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**DESIRE AND MOTIVATION IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC* AND A FEW OTHER  
DIALOGUES**

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**Georgios Kampalios**  
**June 2008**

**26 JAN 2009**

## **Abstract**

My thesis concerns Plato's theory of human motivation and action in the *Republic*. My aim is to try to investigate how and to what extent the tripartite division of the soul into reason, appetite and spirit explains human action and behaviour.

I shall concentrate mostly on the appetitive part of the soul and discuss how and in which cases this part affects the character and the dispositions of human beings.

In my first part (ch.1-2) I investigate the nature of this part of the soul arguing that it is totally deprived of any kind of cognition and incapable of motivating actions on its own without the involvement of reason.

In my second part (ch.3-5) I present an analysis of the story of Leontius in *R. IV* which illustrates an instance of human behaviour that seems to suggest that the desires of the appetitive part can motivate action despite reason's resistance. Then I discuss the role that Plato attributes to appetite in his description of unjust souls and the way that the appetitive part is related to reason in the soul of the non-virtuous person. Finally through

my discussion of the ideal soul of the philosopher I sketch the minimal role that the desiring part has in human motivation and ethical perfection.

In the last part (ch.6) I provide a brief account of the so-called 'Socratic' thesis of human motivation as it appears in the *Protagoras*. My point is that despite some apparent differences the two theories have a substantial similarity.

*To my parents for being always there*

## **Acknowledgements**

Foremost I would like to acknowledge my supervision Prof. Christopher Rowe, for his unstinting commitment to helping see this essay to its final completion, and his equally generous and wise guidance during its development.

I am indebted to my student colleague Xanthippe Bourloyanni for her valuable comments on various issues of this essay. I am also grateful to all my friends from Durham University, for being the surrogate family all these years I have stayed there. I wish especially to thank my best friends George Georgiou and Andreas Pantazatos for their continued moral and intellectual support.

Finally I am forever indebted to my parents for their understanding, endless patience and encouragement when it was most required.

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## Introduction

On one theory of human motivation the agent's conception of what is good for him is sufficient to motivate action. This motivation involves desire for what is good as well as belief about what is good or beneficial for the agent. This theory is often labelled as 'intellectualism' and is attributed to Socrates in a number of Platonic dialogues such as the *Protagoras*, the *Gorgias*, the *Meno*, the *Lysis*, the *Symposium* and the *Euthydemus*. The important feature that underlines this theory of human motivation is that action cannot be motivated unless the agent judges that a certain course of action is the best available option in the circumstances. Thus, all our desires are rational in the sense of being desires for what the agent believes best. At the same time wrongdoing is not explained by reference to the strength of another desire that goes against what the agent believes it best to do. Any failure of the agent to act on his best judgement at the time of the action is explained by an intellectual error; he simply did not know what the best thing to do was. Against this view many modern philosophers like Kant or Hume would protest, suggesting that it is a brute fact of human nature that we sometimes act or we are motivated to act against what we believe or even know to be best. It is a human fact because there are irrational desires that can operate independently of our reasoning capacities and can motivate us to take a certain course of action without any consideration about the goodness or the badness of the action or the object of our desire.

Plato himself seems also to disagree with the view that is presented in these dialogues and in the *Republic* he is trying to develop a more complex and elaborated theory of human action and motivation according to which the various ways that human



beings are motivated to act and behave can be explained by the existence of different elements in their souls. Each element has its own function and accounts for different dispositions of character. These elements provide also the key for Socrates to give at least a preliminary answer to the initial question of the dialogue: 'what is justice?' According to the moral psychology that Plato develops in *Republic* Book IV the soul is divided into three parts: reason, spirit and appetite. Each of these parts has a certain function: we learn and we exercise all our cognitive capacities with reason, we experience emotions such as fear and anger with spirit while we feel attracted or repelled towards pleasant sensations and bodily pains with appetite. At the same time all these three elements are distinct sources of motivation. Only reason out of the three is the source of rational motivation while the other two generate irrational desires that are not for what the agent thinks or believes to be best. The extent to which the theory of human motivation in the *Republic* is more complicated or advanced than the Socratic theory depends more or less on how the nature of the lower parts and their motivational role is understood. In this thesis I shall concentrate on the appetitive part of the soul. In Book IV this part is described in terms of a beast as generating numerous irrational bodily appetites without any consideration of what is best or beneficial for the whole soul (437d2-439b1). These appetites seem to have the strength to overcome reason's power and to be able to motivate the person to act against what he believes it best to do.

This thesis has two main purposes. One of these is to investigate the nature of the appetitive part of the soul and the kind of desires that this part generates. The division of the soul into three parts has raised a lot of questions about how these parts should be conceived. The fact that these parts are often presented by Plato as having their own

desires and being able to motivate action on their own has led some scholars to view the parts of the soul as agent-like parts within the person. This view entails that the parts of the soul are proper subjects having their own reasoning capacities such as evaluative beliefs and their own desires. On this view the appetitive part of the soul desires what it considers to be pleasant for the satisfaction of bodily needs and is also capable of finding adequate means to acquire the object of its desire. On another interpretation, the desiring part is not capable of engaging in the activity of reasoning, but it is equipped with the ability to represent things to itself in a certain way. On both interpretations the appetitive part has some cognitive capacities, either higher or lower, that allow to it to describe objects in a certain way and to generate desires for these objects. In the first part of this thesis I try to disarm the view that the appetitive part can have access to any kind of cognitive abilities so as to be able to recognize objects and to generate full desires for these objects. My view is that in the *Republic* Plato retains a view about perception and belief similar to the one that he holds in the *Theaetetus*, the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*. According to this view judgement requires the application of the 'commons' to which the soul has access with its own resources. The commons are concepts such as 'being', 'sameness' and 'difference', hence perception itself is neither judgemental nor representational. Thus, even if the appetitive part of the soul in the *Republic* is related to perception, as the lower parts in the *Timaeus* are, it seems that it has no access to any cognitive capacity according to which it can recognize objects in a certain way. The view that the appetitive part of the soul is totally deprived of any kind of cognition seems to be compatible with Plato's claim about the 'simple desires' of hunger and thirst in the argument for the tripartition of the soul. He claims that the desire for thirst as such is

directed towards drink or drinking without being able to describe any kind of drink in a certain way either as 'hot' and 'cold' or 'good' and 'bad'. My claim is that the desires of the appetitive part of the soul should be conceived not as full desires which involve some belief according to which we represent something in a certain way and motivate ourselves to act or to acquire the object of our desire, but as unconceptualised irrational motions of the soul that are related to pleasant sensations or bodily pains and so on. Plato is using these simple desires to separate reason from appetite and allocates them to the appetitive part of the soul. Since these motions are unconceptualised and cannot recognize certain objects it seems difficult that this part on its own or the appetites of this part can normally motivate action. In that sense, the motivating power of the appetitive part as it is presented in the argument of Book IV is restricted to the influence that the irrational motions of the soul have on the formation of our fully-fledged physical desires.

The second main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the explanatory value of the appetitive part in human behaviour and action and ultimately to the question of justice. On the grounds that this part seems incapable of motivating action relying on its own resources, it has explanatory value for very few and rather unnatural cases of human behaviour and action. The existence of the appetitive part can explain, for instance, why some people may act unwillingly and under compulsion against what they believe to be the best thing to do. We find such a case in *Republic* Book IV which is illustrated by the story of Leontius. According to the story that Plato is using to separate spirit from appetite, Leontius acts against his judgment of what it is best to do because he is under the influence of a very strong appetite that he cannot resist despite the fact that he does everything not to succumb to his appetite. It can be said that in such cases the agent is not

free to act according to what he believes to be the best thing to do, but is acting under compulsion and the action is counter-voluntary.

The explanatory value of the desiring part seems to be less important when in Books VIII and IX Plato describes why the non-virtuous unjust types mistakenly choose the wrong ends in their lives and arrange all their particular choices and their desires according to these ends. The behaviour and the choices of these types can be explained by reference to a weak and distorted reasoning part that is infused with the wrong beliefs about what is worth pursuing. Although the appetitive part is said to take the government in the soul of the oligarch, the democrat and the tyrant, it is not the appetitive part that takes the decisions and leads the soul in these types by its own devices. All these three types decide what to do by reference to the false beliefs that they hold. The picture of the appetitive part as being in charge is merely rhetorical and emphasizes the unreasonable character of the actions and the choices of these types.

The really virtuous and just soul of the philosopher still has the appetitive part. But this part is not presented even in a metaphorical way as influencing the choices and the actions of the just person. The philosopher decides what to do in the light of his knowledge of what is really good for him and as a result all his actions, his choices and his desires, including the bodily desires, are rationally shaped and organized by his knowledge. This is not to say that in the ideally just soul the appetitive part has been educated or has improved its appetitive and bestial nature so that real harmony is achieved. It is the strength of reason which is in its best condition that ensures and promotes real justice in the soul.

On these grounds it seems that Plato in the *Republic* does actually provide a more

complex picture of human motivation than the one we get in the dialogues where the view of 'intellectualism' appears. The main idea that underlines, in my view, the Platonic theory of motivation in the *Republic* is that, since reason is strong and rules in a normative way over the soul, the person will be motivated towards the right courses of action. When people go wrong they do so not so much because of appetite or spirit, but because of the improper function of the reasoning part. If we look at the *Protagoras*, one of these dialogues in which the Socratic view can be found, we can also see that strength of knowledge ensures that all the practical value-judgements on which we act are always true so that a true homogeneity in the way that we think and act can be achieved.

**PART ONE**

## 1. Perception, Belief and Parts of the Soul in the *Republic*.

It has been assumed<sup>1</sup> that Plato in the *Republic* holds a view of perception according to which perception can form judgements and can say that something is 'so and so'. At the same time 'perception' is used by Plato almost interchangeably with 'belief'<sup>2</sup> as if perception itself involves some kind of judgement. In this chapter I shall try to claim that Plato does not necessarily hold the view that perception is propositional or that belief and perception are the same. The fact that in the *Republic* he treats belief and perception as being the same relies maybe on the fact that perception plays an important role in the formation of our perceptual judgements and appearances and that the deceptive character of perception is usually responsible for the falsity of these appearances.<sup>3</sup> In the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*, dialogues that postdate the *Republic*, perception is non-judgemental, which means that perception cannot form beliefs of the kind 'x is F' when what constitutes 'F' is any term whether or not it is available to the senses. My claim in this chapter is further related to my main view in this thesis according to which the lower parts of the soul in the *Republic* lack any kind of cognitive resources. If it is true that Plato in the *Republic* maintains the idea that mere perception is capable of forming beliefs of the form 'x is F', then it can be argued that the lower parts of the soul that have access to perception or are affected by perception have

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. among others Cooper 1970: 127, Burnyeat 1976: 34, Bobonich 2002: 322 and Fine 1988b: 15-28.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Frede, M., 1987: 3-8.

<sup>3</sup> Within the Two World distinction in the *Republic* beliefs are about the visible world while knowledge is about the realm of the intelligibles. I do not claim here that this is a distinction between belief and perception that Plato really holds. The fact though that he uses this distinction in order to show the instability of belief in relation to knowledge, allows him to present perception as closely related to, or even identical with, belief.

this ability too. This is a claim that Bobonich takes up,<sup>4</sup> arguing that the lower parts of the soul in the *Republic* do have cognitive resources, i.e. are able to form beliefs at least about physical objects exactly because they have access to the data of perception and the beliefs that are involved in perception:

‘Perception in the *Republic* has propositional content, that is, it involves perceiving that objects have certain features. Nor is perception there limited to grasping the proper sensibles, e.g., colours and sounds. It can, rather, grasp a fairly open-ended set of features, including, for example, that something is a finger’.

Bobonich, like others (see n. 1), relies his claim about the judgemental capacity of perception on *Republic* 523a10-524a9 — the ‘finger passage’— where Plato’s use of the idea of judging terms in relation to perception seems to suggest that he holds the view that perception is capable of forming beliefs.

In the *Republic* the relation between perception and the lower parts of the soul is not made clear. Bobonich recognizes this fact, but he assumes that the lower parts have access to perception probably in the sense that the lower parts have the capacity to perceive and thus have the judgemental capacity that Plato seems to attribute to perception in the *Republic*.

‘Although the *Republic* does not make fully clear the relation between perception and the lower parts of the soul, the lower parts do have access to perception and the beliefs that are part of

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<sup>4</sup> Bobonich 2002: 322.

perception, while they lack higher sorts of cognitive abilities such as thought (*dianoia*) and knowledge (*epistēmē* and *nous*).<sup>5</sup>

However, Plato's silence on the relation between perception and the lower parts of the soul might indicate that Plato does not *really* want to attribute perception to the lower parts of the soul since he has not distinguished between perception and belief, but rather uses both terms almost interchangeably. In the *Timaeus*, a dialogue that is dated certainly after the *Republic* and after the *Theaetetus*, Plato clearly allocates the capacity of perception to the lower parts of the soul (69c5-d6). In the *Timaeus*, however, perception itself is not judgemental, but is presented as an irrational motion of the lower parts of the soul caused by the interaction between a sense organ and an external material object (64a2-65a5).<sup>6</sup> In the *Republic*, in my view, Plato is not eager to establish any clear relation between perception and the lower parts of the soul as he does in the *Timaeus*, probably because he wants to avoid attributing beliefs to these parts, something that the almost parallel use of the terms might suggest. That Plato uses the two terms in the same need not necessarily lead us to adopt the conclusion that in the *Republic* Plato holds a wrong view about perception and belief that he corrects when he comes to write the *Theaetetus*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bobonich 2002: 322.

<sup>6</sup> See Silverman 1990: 148-175 and Johansen 2004: ch. 8 for further discussion on perception in the *Timaeus*.

<sup>7</sup> See Cooper 1970: 127 who suggests that Plato was mistaken to say in the *Republic* that perception can say or report this or that.

(i) *Perception and appearance*

At *Theaetetus* 184-186, where Socrates tries to show Theaetetus that perception is not knowledge, Plato distinguishes between perception and belief. At 184d7-185a10 he argues that the senses ‘through which’<sup>8</sup> we perceive something cannot be the subjects even of the simplest judgement. Any predication of the form ‘x is F’ exceeds the capacity of any sense. The soul is the only subject of any kind of judgement since it is the soul that has access with its own resources and independently of the senses to what Plato calls ‘common’ predicates, like being, or numbers and abstract terms such as ‘like’ and ‘unlike’ and also value terms such ‘good’ and ‘bad’ which are essential for the soul to form any kind of judgement 185a1- 186a11.<sup>9</sup> Later on at 189d7-190a7 we are told that judgement is an internal discourse (*logos*) where the soul asks itself questions and answers them. This discourse takes place whatever the topic of the inquiry might be (*peri hōn an skopēi e7*). This internal dialogue of the soul takes place either when we reach a perceptual judgement about a physical object or when we reach a mathematical judgement e.g. ‘7+5=12’. The inner discourse of the soul is exemplified further at 195a5-196c9 in the model of the ‘wax tablet’. Socrates, having rejected the ‘other-judging’ model as an inadequate explanation of false judgements, turns to a new one according to which the soul contains a wax tablet or block where we imprint things that we have to

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<sup>8</sup> The ‘through which’ is expressed in Greek by the preposition *dia* and the genitive. See Burnyeat 1976 and also Frede 1987

<sup>9</sup> Cooper op. cit.: 131-132 and Modrak 1981: 41 cite the passage at 185b-c2 and suggest that there are cases when perception can form a judgement of the form ‘x is F’, namely when we ask whether something is ‘red’ or ‘sweet’. However, at 185e1 Theaetetus says, and Socrates agrees, that everything, including the predicate being, are accessed by the soul through its own resources.

remember. These things are extended from sensations that we had in the past to 'concepts' or pieces of knowledge<sup>10</sup> that we have acquired (191d4-8). The existence of such a tablet in the soul can explain how we can reach a false judgement about an external object that we perceive. If for example we see Theaetetus from a distance and we misidentify him with Theodorus we have related what we perceive to the wrong imprint on the tablet because of the way the object is presented through the senses. But the wax tablet also accounts for other mistakes: when for example I can see Theaetetus clearly, but I judge wrongly that he is ugly because I have related him to the imprecise concept of 'ugly' in my soul.<sup>11</sup> Having an imprecise concept might mean that I do not really know what 'ugly' is, for instance, and I wrongly apply it to what I perceive.<sup>12</sup> The wax tablet then accounts both for mistakes that are due to the way the objects are illustrated to the soul through the senses and also for mistakes due to imprecise imprints in our souls. Having an imprecise imprint might mean that that I do not really know the very meaning of a concept stored in the tablet or that I totally lack the right concept. In both cases whether we reach a false or a right judgement, the judgement is the result of an inner dialogue of the soul. This inner discourse becomes explicit when we are not certain of what we perceive, or when perception is undetermined, while it remains unnoticed when we can see something clearly. If for instance Theaetetus is very close to me I do not have

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<sup>10</sup> By 'concepts' or pieces of knowledge I translate the word *ennoiais*.

<sup>11</sup> I agree here with McDowell 1973: 214-216, 218-219 and Sedley 2006: 136 n.23 who suggest that the wax tablet caters only for mistakes in perceptual judgements and not in conceptual judgements (compare Burnyeat 1990: 104-105 who argues that the model caters for both mistakes). However, a wax tablet of good quality plays some role in our ability to form a true perceptual judgement or a true appearance. The text at 194d1-7 suggests that good quality tablet is a feature of those who learn easily, avoid mistakes and are called wise.

<sup>12</sup> At 186c2-5 we are told that the concepts are not given, but they are acquired gradually (*en chronōi*) through education (*paideia*). What Plato means here is that all ordinary people normally acquire some concepts either through experience or through education; the proper investigation and the acquisition of the right concepts is something that takes time and is achieved only by experts or philosophers who follow the higher educational training of mathematics and dialectic.

to ask whether what I see is Theaetetus or Theodorus and it is also highly improbable that I shall misidentify him with Theodorus. However, even in these cases it is not perception that tells me 'this is Theaetetus'; rather it is the soul that relates what I see with the imprint Theaetetus. The inner discourse in that case remains unnoticed because it is restricted to one question. I can ask 'what is it' and I can immediately answer 'This is Theaetetus', but saying this is Theaetetus means that I have identified what I see not only as Theaetetus but also as a 'human being', 'a man', 'a unity' and so on.

In the *Philebus*<sup>13</sup> we get an example that echoes the *Theaetetus*. At 38c5-e7 Plato describes someone who sees a shape next to a rock from a distance and starts wondering what it is. The person, Plato says, starts asking himself whether this is a man or a statue and he might answer either, rightly, that this a man or, wrongly, a statue. Plato has chosen this example in order to exemplify why judgement,<sup>14</sup> which has been defined earlier on at 38b12-13 as the combination of memory and perception, is the result of an inner dialogue of the soul. In this example the activity of *dianoia* is made explicit since the person strives to reach some certainty about the object that is seeing. However, Plato says that what is next to the rock already appears as something, or 'is' something, say, 'is' an object or 'is' a unity. According to the *Theaetetus*, as we have seen, 'being' is common to every thought, even to the minimal thought where we say that a 'colour is', which is beyond the capacity of perception. When Plato says that 'there is something next to the rock' (*esti to para tēn petran*) that appears (*phantazomenon*) this appearance, since it

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<sup>13</sup> *Philebus* is widely accepted as postdating the *Theaetetus*.

<sup>14</sup> At 37a1 ff. Plato draws an analogy between pleasure and belief. In this analogy he recognizes two aspects of *doxa*. The *doxazein* which is the act of judging, or the activity of *dianoia* in the *Theaetetus*, and the *doxazomenon* which is the result of this activity. The latter is what can be either true or false while the former takes place whether or not we reach a true judgement (37a1 1-12).

involves 'is', cannot be the result of perception, but should involve a belief<sup>15</sup> which in turn is the result of an inner dialogue of the soul. The dialogue in that case remains unnoticed, *as if* the belief comes from perception because we can immediately say that 'something is', while the dialogue becomes explicit when we wonder whether 'something is a man or a statue'.<sup>16</sup> In this passage Plato, in my view, clearly distinguishes between perception and appearance. Every appearance is structured by belief, which is the result of the soul's inner dialogue.<sup>17</sup> Perception on the other hand is part of what an appearance is, but it is not itself an appearance since it does not involve any belief. Being part of an appearance, perception can of course determine the truth or the falsity of this appearance in the sense that an unclear or undetermined perception can partially explain the falsity of a judgement about a physical object.

In the example of the walker in the *Philebus* and the model of the 'wax tablet' in the *Theaetetus* it is made clear that any judgement or any appearance we have about a physical object requires application of the commons like 'being', 'sameness', 'difference' etc. which are not available to perception, but to which the soul has access to by means of its own resources. Application of the commons apart from access to them involves also some kind of thinking and reasoning which, as we have seen, takes the form of an unnoticed — in most cases — inner dialogue within the soul. This kind of thinking refers

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. for the same interpretation of this passage Delcomminette 2003: 216-137. In the *Theaetetus* when I misidentify Theaetetus with Theodorus I have already successfully related what I see to my imprint 'human being', 'man' or 'unity' and I only falsely relate him to my imprint Theodorus due to distance.

<sup>17</sup> In the *Sophist* 264b1-2 Plato defines appearance (*phainetai*) as a combination of perception and belief which recalls what he says in the *Philebus*. In this *Sophist* passage and in agreement with the *Theaetetus* belief is the result of the inner discourse of the soul (*ephanē dianoia men autēs pros heautēn psuchēs dialogos, doxa de dianoias apoteleutēsis* a9-b1) while appearance is the combination of belief and perception (*phainetai de ho legomen summeiksis aisthēseōs kai doxēs* b1-2). From the *Philebus* and the *Sophist* emerges that for Plato, unlike Aristotle, there is no difference between 'something *seems* so-and-so' and 'something *is* so-and-so'. When Plato writes that 'something *phainetai* as such' he means that 'something *is* as such' to the person that has the appearance. In that sense any perceptual judgement is an appearance. For Aristotle's distinction between *doxa* and *phantasia* see *De Anima* 428b1-5.

usually to the way that ordinary people think when they form judgements and is restricted to a superficial application of the 'commons' to what they perceive as they cannot sufficiently recognize all the differences, similarities and interconnections between the common concepts that they apply to what they perceive. As the 'wax tablet' model indicates, this superficial application of the commons can easily lead to false judgments. However, when Socrates and Theaetetus in the *Theaetetus* 201b6-210b3 try to find what should be added to true belief to become knowledge, we get an account of belief that includes more than the mere application of the 'commons'. In the 'Dream Theory' and particular in the Second 'Element' theory, true *doxa plus logos* is defined as a listing of all the elements that constitute an object (206e6-207a1). The important thing in the 'Element' theory is that the elements are not necessarily material components but can be non-elementary constituents like formal features, qualities or any other features that we mention or apply to a physical object when we describe it. This is suggested by the text at 209c5-10 where Socrates seems to consider as 'elements' of an object features like Theaetetus' 'snub nose'.<sup>18</sup>

The kind of thinking or reasoning that underlines a true *doxa plus logos* is not any longer the implicit application of concepts to what we perceive. We have seen that this

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<sup>18</sup> That physical objects are aggregates of different elements echoes the passage at 157d-157c which ends with a definition of physical objects as *athroismata* of perceptible properties. The definition there of course emerges from the Heraclitian theory. In the 'Element' theory Plato adds non-perceptible to perceptible features in order to accommodate statements about physical objects that include not only a list of their material components, but also features that are not perceptible. See Burnyeat 1990: 140 who considers Theaetetus' own snub nose as a constituent. See also Sedley 2006: 171 and n.32 who suggests that the constituents of the objects are to be understood formally and structurally and not in a narrowly material way as material components given to direct perception. See also Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* 156.5-14 where Alcinous suggests that the perceptible world is an aggregate (*athroismata*), which is judged by doxastic *logos* not without perception. This is an idea that comes mainly from the *Timaeus* 28a ff. It is very probable though that Alcinous is also influenced by the text in the *Theaetetus*. (See Sedley 1996 for a very illuminating discussion on Alcinous' text and the relation between the *Didaskalikos* and Plato's epistemology in the *Theaetetus* and in the *Timaeus*).

superficial and 'unreflective' application, even it happens to be correct and includes some kind of reasoning, can never be 'accountable'. At the lower level of the application of concepts, even if some of them are somehow available to the soul the soul rushes to its conclusions without a full understanding of the relations between all the elements of the object. By contrast in listing the 'elements' of the object one by one we do not simply form a sequence of names or concepts that we apply to a perceived sensible object, but we relate or synthesize them in an appropriate way. This is what the musician is doing at 207b: the expert musician knows all the elements of his field and has an account of how these elements are related in order to form a whole. If the elements can be understood formally and structurally then saying something about an object goes even beyond a mere listing of the components; it is to grasp their interconnections and to understand how each element functions in the whole. Reasoning and thinking in that case would be a reference to a higher capacity of *dianoia*, not any longer as an internal dialogue of the soul as it is at the superficial level of application, but as the higher cognitive capacity in the *Republic* which has to do with mathematics and arithmetic and starts turning the soul towards the realm of the intelligible.<sup>19</sup> What is important in the *Theaetetus* is that it is not perception itself that conceptualises or identifies objects as such, but the soul through the senses. In any case, as we have seen in the *Philebus*, that something appears 'as such', the appearance, involving perception is also conditioned by a belief according to which something is presented to the soul in a certain way.

In addition the formation of the belief, i.e. the application of the commons to what is perceived, requires some kind of reasoning and thinking in the form of an inner

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<sup>19</sup> See Sedley 2006: 170-72 who suggests that what Plato probably has in mind in the second 'Element' theory is the physics of the *Timaeus* where complex bodies can be analysed all the way down to primary triangles.

dialogue of the soul. In the *Republic*, as part of Book 10's attack on imitative art, painting and poetry, Socrates appeals to a division of soul in order to identify the part or the parts over which imitative art exerts its power. At 602c-603b he tries first to identify the part of the soul to which the visual art of painting appeals. Plato claims that when we experience optical illusions we often simultaneously believe that things are as they appear and that they are as calculation and measurement prove them to be:

'the same magnitude does not appear (*phainetai*) the same because of sight (*dia tēs opseōs*) if it is seen from distance or from close...again the same things are seen bent when they are in the water and straight when they are out of the water and concave or convex due to the deception of sight in relation to the colours and any sort of confusion (*tarachē*) of this kind clearly takes place in our soul...Measuring, calculating and weighing do not appear to be pleasing aids in relation to these so that we are not guided by what appears to be bigger, smaller, greater in quantity and heavier, but by what was calculated, measured and weighed to be so?' (602c7-d9, my own translation)<sup>20</sup>

In the passage quoted it seems that something 'appears' as bent inside the water or straight outside it, not to the senses — to sight in this case — but to the soul, which is confused by the appearances.<sup>21</sup> If we take, for example, the case where a stick 'seems' to be bent in the water the stick appears to the soul in a certain way because perception in that case is insufficient. In the *Philebus*' example we have seen that a similar undetermined perception due to distance can give rise to a false appearance according to

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<sup>20</sup> The translation of the quoted texts from the *Republic* throughout this thesis is that of Shorey 1978 unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>21</sup> See the analogy between the 'confusion' of the soul in the passage in the *Republic* and the uncertainty of the walker in the *Philebus* where he cannot say what is standing next to the rock due to distance. The walker is confused because before he comes to an assertion and says that something is a man or a statue what he sees appears to him both as man and a statue.

which something appears as a statue though it is a man. Since perception is susceptible to optical illusions — or other illusions, related to each of the senses — the soul can have false appearances because of this undetermined perception. If the optical illusion is removed, if for instance the stick, which is straight, is seen outside the water, the appearance will be true. What is suggested by the passage, in my view, is that since perception itself is deceptive, so may be the appearances that involve perception. Plato points out the fact that the daily judgements of ordinary people many times turn out to be false because of an insufficient and deceptive perception. There is nothing in the text that makes us read it as if perception says that something is ‘so-and-so’. Instead the *dia tēs opseōs* at c8 gives more emphasis to the fact that it is ‘because of’ perception that sometimes something appears to the soul to be small, for instance, when it is seen from distance than that sight itself says that something is ‘small’ or ‘large’. I cannot see in this passage anything that prevents us from interpreting it in the light of the ‘wax tablet’. The falsity or the truth of the appearance or the judgement depends on how the object is shown to the soul in each case through the senses. It does not seem that it is perception that says in each case either that the stick is ‘bent’ or ‘straight’, but the soul.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See also *Alcibiades* 129b5-130e7 where we are told explicitly that the soul, which is the proper agent, does everything by using the body. Whether the *Alcibiades* is a genuine Platonic dialogue or not the writer of the dialogue — possibly a member of the Old Academy — summarizes what was Plato’s standard view. In the *Phaedo*, a dialogue that probably precedes the *Republic*, Plato very often uses the *dia* plus genitive for things that the soul is doing through the body. See for instance 79c1-8 ‘Now we were not saying that whenever the soul uses the body (*proshrētai*) to study anything either by seeing (*dia tou horan*) or hearing (*dia tou akouein*) or by any other sense (*di’ allēs tinos aishēseōs*) — because that is to examine something through the senses (*dia tōn aisthēseōn*) using the body (*dia tou somatos*) — then it is dragged by the body to towards things that are never constant...?’. We notice that in this passage in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates is explaining to Simmias what we mean when we say that the soul uses the body, Plato uses with some consistency the idiom. Even if in the *Phaedo* we do not get the detailed analysis of the *Theaetetus* it seems that we get more or less the same idea that it is the soul that is doing things; e.g. the soul perceives through the senses. As far as I know there is nowhere in the *Phaedo* that Plato writes that the senses ‘say’ things or report things. It seems that the soul is the proper subject of activities. It is true that the *Phaedo* seems to ascribe to the body the ‘bodily’ desires that in the *Republic* are located in the lower part of the soul (94b7-

It is true, however, that Plato in the *Republic* treats in some places belief and perception with the same meaning and almost interchangeably and also, in *Republic* 523a10-524a9, the 'finger passage', perception is said to be able to report (*esēmenen*) that something is a finger.<sup>23</sup> Plato's strategy of using the terms with almost the same meaning even presenting in one passage perception as saying things can be explained by the fact that whenever Plato in the *Republic* uses the terms *doxa* or *doxazein* he associates both terms with the sensible world.<sup>24</sup> In each case that we form a judgement or we have an appearance about the external world perception is involved and in some cases it is one of the candidates that determines the truth or the falsity of our appearance the other being our grasp of all the terms that constitute a judgement about an external object. This close relation or verbal identity between perception and *doxa* in the *Republic* is another tool in Plato's toolkit with which he emphasizes his claim throughout the *Republic* about the instability and fallible character of *doxa*; *doxa* is unstable and fallible as much as perception is. This of course does not mean that we cannot have true *doxai*, or at least temporarily true ones, about the sensible world. The expert in the *Theaetetus* and the expert/philosopher in the *Republic* can go beyond the limits and the fallible character of perception and by using reasoning and calculation he can secure true beliefs. In the

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c1). But evidently it is not argued that the *Phaedo* wishes to treat the body virtually as the bearer of these desires.

<sup>23</sup> The judging language that Plato attributes to perception in the 'finger passage' is metaphorical and is consistent with his strategy in the *Republic* of treating *doxa* and perception as identical. What Plato tries to show to Glaucon is that in some cases where we do have a clear perception we can rely on the senses and we can safely say and without too much thinking that something is a 'finger'. On the other hand when perception does not provide a solid ground for saying whether something is 'large' or 'small' we have to resort to the aid of calculation. With the exception of the metaphorical use of judging terms I do not think that in the finger passage Plato says something that contradicts what he says in Book X or even in the 'wax tablet' presented in the *Theaetetus*.

