CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# SOUL DIVISION AND MIMESIS IN *REPUBLIC* X

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## 1. *Introduction*

It is well known that in the *Republic*, Socrates presents a view of the soul or the psyche according to which it has three distinct parts or aspects, which he calls the reasoning, spirited, and appetitive parts. Socrates' clearest characterization of these parts of the soul occurs in *Republic* IX, where he suggests that they should be understood in terms of the various goals or ends that give rise to the particular desires that motivate our actions. In *Republic* X, however, Socrates uses the phenomenon of cognitive conflict about matters of fact to show that the soul has only two parts, the rational and the irrational. Moreover, he characterizes these parts in terms of cognitive tendencies, such as forming beliefs on the basis of reason versus forming beliefs on the basis of perceptual appearances. In this chapter, I explain how these divergent accounts of the soul and its parts are legitimate alternative characterizations. A consequence of my argument is that we should not think of the divided soul as primarily a division of desires, but rather as a division of cognitive attitudes towards the world, each of which yields different sorts of desires.

In the first section I lay out Socrates' two accounts of the soul, and I raise a puzzle or problem for harmonizing the two accounts. In section two, I consider and reject one possible solution to the puzzle. In section three, I provide my own alternative solution to the puzzle and I outline how my solution suggests a new conception of the ultimate nature of the parts of the soul.

## 2. *The Puzzle*

In *Republic* IV, Socrates argues that the soul has three parts, or sources of motivation, which he calls the reasoning, spirited and appetitive parts (435e1–441c8).[1] Socrates thinks that we need to posit these parts in order

[1] In fact, Plato shies away from using the term 'parts' (*merê* or *moria*) to refer to the

to explain the phenomenon of motivational conflict, or the phenomenon of both wanting and not wanting the same object. He begins his argument by stating that it is impossible for the same thing to do or undergo opposites in the same part of itself, in relation to the same thing, at the same time. Accordingly, if we find this happening in the soul, we must infer that the soul has more than one part (436b8–c1). He then goes on to argue that this very phenomenon occurs with respect to the soul. For example, sometimes a person is thirsty and so wants to drink. But at the same time he determines that it is best not to drink, and so wants not to drink. Since the same thing cannot have opposite inclinations towards the same thing with the same part of itself, there must be two parts of the soul: the part with which it thirsts, lusts, hungers and experiences all manner of appetites, which Socrates accordingly calls the appetitive part, and the part which desires on the basis of rational calculation, which he calls the rational part (539c2–d8).

Socrates uses different examples of motivational conflict to show that there is yet a third part of the soul. Socrates provides, for example, the case of Leontius. Leontius has an appetitive desire to look at corpses. But at the same time he is angry and disgusted at his own desire. Again, Socrates thinks that this shows that there are distinct parts of the soul: the appetitive part, and the part that is angry at the subject's desire to perform actions that are ignoble or shameful, which he calls the spirited part (439e2–440a6).[2]

But how exactly should we conceive of these parts? And how do they explain motivational conflict? Perhaps Socrates' clearest characterization of these parts of the soul occurs in *Republic* IX, where they are distinguished from one another by their distinct goals or loves. Socrates states, for example, that the reasoning part of the soul is always aimed at knowing the truth, and so is appropriately called learning- and wisdom-loving (581b5–10). The spirited part is wholly dedicated to the pursuit of victory and honor, and thus is called victory- and honor-loving (581a9–b3). And

various motivational sources in the soul. Instead, he refers to these using (i) the article with the relative clause, (ii) adjectives, and (iii) other nouns (*genê* and *eidê*).

[2] Socrates goes on to ascribe a wide variety of motivations to the spirited part of the soul, including indignation at the perception that you have been treated unjustly (440c7–d3), irrational anger (441b2–c2), and the desire for victory and honor (581a9–b3). Determining what, if anything, unifies the diverse motivations that Socrates attributes to the spirited part is a matter of some controversy and lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

finally, the appetitive part is the source of intense desires for food, drink, and sex, but since such desires are most easily satisfied by money, it can be called the money-loving part (580d10–581a7). Socrates goes on to say that each individual is ruled by one of these parts of the soul, and thus that there are three kinds of people: philosophic, victory-loving, and profit-loving. In sum, then, Socrates characterizes each of the parts of the soul as an attitude of love towards a certain object; and he thinks that when a part of the soul steadily rules in an individual, that individual organizes his or her life around the pursuit of the object that that part of the soul loves. All of this suggests that we should think of the parts of the soul in terms of the values from which our desires to take particular actions arise.[3] It is the fact that we have these different ends or goals that explains the phenomenon of motivational conflict.

