A Multiform Desire

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A Study of Appetite in Plato's *Timaeus*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*

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Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Universitetshuset, Sal IV, Biskopsgatan 3, Uppsala, Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 13:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English.

Abstract
Pettersson, O. 2013. A Multiform Desire: A Study of Appetite in Plato's *Timaeus, Republic* and *Phaedrus.* Filosofiska institutionen. 242 pp. Uppsala. ISBN 978-91-506-2325-3.

This dissertation is a study of *appetite* in Plato's *Timaeus, Republic* and *Phaedrus*. In recent research is it often suggested that Plato considers appetite (i) to pertain to the essential needs of the body, (ii) to relate to a distinct set of objects, e.g. food or drink, and (iii) to cause behaviour aiming at sensory pleasure. Exploring how the notion of appetite, directly and indirectly, connects with Plato's other purposes in these dialogues, this dissertation sets out to evaluate these ideas. By asking, and answering, three philosophically and interpretatively crucial questions, individually linked to the arguments of the dialogues, this thesis aims to show (i) that the relationship between appetite and the body is not a matter of survival, and that appetite is better understood in terms of excess; (ii) that appetite is *multiform* and cannot be defined in terms of a distinct set of objects; and (iii) that appetite, in Plato, can also pertain to non-sensory objects, such as articulated discourse.

Chapter one asks what the universe can teach us about embodied life. It argues that Plato, in the *Timaeus*, works with an important link between the universe and the soul, and that the account of disorder, irrationality and multiformity identifying a pre-cosmic condition of the universe provides a key to understanding the excessive behaviour and condition of a soul dominated by appetite.

Chapter two asks why the philosophers of the *Republic's* Kallipolis return to the cave, and suggests that Plato's notion of *the noble lie* provides a reasonable account of this. By exploring the *Republic's* ideas of education, poetry and tradition, it argues that appetite – a multiform and appearance oriented source of motivation – is an essential part of this account.

Chapter three asks why Socrates characterizes the speeches of the *Phaedrus* as deceptive games. It proposes that this question should be understood in the light of two distinctions: one between playful and serious discourse and one between simple and multiform. It argues that the speeches of the *Phaedrus* are *multiform games*, and suggests that appetite is the primary source of motivation of the soul addressed, personified by Phaedrus.

Keywords: Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy, Plato, Appetite, Desire, Epithymia, Soul, Tripartition, Multiform, Poikilos, Timaeus, Republic, Phaedrus, Embodiment, Incarnation, Necessity, Philosopher-kings, Allegory of the Cave, Noble Lie, Poetry, Multi-headed Beast, Game, Play, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Deception.

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Photo cover picture: Mathilda Vinkka Haarla

ISBN 978-91-506-2325-3
urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-186130 (http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-186130)

Printed by Elanders Sverige AB, 2012

Acknowledgements

> A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations.[1]
>
> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

In writing this book I have been helped by many people. I am in great debt to my supervisor Pauliina Remes whose devotion to my cause has been invaluable. Without the initial support from Lilli Alanen it would not have been written at all. The feedback I have received from the participants in the history of philosophy seminar at Uppsala University – in particular, Peter Myrdal, Tomas Ekenberg, Lorenzo Casini, Frans Svensson, Alexander Stöpfgeshoff, Annika Wennersten, Marcel Quarfood, Erik Åkerlund and Tor Freyr – has been crucial. The moral support from Per Algander, the proofreading by David McVicker, and all the practical aid from Sandra Olsson and Ryszard Sliwinski have been indispensable as well.

I am also in great debt to Tony Long for comments on an early draft of what eventually became chapter three, for welcoming me into his seminar on the *Phaedrus*, and for taking great care of me during my stay at the University of California at Berkeley; where, in various forms, I also received important reactions from John Ferrari, Dorothea Frede, David Crane, Wei Liu, Derin McLeod and Alexandre Roberts. In addition, I am also sure that the letter of recommendation Hans Ruin wrote for me was essential in the process of getting there.

Nicholas Smith's comments on parts of the manuscript have been important, just as the inspiring discussions I have had with Mats Persson. The positive reactions and the critical remarks from Vasilis Politis, on the whole manuscript, have also been decisive in the final stages of writing.

On top of this, I have received much appreciated financial support from Gästrike-Hälsinge Nation, in the form of Göransson-Sandviken's forskarutbildningsstipendium, and from Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, that made it possible for me to spend a year abroad.

Last but not least, besides the support from my friends and my family, nothing would have been possible without the love of my life, Tuva Widén.

[1] Deleuze and Guattari (2002, 3).

Contents

Introduction

Plato has a good claim to have invented the idea of rationality; and with rationality the idea of the philosopher.[2] A philosopher is supposed to have rational motivations and he is supposed to be ruled by reason. But just like philosophers, rational motivations are rare (e.g., *Rep*., 494a or 496a). The motivating forces of most people come in different forms. In the three dialogues where Plato develops the famous idea of the soul's tripartite nature, i.e. in the *Timaeus*, in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus*, Plato also singles out two forms of non-rational motivation that are particularly important: motivations spelled out in terms of victory and honour, and motivations pertaining to irrational appetite and desire.[3] This book is a study of the latter.

As recent research on appetite (ἐπιθυμία) in Plato has shown, appetite may in general be understood along the following lines. (1) Appetite is a source of motivation pertaining to the body. (2) Appetite is essentially linked to the world as it appears, and (3) appetite gives rise to behaviour that aims at sensory pleasure and satisfaction.[4]

In a comprehensive account of Plato's theory of appetite, these ideas would be central, not only because they are often highlighted in the literature, but also because they, to some extent, have intuitive appeal. It seems reasonable to think about appetite in terms of food, drink and sex. And insofar as we understand appearance as a matter of how the world presents itself before (or unless) it is submitted to rational scrutiny, it is sensible to say that our appetites drag us towards what *appears* to be worthwhile, in the same way as it is reasonable to say that appetite is a source of motivation that orients us towards the sensory pleasure of, say, eating a lot of junk-food. Instead of listening to reason and aiming for a healthy life, we go for instant gratification.

On the basis of these ideas, however, it is often thought that one can also draw a set of further conclusions. Firstly, it has been argued, Plato's notion

[2] As argued by Frede (1996b), Long (2001) and Moss (2008).
[3] Although the idea of the soul's tripartite nature can also be said to be discussed in the *Laws*, I shall leave the study of this dialogue to another occasion. See Bobonich (2002) and Saunders (1962).
[4] The outlines of this general picture I borrow from Cooper (1984, 8-11). The different aspects, as we shall see, are also to be found in Burnyeat (2006), Karfík (2005), Annas (1981), Lorenz (2006), Moss (2008), Johansen (2004), White (1993), Kastely (2002), Buccioni (2002), Hackforth (1952) or Kamtekar (2012), depending on dialogue and context.

of appetite, understood as a source of motivation pertaining to the body, is to be explained in terms of survival (of the individual and of the species). Secondly, as a motivation essentially linked to the world as it appears, appetite is thought to be possible to define by distinguishing a certain set of intrinsic features or qualities of its objects, features or qualities that may or may not be properly assessed. Thirdly, it has also been argued that appetite is a source of motivation exclusively bound to the realm of sensory pleasure and satisfaction, and thus possible to exhaustively define in these terms.

In the light of a detailed account of the contexts where the notion of appetite is used in these dialogues, one may, however, come to see that there are reasons to be careful as one ascribes these further conclusions to Plato. The overall purpose of this study is also to provide such an account, that is, an account of how the notion of appetite, directly and indirectly, connects to the more specific themes and questions of the mentioned dialogues; and thus, in the end, to be able to evaluate and qualify central aspects of the way that this notion has been understood in the literature.

Firstly, Plato can certainly be said to argue that appetite pertains to the body. But it is doubtful that he considers this to be a matter of survival. Instead, Plato's notion of appetite is better understood in terms of excess and redundancy. Secondly, there are also reasons to doubt that Plato thinks that appetite is a source of motivation that can be exhaustively captured by specifying a certain set of intrinsic features or qualities pertaining to its possible objects. Instead, Plato rather considers appetite to be so *multiform* (ποικίλος) that it cannot be adequately defined in this way. And thus, as we shall see, appetite is better understood against the background of Plato's account of the influence of appearance and illusion, an account closely linked to his thoughts about education, tradition and the impact of poetry. Thirdly, one can also doubt that Plato holds appetite to be a source of motivation exclusively bound to the realm of sensory pleasures. For there are reasons to think that appetite can also be oriented towards non-sensory objects, such as articulated discourse.

In order to provide an account with regard to which these qualifications and their repercussions can be said to have bearing, I have in this study chosen to look at Plato's thoughts about appetite in terms of the work that this notion does in the different dialogues. Instead of isolating the relevant passages (on appetite) from their native contexts as a means to draw some general conclusions, I have chosen to work much closer to the themes and inquiries that the dialogues themselves provide.[5] At the cost of leaving some of

[5] Although Plato's thought about appetite and appetitive motivation in recent years has emerged as an important field of study in Plato scholarship, the interest in its role in the broader philosophical projects in the mentioned dialogues has nevertheless not drawn much attention. As a consequence, and despite the fact that there are a few excellent treatments of the nature of appetite and appetitive motivation, the function of this kind of motivation in the contexts where it is spelled out is often left in the shadows. The task I have chosen to shoul-

the more mainstream questions in the shadows (such as the details of the argument for tripartition or the question about the cognitive resources appetite has available, although I shall have some things to say about these matters), I aim to examine how Plato's notion of appetite fits into a wider context, and, in effect, to shed some new light on the ways that this notion is often understood.

As a result of this ambition, this dissertation is composed of three main chapters, which are devoted to three well-known interpretative and philosophical questions closely linked to the central arguments of the dialogues. In considering these questions this study sets out to show how deeply Plato's thoughts about appetite are intertwined with his other purposes in these dialogues, and in so doing offer an alternative and, I hope, more context sensitive account.

The first question has to do with Plato's thoughts about embodiment and necessity in the *Timaeus*: What can the universe teach us about the conditions of embodied life? The second question has to do with the philosophers' relationship to politics in the *Republic*: Why do the philosophers of the Kallipolis return to the cave? And the third question has to do with the deceptive nature of the speeches of the *Phaedrus*: Why does Socrates characterize the speeches of the *Phaedrus* as deceptive games?

Spelled out in this way, then, the direct purpose of each chapter is to clarify, if not to answer, the question pertaining to that dialogue. However, the indirect purpose of each chapter is different: it is to provide a context sensitive discussion of the work that the notion of appetite may be said to do in the dialogue under investigation, and thus, in the end, to offer material enough to be able to qualify Plato's account of appetite along the general lines sketched out above.

In chapter one, *Cosmic and Mortal Necessity*, I shall argue that one of Plato's aims in the *Timaeus* is to develop an account of human psychology and motivation. Appetite plays a central role in this project, and the account we are offered provides an important discussion in view of which it is possible to evaluate and qualify the idea that Plato considers appetite to be a motivating force pertaining to the body. I shall argue that Plato does not only consider appetite to be a source of motivation that may give rise to a behavioural pattern best explained in terms of excess and redundancy, but that he also claims that, without rational control, this is a sort of behaviour that may lead to the very opposite of survival, namely death.

In order to reach this end I will in this chapter put emphasis on the analogy between the soul and the universe. As is well-known, Plato makes a close link between the two. The cosmic universe is to stand as a role-model for our souls. Due to necessity, Plato writes, when the soul is incarnated on this

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der in this study is to try to cast some light on this. See Moss (2008) or Lorenz (2006). Cf. also Schofield (2007) and Rowe (1986b).

earth, it becomes disordered and irrational. And in order to mend these flaws we should study the cosmic universe. If we are to become happy we must learn to rectify the dispositions of our souls in accordance with the disposition of the cosmos.

The *Timaeus* can also be said to be dedicated to the task of spelling out this disposition of the cosmos.

In so doing, however, the story we get is not only an account of essence and structure, but it is also a story of development. Before the universe became a rationally ordered and unified cosmos, disorder prevailed. As is well-known, it was out of this pre-cosmic situation that the demiurge once brought order. In accounting for the details of this process, Plato also introduces two basic causal principles: *reason* and *necessity*. While *reason* can be said to be the principle of order and unity, I shall argue, *necessity* is the principle of disorder, irrationality, and multiformity. And from the account of how this cosmos once came to be, we learn that *reason* took the lead, persuaded *necessity*, arranged the universe in accordance with order and unity and thus made it as good and beautiful as possible.

Now, it is often acknowledged that the analogy between the soul and the universe may help us to understand important aspects of human rationality. By means of studying Plato's account of the principles of reason on the cosmic level we can get a deeper understanding of his views of human reason and rational motivation. What is less often acknowledged, however, is that it is also possible to understand the analogy in terms of the relationship between the pre-cosmic condition of the universe and the pre-ordered condition of the soul. In this chapter I am going to suggest that there are good reasons to acknowledge this relationship. I shall examine Plato's account of *necessity* as the cause of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe and explore what this can teach us about incarnated life, about human motivation in general and about appetitive motivation in particular; and thus, in the end, provide a qualified account of what it may mean to say that appetite pertains to the body.

In chapter two, *The Power of Lies*, I shall examine the work that Plato's notion of appetite may be said to do in the *Republic,* and offer a discussion that clarifies and qualifies the idea that appetite is a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears. I will argue that Plato considers appetite to be so *multiform* that it cannot be exhaustively accounted for in terms of some well-distinguished class of objects. Instead, I am going to suggest that appetite is better understood in view of the process by means of which Plato spells out how it is formed. And this process, as we shall see, is one whose mechanisms are explicated in terms of the influence of poetical illusion, education, tradition and public opinion.

To reach this end I intend to take a closer look at the famous problem of how to get the philosophers to return to the cave of politics. Briefly put, having seen the beautiful sights on the Islands of the Blessed, the philosophers

are described as reluctant. Their higher education has taught them that only the pursuit of truth and knowledge is worthwhile, and accordingly they are also said to be "unwilling to occupy themselves with human affairs" (517c8-9). Yet, to return is their very purpose, and therefore, as we shall see, Plato repeatedly writes that they must be forced to do so.

But how, one might ask, is this forcing enacted? Articulated against the background of the *Republic's* account of education, exploiting the persuasive force of poetry and supported by a detailed account of appetitive motivation, I shall suggest that what Plato in book three of the *Republic* calls the *noble lie* plays a significant part in this story; and that we, in unravelling this story, will be in a position to qualify the idea that appetite is a type of motivation essentially linked to the world as it appears.

In chapter three, *A Multiform Game*, I aim to offer an account of the work that Plato's notion of appetite may be said do in the *Phaedrus*; an account against the background of which it may be possible to question and qualify the idea that appetite is a source of motivation bound to the realm of sensory pleasure and satisfaction. In suggesting that the *Phaedrus* offers an example of a situation in which the object of appetite is of a quite abstract and eloquent nature, I will argue that Plato's notion of appetite cannot be exhaustively defined in terms of aiming at sensory pleasure.

As is well known, the so-called second part of this dialogue is spelled out as an analysis of the first part's three speeches, i.e. Lysias' speech (on why to give in to the non-lover) recited by Phaedrus, and Socrates' two speeches (the first articulated in competition with Lysias', on the same subject matter, and the second, the so-called Palinode, in defence of love). It is also here that Socrates tells Phaedrus that these three speeches were really just games of deception. They were all designed to persuade and allure, and they are all described to have been seductive games. Why?

I am going search for an answer to this question by means of stressing the importance of two distinctions that Socrates makes at the very end of the dialogue. The first distinction is between a playful and a serious discourse. The second is between a multiform and a simple type of discourse.

The first distinction can be said to boil down to the difference between teaching and persuading. Only that which offers the opportunity for questioning or investigation, and thus for understanding and learning, is serious. Set speeches, written speeches and speeches of rhapsodes, just like written texts, voiced without such opportunity are instead articulated for the sake of persuasion. They are games.

The second distinction has to do with psychology and rhetoric. When designed with art, a simple discourse should be addressed to a simple soul and a multiform discourse to a multiform soul. As we shall see, the distinction between the simple and the multiform soul can also be said to be a distinction between a soul ruled by reason and a soul in lack of such rule. While the motivations of the simple soul may be spelled out in terms of truth and

knowledge, the motivations of the multiform soul are rather to be spelled out in terms of *appetite* and the influence of what merely appears to be the case.