<sup>24</sup> That *doxa* is the cognitive capacity associated primarily with the external world does not exclude the possibility that in the *Republic* we might have true *doxai* or true accounts about the realm of the intelligible. Socrates' own account about the Form of the Good in Books VI and VII is what seems (*phainetai*) 506d8 to be so to him.

*Theaetetus* we have seen that reasoning consists in the systematic knowledge of all the 'elements', both perceptible and not perceptible, and the similarities, the differences and the relations between the components that constitute an object. In the *Republic* within Plato's metaphysics and the introduction of the Forms counting and calculation is a reference to the mathematics and arithmetic which is the first subject in the education (*R.* 522c5-8) designed to turn the soul towards the realm of the intelligible. In each case of course perception does not vanish, but its role in the formation of a *doxa* is seriously restricted or even limited to the level of a mere sensory awareness of something within the visual field. It is not through sight that the expert, unlike the walker in the *Philebus*, will decide whether a stick is 'bent' or 'straight', but by reference to his calculating capacity with which he can recognize that the stick appears 'bent' because it is in the water.

ii) *The perceiving part of the soul*

If we accept, as I have tried to show, that in Book X it is the soul that perceives through the senses and not perception, the next question that is raised is which part of the soul is doing the perceiving. After the passage quoted above Plato postulates one part that is doing the calculation and the measurement following reasoning (*logismos*) and another part that goes by the appearances (602e4-603a6). Since we have simultaneously two opposite judgements, Plato claims that, according to the 'Principle of Opposites'—the principle that Plato has also used in Book IV in the initial division of the soul — it cannot be the same part that is the bearer of the opposite judgements, but must be two

distinct parts. The new division of the soul in Book X and its relation to the first division in Book IV has been the subject of different interpretations by scholars.<sup>25</sup> Those who support the view that the part that goes by the appearances is identical with the lower parts of the soul in *R. IV* have to explain how these parts can form appearances, i.e. how they can tell that something 'is' or 'seems' as such. One way to answer the question is to follow what may be called the 'perception mediation' strategy. If perception is judgemental and if the lower parts have access to perception then the lower parts gain their judgmental capacity from perception. I have tried to show, so far, that even in Book X there is nothing that suggests that perception itself has the capacity to make judgements of the form 'x is F'.<sup>26</sup> Even if we accept that primary sensibles like colours and flavours are within the capacity of perception in the *Theaetetus* and hence in the *Republic*, in Book X it seems that the capacity of perception goes beyond the formation of the minimal proposition that 'this is red'; perception seems to be able to form more complicated judgements of the kind 'this is a stick' or even 'this is a bent stick'.

If we deny any judgemental capacity to perception, the other strategy is to assume that the lower parts themselves have the ability to form beliefs and appearances. The latter strategy is preferable to the first one since the soul remains the only subject of every activity and all the cognitive functions are carried out by it. However, I do not think that Plato in the *Republic* equips the lower parts of the soul with any sort of cognition. In the following chapter I discuss this claim in relation to the desires of the appetitive part of the

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<sup>25</sup> It has been argued that a new non-rational part is here introduced (Janaway 1995: 144), that the nature of the non-rational part here is left undetermined (Burnyeat 1976: 34), that a division within the rational part is posited (Murphy 1951: 239-240, Nehamas 1982: 47-78, Burnyeat 1999: 223 and Sedley 2006: 113, n. 40) and that the part that goes by the appearances is identical with the lower parts of the first division (Barney 1992: 186-87 and Lorenz 2006: ch. 5).

<sup>26</sup> Even if we wish to make too much out of the 'finger passage' about the judgemental capacity of perception (see n. 22) in Book X it is a part of the soul that has the appearance and is deceived by it and not perception itself.

soul and in the next part I try to disarm the suggestion that a judgemental capacity is available to the lower parts in the unjust souls in Books VII and IX. Here I shall restrict myself to some general remarks about the need to attribute beliefs to the lower parts of the soul, returning at the end to the argument in Book X. The assumption that the lower parts have beliefs, including normative and evaluative ones, presupposes an account of belief in the *Republic*. On this matter we are in no better position than we are in the case of perception.

Belief, like perception, as we have seen, is normally related to the sensible world, but we are not given a detailed mechanism that underlines the formation of *doxa*. Recently Lorenz has argued that:

‘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 in some way or other and which, moreover, involve acceptance at a level of the soul below reason...They do not qualify as beliefs on Plato’s account of beliefs which...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 not adequate data of what these things are....They are very much like beliefs’.<sup>27</sup>

Lorenz’s conclusion about the account of belief in the *Republic* comes from his own assumption that in Book X the parts that form the appearances are the lower parts of the soul and if we can allow these parts to have beliefs then belief should be what Lorenz

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<sup>27</sup> Lorenz 2006: 72-73. It is not quite clear whether Lorenz claims that the notion of belief that we get, according to him, in Book X is what Plato thought about belief throughout the *Republic*. The way however, that he juxtaposes the *Theaetetus* and the *Republic* in the text that I quote suggests that according to him the notion of belief that we get in Book X is Plato’s view in the whole *Republic*.

suggests. It would be rather odd to try to draw an account of belief in the *Republic* only from the text in Book X. Before going on I would like to make some remarks about the claim that Lorenz makes. Lorenz is influenced like others by Plato's tactic in the *Republic* of not distinguish between belief and perception. This is the only way to explain Lorenz's claim that belief cannot properly distinguish between large and small because it has no adequate data. Probably here Lorenz has in mind, apart from Book X, the 'finger passage', but there it is not belief that is unable to distinguish between large and small but perception. I cannot also understand Lorenz's claim that belief in the *Republic* cannot distinguish between large and small. It is true that if belief is restricted to the sensible world it cannot grasp what it really *is* for an object to be small or large, but it can successfully represent to itself that one sensible object is bigger than another sensible object at a given time  $t_1$ . The representational character of *doxa* lies in the fact that with *doxa* we represent the Forms through their sensibles instances. But also in the *Theaetetus*, as far as I understand it, *doxa* retains its representational character since it is about the sensible world which is a likeness of the Forms in the *Republic*. Plato's addition in the *Theaetetus* is that access to the 'commons' is essential if any *doxa* can be reached. 'Commons' though are not to be equated with the realm of the intelligible since these are accessible even to the ordinary people that can form *doxai*, either true or false, about a sensible object.

Plato discusses belief mainly in Books V, VI and VII in relation to knowledge and in the two latter Books also in relation to his ontological distinction between the sensible world and the intelligible world of the Forms. Although in these Books we are not told what happens when we form *doxai* we can draw an account of what we can do

with *doxa*. What emerges from these Books is that at the stage of *doxa* we can say something about a sensible object and describe somehow the external world. I do not claim here that we should confine *doxa* to the sensible world. In the argument in Book V at 474a ff. it is not clear whether the different objects of knowledge and belief are those that determine the nature of its capacity. For the sake of my argument here I accept that *doxa* is a certain cognitive capacity which is fallible which enables us to speak about objects, say sensible objects, with some confidence<sup>28</sup> saying that ‘something x is F’. The lovers of sound and sights, for instance, at *R.* 476 b say that some sights and sounds are beautiful. It does not matter if they know what they speak about they believe, e.g. that some things are beautiful, and can distinguish them from other things that they believe are ugly. What they cannot do, of course, is to explain why the many beautiful things differ from the many ugly things, since they do not know what the ‘ugly’ is or what the ‘beautiful’ is.

Similarly the prisoners in the cave at 515a ff. in the beginning talk about the images inside and gradually they are able to talk about the natural object. When they reach the state at which they can speak about the ‘puppets’, the level of *pistis* in the divided line (509d), they can also discriminate between the ‘puppet’ and its image although they cannot explain yet how they differ. At the level of *eikasia* or the level of *pistis* that in the divided line are the two levels of *doxa*, some kind of thinking and some kind of reasoning is involved. We are told that the prisoners even inside the cave where they encounter the images of the natural objects and try to recognize what they see, are engaged in a kind of dialogue that takes place between them (*dialegesthai oioi t’eien pros*

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<sup>28</sup> On the idea that belief and knowledge are not defined by their objects see, among others, Fine 1990: 85-115. For the opposite view see Gerson: 2003 ch. 4.

*allēlous* 515b4-5). Again when in the beginning they see the objects that the images are of they are confused, and only when a cross-examination with the help of someone — probably the philosopher — is carried out (515c4-516b1), are they able to proceed at the level of confidence to discriminate between the objects and the images. The kind of dialogue at the stage of *eikasia* reminds us strongly of the inner dialogue of the soul in the *Theaetetus* and the *Philebus*. The difference is that the walker in the *Philebus*, for instance, can distinguish between the image due to distance and the natural object because he is already at the stage that the prisoner will be when he is released. The walker goes wrong due to an undetermined perception while the prisoner goes wrong because the images are the only things he can speak of. When he reaches the level of *pistis* he can discriminate between the two even if he does not know yet why they differ. In the *Theaetetus* we see that the ‘like’ and the ‘unlike’ are among the ‘common’ concepts that we use in order to form a judgement. Despite the fact that the divided line or the simile of the cave do not constitute Plato’s statement on what is involved in the formation of beliefs, but exemplify the ascent from lower cognitive states to the highest level of *noēsis*, we can still trace elements of the mechanism of *doxa* that Plato explicitly mentions in the *Theaetetus*.<sup>29</sup>

If *doxa* involves thinking and reasoning then why should Plato make belief available to the lower parts of the soul (especially the appetitive part which is my main concern in this thesis)? In the initial division of the soul in Book IV the part which is doing the reasoning and also the part with which we learn (*manthanomen* 436a9-10,

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<sup>29</sup> See also the *Timaeus* 43c8-44c4. In this passage in the *Timaeus* we are told that the false judgements are the result of the distorted motions of the soul’s circles composed of the Same and the Different. At an early stage the mind is unable to recognize properly the class of the Same and the Different saying that things are the same or different while they are not. Only later can the mind announce properly the class of the Same and the Difference and through educational training this state can be reinforced further.

580d9, 581b6) is the reasoning part of the soul. That the part with which we learn is described as *logistikon* indicates probably that this is the part that has all the cognitive capacities and through this part the progress from one cognitive state or a certain kind of thought to another can be attained. It might be objected though that the kind of reasoning and thinking that Plato attributes to the *logistikon* is only the higher reasoning associated with *epistēmē* and *noēsis* and with knowledge of the Good and not the kind of thinking at the level of *doxa*. It is true that we are told, for instance, at 442c5-6 that this part has *epistēmē* of what is beneficial for every part and the whole. However, the capacity of *epistēmē* does not have to exhaust all the functions of this part. The higher capacity of reasoning could be the best function of the reasoning part without excluding the fact that a lower capacity of everyday reasoning is another function of the same part. Santas, recognizing the importance of the function argument at *R.* 352e ff. maintains that ‘calculating is the exclusive function of reason’,<sup>30</sup> that is, reason is the only ‘tool’ of calculation. Santas’ claim can still meet the objection that whenever Plato refers to calculation of the reasoning part he does not mean the normal everyday calculation, but he refers to the higher calculation that is related to arithmetic and mathematics and the higher activity of *dianoia* that starts turning the soul towards the intelligible objects (526a-b) This objection can be met easily since in the soul of the oligarch it is with the *logistikon* that the oligarch reasons how to gain more money (553d3-4).<sup>31</sup> We cannot assume that in the case of the oligarch the kind of reasoning that is carried out by the *logistikon* is the more difficult and skilled kind of reasoning and thinking that is implied at *R.* 526a-b. Santas’ claim can gain more strength if we consider that in the *Republic* the

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<sup>30</sup> Santas 2001: 123.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also at 519a1-5 those who are clever, but not wise, and use reason to achieve things that are bad.

appetitive part of the soul is never presented as the part with which we reason, think or calculate. In Book IV and in the three instances that the appetitive part is defined (436b1-2, 439d6-7, 442a6-b1), it is associated with the bodily desires and in the last one with the desire for money. Desire, that is the appetites of hunger, thirst and any other bodily urge or impulse, exhausts the function of this part.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, the tripartite soul for some reason vanishes in Books V, VI and VII where Plato speaks of different cognitive levels or capacities. In Book V, the Book that immediately follows after the division of the soul, there is no reference to lower parts of the soul in relation to *doxa*. Those who are willing to attribute beliefs or appearances to the lower parts will find it very difficult to explain the fact that in the Divided Line where *eikasia* has to do with shadows and images seen in the water and with everything that is presented to perception in an unclear way (509d10-510a3) — something that anticipates the ‘bent stick’ in Book X — no explicit relation is made between this cognitive level and any lower part of the soul. Any explanation that a relation between the lower cognitive capacities and the lower parts of the soul in these Books is simply left implicit, is unsatisfactory, since the parts reappear in Books VII and IX where the topic is the motivational conflict that the unjust souls experience. Another explanation and, I submit, a rather more satisfactory one is that the lower parts disappear in the middle Books

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<sup>32</sup> Fully-fledged desires, as I claim in the next chapter, are not the exclusive function of the appetitive part since these include also the belief that comes from reason. The view that the lower parts might have some cognitive capacities or that reason has appetite (*epithumia*) might find some support in the passage at 580d5 ff. where Plato claims that ‘the three parts have also, it appears to me, three kind of pleasures, one peculiar to each other and similarly three appetites (*epithumiai*) and controls’ (580d6-7). However, Plato never says that the lower parts have beliefs, on contrary the appetitive part is described in the terms that it has been described at Book IV, as the locus of the bodily desires (580d9-581a1). More than that the appetite of the reasoning part is, as Plato claims at 581b6-8, the desire for ‘truth’. It is not the case then that the *logistikon* has *epithumiai* in the sense that the soul has appetites in respect of the appetitive part of the soul. The desire for truth that Plato attributes to the reasoning part is nothing more than the knowledge of the Good that Plato has introduced in Book VI; to know the Good and to desire the Good seems to be one and the same thing. (See the passage at 505e and also chapter five in this thesis).

because they are irrelevant to the theme. Plato does not need to refer to the lower parts of the soul since he has already defined the *logistikon* as the part with which we learn, reason and think. At any cognitive level then, either the level of *eikasia* or the level of *noēsis*, all the cognitive activity is carried out by the *logistikon*. In the case of the unjust souls, by contrast, the parts reappear because they can partially explain the desires of the deviant characters. The desire of the democratic man, for instance, to drink wine till he gets totally drunk can be explained by his fully-fledged desire to drink wine which involves his belief that drinking wine *is* something pleasant for him at the moment and his simple or prime appetite for pleasant replenishment with drink.

It would be striking, to return to Book X, that Plato despite the remarkable absence of the lower parts of the soul in the middle Books of the *Republic* reintroduces them in Book X with cognitive content. In my approach to the passage and in line with my claim that every cognitive activity is carried out by the reasoning part of the soul, I shall follow those who support the proposal that in the first division of Book X it is the *logistikon* that is divided into different parts or aspects. After the quoted passage in (i) above Plato claims at 602e1-603a8 that:

‘But it would be the function of the reasoning part (*logistikon*) of the soul’.

‘Yes, this is true’

‘To this part (*toutōi*) that has measured and indicates that some things are greater or less than or equal to others at the same time there is an opposite appearance’.<sup>33</sup>

‘Yes’

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<sup>33</sup> The translation at 602e4-6 has been the subject of much debate. In my translation I follow Sedley 2006: 113 n. 40 and Burnyeat 1999: 223 who support that the *toutōi* at e4 refers to *logistikon*.

'And we did not say that it is impossible for the same thing to have contradictory beliefs about the same thing at the same time?'

'And we were right in saying so'.

'The part then that judges against measurements cannot be the same as the part that judges according to them'.

'No'

'But the part that follows measurement and reasoning must be the best part of us'.

'Of course'

'The part then that contradicts it must be some inferior part in us'

'Inevitably'. (My own translation)

Having established this division between two parts, one that goes by the appearances and one that follows calculation Plato goes on at 603c11ff to establish another division between one part that follows reason and another part that is drugged by passion and distress. He applies again the 'principle of opposites' as he does in the first division, but in a slightly different way that reminds us of the way that the principle is illustrated in Book IV. At 604a11-b2 we are told:

'Now is it not reason and law that exhorts him to resist, while that which urges him to give away, to his grief is the bare feeling itself?'

'True'

'And where there are two opposites impulses in a man at the same time about the same thing we say that there must needs be two things in him'

[...]

‘Then we say the best part of us is willing to conform to these precepts of reason’

‘Obviously’.

‘And shall we not say that the part of us that leads us to dwell in memory on our suffering and impels us to lamentation, and cannot get enough of that sort of thing, is the irrational and idle part of us, the associate of cowardice?’

In both divisions the best part can be easily identified with the *logistikon* while in the second, the inferior part will be the one of the lower parts of the soul or probably a combination of the two lower parts of Book IV. The identification of the part that has caused different interpretations as we have seen is the inferior part of the first division. My brief approach to the argument follows those who support the view that the first division is within the reasoning part of the soul.<sup>34</sup> Between the two inferior parts Plato wants to establish a relation though not an identity. That the two parts are not identical becomes clear in my view at 605a7-b1 where Plato says that the poet is similar to the painter because his art appeals to a similar part (*pros heteron toiouton homilei tēs psuchēs*) to the part to which the art of the painter appeals. If Plato wanted to postulate an identity between the two he could have easily written at 605a9-10 *pros tauton homilei tēs psuchēs*. The analogy starts with the bad effects that poetry and painting have on the soul. The latter that has to do with *skiagraphia* which is an analogue to the physical illusions that we encounter in the external world and affect the way that the natural objects are presented to us and the judgment we form about what we see. The former concerns the actions that are imitated by poetry and the motivational sources of these actions.

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<sup>34</sup> See n. 24.

What relates both cases is that in both of them it is a distorted part (*phaulon*) in us to which each art appeals. The distorted part to which poetry appeals is identified with the emotional part that if left alone, can give rise to intense and irrational emotions. We can easily trace an inferior part or aspect or disposition within the *logistikon* if we think of the level of *eikasia*. Those who remain at this level inevitably can have only appearances and they cannot judge that a 'stick in the water is bent'. Plato's treatment of the two inferior parts in an analogy echoes his own thesis elsewhere in the *Republic* that the flourishing of the irrational intense emotions or appetites depends on the condition of the reasoning part of the soul<sup>35</sup> and vice versa since if let these emotions grow they can influence further the condition of the *logistikon*. The language of parts makes the analogy stronger. Since the one inferior part to which poetry appeals has to be identified with the emotional part, according to the initial division of the soul in *R. IV*, another analogous inferior part to which painting appeals should be posited. Of course Plato cannot say that it is the *logistikon* as a whole that goes by the appearances so he prefers to speak of a 'part' within the *logistikon* that is deceived by the way that things appear to the soul through the senses. That Plato uses the language of parts does not entail necessarily that the *logistikon* is actually divided into parts in the way that the whole soul is divided in Book IV. It might not be the case that there is one part within the *logistikon* that is doing the calculation and another one that forms the appearances. It could be economical instead of subdividing further the reasoning part to say that it is the same part that does both. Those that remain at the level of *eikasia* can easily go by the appearances. On the contrary the philosopher that has knowledge and the reasoning part of his soul is in its best condition

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<sup>35</sup> The best place that this view can be found is his own analysis of the unjust souls in Books VII and IX.

relies always on measurement and calculation and is not deceived by the way that things are presented to him through the senses. On this interpretation we can also avoid the problem that the principle of opposites might create. What the principle of opposites suggests is that we can have at the same time two contradictory beliefs that present the same thing in a different way. If, as I suggest, Plato's division of the reasoning part is merely rhetorical and he does not actually wish to divide it then we can also view the principle of opposites in this context. Plato does not want to say that we may have two opposites beliefs *at the same time*. He accepts however, that we may have one belief now and in an immediate period of retrospect we may recognize that that belief was wrong.

To conclude, there is no clear evidence in the *Republic* that the lower parts of the soul are equipped with evaluative and normative beliefs or any kind of cognitive activity. My suggestion in this chapter has been that Plato does not necessarily hold the view in the *Republic* that perception is propositional. We might not get the detailed and elaborated analysis of the *Theaetetus*, but we can still assume, especially in Book X, that Plato even in the *Republic* was not actually willing to attribute to perception the capacity to form judgements. At the same time I have tried to show that thinking and reasoning are the exclusive capacities of the *logistikon* and, since all the cognitive states, even *eikasia*, involve some kind of thinking, these are capacities of the reasoning part only. What is probably left to the lower parts of the soul, especially the appetitive part, is perception, but perception deprived of any kind of cognitive capacities. Although the relation between the lower capacities is not made clear, Plato would have to accept that perception does affect the lower parts. This is a view that he expresses clearly in the *Timaeus*, as we have seen, where perception is defined as an irrational motion of the

irrational parts of the soul when soul encounters with external objects through the body (*Tim.* 43c4-7).<sup>36</sup> In the subsequent chapters of this thesis I shall try to show that this view of perception fits with my interpretation of the desires of the appetitive part of the soul.

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<sup>36</sup> At *Tim.* 42a7 pleasure and distress are also caused by perception and at 64d ff. Plato explains how pain and pleasure occur. In the last sentence at 43c4-7 Plato says 'That is no doubt why these motions as a group came afterwards to be called perceptions (*aisthēsis*) as they are still called today'. Plato traces the view that perception is a motion to thinkers before him probably the Presocratics. The fact that Plato was familiar with this old view is an indication that this is the view that Plato holds about perception even before the *Timaeus*.

## 2. The desires of the appetitive part in *R. IV*.

In the preceding chapter I have tried to argue that on the assumption that Plato in the *Republic* holds a view about belief and perception similar to the one that he proposes in the *Theaetetus* — and also in the *Timeaus* — the lower parts of the soul may not be able to form beliefs or even impressions of any sort. As result these parts and especially the appetitive part, which is my main concern in this thesis, are unable to view something in a certain way as large or small, thick or thin, pleasant or painful, good or bad. In this chapter I discuss how Plato conceives the nature and the function of the appetitive part of the soul and the appetites of this part in the initial division of the soul in *Republic* Book IV. I shall try to argue that since this part is deprived of any cognitive capacities the appetites that Plato attributes to this part cannot be fully-fledged desires but something like physical forces that on their own and without any rational mediation cannot motivate action. At the same time the irrationality that is assigned by Plato to this part of the soul is not the kind of irrationality that normally characterizes our normal desires and dispositions.

### I

At 434b9-d1 Glaucon and Socrates have agreed that they have discovered what justice is in the city. Justice in the city can be achieved in so far as each class of the city,

that is, the guardians, the auxiliaries and the wealth making class, mind their own business and do not interfere with the job of the other classes. The conception of justice in the ideal city is directly related to the tripartite class structure so when Socrates goes on to define justice in the soul he is looking for three parts that correspond to the three classes.<sup>37</sup>

What follows is Socrates' argument, to which Glaucon agrees, that since we notice that different nations have different tendencies (435d9-436a3) then these tendencies should be present in each individual. The question that Socrates raises is whether we do all things with one thing or with more than one:

Τόδε δὲ ἤδη χαλεπὸν, εἰ τῷ αὐτῷ τούτῳ ἕκαστα πράττομεν ἢ τρισὶν οὖσιν ἄλλο ἄλλω·  
μανθάνομεν μὲν ἑτέρῳ, θυμούμεθα δὲ ἄλλῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐπιθυμούμεν δ' αὖ τρίτῳ τινὶ  
τῶν περὶ τὴν τροφήν τε καὶ γέννησιν ἡδονῶν καὶ ὅσα τούτων ἀδελφά, ἢ ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ καθ'  
ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πράττομεν, ὅταν ὁρήσωμεν.

'But the matter begins to be difficult when you ask whether we do all these things with the same thing or whether there are three things we do one thing with one and one with the other — learn with one part of ourselves, feel anger with another part, and yet with a third we desire the pleasures of nutrition and generation and the rest of the same kind, or whether it is with the entire soul' (436a8-b3)

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<sup>37</sup> Note however that at 435d2-4 Socrates recognizes that the methods that they will follow here may not be adequate to show whether the soul has *indeed* three parts or not and they may have to take a longer road of investigation (*makrotera kai pleiōn hodos d3*). For the implications of the longer road see chapter five.

To answer the question that he has addressed in the above text Socrates proceeds by introducing the Principle of Opposites (436b8-c1) with two counter-arguments (436c8-e6). The Principle of Opposites as Socrates states it is the following:

‘It is obvious that the same thing will never do or suffer opposites (*tanantia*) in the same respect (*kata tauton*) and in relation to the same thing (*pros tauton*) at the same time. So if we ever find these contradictions in the functions of the mind then we shall know that it was not the same thing functioning but a plurality’. (436b8-c1)<sup>38</sup>

Having stated the Principle of opposites Socrates goes on to speak at 437b1-4 about opposites in desiring terms and at b6-c5 he lists a number of what we might call ‘desiring states’:

Τί οὖν; ἦν δ' ἐγώ· διψῆν καὶ πεινῆν καὶ ὅλως τὰς ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ αὖ τὸ ἐθέλειν καὶ τὸ βούλεσθαι, οὐ πάντα ταῦτα εἰς ἐκεῖνά ποι ἂν θείης τὰ εἶδη τὰ νυνδὴ λεχθέντα; οἶον ἀεὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐπιθυμοῦντος ψυχὴν οὐχὶ ἤτοι ἐφίεσθαι φήσεις ἐκείνου οὐδ' ἂν ἐπιθυμῆ, ἢ προσάγεσθαι τοῦτο ὃ ἂν βούληταί οἱ γενέσθαι, ἢ αὖ, καθ' ὅσον ἐθέλει τί οἱ πορισθῆναι, ἐπινεύειν τοῦτο πρὸς αὐτὴν ὥσπερ τινὸς ἐρωτῶντος, ἐπορευομένην αὐτοῦ τῆς γενέσεως;

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<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the Principle of Opposites see Bobonich 2002: 225-235, Woods 1987: 23-47, Stalley 1975: 110-128, Robinson 1971: 38-48, Moline 1978: 1-20 and most recently Lorenz 2006: ch. 2. The principle of opposites has normally received great attention by the scholars and it has been supposed that its interpretation might cast light or even explain the way that Plato conceives the parts of the soul. Without wanting to undermine the ‘formal’ role of the principle in the whole argument for the tripartition of the soul I do not think that it is the principle or the counter-examples to the principle that Socrates is using that reveal something about the nature of the parts of the soul. In this chapter I omit any interpretation of the principle and I prefer to focus on the kind of the desires that Plato is using in the conflict between reason and appetite. It is the nature of these desires that indicate how Plato thought about the appetitive part of the soul.

From all these ‘desiring states’ at d1-2 he comes to consider one kind of ‘desiring’ that has to do with our physical desires (*epithumiōn*) and from these desires he chooses hunger and thirst as the most clear examples (*enargestatas autōn*). In what follows at 437d7-439a8 Plato is trying to specify the desire of thirst that he will use in the conflict that he describes at 439a9-c9 between a desire to drink and an aversion towards drinking in order to distinguish, according to the principle of opposites, between two parts of the soul that generate the opposite desires.

It is important, in my view, to look at the kind of the physical desire that Plato is going to use in the conflict. At 437d6-e6 Socrates and Glaucon seek to define what is the nature of thirst and hunger:

Ἄρ' οὖν, καθ' ὅσον δίψα ἐστί, πλέονος ἢ οὐ λέγομεν ἐπιθυμία ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ εἶη, οἷον δίψα ἐστί δίψα ἀρά γε θερμοῦ ποτοῦ ἢ ψυχροῦ, ἢ πολλοῦ ἢ ὀλίγου, ἢ καὶ ἐνὶ λόγῳ ποιοῦ τινος πώματος; ἢ ἐὰν μὲν τις θερμότης τῷ δίψει προσῆ, τὴν τοῦ ψυχροῦ ἐπιθυμίαν προσπαρέχοιτ' ἢ, ἐὰν δὲ ψυχρότης, τὴν τοῦ θερμοῦ; ἐὰν δὲ διὰ πλήθους παρουσίαν πολλῆ ἢ δίψα ἦ, τὴν τοῦ πολλοῦ παρέξεται, ἐὰν δὲ ὀλίγη, τὴν τοῦ ὀλίγου; αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ διψῆν οὐ μὴ ποτε ἄλλου γένηται ἐπιθυμία ἢ οὐπερ πέφυκεν, αὐτοῦ πώματος, καὶ αὐτὸ πεινῆν βρώματος;

Socrates in this passage considers simple instances of thirst and hunger that ‘as such’ are for drink and food only and not for specific kind of drink or food, while their object is fixed only in virtue of their nature. The question that is raised, from Socrates’ claim about the relation of what we might call ‘simple’ desires and ‘simple’ objects, is what kind of simple desires Socrates has in his mind at this point. One suggestion could be that in this

passage Socrates — or Plato — does not imply something about desire or the nature of desire, but he introduces another ‘formal’ principle in addition to the principle of opposites. This principle<sup>39</sup> can be understood as a principle that relates objects with attributes: what corresponds to a simple object is a simple attribute while at the same time what corresponds to a qualified object is complex or qualified attribute. This suggestion can find some support in the light of what follows at 438a7 ff. and the analogy between knowledge in general, which has a general object, and knowledge of ‘house building’, which is a specific kind of knowledge having a specific object. The suggestion however, that in the passage at 437d6-e6 Plato simply introduces another formal principle without making any further claim seems to me rather implausible. If we accept that Plato is not doing anything more than introducing another ‘formal’ principle then, on the grounds that the simple desires mentioned in this passage are the desires that he is using to divide the soul, the division of the soul would be merely the result of two logical principles, the principle of opposites and the principle in this passage. More than that, if all we get in this passage is just the articulation of another formal principle of logic it will be rather odd that in what follows at 438a1-6 Plato seems to reject a certain theory of desire — and human motivation — according to which every desire is for the good (a3-4). I shall come back to this passage in a moment.

Let me return to the question of the simple desires that Socrates mentions in the passage quoted. We can fairly assume that Socrates by removing any qualification from

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<sup>39</sup>Robinson 1971: 41-2 refers to the passage at 437d8-e6 as the ‘Principle of Thirst Itself’ and he claims that this passage is a ‘semantical’ analysis and not ‘psychology’. He supports the view that only when Plato comes to 438a1-6 he ‘reads some psychology meaning in it’. On the contrary I think that at 437d8-e6 Plato does not distinguish between semantics and psychology. Reeve 1988: 118-120 calls the same principle the ‘Principle of Qualification’, which, according to him, is a logical principle. But in contrast with Robinson, Reeve accepts that the passage at 437d8-e6 is an illustration of a psychological relation.

the desire of thirst is trying to identify the urge or the inclination that we experience towards drinking in so far we are thirsty.<sup>40</sup> Instances of simple thirst, for example, could be reached if we remove from complex cases of thirst — where thirst in the presence of heat becomes a complex desire for cold drink (d11-e1) — the qualifier, which in that case could be another simple appetite; a simple desire of thirst as such combined with a simple desire for cold as such becomes a complex desire for cold drink.<sup>41</sup> Plato seems here to make use of a simple analogy between simple desires and simple objects on the one hand and combined desires and qualified objects on the other to show Glaucon that if we remove from a complex desire one of the simple desires what we get is simple appetite and simple object. The example with the qualifications ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ makes rather plausible this analogy if we think of the complex desire in terms of two simple appetites. What might create some problem, however, is the qualification of ‘much’ and ‘little’ that Plato adds at e3. What it would mean to add to a simple desire of thirst the qualification ‘much’ or ‘little’? Is the desire for ‘much’ drink, for instance, a combination of two simple appetites one for drink and another one for ‘much’; it seems to me that something like this is highly improbable. It is this point that has probably led some people to read the whole passage in the light of a logical principle. However, Plato’s intention here is to make a more general point according to which thirst as such or the inclination we experience when we are thirsty is *simple* in the sense that it cannot recognize certain objects or describe objects in a certain way. In other words the recognition of attributes

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<sup>40</sup> See for instance Penner 1990: 59 and Cooper 1984: 9. See also Lovibond 1991: 48-49 and Anagnostopoulos 2006: 166-188. When this chapter was first drafted I was not aware of Anagnostopoulos’ paper. Now I have to recognize that, with some exceptions, my argument in this chapter is close to what is in the core of her interpretation.