In *Republic* X, however, Socrates provides a very different conception of the parts of the soul. More specifically, Socrates uses the phenomenon of cognitive conflict, or of having conflicting beliefs about the same thing, to show that there are distinct parts of the soul, and he characterizes the parts in terms of cognitive tendencies. This conception of the soul is introduced during the course of Socrates' critique of the imitative arts, and in particular, in his discussion of the effect of painting on the soul.

Socrates begins this argument by drawing attention to the fact that the appearance of something can vary with the different perspectives we can have of it. The same object, for example, can appear to be different sizes depending on whether we are near or far from it, and something can look crooked when seen in water and straight when seen out of it, or concave when it is one color and convex when another (602c7–d1). Socrates notes that in these situations we use rational calculation—measuring, counting and weighing—to attain the true conception of the object (602d6–e2). Nonetheless, he argues that sometimes we can have the following experience:

> But when this part [the reasoning part] has measured and has indicated that some things are larger or smaller or the same size as others, the opposite appears to it at the same time … And didn't we say that it is impossible for the same thing to believe opposites about the same thing at the same time? … Then the part of the soul that forms a belief contrary

[3] Socrates does suggest that there may be more than these three parts of the soul (443c9–444a1).

> to the measurements couldn't be the same as the part that believes in accord with them … Now, the part that puts its trust in measurement and calculation is the best part of the soul … Therefore, the part that opposes it is one of the inferior parts in us.[4] (602e4–603a8)

Painting comes under Socrates' attack because he thinks it uses tactics, such as tricks of color, and shading, etc., that make things appear to be a way that they are not. Thus, painting appeals to that part of us—the inferior part—that puts its trust in the way things appear as opposed to the way things are.

This characterization of the soul poses a puzzle for how we ought to understand Socrates' conception of the soul and its parts, for it is not at all clear how this account harmonizes with the account introduced in Book IV, and elaborated on in Book IX. In the first place, Book IX describes the soul as having three parts, while Book X describes it as having two. Is the so-called inferior part meant to refer to the appetitive part, the spirited part, or some combination of the two? But perhaps more importantly—and this is the issue that I focus on in this chapter—Book IX characterizes the parts of the soul in term of the various ends or goals that motivate our actions, while Book X characterizes the parts of the soul in terms of beliefs based on calculation versus beliefs based on appearances. The puzzle here is not simply that Book X attributes beliefs to the appetitive (and perhaps spirited) part of the soul, for there is evidence throughout the *Republic* that suggests that Socrates thought that the appetitive part is capable of having beliefs about *value* (I discuss this claim in more detail later in the chapter). The serious problem is that Book X characterizes the appetitive part as the source of beliefs about descriptive matters of fact that seem to have nothing to do with what we value or how we should act. So, while it might make sense to say that the appetitive part may lead me to think that the object of its desire would be good to pursue, it is much stranger to think that the appetitive part would have anything to do with, for example, the thought that a straight stick is bent. As one commentator, Alexander Nehamas, puts the issue: 'why should our *desire* tell us that the immersed stick is bent?'[5] Why would

[4] Τούτῳ δὲ πολλάκις μετρήσαντι καὶ σημαίνοντι μείζω ἄττα εἶναι ἢ ἐλάττω ἕτερα ἑτέρων ἢ ἴσα τἀναντία φαίνεται ἅμα περὶ ταὐτά (…) Οὐκοῦν ἔφαμεν τῷ αὐτῷ ἅμα περὶ ταὐτὰ ἐναντία δοξάζειν ἀδύνατον εἶναι (…) Τὸ παρὰ τὰ μέτρα ἄρα δοξάζον τῆς ψυχῆς τῷ κατὰ τὰ μέτρα οὐκ ἂν εἴη ταὐτόν (…) Ἀλλὰ μὴν τὸ μέτρῳ γε καὶ λογισμῷ πιστεῦον βέλτιστον ἂν εἴη τῆς ψυχῆς (…) Τὸ ἄρα τούτῳ ἐναντιούμενον τῶν φαύλων ἄν τι εἴη ἐν ἡμῖν. All quotes from the *Republic* are from the Grube/Reeve translation.