In this chapter I shall draw on these two distinctions in order to try to understand the status of the speeches of the dialogue. According to the account I shall propose, the speeches in the *Phaedrus* are games of the multiform type. At least in the case of Socrates' speeches, this is also quite decisive. Articulated against the background of an elaborate theory of rhetoric and psychology, and in being sensitive to the rational limitations of a multiform soul, they can be understood to have been designed to influence and persuade a soul not yet properly disposed to handle the simplicity and rationality of a serious discourse. And such a soul, I shall argue, is in this dialogue represented by Phaedrus.

Supplementing these specific treatments of the dialogues, I will end this study with a short concluding section, summarize the main points made in the chapters, draw one general conclusion, and sketch out some areas that might be interesting for further research.

1. Cosmic and Mortal Necessity

> And when, due to Necessity, they [the souls] should be implanted in bodies, and their bodies are subject to influx and efflux, these results would necessarily follow, firstly, sensation that is innate and common to all, proceeding from violent affections; secondly, desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such emotions as are naturally allied thereto […] And if they shall master these they will live justly, [and return] again to the semblance of [their] first and best state.[6,7,8] (42a3-b2 and 42d1-2)
>
> Plato, the *Timaeus*

1.1. Introduction

Due to necessity ("ἐξ ἀνάγκης"), Plato writes, the soul is planted in a body. Because of this incarnation, the soul is also necessarily entwined with the influx and efflux of perception (αἴσθησις). Owing to the violent affections (παθήματα) perception gives rise to, the incarnated soul becomes bewildered. It becomes irrational (ἄνους, 44a8). Due to the unruliness (θορυβώδης) of the body, the incarnated soul becomes confused and disordered. It starts to move around in irrational (ἄλογος) ways and it strays about in all directions (43b). Not yet properly disposed to handle the flow of (irrational) perception and (violent) affection (69d and 42a), the soul's behaviour becomes irregular and without order (ἄτακτος, 46e5). And in the worst-case-scenario it will primarily be motivated by its appetites and desires (42a, 69d, cf. 77b).[9]

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[6] Bury's capital letter. All translations of the *Timaeus* are based on Bury's (1999) if not otherwise stated. When the translations are my own, significantly modified, or when I have used the newest translation of the dialogue by Zeyl, in Cooper (1997), I have so indicated. I have also continuously consulted the great commentaries by Taylor (1928) and Cornford (1937).

[7] This is repeated in somewhat different wording at 69c-d. Cf. Johansen (2004, 146f).

[8] In what follows I will quote the Greek in accordance with the following general principles. I quote longer phrases and single words as they appear in the text using quotation marks (e.g. "ἐπιχειρητῆ παντὸς ἔρωτι" or "κάλλιστον"), except in the block quotes where I will skip the quotation marks; single nouns in nominative (number depending on context); single adjectives in nominative, masculine (number also depending on context) and (for ease of reference) single verbs in dictionary-look-up form (i.e. when possible, in first person, singular, present tense, indicative, active voice, e.g. πλανάω).

[9] In the relevant contexts Plato is primarily using two closely connected terms: ἐπιθυμία (e.g. 70a5, 70b5, 77b6, 86c7, 88b1, 90b2 and 91b2) and ἔρως (e.g. 42a7, 69d5). At 91b, Plato

Eventually, however, if things turn out right, this condition of the soul will change. If, by means of reason (λόγος), the soul manages to become master over its own irrational affections, it will be able to develop and return to the form of what is described as its original and best state (ἕξις, 42d2).

As is well-known, in order to reach this state, Plato articulates advice of great consequence: To overcome the bewildering effects of incarnation, one should learn to regularize one's corrupted movements by studying the rational, ordered, harmonious, unified, beautiful and proportionate nature of the universe (cf. 90c-d).[10] Only by the study of the universe, we learn, is it possible to understand the divine (cf. 92c7) and rational ideal of reason (νοῦς, 47b7). And if one is to become happy (εὐδαίμων, 90c6), and live life at its best, one should take the universe as the model – and imitate it (47b and 90c-d, cf. also 48d).

Now, in one of the central passages where Plato is trying to capture the nature of this paradigmatic universe, the similarity to his account of the incarnated situation is striking. They are both described in terms of change and development. Just as in the case of an incarnated soul, the universe's ideal condition is also described in contrast to irrationality and disorder. Before this universe once emerged as the single, unified and beautiful (92c) order (τάξις) it is today, disorder (ἀταξία) prevailed (30a5). Initially, the universe had no unity. It was a multiform (ποικίλος) multitude (ποικιλία, 50d5) and it swayed about in irregular (ἀνώμαλος) ways (52e3).

In this context, just as in the context describing the cause of the disordered condition of the incarnated soul, Plato also ascribes a decisive role to

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makes it quite clear that they are closely related or even interchangeable. Cf. 77b, 88b or *Symp*., 205d. See also Karfik (2005, 201).

[10] I take these notions to be the basic and most important ones that Plato uses to characterize the universe that was once brought to order (τάξις, 30a5, cf. 90c). They are articulated in a number of contexts, of which I think the following are telling. At 69b2-5 we read: "As we stated at the commencement all these things were [at first] in a state of disorder, when God implanted in them proportions (συμμετρίαι) both severally in relation to themselves and in their relations to one another, so far as it was in any way possible for them to be self-proportionate (ἀνάλογος) and symmetrical (σύμμετρος)". The reference in this passage ("As we stated at the commencement") is presumably back to 30a and onwards. Here Plato also describes how the universe was once ordered into a single, unified and ageless whole. "He fashioned it to be one single (ἕν) whole (ὅλος) […] perfect (τέλειος) and ageless" (33a7, cf. 32a). At 30d this unified condition is also established by the use of συνίστημι. The universe is brought together as one, and self-proportion or analogy (ἀναλογία), we learn, is the most beautiful bond by means of which to create such a unity (31c), because in an analogous relationship all parts "have the same relationship to each other, and, given this, will all be unified" (32a6-7, translation by Zeyl, in Cooper (1997)). Moreover, that the universe is rational is stated a few lines above at 30b8. The universe is made rational (ἔννους), by being ensouled (ἔμψυχος). That the universe is the creation of reason and that it therefore also is in a rational condition is also stated at 47e-48a. Furthermore, that the universe thus created is beautiful (καλός) is, for example, made clear at 92c7-9: "[I]ts grandness (μέγιστος), goodness (ἄριστος), beauty (κάλλιστος) and perfection (τελεώτατος) are unexcelled. Our one (ἕν) universe, indeed the only one of its kind (μονογενής), has come to be". Translation by Zeyl, in Cooper (1997).

necessity (ἀνάγκη). When this cosmos was initially generated, it was generated as a compound of *necessity* (ἀνάγκη) and *reason* (νοῦς). Reason did however take the lead, persuade necessity and made this universe as good as it ever could be. And thus, we learn, if we are to understand how this ordered universe – this cosmos – once became what it is today, our story cannot only be one of reason, but we must also account for what is said to be a *wandering* or *straying* cause ("πλανωμένης […] αἰτίας", 48a7) and accordingly for what is brought about by necessity (cf. 47e5-48a7).

Just like in the case of an incarnated soul, then, the universe may also be understood to have been in a quite bewildered condition before it became ordered, proportionate and unified (e.g. 30a and 31c). In the human case, just as in the case of the universe, it is reasonable to suppose that reason needs to master the effects of necessity in order for proper development to take place.

In what follows I am going to draw on this similarity in order to examine Plato's notion of appetite and the condition of the incarnated soul to which appetite pertains.[11] Just as we can learn something about human reason and about rational motivation by looking at the cosmos,[12] I shall claim that we can learn something about the soul's pre-ordered condition and about appetite by looking at the pre-cosmic condition of the universe.

As we shall see, Plato holds appetite to be a motivating force caused by incarnation. In this sense appetite is also clearly linked to the body. This is, however, often understood to be a matter of providing an account of our basic needs as incarnated beings, and thus as a way to explain our basic striving for survival (as individuals and as a species). It is thought that while Plato considers appetite to be the least valuable type of motivational force, because it is solely concerned with the needs of the body, it is nevertheless ascribed an independent and important function in virtue of being that which provides the basic motivational requirements for the continuation of life.

In the light of the results of this chapter, we shall however see that this is an idea that needs to be modified and qualified. For although it may seem to be intuitively correct to understand appetite as a matter of survival, there is clear textual evidence that Plato, at least in the *Timaeus*, articulates a somewhat different view. Rather than being introduced to explain some basic survival instinct, appetite will instead turn out to be better accounted for in terms of excess and redundancy. And, as we shall see, the similarity between the pre-cosmic condition of the universe and the pre-ordered condition of the

[11] In lack of better words I shall, in the following, be writing about a *cosmic* and a *mortal* level. As we shall see, the cosmic level also pertains to what I shall call *the pre-cosmic universe* or *a pre-cosmic situation*, i.e. the condition of the universe before it became a rational, ordered, harmonious, unified, beautiful and proportionate cosmos. I shall thus sometimes also write about *necessity on a cosmic level*, meaning the effects of necessity as they pertain to the universe, as in contrast to the effect of necessity as they pertain to the incarnated situation of a living being, i.e. the mortal level. See also n.91.

[12] This is often taken to be an important point. See Long (2001, 23), Sedley (1999) or Annas (1999, Ch. III). See also Dodds (1945) and Russell (2004, 241-260).

incarnated soul confirms this idea. Without being submitted to rational control, appetite will give rise to a type of behaviour far beyond aiming at what is required from a rational point of view. Left on its own, Plato does not only consider appetite to lead to excess and immoderation, this excessive behaviour can, in the end, even bring about the very extinction of both the individual and the species.

This chapter is structured in the following way.

In section one (1.2), *Cosmic Necessity*, I am going to spend quite a lot of time examining Plato's account of the pre-cosmic situation of the universe and the effects of necessity on the cosmic scale, so as to properly prepare the ground for what shall follow. This is not uncontroversial territory, and I will therefore begin by laying bare a few of the most predominant interpretations and spell out my own take on the matter against this background.

In section two (1.3), *Mortal Necessity*, drawing on the account of cosmic necessity articulated in the first section (1.2), I shall take a closer look at Plato's thoughts about the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul, his ideas about appetite and appetitive motivation, and examine what we can learn about this from the account of the universe and its pre-perfected condition.

In the third section (1.4), I will conclude and offer a qualified account of the general idea that appetite is a motivating force pertaining to the body.

1.2. Cosmic Necessity

By the initial request of Socrates, Timaeus – a great astronomer (27a2-3) and philosopher (20a4-5) – introduces the account of cosmic necessity, at around 47e, so as to supplement and specify the conditions under which his former exposition was articulated.[13] This former exposition, Timaeus explains, was primarily an account of the effects of reason (νοῦς, 47b7 and e4). It explained how the universe was once unified and bound together (συνδέω, 31c2, cf. 32b, 32c and 41b) and how the works of the demiurge once brought order (τάξις) out of the prevailing disorder ("ἐκ τῆς ἀταξίας", 30a5, cf. 90c). It explained how the universe was made rational (ἔννους), how it once became the most beautiful ("κάλλιστον") and best ("ἄριστόν", 30b5-8) and how analogy (ἀναλογία, 31c3) unified its perceptible parts and made it into a one, ageless and perfect whole (ἕν, 32a6, ἀγήραος, 33a2, τέλειος and ὅλος, 33a7). It also explained how the universe was united by the bounds of friendship "so that being united in identity with itself it became indissoluble

[13] For a good account of the quality of the journey Timaeus here initiates, see Osborne (1996, 180ff). Cf. also Gill (1987, 36-40). With regard to the *literal* or *metaphorical* status of the creation story Timaeus here sets out to qualify, there has been a long running debate. For a survey, see Zeyl (2000, xxiff). See also Vlastos (1939), Johansen (2004, 62-64) or Burnyeat (2005).

by any agent other than Him [i.e. the demiurge] who had bound it together (ὥστε εἰς ταὐτὸν αὐτῷ συνελθὸν ἄλυτον ὑπό του ἄλλου πλὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ συνδήσαντος γενέσθαι)" (32c2-4).

Timaeus now finds reason to supplement this account. It might have told the story of unification and wholeness, but apparently something was neglected. Besides reason, Timaeus insists, we must now also take into account what comes about through necessity.

> The foregoing part of our discourse, *save for a small portion*, has been an exposition of the operations of Reason (νοῦς); but we must also furnish an account of what comes into existence through Necessity (ἀνάγκη). For, in truth, this Cosmos in its origin was generated as a compound, from the combination of Necessity and Reason (ἡ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου γένεσις ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε καὶ νοῦ συστάσεως ἐγεννήθη). And inasmuch as Reason was controlling Necessity by persuading her to conduct to the best end the most part of the things coming into existence, thus and thereby it came about, through Necessity yielding to intelligent persuasion (ἡττωμένης ὑπὸ πειθοῦς ἔμφρονος), that this Universe of ours was being in this wise constructed at the beginning. Wherefore if one is to declare how it actually came into being on this wise, he must include also the form of the Errant Cause (τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας), in the way that it really acts. To this point, therefore, we must return, and taking once again a fresh starting point suitable to the matter we must make a fresh start in dealing therewith (47e3-48b3).[14]

This cosmos is apparently not only a creation of reason. For as Timaeus now comes to explain, it should rather be understood to be a compound. Both reason and necessity must be taken into consideration. As equally important parts of the story, both of them contributed to the whole. Granted that the story of reason has already been told, however, Timaeus proceeds to account for necessity.

Besides being an introduction of necessity and thus an attempt to spell out a fuller account of the origin of the universe, this passage also contains a reference to the preceding discourse ("save for a small portion").[15] What Timaeus is here referring to is most likely the distinction he made around 46d between (what could be called) rational and (what explicitly is called) auxiliary causes (συναίτιοι, 46d1).[16] And this distinction, I believe, offers us a good point of departure. Timaeus explains it in this way:

> We must declare both kinds of causes (λεκτέα μὲν ἀμφότερα τὰ τῶν αἰτιῶν γένη), but keep distinct those which, with the aid of reason (μετὰ νοῦ), are artificers of things *fair and good* (καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν), and all those which are

[14] My italics. Bury's capital letters.
[15] Cf. Johansen (2004, 92ff) or Cornford (1937, 160).
[16] As argued by Johansen (2004, 92ff) or Cornford (1937, 160).

> devoid of intelligence (φρόνησις) and produce always accidental and irregular effects (τὸ τυχὸν ἄτακτον ἑκάστοτε ἐξεργάζονται) (46e3-6).[17]

In line with what Timaeus eventually will come to explain in terms of necessity (at around 47e3-48b3), the auxiliary causes are here contrasted to a cause involving reason (νοῦς). The *rational cause* gives rise to things *fair and good*, while the *auxiliary causes* give rise to random and irregular effects. A few lines above, the same distinction is also explained in terms of what we, in lack of better words, could perhaps understand as psychic and somatic causation.

> [The auxiliary causes] are incapable of possessing reason and thought for any purpose (λόγον δὲ οὐδένα οὐδὲ νοῦν εἰς οὐδὲν δυνατὰ ἔχειν ἐστίν). For, as we must affirm, the one and only existing thing which has the property of acquiring reason (νοῦς) is soul (ψυχή); and soul is invisible, whereas *fire and water and earth and air* are all visible bodies.[18] (46d4-d7)

In contrast to the intelligent nature of that type of cause that pertains to reason, the auxiliary causes are associated with the bodily elements. Rational causation, on the one hand, is associated with soul. It gives rise to things fair and good. The auxiliary causes, on the other hand, are said to always produce ("ἑκάστοτε ἐξεργάζονται", 46e3-6) accidental and irregular effects and are here (at 46d4-d7) described in terms of "fire and water and earth and air".

As we shall see (in section 1.2.4.), in Timaeus' more thorough discussion of necessity that follows, he will return to the question of how to understand these elements in some detail. In that context, the insufficiency of what is here presupposed about the elements will also shine through. As it stands, however, it does nevertheless tell us a few things about the causal factors Timaeus thinks are in play here.

In the context where the auxiliary causes (συναίτιος, 46d1) are introduced, that is, before Timaeus has initiated his more detailed analysis of the effect of necessity and the fundamental nature of the elements, one thing that may strike the reader as somewhat strange is that despite all the talk about irregularity and randomness, the examples we get do not seem to be that random. Timaeus speaks about the eyes, for example. In contrast to their rational cause, he also goes into some detail of what we today perhaps would call their physiological design (and everything that that involves, e.g., the shape of the eye, how light moves in them, and so on).[19] It is also these physiological factors that Timaeus contrasts to what he describes in terms of reason and things fair and good.