<sup>41</sup> Another case of complex desire of thirst in the same passage is thirst combined with much or little. In that case it is rather unclear if we can speak of a simple desire of much or little added to the appetite of thirst as such. Probably what Plato has in mind in that case is a kind of feeling or psychological state that accompanies and qualifies the desire of thirst as such.

such as 'hot', 'cold', 'much' or 'little' does not come with the inclination of thirst itself, but it is added from somewhere else. This is made clearer when Plato adds at 439a5-7 the attributes 'good' and 'bad'; the simple inclination for drink is not directed towards something, a certain kind of drink, that is presented to it either as good or bad.

Plato here in the *Republic* probably conceives these simple desires or inclinations as motions of the soul — or more precisely of a part of the soul — that are related somehow to pleasant sensations or bodily pains and so on. The simple desire of thirst, for instance, is motion towards the pleasant sensation that comes with replenishment and at the same time a kind of repulsion towards pain that is caused by a bodily lack. To describe the simple desires in that way is not to say that these desires are not directed towards any object; apparently, as Plato says, their object is just drink or replenishment with drink which is a pleasant sensation or feeling. We might say that the simple desires, being a motion of the soul can be described as a kind of reaction towards an unconceptualised awareness. This kind of motion can be understood as similar to the motion of perception when the soul — or a part of the soul — interacts with the body and with an external object. In the case of the simple desires this motion can be understood as a reaction to a pleasant sensation that comes with replenishment. One objection to my suggestion could be that Plato's simple desires are not explicitly presented in this text in the way that I have described. The term motion (*kinēsis*), for instance, does not occur in the text. However, Plato would not deny that every desire and hence, the simple desires are motions within the soul. More than that, outside the *Republic*, we can find the idea that desire or inclination is a kind of motion towards pleasant or painful sensations. Consider, for instance, the passage at *Timaeus* 64a2-64b6 where pleasant and painful

affections are presented as unconceptualised movements of the non-rational part of the soul caused through bodily sensations.<sup>42</sup> Also at 77b5-c3 we are told that the appetitive part of the soul is ‘devoid of belief and calculation, but does share in perception, pleasant and painful, together with desires (*epithumiōn*)’. On the grounds that the lower parts of the soul in the *Timaeus* are deprived of any cognitive capacities, the movements of the soul are not directed towards objects represented in a certain way, but are irrational reactions related to pleasant or painful sensations.<sup>43</sup>

At 438a1-6 Plato tries to meet an objection against the point about the simple desires:

Μήτοι τις, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀσκέπτους ἡμᾶς ὄντας θορυβήσῃ, ὡς οὐδείς ποτοῦ ἐπιθυμεῖ ἀλλὰ χρηστοῦ ποτοῦ, καὶ οὐ σίτου ἀλλὰ χρηστοῦ σίτου. πάντες γὰρ ἄρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν· εἰ οὖν ἡ δίψα ἐπιθυμία ἐστὶ, χρηστοῦ ἂν εἴη εἴτε πάματος εἴτε ἄλλου ὅτου ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμία, καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι οὕτω.

‘Let no one then, said I, disconcert us when off our guard with the objection that everybody desires not drink but good drink and not food but good food, because all men desire good things,

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<sup>42</sup> See Bobonich 2002: 322-327 for a very illuminating analysis of the movements of the lower parts of the soul.

<sup>43</sup> See also my claim in the preceding chapter where I claim we do not have to assume that, unlike the *Timaeus*, the lower parts of the soul in the *Republic* are able to form beliefs. The most clear statement about desires as irrational motions of the soul can be found in a work of Middle Platonism. Alcinous in *Didaskalikos* presents *pathos* as an irrational motion of the soul either towards something bad or good (‘Ἔστι τοίνυν πάθος κίνησις ἄλογος ψυχῆς ὡς ἐπὶ κακῷ ἢ ὡς ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ. 32.2-3). If we accept that Alcinous’ account of *pathos* resides in his understanding of Plato and his effort to give an outline of the Platonic philosophy, then his definition of *pathos* captures in my view Plato’s claim in the *Republic*. Although we cannot say from which dialogue or dialogues Alcinous derives his claim — the *Timaeus* is possibly one candidate — the way that he puts his claim reflects Plato’s point in the *Republic*. Note that according to Plato the simple desires cannot distinguish between bad and good things so they may be directed towards either, while Alcinous says that they are either about something good or bad. Also at 32.4-5 Alcinous allocates these motions of the soul to the irrational parts of the soul (τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν κινήσεις). See also chapter three for a further analysis of this text by Alcinous.

and so, if thirst is desire, it would be of good drink or of good whatsoever it is; and so similarly with other desires’.

This passage has been interpreted by most scholars as a rejection of the Socratic view of human motivation and desire as this thesis appears in a number of dialogues preceding the *Republic* such as the *Protagoras*, the *Gorgias*, the *Lysis*, the *Euthydemus*, the *Meno* and the *Symposium*.<sup>44</sup> According to the standard reading of the passage that has been proposed, Plato argues that: (1) we cannot say that everyone desires good drink or good food (2) on the grounds (γὰρ) that everyone desires good things,<sup>45</sup> since (3) there are desires which are neither for good nor for bad. Let us see first which is the Socratic thesis that Plato seems to reject. Since Plato’s point is about physical desires such as thirst and hunger we can assume that he rejects a thesis according to which every desire including physical desires are for something good. By saying that thirst, for instance, is for something good Socrates probably means that when we want to drink, our fully-fledged desire of thirst is directed towards something that we take to be good or something that is represented to us either rightly or wrongly as good.<sup>46</sup> In that sense every physical desire always involves a belief or a value-judgement according to which we take something to be in a certain way and which motivates us to act. Of course Socrates does not seem to

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<sup>44</sup> See e.g. Penner 1990: 53 and 1971: 106-107, Irwin 1977: 191-3, White 1979: 124-5, Murphy 1971: 28-9. For an opposite view see Hoffman 2003: 171-4 and Lovibond 1991: 48. Shorey 1963: 390 writes ad loc. that ‘Plato of course is not repudiating his doctrine that all men really will the good, but the logic of this passage requires us to treat the desire of good as a distinct qualification of the mere drink’. While I agree with Shorey that Plato is not repudiating the doctrine that all men desire the good I am not sure whether I can understand Shorey’s point in the second part of his comment.

<sup>45</sup> Adam 1920: 251 ad loc. comments ‘the particle *ara* indicates that the supposed objector is quoting another’s man view.’ The usage of the particle *ara* and the formulation of the clause indicate clearly that the objection Plato has in mind is the Socratic — or his own earlier — view. (Cf. *Gorgias* 468c5 *ta gar agatha boulometha*; *Meno* 77c1-2 *ou pantas, ōriste, dokousi soi tōn agathōn epithumein*).

<sup>46</sup> See chapter six where I argue that this is probably how Socrates conceives our physical desires in the *Protagoras*.

say that our physical desires are merely reduced to a value-judgement. In so far as we are thirsty we experience prior to our judgement a kind of feeling or inclination towards drinking which is associated with the pleasant sensation that comes from replenishment. This inclination although it is not a fully-fledged desire, gives rise to, or influences to some extent our belief according to which we represent something in a certain way as good or pleasant and so on. If Plato's simple desires are these inclinations or urges towards something, as I have suggested, we do not have to assume that Plato's intention in this passage is to reject the Socratic thesis. On the standard reading of the passage that I have outlined above, Plato is using (2) to reject (3) which is the Socratic thesis. On an alternative reading that I propose what Plato says is that from (2) 'on the grounds (*gar*) that everyone desires good things' we cannot infer (3) that 'if thirst is a desire then it would be for good drink'. If we read the passage in this way then Plato does not reject the Socratic thesis, but he warns Glaucon and the readers of a confusion and a fallacy to which someone might commit himself if he infers from the Socratic thesis that thirst as such or simple thirst is always for good drink and not for drink in general.<sup>47</sup> Plato wants to make clear that it is another thing to say that everyone *desires* to get what is always good in the circumstances; hence everyone desires good drink or good food and it is another thing to say that the desire of thirst as such or the inclination is always for something good. In the former case Plato would accept that *this desire* always involves a belief that transforms mere thirst for drink — or the inclination towards drinking — to

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<sup>47</sup> If we try to formulate the supposed invalid argument it will have the following structure:

- 1) if thirst is a *desire* (simple desire or inclination on Plato's definition at 437d6-e6).
- 2) on the grounds that everyone *desires* good things (desire as fully-fledged desire towards something that we take to be good).
- 3) then thirst would be a *desire* for good drink (simple desire or inclination).

Plato, on my reading, does not reject (2), but he alerts us that (3) does not follow from (2).

thirst for good drink; however, his purpose at this point of the argument is to abstract from *this desire* the kernel which is the *simple* desire of thirst for drink in general.

Someone might object that the interpretation that I am suggesting cannot find support in the text since Plato is using the term ἐπιθυμία in both cases. It is true that he is not using a special term to describe these simple desires or inclinations, which is probably what has led some people to read the text as a rejection of the Socratic thesis. The distinction however, at this point is not a matter of terminology but resides in the way that Plato has already defined the simple desires.<sup>48</sup> More than that, the fact that this passage occurs in the middle of the argument about the simple desires (the whole argument is completed at 439a7) somehow supports the interpretation that I suggest. If Plato's intention was to reject the Socratic view — or his own view in a number of dialogues outside the *Republic* — he could have done so after his description of the conflicting desires at 439b-c and his conclusion about a distinct part in the soul that generates irrational desires. In that case he could have rejected the Socratic thesis on better grounds since he has proved that there is a distinct irrational part in the soul that generates all our full physical desires independently of reason or any thought. That the passage at 438a1-6 appears in the middle of the argument that is going to prove the existence of this irrational part in the soul indicates, in my view, that this passage

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<sup>48</sup> Kahn 1996: 262-63 has noticed that in a number of dialogues preceding the *Republic* and the tripartite complications of Book IV Plato is using *epithumein*, *boulesthai*, *ethelein*, and *eran* interchangeable to indicate the rational desire for the good. Kahn notices that there are two dialogues, the *Gorgias* and the *Charmides*, where Plato distinguishes between *epithumein* that indicates the bodily desires and *boulesthai* that refers to the rational desire. What Kahn probably means here is not that the term *epithumein* in these two dialogues indicates irrational desires, but that Plato reserves this term to refer to physical desires while *boulesthai* has to do with desires that are not necessarily bodily or do not involve our body like the desire for philosophy or the desire of the tyrants to rule. At any rate, if Plato outside the *Gorgias* and the *Charmides*, as Kahn suggests, does not have a fixed term to refer to the bodily desires and to distinguish them from other desires, why should we expect him to use two different terms here in the *Republic* in order to distinguish between the fully-fledged desire of thirst and the inclination or the physical force which is part of this desire.

constitutes part of the argument, in the sense that Plato is trying to make clear what he is talking about, by removing a confusion that the Socratic thesis might create.

## II

Plato's point about the simple desires or the inclinations and the clarification that he provides at 438a1-6, as I have suggested, are important since he uses these simple desires to divide the soul into parts or aspects. The way that Plato now uses the simple desires in the rest of the argument at 439b ff. reveals more things both about the nature of the simple desires and their role in human motivation and also about the role and the function of the appetitive part of the soul. Let us see first how Plato is describing the conflict:

Τοῦ διψῶντος ἄρα ἡ ψυχὴ, καθ' ὅσον διψῆ, οὐκ ἄλλο τι βούλεται ἢ πιεῖν, καὶ τούτου ὀρέγεται καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὀρμᾶ.

Δῆλον δὴ.

Οὐκοῦν εἴ ποτέ τι αὐτὴν ἀνθέλκει διψῶσαν, ἕτερον ἂν τι ἐν αὐτῇ εἴη αὐτοῦ τοῦ διψῶντος καὶ ἄγοντος ὥσπερ θηρίον ἐπὶ τὸ πιεῖν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ, φαμέν, τό γε αὐτὸ τῷ αὐτῷ ἑαυτοῦ περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα τὰναντία πράττει.

Οὐ γὰρ οὖν.

Ὡσπερ γε οἶμαι τοῦ τοξότου οὐ καλῶς ἔχει λέγειν ὅτι αὐτοῦ ἅμα αἱ χεῖρες τὸ τόξον ἀπωθοῦνται τε καὶ προσέλκονται, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἄλλη μὲν ἢ ἀπωθοῦσα χεῖρ, ἑτέρα δὲ ἢ προσαγομένη.

Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν, ἔφη.

Πότερον δὴ φῶμέν τινας ἔστιν ὅτε διψῶντας οὐκ ἐθέλειν πιεῖν;

Καὶ μάλα γ', ἔφη, πολλοὺς καὶ πολλάκις.

Τί οὖν, ἔφην ἐγώ, φαίη τις ἂν τούτων πέρι; οὐκ ἐνεῖναι μὲν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῶν τὸ κελεῦον, ἐνεῖναι δὲ τὸ κωλύον πιεῖν, ἄλλο ὃν καὶ κρατοῦν τοῦ κελεύοντος;

Ἔμοιγε, ἔφη, δοκεῖ.

Ἄρ' οὖν οὐ τὸ μὲν κωλύον τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγγίγνεται, ὅταν ἐγγένηται, ἐκ λογισμοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἄγοντα καὶ ἔλκοντα διὰ παθημάτων τε καὶ νοσημάτων παραγίγνεται;

'The soul of the thirsty man, in so far as it thirsts, wishes nothing else than to drink, and yearns for this and its impulse is towards this.

Obviously!

Then if anything draws it back when thirsty it must be something different in it from that which thirsts and drives it like a beast to drink. For it cannot be, we say, that the same thing with same part of itself at the same time acts in the opposite ways about the same thing.

We must admit that it does not.

So I fancy it is not well said of the archer that his hands at the same time thrust away the bow and draw it close, but we should rather say that there is one hand that puts it away and another that draws it to.

By all means.

Are we to say, then, that some men sometimes through thirsty refuse to drink?

We are indeed, he said.

What then, I said, should one affirm about them? It is not that there is something in the soul that bids them drink and a something that forbids, a different something that masters that which bids?

I think so.

And is it not the fact that that which inhibits such actions arises when it arises from calculations of reason, but the impulses which draw and drag come through affections and diseases?’ (439a4-d1).

The kind of conflict that Plato describes here is a bit odd. The desire for drinking is not the fully-fledged desire that involves a belief or a value-judgement according to which we consider that getting a specific kind of drink would be, for example, something good or pleasant in the circumstances. Instead of that, it is the simple desire or the inclination towards drinking that Plato has identified earlier on, which is not able to describe or represent objects in a certain way. Look for instance how the core of the conflict is described at c3: *dipsontos-ouk ethelein*, where the first indicates the feeling that someone experiences in so far as he is thirsty. At the same time the aversion towards drinking is not presented in terms of an opposite value-judgement according to which we think or know that getting a specific drink will not be something good or pleasant to do; the opposite desire again takes the form of a general aversion towards drinking. It has been argued, as part of a criticism against the kind of conflict that Plato is describing here, that he could have used a more typical kind of conflict where thirst, for instance, would be for something pleasant opposed to another desire for something good.<sup>49</sup> Penner, who has offered a very valuable and useful analysis of the kind of conflict that Plato presents here, argues that what Plato needs, to get the required conflict of desires, are desires for particular objects or courses of actions. These are the desires that Penner calls ‘executive’

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<sup>49</sup> See for instance Woods 1987: 41 and Penner 1990: 51-61. Penner who has offered a very valuable and useful analysis of the kind of conflict that Plato presents here, has argued that what Plato needs to get the required conflict of desires are desires for particular objects or courses of actions — what Penner calls ‘executive’ desires that lead to action — and drives. According to Penner, Plato’s mistake resides in the fact that he confuses drives with desires (59).

desires and are they only ones that can motivate action. According to Penner, Plato's mistake resides in the fact that he confuses *drives* with *desires*.<sup>50</sup> Although I agree with Penner's distinction between 'executive' desires — or what I prefer to call fully-fledged desires — as the only desires that can lead to action and drives, I do not think that here Plato confuses drives and desires unwillingly. On the contrary he is fully aware that he is using drives or inclinations instead of fully-fledged desires. If his intention was to describe a conflict between a fully-fledged desire to drink and the aversion towards this desire then what was the point of the whole argument about the simple desires at 437d6-e6? Plato could have described the conflict straightforwardly after the 'principle of opposites' and the passage at 437b1-c1 where he lists various desiring states.

However, Plato has chosen inclinations and not fully-fledged desires because this is what the conflict that he describes requires. By applying the 'principle of opposites' Plato can show that the desire towards drinking and the aversion should have different origins in the soul. At 439d10-11 he concludes that the physical inclination to drink comes from 'affections and diseases' while the aversion is the result of reason. The question is what might be the further implications of the way that Plato has chosen to describe this conflict. One immediate implication has to do with the nature of the two parts of the soul the existence of which the example has proved. Plato maintains that the inclination towards drinking has its source in affections and diseases while the appetitive part is rendered irrational. On the other hand, the part that is doing all the calculation and the measurement is the reasoning part of the soul. By saying that the inclination towards drinking comes from 'affections and diseases' Plato presumably does not mean that our fully-fledged desire for drink or food is merely the result of 'affections and diseases'.

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<sup>50</sup> Penner 1990: 57-58.

What is the result of affection is just the urge towards drinking when we are thirsty. Our fully-fledged desire for a specific kind of drink, however involves always some value-judgement according to which drinking or getting a specific kind of drink is presented to us as something good to do in the circumstances. Besides, our fully-fledged desires are those that motivate us to take a certain course of action by specifying the content of this action and not the impulse. Let us assume that someone feels thirsty, for instance, and decides to go for a glass of water thinking that in this case getting a glass of water is something 'good' to do. In that case what motivates the agent to get the glass of water is not just a simple inclination towards drinking, but also a judgement according to which the agent views his getting a glass of water as something good, pleasant or whatever. If the person had not thought of getting the water in any particular way the pure inclination would not be enough to motivate action.

Since Plato has allocated the inclinations to the appetitive part of the soul, it seems that this part, normally, is not able on its own to motivate action. If we return to the kind of conflict that Plato has described we are not actually told whether the person drinks or not in the end. The only thing that we are told is that in so far as the soul is thirsty it wants or is inclined to drink.<sup>51</sup> We get a picture of a certain motion that the soul experiences towards drinking, but it remains open whether this motion leads the soul to drink or not. On the assumption that what might have stopped this motion is the aversion that comes from reason, Plato seems to imply that the simple inclination of thirst may start moving the soul towards something, but this movement cannot be completed

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<sup>51</sup> Note again that Plato is using here a variety of desiring terms like *bouletai*, *oregetai*, *horma*, to denote the soul's inclination towards something. This is another indication that the terminology does not indicate anything about the kind of desire that Plato has in mind. Since here the reference is the physical desire of thirst someone would expect Plato to have written *epithumei*. (See also n. 48).

without the 'assent' of reason.<sup>52</sup> This is not to say of course that the appetitive part does not have any the power to motivate action, but that this power is normally exercised through the involvement of reason. In the description of the conflict however, Plato does not explicitly say that this first movement of the soul, which is the result of affections, needs reason's involvement in order to be completed. However, when Plato goes on to describe the harmonious soul we are told at 442c4-7 that reason should be in charge, knowing what is beneficial for the whole soul and each part of it. The question is what would it mean for reason to know what is beneficial for the appetitive part of the soul. If my interpretation is correct so far, what Plato has proved is that the appetitive part of the soul generates physical impulses towards drinking or eating and is irrational. One way that reason could be said to know what is beneficial for this part is to transform these impulses into fully-fledged desires which are directed towards the right objects. That reason's rule and power can be understood in that way is implied somehow at 442b10-c3 when Plato says that 'Brave, too, then, I take it, we call each individual by virtue of this part in him, when, namely his high spirit preserves in the midst of pains and pleasures the rule handed down by the reason as to what is or is not to be feared'. Although here Plato refers to the spirited part of the soul, we might say that also in the case of the appetitive part reason decides what should be desired and what should not. Besides at 442a4-b3 we

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<sup>52</sup> I do not use the term 'assent' here with the strict meaning that the term (*sugkatathesis*) has in the Stoics. However, I am inclined to believe that the way that Plato argues, in my view, about the appetitive part of the soul and the simple desires or the inclinations reflects — or is very close to — the psychology of Posidonius as he is presented by Galen in *PHP* Books 4 and 5. It seems to me that the *pathētikai kinēseis* of Posidonius are very close to the simple desires that Plato introduces here in the *Republic*. It might be the case, if we believe the account of Galen about Posidonius, that this was how Posidonius may have interpreted the role of the appetitive part of the soul and the 'desires' of this part in Plato. The latter of course is just an assumption the support of which goes beyond this thesis. For a very illuminating discussion on Posidonius and emotions and his relation with Chrysippus and the orthodox Stoicism, see among others, Cooper 1998: 71-111, Gill 1998: 114-148, Sorabji 1998: 149-169. On Galen's psychology see, among others, Hankinson 1991: 197-233 and 1993:184-222.

are told that ‘reason and spirit should take care of the appetitive part so that it does not become strong and large by being filled too much with the bodily pleasures’. What Plato probably means here is that reason decides which of the bodily physical impulses will be satisfied or in other words which of them will be transformed into fully-fledged desire for specific objects that fulfil the needs of the desiring part of the soul in the best way.

The recognition of an appetitive element in the soul that according to Plato is *alogiston* does not necessarily imply that our normal physical desires for specific things are also irrational. The appetitive part of the soul is described as *alogiston* on the grounds that the various impulses of this part are motions of the soul that have their source in affections such as pleasant sensations or pains. In that sense the rise of these impulses is not explained by reference to any kind of thinking or reasoning, but by reference to our bodily nature and the way that our bodies affect the soul.<sup>53</sup> Although these inclinations constitute the raw material of our full desires, the latter are shaped under the rule of reason and they cannot be irrational in the sense that the appetitive part and the inclinations that belong to this part are. In one sense, *alogiston*, might mean without any kind of thought, language and belief. This is the sense that the appetitive part is *alogiston*.<sup>54</sup> There is however, another sense according to which we can say that a person, for instance, is *alogistos*; in this sense *alogistos* would not mean that a person cannot

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<sup>53</sup>It might be argued that the appetitive part of the soul is not irrational in the sense that it is totally deprived of any kind of reasoning and calculation. Price 1995: 61-62, for instance, argues that the passage at 436a suggests mean-end reasoning on behalf of the appetitive part. At this passage Plato says that ‘we desire with a third one (*tritōi tini*) the pleasures associated with nutrition and generation’. According to Price ‘[I]n the instance of consciously desiring to drink in order to experience the pleasure of satisfying thirst *appetite’s reasoning* achieves an adaptation of instinct’ (my own italics). In the light of my argument in the preceding chapter if the appetitive part is not able to form any kind of beliefs it seems to me that it is more difficult to attribute to this part the capacity of means-end reasoning. In Book IV at least and in view of what Plato suggests about the simple desires it is not the appetitive part that achieves the adaptation of an instinct but, as I have tried to argue, the reasoning part of the soul.

<sup>54</sup> See 439b4 where the appetitive part that pushes the soul towards drinking is presented as an animal (*hō sper thēriou*). See also 589b1-2.

think or that is deprived from any cognitive capacities, but that he is foolish or unreasonable.<sup>55</sup> Our full physical desires that are shaped by reason cannot be irrational in the first sense since they involve reason's guidance. They can be however, irrational in the sense of being unreasonable if they are falsely directed by reason towards the wrong objects. In that case the rationality or the irrationality of our desires does not depend so much on the nature of our inclinations that are generated in the appetitive part, but on the condition of the reasoning part of the soul.<sup>56</sup>

My claim is that the kind of irrationality that Plato assigns to the appetitive part of the soul *as such* is not the kind of irrationality that underlines our full desires and our actions. To put it in other words, the unreasonable character of some of our physical desires is not explained so much by the existence of an irrational appetitive part in us, but by the condition of the soul, that is, the way that the parts interact and are related to each other. It is true however, that we cannot deny the strength that Plato attributes to the appetitive part and hence the influence that it has or may have on reason and, as a result, on the formation of our full desires. If the conflict that Plato has described shows anything it shows at least that the impulse has the adequate power to start the soul moving in one direction no matter if this movement normally needs reason's involvement in order to be completed. The strength that the appetitive part has *qua* part is, in my view, the most important consequence that the tripartition of the soul has on human motivation and action. The appetitive part, being a distinct part within the soul can influence reason — especially when reason is not in its best condition — and put in danger the harmony

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<sup>55</sup> See e.g. *Apology* 37c. At the same time *logismos* might mean either the common human capacity of language, thought and belief or some kind of more difficult and elaborated thinking; for the latter notion of the term see *Republic* 526b where *logismos* has to do with mathematics and arithmetic.

<sup>56</sup> See also chapter five where I try to argue that all the full physical desires of the philosopher are rational as a result of reason's knowledge.

among the parts of the soul. This may happen, for example, when under the influence of a very strong impulse we fail to perform the right calculation and form a full desire that is directed towards the wrong object. However, even in that case the irrationality of our choice resides in the fact that we thought passionately under the influence of the impulse and we form the wrong desire.

The effect that the strength of the appetitive part may have in our choices seems to go beyond the immediate influence it has in the formation of the fully-fledged physical desires. Although the appetitive part in Book IV is directly related to bodily desires and pleasures we notice that Plato appeals to this part to ‘explain’ the wrong choices of the deviant characters in Books VIII and IX. In a following chapter of this thesis I shall try to argue that in his description of unjust souls (at least in three of them) Plato is using the appetitive part in a metaphorical way to *emphasize* the unreasonable way that some people think and decide to act.<sup>57</sup> In each case however, in our actions, our choices and even in our full physical desires such as thirst and hunger, this part does not manifest itself *as such*, but in relation to the rest parts of the soul and the soul as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

The sharp distinction between appetite and reason, and the relevant distinction between what is rational and irrational that Plato postulates in Book IV, reflects in some way the reasonable and unreasonable character of our actions and our dispositions. We do not have to assume however, that when we act in a wrong and unreasonable way we do so in respect of one part of the soul and not in respect of the whole soul as the compound

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<sup>57</sup> See also chapter four.

<sup>58</sup> At the same time the existence of an appetitive part in the soul and the strength of the impulses of this part can explain even ‘extreme’ cases of human behaviour and human action. We get such a case at 439e4-440a4 where Plato describes the case of Leontius who acts on his irrational impulse to look at the dead bodies in front of him although his reason dictates him not to do so. Plato could have said, as I try to argue in a subsequent chapter of this thesis, that these although these cases happen as a matter of fact this is not how human beings normally act when they are free to choose what to do.

of the three parts. If we return to our full physical desires it seems, as I have tried to argue, that even these desires are not formed merely by an irrational appetitive part in the soul and they are not purely appetitive in their nature. They involve reason's guidance that directs them towards objects that we view as good, pleasant and so on. While we cannot get rid of our appetitive nature and the irrationality of our impulses and instincts, we can avoid having unreasonable desires through the improvement of our reasoning capacities. In the ideal harmonious soul of the philosopher, as argue in a subsequent chapter of this thesis, where reason functions in the best way, it is highly improbable that the philosopher will ever form unreasonable appetitive desires.

## **PART TWO**

### 3. The case of Leontius (*R.* 439e5-a3) and *akrasia*.

In *Republic* 439d6 ff. Socrates argues for the existence of a third part within the soul, the *thumoeides*, distinct from the reasoning and the appetitive parts. Plato presents at 439e5-a3 the story of someone called Leontius to eliminate Glaucon's assumption at 439e5 that this third part with which we get angry could be of the same kind (*homophues*) with the appetitive part:

Ἄλλ', ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ποτὲ ἀκούσας τι πιστεύω τούτῳ· ὡς ἄρα Λεόντιος ὁ Ἀγλαΐωνος ἀνιῶν ἐκ Πειραιῶς ὑπὸ τὸ βόρειον τεῖχος ἐκτός, αἰσθόμενος νεκρούς παρὰ τῷ δημίῳ κειμένους, ἅμα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῖ, ἅμα δὲ αὖ δυσχεραῖνοι καὶ ἀποτρέποι ἑαυτόν, καὶ τέως μὲν μάχοιτό τε καὶ παρακαλύπτοιτο, κρατούμενος δ' οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διελκύσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, προσδραμὼν πρὸς τοὺς νεκρούς, "Ἴδου ὑμῖν," ἔφη, "ὦ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος.

But, I said, I once heard a story which I believe, that Leontius the son of Aglaion, on his way up from Peiraeus under the outer side of the northern wall, becoming aware of dead bodies that lay at the place of public execution at the same time felt a desire to see them and an aversion, and that for a time he resisted and veiled his head, but overpowered in despite of all his desire, with staring eyes he rushed up to the corpses and cried, 'There, wretches, take your fell of the fine spectacle!' (439e5-440a4)

The story of Leontius seems to contradict my claim in the first part of this thesis where I have tried to suggest that the 'simple' desires cannot lead to action unless they are informed by reason. In the story of Leontius a non-rational desire on its own seems to have adequate

motivational force to lead Leontius to take a certain course of action against reason. Moreover this extraordinary story seems to mark a clear case of *akrasia*, normally translated in English as 'weakness of will', since Leontius acts on a non-rational desire and against his best judgement. In this chapter I shall try to show first that that Plato, through the story of Leontius, suggests that actions, which are the result merely of a non-rational desire are not voluntary actions. In that case we do not have to do with *akrasia* translated as weakness, but with compulsion. If I am right, then, Plato could accept that the simple 'appetites' that he has used to divide the reasoning from the appetitive part can lead to action only in some extreme cases when the person cannot do otherwise and is 'forced' somehow by the strength of the appetite or the inclination to take a certain course of action unwillingly.

## I

The kind of *akrasia* that the story of Leontius seems to imply is what we might call *akrasia* in the strict sense. On this strict sense of *akrasia* at the very moment of action the agent acts counter to his own best judgement. This strict sense of *akrasia* is best expressed by Davidson in his influential essay 'How is weakness of the will possible?'<sup>1</sup> According to him we say that a person acts incontinently 'if and only if: a) the agent does x intentionally; b) the agent believes there is an alternative action open to him; and c) the agent judges that, all things considered, it would be better to do y than to do x'.<sup>2</sup> There is also a broader sense of *akrasia* where the person does not follow a previous decision he has made but the moment he acts he

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson 1980: 21-42.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson 1980: 22.

wants to do or he believes that he wants to do what he does more. An example can make the distinction between the two cases clearer. Let us suppose that someone gives in to his desire for his best friend's wife. In that case two things may be going on. On the broader sense of *akrasia* the person has decided and he is committed to his decision that indulging his desire for his best friend's wife is not an appropriate thing for him to do. When he does indulge his desire, he has changed his mind, and the very moment he acts he wants more to indulge the desire more rather than he does not want to. On the strict sense of *akrasia* we could say at the very moment of indulging his friend's wife the person still wanted more not to do so than he wanted to do. According to Davidson then the person acts intentionally counter to his decision to which he is still committed.