[5] Nehamas (1999/original publication 1982), 265.

Socrates have linked together a certain kind of desire and beliefs about matters of fact based on optical illusions?

One response to this puzzling passage is to think that Socrates is just being careless. This is Julia Annas's conclusion. She says:

> Plato presumably fails to see that his argument will not work, that desire has nothing to do with optical illusions, because he thinks of the lower part of the soul as being merely the trashy and reason-resisting part. In this passage he always refers to it simply as the worthless part, keeping in the background the fact that to be consistent with its roles elsewhere it would have to be the desiring part.[6]

Perhaps Annas is right that the resolution to this problem lies in seeing that Socrates is simply being overly impressionistic here. But it is worth exploring other options before we conclude that the appetitive part of the soul is simply the grab bag for anything Socrates finds disdainful.

There are at least two other options worth considering. First, we might think that Socrates' characterization of the parts of the soul in terms of beliefs based on reasoning versus beliefs based on appearances is not meant to completely overlap with his division of the soul in terms of different ends or values. So, for example, Neville Murphy and Alexander Nehamas argue that Socrates' division of the soul into the part that forms beliefs based on calculation versus the part that forms beliefs based on appearances marks a unique division in the soul—a division within the rational part itself.[7] I consider and reject this interpretation in the next section. Second, we might think that Socrates intends the characterization of the parts of the soul in terms of beliefs based on reasoning versus beliefs based on appearances to refer to the rational and appetitive (and perhaps spirited part), but that he has a principled reason for linking certain ends, goals, or values with certain modes of cognition. I defend this option in the final section of the chapter.

## 3. Republic *X: A Division within the Rational Part of the Soul?*

One solution to the puzzle that we have been considering is to argue that a distinct division of the soul is at play in *Republic* X. Commentators such as Murphy and Nehamas argue that in Socrates' critique of painting, where he characterizes the parts of the soul in terms of beliefs based

[6] J. Annas (1981), 339–340.
[7] Murphy (1951), 239–243; Nehamas (1999/original publication 1982), 264–269.

on reasoning versus beliefs based on appearances, Socrates deploys a division not previously discussed in the *Republic*: a division within the rational part itself into its superior and inferior aspects. More specifically, they argue that *Republic* X depicts a division between the uncritical or careless acceptance of the evidence of the senses and vigilant rational reflection on such evidence. There are two primary pieces of evidence for this interpretation. The first is that it resolves the puzzle: we do not have to explain how appetites tell us what to believe about size issues, because appetites do not tell us what to believe in that regard. Instead, it is a lower part of reason itself that is the source of beliefs about matters of fact. Second, this interpretation nicely accords with the most natural reading of the Greek, according to which Socrates attributes the conflicting beliefs to the reasoning part of the soul. Recall that Socrates says, 'But when this part [the reasoning part] has measured and has indicated that some things are larger or smaller or the same size as others, the opposite appears to it at the same time … And didn't we say that it is impossible for the same thing to believe opposites about the same things at the same time?' (602e4–9).[8] According to the principle of opposites expressed in *Republic* IV, if some one thing is the subject of conflicting attitudes, then it is that thing which must be said to have parts. As Nehamas puts it, 'Our principle does not allow us to introduce a distinct object, appetite, and attribute to it one of the two conflicting beliefs.'[9]

Although the thought that the division of the soul in *Republic* X is really a characterization of the parts of reason provides a nice solution to the worry about the relation between appetites and optical illusions, and is consistent with the most natural, although not only, reading of the Greek,[10] I will now argue that this interpretation of the division presented

[8] Τούτῳ δὲ πολλάκις μετρήσαντι καὶ σημαίνοντι μείζω ἄττα εἶναι ἢ ἐλάττω ἕτερα ἑτέρων ἢ ἴσα τἀναντία φαίνεται ἅμα περὶ ταὐτά (…) Οὐκοῦν ἔφαμεν τῷ αὐτῷ ἅμα περὶ ταὐτὰ ἐναντία δοξάζειν ἀδύνατον εἶναι.