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[17] My italics. In relation to the account of causes in the *Phaedo*, see Johansen (2004, 103ff) and Cornford (1937, 174f).
[18] My italics.
[19] For a good account, see Cornford (1937, 154ff).

As T.K. Johansen has pointed out, there are reasons to distinguish three causal factors in this context.[20] There are (a) causes that involve reason and gives rise to things fair and good. There are (b) causes the effects of which are *used* by reason to give rise to things good and fair, and there are (c) causes whose effects do not involve reason at all. These three different causal players can also help us to understand what is at stake here.

Firstly, for example, the rational cause of the eyes is to make it possible for us to study the universe, learn its rational order and imitate it (46e-47c). This is the purpose of the eyes, and this, we could say, is the eyes' *true* cause (cf. 46d1-2).

Secondly, a cause the effects of which are *used* by reason is an auxiliary cause. We can understand it like this: If the eyes are used in accordance with their rational cause (or purpose), the physiology of the eyes is used in a rational way. It is used as a helper or auxiliary for a rational end. The eyes, as made up of the elements, are thus used for a purpose. "Remove [this rational cause]", Johansen writes, "and the sunaitia [the auxiliary cause] collapse into the sort of necessity that produces disorder".[21] Granted that reason is the sole producer of order, a rational purpose is required to bring about order. So, if the eyes, for example, are not used to study the universe (so as to learn its rational order and imitate it) their purpose is removed. They no longer contribute to the rational end. They do not help to cause a rational order, and thus they will no longer be auxiliary cases.

Thirdly, then, the sort of necessity that Johansen describes as the producer of disorder is the last of the three causal players involved here. An auxiliary cause is called auxiliary in virtue of it how its effects are used by reason towards a rational end. Left on its own, however, it gives rise to random and irregular effects.

The third and the second types of causes are thus basically the same, but they do explain different sets of phenomena. When Timaeus describes the physiology of the eyes in terms of being an auxiliary cause, for example, he is supposedly trying to describe the somatic aspects of the eyes in light of their rational function. If this function or purpose is taken away, we are left with random and disordered effects.

In what follows it is this latter type of causal factor that shall be the focus. As we eventually shall see, it is this type of cause that Timaeus calls necessity. It gives rise to disorder and randomness, and it is this type of cause that Timaeus will come to discuss in terms of a more detailed analysis of the nature of the elements.

[20] Johansen (2004, 95).
[21] Johansen (2004, 95).

1.2.1. A Mechanistic Line of Interpretation

Framing the question of the nature and effects of necessity in terms of disorder, irregularity and randomness has the advantage of capturing many of the qualifications that Timaeus gives it. Such a framing, as we shall see, certainly answers to the description of necessity as the errant or straying type of cause ("τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας", 48a6-7); and may as such also be said to circle in that type of cause that Timaeus (at 47e-48a) clearly wants to contrast to reason (νοῦς).

As has been pointed out, however, such a framing may nevertheless fail to explain the causal link that necessity presumably is also introduced to capture.[22] If necessity is supposed to be a *cause* it must in some way be linked to the effect that it is to bring about. The link between necessity as a cause and its effects should be possible to understand. If this link is explained in terms of chance and disorder, however, one might ask why it is called a cause at all. If it is not in any way possible to predict what necessity will bring about, one might doubt its causal status.

In order to explain how necessity can both be said to give rise to irregular effects and how it nevertheless can be said to be a predictable causal factor, there are a few scholars that have taken another point of departure here.[23] As we shall see, instead of explaining necessity in terms of disorder and randomness, they argue that necessity is basically supposed to be understood as a mechanistic type of cause. Necessity is taken to be governed by a set of laws or rules that are predictable, and in terms of which the causality of necessity may be understood. Yet, in contrast to reason, necessity should be understood to be a causal factor that brings about its effect without a purpose. On this view, this is also the reason for why Plato uses words like *irregular*, *random* and *straying* to describe it. In the following three subsections I shall discuss some of the most central arguments along these lines and eventually spell out my own take on the matter against this background.

1.2.2. Andrew Mason

Paying heed to Plato's choice of words, Andrew Mason presents a fascinating attempt to explain what Plato may have meant when he decided to call necessity something that strays. Defending a view of necessity first set out in detail in the modern debate by Glenn Morrow, Mason argues that Plato's notion of necessity must be understood as *natural* or *causal necessity*.[24] Necessity has to do with a natural kind of causation, he argues, because necessity is a name of the causal power inherent in "material things", as he puts

[22] Johansen (2004, 93).
[23] E.g. Mason (2006), Morrow (1950) or Johansen (2004).
[24] Mason (2006, 284).

it.[25] These material things, he explains, do as such also have certain powers, which, in virtue of their natures, "determine, given the circumstances, how they will behave".[26]

In order to make this claim Mason must, however, of course, also deal with all those passages that may seem to suggest otherwise. He must explain in what sense *straying*, *disorder, irrationality* and *chance* may meet the requirements of such a natural causation.

Trying to specify Plato's description of the necessary state of affairs, Mason accordingly also argues that in describing necessity as causing a disorder pure and simple, one really begs the question. One cannot just presuppose, he argues, that disorder is the predominant effect of necessity, insofar as necessity is supposed to be the causal power of the materials of the universe. "The central section of the *Timaeus*, describing 'things that come about through necessity' is not a description of disorderly phenomena", he writes, "but simply of material nature, though some aspects of it are disorderly".[27] By presupposing that necessity only brings about disorder, he continues, it is also easy to suppose that reason and necessity are opposite; that they are order and disorder.[28] Yet, this neglects the fact that Plato also argues that they work together. Instead of assuming that necessity *always* produces random and disorderly results, Mason suggests that we should rather try to understand how these qualifications may be explained in terms of how reason and necessity co-operate.

In order to argue for this, Mason starts out by investigating the notion of disorder. Instead of taking Plato to mean that disorder is a general effect of necessity, he suggests that Plato rather had a "lack of periodicity and predictability" in mind.[29] Instead of assuming that the disordered effects of necessity are just disordered in an unqualified sense, he suggests that "the order they lack is some aspect of the good".[30] Reminding us of the fact that the works of reason are supposed to bring about not just any order, but indeed a *good* order, he also concludes that "[i]t is not clear why regularity simply in the sense of having a rule should be seen as good".[31] Instead, Mason suggests that the lack of order that necessity supposedly involves should rather be understood as a "lack of periodicity and predictability".[32] Both, he argues, are also possible to understand as good things. "Periodicity is a form of stability", Mason writes, "which Plato certainly sees as good; the periodic movements of the heavens are for him a paradigm of order [and] predictabil-

[25] Mason (2006, 284).
[26] Mason (2006, 284f).
[27] Mason (2006, 286).
[28] Mason (2006, 286).
[29] Mason (2006, 290).
[30] Mason (2006, 290).
[31] Mason (2006, 290).
[32] Mason (2006, 290).

ity helps rational beings to understand the world and to organize their lives in it".[33]

Necessity is thus, according to Mason, not disorder pure and simple, but disorder in the sense of lacking predictability and periodicity. As such, he goes on, Plato does in fact also have a world-view that is really quite similar to the one we have today: Our world includes a great set of unpredictable and random events, Mason explains, but we do nevertheless believe that it is governed by a set of basic rules and laws. Insofar as disorder means lack of good order, Plato's point of view would in fact also go hand in hand with such a deterministic account. This, he goes on, is certainly a world that is governed by *causal* necessity. "Things like the weather, or the incidence of earthquakes, and so on", Mason writes, "do not happen at regular intervals, and normally we cannot predict them".[34] Yet, we do nevertheless assume that they are governed by more or less basic natural laws, he argues. "Plato's concept of necessity [also] allows for this", Mason writes, because "the section of *Timaeus* devoted to necessity does contain general principles governing the motion of the elements, their transformations, and so on".[35]

As we may suppose, this is a reference to those sections of the Timaeus where the elements (fire, water, air and earth) can be said to be explained in terms of their geometrical regularity and order (διάταξις, 53b8); and thus clearly as being subjects to a kind of natural order and law.

In this context (around 53b-c), to put it brief, Timaeus explains that all elements are bodies (σώματα, 53c4). As such, however, they do also have depth (βάθος, 53c6). Yet, depth is always surrounded (περιλαμβάνω) and made up of planes (οἱ ἐπίπεδοι). These planes are, however, rectilinear (ὀρθός), Timaeus goes on, and they do consist of triangles (τρίγωνοι). But all triangles do supposedly have their origin in two types of triangles, "each having one angle right and the others acute; and the one of these triangles has on each side half a right angle marked off by equal sides, while the other has the right angle divided into unequal parts by unequal sides" (53d2-4).

By accordingly breaking down the body of the elements into what might seem to be their basic components, Timaeus also discerns a set of minimal parts by means of which he can eventually build them up again, but now with a geometrical base. Eventually, Timaeus also ends up with a selection of four different basic geometrical solids – the tetrahedron, the octahedron, the icosahedron and the hexahedron (the cube) – that he identifies with fire, air, water and earth, respectively, and in terms of which he also explains their different features (53c-61b).

The elements are thus given a solid geometrical base. Given the soundness of the geometry, the behaviour of the elements does accordingly also

[33] Mason (2006, 290).
[34] Mason (2006, 290).
[35] Mason (2006, 291).

become predictable, and their conduct can be explained in terms of a kind of natural order and law. There are "general principles", as Mason puts it, "governing the motion of the elements".[36] Despite the fact that the effects of necessity may appear to be disordered, they are, according to Mason, fundamentally constituted by a set of predictable rules and laws.

Now, to further enhance this argument, Mason turns to the notion of *chance*. For, as he also admits, Plato certainly claims that the effects of necessity are quite coincidental. "Chance", however, Mason goes on, "*can* be used to refer to what is wholly undetermined. But it can also be used, either of what does not happen for a purpose, or of what is unpredictable".[37] Both of these latter cases, he argues, go hand in hand with determinism. We may call things coincidental and of a chance-like nature, but this is often just a matter of expression. One telling example, Mason explains, is games of chance.

> We do not suppose that the fall of dice, for instance, is genuinely undetermined. If we knew the exact speed and direction with which a dice was thrown, together with any other forces acting on it, we would be able to predict how it would fall. But since in fact we do not normally know these things, we cannot predict it, and so we call it a chance outcome.[38]

It is also such a lack of capacity and information, Mason seems to argue, that is the reason for why Plato calls the effects of necessity coincidental (cf. 46e). These chance-like features of the universe are thus really only signs of our mortality and they would disappear if our mental capacity would grow. Accordingly to Mason, Plato does not think that the effects of necessity are coincidental, but only seem to be so from a limited point of view. All chance-like, unpredictable and irregular effects of necessity are only apparent. Earthquakes, the weather and other apparently random phenomena are described to lack predictability and periodicity because we do not have sufficient knowledge. And the disorder and randomness that might seem to be an obstacle in the joint venture of reason and necessity can also be explained away. Reason persuaded necessity and created the cosmos, not as someone straightens what is bent, but rather as someone puts together already working parts.

In an important sense, F.M. Cornford already objected to Mason's account more than half a century before it was articulated. Arguing against the interpretations of Archer-Hind and Professor A.E. Taylor, Cornford then

[36] Mason (2006, 291). As is well-known, at 55c, we also get a fifth basic solid, the dodecahedron, the most spherical shape, "and this one the god used for the whole universe, embroidering figures on it (ἐπὶ τὸ πᾶν ὁ θεὸς αὐτῇ κατεχρήσατο ἐκεῖνο διαζωγραφῶν)". Translation by Zeyl, in Cooper (1997).
[37] Mason (2006, 291).
[38] Mason (2006, 291).

also challenged any interpretation of these passages that suggests that necessity *really* should be explained as rule, law or reason.

The irregularity of necessity, Cornford argued, cannot be explained away in terms of our lack of understanding, because that would in fact reduce the nature of necessity to nothing. If the irregularity of necessity could be reduced to merely *apparent* irregularity, and as such really to some basic regularity, regularity would indeed rule everything and reason, as the governor of what is regular, would be all-encompassing. Necessity would be natural law and it would be nothing but a causal necessity. This is, of course, coherent, but it does not really capture what Plato writes. Cornford also objects: "We must pause to ask ourselves whether there is any sense in speaking of Reason as 'persuading' a Necessity which has emanated wholly from Reason itself, or of an Errant Cause which is only an unerring cause that happens to be inscrutable to us and may become less and less inscrutable as knowledge advances".[39] In the *Timaeus*, Cornford argued, reason is nothing like an all-encompassing god. It is not all-inclusive and does not work with nothing. Instead, reason is faced with a causal counterpart that is its own source of irregularity and coincidence and this must certainly be accounted for.

1.2.3. Glenn Morrow and T.K. Johansen

From Mason's point of view this objection could perhaps be met in terms of necessity and reason having different sets of order. While necessity could make up the rules that govern more locally expressed mechanistic laws, pertaining to the elements and to the geometrical configuration of the basic solids (i.e. a micro-cosmos), reason could be the more general set of rules, putting these loci together in a cosmic fashion (i.e. a macro-cosmos) and giving them predictability.[40] In the world of necessity there would thus only be sets of locally ordered systems of causality and nothing that connects them. These loci could also have random and unpredictable relations. It would be these relations that reason would regularize and order. The irregular effects of necessity could as such also be explained without being totally reduced to nothing and yet remain as a principle of causal regularity. This is also more or less the point of view argued for by Glenn Morrow.

> What happens when intelligence enters is that certain sequences which we have no reason to regard as necessarily connected with one another do as a matter of fact occur together, and occur together habitually, producing jointly effects which could not have been expected or predicated from any of the individual sequences, but only from their collective occurrence.[41]

[39] Cornford (1937, 164).
[40] Cf. Harte (2002, 226).
[41] Morrow (1950, 159).

In this process both irregularity and chance are involved, and the connections between the locally regularized sets of causal chains would also be random if reason would not interfere. Such random connections happen all of the time, Morrow argues, but they have no regularity or periodicity. This regularity and periodicity is rather what reason has to offer. Reason selects, Morrow argues, those connections that it considers to be good and makes them recurrent.[42] Reason does however not produce these connections, but does rather discern them from the unlimited variety of random connections that, as such, are the basic effects of necessity.

The locally regularized sets of causal chains upon which Morrow's account are based are also presupposed by T.K. Johansen. Johansen, like Morrow, also seems to argue that the basic features of the elements are determined by a certain set of rules that they must follow. This is also what makes them products and accordingly also "*carriers* of necessity", he writes.[43] Just as Morrow distinguishes the local rules of the elements and the more general order, caused by reason, Johansen also makes a distinction between *regularity* and *order*. While *regularity*, he argues, is that by means of which cause and effect are conjoined, *order* is rather a property of a certain kind of outcome. The necessity that ties cause and effect, he continues, is thus no guarantee that the outcome is an order. Accordingly, and in agreement with Morrow, he also concludes that "[e]ntirely regular mechanisms often produce results that are disordered".[44] "So, for example", he explains, "when you take your clothes out of the washing machine their arrangement will be in no particular order but the way in which each item has arrived in its place is the outcome of entirely regular physical processes".[45]

Speaking here of the world of necessity, the washing machine example is also to explain the universe as it would be *without* the interference of reason. It is a situation of absolutely regularized local causality, but it lacks the order that reason may bestow upon it.

Now, Johansen's argument certainly makes sense, but, for that very reason, it unfortunately makes great parts of Plato's argument redundant. In Johansen's story, the job of the demiurge would in fact already be possible to accomplish by the elements themselves. But this, of course, is not how Timaeus actually explains it. Allow me to spell out the problem.

Johansen's account of the elements as carriers of causal necessity is based on the geometrical properties by means of which Timaeus eventually comes to explain the nature of the elements. These properties are not only predictable, but they are clearly also reasonably explained in terms of the specific regularity that pertains to each element. Fire has such and such a nature, due

[42] Cf. Morrow (1950, 159f).
[43] Johansen (2004, 98).
[44] Johansen (2004, 94).
[45] Johansen (2004, 94).

to its specific geometrical makeup. It behaves in a manner that is predictable in accordance with its geometry. And the same goes for the other elements too.