For modern philosophers like Davidson, in the case of any action done by the person when there is no external force acting upon the person at the time of the action and there are reasons – including beliefs, judgements and desires — in respect of which the person does an action, the action is done voluntarily or intentionally.<sup>3</sup> On this interpretation, Leontius' action to look at the dead bodies is a voluntary action, since he acts on a desire to look at them and he is free to refrain from looking. This explanation of voluntary actions, held by Davidson and others, can be traced back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. At 1110a9 ff. Aristotle illustrates mixed actions that 'make one doubt whether they are voluntary or 'counter-voluntary' (1110a8-9), with the case of the ship captain who throws things overboard in a storm:

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<sup>3</sup> I use intentionally and voluntarily as having the same meaning. Someone acts voluntarily or intentionally when someone does something and he has some reasons for doing it, where reasons include judgement, belief, decision and desire. Moreover someone acts voluntarily or intentionally when the source of the action rests within the agent and the agent has factual knowledge. (Cf. Aristotle's *NE* 1109b30 ff. and *EE* 1223a23 ff.).

'... no one throws goods away whereas if it is a condition of saving oneself and the rest of what is on board, any sensible person would do it. Such actions, then, are mixed, but they look as if they belong more to the class of the voluntary, for actions in question are *desired* at the time of acting, and the end for which actions are done varies with the occasion...And a person acts *voluntarily* in the cases in question; (1110a9-15 trans. Rowe my own italics).<sup>4</sup>

It is clear in the above text that for Aristotle an action can be called voluntary in so far as the person has some reasons at the time of acting to take the course of action. We can formulate Aristotle's claim in the following way: A does x voluntarily if and only if A's beliefs and desires are reasons for doing x'. The ship owner has reasons to throw things overboard believing that he will save himself and his ship and desires to do what he does; hence his action, under the certain circumstances, is a voluntary action.

In the Platonic story of Leontius, on the other hand, Leontius has no reasons, other than his appetitive desire, to look at the dead bodies. At the very time he looks at the bodies he is still committed to his belief that it is a shameful thing to do. On the Aristotelian account in the text quoted, Leontius' action *is* voluntary since the desire he acts on is something within himself. For Davidson, cases of *akrasia* in the strict sense, like the one that the Leontius' story tells us about, are also puzzling.<sup>5</sup> Davidson has to explain how a voluntary action can be in conflict with person's practical decisions. At the same time it is not part of Davidson's account that the desire that Leontius experiences to look at the bodies is distinct from his judgement not

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<sup>4</sup> In the quoted text I have omitted purposely the next two lines 15-17, where Aristotle adds one of the other two conditions that account for voluntary actions, that the source of the action is within the agent. What Aristotle stresses, in my view, in the quoted text is that an action done by rational decision, even if this decision does not meet the agent's general rational plan (no one wants to throw goods away), is a voluntary action.

<sup>5</sup> These cases are also puzzling for Socrates and early Stoics that share with Davidson the analysis of action that faces problems concerning *akrasia* in the strict sense.

to look at them. For Davidson, if there is a conflict between two desires or preferences then both of the conflicting desires are rational. It is in that sense that action as a result of any of the two conflicting desires is voluntary or intentional action. Plato in the *Republic* and Aristotle provide a different account to explain such cases.<sup>6</sup> If there is a conflict between a person's decisions and actions then the actions are caused by another power within the person. For Plato and Aristotle non-rational desires can motivate someone to act against his best judgement<sup>7</sup>. But here, in my view, lies a difference between the two and also between Plato and Davidson. For Plato in *Republic*, unlike Davidson and Aristotle, such actions are not voluntary. My suggestion is that Plato considers actions done in virtue of a non-rational desire 'counter-voluntary'. What follows this claim is the further suggestion that for Plato when someone acts on a non-rational desire sometimes or in some extreme cases this desire is like an 'alien' force within the person that compels him to take a course of action against his rational decision and his evaluation.

Such a reading of course cannot be supported merely from the illustrated case of Leontius. In the story that Plato describes, Leontius is overcome by a non-rational desire, but there is no evidence in the text that Leontius acts involuntarily and that he is under compulsion. More than that, nowhere in the *Republic* does Plato make a distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions. There is only one passage at 412e1-413c3, which has remained largely

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<sup>6</sup>At this point I do not claim that Plato's division of the soul intends to provide another explanation or even a response to the Socratic denial of *akrasia* in the so called early dialogues (esp. in the *Protagoras*). My claim is that Plato's acceptance of non-rational desires gives us a better account of human action that can also accommodate extreme cases of human behaviour, like the one described in the story of Leontius, that Socrates purposely leaves out.

<sup>7</sup>In Aristotle's explanation of *akrasia*, as I shall try to explain briefly in the text, it is not merely a non-rational desire that goes against someone's best judgement, but a pair of a non-rational desire and a belief which together constitute a motivational set.

unnoticed in the literature<sup>8</sup>, where Plato carefully reminds us that no one goes wrong willingly when in abandoning his true beliefs about the good and succumbing to pleasures and pains. Plato explains that people often change their minds involuntarily (*akontes*) either because they are persuaded to do so or because of fear, grief and pleasure (413b4-7, b8-c3). But from this position we should not infer that the actions which are done directly under the influence of an emotion or a non-rational desire with no involvement or intervention of beliefs are also involuntary. To put it in other words, Plato here seems to argue for involuntary actions in respect of false beliefs that can be formed by arguments and through persuasion or by the affection of some emotions, but he does not say that actions which are done directly by non-rational desires are also involuntary. At any rate, if Plato's view here is a restatement of the Socratic thesis, The Socrates of the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias* does recognize non-rational desires that operate independently of the agent's judgement.<sup>9</sup>

However we can find some evidence that Plato considers actions done by non-rational desires non-voluntary in the philosophical tradition after him. There are at least three occasions, two in Aristotle's *Ethics* and another one in the *Didaskalikos* written either by Albinus or 'Alcinous',<sup>10</sup> where it seems that the view that actions done by the non-rational parts of the soul are non-voluntary actions is attributed to Plato. Let us start first with Aristotle. At *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b30-1111b3 he distinguishes between voluntary and counter-

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<sup>8</sup> For a reference to this passage see: Penner 2005: 158 n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> In the end of this chapter I shall try to make clear that in *Republic* Plato provides a twofold explanation of involuntariness. Involuntary actions can be explained either by reference to false beliefs (which is the thesis that Plato's Socrates holds in the dialogues preceding *Republic*) or by reference to non-rational desires.

<sup>10</sup> There is a dispute about the author of the *Didaskalikos*. Usually the author of the *Didaskalikos*, who is named in the manuscripts as 'Alkinoos' has been identified with the Middle-Platonist philosopher Albinus. But John Dillon in his *Alcinous The Handbook of Platonism* argues that probably Albinus and Alcinous are not names for the same person and that someone called Alcinous is the real author of this work. (See Dillon 1993: ix-xiii). After Dillon's book, as far as I know, it is widely accepted that the author is Alcinous.

voluntary actions. In general, actions which are done by force or ignorance are considered by Aristotle as counter-voluntary (1109b35-1110a1). On the other hand, a person acts voluntarily when the 'origin of moving his instrumental parts is in himself, and if the origin (*archē*) of something is in himself (*en autōi*), it depends on himself (*ep' autōi*) whether he does this thing or not' (1110a115-18). Later on at 1111a22-25, when Aristotle summarizes his claim about voluntary and counter-voluntary actions, he objects against those who say (*isōs gar ou kalōs legetai*) that things done because of appetite (*epithumia*) and temper (*thumos*) are counter-voluntary. Here, in my view, by *legetai* Aristotle refers back to Plato's *Republic*. This assumption of course might face two objections: the general question of how far we can always rely on Aristotle's understanding of the philosophers before him — especially Plato — and the ambiguity of the reference at this point that is generated by Aristotle's practice of not naming his predecessors in his ethical treatises.<sup>11</sup> I think that Aristotle does read Plato correctly at this point. That the reference is to Plato is made clear, I think, by the usage of the terms *thumos* and *epithumia* that Plato uses for the lower parts of the soul in *Republic* and that Aristotle takes over from him to name two of the three species of *orexis* in *De Anima* 414b1.

There is an analogous, though more elaborate, reference in the *Eudemian Ethics*. At *EE* 1223a23 ff. Aristotle discusses which actions count as voluntary and which as counter-voluntary. His account in *EE* is almost the same as that in *NE* with the exception that in *EE* there is one more condition, compulsion, beyond force and ignorance that accounts for counter-voluntary actions. Compulsion is used to render the term *bia* that Aristotle uses in *EE* to refer to external force. In *EE* there are two ways that we can speak of compulsion. In the

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<sup>11</sup> Before *NE* 1111a25 there is only one reference by name to Plato at 1095a32 and one more to Speusippus at 1096b7.

case of the controlled and the uncontrolled man, we could say that each of them acts under compulsion since they act on one motive and against another one. The self-controlled man acts under the force of rational calculation that drags him away from the pleasures while the uncontrolled acts under the force of appetite that is going contrary to his rational faculty (1224a31-36). Of course Aristotle denies that any of them acts under true compulsion and hence the actions are counter-voluntary. We could say, Aristotle argues at 1224b26-29, that each part acts under compulsion because of the presence of the other, but we cannot say the same for the whole soul. The whole soul both of the self-controlled and the incontinent man acts not under compulsion and hence voluntarily.

But there is also another way in which people are said (*legontai*) to act under compulsion. Aristotle considers those cases when someone does something bad and he is faced with flogging or imprisonment or execution if he does not do it (1225a3-6). It seems that here, unlike *NE*, Aristotle accepts the idea that:

οὕτω γὰρ ἀναγκαζόμενος καὶ [μὴ] βίᾳ πράξει, ἢ οὐ φύσει, ὅταν κακὸν ἀγαθοῦ ἔνεκα ἢ μείζονος κακοῦ ἀπολύσεως πράττη, καὶ ἄκων γε· οὐ γὰρ ἐφ' αὐτῷ ταῦτα. διὸ καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα πολλοὶ ἀκούσιον τιθέασιν, καὶ θυμοῦς ἐνίους καὶ τὰ φυσικά, ὅτι ἰσχυρὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν φύσιν·

‘it is when someone does something bad for the sake of something good, or for avoidance of a greater evil, that someone acts by necessity and under compulsion or at all events not according to nature; and of course he acts non-voluntary, because these things does not rest with himself. *For that reason many reckon even love counter-voluntary and some forms of anger and the natural impulses, because they are strong and beyond nature*’ (1225a17-21, my own translation and italics).

I think that the last part in italics constitutes a reference back to Plato. Again here, as in *NE*, we are faced with the difficulty of the anonymous reference (*polloi*). However, there are hints that make us think that Aristotle is referring to Plato and his immediate successors in the Early Academy.<sup>12</sup> That the philosopher here might be — or is — Plato can be supported by the usage of *erōs* in the same line. The word occurs at least another two times in *EE* once at 1229a21 and at 1245a24 with the meaning of the non-rational sexual desire. In Plato the same word is also used to denote the non-rational sensual desire, or even more all the non-rational desires of the appetitive part of the soul. Two obvious instances of this usage of *erōs* are to be found in *Phaedrus* 238c4 where *erōs* designates the desire without rational judgement and in *Republic* 573b8 where *Erōs* is associated with the up springing of all the non-rational desires in the soul of the tyrant.

Apart from the use of the word *erōs* by Aristotle which might lead us to see a reference to Plato, Aristotle's explanation of *mē eph' hautōi* captures, I think, how the *polloi* would consider actions done through *erōs* counter-voluntary actions. Things that do not rest within the self of the agent are explained by what the nature of someone is capable to bear (*ho hē autou phusis hoia te pherein* 1225a26). Here Aristotle does not explicitly mention what kind of things the nature of someone cannot bear. But earlier on at 1224b29 ff. he argues that both reason (*logos*) and appetite (*epithumia*) are natural properties and accompany us from birth. By saying that appetites are natural properties Aristotle refers, in my view, to those 'normal'

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. for a similar formulation *DA*. 432a24-26: 'τρόπον γάρ τινα ἄπειρα φαίνεται, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἃ τινες λέγουσι διορίζοντες, λογιστικὸν καὶ θυμικὸν καὶ ἐπιθυμητικὸν, οἱ δὲ τὸ λόγον ἔχον καὶ τὸ ἄλογον.' It is clear that by the indefinite pronoun in the plural (*τινες*) Aristotle refers here to Plato and the oral tradition in the Early Academy.

desires that every person experiences throughout his life; hunger and thirst are two clear examples of these desires. We are justified, then, in identifying the things that ‘the nature of someone can bear’ with those appetites which are properties of human nature. On the other hand there are some strong and excessive impulses like the ones that the *polloi* mention that are beyond human nature (*huper tēn phusin* 1225a22); these are presumably the impulses that human nature ‘cannot bear’.<sup>13</sup> In the following lines Aristotle claims that such impulses are outside the agent (*mēd’ esti tēs ekeinou phusei orekseōs... ouk eph’ hautōi* 1225a26-27) and concludes that the actions (*erga*) done by these impulses are not within the agent (*ouk eph’ hēmin eisin* a31).<sup>14</sup> Thus, according to Aristotle when the source of some actions does not rest within the agent, these actions are not voluntary. This, is of course, Aristotle’s view and cannot be attributed directly to Plato. However, the reference to his predecessors indicates that what Aristotle suggests here is a view that some other thinkers before him — either Plato or the members of the Old Academy — used to hold.

The second, and most important, reference comes from *Didaskalikos*. No matter who is the real author, the text is a genuine work of Middle-Platonism and a reliable source of how Middle-Platonists were reading Plato.<sup>15</sup> In chapter 32 A., having devoted the two previous chapters to discuss the virtues, comes to describe the emotions:

Ἔστι τοίνυν πάθος κίνησις ἄλογος ψυχῆς ὡς ἐπὶ κακῷ ἢ ὡς ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ. Ἄλογος μὲν οὖν εἴρεται κίνησις, ὅτι οὐ κρίσεις τὰ πάθη οὐδὲ δόξαι, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν

<sup>13</sup> Cf. also *NE*. 1148b15 ff., where Aristotle argues that there are some things, which are pleasant according to nature (*hēdeia phusei*).

<sup>14</sup> The same holds if something is done by *logismos* or *dianoia* when these principles do not belong to the nature of the agent (1225a27-30)

<sup>15</sup> I refer to the author as A. adopting Dillon’s strategy in Dillon: 1993. The translation of the quoted texts from *Didaskalikos* is that of Dillon 1993 unless otherwise indicated.

κινήσεις· ἐν γὰρ τῷ παθητικῷ τῆς ψυχῆς συνίσταται, καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα ἔργα οὐδ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

Ἔκουσι γοῦν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐγγίνεται πολλάκις καὶ ἀντιτείνουσιν·

‘An emotion is an irrational motion of the soul, in response either to something bad or to something good. It is called an irrational motion because emotions are neither judgements nor opinions, but rather motions of the irrational parts of the soul; *for they come about in the affective part of the soul, and they are not really our actions, nor under our control. At any rate, they often come about without our wishing and indeed despite our resistance*’ (32.1.3-8, my own italics).

I have put in italics the second section of the quoted text which indicates, in my view, how A. understands Plato’s treatment of those actions that come from the irrational parts of the soul.<sup>16</sup> My suggestion is that in this passage A. seems to support the hypothesis that the actions, which are done as a result of the emotions of the irrational parts of the soul are counter-voluntary (*akousi*). But caution is needed here. An alternative reading of the Greek does not support this view. Dillon comments ad loc. that: ‘All that A. means here is that a sudden pang of distress or fear, for example, is not properly to be counted as an act of ours. What happens after that, however (i.e. whether we resist the emotion or not), is our responsibility’.<sup>17</sup> According to Dillon, as far as I understand him, what A. says is that it is only the stirring up of the emotions that is involuntary and not up to us, but not the action that these emotions might produce. Dillon draws his explanation only from the corrupted text in the lines 5-7 where he supplies an

<sup>16</sup> The first part of the quoted text is a reference, which supports my claim that for Plato the lower parts of the soul are deprived of beliefs (*doxai*). I have argued briefly for this claim in the first part of this essay.

<sup>17</sup> Dillon 1993: 194.

(*oude*) in the missing text after *kai* and he rightly translates ‘they are not really our actions, nor under our control’, but he omits what follows.

The following sentences (*Akousi goun eggignetai en hēmin pollakis kai antiteinousi*) in the lines 7-8 supports, in my view, the reading that I suggest. Dillon translates here ‘At any rate they (sc. the passions) often come about without our wishing (*akousi*) and despite our resistance (*antiteinousi*)’. But the text here and Dillon’s translation are at odds with the second part of his comment. This sentence is introduced by A. as evidence of what had already been said.<sup>18</sup> A. claims that the emotions are not our own actions because in many cases (*pollakis*) they awake without our wish and despite our resistance (*antiteinousi*). While Dillon proposes that it is our responsibility whether we decide to resist the emotion or not the text says that we *do* resist, but the emotion comes about despite our resistance. This is further explained in the following lines (8-12) where A. argues that ‘sometimes (*esth’ hote*) even if we know that the sensations presented to us are neither unpleasant nor pleasant, nor yet worthy of fear nevertheless we are driven by them (*ouden hētton agometha*) which would not be the case had they (sc. the passions) been judgements’ (translation adapted, my own italics). On this explanation even if we know sometimes that we should not allow the awaking of certain emotions in the end these emotions not only arise independently of our judgements but also go against our judgements, and they persist despite our resistance (*antiteinousi*) and are capable of motivating us towards certain actions (*agometha*).<sup>19</sup> What A. describes here is a conflict

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<sup>18</sup> The *goun* here is used to introduce a sentence, which is evidence for a preceding statement. Cf. Denniston 1954: 451 ii.

<sup>19</sup> The verb *agometha* in the passive voice with the supplement up’ *autōn* is indicative, I think, of the strength of some emotions when they arise and their capability to lead us towards actions despite our resistance and our wish.

between judgements and emotions.<sup>20</sup> Such a conflict does not stress the mere fact that emotions in general arise independently of our judgements (something that we can draw if we can draw only from the lines 5-7), but it suggests that in many cases they go against our judgements and lead us towards actions that we do not really want to do. It is in that sense that both the awakening of some emotions and the actions that these emotions might produce despite our resistance are against our wish (*akousi*). Of course the stirring up of every emotion is not always in conflict with judgement. A. would argue that moderate anger (15ff.), for instance, does not arise against our judgement. On the contrary when someone goes to war he wants to feel angry to a reasonable degree in order to be able to fight his enemies. In that case also, the emotion of anger arises *independently* of our judgement in the sense that it is a non-rational motion of the soul, but it *does not go against* our judgement since we judge that we want to have this right kind of moderate anger in the sight of our enemies in the battlefield.

Before leaving the two references from Aristotle and the *Didaskalikos* I would like to make some concluding remarks. Aristotle uses negative criteria both in *EE* and *NE* to define voluntary and counter-voluntary actions. An action is not voluntary if it is done through ignorance or under external force. Aristotle provides a more positive account in *EE* concluding that 'the voluntary is a matter of acting with some thought' (1224a7). In *NE* actions done from passion are voluntary actions since the source that moves the agent is within himself. In *EE* he holds a more nuanced view according to which actions done from fear might be counter-voluntary. In the same work he seems to accept the view that actions done by impulses that human nature cannot bear are somewhat like actions done by an external force and hence

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<sup>20</sup> That A. speaks of a conflict between emotions and judgements becomes clear by reference to Ch. 24. 43-46 where A. explicitly claims that reason and the affective parts of the soul 'occupy different locations because they are found in conflict'.

counter-voluntary. What is important for my argument is the fact that both in *NE* and *EE* Aristotle seems to attribute to Plato the view that actions done by appetite and spirit (*NE*) or by some impulses that human nature cannot bear (*EE*) are counter-voluntary. Of course we cannot make out too much of this passage of Aristotle. Even if, as I suggest, Aristotle refers to Plato in both works, the reference is abbreviated and we are not given an account of what Plato means by saying that these actions are involuntary. In the *Didaskalikos* on the other hand, we find a more illuminating reading of Plato. We have seen that A., according to my interpretation of the quoted text, makes the following claims: a) emotions arise independently of our judgements, b) many times they go against our judgements despite our resistance and our wish, and c) they can initiate actions which in turn are done against our wish (*akousi*). On the grounds that the text is a genuine work of Middle-Platonism and that this is how A. reads Plato, (b) and (c) give us some evidence that Plato would consider actions, which are done by emotions involuntary actions. If we return to the story of Leontius we see that Leontius experiences a non-rational sexual desire to look at the dead bodies in front of him. In the text it is quite clear that this desire goes against his rational decision not to look at them. If we rely on how A. reads Plato in the *Didaskalikos* Leontius is doing something that is against his wish and does not really want to do; hence Leontius does not act willingly.

## II

Earlier on in this chapter I have made the further suggestion that in those cases where an involuntary action is explained only by reference to the strength of a non-rational desire,

Plato would say that the agent acts under psychological compulsion. In the Greek text there is verbal evidence that probably supports the idea of compulsion. At 440b1 Plato says that sometimes the appetites constrain (*biazontai*) reason. The same term occurs at 413b9 (see above) where Plato says that people are constrained (*biasthentes*) by fear and grief and that they form false beliefs involuntarily. At 413b9 the constraint of fear or grief makes someone form false beliefs and act in respect of them. In the case of Leontius, the constraint of a non-rational desire can lead directly to action without the mediation of any belief. For such an action to occur three conditions should be fulfilled: a) the agent knows fully that he should do x, b) the agent experiences a strong desire to do y that arises independently of his knowledge and goes against it, c) the agent wants to, but cannot resist, this desire. The case of Leontius meets all the three conditions. He experiences a strong desire to look at the dead bodies that comes from his appetitive part of his soul; at the same time he knows that he should not look at the dead bodies; he tries to resist his non-rational desire by all means (Plato's language is indicative of his effort to resist '*machoito*', '*parakaluptoito*' 440a1), but in the end he is driven by his desire against his knowledge.

This idea of psychological compulsion has been suggested by Santas<sup>21</sup> in his effort to save the Socratic thesis on the denial of *akrasia* in *Protagoras*. He maintains that Plato's Socrates in the *Protagoras* 'seems to run together strength [of desire] and value estimate; when for instance, he [Socrates] considers an objection that might be understood to imply that strength of desire varies with variation of distance from the object of the desire, he understands it rather to imply that the agent's estimate of the value of the object varies with distance. The

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<sup>21</sup> Santas 1966: 1-32.

whole confusion is made easier to fall into by the fact that strength is not entirely independent of value estimate'.<sup>22</sup> In those cases according to Santas that we can determine the strength of a desire independently of the agent's knowledge of his action and independently of his value estimate then we could say that the agent was not psychologically able to refrain from doing this certain action.<sup>23</sup> I do not know how far Santas had in his mind the Platonic story of Leontius when he was endorsing the idea of compulsion to meet an objection to the Socratic thesis. In fact it does not seem that he borrows the idea of compulsion from Plato. However the way that Santas argues for compulsion captures, I think, what Plato suggests with the story of Leontius.

The idea of compulsion that Santas suggests and to which I resort to interpret the story of Leontius has met with some criticism. Penner<sup>24</sup> attacks compulsion in the Santas paper by saying that '[w]hat Plato and Aristotle think of as irrational desires which can, nevertheless, result in voluntary actions, Santas called compulsions hoping thereby to save the Socratic thesis that no one errs willingly...Obviously Plato and Aristotle would not have availed themselves of Santas's word "compulsions". For that would have completely destroyed the account of *akrasia* they offer as a rival to Socrates'.<sup>25</sup> Penner rests his criticism on two further claims in the same paper. First he believes that Plato seems to confuse the generalized simple non-rational desires with executive non-rational desires for particular objects.<sup>26</sup> In the preceding chapter I have argued that Plato is fully aware of this distinction between drives and what Penner calls executive non-rational desires. In Book IV he deliberately speaks of a

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<sup>22</sup> Santas 1966: 29.

<sup>23</sup> Santas 1966: 30-31.

<sup>24</sup> Penner 1990: 51-52, n. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Indeed Plato does avail himself of the word 'compulsion'. See *biazontai* above in the main text.

<sup>26</sup> Penner 1990: 59.

conflict between simple non-rational desires and executive rational desires because this kind of conflict serves better his aim of dividing the soul. The second, and most important, claim that supports Penner's criticism against the idea of compulsion is that Plato does not only confuse drives with non-rational desires for particular objects, but also, according to Penner, Plato maintains that someone is acting voluntarily when he acts merely on a non-rational simple desire.<sup>27</sup> I have argued so far in this chapter that Plato — unlike Aristotle — would consider those actions done by the non-rational parts of the soul involuntarily.<sup>28</sup> It is clear in the text that Leontius acts on a non-rational desire that comes entirely from the appetitive part of his soul. The fact that Leontius' sensual desire has a specific object, that is, the dead bodies in front of him, does not make this desire different in its nature from the simple generalised desires of thirst, hunger and sex that Plato has described earlier on at 437d ff. That Leontius' desire is directed towards a specific object is quite incidental; it is just in the presence of the dead bodies that Leontius perceives (*aisthomenos*) through his eyes that these bodies become the specific object of his simple generalized sensual desire. If so, then Leontius acts involuntarily on a blind non-rational desire against his knowledge. The notion of involuntariness, that Penner fails to see in his criticism against Santas and the latter does not mention when he introduces the idea of compulsion, allows us to say that Plato does not abandon at least one of the Socratic theses namely that no one goes wrong willingly. But now Plato can explain unwillingness by reference either to false beliefs (see above) or to simple non-rational desires.

However, despite the fact that Leontius is acting involuntary, his action can be described as a 'clear-eyed *akratic* action' that rejects the other Socratic thesis that *akrasia* of

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<sup>27</sup> Penner 1990: 50.

<sup>28</sup> That this is a view that Plato himself does not hold is now clear to Penner in Penner and Rowe 2005: 222-223, n.40.

the strict sense, or synchronic-belief *akrasia* as Penner calls it, never happens. The case of Leontius tells us that this kind of *akrasia* is a possibility. At this point if we combine the involuntariness of Leontius' action with the fact that he tries to resist his desire, but he cannot, we might end up saying that what Plato describes is not a real case of *akrasia*, but the phenomenon of human behaviour that we call compulsion. Although the mere fact that Leontius is overcome by his desire can be labeled *akrasia* in the literal meaning of the Greek term<sup>29</sup> it is rather striking that this is an account of *akrasia* that Plato offers to replace the account that he puts in Socrates' mouth in *Protagoras* and those dialogues that by stylometric criteria precede *Republic*. What is striking is that while Socrates seems to argue in *Protagoras* that when someone fully knows what to do it is impossible to go wrong, Plato through the story of Leontius argues for exactly the opposite; Leontius *does fully know* what to do nevertheless he goes wrong.

Plato's claim, if we take it to be an explanation of *akrasia*, becomes stranger if we look on how Aristotle explains *akrasia*. Aristotle in his own explanation of *akrasia*,<sup>30</sup> as far as I understand him, seems to claim that if someone goes wrong then he does not fully exercise his knowledge. What Aristotle suggests is that in the case of the incontinent man a part of his practical syllogism, either the particular premise or the conclusion of the syllogism, remain inactive. Aristotle explains the action of the incontinent man by reference to a non-rational

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<sup>29</sup> *Akratēs* literally means someone who is powerless or does not have power or command over a thing. In the abstract moral sense which is to be found in Aristotle, according to LSJ, the term means 'without command over oneself or one's passions'.

<sup>30</sup> *NE* 1146b31-36, 1146b36-1147a10, 1147a11-24 and mainly 1147a24-b19. For a detailed discussion of Aristotle's explanation of *akrasia* see Kenny 1966: 163-184, Santas 1969: 162-189, Robinson 1977: 79-91. Despite some slightly differences in their interpretation all of them seem to agree that when real *akrasia* happens the incontinent man does not exercise a part of his knowledge.

desire and an opinion (*doxa*).<sup>31</sup> The opinion that accompanies the desire is probably the premise of the syllogism that the incontinent man exercises. On Aristotle's explanation it seems that, although all the premises and the conclusion of the syllogism are present in the incontinent man at the time he acts, only one part of the syllogism (the opinion that accompanies the desire) is activated. On this explanation Aristotle would argue that the kind of *akrasia* that the story of Leontius describes is not a reality. It would be impossible for Aristotle that someone might fully know what to do and exercise his knowledge completely and yet goes wrong. Leontius does not only know what he should do but it seems that he exercises his knowledge completely. In the description of the story Leontius does not act on a belief that tells him 'looking at the dead bodies is something pleasant, and these are dead bodies'. All that Leontius knows or believes is that he should not look at the dead bodies and while this knowledge or belief comes entirely from the reasoning part of his soul, the opposite non-rational desire that Leontius acts on emerges from the appetitive part of his soul. That he exercises his knowledge completely can be justified by the fact that he tries to resist his desire to look at them. On the other hand, although the incontinent man in Aristotle experiences an inner conflict, since his non-rational desire goes against his knowledge, it is not true of the incontinent man that he tries to resist his desire/opinion motive in the way that Leontius does. This lack of resistance on the part of the incontinent man is due to the fact that he does not fully exercise his knowledge when he is under the influence of passion. We could say that Aristotle follows to some extent Socrates by claiming that the so-called cases of *akrasia* are in some sense cases of ignorance or of failure in respect of the agent to exercise his knowledge

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. NE 1145b9-15 where Aristotle says that the incontinent acts according to desire and 1147a31 ff. where he explicitly supplies the non-rational desire with a belief that directs the desire towards a specific object (*hoti pan gluku hēdu, touti de gluku*).

completely.<sup>32</sup> We are left then with the Platonic account, which totally overlooks the role of ignorance in the explanation of *akrasia*. This is why I suggest that the story of Leontius marks a case of compulsion,<sup>33</sup> which, Plato would argue, is not the same thing as real *akrasia*.

Gary Watson in a fascinating paper<sup>34</sup> tries to explain why weakness is not a case of compulsion. Watson argues that:

‘there are capabilities and skills of *resistance* which are acquired in the normal course of socialization and practice, and which we hold one another responsible for acquiring and maintaining. Weak agents fall short of standards of ‘reasonable and normal’ self control (for which we hold them responsible), *whereas compulsive agents are motivated by desires which they could not resist even if they meet those standards*. That is why we focus on the weakness of the agent in the one case (it is the agent’s fault), but on the power of the contrary motivation in the compulsive case. And this view allows explanation in terms of weakness of will to be significantly different from explanations in terms of compulsion. *In the case of weakness, one acts contrary to one’s better judgement because one has failed to meet*

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Santas 1969: 184-189 for a discussion on the differences and the similarities of the Socratic and the Aristotelian explanation. Note also that when Aristotle comes to explain *akrasia* at 1145bff. he starts his discussion by a reference to the Socratic account of *Protagoras* and not to the Plato of *Republic*. The reference to Socrates is justified because Aristotle might have thought that it is Socrates who tried to give a successful, though not adequate, explanation of *akrasia*. Probably Aristotle does not think that the story Leontius is a real case of *akrasia*.