[9] Nehamas (1999/original publication 1982), 265.

[10] There are two ways of reading this passage, both revolving around the proper reference of τἀναντία. On the first, it refers to a pair of opposites both of which appear to the calculating part of the soul. This leads Murphy and Nehamas to argue that it is the rational part of the soul that is divided. On the second reading, due to Adam (1969), 407–408, and 466–467, and defended by Lorenz (2006), 66n16, it refers to the opposites of those properties that appear to the senses. On this reading, the opposite of what appears to the senses appears to reason, and so the division is between reason and some other part of the soul (i.e. the part that is associated with sense perception). See also Halliwell (1988), 134. I do not decide between these two interpretations here, since, as I go on to argue, both readings could be construed as consistent with my interpretation of the moral psychology of the *Republic*.

in *Republic* X is not supported by the text. To see why, we need to consider the remainder of Socrates' critique of the imitative arts. Following his critique of painting, Socrates argues that poetry also appeals to the inferior part of the soul. Socrates argues that poetry imitates human actions and the results of these actions in terms of the characters' beliefs about their well-being and their experience of pleasure and pain (603c4–8). But, according to Socrates, we are often conflicted in these matters (603c10–d7). For example, someone may have conflicting reactions to the fact of losing a child: he may want to lose himself in grief, but also realize that he must stop grieving and pull himself together and continue with his life (603e3–604a8). Socrates says that it is reason and law that encourage him to resist his pain, while his experience of it tells him to give in (604a10–b1). Again, these conflicting inclinations suggest that there are two parts of the soul: the best part, which is willing to follow rational deliberation, and an irrational part, which leads us to dwell on misfortune and grief (604b3–604d10).

Socrates then states that poetry almost always imitates people being ruled by the inferior part of the soul (after all, that's much more interesting than watching people behave rationally), and thus it appeals to and strengthens this inferior part of the soul (604e1–605a6). While my aim in this chapter is not to provide a rational reconstruction of Socrates' critique of poetry, we might conjecture that one explanation for Socrates' claim that poetry strengthens the irrational part of the soul is that poetry encourages us to empathize with the character's point of view. But Socrates describes such characters as seeing things from the point of view of experience (*pathos*) or the way things appear to them. Thus, poetry, like painting, encourages us to see things from the point of view of appearances, and thus strengthens the irrational part of the soul.

But what part of the soul does poetry appeal to? There are strong textual reasons for thinking that poetry appeals to the appetitive (and perhaps spirited part of the soul) discussed in Books IV–IX of the *Republic*. The passage just cited seems to be referring to the familiar distinction between motivations that are based on reasoning about what is best and motivations that are more like intense emotional reactions. In addition, Socrates describes the effects of poetic imitation as follows: 'And in the case of sex, anger, and all the desires, pleasures, and pains that we say accompany all our actions, poetic imitation has the very same effect on us. It nurtures and waters them and establishes them as rulers in us when they ought to wither and be ruled, for that way we'll become better and happier rather than worse and more wretched' (606d1–8). So, Socrates

thinks that poetic imitation nurtures and waters sex, anger and all of the desires, pleasures and pains that accompany our actions. But sex, anger, and all such desires and pleasures are clear references to the desires of the appetitive (and perhaps spirited) part of the soul. And so Socrates must think that poetry appeals to the appetitive (and perhaps spirited) part of the soul.