Necessity is, from Johansen's point of view, thus a matter of geometrical regularity. The necessity that can be ascribed to the elements is ascribed to them in virtue of the fact that they may be reduced to and explained in terms of the basic geometrical solids. Understood in this way, the elements may also be said to have a rational and proportionate ground and their behaviour can be predicted from the point of view of their geometry. Necessity, he argues, should accordingly be understood in terms of the well-ordered geometrical features of the basic solids and it should accordingly be called *causal* necessity.[46]

These solids and the type of elements with which each are connected, Johansen also points out, are however not self-generated. They are themselves ordered or created by reason. Referring to 53b, Johansen also admits that the demiurge somehow must have made the elements before he made the cosmos (cf. also 69a-c).

> The builder needs to make sure the bricks are hard, durable, impervious to moisture, and so on. In those cases, craftsmanship is not just a matter simply of assembling materials which already come ready-made and fit for the purpose like a do-it-yourself kit. Rather craftsmanship is involved also at the lower level of shaping the materials so that they will be useful for assembly.[47]

It is in this way we should also understand necessity, he argues. Necessity "arises out of the nature of the simple bodies", he writes.[48] Necessity is that out of which the cosmos is created and it is the elements, as geometrical solids, that reason persuaded and ordered as good as possible.

Now, the problem with this line of interpretation, as Johansen also seems to admit, is that it would at the end of the day really make both reason and the demiurge redundant at the cosmic level.[49] Because if the cosmos was to be organized by means of the same principles as the elements – i.e. by the harmonious (cf. 37a, 47d, 69b), well-ordered (cf. 90c) and proportionate (cf. 53a) principles of reason (cf. 53a-b) – it may, of course, seem as if the rules that are to make this universe a unified and harmonious cosmos are already in place (cf. 30a).

If there is nothing in the basic building-blocks and, in effect, in necessity as such, that could disrupt or challenge the perfection, why would it at all be required for reason to interfere and persuade necessity?

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[46] Johansen (2004, 98).
[47] Johansen (2004, 96).
[48] Johansen (2004, 100).
[49] Johansen (2004, 100) writes: "[I]t seems that on my reading, the demiurge just rubber-stamps the necessary behavior that the simple bodies are engaged in anyway, given their nature".

The result of reason's absence at the cosmos level would at least be quite hard to separate from its presence. And it would be the well-ordered mechanistic and geometrically governed causal processes that would make it so.[50] The elements as carriers of (well-ordered and causal) necessity would thus be necessary. But they would also be sufficient. Without any inherent irregularity and randomness, necessity would be able to make up the order itself.

Johansen's answer to this objection is that the demiurge, as he writes, still plays a role in the process of *selecting* the simple bodies. The demiurge picks them out from the various possible geometrical compositions and makes them elemental.[51] This answer does of course save the demiurgic activity to some extent, but really not at the cosmic level where it supposedly is to play the greatest part.

1.2.4. Cosmic Necessity Reconsidered

Although Mason, Morrow and Johansen approach the question of the nature of necessity from different perspectives and with different arguments, they do nevertheless all share and defend the same basic idea: The effects of necessity are to be understood in terms of the geometrical makeup of the elements as material causes; and as such the effects of necessity ought to be accounted for in mechanistic and deterministic terms. While Mason claims that "the section of *Timaeus* devoted to necessity does contain general [geometrical] principles governing the motion of the elements, their transformations, and so on"[52], Morrow shares this basic assumption in arguing that necessity as a cause is best understood as a way to account for the rules that govern the locally expressed mechanistic laws pertaining to the geometrical configuration of the basic solids, i.e. the elements. On this point Johansen also agrees, because necessity is also, from Johansen's point of view, a matter of geometrical regularity: Necessity as a cause involves a type of causation that should be ascribed to the elements in virtue of the fact that they may be reduced to, and explained in terms of, the basic geometrical solids.

Besides the more specific objections I have tried to spell out above, there is another general, and perhaps more severe, objection to any account trying to explain the effects of necessity in terms of the geometrical makeup of the elements. Necessity as a cause, I shall argue, is in fact not at all introduced to explain the elements and their geometrical regularity, but it is instead introduced to describe and characterize a situation before the elements were thus construed. Yet, this is a point that might easily be overlooked, because before the more thorough investigation of the effects of necessity is initiated (at 47e), Timaeus does speak of the elements as if they were good examples.

[50] Cf. *Gorg.*, 508a-b.
[51] Johansen (2004, 100).
[52] Mason (2006, 291).

At 46d, as we have seen (in section 1.2), Timaeus speaks about the elements in connection with what he explains to be an auxiliary cause, i.e. a type of cause the effects of which in that context may be considered to be coextensive with the effects of necessity. For this reason it is also easy to get the impression that the elements as they are used in that context are good examples of what Timaeus means when he speaks about necessity as a cause. Granted that this would have been the final word on the matter, it would perhaps also have been adequate to account for the effects of necessity in these terms. If we take a closer look at this passage, however, and compare it with the passages in which the effects of necessity are analysed in more detail, we learn that such an explanation will not be sufficient.

At 46c-d, Timaeus uses the elements as an example of what he calls the auxiliary causes. In order to distinguish their effects from the effects of rational causation, Timaeus describes them in terms of irregularity and coincidence. Reason gives rise to the fair and the good and the elements to randomness and disorder.

In this passage, however, Timaeus does not ask further about the nature of these elements, and just as in the passages where he accounted for the effects of reason (29e-47e), the elements are also, at 46d, presupposed as the most basic material constituents. In the contexts where the effects of necessity are investigated in more detail, however, such a presupposition will no longer do.

> Wherefore if one is to declare how it [the cosmos] actually came into being on this wise [necessity being persuaded by reason], he must include also the form of the Errant Cause [necessity], in the way that it really acts. To this point, therefore, we must return, and taking once again a fresh starting point suitable to the matter we must make a fresh start in dealing therewith, just as we did with our previous subjects. *We must gain a view of the real nature of fire and water, air and earth, as it was before the birth of Heaven* [i.e. the cosmos]*, and the properties they had before that time*; for at present no one has as yet declared their generation, but we assume that men know what fire is, and each of these things.[53] (48a5-c1)

As Timaeus in this context also explains, the story of the universe thus far articulated lacked an account of the effects of necessity (47e). From the point of view of reason, it was reasonable to speak about the elements as if they were the basic material constituents of the universe. At this point, however, when the effects of necessity are to be investigated in a more thorough manner, no such speech is acceptable, because what is now at stake is something more basic than the elements thus understood. Insofar as we are to account for the real effects of necessity, we must take another point of departure. At 69b, Timaeus also spells out what is at stake here:

[53] My italics. Bury's capital letters.

> As we stated at the commencement all these things were in a state of disorder, when God [i.e. reason] implanted in them proportions both severally in relation to themselves and in their relations to one another, so far as it was in any way possible for them to be in harmony and proportion. For at that time nothing partook thereof, save by accident, nor was it possible to name anything worth mentioning which bore the names we now give them, such as fire and water, or any of the other elements; but He [i.e. reason], in the first place, set all these in order, and then out of these He constructed this present Universe. (69b2-c2)

As this passage makes clear, the (geometrical) ordering and construction of the elements also belong to the effects of reason. Before the elements were construed in accordance with harmony and proportion they were not even worthy of the names we now give them. In this situation they were something else and it is this we must now investigate if we are to understand the effects of necessity.

Now, I must grant that this call for further investigation, articulated in this way, does seem to leave the option open that this further investigation might be the geometrical account Timaeus eventually turns to (at 53c). As we shall see, however, this is not the option Timaeus chooses. If one follows the investigation Timaeus sets out to pursue at 47e, one will also soon realize that it is not the geometrical makeup of the elements that he is after, but instead the notoriously difficult notion of what is called *the third kind*.

1.2.5. The Third Kind

From the point of view of reason, and in the story of how the demiurge once created order out of disorder (29e-47e), the material constituents of the universe were assumed to be fire, water, air and earth (31b, 32b and 32c). As Timaeus at 47e sets out to investigate these material constituents of the universe in a more thorough matter, however, this assumption will no longer do. These elements cannot in fact be considered to be *elements* (στοιχεῖα) at all.

> [F]or at present no one has as yet declared their generation, but we assume that men know what fire is, and each of these things, and we call them principles (ἀρχαί) and presume that they are the letters (στοιχεῖα) of the Universe, although in truth they do not so much as deserve to be likened with any likelihood, by the man who has even a grain of sense, to the class of syllables (συλλαβή).[54] (48b5-c1)

That which was formerly called fire, water, air and earth, and which was then considered to be the material building-blocks of the universe must now be given a more thorough investigation. In terms of the elements we only

[54] Plato is here presumably playing with the word "στοιχεῖα", which can mean both *elements* and *letters*.

spoke of what was caused by reason, Timaeus argues, but now we must also investigate what is caused by necessity.

Knowing that Timaeus will eventually come to explain the elements in terms of the geometrical solids (53c), one might have expected him to pursue that story here. But that is not what happens. Instead, Timaeus starts out by articulating what could perhaps be described to be a kind of experiential datum.[55]

Trying to capture what seems to be designed to be a description of a common experience Timaeus also goes on to describe how we in reality never perceive any of the elements in any fixed or stable state (49b-50a). These so-called elements always seem to change, and as soon as one tries to fix any one of them, it transforms into another. As it appears ("ὡς φαίνετα", 49c7), Timaeus says, the so-called elements transform into each other in a circle (κύκλος, 49c6).[56] And therefore, he continues, there is really no reliable (πιστός) or certain (βέβαιος) way to speak about them (49b). Instead of using notions formerly known as fire, water, air and earth, Timaeus insists that we now instead introduce something new. We need something else in reference to which our words can be more secure.[57] And accordingly he introduces what he calls a *third kind* ("τρίτον […] γένος", 48e4, cf. 49a1).

Now, this *third kind* is supposedly called *third* in virtue of its ontological status. Before, Timaeus explains, when he was dealing with things from the point of view of reason, a twofold distinction was sufficient. It was then sufficient to distinguish two kinds: an intelligible paradigm and a realm of perceptible copies.

The intelligible paradigm, he explains, is invisible. It is not affected by change. It can only be understood by reason and teaching. It cannot be affected by persuasion and it is accompanied by a true account (51d-52a).

The copies in the realm of perceptible things are like the objects in the realm of the paradigm. The copies share names with their paradigms. They can be perceived by the senses. They are in constant motion. They are grasped by opinion which can be affected by persuasion, and they cannot really be accounted for at all (51d-52a).

From the point of view of necessity, however, and insofar as the material constituents of the universe and the so-called elements are to be given some solid ground, this distinction is apparently not sufficient. Instead, a new kind must be introduced (48e-49a).

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[55] I borrow this description from Harte (2002, 135).

[56] At 54b, Timaeus comments on this description and argues that this cycle of transformation does not apply to the elements when they have been ordered in accordance with form and number.

[57] There has been a long running (philological) debate on this issue. Since nothing in my argument really hangs on it, I do not intend to try to adjudicate, or even enter, this debate here. For a discussion, see Harte (2002, 252ff) or Zeyl (2000, livff).

As is well known, Timaeus also goes on to explain the nature of this third kind with the help of a threefold set of images. Initially, it is explained in terms of gold, secondly in terms of the odourless base of perfumed ointments and, thirdly, in terms of a mould.

All of these images, which we shall take a closer look at in a moment, also capture the name that the third kind is initially given.[58] It is called a receptacle (ὑποδοχή, 49a6), and it is so called presumably because it receives (δέχομαι, 50b) the perceptible copies. As a receiver the third kind can also be said to somehow care for the sensible world. It is like a nurse (τιθήνη, 49a6). Apparently not being restricted to any specific shape or kind, the receptacle is also called all-receiving (πανδεχής, 51a7). Likened to a mother (50d), the third kind is not only that *in which* ("ἐν ᾧ", 49e7) and that *out of which* ("ἐκεῖθεν", 49e8) the copies of the intelligible forms are made, but it is also that which makes it possible for us to have something stable and secure to refer to when we look at the perceptible world and say of it that it is (52b).

Suppose, Timaeus explains, that someone makes different shapes out of gold, and that he constantly alters the figures he makes. If someone would come, point at his creations and ask what they are, the most secure answers would be to say that they are gold – and not that they are any of the constantly changing forms (50a-b). The same account (λόγος), Timaeus says, must also be given to that which receives all bodies (50b). It must always be given the same name, because it never departs from its own capacity (δύναμις, 50b8). Although it *always* receives *everything* ("ἀεὶ τὰ πάντα") it never takes on any of the shapes (μορφαί) it welcomes (δέχομαι, 50b5 and 50b6). Its own nature cannot be derived from the nature of the shapes and forms it is supposed to receive.

Perhaps it is also for this reason that the third kind is likened to a mould (ἐκμαγεῖον, 50c2) for everything (πᾶς).[59] Being somehow shaped (διασχηματίζω) and moved (κινέω) by that which enters it (50c) the third kind appears to be different (ἀλλοῖος) at different times (ἄλλοτε, 50c4). But, as Timaeus goes on to explain, it cannot for that reason be said to have any properties of its own. It is rather like that odourless base out of which perfumed oils are made (50e). It is totally void of any shape (ἄμορφος, 50d7). And this is apparently the case, because it is only as such that it itself can be undetermined enough not to affect or pollute all (ἅπας) of those forms (ἰδέαι, 50d7) that it is supposed to receive from without (ποθεν, 50e1).

> Therefore let us not speak of her that is the mother and receptacle of this generated world, which is perceptible by sight and all the senses, by the name

[58] For a good and critical discussion of how these images have been treated in the interpretative tradition see Derrida (1997). See also Sallis (1999).

[59] Cf. *Theaet.,* 191c-d, where Socrates uses the same term to describes a lump of wax, which is to serve as an image for the memory.

> of earth or air or fire or water, or any aggregates or constituents thereof: rather, if we describe her as a kind invisible and unshaped, all-receptive, and in some most perplexing and most baffling way partaking of the intelligible, we shall describe her truly. (51a4-b2)

Timaeus' account of the third kind is both difficult and perplexing, and it has given rise to a variety of interpretations and explanations. There are, however, two principal lines of interpretation that have persisted over the years: One that takes the third kind to be *space*, and one that takes it to be *matter*.[60]

Those, on the one hand, that take the third kind to be *matter* prefer Timaeus description of it in terms of gold, and they also often put much weight on the image of the odourless liquid. Those, on the other hand, that prefer to understand it in terms of *space,* often have other qualifications in mind. The most obvious argument is of course that Timaeus, at around 52a-b, explicitly uses the word χώρα (space) to describe it, but indeed also because it is referred to as being the place (τόπος) into which the sensible copies enter and from which they also depart. Furthermore, since Timaeus argues that it is not only necessary that the third kind provides room (ἕδρα) for all things that are generated (γένεσις), but also that this is necessary because anything must be in a place and occupy some space in order not to be nothing (οὐδείς), there are certainly passages that support this line of argument.

1.2.6. The Effects of Necessity

The problem, however, is that in either case one will need to neglect certain aspects of Timaeus' description of the third kind for the sake of others. In addition, this dilemma has also given rise to a kind of anachronistic debate regarding the nature of space and matter. In order to develop a notion of either space or matter that is able to explain the third kind one will need to redefine these notions to such a degree that it may in fact seem pointless to use them at all.[61]

As many scholars nowadays acknowledge, this debate also reflects what Keimpe Algra has described as "wrongheaded (essentialist) presuppositions concerning the 'real nature' of space and matter with, as a corollary, premature conclusions about the incompatibility of space and matter as labels of one and the same entity".[62]

Timaeus clearly uses both spatial and material imagery so as to qualify and describe the third kind, but these descriptions must be put in context. It is also from such a perspective most modern readings of these passages nowadays depart. Instead of trying to fit Timaeus' description of the third

[60] For a discussion of this and of how these lines of interpretation may be possible to trace back to the old dispute between Cherniss and Gulley, see Zeyl (2000, lxiiff).
[61] This problem is also acknowledged by Zeyl (2000, lxiii).
[62] Algra (1995, 77).

kind with more or less (in)adequate notions of space and matter, many contemporary scholars argue that the introduction of the third kind should rather be understood as an attempt on Timaeus' part to further explain the causal factor he calls *necessity*.[63] Before reason (or the demiurge) entered the picture and ordered the universe in accordance with proportion and harmony, the only operating cause was necessity. And, as we have seen, it is in the context where Timaeus initiates a more thorough investigation of the effects of necessity that he introduces the third kind. Accordingly we also have reasons to believe that the third kind is introduced to further describe a pre-cosmic situation, and, in effect, that a good way to understand the third kind is in terms of how Timaeus describes this situation.[64]

On this reading, there are also three notions that suggest themselves as central and significant. The pre-cosmic situation is described to be *disordered*, *irrational* and *multiform*. Allow me to spell these out one at a time and put them in their proper contexts.