<sup>33</sup> By compulsion or compulsive behaviour I mean that someone is compelled to act in a certain way by a motivating source other than his value-judgements, his beliefs and his practical reasoning. In Plato the non-rational desires of the lower parts of the soul are distinct motivating forces that, in some cases, can do this job as the story of Leontius tells us. Aristotle seems to suggest (see below in the main text) that compulsion might be the result of disease or disorder. In general, to say that someone is under compulsion is to explain someone’s action by reference merely to a non-rational desire that goes against not only his best judgement of what to do in a particular situation, but goes against his judgement overall. The simple fact that these irrational motivating forces are present in the soul does not entail that the person is under compulsion. It is only when a person acts on this motivating source that we say that the person acts on a compulsive desire that he cannot resist.

<sup>34</sup> Watson 1977: 316-319.

*standard of reasonable or moral self control*; whereas this explanation does not hold of compulsive behaviour' (my italics).<sup>35</sup>

I have decided to quote this text at length because I think it captures in the best way the difference between weakness and compulsion. I do not know to what extent, if any, Watson relies for his analysis on his reading of Plato and especially on the case of Leontius. However the parallel between the quoted text, especially the words in italics, and the case of Leontius is striking. Watson claims that the compulsive agents could not resist even if they meet certain standards while the weak person does not resist because he fails to meet these standards. We have seen that Leontius acquires all these capabilities and skills of resistance, but he cannot resist the excessive blind desire that he experiences. It might be the case that Aristotle himself was aware of this distinction between *akrasia* and compulsion. Watson in the same paper,<sup>36</sup> a few lines before the quoted text, cites a text from *NE* 1150b7 ff., where Aristotle claims that 'For it is not surprising if someone gives in to strong excessive pleasures or pains, but rather something one tends to feel sympathy for, if he is overcome despite struggling against them...but it is surprising if someone is overcome by pleasures or pains that most people can withstand, and is unable to struggle against these unless it is because of some natural, congenital factor (or because of disease)'. It is not clear what Aristotle means by 'strong excessive pleasures or pains'. There is some evidence that he may refer to these morbid dispositions towards pleasant things, which result from habituation, like the disposition to sexual activity with other males (1148b27-28). Aristotle says at b34-35 that no one would call

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<sup>35</sup> Watson 1977: 331-332.

<sup>36</sup> Watson 1977: 331.

un-self-controlled those who are in a morbid condition as a result of habituation and he adds at 1149a13-15 that there are some people who have these traits without being overcome by them, but it is also possible to be overcome by them and not just have them. We may assume that Aristotle refers to those morbid conditions at 1150b7 where he says that someone is overcome by 'excessive pleasures and pains'. In any case whatever Aristotle means by 'excessive pleasures and pains', I think that the passage at 1150b7 ff. suggests a distinction between weakness and compulsion where the latter is explained in respect of very strong and irresistible desires while the former, following Aristotle's explanation of *akrasia*, is due to the agent's failure to exercise his knowledge completely and to avoid being overcome by his pleasures. If Aristotle recognizes that there are actions which are done under the influence of a very strong desire that the agent cannot resist, it remains questionable how far these actions for Aristotle are counter-voluntary. In *NE*, as we have seen, it seems that all actions done by appetite or anger are voluntary actions, while in *EE* Aristotle seems to argue that some actions done by excessive desires that human nature cannot bear could be counter-voluntary actions. But if we interpret Aristotle saying that only normal adults are responsible for their voluntary actions,<sup>37</sup> we could say that compulsive agents act voluntarily but they are not in some sense responsible for going wrong because they do not act out of thought and decision. For Plato on the other hand, as I have argued, actions done under compulsion are involuntary actions.

The story of Leontius then within the context of book IV and Plato's recognition of simple non-rational desires does not necessarily imply an explanatory account of *akrasia*. On the grounds that Leontius is acting involuntary and tries to resist with all his power, we are

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<sup>37</sup> I follow here Irwin and his interpretation on voluntary actions and responsibility in Aristotle in Irwin 1980: 117-155.

allowed to read the story as a case of compulsion. Although such cases fall under the description of *akrasia* in the literal meaning of the term, they are not explained in terms of weak knowledge or ignorance on behalf of the agent, but they find their explanation in the presence of an excessive non-rational desire that the agent cannot resist. It is true though that compulsive behaviour is the result, as Aristotle seems to claim, of habituation. Plato would agree with Aristotle that someone can always regulate his desires and avoid letting them grow to compulsive and irresistible desires. At the same time Plato would accept that cases like the one that the story of Leontius describes are a possibility.<sup>38</sup> The acceptance of such cases makes him more pessimistic about human nature compared with what Socrates says in *Protagoras*. But at the same time in *Republic* he is not willing to abandon the Socratic thesis. He still thinks that normal human behaviour can be explained in terms of beliefs, which are usually formed and are affected by the non-rational desires of the lower parts of the soul (esp. the appetitive part). This becomes apparent in his discussion of the unjust souls and the way that the deviant characters are motivated towards their choices in Books VII and IX to which I turn in the following chapter.

In the beginning of this chapter, I have noticed that the case of Leontius might contradict my claim in earlier chapters of this thesis that the desires of the appetitive part of the soul are 'simple'. In the first part of this thesis I have supported the idea that the 'simple' desires or the pure inclinations are not shaped by reason, and they cannot recognize specific objects. This is in line with my claim in the same part, that the appetitive part is deprived of

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<sup>38</sup> I am not keen on the idea that Plato introduces the story of Leontius *ad hoc* to serve his aim to distinguish the spirited from the appetitive part of the soul. Socrates clearly indicates at 439be5 that he believes the story that follows. It is true though that Plato uses the story because it describes a sharp conflict between reason and appetite that serves Plato's argument for the kind of the division of the soul in Book IV.

any judgemental capacities and is unable to 'say' that something is 'such and such'. In the case of the Leontius, however, his appetite is directed towards a certain object something that might indicate that the appetitive part can recognize objects and can form judgments. One way to meet this difficulty would be to assume that Leontius' desire is not a 'simple' appetite, but I think this is not a satisfactory solution. The similarity between the conflict that Plato describes in the case of the 'thirsty man' and the case of Leontius is striking. In the case of Leontius we get again a conflict the between a desire that comes form reason and a desire that derives from the appetitive part of the soul and goes against reason. The only difference is that in the story of Leontius reason is backed up by spirit. The other solution is to say that the case of Leontius goes against my claim about the non-cognitive character of the appetitive part and indicates that this part is capable of saying things and recognizing objects. But Plato is very careful in his illustration of the story to say that it is Leontius that 'sees' the dead bodies (*aisthomenos vekrous para tōi dēmiōi keimenous* 439e7) and the appetitive part of his soul.

I think that the *aisthomenos* provides a hint towards a plausible answer. The example of the 'thirsty man' who wants to drink at 439a9 ff. is just an abstraction that serves Plato's aim of distinguishing between the two parts of the soul; the focus in this example are on the parts of the soul as two distinct sources of motivation and not the person having a soul with three parts. In the same manner that we could say that we never experience *actual* desires of thirst in the way that the simple inclination of thirst is presented in the example, the inclination itself is not something that occurs in respect of the appetitive part of the soul in isolation. To make my point more clearly; if the 'simple' thirst is, as I have suggested in the first part of this thesis,<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See chapter two.

an irrational movement in relation to bodily sensations — either pleasant or painful — that we experience, then the experience of these sensations belongs to the whole soul or the person and not only to one part of it. In the case of Leontius it is the person that recognizes the dead bodies in front of him and feels attracted towards them. It is true however, that the non-rational motion towards the dead bodies springs from the appetitive part of the soul just as Leontius' ability to recognize that there are some bodies in front of him belongs to the reasoning part of the soul. Thus, the pure inclination that Leontius experiences is not different from the simple desire for drink that Plato has described earlier on. The story exemplifies how these inclinations occur in actual cases and what is the effect that they might have on the person that experiences them. On the contrary through the example of the 'thirsty man' Plato tries to identify the source of these inclinations and to describe their nature.

#### 4. Deviant Characters and Appetite.

At the end of Book IV (445a5-b5), Plato and Glaucon have agreed that the just person is better off than the unjust. In the just soul of Book IV each part is doing its own job with reason being in charge and taking care of the whole soul (441e4-6). At 445c6 Plato mentions that there are four types of vice and four unjust souls that deviate from the above definition. But at this point instead of giving an elaborate account of each type, he goes on to discuss the arrangements of the rulers of the ideal city and their education, which in turn leads him to the epistemology and the metaphysics of Books V-VII. It is only in Books VIII and IX that he returns to the issue he mentioned in Book VI and discusses the four types of vice in the soul: timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny. Rather than simply classifying the four types of vice in the soul, Plato presents them as a series of moral degeneration starting with timocracy and ending with tyranny. The timocrat devotes his whole life to the pursuit of honour. His son, the oligarch, values money as the ultimate end of his life and does everything to acquire it. The son of the oligarch, the democratic character, satisfies equally the necessary and the unnecessary desires. The last type in the series of the characters, the tyrant, exercises every kind of desires even the most lawless ones. In all the deviant characters one of the lower parts appears to be in charge instead of reason. In the timocratic man it is the spirited part that rules the whole soul, while in the three remaining types the satisfaction or the constraint of various kinds of appetitive desires gives priority to the appetitive part over reason. In this chapter I attempt a sketch of the way that Plato describes this degeneration. My aim is to try to show how the lower parts of the soul, especially the appetitive part, influence the person and lead

him to the wrong choices. My claim is that that the unreasonable choices of these characters are the result of an improper function of the reasoning part, which, after a stage, is further affected by the lower parts.

## I

Let me start first with the timocratic man. The way that Plato describes the shift from reason to spirit in the soul of the timocrat suggests, in my view, that the descent of the soul begins when the person forms the wrong beliefs and fails to choose the right plan in his life. At 549e2-550b7 Plato describes how the timocrat comes to turn over the government in his soul to the spirited part:

Οἴσθα οὖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὅτι καὶ οἱ οἰκέται τῶν τοιούτων ἐνίοτε λάθρα πρὸς τοὺς ὑεῖς τοιαῦτα λέγουσιν, οἱ δοκοῦντες εὐνοὶ εἶναι, καὶ ἐάν τινα ἴδωσιν ἢ ὀφείλοντα χρήματα, ᾧ μὴ ἐπεξέρχεται ὁ πατήρ, ἢ τι ἄλλο ἀδικοῦντα, διακελεύονται ὅπως, ἐπειδὴν ἀνὴρ γένηται, τιμωρήσεται πάντας τοὺς τοιούτους καὶ ἀνὴρ μᾶλλον ἔσται τοῦ πατρὸς. καὶ ἐξίων ἕτερα τοιαῦτα ἀκούει καὶ ὄρα, τοὺς μὲν τὰ αὐτῶν πράττοντας ἐν τῇ πόλει ἡλιθίους τε καλουμένους καὶ ἐν σμικρῷ λόγῳ ὄντας, τοὺς δὲ μὴ τὰ αὐτῶν τιμωμένους τε καὶ ἐπαινουμένους. τότε δὴ ὁ νέος πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀκούων τε καὶ ὄρων, καὶ αὖ τοὺς τοῦ πατρὸς λόγους ἀκούων τε καὶ ὄρων τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα αὐτοῦ ἐγγύθεν παρὰ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων, ἐλκόμενος ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων τούτων, τοῦ μὲν πατρὸς αὐτοῦ τὸ λογιστικὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἄρδοντός τε καὶ αὔξοντος, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων τό τε ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ τὸ θυμοειδές, διὰ τὸ μὴ κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι τὴν φύσιν, ὁμιλίαις δὲ ταῖς τῶν ἄλλων κακαῖς κεχρηῆσθαι, εἰς τὸ μέσον ἐλκόμενος ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων τούτων ἦλθε, καὶ τὴν ἐν

ἑαυτῷ ἀρχὴν παρέδωκε τῷ μέσῳ τε καὶ φιλονίκῳ καὶ θυμοειδεῖ, καὶ ἐγένετο ὑψηλόφρων τε καὶ φιλότιμος ἀνὴρ.

‘You are aware, then, I said, that the very house-slaves of such men, if they are loyal and friendly privately say the same sort of things to the sons, and if they observe a debtor or any other wrongdoer whom the father does not prosecute, they urge the boy to punish all such when he grows to manhood and prove himself more of a man than his father, and when the boy goes out he hears and sees the same sort of thing. Men who mind their own affairs in the city are spoken of as simpletons and are held in slight esteem, while meddlers who mind other people’s affairs are honoured and praised. Then it is that the youth, hearing and seeing such things, and on the other hand listening to the words of his father, and with a near view of his pursuits contrasted with those of other men, is solicited by both, his father watering and fostering the growth of the rational principle in his soul and the others the appetitive and the passionate; and he is not by nature of a bad disposition but has fallen into evil communications, under these two solicitations he comes to a compromise and turns over the government in his soul to the intermediate principle of ambition and high spirit and becomes a man haughty of soul and covetous of honour’.

We see that the timocrat turns the lead in his soul over to the spirited part of the soul since he has been persuaded by the arguments of the servants and his mother and has failed to follow the words of his father. By saying that the timocratic person has been persuaded to value honour by the people that surround him, Plato probably means that the person has come to think or to believe that honour is something worth pursuing. Hence, the timocratic person has formed a belief according to which he has decided, as we are told, to make political honour the ultimate end in his life. However, two immediate questions may rise. First: why has he chosen

to follow the instructions of those that tell him that honour is something worth pursuing and not the words of his father? Second: why, as I am inclined to argue, are the words of his mother and the servants of the house received by the reasoning part of the soul and not by the two lower parts? (The way that the text describes how the different arguments affect the soul may suggest that the words of the father are accepted by the reasoning part while those of the rest of the people by are accepted the lower, the spirited part). Let us take up the first question. At 377a-c where Plato describes the first stage of education, he maintains that the young children should be exposed only to those stories that are appropriate and infuse the right beliefs:

‘we begin by telling children fables, and the fable is, taken as a whole false but there is truth also in it...Do you know then that the beginning in every task is the chief thing especially for any creature that is young and tender...Shall we, then, thus lightly suffer our children to listen to any chance stories...and so to take into their minds opinions for the most part contrary to those what we shall think desirable for them to hold when they grow up?’ 377a2-b8

On the grounds of what Plato claims about the right intellectual development of the children even at an early stage of their lives, it is not surprising that the timocrat who as a young person is being exposed (ὁ νέος πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀκούων τε καὶ ὁρῶν) to what the rest of the people tell him is persuaded by them and finally forms wrong beliefs. Probably Plato thought, as the passage on the education of the young children suggests, that at an early stage when children do not have the capacity to distinguish between what is true and false, any kind of bad influence on them should be avoided. The timocrat, without being by nature of a bad

disposition, is deceived by what he hears from the people around him and forms the wrong beliefs.

Let me turn now to the second question. In the light of what I have proposed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, the lower parts of the soul, and especially the appetitive part, seem to be deprived of any kind of cognition and reasoning. Consequently it seems rather difficult to think that these parts can understand the arguments or the words of those that try to persuade the young person. But even if we accept that these parts are equipped with some reasoning and can understand the arguments, we come up with another difficulty. In that case we have to assume that the reasoning part, by accepting the words of the father, forms the right beliefs while the appetitive part, being influenced by the other set of arguments, forms the wrong beliefs. On this picture how and why does the spirited part take the lead in the soul? We may assume that a conflict between the two takes place and the spirited part wins. However, such a conflict is not suggested in the text. More than that, even in Book IV where Plato introduces the division of the soul, it does not seem that spirit and reason are in conflict in the way that reason and appetite are. On the contrary, spirit is presented as an ally to reason in the effort of the latter to control appetite. In any case, the picture according to which spirit takes the lead of the soul by its own devices seems to me merely metaphorical and it could not be what Plato thought. More than that, towards the end of the passage quoted at 549e2-550b7, Plato seems to suggest that it is the person that decides to turn over the government of his soul to the spirited part (καὶ τὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀρχὴν παρέδωκε τῷ μέσῳ τε καὶ φιλονίκῳ καὶ θυμοειδεῖ).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Price 1995: 54 who suggests that 'Mental parts should not be taken to be subjects of mental activities...for a subject of an activity cannot also be the aspect of another subject in respect of which this subject performs it'.

The next type, the oligarch, is described as someone who, because of his father's misfortunes, decides to 'seat in the throne (of his soul) the appetitive part and money-loving part' (553c5-6), making money-earning the ultimate end of his life. In the case of the oligarch, we are not told exactly how this type comes to value earning money more than honour. However, the shift from one end to another can be explained again in terms of beliefs. The oligarch has changed his beliefs about what should be valued more in comparison to his father, the timocratic man, who has been persuaded that the pursuit of honour is the best end. The oligarch however does not change his beliefs by means of persuasion but by means of some external 'force' that compels him to think in a certain way. At 553b7-c7 where the shift is described, we are told that the oligarch decided to make money-earning the end in his life because he felt fear seeing his father losing all his fortune: 'Ἰδὼν δέ γε, ὦ φίλε, ταῦτα καὶ παθὼν καὶ ἀπολέσας τὰ ὄντα, δείσας οἶμαι εὐθὺς ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν ὥθει ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῇ φιλοτιμίαν τε καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς ἐκεῖνο' (553b7-c1). It is not surprising that Plato considers fear as something that can make someone change his beliefs. Consider the passage at 412e4-413c3 in Book III where Plato suggests to Glaucon that the true guardians should be proved strong against any kind of influence that might change their beliefs. According to Plato there are two ways that someone might be 'forced' to change his/her beliefs. One way is by means of persuasion or forgetfulness:

Τραγικῶς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, κινδυνεύω λέγειν. κλαπέντας μὲν γὰρ τοὺς μεταπεισθέντας λέγω καὶ τοὺς ἐπιλανθανομένους, ὅτι τῶν μὲν χρόνος, τῶν δὲ λόγος ἐξαιρούμενος λανθάνει· νῦν γὰρ που μανθάνεις;

'I must be talking in high tragic style, I said, by those who have their opinions stolen from them I mean those who are over-persuaded and those who forget, because in the one case time, in the other argument strips them unawareness of their beliefs. Now I presume you understand, do you not?' (413b4-7)

Another reason that someone might change his/her beliefs is because of an external force:

Τοὺς μὴν γοητευθέντας, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, κἄν σὺ φαίης εἶναι οἱ ἂν μεταδοξάσωσιν ἢ ὑφ' ἡδονῆς κληθέντες ἢ ὑπὸ φόβου τι δείσαντες.

'Well then, by those who are constrained or force I mean those whom some pain or suffering compels them to change their minds' (413c1-3)<sup>41</sup>

The oligarch apparently belongs to those that have changed their beliefs because of fear. We notice again that the oligarch in the light of false beliefs and a further distortion of his reasoning part has decided to pursue another end in his life turning the rule in his soul to the appetitive part.

It might be objected again that it is not the person that takes this decision in the light of his reasoning part, but that the appetitive part knocks out reason and supplies its own ends. In the case of the oligarch, the view that the appetitive part of the soul chooses the ends instead of the reasoning part can find some support at 553d1-7. Plato claims that in the soul of the oligarch the appetitive part 'under this domination will force the rational and spirited principles to crouch lowly to right and left as slaves, and will allow the one to calculate and consider

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<sup>41</sup> For this second way according to which someone might be forced to change his mind, see also the preceding chapter of this part.

nothing but the ways of making more money from a little, and the other to admire and honour nothing but riches and rich men, and to take pride in nothing but the possession of wealth and whatever contributes to it'. On one suggestion, the appetitive part here can be understood as being able to supply its own ends without the help of reason and hence to motivate the person to acquire more money. The only role that is left to reason is to find out the means towards the satisfaction of that end, that is, the means to acquire more money. Bobonich who has advanced this interpretation<sup>42</sup> suggests that since Plato assigns the desire for money to the appetitive part of the soul (442a5-7) it seems that this part can understand that money is the means towards the satisfaction of other bodily desires. On this assumption, Bobonich suggests a rather complicated reading of this passage. According to him, since the appetitive part can understand that money lead to the satisfaction of the rest of the desires, it enslaves reason to find out the best means for the acquisition of money. But if the appetitive part has the capacity for the first means-end relation, that is, money as the means towards the satisfaction of the bodily desires, why it is unable to take also the second step and to find the best means to acquire more money?<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See Bobonich 2002: 534-536 n. 47. For Bobonich this is a passage that supports his claim that the lower parts of the soul can have beliefs or some kind of reasoning (see also chapter one of this essay.). Irwin 1995:284-287 suggests a more complicated picture on which the appetitive part uses the reasoning part to find the most efficiency means towards certain ends. Even on that picture Irwin accepts that the appetitive part is capable of supplying its own ends and finding the adequate means by appealing to reason

<sup>43</sup> It is true that Bobonich's claim can find some support at 580d10-581a where Plato claims that the appetitive part is also called *philochrēmaton* because all the bodily desires are satisfied through money (*dia chrēmātōn*). But I cannot see why we have to put to much weight in this passage and to assume that Plato attributes the capacity of means-end reasoning to the appetitive part of the soul. On the grounds that Plato has already allocated the desire of money to the appetitive part at 442a5-7 in the initial division of the soul where the appetitive part is presented as irrational it would be strange that here in Book VII this part becomes capable of some kind of thought. What probably Plato had in mind was something like that: since the acquisition of the 'goods' that will satisfy the bodily appetites is achieved through money, the desire for money although not appetitive in its nature is strongly associated with the bodily appetites. In that case it is not that the appetitive part desires money, but the person who has formed wrong beliefs and has become attached to the satisfaction of the bodily needs. In chapter two I have suggested that the existence of the appetitive part and the strength that Plato attributes to it can explain to

Another, and more simple explanation, is to say that the person in respect of his false beliefs comes to think that money-earning is the ultimate end that he can pursue in his life. Once he has put the end he is using reason to find the best means towards this end. That it is the person that decides what to do in respect of the reasoning part of the soul and the beliefs that belong to this part is implied in my view at 554c11-d where we are told how the oligarch decides, in some cases, to restrict the bad desires.

Ἄρ' οὖν οὐ τούτω δῆλον ὅτι ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις συμβολαίοις ὁ τοιοῦτος, ἐν οἷς εὐδοκιμεῖ δοκῶν δίκαιος εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖ τινὶ ἑαυτοῦ βία κατέχει ἄλλας κακὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἐνούσας, οὐ πείθων ὅτι οὐκ ἄμεινον, οὐδ' ἡμερῶν λόγῳ, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη καὶ φόβῳ, περὶ τῆς ἄλλης οὐσίας τρέμων;

'And is it not apparent by this that in other dealings, where he enjoys the repute of a seeming just man, he by some better element in himself forcibly keeps down other evil desires dwelling within, not persuading them that it 'is better not' not taming them by reason, but by compulsion and fear, trembling for his possessions generally'.

This passage suggests two things: a) the beliefs with which the oligarch decides to restrain some of his appetites seem to belong to another part of the soul (ἐπεικεῖ τινὶ ἑαυτοῦ), and not to the same that generates the 'bad' desires. It is worth noting that he decides to restrain the 'bad' desires in the light of the same beliefs that he decided to make money-earning the ultimate end

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some extent the unreasonable character not only of our physical bodily desires but of all our desires and choices. Plato wants to emphasize that the desire of the oligarch for money, though not appetitive in its nature, can be explained in terms of false beliefs and a distorted reasoning part of the soul, and the influence that the appetitive part has on the soul. See also below in the main text and the desire of the democratic man to do some philosophy.

of his life (ἀνάγκη καὶ φόβω, περὶ τῆς ἄλλης οὐσίας τρέμων;).<sup>44</sup> If now these beliefs according to which he decides to restrain his desires do not belong to the appetitive part, as the text suggests, how is it possible that the beliefs on which he has made his decision to pursue money belong to this part? b) we are told that the oligarch in respect of his better part ‘forcibly keeps’ down the evil desires. This picture alludes to the description in book IV where reason controls the appetitive part. Thus, we have good reasons to assume that this better part to which the beliefs of the oligarch belong is the reasoning part of the soul.

The third type in this series of degeneration, the democratic man, is described as someone who like the oligarch has turned the government of his soul to the appetitive part, but unlike the oligarch, who in some cases restrains some of his appetites, the democratic man satisfies any kind of appetite:

Οὐκοῦν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ διαζῆ τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν οὕτω χαριζόμενος τῇ προσπιπούσῃ ἐπιθυμίᾳ, τοτὲ μὲν μεθύων καὶ καταυλούμενος, αὐθις δὲ ὑδροποτῶν καὶ κατισχναινόμενος, τοτὲ δ' αὖ γυμναζόμενος, ἔστιν δ' ὅτε ἀργῶν καὶ πάντων ἀμελῶν, τοτὲ δ' ὡς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίβων. πολλάκις δὲ πολιτεύεται, καὶ ἀναπηδῶν ὅτι ἂν τύχη λέγει τε καὶ πράττει· κἄν ποτὲ τινος πολεμικοῦς ζηλώσῃ, ταύτη φέρεται, ἢ χρηματιστικούς, ἐπὶ τοῦτ' αὖ. καὶ οὔτε τις τάξις οὔτε ἀνάγκη ἔπεστιν αὐτοῦ τῷ βίῳ, ἀλλ' ἡδύν τε δὴ καὶ ἐλευθέριον καὶ μακάριον καλῶν τὸν βίον τοῦτον χρῆται αὐτῷ διὰ παντός.

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<sup>44</sup> Note how the oligarch comes to make money-earning the ultimate end of his life ‘Ἰδὼν δὲ γε, ὦ φίλε, ταῦτα καὶ παθὼν καὶ ἀπολέσας τὰ ὄντα, δείσας οἶμαι εὐθὺς ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν ὡθεῖ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῇ φιλοτιμίαν τε καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς’ (553d7-c1).

'And does he not, I said, also live out his life in this fashion, day by day indulging the appetite of the day, now wine biding and abandoning himself to the lascivious pleasing of the flute and again drinking only water and dieting; and at one time exercising his body, and sometimes idling and neglecting all things, and at another time seeming to occupy himself with philosophy. And frequently he goes in for politics and bounces up and says and does whatever enters his head. And if military men excite his emulation, thither he rushes, and if moneyed men, to that he turns, and there is no order or compulsion to his existence, but he calls this life of his the life of pleasure and freedom and happiness and cleaves to it to the end' (561c6-d8)

It is striking that although in the democratic man the appetitive part of his soul is said to be in charge the desires that he satisfies are not all of them appetitive ones. His desire for philosophy or his desire for politics have nothing to do with the bodily pleasures that Plato normally associates with the appetitive part of the soul. On the contrary these desires may be said to be desires that belong to the reasoning part of the soul.<sup>45</sup> This is evidence, and in my view strong evidence, that when the soul descends from its ideal state it is not the case that one of the lower parts takes the place of reason and rules over the other three, satisfying its own desires. We have noticed that in the case of the timocratic man and in the case of the oligarch the shift from one type of person to the other — or from one condition of the soul to another — is not merely a 'psychological' process where one part of the soul takes control over the other two. It is not that either spirit or appetite knocks out reason and sets a plan of life or fixes certain ends according to their own devices. The shift seems to be the choice of the person who

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<sup>45</sup>See Scott 2000: 23 who claims that '[H]is pursuit of some short of intellectual interest (though not, in Plato's sense, philosophy) suggests that he is someone for whom discovery can occasionally be a goal and he satisfies rational desires'.

decides to satisfy the desires of one part of the soul. We see that the handing over to one part of the soul rather than to another follows, in both cases, the person's decision to value the desires of this part more. If the rational choice precedes the psychological domination of one part over the other, then it is the rational part of the soul that values and promotes the desires either of the spirited or the appetitive part. The picture of the unjust souls where one of the lower parts seems to take the lead of the whole soul is, in my view, merely metaphorical and emphasizes the unreasonable character of some of our desires and our choices because of a distorted and imperfect reasoning part.

## II

In the first part of this thesis I have suggested that the sharp distinction between reason and appetite or between rationality and irrationality is not normally manifested in actual souls. This is not to say that these parts do not influence in some way or another our choices, but they are not the parts that *lead* us towards the wrong choices. What leads these people astray are their false beliefs and their attainment to what they have falsely believed to be the right end. As a result all the choices of the unjust persons are made in the light of what they believe to be the ultimate end and at the same time their lives are organized in the light of this end. If we look at

how the oligarch restrains the unnecessary desires<sup>46</sup> we notice that the oligarch does so by reference to his beliefs according to which he has made money-earning the ultimate end in his life. The just person where reason is in its best function would draw the distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires by reference to his knowledge about the goodness and badness of these desires.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the oligarch's rational part is distorted and is infused by wrong beliefs explains his failure in the end to gain full control over his unnecessary desires and to shift to the democratic man:

Καὶ ποτὲ μὲν οἶμαι τὸ δημοκρατικὸν ὑπεχώρησε τῷ ὀλιγαρχικῷ, καὶ τινες τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν διεφθάρησαν, αἱ δὲ καὶ ἐξέπεσον, αἰδοῦς τινος ἐγγενομένης ἐν τῇ τοῦ νέου ψυχῇ, καὶ κατεκοσμήθη πάλιν

Αὔθις δὲ οἶμαι τῶν ἐκπεσουσῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἄλλαι ὑποτρεφόμεναι συγγενεῖς δι' ἀνεπιστημοσύνην τροφῆς πατρὸς πολλαί τε καὶ ἰσχυραὶ ἐγένοντο

Τελευτῶσαι δὴ οἶμαι κατέλαβον τὴν τοῦ νέου τῆς ψυχῆς ἀκρόπολιν, αἰσθόμεναι κενήμαθμάτων τε καὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων καλῶν καὶ λόγων ἀληθῶν, οἳ δὴ ἄριστοι φρουροὶ τε καὶ φύλακες ἐν ἀνδρῶν θεοφιλῶν εἰσι διανοίαις.

'And sometimes, I suppose, the democratic element retires before the oligarchical, some of its appetites having been destroyed and others expelled, and a sense of awe and reverence grows up in the young man's soul and order is restored...

<sup>46</sup> At 558d8-559d2 necessary desires are said to be those that we cannot get rid of and are beneficial. The desire for bread (*sitou*), for example, is one that someone cannot get rid of while he is alive and is also beneficial since it contributes to his survival. But there are also desires that fall under the necessary ones and do not fulfil both conditions. The desire for 'prepared meal' (*opsou*) at 559b6 is beneficial because it promotes health but someone can still survive without it.

<sup>47</sup> See more about that in the following chapter.

And sometimes other broods of desires akin to those expelled are stealthily nurtured to take their place owing to the father's ignorance of true education and wax numerous and strong...

And in the end, I suppose, seize the citadel of the young man's soul, finding it empty and unoccupied by studies and honourable pursuits and true discourses, which are the best watchmen and guardians in the mind of men who are dear to the gods' (560a4-c9)

In his turn the democratic man makes his dominant value the satisfaction of both the necessary and the unnecessary desires. In Plato's description the democratic man makes use of the democratic political devices of rotation in office and selection by lot (561b2-5) to decide which desire he will satisfy every day. Presumably, Plato does not mean that the democratic man's decision which desire he will satisfy first and which second is completely irrational. Probably he will satisfy first the most intense desires and those which are essential for his survival like thirst and hunger, and then the unnecessary ones. What Plato criticizes is not so much the way that the democrat decides which desire to satisfy first and which second, but he criticizes, as Santas claims,<sup>48</sup> a version of the human good. What is essential — and for Plato irrational or as I prefer to call it 'unreasonable' — in this version of human good is that the person, for instance the democratic man, decides which desire to satisfy by reference to the strength or the intension of the desire rather than by reference to its goodness or badness. Although he uses his instrumental reasoning to find the means for the satisfaction of his desires or even to decide which desire to satisfy first and which second, he is deprived of considerations of the goodness of the desires and their objects and in that way he fails to bring order and rationality in his choices.

