within it. What is required by the contrast is rather some way in which reason can affect the appetitive part so as to make it gently and perhaps gladly acquiesce in the better course of action. That would be a clear case of taming appetite by reason, and it would contrast in a perfectly adequate way with holding desires down 'by compulsion and fear'. The *Republic* does not say how reason can affect appetite in the requisite way. It simply assumes that it can. Acquiescence of the non-rational parts in the course of action that reason prescribes is also what is minimally required by Socrates' account of temperance in book 4: 'A person is temperate because of the friendly and harmonious relations between these same parts, namely, when the ruler and the ruled believe in common that reason should rule and they don't engage in civil war against it' (*Republic* 4, 442 C 9–D 2).

The *Timaeus*, by contrast, does attempt to explain how reason can affect appetite. A gentle inspiration descending from thought', *Timaeus* says, may 'paint' appearances (φαντάσματα) that are opposite to the threats mentioned just before in the text. When that happens, he says, the liver becomes sweet and smooth. In this way—both, I take it, by 'painting' agreeable prospects and by causing pleasant sensations—thought makes the appetitive part gentle and tame.²⁷ As we have seen, *Timaeus* leaves it obscure how thought can paint agreeable prospects and how appetite can be aware of them. But we only have to consult the *Philebus* to see how this can be. The human soul is constituted so that certain kinds of thoughts—such as beliefs about future pleasures and pains—involve, or are accompanied by, suitable exercises of the sensory imagination, through which the person 'pre-enacts' the pleasures and pains in question. The appetitive part of the soul, *Timaeus* tells us, is constituted so that it fails to understand, or in any event fails to be moved by, the accounts that form the contents of thoughts (*Timaeus* 71 A 3–5). But if thoughts about good or bad prospects come with sensory representations that illustrate them, it turns out that they can, after all, move even the lowest part of the soul. For as *Timaeus* also lets us know, the appetitive part is so constituted as to be highly sensitive, and responsive, to 'images and appearances' (71 A 5–7).

²⁷ Ἰλαίων τε καὶ ἐβήμερον, *Timaeus* 71 D 1–2. Note ἡμερῶν at *Republic* 8, 554 D 2.

What reason can do, then, in order to make appetite acquiesce in the better course of action is to draw its attention to some pleasure that may accompany that course of action, or to some pain which that course of action may help avoid. To be sure, such tactics will not always work. Whether or not they do will depend both on the strength and intensity of the occurrent appetite and on the character and motivational structure of the person in question. As we have seen, Plato's psychological theory acknowledges that everyone forms objectionable non-rational desires at least every once in a while. At the same time, the *Republic's* theory of virtue requires that the virtuous person is able to allay bad desires in a way that leaves intact the harmonious relations among the parts of her soul that are characteristic of true virtue. Having read both the *Timaeus* and the *Philebus*, we can see how Plato can meet that requirement.

PART THREE

PHANTASIA AND NON-RATIONAL DESIRE IN ARISTOTLE