Nehamas acknowledges this evidence for the claim that poetry appeals to the appetitive (and perhaps spirited part of the soul). Accordingly, he argues that Socrates makes use of two distinct divisions of the soul in the course of his attack on the imitative arts. In his critique of painting, where Socrates characterizes the parts of the soul in terms of beliefs based on reasoning versus beliefs based on appearances, Socrates deploys a division not previously discussed in the *Republic*, a division within the rational part into its superior and inferior aspects. In his critique of poetry, however, Socrates makes use of the familiar division of the soul into the rational and appetitive (and perhaps spirited) elements. Thus, Nehamas thinks that Socrates' critique against the imitative arts should be understood analogically: just as painting is bad for the soul because it appeals to an inferior part of reason, so poetry is bad for the soul because it appeals to an inferior part of the soul (i.e. the appetites and perhaps spirit).[11]

This move, however, fails, since there is textual evidence for thinking that painting and poetry appeal to the same part of the soul. Socrates describes the poet as follows: '. . . an imitative poet puts a bad constitution in the soul of each individual by making images that are far removed from the truth and by gratifying the irrational part, which cannot distinguish the large and the small but believes that the same things are large at one time and small at another' (605b6–c3). In this passage, Socrates describes poetry as appealing to the part that forms its beliefs about the relative size of objects on the basis of appearances, which he earlier described as the part to which painting appeals. Thus painting and poetry appeal to the same part of the soul.

To sum up, then, Socrates thinks that (i) painting appeals to the part that forms its beliefs on the basis of appearances; that (ii) poetry appeals to the appetitive part of the soul; and that (iii) painting and poetry appeal to the same part of the soul. It follows, then, that the part that forms beliefs on the basis of appearances is the appetitive part of the

[11] Nehamas (1999/original publication 1982), 267.

soul, and thus we should reject the idea that Socrates is introducing a new division—a division within the rational part itself—in his critique of painting. This still leaves us with the puzzle with which we began, however, namely, explaining why the appetitive part of the soul, the part that is the home of a host of desires, could also be the part that hastily forms beliefs about matters of fact on the basis of appearances.

## 4. *Appetites and Appearances*

Perhaps the first step in trying to solve this puzzle is to come to a clearer understanding of the appetitive part of the soul as described in *Republic* IV–IX. In fact, in *Republic* IX, Socrates describes the appetitive part as markedly different from the spirited and rational parts of the soul, for while Socrates says that the latter have a single goal (e.g. honor, wisdom), the former is depicted as multiform (580d10–581b10). This feature of the appetitive part is emphasized in Socrates' metaphorical description of the soul in *Republic* IX. Socrates characterizes the soul as being composed of the following creatures, all joined into one: a multi-colored beast with a ring of many heads, a lion, and a human being (588c7–e1). Socrates thinks that the human represents the rational part, the lion represents the spirited part, and the multi-form beast represents the appetites.

But why does Socrates characterize the appetitive part as multi-form? One explanation is that this characterization is due to the fact that the appetitive part can desire such a wide variety of things. We have already seen that the appetitive part desires food, drink, and sex (439d4–8, 580d10–581a1). But Socrates also characterizes a person who is ruled by the appetitive part as desiring a far wider range of objects, including activities like listening to the flute, physical training, philosophy, politics and military pursuits (561c6–d7).

Thus, the appetitive part can aim for a wide variety of objects, including those associated with the other parts of the soul. We can explain all of this with the claim that the appetitive part does not really have a single, unified goal, or a fixed end, but pursues whatever it simply experiences as attractive or desirable. John Cooper captures this thought nicely when he states that appetites 'have their ultimate origin simply in facts of experience, in the fact that the person in question happens to get a certain pleasure from doing these things . . .'[12] The fact that we have certain

[12] Cooper (1999/original publication 1984), 199.

appetites is, in Cooper's language, simply a 'brute fact' about our way of being affected by the physical world.[13] That is, sometimes, things just occur to us as appealing, or strike us as attractive. Thus, the appetitive part of the soul is the source of desires for whatever seems appealing or attractive to us. Since any number of things could strike us this way, Socrates describes the appetitive part as multi-form.

But how should we understand these desires for whatever strike our fancy? Are they blind desires—simple feelings of attraction that propel us towards their object? Or do the appetites involve beliefs about the value of their object? There is ample evidence that suggests that the appetites do involve beliefs about value. In the first place, in *Republic* VI, Socrates states that 'every soul pursues the good and does whatever it does for its sake' (505d11–e1). But if we always pursue what we believe is good, then this suggests that even when we are motivated by the appetitive part, we are motivated by beliefs about the good, which in turn suggests that appetitive motivations involve beliefs about the good.