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<sup>48</sup> Santas 2001: 67

We see that the shift from the oligarch to the democratic man and from that one to the stage of the tyrant is an easy process since the former has started acting on a desire of the appetitive part of the soul. Becoming attached to 'appetite', the oligarch becomes further attached to the unnecessary ones in the case of the democratic man and even to the lawless ones in the case of the tyrant:

ὅς πάλαι εἶχεν δόξας ἐκ παιδὸς περὶ καλῶν τε καὶ αἰσχρῶν, τὰς δικαίας ποιουμένας, αἰνεωστί ἐκ δουλείας λελυμένοι, δορυφοροῦσαι τὸν Ἔρωτα, κρατήσουσι μετ' ἐκείνου, αἱ πρότερον μὲν ὄναρ ἐλύοντο ἐν ὕπνῳ, ὅτε ἦν αὐτὸς ἔτι ὑπὸ νόμοις τε καὶ πατρὶ δημοκρατούμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ.

'...in all these actions the beliefs which he held from boyhood about the honourable and the base, the opinions accounted just, will be overmastered by the opinions newly emancipated and released, which, serving as body-guards of the ruling passion will prevail in alliance with it— I mean the opinions that formerly were freed from restraint in sleep, when being still under the control of his father and the laws' (574d5-e1).<sup>49</sup>

At these three stages of degeneration, that of the oligarch, the democrat and the tyrant the rational part of the soul is further affected by the growth of a number of appetitive desires that the person either tries to control occasionally or does not control at all. Plato's point through the description of these three types in the ranking of the deviant characters is that in so far as

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<sup>49</sup>Note that even in the case of the tyrant the person decides to satisfy the lawless desires because he has changed his beliefs about what is good and bad. For the lawless desires that rise in the dream at 571c ff. and the case of the tyrant see also the next chapter.

someone acts on a appetite with no reference to the goodness of the appetite then he can easily be overwhelmed by a number of appetites and start satisfying all of them. We have seen that the rational part of the timocrat and the oligarch in the first place, is affected by wrong beliefs which come either by argument and persuasion in the case of the former or from fear in the case of the latter. Plato claims<sup>50</sup> that, since the reasoning part of the oligarch is affected by wrong beliefs about what is good to pursue and is not in its best condition, the shift to the democratic man and the satisfaction of the necessary and the unnecessary desires can easily happen.

To understand why the shift is easy we have to look how the oligarch restrains his desires. In the passage at 554c11-d that I have quoted above we see that in some cases he considers that some of his desires are 'bad' because they will put in danger his fortune and he tries to constrain them, while on other occasions when his fortune is not in danger he goes on to satisfy these desires. The criterion according to which the oligarch decides which desires should be satisfied and which should be constrained is his belief that money-earning is the best thing to pursue in his life. In other words the oligarch has a false conception about what is good or bad. In the case of the oligarch it is not made explicit that his failure to keep an order in his life and his choices is the result of his false beliefs and his misconception of what is good or the *real* good for him. However, at 554d9-e6 we are told that this type of person 'would not be really one, but in some sort a double man' and at the same time 'the true virtue of a soul in union and harmony with itself would escape him'. This is a clear reference back to Book IV and the harmony of real just soul where the three parts come together and become one under

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<sup>50</sup> See 560a9-b2, 560b7-561a4.

the rule of reason (443c9-444a2). In the following chapter of this part I describe which should be the condition of the reasoning part in order to be able to rule in a normative way so that real harmony is achieved in the soul. My point there is that in the ideal harmonious soul reason is not only in charge, but, as the passage at 442c4-7 suggests, should also have *knowledge* of what is good and bad for each part of the soul and the soul as a whole. The person whose reasoning part has this knowledge of good and bad — or knowledge of the Good — can achieve complete order in his soul by thinking rational thoughts and making the right choices. In the opening paragraph of this chapter I have mentioned that Plato postpones the discussion of the unjust souls in the end of Book IV and takes on the topic again after the discussion of the epistemology and the metaphysics of Books V-VII. This strategy of course is not accidental and is in line with the whole argument of the *Republic* and the initial question that Socrates has addressed in Book I about the definition of justice. The descent of the soul from a stage of real justice and harmony to various stages of disharmony and injustice can be explained by reference to lack of knowledge between good and bad. It is interesting that lack of knowledge of good and bad is what marks the first stage of descent in the case of the timocrat. We have seen that the soul of the timocrat, being under the bad influence of people in his environment, is implanted with wrong beliefs, and he chooses to make honour the ultimate end of his life. It seems that soul's descent from an ideal state towards worse conditions begins when reason lacks knowledge of good and bad and fails to direct each part of the soul and the soul as a whole towards the right ends.

This lack of knowledge explains why the shift from one stage to another becomes an easy process. The oligarch fails to keep order in his choices because he does not have

knowledge, but his reasoning part is infused by wrong beliefs. Since he decides which desires he will satisfy by reference to beliefs that are not stable and change from time to time according to the circumstances, it is possible that at some point he may decide to start satisfying all his desires, both the necessary and the unnecessary ones, and shift to the democrat. Similarly the democrat, as we have seen, since he decides to satisfy his desires by reference to the intensity of each desire and not by reference to its goodness, descends to the next stage where he satisfies all the intensive desires including the lawless ones. Of course, once the reasoning part of the soul has been infused with the wrong beliefs and becomes weak, it can be further affected. In the case of the timocrat it seems that his failure to acquire the right beliefs and to organize his life accordingly resides only in factors which are external to him. As we are told, the timocrat has not developed any bad dispositions, which might have affected his beliefs. The same happens more or less with the oligarch. However, the tyrant is said to become such a person 'either by nature or by habits or by both' (573c8),<sup>51</sup> something which suggests that the previous attachment to the appetites when the soul was at the stage of the democrat had affected further the beliefs of this person and as a result he decides to satisfy any kind of desire. The case of the tyrant seems to imply that the descent of the soul is not just a descent of the reasoning part of the soul from its best condition to a worse one, but a descent that has also to do with the involvement of the rest of the parts of the soul and their relation to the reasoning part. At any rate this why the unjust souls, even metaphorically, as I have suggested, are presented by Plato as being governed by one of the lower parts of the soul.

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<sup>51</sup> Shorey translates habits the term *epitēdeumasi* and nature the term *phusei*. At 550b4 in the description of the timocrat he translates the term *phusin* as 'dispositions' something which brings the meaning of the term close to the meaning of *epitēdeumasi* in the passage at 537c8. It is unclear what exactly Plato means by *phusis* here. Probably he wants to say that the disorder in the soul of the tyrant cannot be the result only of bad education, but also the result of a natural defect.

Let us see, however, the motivational role of these parts, especially the appetitive part, in the unjust souls. In Book IV where we get the initial division of the soul and the initial characterization of the parts of the soul, we have seen that the appetitive part is associated with the bodily desires such as hunger, thirst, sensual desire and the rest. In my analysis of Plato's argument for the tripartition of the soul (see chapter two) I have tried to suggest that one way that the appetitive part of the soul can be conceived is as the locus of the irrational motions of the soul that start moving the soul towards one direction. In this picture, these motions constitute the core elements of our fully-fledged physical desires, which are shaped by the involvement of reason and are directed towards specific objects that will satisfy our needs. The above picture emerges from the conflict that Plato has used in Book IV to separate reason from appetite and his argument about the simple desires. However, as I have suggested there, the role of the appetitive part as the locus of the irrational motions of the soul remains unnoticed in our fully-fledged desires since these desires with the involvement of reason do not belong to one part, but to the whole soul. On this interpretation Plato retains for the appetitive part of the soul one role according to which this part represents our appetitive nature, that is, all the bodily inclinations that we experience. These inclinations are not the result of any kind of thought or belief, but are irrational motions that emerge from pleasant sensations or bodily pains and so on. At the same time since these inclinations arise in a distinct part of the soul other than reason and do not involve any kind of thinking or reasoning, extreme cases of human behaviour or action, like the one described in the case of Leontius, can be explained by reference to this role of the appetitive part of the soul.

However, the appetitive part of the soul is used by Plato in his description of the deviant characters in another way and without the purely 'bestial' character that it has in the argument for tripartition. Let us look at the appetites of these unjust types that this part is supposed to rule in their soul. The oligarch apart from the desire for money (see above) satisfies either some necessary or unnecessary 'appetites', as we have seen, according to the circumstances. In each case all these appetites that the oligarch has and satisfies do not have the character of pure inclinations, but they are shaped by his beliefs about what is best for him to do in each case. When we are told at 554d1-2 that in some cases he restrains some 'bad' desires (*kakas epithumias*), these are possibly well shaped desires for certain things that the oligarch would like to acquire. On certain occasions however, they are considered to be 'bad' because he believes that satisfying them or getting the objects of these desires would be something that may harm him in the circumstances. More than that, it is not clear that these desires are only bodily ones and have to do with the satisfaction of bodily pleasures. It is true that when Plato distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary desires, arguing that the oligarch, unlike the democrat satisfies the former and usually restrains the latter, he is using the example of the physical desire for food (558da4-559c1). Nevertheless we can fairly assume that the distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires is not restricted only to bodily desires. One desire which is classified as necessary because, for instance, it is beneficial — one of the criteria according to which Plato classifies desires as necessary and unnecessary (b3 6)— could be any kind of desire, either bodily or not, the satisfaction of which is thought by the person as something good or beneficial under certain circumstances.

That the unjust types whose soul is said to be governed by the appetitive part do not only satisfy bodily appetites is made clear, as we have seen, in the case of the democrat. The democrat, among other bodily desires, is also said to satisfy from time to time his desire for doing philosophy or politics. Presumably his desire for philosophy or politics is not peculiar to the appetitive part of his soul but seems to be more a desire of the reasoning part. Of course even in those cases that the democratic person is devoted to some kind of philosophy, his desire to do philosophy, though not peculiar to the reasoning part of the soul, is not a fully 'rational' desire in the sense that the democrat has not value this activity by reference to its goodness. In contrast to the real philosopher who finds *real* and *pure* pleasure in intellectual contemplation throughout his whole life and desires the truth which is the object of this activity (485d3-4), the democratic person satisfies a preference of the moment.<sup>52</sup> At the same time we have seen that the shift from one stage to another is marked by a relevant change of beliefs in respect of the person as to what is best for him to do in his life. The democrat, for instance, has set as his ultimate end the satisfaction of any kind of preference or desire that he may have. In that sense all his particular desires, either bodily or not, are instances of what the person has believed to be the best thing for him to do. In other words every desire or action of the democratic man manifests or reflects his attachment or his commitment to a certain value system according to which he acts. In that sense what motivates the democratic person towards action is not only the appetitive part, and especially the appetitive part with the role that Plato

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<sup>52</sup> Alcibiades, as Plato presents him especially in *Symposium* (212d3-213a2), is a good example of someone who resembles the image of the democratic man in the *Republic*. Alcibiades bursts in the house of Agathon completely drunk the time that Socrates has finished his own speech followed probably by some lovers of him. Alcibiades' speech, an encomium to Socrates, contributes almost nothing to the philosophical account of love that Socrates gave in his own speech. It shows that, unlike Socrates, Alcibiades conceives philosophy as a kind of superficial 'intellectual' entertainment. Philosophy for him is not an activity to which he devotes all his life and through which he is trying to attain knowledge of the real Good, but is a pleasant activity of the moment.



assigns to it in Book IV, but the whole soul; his desire to do philosophy or his desire to drink till he gets drunk though different in their very nature belong to his whole soul — as the compound of three parts — and are shaped by his general beliefs about what is overall best for him. The democrat does not act either on a simple appetitive inclination or on a desire that comes entirely from reason. In each case he takes a certain course of action, he acts according to particular beliefs, which are issued by some general value-judgements about what is good overall.

In his description of the deviant characters it seems that, although Plato retains a kind of 'partition' of the soul he abandons the sharp distinction between reason and appetite that he introduced in Book IV. The appetites of these unjust souls that the appetitive part is said to be in charge of are not 'irrational' in the sense that our inclinations are. On the contrary as we have seen they are the result of certain beliefs that the persons hold. More than that, the oligarch is not presented as being 'double' and not 'one' in the same sense that Leontius could be described as 'double'. The oligarch does not experience a kind of conflict where a totally irrational drive pushes him towards one direction that he cannot resist. The oligarch is 'double' because he changes his mind and he cannot impose any order in his choices. In that sense the desires of the oligarch, like those of the democrat or even the tyrant are not irrational because they are not the result of any thought or belief, they are rather unreasonable because they are shaped and organized by the false beliefs that all these types hold.

This is why the souls of the democrat, the oligarch and the tyrant are presented by Plato as being governed by the appetitive part. The 'government' of the appetitive part does not imply either that this part actually takes the lead in the soul or that these persons satisfy only

the physical 'appetites' that emerge from this part. The picture of the soul as being ruled by the appetitive part is just a metaphorical illustration, as I have suggested, of the disorder in the choices of these persons. This is not to say, of course, that Plato would deny the role that he assigned to the appetitive part in Book IV. In the unjust souls — and also in the just soul as I argue in the following chapter — the appetitive part retains its role as the locus of the bodily inclinations that boot our fully-fledged physical desires. This role can explain, for instance, why some of these persons experience more intense physical desires that they sometimes find it difficult to restrain. However, in Books VII and IX, we get a metaphorical enlargement of this part and the irrational character of the inclinations that belong to it. In other words Plato alludes to the kind of irrationality that this part has in Book IV in order to emphasize the unreasonable character that the choices and the desires of some persons have. At the same time although the souls of the unjust persons are not presented to be divided in the way that the soul appears in Book IV since all their desires are shaped and informed by their beliefs and belong to the whole soul, the metaphor of the parts shows how 'fragmented' they can become. The real disharmony of these souls however, resides in the improper function of reason and the fact that their reasoning capacities are never developed correctly; they are so degraded and fragmented as to be almost entirely focused on the attainment of what they are falsely believed to be the best for them.

## 5. The Appetitive Part and the Philosopher.

In his discussion of the deviant characters Plato describes the various types who are focused on enjoying the pleasures of the lower parts of the soul and gratifying the relevant desires. We see that all of them have a misinformed conception of the good and are attached to the immediate pleasures that come from the satisfaction of their appetites. The constant pandering to the desires of the appetitive part of the soul has distorted further the condition of the reasoning part and their conception of value. This distortion is described through a series of stages of degeneration starting with the timocratic man and ending with the tyrant who satisfies even the lawless appetites. Presumably the unjust types of soul are not the Platonic ideal and in general Plato appears to be committed to an account of our nature which encourages us to identify ourselves with the rational part of the soul which takes care of the lower parts. In this normative account of the soul, where reason rules, the fulfilment of the needs of the rational soul is what fulfils best the nature not only of the reasoning part but also of the two lower parts. Since it is impossible, at least while the soul is incarnated,<sup>53</sup> to rid ourselves entirely of our appetites and the influence of the lower parts, especially the appetitive part, the appetites should at least be controlled and eliminated as far as possible. Such an identification with the rational part is necessary for the proper harmony of the parts of the soul that Plato emphatically

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<sup>53</sup> The soul is treated by Plato as incarnated in the first nine Books of the *Republic*. There is a question, however, about the lower parts in the immortal disembodied soul in Book X. It would be reasonable to suggest that the soul in its disembodied state does not have any of the lower parts and the desires that derive from these parts; the soul without the body could not be, for instance, either thirsty or hungry. There is though a problematic passage at 612a where Plato seems to suggest that the soul in its real disembodied state could be either single (*monoeidēs*) or manifold (*polueidēs*). The problem has to do with the meaning of the *polueidēs*. If the *polueidēs* is a reference to the parts of the soul when the soul is incarnated then how the existence of the appetitive part can be explained in the disembodied state of the soul?

suggests in Book IV.<sup>54</sup> The philosopher is that type of person who actually achieves this identification with the reasoning part of the soul and the real harmony among the parts. In this chapter I shall try to describe how this harmony is achieved in the soul of the philosopher in relation mainly to the appetites of the appetitive part of the soul. I shall try to propose that what emerges from Plato's description of the philosopher can be seen to provide broad support for my claim throughout this thesis about the nature of the desires of the appetitive part and the function of this part.

## I

At 485d we are offered a picture of the soul of the lover of knowledge. Plato maintains that 'the true lover of knowledge must from childhood be most of all a striver after the truth in every form (*pasēs alētheias*)' (d3-4). The desire for the truth in every respect can, according to Plato, weaken the rest of the desires: 'when in a man the desires incline strongly towards one thing, they are weakened for other things like a stream that has been diverted into another channel' (d6-8). At this point Plato does not explain exactly how the rest of the desires can be weakened or redirected in the face of the desire for knowledge. The only thing that we get in the text is that the strength of reason's desires (*sphodra* d7) weakens the rest of the desires that the philosopher might experience. The language of strength, of course, that Plato uses here may leave room for a possible conflict, of the kind that Plato has described in Book IV, between desires. What if, for example, an appetite is stronger than reason's desire for the truth

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<sup>54</sup> See e.g. 442d4-d1.

and knowledge? Plato seems to rule out this possibility since he suggests that ‘when a man’s desires have been taught to flow in the channel of learning (*mathēmata*) and all that sort of thing, they will be, I suppose, only with the pleasures of the soul in itself and will be indifferent to those of which the body is the instrument, if someone is a true philosopher and not a sham’ (d10-e1). In the passage quoted it seems that the desire for learning cannot be overcome by any other desire no matter how strong the latter might be. The desire for learning here, in my view, is nothing more than a reference to the desire for the Good at 505a. It might be the case that since reason has been trained to aim at learning in general and to seek every kind of study and knowledge, it turns finally towards the Good which is, as Plato suggests at 505a, the *megiston mathēma*.<sup>55</sup> I will return to the passage at 505a in the second section of this chapter. The important thing at the moment is that at 485d Plato makes the strong claim that the rest of the appetites are in conformity with reason’s desire when reason fulfils its best function and it is in its best condition, that is, when reason desires to learn the whole truth and strives to attain knowledge. Plato believes that the person whose reason is in that state will never prefer the satisfaction of the bodily appetites and the relevant pleasures that accompany these desires to the pure pleasures of intellectual contemplation.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See also 475c6-8 where the main feature of the philosopher is that he does not feel any distaste for any kind of study but he strives for any kind of knowledge that he can get.

<sup>56</sup> Plato’s point here accords with the idea of harmony in Book IV. The real harmony between the parts in Book IV does not depend merely on the fact that reason is in charge but the harmony requires that reason is in charge and has also knowledge and *epistēmē* of what is beneficial for each part of the soul and the soul as a whole (442c4-7). Presumably young persons that have not yet acquired knowledge and cannot distinguish between what is beneficial and harmful cannot achieve real harmony. Plato claims at 441a7-b1 that ‘one can see in children, that they are from their very birth full of high spirit, but as for reason, some of them to my thinking never participate in it and the majority quite late’. This of course does not mean that young people or even some adults do not follow reason at all or they are totally deprived of the reasoning part of the soul. The point is, in my view, that not everyone can achieve the higher capacities of reason that can secure a real harmony. See also the first and the second stage of education in Books II and VII respectively. Those — the majority — that go through the first stage accept some beliefs unreflectively and they can easily be deceived by their intense appetites since the

It remains questionable however what Plato means when he claims that the rest of the desires are weakened in the face of reason's desire towards learning. Does he mean that all the bodily appetites, for instance, disappear, something that the *ekleipoien* at 485d12 might suggest, or that some of them remain and are redirected under the rule of reason towards what is good and beneficial for the whole soul? I think that the latter seems a more plausible answer. First Plato cannot deny that the philosopher in this life does experience and satisfy some of the appetites. Since Plato's treatment of the ideal soul of the philosopher has to do with the embodied soul it would be at least odd for him to claim that the philosopher does not experience hunger, thirst or sensual desire that are associated with the appetitive part of the soul. Second if the real philosopher is totally deprived of all the appetites, the acclaimed harmony of the soul loses its importance. In Book IV Plato has emphasized the role of reason in the harmonious soul as the part that has knowledge and takes care of each part of the soul and the soul as a whole (see n. 56). If now in the soul of the philosopher there is no question about the satisfaction of the desires of the appetitive part of the soul, the role of reason as the part that rules and takes care of the whole soul is diminished to a considerable extent. The question, of course, is which appetites would Plato allow in the ideal soul. We can assume that the philosopher does experience, satisfies and gets pleasure from those appetites that Plato calls at 559a ff. necessary desires. In this passage Plato distinguishes between two categories of necessary desires: the desires that someone cannot get rid off (*has te ouk an hoioi t' eimen apotrepsai*) and those desires the satisfaction of which is beneficial (*hosai apoteloumenai*

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reasoning part is not yet in its best condition. Only a minority of the citizens that will become the future philosophers are able to go through the second phase of education and acquire the analytic and critical powers of reason will have real knowledge and achieve true harmony in their souls (see more on this below in the present chapter).

*ōphelousin*). At 558 b3-4 we get two examples of each category. Plato claims that the desire for food (*sitou*) is necessary because we die unless we satisfy it and it is also beneficial. At the same time the desire for well cooked food (*opsou*) is only beneficial in so far as its satisfaction leads to a healthy body. Although Plato distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary desires in two respects, we notice that in each case the satisfaction of the necessary desires is beneficial for the person.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, Plato suggests that we should get rid of (*apallatesthai* b10) the unnecessary desires, which are harmful both for the soul and the body. Plato suggests that the unnecessary desires for excess of food should be regulated and trained somehow from childhood (*kolazomanē ek neōn kai paideuomenē* 559b8-11). This is in line, I think, with 485d3-e1 and Plato's claim that in the soul of the real lover of wisdom who desires the whole truth from childhood (*ek neou*) the rest of the desires are weakened and in the end they disappear. Both passages share the view that, when a person from an early age is under an educational programme that aims at the development of the rational capacities, the person learns to form only these desires that are beneficial and gradually he gets rid of the harmful and unnecessary ones. It is true of course, as I suggest later in this chapter, that only those who have the capacity to go through the higher stage of education that includes arithmetic and

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<sup>57</sup> If we assume that the necessary desires are the appetites that philosopher normally has, in the light of the philosopher's knowledge of the good, we might say that these desires are not beneficial because they are necessary but they are necessary because they are beneficial. In the text Plato does not use the term *anagkaiai* in the strict meaning as the desires that we cannot get rid of. The desire for well cooked food is *anagkaia* although this is a desire that we can live without. In the light of the Good and the knowledge of the Good even the desires the satisfaction of which keep us alive are beneficial because the person who has knowledge of the Good has valued the preservation of life as something worth pursuing. In that case that someone, say the philosopher, does not think that being alive is something good for him the desire for bread (*sitou*) will not be necessary anymore.

dialectic can reach that level of rational contemplation that pauses entirely any interest in the satisfaction of the unnecessary appetites.<sup>58</sup>

The idea that the satisfaction of some desires — the necessary ones — is not at odds with the ideal soul is also suggested in the discussion about the priority of the intellectual pleasures of the philosopher at 583c ff. Socrates criticizes the behaviour of those that enjoy and are focused on bodily delights and pleasures (586a) and suggests that only the fulfilment of the needs of the rational soul is what fulfils us best according to our nature (*ei ara to plērousthai tōn phusei prosēkontōn hēdu esti* 585c11). In addition, at 586d4-e2 he claims that only the philosophical just soul, ruled by reason, enjoys the pleasures of the lower parts since only with the guidance of reason will each part — and the soul as a whole — ‘enjoy’ the best and truest of its own pleasures, in so far as is possible’ (d6-e2). It seems that the philosopher does not only enjoy the pleasures from the satisfaction of the bodily appetites but he is the only one that can get true pleasure from them. Socrates’ acceptance at this point that the philosopher gets pleasure from the bodily appetites is something that the argument requires since some comparability is necessary between the two kind of pleasures — intellectual and bodily ones — for the comparison of the lives in terms of their pleasurability. At the same time, as a matter of fact, Plato cannot deny that everyone, including the philosopher, does get some pleasant feeling when eating and drinking, no matter if the pleasure is not truly pure. Socrates is careful at this point to add the restriction ‘in so far as is possible to be true’ (*hōs hoion te autais alētheis*

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. also 519b-c about the pleasurability of rational contemplation and the diminish interesting of the rest of the sensual pleasures. See also the ascent passage in the *Symposium* 210-211 where Plato seems to make the same point. At 211d the Mantinean woman says to Socrates that since someone has finally contemplated the essential beauty he can go on to live even without food and drink. Note, however, the *ei pōs hoion t' ēn* at 211d7 which suggests that Plato does not really think that it is possible for someone to live without satisfying the necessary desires for food and drink.

*labein d8, tas beltistas kai eis to dunaton tas alēthestatas 587a2*) since he cannot accept that the bodily pleasures even the best ones are true pleasures in the sense that the intellectual ones are. At any rate, the point is that Plato does not only accept that the philosopher can enjoy some bodily pleasures — at least those which are ‘best’— but also that he is the only one that can have true bodily pleasures.

The passage at 571a ff. in Book IX however, where Plato starts the discussion of the soul of the tyrant, the last of the deviant characters in the series of the unjust souls, might create some difficulty about the desires that the philosopher has. The passage seems to suggest that the unnecessary desires – or better an extreme kind of these desires that Plato calls *paranomoi* at b4 — might occur to everyone including the philosopher (*kinduneousi men panti eggignesthai* b4-5):

ἴστιν δὲ τόδε. τῶν μὴ ἀναγκαίων ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν δοκοῦσί τινές μοι εἶναι παράνομοι, αἱ κινδυνεύουσι μὲν ἐγγίγνεσθαι παντί, κολαζόμεναι δὲ ὑπὸ τε τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν βελτιόνων ἐπιθυμιῶν μετὰ λόγου ἐνίων μὲν ἀνθρώπων ἢ παντάπασιν ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἢ ὀλίγοι λείπεσθαι καὶ ἀσθενεῖς, τῶν δὲ ἰσχυρότεροι καὶ πλείους.

‘Of our unnecessary pleasures and appetites there are some lawless ones, I think, which probably are to be found in us all, but which, when controlled by the laws and the better desires in alliance with reason, can in some men altogether got rid of, or so nearly so that only a few weak remain, while in others the remnant is stronger and more numerous’ (571b3-c1).

I do not think that Plato here suggests that the real philosopher might actually experience these *paranomoi* desires through out his life. It is true however that *kinduneousi* here, in view of the *panti*, seems to mark the possibility that these desires might arise in everyone. Since every soul, including the soul of the philosopher, has the appetitive part, it is logically possible that these desires may arise in every soul. They never actually occur when reason is in its best condition and is directed towards the truth. However, Plato seems to suggest that the rise of the *paranomoi* desires is not always an actuality when he says that ‘when (these desires) controlled (*kolazomenai*) by the laws and the better desires in alliance with reason, they can in some men be altogether got rid of, or so nearly so that only a few weak ones remain, while in others they are strong and numerous’ (b5-8).<sup>59</sup> Presumably the philosopher belongs to those that get rid of these desires entirely. The passage at 571c3-572a9 explains in my view under which conditions — or better under which condition of the soul — these desires may rise. At 571c3-d5 we are told that the *paranomoi* desires occur in the state of dreaming when the appetitive part is totally released from the guard of reason and the person under the influence of the desiring part wants to have sex with the image of his mother or with the images of any god and animal that appear in his dream.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand when the person is still awake and there is order in his soul (*hugieinōs tis echei autos hautou kai sōphronōs* d7-8):

<sup>59</sup>Note that it is only the tyrant (571b ff.) that actually experiences and decides to satisfy the *paranomoi* desires.

<sup>60</sup> Plato presents the way that the lawless desires rise at 571c3-d5: ‘Τὰς περὶ τὸν ὕπνον, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ἐγειρομένας, ὅταν τὸ μὲν ἄλλο τῆς ψυχῆς εὐδῆ, ὅσον λογιστικὸν καὶ ἡμερον καὶ ἄρχον ἐκείνου, τὸ δὲ θηριῶδες τε καὶ ἄγριον, ἢ σίτων ἢ μέθης πλησθέν, σκιρτᾷ τε καὶ ἀπώσαμένον τὸν ὕπνον ζητῆ ἰέναι καὶ ἀποπιμπλάναι τὰ αὐτοῦ ἦθη· οἷσθ’ ὅτι πάντα ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ τολμᾷ ποιεῖν, ὡς ἀπὸ πάσης λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως. μητρὶ τε γὰρ ἐπιχειρεῖν μείγνυσθαι, ὡς οἶεται, οὐδὲν ὀκνεῖ, ἄλλω τε ὄψουδν ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων, μισοφονεῖν τε ὅτιοῦν, βρώματός τε ἀπέχεσθαι μηδενός· καὶ ἐνὶ λόγῳ οὔτε ἀνοίας οὐδὲν ἐλλείπει οὔτ’ ἀναίσχυντίας’. It might be the case that the subject doing all these things is the appetitive part of the soul. If so then the appetitive part can be seen as a proper agent that is able to shape fully-fledged desires, a view that I deny in this chapter and throughout this thesis. Instead of that, the passage might invite another interpretation according to which the subject is the person and not the appetitive part. Jowett

“ καὶ εἰς τὸν ὕπνον ἴη τὸ λογιστικὸν μὲν ἐγείρας ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐστιάσας λόγων καλῶν καὶ σκέψεων, εἰς σύννοιαν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ἀφικόμενος, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν δὲ μήτε ἐνδεία δοῦς μήτε πλησμονῆ, ὅπως ἂν κοιμηθῆ καὶ μὴ παρέχη θόρυβον τῷ βελτίστῳ χαῖρον ἢ λυπούμενον, ἀλλ’ ἐᾷ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μόνον καθαρὸν σκοπεῖν καὶ ὀρέγεσθαι τοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι ὃ μὴ οἶδεν, ἢ τι τῶν γεγονότων ἢ ὄντων ἢ καὶ μελλόντων.

‘he goes to sleep after arousing his rational part and entertaining it with fair words and thoughts, and attaining to clear self consciousness, while he has neither starved nor indulged to repletion his appetitive part, so it may be lulled to sleep and not disturb the better part by its pleasures or pain, but may suffer that in isolated purity to examine and reach out towards an apprehend some of the things unknown to it, past present or future’ (571d7-572a3).

The two states of dreaming and waking are possibly a metaphor for two states of the soul. The state of waking corresponds to the ideal soul where reason is strong and has knowledge while

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and Campbell 1894: V. III 408, note to the text at 571 c, suggest that at ἐπιχειρεῖν ‘from the irrational element of human nature we here pass insensibly to the person in whom it is active’. I totally agree with Jowett and Campbell that the subject of the verb here cannot be the part, but the person. However, I think that the shift from the part to the person occurs earlier on at ποιεῖν. Note the analogy between the ὅτι πάντα ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ τολμᾷ ποιεῖν here and the οἶσθ’ ὅτι τῆς τ’ ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ μάλιστα ἄπτεται at 572a8 where in the latter the reference is clearly to the person and to the reasoning part. Hence the meaning at 571c3-d5 is that the person in his dreams and under the influence of the appetitive has the desires that Plato describes. The picture of the appetitive part here and the way that it motivates the person is probably a metaphorical illustration for what happens in the soul of the tyrant that has these lawless desires.

the state of dreaming illustrates a state of ignorance<sup>61</sup> which is a feature of all the unjust souls. We might say then that the unnecessary (*paranomoi*) desires disappear and never emerge when the person under the power of reason seeks the truth and satisfies only those necessary appetites so that the appetitive part is kept calm and harmony is achieved in the soul. On the other they may occur, as they actually do in the tyrant, in this soul where reason is weak and is under the influence of the appetitive part of the soul.