1.2.6.1. Disorder

Disorder (ἀταξία, 30a5), being disordered (ἄτακτος, 46e5) or moving disorderly (ἀνωμάλως, 52e3), first of all, is a description of the pre-cosmic situation that Timaeus initially introduces at 30a. Before the universe emerged as an *order* (τάξις, 30a5), it was in a disordered state. Everything moved about (κινέω) disharmoniously (πλημμελῶς) and irregularly (ἀτάκτως, 30a5) and there was no beauty or goodness (30a-b).

One way to understand this condition of the universe is to do so in terms of how Timaeus describes its fate. In this context we also learn something important about this in terms of motions. All the motions pertaining to the pre-cosmic situation, Timaeus explains, except one, were eventually taken away.

> For movement He [i.e. the demiurge, eventually also called *reason*] assigned unto it that which is proper to its body, namely, that one of the seven motions which specially belongs to reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις); wherefore He spun it round uniformly in the same spot and within itself and made it move revolving in a circle; and all the other six motions He took away (ἀφαιρέω) and fashioned it free from their wanderings (ἀπλανής). (34a1-5)

[63] Osborne (1996, 200), for example, insists that this be the case: "[Timaeus] needs the concept of the receptacle [i.e. the third kind] to explain the nature of necessity". This view is also shared by Harte (2002, 251).

[64] In contrast to the basic idea shared by Mason, Morrow and Johansen, then, founded on the assumption that the elements and their geometrical constitution ought to be the primary object of concern in trying to understand necessity, we have reasons to believe that it is instead the pre-cosmic situation and the third kind we must examine.

In terms of what the demiurge once had to work with, Gregory Vlastos also captures this situation quite concisely.[65] "[W]hen he creates the 'body' of the universe: there is no question of pushing it off to a start, but only of *subtracting* from it the six 'wandering' motions".[66] These motions were there before. They cannot blame reason (νοῦς) for their wandering ways. And rather than being understood as an addition of some kind of rational components, we can understand the effect of reason in terms of reduction, subtraction and transformation. Reason (or the demiurge) reduced the seven wandering motions to one – revolution – and transformed the six pre-cosmic movements of the universe in accordance with reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις).

Now, in the description of the third kind, Timaeus does supposedly also have this set of not-yet-subtracted motions in mind when he describes how it moves around disorderly (ἀνωμάλως, 52e3).

> [O]wing to being filled with potencies that are neither similar (ὁμοῖος) nor balanced (ἰσόρροπος), in no part of herself is she equally balanced, but sways disorderly (ἀνωμάλως) in every part. (52e1-3)

This is a difficult passage. But what I want to point out, however, is less difficult to see. The disorderly (ἀνωμάλως) behaviour we are here dealing with is supposedly better understood as an abundance of movement than as a lack thereof. In the pre-cosmic situation there are supposedly more motions, and of different kinds, than are required in a rational and ordered situation. When reason does it proper work, all of the disorderly motions of the pre-cosmic universe are reduced to the only one properly corresponding to reason (νοῦς). Before this reduction, everything is irrational and without measure:

> Before that time [i.e. before the interference of reason], in truth, all these things were in a state of irrationality (ἄλογος) and without measure (ἄμετρος), [and] fire and water and earth and air, although possessing some traces of their own nature, were yet so disposed as everything is likely to be in the absence of God. (53a7-b4)

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[65] In the *Phaedrus* it is quite clear that all motion has its *origin* in soul. But, as Vlastos points out, the notion used to describe this origin is ἀρχή, but ἀρχή can, however, just as well be translated as something like *leader* or *ruler*. And with such a translation, we would end up with quite a different picture. Soul is not the origin of movement, but its governor and ruler. This is so because soul, being the bearer of reason, is best, and should therefore rule. This, however, does not imply that everything else is firm and stable; on the contrary. There are lots of other types of movement. This type of interpretation also solves a lot of problems. For given that movement is exclusive to soul, many interpreters have also had a hard time reconciling this presupposition with the idea that the world of becoming is also in constant chance and transformation. Admitting that movement can be said in at least two ways, as mere movement (change and transformation) and as good movement (originating in soul), many problems pertaining to this difficulty are thus also solved. See Vlastos (1939).

[66] Vlastos (1939, 81).

As we saw in the quote above (34a1-5), before the rational reduction of the disorderly movements of the pre-cosmic situation, Timaeus describes the six motions in which it moves around in terms of their wandering.[67] This *wandering* quality is, of course, also one of the basic qualities Timaeus ascribes to necessity. If we are to understand the effect of necessity, Timaeus explains, we "must include also the form of the wandering cause (τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας), in the way that it really acts" (48a6-7). Granted that we accordingly also have reason to believe that these wandering motions – described at 34a so as to qualify the six non-rational motions – corresponds to the irrational and disorderly motions – ascribed to the third kind at 52e – it also seems reasonable to take these types of movements (redundant and wandering) to be effects of necessity. Necessity is the cause of all motions save the rational one (revolution). It causes an abundance of motions that, for the rational condition of the universe, are redundant and superfluous; and whatever objects these movements pertain to, necessity gives rise to disorderly behaviour.

Now, although these characterizations of the pre-cosmic situation do tell us something about the way that Timaeus wants us to imagine the pre-cosmic situation, we still need to inquire further about the objects we are actually dealing with here, i.e. about whatever it is that moves about in disorderly ways. From the point of view of Masson, Morrow and Johansen, the answer would have been the elements. But insofar as I am right in claiming that Timaeus is after something else now, the question remains.

One promising answer to this question, I believe, is what Timaeus comes to call *traces* (ἴχνη, 53b2) of the elements. As we shall see, these traces do not only correspond to the disordered movements of the pre-cosmic situation by being irrational, in Timaeus' account they also seem to play the basic role of material constituent. But in order to understand why these traces may be understood to play this role we must go back to Timaeus' basic presuppositions.

1.2.6.2. Irrationality

Before this universe was ordered and made into the perfect and unified whole it is today, Timaeus explains, there were three things.

> Let this, then, be, according to my verdict, a reasoned account of the matter summarily stated, – that being and space (χώρα) [i.e. the third kind] and becoming were existing, three distinct things, even before the Heaven came into existence. (52d1-3)

[67] When the universe was brought to order it was made *free from wandering* (ἀπλανής, 34a5).

What we are dealing with is thus (a) the intelligible paradigm, (b) the third kind and (c) the copies in the realm of perceptible things. This description of the pre-cosmic situation also answers to the *Timaeus'* basic ontology (see section 1.2.5): Everything that is distinct and perceptible is what it is in virtue of its likeness to a form (εἶδος, 51c4).[68] Fire, for example, is fire because there is a form for fire (cf. 51b and 51c). That which is perceived as fire is perceived as such because it is like the form which makes it possible to be perceived as such (cf. 51b).

This type of relationship is however something that cannot be said to be actualized before the interference of reason, because it was exactly this relationship that the demiurge established when he brought order and beauty to the universe. This is a rational relationship. The principle goes like this:

> [W]hen the artificer of any object, in forming its shape and quality, keeps his gaze fixed on that which is uniform, using a model of this kind [being comprehensible by thought and account ("νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν", 28a1)], that object, executed in this way, must be beautiful. (28a6-b1)

Now, in a situation where this principle has not yet been implemented, however, there cannot plausibly be any such relationship between the copies and the model. Even if Timaeus claims that there were three things before the universe was ordered, it seems unlikely that he would also describe this situation as beautiful. Before the qualities and shapes of the objects are formed in accordance with the model, they cannot yet have been made beautiful in virtue of having been made copies of their intelligible paradigm-forms.[69]

Given that nothing in the situation caused by necessity thus corresponds to any intelligible form, and that whatever we are dealing with here cannot be said to correspond to what would be able to make it like something comprehensible by thought and account ("νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν", 28a1), one might perhaps expect that this situation should be described as some kind of unaccountable nothingness. This is however not how Timaeus will come to describe it. Instead of claiming that the effects of necessity make up some kind of undifferentiated and imperceptible void, his description of the situation will rather be of something both moving, as we have seen (in section 1.2.6.1), and, as we shall see (in section 1.2.6.3), of something that will show itself off to be seen in all sorts of ways ("παντοδαπὴν […] ἰδεῖν φαίνεσθαι", 52e1).

What we are dealing with here, however, is not, as in the case of the situation caused by reason, described in terms of the elements proper (as at 31b,

[68] This is at least a description of the situation that Timaeus votes for (51d).

[69] If the universe prior to the interference of reason would also have a form, all of its qualifications must also have forms (cf. 51c4). Yet, since Timaeus is quite clear in saying that form and number are the effects of reason, it seems unlikely that he also would have them to be effects of necessity.

for example). As we saw in the quote above (53b4-6), it is instead described in terms of something Timaeus chooses to call *traces* (ἴχνη, 53b2). It is also here that irrationality enters the picture. Let us take a look at the relevant passage again:

> Before that time [i.e. before reason entered the picture], in truth, all these things were in a state of irrationality (ἄλογος) and without measure (ἄμετρος), [and] fire and water and earth and air, although possessing some traces (ἴχνη) of their own nature, were yet so disposed as everything is likely to be in the absence of God […] (53a7-b4)

These traces (ἴχνη) have given rise to a lot of interpretative uncertainty, but insofar as we may take them to be a description of what would be left if we were to abstract all interference of reason, they may be plausibly understood.[70] Reason taken away only traces of the elements are left. That is why they are irrational.

> [A]nd inasmuch as this was then their natural condition [the traces being irrational and without measure], God [i.e. reason] began by first marking them out into shapes by means of forms and numbers. And that God constructed them, so far as He could, to be as fair and good as possible […] (53b4-6)

As Timaeus thus continues to explain, the elements have in the pre-cosmic situation not yet been ordered according to numbers (ἀριθμοί) and forms (εἴδη, 53b5). Insofar as this is also a reference to the following story about how the elements eventually became ordered and constituted as the geometrical solids, we also have reasons to believe that the notion of a trace (ἴχνος) is used so as to describe how the elements were before reason made them "to be as fair and good as possible" (53b5-6).[71]

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[70] See Harte (2002), Osborne (1996) or Cornford (1937).

[71] At 68e1-3 we read: "And so all these things were taken in hand, their natures being determined then by *necessity* in the way we have described, by the craftsman of the most perfect and excellent among the things that come to be (ταῦτα δὴ πάντα τότε ταύτῃ πεφυκότα ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὁ τοῦ καλλίστου τε καὶ ἀρίστου δημιουργὸς ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις παρελάμβανεν)". Translation by Zeyl, in Cooper (1997). This is supposedly a reference back to the account beginning with the story of how the traces of the elements were once ordered in accordance with forms and numbers, via the account of the basic solids thus construed, their properties and mechanisms, how they affect sense-perception, what, in light of this, heat, coldness and weight are, what up and down are, what pain and pleasure are, what taste and hearing are, and ending with an account of what the colours are. Now, for example, if Timaeus does mean that the traces of the elements are to be understood in terms of how the demiurge once ordered them in accordance with form and number, how can he also say that this is something determined or brought about by necessity ("πεφυκότα ἐξ ἀνάγκης")? How can what is determined or brought about by necessity also be determined or brought about by reason? If the rational make-up of the elements is an effect that should be accounted for in terms of necessity, why does Timaeus tell us that the elements were thus ordered by reason or the demiurge (at 53b4-6)? Or, from the other point of view, if we accept that the rational make-up of the elements is an effect of reason, how are we to account for the fact that Timaeus also says that they are determined or brought about by necessity (at 68e)? One solution could be to understand ne-

In the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, there are no proper elements. There are only traces of elements; disorderly moving around without any appropriate focus or orientation. Perhaps one could liken this pre-cosmic situation to the situation of a new born and uneducated child.[72] The child has traces (or seeds) that suggest that it might one day become fair and good. Through education and training it can develop. The possibility is there. But judging from its actual behaviour, its rationality is far away. It has not yet been properly ordered in accordance with form and number, and it moves around disordered and confused.

1.2.6.3. Multiformity

Now, this last point has some explanatory value, I believe, because it makes it plausible to further comprehend how Timaeus continues to describe this pre-cosmic condition of the universe. Just like in the case of a new born and uneducated child, thus understood, this situation seems to be described with careful consideration to the possibilities it must contain. Not yet being a situation in which reason has made its impact and construed those characteristics that are appropriate in a well-ordered and unified condition – e.g., the right type of movement (revolution), number and form – the pre-cosmic situation must nevertheless have the possibility to develop in accordance with such an impact.[73] Granted that reason does not create from nothing, but works with the material constituents provided by necessity (as argued in section 1.2), the situation must also already contain the possibility of everything that might eventually develop; yet in a way that is not yet ordered in accordance with form and number. The traces of the elements are the appropriate example. Timaeus' way of phrasing the matter also makes this point clear. Since the pre-cosmic situation cannot be properly accounted for in terms of the relationship between the paradigm and the copy, Timaeus spells this out in terms of the third kind. Before reason entered the picture, he explains, being ignited, liquefied, earthed and aired, the third kind appeared

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cessity and reason as tools of analysis, in the same way Aristotle may be said to use the notions of form and matter. They can be applied on different levels. Something that on a greater scale may be understood to pertain to necessity, e.g. the elements, may on a smaller scale be understood to pertain to reason, e.g. the elements as geometrical solids. The macro-cosmos may be analysed in *necessary* and *rational* components, i.e. body (the elements) and soul. Yet, these components may also themselves be further analysed in the same way. Thus the elements can also be analysed in *necessary* and *rational* components, i.e. as traces (necessity) and number-forms (reason). I am not sure how far one can push this idea, but it may have some explanatory power.

[72] The explanatory value of likening the pre-cosmic situation and the movements of the third kind to an infant child is also appreciated by Zeyl (2000, liii), who also deems it appropriate to describe the development of the universe in terms of education.

[73] Johansen (2004, 95) articulates a similar requirement.

(φαίνω) in all imaginable ways and swayed (σείω) in all possible directions (cf. 52e1).[74]

> [B]ut owing to being filled with potencies (δυνάμεις) that are neither similar (ὅμοιος) nor balanced (ἰσόρροπος), in no part of herself is she equally balanced, but sways disorderly (ἀνώμαλος) in every part, and is herself shaken by them and shakes them in turn as she is moved. (52e1-5)

The potencies (δυνάμεις) Timaeus is here referring to are most likely the *traces* of the elements. And, as it seems reasonable to believe, they are described to lack similarity and balance, because they have not yet been given their proper geometrical makeup. Instead they are in a state prior to this. As such, however, they do apparently also shake the third kind; and because of the unbalanced momentum she receives from them, they are also shaken back: "[J]ust as the particles that are shaken and winnowed by the sieves and other instruments used for the cleansing of grain" (52e6-7), Timaeus explains, so are the traces moved around (52e1, cf. 34a).[75]

Now, the situation might perhaps still appear to be quite desolate; and inhabited, perhaps, only by some scattered groups of vague traces. As Timaeus describes the situation, however, it will turn out to be a lot more. In depicting its basic characteristic, he not only claims that it is a situation in which the third kind is ignited, liquefied, earthed and aired, he also claims that the situation indeed is submitted (πάσχω) to all other affections (πάθη) that can be said to follow (συνέπομαι, 52d-e). Although Timaeus is clearly not specific as it comes to what this might entail, this lack of specificity is at least clearly qualified: the third kind shows itself off to be seen in all sorts of ways ("παντοδαπὴν […] ἰδεῖν φαίνεσθαι", 52e1).[76]

For this reason it is also plausible to think that the third kind is given one of its proper names in terms of its all-receiving ability. It is supposed to be

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[74] Since it here seems as if there would be a kind of movement that does not originate in soul, as pointed out by Clegg (1976, 54ff), this point is controversial. For a different view, see Vlastos (1939). See also n.65.