There is further evidence that appetites crucially involve beliefs about the good. In *Republic* VIII, Socrates describes the process by which an individual comes to be ruled by his appetites. Socrates describes the appetites as follows: 'seeing the citadel of the young man's soul empty of knowledge, fine ways of living, and words of truth … they [the appetites] finally occupy that citadel themselves … And in the absence of these guardians false and boastful words and beliefs rush up and occupy this part of him' (560b7–c3). In this passage, Socrates describes the appetites as capable of affecting our reasons, or our beliefs about value, and this suggests that they are at the least representations of value, and perhaps beliefs about value themselves.

Finally, Socrates thinks that reasoning can affect our desires, and this again suggests that appetites involve beliefs about value. Socrates is critical of people who do not use their reason, but rather force, to quell their appetites. He criticizes the individual who relates to his appetites that he does not want to act on in the following way: 'he holds them [his appetites] in check, not by persuading them that it's better not to act on them or taming them with arguments, but by compulsion and fear …' (554c12–d3). But if Socrates is critical of individuals who do not use reason and arguments to quell their appetites, then he must

[13] Cooper (1999/original publication 1984), 198–199.

think it is possible to use reason and argument to quell the appetites. And if appetites are the sort of thing that that can be eliminated through rational persuasion, then they must involve our beliefs about value. More specifically, they must be either dependent on or constituted by our beliefs about value.

To sum up, Socrates thinks that we are always motivated by our beliefs about the good, and that appetites are capable of affecting our reasons and being affected by our reasons, or our beliefs about value. All of this in turn implies that the appetites cannot be purely feeling states, or blind desires, for it is difficult to explain how such states could both affect and be affected by our evaluative beliefs. We ought to conclude that the appetites involve beliefs about value.[14]

Socrates seems to think, then, the following things about the appetitive part of the soul:

> It is the source of desires based on a variety of unbidden experiences of attraction (from the multi-form beast and the individual who is ruled by his appetites).

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[14] It might be objected here that there is strong evidence that Socrates does *not* think that the appetites involve beliefs about value, but instead are blind desires. The primary evidence for this claim comes from *Republic* IV, where Socrates describes the appetites as being solely for their natural object; so, for example, thirst is for drink, and hunger is for food (437d8–e8). Socrates proceeds to say that we should not be dissuaded from this conception of the appetites by the view that everyone desires good things (438a1–5). Commentators such as Irwin (1995), 209, Penner (1990) and Reeve (1988), 134–135 have taken this to be a direct repudiation of the thesis, defended in other Platonic dialogues, such as the *Protagoras* (358c6–d4) and the *Gorgias* (468a5–b4), that we always desire what we believe to be good. Thus, these commentators have taken this to mean that Socrates thinks that the appetitive part is the source of blind desires, while the rational part (at least) is the source of desires for what we believe to be good. But this passage does not provide conclusive evidence that the appetites are independent of our beliefs about value. In the first place, Socrates is cautioning his audience against the idea that the claim that all desires are for good things constitutes *an objection* to the claim that appetites are distinguished from other sorts of desires by being solely for their object. This leaves wide open the possibility that Socrates thinks that the claim that we all desire what we believe to be good is true, but just does not provide an objection to the thesis on the table. And he would be right to think so: for even if we all desire what we believe to be good, it does not follow that there are not different kinds of desires. So, for example, as *Republic* IX suggests, desires might be classified in terms of their various objects. Or, they might be classified in terms of their origins: Socrates might think that some desires arise as a result of a process of reasoning about value, while some desires do not arise due to a process of reasoning. Neither of these options precludes the idea that each of these different kinds of desire may involve beliefs about value. For other commentators who defend the idea that appetitive desires are not independent of our beliefs about value see Bobonich (2002), 243 ff., Carone (2001), Lesses (1987), and Price (1995), 49–52.