## II

The pictorial account of harmony in the soul of the philosopher, especially in the last mentioned passage casts some light on the notion of harmony that Plato has initially introduced in Book IV and the role that the parts of the soul play in the harmonious soul. We notice that in the philosophical soul harmony depends almost entirely on the power of the reasoning part of the soul that conditions the lower parts, especially the desiring part. When reason is in its best condition and aims at the truth real harmony can be achieved in the soul. In Book IV the harmonious and just soul is presented as the result of an ‘agreement’ among the parts that reason should rule:

‘Then do not we call him *sōphrona* when all these three elements are in friendly and harmonious agreement (*sumphōnia*), when reason and its subordinates are all agreed (*homodoxōsi*) that reason should rule and there is no conflict among them?’ (442b9-d1)

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<sup>61</sup> See the analogy between the state of dreaming here and Plato’s claim at 476c1-5 where those that cannot distinguish between the real objects and their images are presented as being in a state of dreaming.

We are not told however how this agreement among the parts can be reached. The *homodoxōsi* at 442d1 might indicate that the agreement is the result of a 'dialogue' that takes place among the parts of the soul.<sup>62</sup> The idea of dialogue as a mean towards an 'agreement' among the parts loses its strength if we look at the way that the spirited part of the soul and reason are presented as being in harmony. At 441d7-442a2 we are told that music and athletic education nourishes the reasoning part with fine speeches and instructions (*logois te kalois kai mathēmasi*) while it relaxes the spirited part with the rhythm. The passage here refers back to 410a-412a where Plato suggests that gymnastic and music aim at the harmonization of the spirited and the philosophical elements of the soul. Both passages reflect the first stage of education at 376 ff. Plato claims that the 'the love of wisdom and high spirit and quickness and strength will be combined for us in the nature of him who is to be a good and true guardian for the city' (376c4-6) and goes on to introduce gymnastic as the appropriate training for the body and music for the education of the soul (376e1-3). Music, according to Plato, includes those fables that are told to the future guardians and shape their souls by imposing the right beliefs (379a ff.). It is important that at this stage of education the young people of the city should be exposed only to those stories that will infuse in their souls the right opinions and avoid inappropriate stories told by the poets (377-378). The aim of this phase of education is that the guardians will achieve an equilibrium between spirit and wisdom by training both the soul and the body. However, it is mainly and above all the education of the mind that will determine the nature of the guardians. Plato makes this point explicitly at 376b12- c2 where he suggests that

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<sup>62</sup>I have suggested some reasons throughout this thesis for supposing that the idea of the 'dialogue' among the parts is merely metaphorical and not something that Plato really means. The idea of a dialogue among the parts cannot be supported unless we accept that the parts have beliefs. In earlier chapters of this thesis (see esp. chapters one and two) I have tried to show that Plato does not attribute beliefs or any other cognitive abilities to the lower parts of the soul and especially not to the appetitive part.

‘then we may not confidently lay it down in the case of man too, that if he is to be in some sort gentle to friends and familiar he must be by nature a lover of wisdom (*philosophon*) and of learning (*philomathē*)?’ It seems that although gymnastic is important for the training of the body it is actually the condition of the mind that will make some citizen true guardians.

When Plato describes the appetites in the soul of the philosopher at 485d-e we see that the rest of the appetites diminish when the lover of wisdom from an early age (*ek neou* d3-4) is focused on learning. We notice that this kind of learning starts at the first phase of education where a development of the reasoning part goes in parallel with the development of certain dispositions that are related to certain responses towards anger or pleasure.<sup>63</sup> At 401e4-402a4 Plato concludes that those that have gone through this phase of education:

‘would praise beautiful things and take delight in them and receive them into his soul to foster its growth and become himself beautiful and good. The ugly he would rightly disapprove of and hate while still young and yet unable to apprehend the reason, but when reason comes, the man educated in that way would be the first to welcome it recognizing it through affinity’.<sup>64</sup>

We have also seen that at 410a-412a music and gymnastics are introduced by Plato as the means towards a harmony within the person something to which Plato also alludes at 441d7-442a2 in Book IV<sup>65</sup> when he speaks about the harmony between spirit and reason.<sup>66</sup> It

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<sup>63</sup> See 376a-c.

<sup>64</sup> When Plato says that that ‘are unable to apprehend the reason’ he does mean that people at this educational stage are unreasonable, but that they cannot still say why some things are good, for instance, while some others are bad. They do not have a criterion to which they can appeal in order to explain the difference between the good and the bad things. This criterion will become available to them only through the knowledge of the Good.

<sup>65</sup> Note that at 441d7-442a2 gymnastic is not mentioned since now spirit does not belong to the body but it is part of the soul.

might be the case that, according to Plato, a kind of harmony can be achieved from an early age when the person through the development of some understanding of the ethical norms of right and wrong can habituate his emotional responses. In his description of that phase of education of course Plato has not divided yet the soul into parts. He accepts that there are different elements in human nature, but these elements are not presented as conflicting 'parts' that belong to the soul. The distinction is much more between the body and the soul rather than between different aspects of the soul itself (see 376 ff.). What is important is the fact that the harmony at that stage is not the result of any 'agreement' among the different elements that constitute human nature, but the outcome of the training that concerns the whole person as the compound of soul and body.<sup>67</sup> It would be actually odd for Plato to say that the body and the soul agree in something. More than that the education and the training of the person, as the passage at 376b12-d2 suggests, refers mainly to the development of some rational, although unreflective, capacities that lead the person to shape certain dispositions with the aid of reason.

The account of harmony that Plato has presented in the first phase of education is no longer sufficient any more his for aims in Book IV. Reason in the first stage of education has a

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<sup>66</sup> Plato retains music also in the second phase of education along with mathematics and he recommends that the harmony of music 'is useful for the investigation of the beautiful and the good' (531c6-7).

<sup>67</sup> I disagree with Gill 1985: 8-12 in his otherwise illuminating discussion of the education of the character, that the first stage of education concerns the spirited element. Despite the fact the Plato does use the terms *thumoeides* and *philosophon* at 375-6 we do not have to assume that he uses them as they appear in the argument for the division of the soul in book IV. If we suppose that Plato refers to the person as the compound of the body and the soul and not to different parts of the soul then we can face Gill's worry that the first stage of the education 'makes sense as a training of the *thumoeides* in a way that it does not as a training for the *epithumētikon*' (11). What Plato says about the *thumoeides* can be applied also to the *epithumētikon*. In the same way that the natural spiritness that can be also met in the animals can be trained and transformed to bravery the natural inclination of thirst and hunger can be transformed into a full-fledged desire for food and drink. I agree however with Gill's view that the appetitive element cannot be *as such* cannot be trained (11 and 19-21). What can be trained especially in the light of the tripartite soul is not the appetitive part itself as the locus of all the bodily inclinations but the whole soul as a composite of different elements (see also below in the text). That Plato in the first stage focuses on the spirited element does not mention the *epithumētikon* might be explained further by the fact that this stage of education is designed primarily for the guardians who should develop the right amount of spirit.

passive role and accepts uncritically the beliefs and the opinions that are illustrated in the stories (377a ff.). In Book IV, by contrast, the harmony of the soul seems to require knowledge and *epistēmē*. At 442b4-7 Plato calls this ‘small’ part that rules *sophon* and he says that this part should have *epistēmē* about what is beneficial for each part of the soul and the soul as a whole. Mere belief that accounts during the first educational phase for the ethical development of the person is not adequate any more for what Plato wants to present in Book IV as the real harmony and justice in the soul. The problem is that in Book IV we are not told what the knowledge is that will promote the real harmony and justice in the soul. While Plato has described how right beliefs can be implanted in the souls of the young children through the stories told by the instructors in the first stage of education, in Book IV there is nothing on the acquisition of knowledge. This is a task that Plato will take on in the subsequent Books V, VI and VII.

However, it seems that he is not unaware in Book IV of the fact that unless knowledge has been defined the harmony and the role that he wishes to attribute to reason in the just soul cannot be supported. We notice that at 435d3 Socrates warns Glaucon that they might need a ‘longer road’ (*makrotera hodos*) to find out whether the soul has the three parts or not. Socrates does not relate the ‘longer road’ directly to the question of knowledge; what the longer investigation might show is whether the present account of the soul with the three parts is true or not. But the two questions, as I shall try to show in the end, are not unconnected. It has been argued<sup>68</sup> that Socrates takes up the ‘longer road’ at 504b2 ff. (*makrotera periodos*) and relates it to the Good. What Plato has described as reason’s knowledge of what is

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<sup>68</sup> See among others Cooper 1996: 142-143 and Adam 1963: 244 note to text at 435d.

beneficial for each part of the soul and the soul as whole in Book IV is what he calls now at 505a the 'Form of the Good' which is the *megiston mathēma* and makes everything else useful, beneficial and just:

ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα μέγιστον μάθημα, πολλάκις ἀκήκοας, ἥ δὴ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τᾶλλα προσχρησάμενα χρήσιμα καὶ ὠφέλιμα γίνονται. καὶ νῦν σχεδὸν οἶσθ' ὅτι μέλλω τοῦτο λέγειν, καὶ πρὸς τούτῳ ὅτι αὐτὴν οὐχ ἰκανῶς ἴσμεν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἴσμεν, ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα τᾶλλα ἐπισταίμεθα, οἶσθ' ὅτι οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ὄφελος, ὥσπερ οὐδ' εἰ κεκτήμεθα τι ἄνευ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. ἢ οἶε τι πλέον εἶναι πᾶσαν κτήσιν ἐκτῆσθαι, μὴ μέντοι ἀγαθὴν; ἢ πάντα τᾶλλα φρονεῖν ἄνευ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, καλὸν δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὸν μηδὲν φρονεῖν; Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἔφη.

'For you have often heard that the greatest thing to learn is the idea of the good by reference to which just things and all the rest become useful and beneficial. And now I am almost sure you know that this is what I am going to speak of and to say further that we have no adequate knowledge of it. And if we do not know it, then even if without the knowledge of this we should know all other things never so well, you are aware that it would avail us nothing, just as no possession either is of any avail without the possession of the good. Or do you think there is any profit in possessing everything except that which is good, or in understanding all things else apart from the good while understanding and knowing nothing that is fair and good? No, by Zeus, I do not' (505a2-b3).

if reason acquires knowledge of the Good then harmony in the soul can be achieved since reason will know what is really beneficial for the soul and the parts.<sup>69</sup> In the light of the above interpretation it is not surprising that at 505e Plato claims that the ‘every soul aims at the good and does (*prattei*) everything in the sake of it’. It seems now that it is the soul, and not just reason that desires the Good and does everything for the sake of the Good. Caution is needed here. By every soul Plato does not mean every soul as it manifests itself in each individual person. The souls of the unjust types, as we have seen, do not desire what is Good and do not do everything for the sake of the Good. Probably Plato refers here to the soul as it should be that is, the ideal soul of the philosopher. In the soul of the philosopher the endorsement of every action occurs in the light of full knowledge about its goodness and it is reason’s desire for knowledge that integrates the object of any desire into the person’s conception of what is good. The philosopher who knows the Good values everything around him, including his own psychic events such as the desires that stem from the appetitive part of the soul, in the light of a comparison between that thing and the Good itself. The knowledge of the Good that is introduced in Book VI and the description of the second phase of education in Book VII improves the model of the first educational stage and adds to the account of the acquired rational capacities of that stage in a way that now the desires of the person that has knowledge are not shaped by unreflective beliefs and are not directed towards what the person merely

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<sup>69</sup>Note that also at 376d6-7 Socrates says to Adeimantus that the definition of the just and the unjust city may require a longer argument (*ei makrotera tuganei ousa*). The longer argument here will help them to find out what is justice in the city which in turn depends on how those that will rule in the city should be educated (*threpsontai de dē hēmin houtoi kai paideusontai tina tropon*) 376c8-9. Thus the ‘*megiston mathēma*’ will not show only what it is for the soul to be just, but also what it is for the city to be actually just. The ‘longer road’ will prove that justice in the city depends ultimately on knowledge of the good which is what makes the soul of the philosophers-rulers just.

believes — either rightly or falsely — to be good, but they are informed by knowledge and are guided by the active power of reason to what is *really* good for the whole soul.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately Plato does not provide any concrete account of what it is about the Good that makes everything else good. Instead of that Socrates speculates about the Good and offers the analogies and the parallels of the cave, the sun and the divided line. What is then the object of the philosopher's knowledge and what does the philosopher know when he has knowledge of the Good? I am not going here to attempt an answer to this difficult question. For the purpose of my argument in this section we might follow Cooper's claim<sup>71</sup> that the Good is the perfect example of an ordered whole whose orderliness is explained by the mathematical relationship among its parts. The philosopher that has knowledge of the Good or aims at it applies this complete order in the nature of the Good to the physical events of the world including his own choices, actions and desires. We have seen that the lover of wisdom can achieve complete order and harmony in his own soul by thinking rational thoughts and satisfying the rationally controlled appetites that stem from the appetitive part of the soul. The Good as the object of knowledge and the object of the soul's desire is the criterion according to which everything else can be said to be neither good nor bad. It is in that sense that knowledge of the Good can secure the real harmony of the soul that Plato has so emphatically introduced in book IV and can explain the role of reason as the ruling part that knows what is beneficial for the whole soul and each part.

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<sup>70</sup> Note that the deviant characters in Books VII and IX who have gone probably through the first phase of education they can shape from time to time reasonable desires. But since they have not acquired knowledge their choices throughout their lives are not determined by what is *really* good for them.

<sup>71</sup> Cooper 1999: 144.

### III

The knowledge of the Good, does not seem to entail any improvement in the ‘character’ of the appetitive part. In Book IX and after the discussion of the pleasures of the philosopher, the soul is presented in terms of a man, a lion and a many-headed beast which is the appetitive part of the soul (588c6-10). Even in the perfectly united soul of the just person the reasoning part of the soul is presented as a farmer and the numerous inclinations of the appetitive part as the ‘plants’ from which the farmer ‘cherishes and trains (*trephōn kai tithaseuōn*) the cultivated ones but checks the growth of the wild (*ta de agria apokoluōn phuesthai*) having as an ally the spirited part (*leontos phusin*).

‘And on the other hand he who says that justice is the more profitable affirms that all our actions and words should tend to give the man within us complete domination over the entire man and make him in charge of the many headed beast like a farmer who cherishes and trains the cultivated plants but checks the growth of the wild and he will make an ally of the lion’s nature, and caring for all the beasts alike will first make them friendly to one another and to himself and so foster their growth’ (589a6-b6).<sup>72</sup>

Someone would have expected that in the real harmonious soul and in the light of Plato’s claim that the just person experiences only the best appetites the nature of the appetitive would have

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<sup>72</sup> The way that the desires of the appetitive part are presented at this passage as the many heads of a beast or plants from which the farmer should let grow only a few it is very close to what I suggest in this chapter. The plants may represent all these bodily inclination that are allocated in the appetitive part while the cultivated ones are those appetites that are shaped by reason’s input.

changed.<sup>73</sup> The question is whether Plato's account of the just soul and the way that the united soul is exemplified in the case of the philosopher, needs any kind of improvement in the 'nature' of the desiring part as such. If we accept that knowledge of the Good equips reason with the ability to know what is beneficial about the whole soul and each part of the soul, then it seems that knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition for the soul to be just. No matter what the condition of the appetitive part the person with a harmonious soul will always desire what is good and beneficial. The role and the development of this part — that is, the appetites that stem from this part — in the harmonious soul depend entirely on reason's guidance and reason's knowledge of the Good. We have seen that in the soul of the philosopher the ideal harmony is achieved in so far as the philosopher in the light of the Good has only those bodily appetites that are beneficial for the whole soul and does not experience the unnecessary or the lawless desires of the tyrant. All his appetites are informed by reason and are directed towards the objects that are really good for him. The very nature, of course, of

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<sup>73</sup> This a question that Gill 1985: 22-23 raises. Gill claims that 'In fact, Plato does conclude the main part of his argument in the *Republic* by presenting a picture of the tripartite soul and its inter-relations, and one that does make reference to the notions of unity and harmony. But this picture makes no allusion to the second phase of education and its effects on the *psuchē* .....Indeed what is added to the previous account of psychic harmony is a pictorial image which emphatically suggests that the *psuchē* is made up of elements which are divergent in character and difficult to combine'. In Gill 1996: 259 and n.66 he suggests a way to answer this question. He claims that 'the depiction of the appetitive or desiring part of the psyche as 'insatiable', capable of 'wrecking the lives' of the other parts, and proliferating like wild, many headed beast or plant, is a characterization not of desire as such, but of desire as shaped by 'unreasonable' beliefs and life-goals' 259. In n. 66 he suggests that the picture in 588c-592b seem to underline the unassimilably 'animal' character of desire because 'it confirms the cautionary picture of desire which is shaped by 'unreasonable' life choices in R.8-9'. The claim that I try to advance in this chapter and throughout this thesis is that the 'desires' of the appetitive part of the soul are not the desires shaped by beliefs either 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' ones but the pure inclinations that are parts of these desires. Hence, I am not in line with Gill's claim that the 'animal' character of the desires depicts the picture of desire, which is shaped by 'unreasonable' life choices in Books VII and X. We have seen that the unjust types from time to time shape perfectly reasonable desires such as the necessary desires that the oligarch has or even the desire of the democratic man for philosophy. The problem with the deviant characters is that, unlike the philosophers, they do not have knowledge but mere belief. As a result while their desires are always shaped by the reasoning part they are not always directed towards what is good. The 'plant' and 'animal' character of the appetitive part has to do with the irrational inclinations that belong to this part and not with the fully-fledged desires which are always shaped by the reasoning part of the soul.

this part has not changed. It is not that the appetitive part can now realize what is good for the soul or even what is good for itself. The part as such remains 'appetitive' in its nature with no concern about what is good. However, the desires that spring from this part are informed by reason and are directed to what is good and beneficial. In other words, while the philosopher can get rid of the unnecessary desires, for instance, in the sense that *he*, as the proper subject of all his desires, will never form a desire for something which is not good, he cannot get rid of the bodily inclinations that are transformed under reason's guidance to fully- fledged desires. The appetitive part cannot be educated, that is, if understood as I propose it should be understood, not as the locus of the shaped desires that we normally have, but as the locus of the 'core' impulses from where the fully-fledged desires spring. My point here reflects my earlier claim in the first part of this thesis (see chapter two) where I have tried to separate the simple inclinations that Plato allocates to the appetitive part of the soul from the fully-fledged appetites that belong to the whole soul. The inclination is part of what a fully- fledged desire is while the latter is also informed by reason no matter whether reason is in its best condition as it is in the soul of the philosopher or is distorted as it is in the unjust souls. In the ideal soul where reason has knowledge the desires develop not only with reason's input, but also with reason's guidance towards what is good.

That the desiring part cannot be trained in the sense that I have proposed probably explains why Plato remains silent on the matter of the inter-relation between the reasoning and the appetitive part in the just soul. Although he implies a kind of 'agreement' at 442d1— something that can be seen as a strong expression of the analogy between the parts of the soul and the classes of the city and not as something that Plato really believes — he never

explains how through knowledge of the Good the appetitive part comes to follow reason. One suggestion could be that the appetitive part is somehow affected by the second phase of education that has been designed for those that will become real philosophers. It is striking though that this part is never mentioned during that stage of education and there is no implication that the appetitive part as such is 'educated' along with reason's training. More than that, the only thing that we are told at 571a ff. and 581b1-4 is that the nature of the appetitive part — that is, the bodily inclinations that are presented as 'plants' — should be conditioned by reason's power. It seems that in the just soul it is not that the appetitive part learns to shape good appetites or to follow reason and to understand reason's orders. Understanding of reason's orders in that case would entail that the desiring part should have some share in reason's knowledge, something that would lead to the incredible claim that the appetitive part as such can have access to the Good. My suggestion is that Plato can perfectly well argue about a just and harmonious soul without having to say that the nature of the appetitive part has changed so that the desiring part is able to follow or agree with reason. Plato's point concerning the just soul is that the distinct elements can perform their role and develop only under reason's rule and guidance and not in isolation *as such*. The soul in its ideal state still remains composite where each element plays a particular role in bringing about the good of the whole. The impulsive role of the desiring part is the result of the soul's embodiment and the bodily impulses that the soul has in this state.

The appetitive character of the desiring part of the soul and my claim that the nature of this part remains the same even in the perfectly unified soul might offer a way to resolve the question that the 'longer road' has been supposed to answer. We have seen that at 435d3 what

initiates the *makrotera kai pleiōn odos* is not the question about justice or the just soul but the question whether the soul has the three parts or not. I have suggested earlier on in this chapter that the two questions are not irrelevant to each other. Let us assume that Plato questions the existence of the three parts in the soul as the text itself in Book IV seems to suggest. The ‘longer road’ in Book VI has not proved that the three parts cease to exist. What it has shown is that knowledge — that is, knowledge of the Good — can infuse real harmony in the soul. The just soul of the philosopher — the soul that approximates the soul in its best condition — which ‘aims at the good and does everything for the sake of the good’ at 504e, still has the appetitive part since, as we have seen, the philosopher has appetites albeit only good ones that have their source in this part of the soul. Thus, knowledge of the Good has not shown that the soul is not tripartite in the sense that the rational just soul has totally lost its appetitive nature.

In his effort to identify the origins of the bodily appetites in Book IV Plato identifies a part from which these appetites spring in their simplest form. It is this part as such and in isolation as the locus of all the simple urges that is characterized by Plato as a ‘many-headed’ beast. In the just person however, who has knowledge of what is best to do, all sorts of desires, preferences and choices are determined by this knowledge. The appetitive desires now, although they remain ‘appetitive’ in their nature, are not any more the simple bodily urges that spring from the appetitive part of the soul alone, but are fully-fledged desires for what is good and beneficial that are formed under reason’s knowledge of what is good and belong to the whole soul. Although the ‘longer road’ has not proved that the appetitive part does not exist it has proved that in the ideal just soul this part never manifests its ‘bestial’ character in the

actual desires that the just person has.<sup>74</sup> To put it in other words, when the soul is in its ideal state it does not make any difference whether the soul has three parts or not since these parts cannot be recognized in the way that the argument in Book IV distinguishes them. The appetitive part can be recognized in the existence of the bodily desires that the philosopher shapes and satisfies; however, these desires are no longer impulses which are peculiar to the desiring part, but belong to the unified soul. The ideal soul can be said to be actually *simple* when each part performs its own role within human nature under the rule of reason. Remember that 'each part doing its own is part of the definition of the just soul in Book IV (443da). Thus, if the 'longer road' has proved, according to my suggestion, that the soul is actually *simple* it has also proved that the soul is really just.

If we return to the outcomes of the second stage of education where the person that has gone through this stage has learned to have the right dispositions as the result of a kind of harmony between the different elements within human nature we notice that the second phase of education and the *megiston mathēma* supplement the first educational programme. Although Plato does not mention it explicitly, we might assume that the conditioning of the appetitive part in the case of the philosopher is still the result of habituation. The difference, of course, now is that the philosopher can explain why he has the preferences and the desires that he has by reference to what is really good for him and the whole soul. In the first stage of education, where we do not get parts of the soul, I have suggested that Plato opts for a training of the whole person as an entity that is composed by different elements and for a specific kind of training that concerns the elements as such. Although the different elements of human nature in

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<sup>74</sup> This claim is related to my earlier point at 571b ff. where I have suggested that the lawless desires never actually occur in the just soul although they might be considered a possibility since the appetitive part is still there.

Book IV are presented as 'parts' of the soul where the appetitive part corresponds to our impulsive and animal nature, it seems that the impact of the second phase of education on the ethical development of the person has to do with the soul as a whole and not with the desiring or the appetitive part in isolation. Ethical perfection or what Plato calls the state of the 'just soul' can only be achieved through the knowledge of what is really good according to the person's rational nature. This kind of perfection is not at danger from the existence of the lower parts and in particular from the existence of the appetitive part when reason is in its best condition and takes care of each part and the whole soul. The way that Plato describes how the desires of the philosopher become weakened, or his claim that the philosopher can get true pleasure, in so far possible, from the satisfaction of the best appetites, indicates that the mere existence of the appetitive cannot jeopardize the harmony in the soul; it is distorted reason, as the examples of the deviant characters reveal, that is responsible for the flourishing of these desires which are directed towards what is not good and beneficial. The appetitive part, even in the ideal soul of the philosopher, is not seen by Plato as a destructive element to be eliminated as completely as possible but as a source or energy that can be directed in the right channels.

To conclude, it seems that in the ideal embodied soul of the philosopher which approximates to — if it is not actually — the ideal soul that Plato has in mind, it is only knowledge that can secure the harmony among the parts and bring about the justice that Plato suggests in Book IV. Plato's pictorial representation at 485d of the desires that are weakened in the face of reason's desire for learning and the truth indicates that the role of the appetitive part in the unified soul depends entirely on reason exercising its proper function. The appetitive part, although it has some motivational strength as the locus of the bodily impulses that boot

the fully-fledged desires, remains motivationally inactive unless it is informed and directed by reason.

## **PART THREE**

## 6. Knowledge and motivation in the *Protagoras*.

Those dialogues that precede the *Republic*, such as the *Protagoras*, the *Gorgias*, the *Meno*, the *Lysis*, and the *Symposium* are often called ‘early’ or ‘Socratic’ dialogues. The label ‘Socratic’ is supposed to indicate that in these dialogues we get what is taken to be Socrates’ own view as opposed to Plato’s own voice in dialogues like the *Republic* or what are called ‘middle’ and ‘late’ dialogues. In particular ‘middle’ tends to mean mainly reference to the theory of the separated Forms.<sup>1</sup> Another feature that can be said to characterize the so-called ‘middle’ dialogues is the tripartite, complex soul that Plato introduces, as we have seen, in *R. IV*. This latter feature indicates probably another difference between the ‘early’ and the ‘middle’ dialogues — where the *Republic* belongs according to the standard division — that is a difference in the theory about human motivation and desire. The theory of human motivation that is recognized as distinctly ‘Socratic’ — but may not be Platonic — is labelled as ‘intellectualism’.<sup>2</sup> The core thesis of this theory is that agent’s conception of what is good for him is sufficient to motivate action. This motivation involves desire for what is good as well as belief about what is good or beneficial for the agent. In that case desire is always focused on what is best for the person through the person’s conception of the overall good. Given the assumption that that the agent always aims at her/his good via a conception of what is the overall good for him, any failure to achieve that aim can be explained by a cognitive or ‘intellectual’ defect. The outcome of this theory is that it conceives the soul as a

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<sup>1</sup> The traditional separation of the dialogues into ‘early’ or ‘Socratic’, ‘middle’ and ‘late’, has recently been supported, among others, by Fine 2003: n.1 to Introduction. Fine defends the view developed by Vlastos in Vlastos 1991: ch. 2 and 3, and it seems that for her the introduction of the Forms is what divides Plato from Socrates (298).

<sup>2</sup> See Taylor 2000: 62-63 for a brief and clear statement of his theory.

unified entity and rules out the existence of any desires that are not directed towards what is good.

The ‘Socratic’ thesis can be traced in the *Gorgias* where at 468c2-8 Socrates proposes to Polus that:

‘Then we do not wish to slaughter people or expel them from our cities or deprive them of their property as an act in itself, but if these things are beneficial we wish (*boulometha*) to do them, while if they are harmful, we do not wish them. For we wish (*boulometha*) what is good, as you say; but what is neither good nor bad we do not wish, nor what is bad either, do we? Is what I say true in your opinion, Polus, or not? Why you do not answer?’

Also in the *Meno* at 77d10-e37 Socrates claims that:

‘Obviously those who are ignorant of the evil do not desire it, but only what they are supposed to be good, though it is really evil; so that those who are ignorant of it and think it good are really desiring the good. Is not that so?’<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the two aforementioned dialogues, the same can be also found in the *Euthydemus* 278e ff. where Socrates suggests that the question whether all human beings wish happiness (*eu prattein*) or not would be a ‘stupid’ question since there is nobody that does not wish happiness (278e5-279a1). In Diotima’s speech in the *Symposium* — a dialogue that might be considered to belong to the ‘middle’ group

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<sup>3</sup> The view expressed in the two passages in the *Meno* and the *Gorgias* might not be exactly the same; in the *Meno* passage Plato seems to allow that some people may desire things which are bad believing that they are good, while in the *Gorgias* passage it seems the agent desires (*bouletai*) only what is good. The difference between the two passages generates the question whether the Socratic good is the *real* good or the *apparent* good, that is, what the agent thinks to be good or beneficial for him at the time he takes a certain course of action. See also below in the main text and n. 25.

if we accept that the distinguish mark between ‘early’ and ‘middle’ are the Forms — we also get the idea that humans desire ultimately what is truly ‘good’ and ‘beautiful’. Especially at 208d ff. even the sensual desire for procreation is presented in terms of desire or belief about what is ‘good’, divine, immortal and a state of happiness (*eudaimonia*) 208e6.<sup>4</sup> In what follows in this chapter I shall focus on the *Protagoras* and discuss whether the thesis of Socrates in the *Protagoras* about what motivates us to take a certain course of action bears some similarities with the picture of human motivation in the *Republic* that I have proposed in the preceding chapters of this thesis.

## I

At *Protagoras* 351e ff. Socrates is trying to reject *akrasia* by refuting the thesis of the many that someone can be overcome by pleasure or by *lupēn* 352d9-a1 or *thumon* (352b7) and *erōta* (b8). Socrates’ denial of *akrasia* is based on a controversial argument where he endorses a kind of hedonism according to which the pleasant is the good (353c9-254e2). The soundness of the so-called hedonistic argument in the *Protagoras* and the extent to which Plato himself is committed to this position in the *Protagoras* has received great attention by scholars.<sup>5</sup> I think, however, that we should not put too much weight in the notion of hedonism and Socrates’ initial claim at 353c9 ff. that pleasure is the human good. One reason why Socrates has chosen hedonism is possibly because hedonism is a theory of good. What Socrates has in his mind is probably a kind of sophisticated hedonism about

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<sup>4</sup> See also the *Lysis* and Penner and Rowe 2005 for a very illuminating study on how the Socratic ‘intellectualism’ fits in with the main theme of the dialogue.

<sup>5</sup> See for a detailed analysis of the steps of the Taylor 1991. For a discussion on the question whether or not the hedonistic view of the *Protagoras* is a thesis that Plato himself holds see, among others, Taylor and Gosling 1982: ch. 3.

long-term pleasures whereby the pleasant life could be identified with the happiest life. Another reason that Socrates endorses a kind of hedonism for his argument in the last part of the *Protagoras* might be that pleasure, which is the chief good in this theory, constitutes a convenient means for Socrates to show Protagoras that the *pathos* of being overcome by pleasure or passion in general, the notion of 'being overcome' that most people have in mind (352d4-7), is ignorance (357c1-e2) in the sense that someone does not know or wrongly believes that something is pleasant while it is not.<sup>6</sup> At any rate it seems to me that it is not hedonism that Socrates is arguing for, but a theory of human motivation that he illustrates through hedonism.