[75] The traces of the elements do however also initiate a kind of non-rational self-organization. Each type of trace is separated off and, in accordance with its type, piled up together (53a). Those traces that are similar (ὅμοιος) are pushed together (συνωθέω) and those that are dissimilar (ἀνόμοιος) separated off (ὁρίζω, 53a5). "It is things of like quality that come together", Cornford (1937, 202f) writes, "These things are the 'vestiges' [traces] of fire and the rest, before any shape has been given them. They come together on the principle, unanalysed (here as elsewhere) and assumed as obvious, that like things come together […] Granted that the qualities [of the traces] are active 'powers', and that like necessarily tend to like, 'the bodily', undirected by any intelligence [i.e. reason or the demiurge], might be imagined as advancing so far, but no farther, towards a cosmic order".

[76] "Plato's fondness for words compounded with -παν", Hawtrey (1983, 63) writes, "is obvious at the most cursory reading of his works". They are, however, often, he continues, used in scornful and pejorative ways. Here the word seems to be simply descriptive, perhaps, but one can surly suspect a certain discomfort. The word παντοδαπός, is according to Hawtrey (1983, 63), used 82 times throughout Plato. 24 of these times it occurs together "by some part of πολύς and is often employed to register Plato's distaste […] for plurality and diversity".

something that may receive everything ("τὰ πάντα", 50e5), by means of allowing all of these things to appear. And therefore it is called all-receiving (πανδεχής, 51a7). It always receives everything ("ἀεὶ τὰ πάντα", 50b8), we learn, and it is that which is supposed to welcome all (πᾶς) kinds of shapes (εἶδος, 50e4). It shows itself off in multiform ways (παντοδαπός, 52e1) and it assumes the form of all sorts of various things ("ποικίλου πάσας ποικιλίας", 50d5).[77]

The pre-cosmic situation and the effects of necessity are apparently not just only four vague groups of more or less distinguished traces of elements, but indeed inhabited by a great variety of whatever we might imagine to be made up of them, that is, as yet unaffected by the rules and order of reason. Although such a situation might seem to be quite undetermined, and indeed hard to imagine, it is presumably for these reasons that Timaeus qualifies this pre-cosmic situation as irrational (ἄλογος), immoderate (ἄμετρος, 53a8), disorderly (ἀνωμάλως, 52e3) and multiform (ποικίλος, 50d5). It lacks measure (53b). It moves and sways in all directions (52e), and it is not yet regularized in conformity with number and proportion (e.g. 53a-b).

1.2.7. Demiurgic Cognition

This characterization of the pre-cosmic situation is also confirmed by the way Timaeus depicts it at the very outset (30a). Long before Timaeus introduced the notion of necessity (48a), the description of the pre-cosmic situation as a multiform situation of irrationality and disorder was clearly already anticipated: Seeing that the pre-cosmic situation was not in a state of rest (ἡσυχία), Timaeus explains, but discordantly (πλημμελῶς) and irregularly (ἀτάκτως) moving (κινέω) around, the demiurge brought order (τάξις) out of disorder (ἀταξία, 30a).

This enactment of the rules of reason was an act in lack of envy (φθόνος), we learn, because the demiurge was a good god (29e).[78] As one might suppose, however, such a characterization of the demiurge may not tell the whole story. The demiurge cannot only have had his eyes fixed on what was rational and good, because he must also have been able to handle the situation with which he was initially faced. He did not create out of nothing. Besides being able to understand the beauty and goodness he was about to actualize, he must also have been able to appreciate the situation out of which they were to be made.

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[77] Cf. 87a and *Rep*., 398a, where παντοδαπός is used to describe the multiform aspect of the sophist. Cf. also 59c and *Rep.*, 588c and 605a, where ποικίλος is used to describe the multiform aspect of the lowest part of the soul, depicted as multi-headed (πολυκέφαλος) and called a monster (θηρίον).

[78] With regard to the status of the demiurge in relation to whether one should take Timaeus' creation story to be literal or metaphorical, see Zeyl (2000, xxff). See also Cornford (1937, 34ff) or Johansen (2004, Ch.4).

As we have seen, however, the effects of necessity, and thus the demiurge's initial point of departure, is not structured in any rational way. The pre-cosmic situation, which the demiurge was supposed to handle, was clearly not a situation accountable in terms of a rational order. Instead it was just as multiform as it was disorderly and irrational. For even if it had a set of distinguishable qualifications, one might wonder how the demiurge was supposed to understand it at all, let alone how he was supposed to order it.

Granted that the impact of the demiurge may be equated with the impact of reason, however, Timaeus does give us some answers.[79] Furthermore, Timaeus does in fact also quite explicitly spell out how to understand that kind of thought that besides reason must have been a part of the demiurgic mind.[80] The most obvious answer does of course come as Timaeus' explicit account of how to understand the pre-cosmic situation in terms of the third kind. He is also quite careful here in chiselling out its epistemology.

As we soon shall turn to the soul and take a closer look at what Timaeus' account of the pre-cosmic universe can teach us about its incarnated condition, we will also see that this epistemology will turn out to be helpful. Before turning to the soul, then, let us first take a final look at the pre-cosmic universe and its peculiar epistemology.

1.2.8. The Epistemology of Cosmic Necessity: Bastard Reasoning

As we have seen, the third kind is introduced at 48e so as to supplement an insufficient account of the material components of the universe. Instead of an account of the elements, as they were presupposed in the former story, we are offered an account that is supposed to capture the situation as it was before, or independent of, the regularizations imposed by reason. The pre-cosmic situation that Timaeus accordingly tries to capture has also granted us a few ways to characterize it: It is *disordered* because it wanders about and sways in all six directions. It is *irrational* because it has not yet been ordered in accordance with form and number, and this unruly behaviour corresponds to the *multiform* ways in which it appears.

Now, the basic characteristics of the pre-cosmic situation (disordered, irrational and multiform) pertain to the third kind. The third kind is described as being able to take on any imaginable shape and form. Yet, for this very

[79] In the passages where the notion of cosmic necessity is most explicitly discussed, the demiurge is however somewhat absent (47e-53c). And instead of speaking of the works of the demiurge, Timaeus speaks of reason (νοῦς, 48a): It is reason that persuades necessity and it is reason that makes the universe as good as possible (48a). The significance of this demiurgic absence should not be neglected, but for that sake neither overestimated. Given the concurrence of the effects of their impact, there are certainly reasons to understand them in similar terms. They both give rise to order, beauty and goodness (cf. 30a and 48a).

[80] My argument does not rest on this, but I still want to make this point, because it seems reasonable to understand the personification of reason in terms of demiurgic activity.

reason, as Timaeus explains, it cannot itself have any particular form or shape. Instead of being something with a distinct form of its own, the third kind is totally shapeless (ἄμορφος, 50d). In itself, the third kind cannot be distinguished by means of any of the shapes it is to receive. It never appears in any of these ways. Just like the odourless base of a perfume, the less it is itself, the greater will its all-receiving ability be.

Granted that the pre-cosmic situation itself is supposed to be an overwhelmingly abundance of phenomena (cf. 52e1 and 50d5), it is thus furthermore also reasonable to assume that the third kind's degree of featurelessness should correspond to this abundance.

In other words, if the third kind's ability to receive would have been restricted to the effects of reason, there would not have been any reason for it to have this versatile nature (cf. 50d). If the third kind would have been designed only so as to receive the well-ordered products of reason, its ability to take on all (πᾶς, 50e) types of shapes and appear in any imaginable type of way (παντοδαπός, 52e) might seem quite out of proportion. Its multiform (ποικίλος, 50d) potentiality (50d and cf. 52e) seems to serve one important function. It is to be all-inclusive, that is, it is to be able to welcome everything we might imagine to appear.

Now, insofar as the third kind is introduced so as to be able to capture a situation so multiform that the basic distinction between paradigm and copy is no longer sufficient, the reason for its lack of features might seem quite perplexing. If the pre-cosmic situation is as multiform as I have tried to show, and the third kind is introduced so as to capture this situation, why is the third kind itself not described as being as multiform as the forms and shapes that it is supposed to be able to receive?

Granted that Timaeus' reason for introducing the third kind comes in terms of finding something reliable (πιστός) and certain (βέβαιος), however, this perplexity might seem less confusing. Introducing the third kind is presumably not an attempt to express or capture all of those multiform shapes inhabiting the pre-cosmic situation, but instead a way to speak of this situation in a reliable and secure way. But it is not an attempt to reduce the pre-cosmic irregularities to the rational order of a post-demiurgic situation either. Rather, it is an attempt to balance on this delicate edge.

As is often pointed out by Plato, things without stability and continuity cannot be adequately spoken about. One cannot account for them. About that which constantly transforms, wanders about, and always appears in different ways, we can never say anything certain (cf. 28a, 51e and 52a).[81] The pre-cosmic situation we are here dealing with has, of course, all the features of

[81] See for example, *Theaet.,* 182c-183b, where Plato describes what has been called "a radical Heraclitean" position, and which as such unravels all the problems pertaining to understanding that which changes in stable terms. For a discussion, see Gill (1987).

such a situation. And it can therefore not be reasonably and reliably spoken about at all.

The notion of the third kind is supposedly introduced in order to avoid this problem. The third kind is the receptacle of everything. It is supposed to be able to take on a multitude of shapes, but it is not supposed to have any shape of its own. Most likely, it is also for these reasons that the third kind is granted a kind in intelligibility (52b). Just like the paradigmatic forms, the third kind is invisible (ἀνόρατος). Just as that which is intelligible, the third kind never departs from its own nature. And just like the forms, it must always be referred to with the same name (cf. 50c and 51a-c).

The intelligibility of the third kind is, however, only a bastard kind of intelligibility, Timaeus explains (52b). Presumably this is the case because it is only granted its invisibility, its shapelessness and its stable nature in virtue of its capacity of being multiform. It is itself not that multitude of phenomena that it is supposed to be able to receive, but besides being that, however, it is nothing. It is only that which it is supposed to entail, but never in any specific way. For if it would be anything distinct, its (bastard) intelligibility would slip away. The third kind is only possible to understand insofar as it is confined to being something of a general nature, as it were. Yet, it is not a form (εἶδος, 51c4).

Now, the effects of necessity are not possible to speak of in any trustworthy way, but granted the third kind, they can nevertheless be determined by a singular notion. This notion is certainly quite perplexing. It is the most perplexing ("ἀπορώτατά", 51b1) of all, Timaeus says. But it nevertheless makes it possible to account for something without a rational and regularized nature in a way that does not force this account to conform to the disorder and multiformity of its subject matter. Supposedly, it is a way to capture the many in the one, yet without reducing multiplicity to unity.

It is supposedly also for this reason that the third kind gets an exclusive epistemological category of its own. The background is familiar, but, for the sake of clarity, let me spell it out anyway: On the one hand we have something unchangeable and invisible, i.e. the forms (often referred to as *being*). On the other hand we have something that always changes and that can be perceived by the senses, i.e. the perceptible things (often referred to as *becoming*). In the former realm, everything always remains in its own form (εἶδος, 52a1), while each thing in the latter realm, having the same names as those in the former, always comes to be, in order to soon disappear (52a, cf. 51d-e). In the world of being, each form is self-according-to-itself ("αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτὰ", 51c1, cf. 52a), while things in the latter are not. Now, besides these two kinds, Timaeus distinguishes the third kind (52b):

> [A]nd a third kind is ever-existing place (χώρα), which admits not of destruction, and provides room for all things that have birth, *itself being apprehensi-*

> *ble by a kind of bastard reasoning* by the aid of non-sensation (αὐτὸ δὲ μετ᾽ ἀναισθησίας ἁπτὸν λογισμῷ τινι νόθῳ) (52a8-b2).[82]

With regard to the idea that all matters should be treated in accordance with their natures (29b), the third kind can accordingly neither be understood nor categorized by means of the twofold ontological distinction. But more interesting, perhaps, it can neither be grouped in any of the two corresponding epistemological categories. The third kind cannot be submitted to the laws pertaining to the (rational) relationship between the two first kinds: It is neither understandable by means of thinking or reason (λόγος, 51e3), because it is really not intelligible, nor by means of opinion (δόξα, 51d4), because it is not perceivable (αἰσθητός, 52a5). Instead, we learn, it must be understood by means of *a kind of bastard reasoning* ("λογισμῷ τινι νόθῳ", 52b2).

The notion of bastard-ness that Timaeus thus puts in play basically means what one might expect: Something that is bastard is something that must be conceived external to any lawful relationship. The third kind has no legal father; and quite explicitly so, because Timaeus will also soon include these family-ties into his account: The father is likened the unchangeable paradigm, the son to the sensible copy and the third kind to the mother (μήτηρ, 50d3).

In contrast to the post-demiurgic situation, wherein which everything perceptible has been informed in accordance with a father-form, the third kind represents a situation in which no such father is yet present. The third kind cannot be confined to the relationship between the father and the son. Whatever we are to make of the fact that she is called a mother, we can at least be quite sure that the motherhood of the third kind cannot be understood in terms of the order and regularity exclusive to such a father-son relationship.

Granted that this (father-son) relationship is also something established by the demiurge, or at least by the persuasion of reason, it is also clear that the notion of the third kind is introduced so as to capture something that is not regularized by these confines. The third kind is something else: it is an ontological category – although singular – answering to a peculiar kind of cognition, and as such also granted an epistemology of its own. When we try to understand it, Timaeus explains, we understand it as if in a dream (52b). We can no longer make any clear distinction between the intelligible and the perceptible – between reality and illusion – because this distinction belongs to a realm of reality not yet realized. The dream hinders us, Timaeus explains, from seeing what is true, and what is true, he continues, is this: "so long as one thing is one thing, and another something different, neither of the two will ever come to exist in the other so that the same thing becomes simultaneously both one and two" (52d). But, this, indeed, is exactly what

[82] My italics.

the third kind does. It is simultaneously both itself and that whose shape and form it is supposed to take on.

1.3. Mortal Necessity

With the effects of necessity on the cosmic level thus sketched out we can now turn to Timaeus' treatment of the effects of necessity on a human level. As I have tried to argue, the effects of necessity on the cosmic level can be understood along the lines of three interconnected notions. Before reason entered the picture and ordered the universe in accordance with what was best, it was in a disordered, irrational and multiform condition. It strayed around in all directions. It was not yet ordered in accordance with proper form and number and there was no proper unity to the way it appeared (cf. 52e1). As I now shall argue, the effect of necessity on the human or mortal level can also be understood along these lines.[83] Drawing on this similarity, as I shall try to show, will also allow some fruitful interpretative moves that otherwise would not be possible.

As we briefly saw at the outset of this chapter (in section 1.1), besides being the cause of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, necessity is also said to be the cause of human incarnation. Due to necessity, Timaeus explains, the soul was placed in a body, and because of this incarnation, the soul is also entwined with the influx and efflux of perception.[84]

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[83] The notion of necessity that I argue for here, which is also in play on the mortal level, is the notion of necessity introduced at around 47e-48a in the cosmic context to stand in contrast to reason, i.e. necessity as the cause of disorder, irrationality and multiformity. It may perhaps be argued that Plato in connection with embodiment and incarnation is using necessity in a more non-technical sense, as it were, and thus more in line with the use of necessity at 28a, for example (cf. also 32a). There Timaeus says that it is necessary ("ἐξ ἀνάγκης") that everything has a cause, and that if the demiurge, in making the cosmos, imitates a model that *is,* and that is grasped by thought with the aid of reasoning ("νοήσει μετὰ λόγου"), then everything that he makes is necessarily ("ἐξ ἀνάγκης") beautiful. This use is hardly the same as when necessity is described to be *the form of the errant cause* ("τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας") at 48a6-7. As we shall see, and in view of how Timaeus, in connection with embodiment, also goes on to describe the condition of the incarnated soul in terms a set of notions that are also explicitly used to describe the effects of necessity on the cosmic level, e.g., randomness, disorder and irrationality (cf. 43a-b), I believe that there are good reasons to think that necessity in this (mortal) context is used in a more technical sense. For a similar view, see Zeyl (2000, lii, n.114 & lxxix). At the end of the day, although I do think that this point is important, it is not one on which my basic argument hang. The similarity between the pre-ordered condition of the soul and the pre-cosmic condition of the universe is clear in any case.