> It is a source of beliefs about value (from the fact that Socrates says that we always pursue what we believe to be good, and from the fact that appetites affect and are affected by our reasoning, or by our beliefs about value).
>
> It is prone to form judgments based on appearances (from *Republic* X).

How can we synthesize these apparently disparate features of the appetitive part?

A reasonable way to synthesize these features of the appetitive part of the soul is to say that experiences of attraction are appearances of value; and the appetitive part is the part of us that is prone to form beliefs or judgments of value on the basis of these appearances of value; and these beliefs about value are the appetites.[15]

This account of the appetitive part of the soul nicely resolves the puzzle with which we began. We wanted to know why Socrates thought that it was legitimate to characterize the appetitive part of the soul—the part that is the source of a host of appetites—as the part that forms its beliefs on the basis of appearances. But now that we have seen that brute experiences of attraction are appearances of value, and that appetites are beliefs about value based on appearances, we can understand why Socrates thought that the *Republic* X characterization was a legitimate alternative way of characterizing the appetitive part of the soul.

This interpretation suggests a new way of conceiving of the appetitive part of the soul, and, as a consequence, of the parts of the soul in general. If this account is correct, then we should not think of the appetitive part as fundamentally the source of a host of blind desires, but rather as fundamentally a cognitive tendency—the tendency to form beliefs on the basis of appearances. The fact that the appetitive part of the soul is appearance-responsive in this way explains Socrates' claim that it is both the source of beliefs about matters of fact that have nothing to do with value, and the source of the appetites, which are beliefs about value.

On this view, Socrates thinks that the fact we have certain cognitive tendencies *explains* the fact that we have certain ends, goals or values. So, the fact that the appetitive part is appearance-responsive, or forms its judgments on the basis of appearances alone, explains why Socrates characterizes it as not really having a fixed, single end. For this part of the soul gives rise to appetites on the basis of appearances alone, or on the basis of whatever simply appears good. But recall that appearances

[15] See Moss (2006) and (2008) for an alternative but similar account of the appetites and the parts of the soul.

of value just are attractions. Thus, there are as many appearances of value as there are interests and attractions. And if we go no further than the appearances in choosing our actions, then it follows that we may (depending on the strength and consistency of our attractions) have a wild variety of ends.

The claim that Socrates thinks that the fact that we have certain cognitive tendencies explains why we have certain ends is supported by Socrates' famous allegory of the cave. In the cave allegory, Socrates likens our human condition to that of prisoners chained so that they are facing the wall of the bottom of a cave. Moreover, these prisoners mistake the shadows that they see on the wall in front of them for reality; that is, they form beliefs about the world on the basis of how things appear alone. These prisoners, then, cannot get beyond the appearances (514a1–515c2).

Socrates describes the journey out of the cave—the journey towards freedom from dependence on the appearances—as an intellectual journey. He says that we should compare the journey to the image of the line, which outlines increasingly sophisticated kinds of reasoning, and thus that we should 'interpret the upward journey [out of the cave] and the study of things above [the forms] as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm' (517b4–6). But Socrates also says that the individual who makes this journey undergoes a radical transformation of values. He no longer values the things that are considered desirable in the cave, nor does he care to be held in honor in the cave, and indeed he pities the people who live there (516c4–d7). Instead, his desire is focused on the sun, which we should understand as the form of the good, the real good (517c7–d2).

Thus, the cave suggests that Socrates thinks that using increasingly sophisticated modes of reasoning to understand the world, including what is truly valuable, affects our choice of goals.[16] This, again, supports the view that Socrates thinks that the parts of the soul are fundamentally cognitive tendencies towards more and less sophisticated forms of reasoning, and that it is this feature of them that explains why the various parts are associated with their respective ends, goals or values.

[16] This view flows naturally from three Platonic tenets: (i) we have a motivational orientation towards the good, and (ii) there is a real good, and (iii) reason discovers the good.

Now, someone might object here that this cannot be the complete picture, since Socrates thinks that it is our appetites that affect the way we think and conceive of the world, and not the other way around.[17] There is evidence for this view in the cave allegory. Recall that Socrates states that the prisoners in the cave are chained such that they cannot see anything other than the shadows, and that they mistake these shadows for reality. In short, they are trapped in the world of appearances. Later, Socrates suggests that we should think of the prisoner's soul as chained by its appetites; he says, 'feasting, greed, and other such pleasures ... like leaden weights, pull its vision downward' (519b1–3). This implies that it is our experiences of attraction, or our urges, that keep us focused on the world of appearances, and so affect the way that we think.