At 357c1 ff. Socrates draws the conclusion of his argument against *akrasia* by saying that wrong-doing is explained by defect of knowledge while, when knowledge is present, nothing can overcome knowledge whether this is pleasure or anything else. At 358b9-c3, relying on his argument so far and his claim that being overcome by pleasures is anything more than ignorance or intellectual error Socrates makes two further claims about knowledge or belief and about human motivation:

'Then if, I proceeded, the pleasant is good, no one who has knowledge or thought of other actions as better than those he is doing, and as possible, will do as he proposes if he is free to do the better ones; and to be overcome is nothing but ignorance, and to master oneself is nothing but wisdom...Well then by ignorance do you mean having a false opinion and being deceived about matters of importance?' (358b8-c8)

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<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, how Socrates is trying to explain how we might go wrong about things which are more or less pleasant and painful at 356c ff. where he claims that the same size appears larger to our sight when seen from close and small when it is seen from distance (c5-9). Hence, any misconception is explained by intellectual error.

‘Then surely, I went on, no one willingly (*hekōn*) goes wrong after evil or what he thinks to be evil; it is not in human nature (*en anthrōpou phusei*), apparently, to do so - to wish (*ethelein*) to go after what one things to be evil in preference to the good; and when compelled to choose one of two evils, nobody will choose the greater when he may choose the lesser’ (358 c8-d5)<sup>7</sup>

These two passages express what is at the heart of the Socratic ‘intellectualism’, that is, no one will willingly choose what he knows/believes to be bad. The important feature of the view expressed here is that nobody will ever take a certain course of action without taking something to be good or bad. The question that may be raised however, is whether the agent will do so either believing or knowing. Does Socrates say that someone will always choose the right action because he believes or knows that this is the right action or is his claim that it is only knowledge that suffices for this condition. In the Greek text, throughout the whole argument where Socrates tries to refute the view that someone can be overcome by pleasure, in some places he speaks of knowledge (*epistēmē* at 357a2 and 352c4), while in other places he mentions belief (358c7 ignorance as false *doxa*, d1 *oietai*, b9- c1 *oute eidōs oute oiomenos*). One suggestion could be that Socrates proposes that when belief is strong and the agent thinks that one action x is the best action to take the agent will do x. On the other hand it might be argued that it is the strength of knowledge that suffices Socrates’ claim against *akrasia*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The translation of the quoted texts from the *Protagoras* is that of Lamb 1962.

<sup>8</sup> For the first view see Vlastos 1969: 71-88 and Walsh 1971: 235-263 who argue that strength of knowledge seems to be a trivial consequence of Socrates’ claim on the impossibility of belief-akrasia, that is, the impossibility that someone will go against what he *believes* to be good. On the second interpretation see Penner 1997:117-149. Penner suggests that the Socrates’ argument against *akrasia* requires knowledge and not belief. For his claim Penner thinks that Socrates does not want just to say that ‘strength resides not simply in our automatically acting on the passion what we believe or know *synchronically*, that is, at the instant of the action’, but that he claims something more than that. The strength, according to Penner resides ‘in our acting on the basis of what we believe or know

In the *Protagoras* of course, it is not clear exactly how Socrates conceives knowledge or the art of measurement while the investigation of the nature of this art is something that Socrates himself postpones at 357b6-7 for another time.<sup>9</sup> What I take Socrates to claim is that human beings always act on what they believe or value to be good in any situation; it is the strength of their value judgements that motivates them to take a certain course of action that they think is best or better than an alternative one. Knowledge enters the picture as a kind of regulative power which ensures that we *always* hold the true value judgements about what is good and bad and hence we always choose the right action.<sup>10</sup> Let us look then, at the passage at 356c-357d where Socrates mentions how through the art of measurement we avoid having holding false judgements:

‘Does the same size appear larger to your sight when near, and smaller when distant? And it is the same with thickness and number?... And sounds of equal strength are greater when near, and smaller when distant?... Now if our welfare consisted in doing and choosing things of large dimensions, and avoiding and not doing those of small what would be our salvation of life (*sōtēria tou biou*)? Would it be the art of measurement, or the power of

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*diachronically*, that is, throughout most of the period of coming to decide and acting...Strength will then be exhibited in our intellectual grasp in the situation-in our avoiding being seduced by differing views on the situation that present themselves during the temporal context of the action’. The latter notion of strength precludes that a certain value-judgement on which we act at one certain time, say  $t_1$ , may go against to how we would value the same action in some other given time  $t_2$ . If for example I choose to take that chocolate bar on the table in front of me because I believe that it will be pleasant and beneficial for me having it now, it is very possible that I might regret later and say that it was wrong to had the chocolate bar. Although at the time I got the chocolate I acted on my judgement that it was pleasant or good for me to have it, retrospect I might recognize that I acted on a false belief or that I was misled by the way that the object appeared to me as pleasant or good. Although I agree with Penner’s distinction (above) when he argues that *akrasia* in the *Protagoras* requires knowledge and not belief, is not intelligible to my mind.

<sup>9</sup> The *Republic* is one place that Plato takes up the task to say what is knowledge. See the similarity between the passage here in the *Protagoras* at 356c5 ff. and the passage in *R.X.* where Plato presents measurement and calculation as the mean that can help people to escape the mistakes caused by the way that things presented to them through the senses. See also chapter one in this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> At this point I am close to Taylor 1991: 190-192 who relies on the passage at 356c ff. and suggests that the art of measurement, unlike the power of appearance, provides some consistency to the bulk of our beliefs or as I suggest makes our judgements true and somehow stable.

appearance? It is not the latter that leads us astray (*eplana*), as we saw, and many times makes us to view the things in different ways and to have to change our minds both in our conduct and in our choice of great and small? Whereas the art of measurement would have made this appearance ineffective (*akuron epoiēsen*), and by showing us the truth would have brought peace (*hēsuchian*) in the soul by abiding it to the truth and would have saved our life...it is from the defect of knowledge (*epistēmēs endeia*) that people make mistakes in their choices of pleasures and pains-that is, in the choice of good and bad’.

We see that the art of measurement is presented as a kind of rational evaluation through which people can escape the effect of the deceptive appearances and reach true judgements, whether they are judgements about objects of the external world or value judgements about the good and the bad. Knowledge as an art of measurement implies that all our judgements at any given time are the result of measurement and calculation. If one knows something one cannot have one belief now and another one later. Knowledge precludes all kinds of false appearances including false appearances of good and bad or – on Socrates’ identification — pleasant and painful. In that case knowledge of what is good or bad implies that *all* the particular judgements that motivate action are the result of reflection and thorough thinking. If all the particular judgements are tied down by what Socrates calls calculation and measurement then someone will avoid having one belief at the time that he acts and another belief after the action that contradicts the earlier one. While our beliefs and our value judgements are unstable and change according to various perspectives that we adopt from time to time, they become stable when they are organized and shaped by knowledge or the art of measurement and calculation. It is only the science of measurement that can secure that all our beliefs will be true ones at any given time

and at any situation.<sup>11</sup> Thus, to say that someone has knowledge is to say that someone's judgemental commitments never remain unattested and unjustified so that the person holds now one belief and later on another one that may contradict the first.<sup>12</sup> We may assume then that according to Socrates to have knowledge is to be in possession of a regulative and organizing principle that promotes a certain state of the soul.<sup>13</sup> When the person is in that state of 'knowing', that is, all his beliefs are justified and are tied together by reasoning then the person will always choose in any situation what he believes/knows to be good. On this account of knowledge and the way that our judgements are related to knowledge and become stable, any case of *akrasia* or any case that someone goes against his/her better judgement is a certain kind of ignorance, in the sense that the person acts on a false value judgement or appearance that he adopted uncritically and unreflectively.

Socrates suggests in the same passage that when the soul through knowledge is abiding in the truth, peace of mind is achieved. But why, according to Socrates does knowledge promote peace of mind or what does Socrates mean by peace? We

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<sup>11</sup> In an earlier chapter of this thesis (chapter five) I have implied that the knowledge of the Good in the *Republic* can be viewed as a way through which the person can achieve some kind of order in his/her own life. This order is related to the aggregate of the mental and the physical events of human life. In the formation of the judgements the order can be achieved in so far the person can secure that he holds the same beliefs about certain things or state of affairs over time and he is not deceived by the way that things appear in any particular situation.

<sup>12</sup> This is what Plato probably means in *Meno* 97e2-98a10 when he says that true beliefs (*hai doxai hai alētheis*) are not worth so much until they are fastened and they become *epistēmē* and stable. Here in the *Meno*, as well as in the *Protagoras*, Plato does not necessarily draw any ontological distinction between knowledge and belief. A true belief that is fastened becomes knowledge in the sense that a strong justification for the truth of the belief is provided. Although now we can call it knowledge it still remains a true belief with an account or *logos*, as it is suggested in the later *Theaetetus*. My intention here is not to imply an answer to the question how belief or true belief and knowledge differ. I just wanted to mark that when Plato is using the two terms he does not necessarily imply that we have to do with two cognitive states that are strictly different epistemologically and ontologically. It is Plato's metaphysics and especially the introduction of the Forms, in the *Republic*, that has created problem in the distinction between the two. But even in the *Republic* Book V, for instance, where Plato attempts to define knowledge and to separate it from belief it is not clear at all what is the distinguish mark between them. See also the *Theaetetus* where in the end of the dialogue the question what is knowledge remains open, while at the same time it seems that true belief plus *logos* might be said to be something very close to knowledge.

<sup>13</sup> The idea of knowledge that I express here as a regulative and organizing force is close to what Heda Segvic suggests in Segvic 2000: 1-45.

could say that there is no peace in the soul in so far as the person's judgements are changing and sometimes contradict each other something, and this creates a kind of confusion within the soul. We have seen that not all people think in the same way and judge things in the same way. Most people are deceived by the way that things appear to them and end up with false beliefs or appearances. But peace of mind seems to imply something more. Recall the way that the many may argue for *akrasia*:

'often, although knowledge is present in the human beings, what rules is not knowledge but something else; sometimes anger, sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain, sometimes love (*erōta*)<sup>14</sup> or fear; they think that knowledge is dragged around by all these just like a slave' (352b5-c1).

Socrates' claim in his argument against *akrasia* implies that when we are supposed to be overcome by these feelings what overcomes us is false judgement about what is pleasant and the feeling. Apart from that and most importantly, as the passage at 358c8-d5 suggests, what motivates us towards action is not how we feel but how we evaluate something or the way that something is presented to us. Sometimes Socrates is said to reduce desires to mere beliefs, but I do not think that this could be the case. Although Socrates does not say anything in the *Protagoras* about the nature of our desires and especially our bodily desires he could not have thought that desires like thirst or hunger are just beliefs either false or true ones. If this was the way that Socrates — or Plato at the time he was writing the *Protagoras* — was thinking about our bodily desires, then he would have left out the physical event that

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Phaedrus* at 238a-b where *erōs* is used as a generic term for desires like hunger and the rest that are normally associated with bodily pleasures.

is included in any instance of a bodily desire like thirst and hunger. Socrates however, does not have to say that every time that we feel thirsty we experience nothing at all or that we are not already experiencing a kind of inclination towards drinking which is not a belief. Socrates could have thought of the nature of our bodily desires in the following way: this kind of inclination is related to bodily pains or pleasant sensations that we experience. When we are thirsty, for instance, we already feel attracted to the pleasure that comes from fulfilment. This inclination or physical force however, does not motivate us to act, but gives rise to a value judgement according to which we take something, say a glass of water in front of us, to be pleasant. It is the value judgement that something is pleasant that will motivate us to get the glass of water. The fully-fledged desire of thirst is neither simply a belief nor a pure inclination but is the way that we take something to be pleasant or whatever under the influence of experiencing a certain inclination.

One objection to my interpretation of how Socrates may think about desires and emotions could be that this is highly speculative. However, I cannot see anything that would prevent us from thinking that this was what Socrates was thinking about bodily desires and emotion. Consider the analogy between false visual appearances and desires. In the passage quoted above we are told that we form false visual beliefs when we see things from a distance and not very clearly. What gives rise in that case to our false belief that something is small is our sight or the effect of that the motion of perception has on us. This is not to say that sight for instance, is false but that the motion of sight may give rise to a false appearance.<sup>15</sup> By the same token, the physical force that we experience when we are thirsty or hungry or in general the way that we 'feel' in relation to something gives rise to a

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<sup>15</sup> On the idea that perception is a kind of irrational motion of the soul actually of the lower parts of the soul see *Tim.* 43c4-7.

belief according to which we take something to be pleasant, for instance, though it might not be. Thus, our desires, even our bodily or physical desires always involve some kind of evaluation about the objects and it is on this evaluation or on value-judgement that we act and not on the mere inclination or the physical force that we experience. Some further support that this is probably how Socrates conceives emotions in the *Protagoras* comes for the definition of fear at 358d5-7. Socrates defines fear as *prosdokian tina kakou*. If by *prosdokian* Socrates means a belief about something then this belief seems to be the result of a frightening experience that either we have now or in the future and the way that we feel towards that experience.<sup>16</sup>

Once this objection has been met and my suggestion about how Socrates would think about the desires and the emotions is accepted, peace of mind does not result only from the fact that knowledge precludes in general false and sometimes contradictory beliefs or appearances, but also from the fact that it also precludes those false value-judgements that are involved in, or are part of, our desires. In that sense, knowledge regulates our desires through the conditioning of our value judgements by removing the false evaluative appearances and letting fully-fledged desires which are not for something good — or better in that case for something really good — to rise. This kind of regulation here does not necessarily mean the ‘coercion’ of our fully-fledged desires when they arise, but it rather means that under the rule of knowledge we allow those desires that involve true value judgements. Someone who possesses knowledge will not have desires for something

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<sup>16</sup> The idea of the passion of fear as the expectation of something frightful that is expressed in this passage is very similar to how the Stoics define passions. See e.g. Stobaeus 2.881 8-90 and Galen *PHP* 4.2.1-6. The way however, that I have chosen to describe how a fully-fledged emotion or desire comes about is closer to Posidonius account as it presented by Galen *PHP* 5.5. See also chapter two where I claim that we might consider the appetites of the appetitive part of the soul in *R. IV* to be something very close to the ‘affective motions’ of Posidonius.

which is not good since he/will never hold false evaluative appearances and act on them. At the same time, my suggestion of how probably Socrates thinks about desires and emotions in the *Protagoras* reveals something about how he conceives the soul. Although the soul is presented as unified and without having parts in the way that the soul is presented in *Republic IV*, Socrates does not deny some kind of heterogeneity. This heterogeneity can be seen as heterogeneity in the ways that people normally take things to be or judge. Not all of them judge in the same way and some of them make mistakes or hold false judgements. If we come now to those value-judgements that are involved in our desires and especially our physical ones and motivate us to act, the different ways that we value things is the result of the effect that a physical force has on us that is the inclinations that we experience in relation to pleasant sensations or bodily pains and so on.<sup>17</sup> Peace of mind then might mean that the person who possesses knowledge will never be motivated by a desire towards something in which he will regret later or will never experience fear or any other emotion at a great extent though he should not.

## II

If knowledge promotes a certain state in the soul, that is a state where all the practical judgements are organized and tied together in such a way that the person always holds the right value-judgements and consequently desires what is good or in that case what is really good. Thus, it seems that in the light of Socrates' claim that knowledge is virtue, only the virtuous who possess knowledge hold true value judgements and desire always the real good. If this is what Socrates claims, then his

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<sup>17</sup> All these inclinations can be identified with a 'desiderative' aspect on us, though this 'aspect' in the *Protagoras* is not described as part of a divided soul in the way that it appears in *Republic IV*.

thesis is not that far from the Platonic thesis in the *Republic* that only the philosopher aims at what is really good. In the *Republic* (see also chapter five) only the philosopher through knowledge of the Good achieves true harmony among the parts of the soul and all the desires of the soul — which in that case belong to the soul as whole and not to each part of it — are directed towards what is really good. Similarly the virtuous person in the *Protagoras* always desires what is truly good when all his value-judgements are shaped by the rule of knowledge.<sup>18</sup> The harmonious state of the soul in the *Republic* under the rule of reason could be identified with this state of peace and equanimity that the virtuous man achieves in the *Protagoras*. In that case, knowledge both in the *Republic* and in the *Protagoras* has a normative function; in the *Protagoras* as I have suggested, the normative function has to do with the regulation of all the particular judgements so that these judgements are always true. In the *Republic* the knowledge has to do with the fulfilment of the ‘needs’ of its part of the soul and the soul as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

Knowledge in the *Protagoras* has all this motivating force that leads the person to wards what is truly good in each case. Against this view Penner<sup>20</sup> suggests that for Socrates, like Hume, knowledge or reason is inert and that it does not have any motivating force. According to Penner it is only the desire for the good — and actually the desire for the real good — that motivates us. I cannot see why exactly Penner wishes to deny any motivating force to knowledge. One obvious reason that

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<sup>18</sup> For a similarity between the notion of the reasoning part in the *Republic* as the ruling part and knowledge as a regulative principle within the person in the *Protagoras* see the passage at 352c4-7 where Socrates claims that: ‘knowledge (*epistēmē*) is something noble and able to govern man (*archein tou anthropou*), and that whoever learns what is good and what is bad will never be overcome (*kratēthēnai*) by anything to act otherwise as knowledge rules (*keleuei*), but knowledge is a sufficient aid for mankind’

<sup>19</sup> Note that in the *Republic* when the reasoning part has knowledge this knowledge is not beneficial only for the right flourishing of the lower parts, but also for the right function of the reasoning part itself, in the sense that the reasoning part will never have false appearances or beliefs. This why Plato says that when reason has knowledge it takes care of each part of the soul including itself (442c4-7).

<sup>20</sup> See above n. 10

he does so is because he reserves all the motivating force for the desire. I shall return to this point in a moment. Another reason, according to what Penner maintains elsewhere,<sup>21</sup> is that the strength of knowledge especially, in the *Republic*, is not what conditions our desires and emotions and thus, what motivates us to action. This is not to say, according to Penner, that the person who has knowledge can go wrong, but that he does not go wrong it is the result of the training of the emotions and the desires and the acquisition of true beliefs through the first stages of education and well before the philosopher acquires knowledge. In chapter five of this thesis I have argued that this might not be the case as the desires — or the appetites of the appetitive part of the soul — are not educated as such, but only through reason. The philosopher then will never form wrong desires as a result of his/her knowledge and not through the training of the appetitive part of the soul. Knowledge of course, as I understand it in the *Republic*, and also here in the *Protagoras*, is not just an epistemological cognitive state which is about something e.g. geometry, mathematics or the Forms. It is also a cognitive state through which human beings, as the passage at 356d9-e3 in the *Protagoras* suggests, can organize and shape their lives in the appropriate way. What motivates action in that case is not knowledge, if this is understood as theoretical knowledge, but our practical value judgements that are shaped by knowledge.

Let me return now to the desire for the good. In the *Protagoras* and the whole argument against *akrasia* Socrates does not mention desire, at least explicitly, and he does so only at 358 c8-d5 (*ethelein* d2) where his argument against *akrasia* is completed. In this passage however desire is mentioned along with belief and Socrates is saying that no one wants or wishes to do what thinks to be evil. It seems

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<sup>21</sup> See Penner 1992: 130 and n. 33.

to me that in the *Protagoras* Socrates does make — as he might be said to make — two claims, that is, one claim about the link between thought either knowledge or belief and action and another claim about desire. It seems to me that he makes one claim, that is, a claim about how we are motivated towards action; in this claim desire and thought are strongly related since desire or better fully-fledged desire always involves belief or value judgement. The supposition that the claims are two and not one might derive from the failure to understand how Socrates in the context of *Protagoras* would have thought about physical desires such as hunger and thirst. Let me put my point more clearly. If Socrates makes one claim about motivation relating thought and action by saying that we always choose the action that we believe — either rightly or wrongly — to be best, then he has to claim that all the desires that we experience like thirst, hunger and the rest which also motivate us to act should be for the good. Socrates would have to do so if he had thought of these desires as passions or pure inclinations. But, as I have suggested above, to have a fully-fledged, even a physical desire, towards something means that we already take something to be in certain way or we have already valued something as pleasant, good or bad. So Socrates does not have to say that thirst or hunger, being fully-fledged desires, are for something good or pleasant; this is part of what he claims about human motivation.<sup>22</sup> It is in that sense that, unlike Penner, I think that all motivating power belongs to knowledge or to belief.

On this assumption the view that emerges from Socrates' thesis about human motivation is a thesis about the 'good-dependence' of all our desires even our bodily

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<sup>22</sup> The view that our emotions and our fully-fledged desires are in their nature something totally different from the way that we think things to be or we know things to be is something that derives from David Hume's famous dictum 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them' (*Treatise* 415). But well before Hume the Stoics (see also note 16) and well before them Socrates — and as I have suggested Plato — had argued for another view.

ones. In saying that all our desires are good-dependent Socrates would mean that all our desires conform and derive from our considered view of where our good lies. This is something that is made clear, in my view, in the *Protagoras* and Socrates' statement about human motivation. Let us take the example of someone that has a desire for a glass of wine. Since this a bodily desire if we apply the mechanism of these desires that I have suggested above, the fully-fledged desire for the wine is a combination of a physical force, that is, an inclination or a feeling of excitement in the sight of a glass of wine and the value judgement to which the inclination gives rise according to which we take the wine to be something pleasant. If we assume that the person is a hedonist and acts on his/her desire for the glass of wine, he has acted on his/her 'better judgement' of what is most pleasant or best to do. Even if the agent recognizes later that to take that glass of wine was painful because of a discomfort that he experiences, at the time of the action he acted in accordance with his considered view about his overall good.<sup>23</sup> Socrates in the *Protagoras*, would say that the person did so because he did not actually *know* what was *really* pleasant. It is in that sense that Socrates has described any case of apparent *akrasia* as ignorance or as he says at 357e3 'the greatest ignorance' (*amathia hē megistē*).<sup>24</sup> According to the Socratic theory of human motivation that we get in the *Protagoras* the strength of motivation resides in what the agent believes or knows. When Socrates claims that no one will ever do something that he knows or believes to be wrong he implies that there is nothing stronger that can motivate human beings

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<sup>23</sup> This rests on the assumption that at the time of action we always act according to a value-judgement that is involved in the desire. Even if the value-judgement is false at the time of action it is for us the 'best judgement'; simply we did not *know* that in the end it was not. In the case of the virtuous however who has knowledge false value-judgements never arise and hence the virtuous never has desires for something which is not really good.

<sup>24</sup> See the analogy between the *megistē amathia* here in the *Protagoras* which is ignorance of what is really good — or really pleasant in hedonism — with the *megiston mahtēma* in Republic at 505a2 which the knowledge of the Good or what is *really* good.

other than their beliefs or their knowledge. The strength of an opposite desire is ruled out since on the picture of desire that Socrates probably has in mind — and I have described — every desire involves a value judgement or to put in another way to desire something means that we take something to be in a certain way, or to have a value judgement or appearance. Thus, it seems to me that at least in the *Protagoras* there is not a universal desire for what is good or really good that motivates action. What motivates us is a cognitive state either belief or knowledge. In that sense we might say that any instance of ‘wanting’ or ‘desiring’ is state of ‘knowing’ or ‘believing’. If now the soul is in that state of knowing where all beliefs are shaped and are organised by the power of knowledge and become true beliefs or value judgements any instance of ‘desiring’ is for the *real* good.

This entails that everyone wants or desires to go after what he values or judges to be good. But apart from the real virtuous person who desires the *real* good the rest desire the *apparent* good. One word first about the distinction between the two. To desire the good might mean to desire either what is *really* good or what we think to be good although it is not. The latter means that when we want something we want it under a certain description; hence what we want is the apparent good what we think that is good and the *real* good or what we really wanted. On the other hand to desire the real good suggests that we always want what is *really* good no matter if we mistakenly want something which is not the real good or what we really wanted.<sup>25</sup> Here in the *Protagoras* at least it does not appear that Socrates suggests that what all human beings want or desire is the real good. First Socrates’

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<sup>25</sup> On the apparent good see Santas 1964: 153-154. Santas draws a distinction between actual and intended objects of desire. According to this distinction the actual object of one’s desire, that is, the object to which the desire is actually directed, is not the same with the intended object, that is, the object that the person actually wanted to acquire; the latter is identified with the *real* good. Penner and Rowe:1993:1-2 n. 2 deny this distinction and maintain that the actual object of the desire is always the *real* good.

claim is much more about the link between thought and action and less about desires. Second the important thesis against the many who might suggest that there is such a phenomenon as 'being overcome' by pleasure or any other passion, is that what overcomes us is a false belief or ignorance and not the passion itself or the physical force that is involved in the passion. If we take now the claim at 358 c8-d5 as a general claim about human nature, what we are told is that is not in human nature (*en anthrōpou phusei* d1-2) to wish or to desire to go after what one thinks to be bad or if we reverse it that everyone desires what he things is good. On the assumption that not all the people have true value judgements not all of them desire what is *really* good.<sup>26</sup>

If this is what Socrates claims about human motivation in the *Protagoras* his view might not be that far from the Platonic view in the *Republic*. First of all in both dialogues, as I have already suggested, the wise person never goes wrong since he possesses knowledge and desires only what is *really* good. The question is what happens with the rest of people that are not philosophers in the *Republic* or not virtuous in the *Protagoras*. According to the picture of human motivation in the *Protagoras* they desire what they *think* is really good at the time of action. Their desires then are not always for the *real* good but sometimes they might be for the

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<sup>26</sup> On the idea that in the 'Socratic' dialogues all desires are for the *real* good and not only the desires of the virtuous see Penner 1992: 122. This is an idea that Penner suggests also in Penner 1997: 117-149 and Penner 1971: 96-118. Rowe and Penner also hold this claim in Penner and Rowe 1993: 1-25 and in Penner and Rowe 2005: esp. ch. 10 and 11. The view that what motivates human beings is the desire for what is *really* good in any situation might be supported by the *Meno* passage at 77d7-e4 where Socrates claims that 'those who are ignorant of them (sic. bad) and think them good *really* desire good things'. However, this might not be what the passage says. Santas 1964: 152-156 provides one interpretation according to which what is desired by the person is not what is really good, but what the person conceives or describes as good (see also the previous footnote). According to Santas the good things are the intended and the real objects of the desire. For the opposite interpretation according to which the good things are the real good things see Penner and Rowe 1993: 1-25. At any rate the passage in the *Meno* is highly controversial and my intuition is that any interpretation cannot rely so much on the passage itself, but has to do with the general view that someone adopts about the Socratic thesis. For the sake of my argument in this thesis I follow Santas' view. See Penner and Rowe 2005: esp. ch. 10 and 11 who have argued recently that the idea of the real good can be also found in the *Lysis*. See also *Gorgias* 467c5-468e5 where, according one interpretation, Socrates is supposed to say that we want only things which are *really* good.

*apparent* good; all their desires however are good-dependent in the way that I have described. So even if they go after something which is *really* good, they do so unwillingly.<sup>27</sup> Does Plato say something similar about the non-philosophers or the unjust types in the *Republic*? It is true that the introduction of the parts of the soul in *Republic* book IV makes the picture of human motivation much more complicated than it is in the *Protagoras*. However, as I have tried to argue in earlier chapters of this thesis, we do not have to assume that Plato necessarily rejects Socrates' general claim about human motivation as it is expressed in the *Protagoras*. He does not reject the view that human beings act on what they think is best to do in any given situation. The picture in the *Republic* is more complicated not so much because Plato divides the soul, but because in the light of the Form of the Good he offers a more detailed account of how someone comes to hold false beliefs or to be ignorant. In the *Protagoras* we have seen that Socrates illustrates ignorance through his example of the false visual judgements that people may hold in some cases, but he does not say why some people hold these beliefs in the first place or better why they cannot shape their beliefs according to the art of measurement. The unjust types in the *Republic* fail to hold true beliefs or to have knowledge because they lack an appropriate education of the reasoning part of the soul that will ultimately make them to turn their thoughts towards what is *really* good for them.<sup>28</sup> Having a weak intellect they are unable to organize their beliefs and their desires in the light of what is *really* good for them in each case as the philosopher does. The divided soul in the *Republic* emphasizes how apparent the heterogeneity of the soul in the

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<sup>27</sup> Note that at 358c8-d3 Socrates says that 'no one willingly goes after evil or what he thinks (*ha oietai kaka*) evils'. This indicates that only someone who has belief and not knowledge might go wrong and if so he goes wrong unwillingly. The virtuous man who possesses knowledge or has always true beliefs never goes wrong.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance 554b2-4 where Plato suggests that the oligarch values money and fortune because his thoughts have not been shaped by education.

*Protagoras* can become when the person becomes a slave of his passions and his desires as a result of false beliefs and lack of knowledge.

There is of course one difference between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic*. Since Plato has introduced an appetitive part of the soul where all the inclinations or the urges are located<sup>29</sup> these inclinations can go against knowledge or belief as the case of Leontius indicates and motivate action without any consideration of what is good. I have argued<sup>30</sup> however, that although this is something that results from Plato's division of the soul the case of Leontius is an extreme compulsive case<sup>31</sup> and this is not how people normally are motivated towards action. At the same time my claim was that Plato would consider that such actions are done unwillingly just as Socrates thinks that people go wrong unwillingly. Socrates provides a general theory of human motivation that explains how action is motivated and emphasizes the role and the motivating strength that knowledge or true belief have in this theory. It is true however, that there might be cases that are not explicable by this theory, like the specific case of Leontius. But on the assumption that what we get in the *Protagoras* is a theory of motivation according to human nature the fact that we may find some extreme and 'unnatural' cases that are not explained by the Socratic theory does not mean that the theory is not valid.

In the *Protagoras* Socrates, offers a picture of motivation where knowledge as an organizing force has the most important role. Ultimately it is knowledge that will motivate the virtuous towards what is *really* good in any particular case and at

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<sup>29</sup> See chapter two, where I argue that the simple desires of the appetitive part are physical forces or inclinations but not yet fully-fledged desires.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>31</sup> Santas 1966: 32-33 has argued in those cases that a feeling or a desire overcome in strength knowledge and belief we have to do with compulsion. I have referred to Santas' suggestion and I have explained the case of Leontius as a case of compulsion. (See chapter three). My difference with Santas is that what I take to overcome belief and knowledge in strength in the case of Leontius is not a fully-fledged desire by what I call a physical force or a simple desire or an inclination.

this point there is no contradiction or inconsistency between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic*. At the same time Socrates claims that all desires involve value judgements and are good-dependent in the sense that everyone desires what is thought or believed to be good at the time of the action something that probably is also what Plato believed at the time he was writing the *Republic*. What is important, in my view, is that in the heart of the so called Socratic ‘intellectualism’, as it emerges at least in the *Protagoras* and as I understand it, is the power of knowledge or what Plato would say in the context of the *Republic* the power of the reasoning part having knowledge of the Good. Under the rule of knowledge all our mental and physical events are instances of knowledge and are shaped by reference to what is really good. It is true however, that not all people have knowledge and not all of them are virtuous or become philosophers. Maybe in the *Protagoras* Socrates — or Plato in his early writings — is more optimistic about human nature and its intellectual achievements and he may ‘allow’ that more if not all people can become virtuous than Plato believed in the *Republic*. This might explain, as I have already suggested, why in the *Republic* we get the series of the unjust souls and the divided soul; Plato’s pessimism about people’s capacity to attain knowledge and their attachment to false beliefs and appearances is expressed through a divided soul; the less someone approaches knowledge and remains tied to wrong beliefs and appearances the more fragmented he becomes.

However, as I have tried to suggest in the preceding chapters and of this thesis, Plato in the *Republic* could also accept that wrongdoing is unwilling. This is so at 412-413 in the *Republic* where he argues that people are deprived of their true beliefs and form false ones unwillingly; hence when they act on these false beliefs and go wrong they do so unwillingly. Even in those dramatic cases of human action

like that illustrated by the story of Leontius Plato — and presumably Socrates — could have said that did not actually want to do what he did.

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