[84] For a clear and lucid discussion of Plato's view on perception in the *Timaeus*, see Brisson (1997). See also Karfík (2005) and Carpenter (2008). Perception, and Plato's theory thereof, is of course a matter that has been given thorough attention. See, for example, Sorabji (1993), Cooper (1970), Burnyeat (1976), or Frede (1987). These studies do however mostly concern *Theaetetus'* discussion of perception. For some remarks in connection to perception in the *Timaeus*, see Lorenz (2006, 94-118).

> And when, due to Necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης), they [the souls] should be implanted in bodies, and their bodies are subject to influx and efflux, these results would necessarily follow, firstly, sensation that is innate and common to all proceeding from violent affections; secondly, desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such as are naturally allied thereto […] And if they shall master these they will live justly, [and return] again to the semblance of [their] first and best state.[85] (42a3-b2 and 42d1-2)

When the soul is placed in a body it becomes bewildered. Torn from its place in the heavens, Timaeus explains, where the soul once dwelled in a star, the soul is planted on earth (41e-41a).[86] Its initial condition is broken apart, and due to necessity, the incarnated condition of the soul gives rise to a whole new field of violent affections and emotions (i.e. "desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such as are naturally allied thereto").[87] As we accordingly also might reasonably presume, in its "first and best state", as Timaeus has it (42d1-2), the soul was spared from all the hassle of life on earth. As an incarnated being, however, bewilderment, following from the affections of perception, is its primary and initial condition. And the living being (ζῷον, 43b1) that Timaeus now sets out to describe, is immersed in a life and a situation the basic characteristics of which may be accounted for as effects of its incarnation.[88]

As one might have presumed, and as Timaeus in this context also makes perfectly clear, such a bewildered condition is nothing to strive for. The alternative is also clearly spelled out. If one manages to control that unruly

[85] This is also repeated at 69c-d. Bury's capital letter.

[86] In connection to the problem of mortality, and *why there are mortal beings at all*, Vasilis Politis (manuscript) has pointed out that the solution to this problem may be understood in terms of the purpose of the creation of the heavenly bodies as constituents of space and time. If there are no mortal beings, as distinct from the heavenly bodies, both being parts of the physical world, then the purpose of creating the heavenly bodies would be in vain. The purpose and *raison d'être* of the heavenly bodies, Politis argues, is to constitute and articulate time and space. But, given that these bodies are not themselves subjects to what they constitute, there is a reason for the demiurge to make the young gods make mortal beings. Just as a clock needs things to time, the mortal beings are needed as subjects of space and time. Politis' account is certainly plausible, and it does as such also explain why there are mortal beings. Granted this, however, he does nevertheless not account for why the mortal beings, as subjects to space and time, behave in disorderly ways. It might certainly be the case that the mortal beings have an important role to play in the ordered universe, and that the demiurge has a good reason for making the young gods make them, but insofar as we are to account for their irrational and disorderly behaviour, a further explanation seems to be required. And since it seems implausible to think that the demiurge also had a reason to make them behave in irrational and irregular ways, there seems to be another casual factor in play here.

[87] Cf. Carpenter (2008).

[88] In this context Timaeus also takes great pains to spell out the mechanisms and functions of the material constituents, i.e. the body. The physiological mechanisms Timaeus thus sets out to describe are indeed also characterized in terms of necessity. Timaeus' physiological explanations are quite interesting in themselves, but what I am interested in here is rather the effects incarnation has on the soul. I am interested in psychology, not so much ancient physiology, although these accounts in the *Timaeus* are closely connected.

(θορυβώδης) and irrational (ἄλογος) mass (ὄχλος) the soul is now placed in, one will eventually return to the ideal condition of one's star (42d). Dominating by force of reason ("λόγῳ κρατήσας", 42d1), the body with which the soul is now connected, the living being, may manage to become master of itself.

In its initial, incarnated condition, however, the soul has not yet managed to enact the proper measures. Not yet being able to handle the violet affections pertaining to its embodiment, Timaeus explains, the soul becomes irrational ("ἄνους ψυχὴ γίγνεται", 44a8). "The souls", we read, and "the whole of the living creature (ζῷον) was moved, but in such a random way that its progress was disorderly and irrational (ἀτάκτως μὴν ὅπῃ τύχοι προϊέναι καὶ ἀλόγως)". And the reason for this, Timaeus continues, was because "it partook of all the six motions: for it progressed forwards and backwards, and again to right and to left, and upwards and downwards, *wandering* (πλανάω) every way in all the six directions" (43a6-b5).[89]

Before the incarnated soul has learned to order itself and before it has developed the proper ability to master the affections and emotions to which its incarnations gives rise, the living being is bound to be *wandering*. It is without rational make-up (47b). Just as in the case of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, necessity, on a mortal level, also causes a condition in which reason has not yet managed to prevail.

In the case of the universe, the account we are offered is supposedly thus articulated because Timaeus is trying to capture a situation before rational interference. In the mortal situation, Timaeus' description of the incarnated condition of the soul as irrational is supposedly articulated as such because Timaeus is here also trying to capture a situation before reason has managed to get the upper hand. In the latter situation, the incarnated being is left at the mercy of the effects of necessity and as such to the violent affections and emotions its body has immersed it in.[90]

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[89] My italics.

[90] The human body (just as all other bodies in the universe for that matter) is a part of the rational ordering of the universe. And although the demiurge gave the task of creating the human body to the young gods (42d6, cf. 42e and 69c), it is not only the case that the basic components of the body are the elements as basic solids (42e-43a), and thus elements that are rationally ordered according to form and number (53b-57e), it is apparently also put together in a way that Timaeus describes as having a (rational) purpose: Timaeus' accounts of the different parts of the body (the eyes, the ears, the limbs, the heart, the liver, etcetera) are clearly spelled out in a way that explains their rational function and purpose. The eyes, for example, are construed so as to make us able observe the movements of the heavens (47b-c); the liver, so that the rational part of the soul can persuade the appetitive, and so on. All parts of the body are supposedly construed so as to make the living being function as a whole. This rational construction of the body granted, however, Timaeus nevertheless considers the body to be the cause of everything gone bad (cf. 42c, 44b or 86e). It is because of the body that the living being gets sick, both in body and soul (86a-87c). It is because of its connection to the body that the soul gets irrational and disordered, and it is due to its incarnation that the soul can be said to be without control and self-mastery (cf. 42b or 42d). But how can something that is ordered in accordance with the rational purpose of the demiurge (which the young gods

Primarily pertaining to the involvement with the body though it does, Timaeus' description of the human condition is, however, soon supplemented with a more psychologically oriented account. When Timaeus eventually comes down to explain the further effects of necessity on the human level, he also introduces what he calls a *mortal soul*.[91]

> And they [the young gods], imitating Him [the demiurge], on receiving the immortal principle of soul, framed around it a mortal body, and gave it all the body to be its vehicle, and housed therein besides another form of soul, the mortal (θνητός) kind, which has within it passions both fearful and unavoidable – firstly, pleasure, a most mighty lure to evil; next, pains, which put good to rout; and besides these, rashness and fear, foolish counsellors both and anger, hard to dissuade; and hope, ready to seduce. And blending these with irrational sensation and with all-daring lust, they thus compounded in necessary fashion the mortal kind. (69c5-e6)

In this context, Timaeus also goes on to make a further distinction. He divides the mortal soul in two, and locates these two different parts in different regions of the body.

> And within the chest – or thorax, as it is called – they fastened the mortal kind of soul (τῆς ψυχῆς θνητὸν γένος). And inasmuch as one part thereof is better, and one worse, they built a division within the cavity of the thorax – as if to fence off two separate chambers, for men and for women – by placing the midriff between them as a screen. That part of the soul, then, which partakes of courage and spirit (θυμός), since it is a lover of victory, they planted more near to the head, between the midriff and the neck, in order that it might listen to the reason, and, in conjunction therewith, might forcibly subdue the tribe of the appetites (τὸ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν […] γένος) whensoever they should utterly refuse to yield willing obedience to the word of command from the citadel of reason. (69e3-70a7)

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imitated, cf. 42e or 69c) be lacking? In Timaeus' account of the construction and mechanisms of the human body, we do not seem to get any satisfying answer to this question (although the part of sickness is perhaps of some relevance, 81e-89d). Timaeus' account of human physiology does not seem to help us out here. In his account of the psychology of the incarnated being, however, Timaeus does seem to spell out some interesting reasons, yet in this case, however, only in terms of the effects of incarnation. So, although Timaeus makes is perfectly clear that it is because of the body that human life is in disorder and needs to be restored to its original and best state, his account of the (human) body does not seem to explain why. A better place to look for why Timaeus considers incarnated life to be lacking, I believe, is in the psychology he spells out, as I try to do. For a further discussion of the moral purpose of the human body and its organs, see Steel (2001) or Zeyl (2000, p.lxxxi).

[91] As has been persuasively argued by both Johansen (2004) and Carpenter (2008), the phrasing *mortal soul* should supposedly not be understood as aiming to express the fact that these parts of the soul, in contrast to the rational part, shall die. Rather, as Carpenter (2008, 46) puts the matter, "[m]ortal […] mean not 'dying', but […] 'concerned with the dying bit': it is that aspect or function of the soul that we have in virtue of involvement with mortal stuff, viz., in virtue of having a body".

As Timaeus here also continues to explain, the appetitive part of the soul is located below the midriff, i.e. in the belly, close to the stomach, in direct proximity of the liver and far away from the rational part (70d-71a). In this context Timaeus also likens this appetitive type of soul to a wild beast ("θρέμμα ἄγριον", 70e4). In terms that clearly are supposed to capture its unruly and distracting nature, Timaeus moreover explains that it is thus located because the further away from reason it is, the less it can disturb the rational deliberation going on in the head (70e).

This lowest or, as it soon shall be called, *third*, kind of soul, which at 70a5-6 is described in terms of a tribe or class of desires or appetites ("τὸ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν […] γένος"), is also further qualified at 77b:

> [It] shares not at all in opinion (δόξα) and reasoning (λογισμός) and reason (νοῦς) but in sensation (αἴσθησις), pleasant and painful, together with appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι).[92] (77b5-6)

As is famously known and as is clear from these passages (42a, 42d, 69d-e, 69e-70a and 77b, cf. also 69d-e, 88e and 90a), Timaeus thus distinguishes three soul parts pertaining to the human incarnated condition: The rational part (residing in the head), the spirited part (residing in the upper part of the chest) and the appetitive part (residing in the lower part of the chest, i.e. in the belly). Yet, as is also quite clear, Timaeus often treats two of these parts as one, collectively calling them *the mortal soul*.[93] Although their distinguishing characteristics are not impossible to single out, they are often spelled out in the same breath (as at 42a, 69d-e or at 90b). In both cases they are explained in terms of being effects of necessity. It is due to necessity ("ἐξ ἀνάγκης", 42a3-4, cf. 69e) that the soul is planted in a body and it is due to this incarnation's alliance with perceptions that the soul gets disordered (ἄτακτος), irrational (ἄλογος) and subjected to appetite (ἐπιθυμία) and erotic

[92] This passage, denying belief to the appetitive part of the soul, has given rise to an interesting discussion. See Lorenz (2006, 75ff & 95ff) and Moss (2008). In contrast to what is said in the *Timaeus,* Lorenz points out, belief (δόξα) is something that is said to be accessible to the appetitive part of the soul in the *Republic* (see especially at 603d1-3). Lorenz accounts for this difference in developmental terms (2006, 75ff). In the *Republic,* if I have understood him correctly, Lorenz argues that Plato has not yet developed any theory of how the appetite part of the soul can be influenced by the rational part (2006, 109). Instead their relationship is spelled out using a cognitive vocabulary, belief being one central notion (2006, 59). As Plato comes to write the *Timaeus*, however, belief is a notion that has undergone some transformation. Drawing especially on the *Theaetetus*, Lorenz (2006, 56) explains that Plato here starts to distinguish belief understood as involving the "the application of predicates" from "the apprehension of perceptual features". As a further sign of this more reason-exclusive notion of belief, Lorenz draws attention to how the relationship between appetite and reason is spelled out in the *Timaeus.* The appetitive part is here denied belief, and its relationship to the rational part is instead explained in terms of a set of perceptual features – the liver and the images and phantasms impressed on it, being the telling examples – a relationship that Lorenz argues is further elaborated in the *Philebus* in terms of the simile of the illustrated book.

[93] As noticed and discussed by Moss (2008, 15ff) and Lorenz (2006, 74ff).

desire (ἔρως). In addition, it is also due to necessity that the soul gets a feel for victory and glory. For although Timaeus does make it clear that the part of the soul partaking in spirit (θυμός) and courage is somehow inclined to listen to reason ("τοῦ λόγου κατήκοον ὄν", 70a4-5) and may share its cause in the struggle against appetite, these types of motivations do nevertheless both pertain to the mortal part of the soul.[94]

In what follows I shall eventually get down to the more distinct appetitive aspects of the mortal soul. Due to Timaeus' way of pairing spirit and appetite, however, I shall initially treat them together.

Now, we can here make an initial distinction between two conditions in which the incarnated soul can be. It can be in control of itself or it can lack such control. In the first case reason has the upper hand, and in the second, appetite and the love of strife (or victory), as Timaeus puts it.

> [H]e who has seriously devoted himself to learning and to true thoughts, and has exercised these qualities above all his others, must ineluctably and inevitably think thoughts that are immortal and divine, if so be that he lays hold on truth, and in so far as it is possible for human nature to partake of immortality, he must fall short thereof in no degree (90b6-c2). [But whosoever], then, indulges in appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι) or in love of strife (φιλονικία) and devotes himself overmuch thereto must of necessity be filled with opinions that are wholly mortal, and altogether, so far as it is possible to become mortal, fall not short of this in even a small degree, inasmuch as he has made great his mortal part.[95] (90b1-5)

In the first case, the soul has managed to order itself in accordance with reason. Reason, or the rational part of the soul, is in control. In this case one has allowed "the supreme part [of one's soul] to take counsel in peace concerning what benefits all [parts], both individually and collectively" (71a1-2). By

[94] Indicted by the fact that the parts of the dialogue that discusses the mortal soul are often referred to in terms of what Cornford (1937, 279) once called "the co-operation of reason and necessity", it seems as if the incarnated condition of the soul is thus both an effect of necessity and somehow also a product of reason (cf. 42e or 69c). The young gods created the mortal body and the mortal parts of the soul. They took the principle of the immortal soul, given from the demiurge, and gave it the body as a means of transportation. In turn they also made the mortal parts of the soul and placed them in the same body. Although all of this was done by the young gods, giving us reason to think that this was a rational act, at 69d5, Timaeus explains that it was nevertheless done in a necessary fashion (ἀναγκαίως). For a good and concise discussion of some of the problems pertaining to this passage, see Johansen (2004, 147ff). See also Zeyl's introduction (2000, lxxxi) to his translation, in which he suggests that this should be explained in terms of how necessity and reason (in the shape of the young gods) cause different aspects of the same things: "The material composition of these parts [the body's organs], and the characteristics they have in virtue of that compositions, are determined by Necessity. The triumph of Intellect [i.e. reason] over Necessity consists in the selection and shaping of just these parts to accomplish just those purposes".

[95] I have here reversed the order of how Plato introduces the two types of conditions. In the original, Plato first introduces the pre-ordered, mortal condition and then contrasts this to the ideal.

means of reason (λόγος, 42d1), one has accordingly also allowed the rational part of the soul to master (κρατέω, 42b2) the violent affections and emotions pertaining to the incarnated condition of the mortal soul.

> [Thus, by] dominating by force of reason (λόγος) that burdensome mass […] a mass tumultuous and irrational, [the soul] returns again to the semblance of his first and best state. (42d1-2)

Now, as we also saw at the outset of this chapter (in section 1.1), and as we shall see in more detail further down the line, this first and best state of the soul is one that it can only re-enter if it learns to order itself in accordance with the rational order of the universe. In this ideal condition the soul has devoted itself to the study of the universe, understood its divine composition, applied this knowledge to itself; and accordingly corrected the disordered movements its incarnation subjects it to.

> These [the harmonies and revolutions of the universe] each one of us should follow, rectifying the revolutions within our head, which were distorted at our birth (περὶ τὴν γένεσιν), by learning the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, and thereby making the part that thinks like unto the object of its thought, in accordance with its original nature, and having achieved this likeness attain finally to that goal of life which is set before men by the gods as the most good both for the present and for the time to come.[96] (90d1-7)

By imitating the unified, rational, ordered, harmonious, beautiful and proportionate universe, the soul has, in its ideal condition, and as far as this is possible for an incarnated being, become just as unified, rational, harmonious, beautiful and proportionate itself (90c-d). And as should now be quite clear, this is a condition that may only be accomplished by means of the rule of the reason.