And indeed, this view has some psychological plausibility. It seems plausible that strong attractions prevent us from looking past the appearances, or from engaging in more sophisticated forms of reasoning about the value of the object of our attraction. If I find a piece of chocolate cake very appealing, then this urge might lead me to focus on the appearances alone, and not entertain thoughts about how the cake might be harmful and not really good. This in turn makes me prone to assent to the appearances. Strong wants do tend to narrow our attention and thus affect our judgments.

We should not, however, accept the claim that Socrates thinks that it is the ends or goals of a part of the soul that are fundamental and thus that explain its cognitive tendencies, for this view cannot explain the fact that the appetitive part has beliefs about size issues that have nothing to do with what we desire or what to value. Again, to return to our earlier question: what desire or want could possibly make me believe that a straight stick in the water is bent or that a large object in the distance is small?

This does not, however, mean that we should ignore the insights of this objection—the insight, that is, that our attractions can affect how we reason. What all of this suggests is that Socrates probably thinks that there is some kind of a feedback loop. That is, focusing on appearances leads me to have appetitive goals, which then keeps me focused on the world of appearances, which then leads me to have appetitive goals, and so forth

[17] Reeve (1988), 95–100 defends a variant of this view. He is interested in mapping different ends or goals onto the cognitive faculties described in the line in *Republic* VI; and he argues that the different ends determine the sort of cognitive faculties used in their pursuit.

and so on. Nonetheless, since it is the claim that the appetitive part is first and foremost a cognitive tendency that can explain Socrates' claim that the appetitive part forms beliefs based on visual appearances, we ought to conclude that the appetitive part is first and foremost a cognitive tendency, or a way of seeing and thinking about the world, where this explains, at least in part, why we adopt certain ends.

A consequence of the view that we should understand the parts of the soul as primarily a division of cognitive attitudes is that in a sense, Nehamas and Murphy may have been right: *Republic* X does point us in the direction of the idea that Socrates is interested in dividing reason into its superior and inferior aspects. The division of reason is, however, also at the same time the familiar division into the reasoning and appetitive (and perhaps spirited) part of the soul. If I am correct about this, then the picture of the soul in the *Republic* should be moved much closer to that given in the *Protagoras*, where the soul is depicted as having two primary sources of motivation, one due to the measuring art, and one due to the power of appearances (356c–357e).[18]

Of course part of what determines whether or not this is the correct conception of the soul in the *Republic* is whether it can explain why Socrates attributes certain goals to the spirited and rational parts of the soul. Thus, on the likely assumption that the inferior part of the soul in *Republic* X includes the spirited part, we need to show how focusing on appearances might lead one to adopt spirited ends, and in what way this process is distinct from the adoption of appetitive goals.[19] Similarly, we need to see how the mode of reasoning associated with the rational part might lead one to adopt the goals that Socrates associates with the reasoning part of the soul. I do think, however, that the arguments presented here provide strong reason for adopting the view that the appetitive part of the soul is first and foremost a certain sort of cognitive

[18] I provide an interpretation of the moral psychology of the *Protagoras* that coheres with the account of the moral psychology of the *Republic* presented here in Singpurwalla (2006).

[19] We should note that in the *De Anima*, Aristotle divides the soul into the rational and non-rational parts; and he assigns rational wish to the rational part, and appetitive and spirited desires to the non-rational part (432b6). Additionally, Socrates in the *Phaedrus* likens the soul to the union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer. It is, of course, reasonable to think that the chariot driver represents the rational part, and the two horses represent the spirited and appetitive elements (246aff). This picture coheres nicely with the claim that rational desires belong to their own part of the soul (the rational part), while spirited and appetitive desires belong to another (the non-rational).

tendency, and thus give support for thinking that Plato's conception of the ultimate nature of the soul and its parts should be understood in these cognitive terms.[20]

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