In the second case, however, things are not as sound. In the case of the (newly) incarnated soul, no such rational rule is yet established. Having not yet been subjected to the laws of reason, the soul lacks a governing principle. Just like the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, then, the pre-rational condition of the incarnated soul is a condition that has not yet been harmonized and unified by the laws of reason. In this situation, the incarnated soul has not yet developed in accordance with the course that a proper education would bring, as Timaeus explains (44b).[97] It behaves disorderly. Its conduct

[96] Sedley (1999, 323) contests this translation, arguing that ”περὶ τὴν γένεσιν”, here translated as ”at our birth”, should rather be translated ”concerned with becoming”, thus indicating that the distortions we are here dealing with should really not be confined to the condition of a new born child, but extends to all humans that focus their thinking on things in the world of becoming.

[97] Later down the line Timaeus expands these points. A bad diet, he says, brings disease and this is due to excess and lack. Such disease is also due to a distortion of the proper and natural proportions of the elements of the body (82a-b). A bad education (86c), i.e. bad public and

is irrational, and it is not properly unified. Let us look at these three features of the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul one at a time and also further investigate how the pre-cosmic condition of the universe can help us out here.

1.3.1. Disorder

Disorder (ἄτακτος) is a qualification of the pre-ordered and incarnated condition of the soul that Timaeus makes at 43a-b. Due to necessity ("ἐξ ἀνάγκης", 42a3-4), as Timaeus puts it, and due the perceptions and violent affections its incarnated condition has entwined it with, the soul strays about in random.

> The souls, then, being thus bound within a mighty river [of perception] neither mastered it nor were mastered, but with violence they rolled along and were rolled along themselves, so that the whole of the living creature (ζῷον) was moved, but in such a random way that its progress was disorderly and irrational (ἀτάκτως μὴν ὅπῃ τύχοι προϊέναι καὶ ἀλόγως), since it partook of all the six motions: for it progressed forwards and backwards, and again to right and to left, and upwards and downwards, *wandering* (πλανάω) every way in all the six directions.[98] (43a6-b5)

Already in this passage can we see two things that connect Timaeus' notion of necessity on the human level with his account of necessity on the cosmic level. Not only is necessity on the human level here directly connected with *wandering* (πλανάω), a notion that Timaeus soon will use as one of the central denominations of necessity on the cosmic level (48a) – as *the form of the wandering cause* ("τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας") – Timaeus here also explains this in terms of what he refers to as *the six motions*. When the soul is connected to the mighty river of perception it loses control and starts to move around in all directions.

> [I]t partook of all the six motions: for it progressed forwards and backwards, and again to right and to left, and upwards and downwards, wandering (πλανάω) every way in all the six directions. (43b2-5)

Now, taken in isolation, this passage is not given any further explanation. On the human level, Timaeus neither explains how these movements are sup-

private speeches (λόγοι), in a bad city, also brings disease, but now in the soul (87b). The diseases of the soul are also due to lack and excess, i.e. lack of reason and excess of the pleasure and pain primarily pertaining to appetite: "We must agree that folly is a disease of the soul; and of folly (ἄνοια) there are two kinds, the one of which is madness (μανία), the other ignorance (ἀμαθία). Whatever affection a man suffers from, if it involves either of these conditions it must be termed 'disease'; and we must maintain that pleasures and pains in excess are the greatest of the soul's diseases" (86b2-5).

[98] My italics.

posed to be handled nor what they represent, and the question of how to read this passage remains.

If we are allowed to take the pre-cosmic condition of the universe as a parallel condition here, however, we get an important clue. For as we have seen (in section 1.2.6.1), on the cosmic level, Timaeus also makes it quite clear both what these motions represent and what the demiurge did with them: In virtue of reason he reduced them all to one. ("[A]ll the other six motions he took away", 34a4-5). In contrast to the one movement that belongs to reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις) – i.e. revolution or circularity – these six movements represent that wandering (cf. 34a5) condition of the universe that it was in before it was made fair and good.

In this context, however, it is of course not the universe Timaeus is describing, but the conduct and behaviour of an incarnated soul. As we accordingly have reasons to believe, there is also an important similarity to be noted here. It is presumably neither arbitrary nor coincidental that Timaeus has chosen to describe the pre-ordered condition of the soul in the same terms as he decided to describe the pre-cosmic condition of the universe (cf. 34a and 30a).[99] Conceptually, necessity seems to be used in the same way, i.e. as the cause of disorder, and also causally necessity seems to bring about the same type of effects, i.e. the six motions – both on the cosmic and on the mortal level.[100]

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[99] Although not explicit, Johansen (2004, 142ff) also draws on this parallel in order to further understand what goes in these passages on human incarnation.

[100] In connection to the similarity between the pre-cosmic condition of the universe and the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul, one might object that this similarity only goes so far. One difference between these two accounts is that while Timaeus, in accounting for the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, introduces *the third kind*, we get nothing of that sort in his account of embodiment and incarnation. Accordingly, one could perhaps argue that Timaeus' more thorough investigation of the elements and of the effects of necessity on the cosmic level cannot be said to correspond to his account of the incarnated situation. Granted the (ideal) similarity between the ordered condition of the embodied soul and the cosmic condition of the universe, however, a similarity that is of decisive importance for Timaeus' account of human development (cf. 47b and 90c-d), this objection will turn out to be too crude. If one argues that *different contents* and *different explanatory means* in principle undermine the similarity of what is to be explained, then one would also need to argue that Timaeus' account of the cosmos cannot be said to correspond to his account of what a perfectly ordered soul should be. One can think about it like this: In the same way as the movements of the heavenly bodies, for example, are to explain the nature of reason on the cosmic level, without having any corresponding contents on the mortal level, so can the third kind help us to explain the pre-ordered condition of the soul (cf. 47a-b). The point (as in any analogy) is that although the contents and way of explanation in the two stories are different, the principles are the same. In the ideal situation it is order, rationality and unity that are to be explained, while in the non-ideal situation, it is disorder, irrationality and multiformity. When Timaeus introduces the third kind, he does so to further explain the effect of necessity. And although this certainly gives rise to a different type of explanation than when accounting for the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul and the effect of necessity on the mortal level, this difference does not undermine the similarities. As we shall see, the way that the pre-cosmic condition of the universe is characterizes will turn out to be crucial in order to understand the mortal situation. What Timaeus says about the third kinds' disordered, irra-

Drawing on this similarity, there is also something more that the pre-cosmic story can tell us about the disorder of incarnated life. For if the movements of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe are to be understood as a situation inhabited by an array of redundant movements (as argued in section 1.2.6.1) we have reasons to believe that the movements pertaining to the condition of the incarnated soul, here described, are also of such a redundant nature.

Before the proper enactment of the rule of reason (λόγος, 42d1), the incarnated soul – *the living being* (ζῷον, 43b1), as Timaeus has it – moves around in all six directions (43b). Just as in the case of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, this is due to necessity. In terms of necessity we have all (ἅπας, 43b) motions, but in terms of reason only one. The disoriented and newly incarnated soul strays about in all directions, while the soul that is ruled by reason has managed to reduce its superfluous movements to the only motions adequate for reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις), i.e. revolution (cf. 34a). Just like in the case of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, then, the living being is accordingly involved with a number of motions that in the course of its rational development ideally shall all be taken away. In the ideal and rational life they have no role to play. Although this might appear to be a utopian or unrealizable ideal for an incarnated soul, with a body the involvement with which forever shall continue to cause disorder (cf. 44a-b), this nevertheless says something about how Timaeus values and understands the soul's incarnated condition.

From the story of the development of the universe we learn that when order is made out of disorder the process is not really an addition but rather a reduction, a subtraction and a transformation (as agued in section 1.2.6.1). When Timaeus comes down to explain how the situation of the incarnated soul might be understood before reason has learned to take proper control, he also explains (43c-e) that such a situation is inhabited by a number of obstructing (πεδάω) movements that cause fracture (κλάσις) and disruption (διαφθορά). These are supposedly not movements that are of any greater value to the being who is subjected to them. Eventually, Timaeus explains (44b-c), given proper education (and nutrition), these movements shall also be conquered, corrected and transformed in accordance with the movements that make a human being intelligent (ἔμφρων).

Now, this point also brings out a more technical side to the story. Although the conclusion will be the same, let us take a brief look at the details of the matter.

When Timaeus in this context explains what happens to the soul when it is incarnated, he also continuously uses notions that he introduced in the

tional and immoderate (cf. 53a) condition, for example, will also further help us to understand what he had in mind when he used the same notions in connection with the pre-ordered condition of the embodied soul (see sections 1.3.1. and 1.3.2.5-1.3.2.7).

account of the construction of the universe. When the soul, due to its incarnation, is exposed to the river of perception, Timaeus explains, the motions proper to the soul, which are called the orbits of *the same* and *the different*, are disrupted in their motions by the most plentiful (πλείστη) and mightiest (μεγίστη) of distractions (43c).

> [V]iolently shaking the revolutions of the soul, they [on the one hand] totally blocked the orbit of *the same* (τὴν μὲν ταὐτοῦ παντάπασιν ἐπέδησαν) by flowing contrary thereto, and hindered it thereby in its ruling and its going; while, on the other hand, they so shook up the orbit of *the different* (τὴν δ' αὖ θατέρου διέσεισαν) that in the three several intervals of the double and the triple, and in the mean terms and binding links of the 3/2, 4/3 and 9/8 – these being not wholly dissoluble save by Him [the demiurge] who had bound them together – they produced all manner of twistings, and caused in their circles fractures and disruptions of every possible kind, with the result that, as they barely held together one with another, they moved indeed but moved irrationally, being at one time reversed, at another oblique, and again upside down. (43d1-e4)

The orbits of *the same* and *the different* that Timaeus is here referring to are most likely the orbits he, in his account of the universe, ascribed to the world-soul. For when Timaeus, in the human context, describes the creation of the individual souls he also makes it quite clear that these souls indeed were made with the same principles in play. In accordance with the way the demiurge once made the soul of the world, Timaeus now explains that he also made the individual souls; although in this case with slightly less perfect ingredients (41d).[101]

Now, the soul of the world is a complex mixture of divided and undivided parts of being, sameness and difference. According to Johansen's reconstruction of the most common interpretations of this process, shared by Grube, Cornford and Robinson, this is what we get:

> He takes divided and undivided parts of each being, sameness, and difference. He first mixes the divided and the undivided parts of being together, and then, the divided and undivided parts of sameness, and again the divided and undivided parts of difference. Next, he mixes the three compounds together to form the final soul stuff. This is the whole that he then goes on to divide in 'as many parts as were fitting'. He divides the soul stuff into intervals according to mathematical ratios and cuts it up into two bands or strips. The strips are bent into circles, one called the circle of the same, another the circle of the different. The circle of the different is further subdivided into seven circles, which move, in accordance with mathematical proportions, inside the circle of the same in different directions and at different speeds.[102]

[101] As one might note, the demiurge only made the rational part of the individual soul. The creation of the mortal soul-parts he delegated to what is called the young gods (42d6, cf. 69c).
[102] Johansen (2004, 138).

Granted that Johansen is correct in his reconstruction, and without getting too deep into the reasons for why Timaeus has chosen to elaborate such a complicated and, to most interpreters, notoriously difficult account, there is nevertheless one idea that emerges from this that is of direct relevance to my argument.[103] Timaeus understands proper thought as a circular motion.[104] And as we have seen (in section 1.2.6.1), circularity or revolution is indeed the only movement proper to reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις, 34a2). Connecting the condition of the individual and the universe, David Sedley once put this thought properly into motion.

> The immortal, rational soul-part housed in the head, has natural circular motions like those of the heavens […] Circularity is appropriate to rational thought, no doubt, because circular motion is eternal, and reason has eternal entities or truths as its proper objects.[105]

In its ideal condition the movement and outlook of the soul is a circle, both in the case of the individual soul and in the case of the world-soul. As we have seen (in section 1.2.6.1), Timaeus is also quite clear in taking circularity or revolution to be the only proper movement of reason (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις, 34a2). This is the case, however, not only for the soul, but apparently also for the body. For, as we also have seen (in section 1.2.6.1), when the demiurge construed the body of the universe, its movements were made to be of the circular kind.

> For movement He [the demiurge] assigned unto it that which is proper to its body, namely, that one of the seven motions which specially belongs to reason and intelligence; wherefore He spun it round uniformly in the same spot and within itself and made it move revolving in a circle; and all the other six motions He took away and fashioned it free from their aberrations. (34a1-5)

Now, when the individual soul – which, due to its circular strips of sameness and difference, is endowed with the circular motions of reason and intelligence – is incarnated, it is exposed to the river of perception. The circular motion of the soul, i.e. the circles of the same and the different, is then diso-

[103] According to Johansen (2004, 139), there are two basic reasons for why the world-soul is described in this way, one *kinetic* and one *cognitive*. From the kinetic point of view, he writes, this "composition of the world-soul is supposed to explain the soul as a principle of motion". This means that the world-soul is said to be circular because this will explain why the cosmos moves in a circular way (cf. 36e). From the cognitive point of view, the world-soul is described in this way because this is supposed to explain how the cosmos thinks. This, Karfik (2005, 199) writes, "is supposed to explain the rational faculties of the world-soul; its capacity to produce a *logos*, a rational account of what it encounters. […] Owing to the […] character of its substance, put together from indivisible and divisible ingredients, the world-soul has access, so to say, to both these realms: to that of the intelligible forms as well as to that of the bodies which come into being and pass away". See also Frede (1996a) or Cornford (1937).
[104] As argued by Johansen (2004), Sedley (1999) and Frede (1996a).
[105] Sedley (1999, 316f).

riented. Sameness is blocked (43a). Difference is twisted in all types of ways (43a-b). Just as the whole living being, which now strays around in all six directions, the soul also starts to stray about in irrational ways.

> [T]hey [the circles of the same and the different] moved indeed, but moved irrationally (ἀλόγως), being at one time reversed, at another oblique, and again upside down. Suppose, for example, that a man is in an upside down position, with his head resting on the earth and his feet touching something above, then, in this position of the man relative to that of the onlookers, his right will appear left to them, and his left right, and so will theirs to him. This, and such like, are just what the revolutions of the Soul experience with intensity.[106] (43e3-9)

Johansen offers a good image to explain how one can picture this situation.

> Imagine dropping a stone into a torrid river. The stone makes rings in the water, which, however, are soon disturbed by the motions of the running water. In the same manner, the circles of the soul lose their circular shape under the impact of the motions that flow through the body.[107]

When the soul in incarnated, its proper circular motion is disrupted by the linear (Johansen) or rectilinear (Sedley) motions of the river of perception.[108] Exposed to the irrational and irregular motions its incarnation now involves it in, it becomes just as irregular and irrational itself (44a-b).

Eventually, however, given proper education and nourishment, as we saw above (in section 1.3), these irregular and irrational movements might be corrected.

> [When] the soul's orbits regain their composure, resume their proper course and establish themselves more and more with the passage of time, their revolutions are set straight, to conform to the configuration each of the circles [the same and the different] takes in its natural course. They then correctly identify what is the same and what is different, and render intelligent the person who possesses them. And to be sure, if such a person also gets proper nurture to supplement his education, he'll turn out perfectly whole and healthy and will escape the most grievous illnesses.[109] (44b1-c2)

In the first case, then, the living being is out of control. It is subject to the whole array of distracting and disordered motions. In the second and ideal case, however, these motions are put to order. Proper development unhindered, they are overpowered, subjected to the rule of the circular (reason) and transformed accordingly. And if the human being lives a whole life like this, mastering (κρατέω) the effects of perception (42d), and "dominating by

[106] For a good discussion of these passages, see Karfík (2005, 200ff).
[107] Johansen (2004, 143).
[108] Cf. Sedley (1999, 316).
[109] Zeyl's translation, in Cooper (1997).

force of reason (λόγῳ κρατήσας) that burdensome mass" we know as the body (42d1), he will also, in his next incarnation, be reborn as the star he once was (42b).

1.3.2. Irrationality

Another important notion that Timaeus put in play in accounting for the incarnated condition of the soul is *irrationality*. In its incarnated condition the soul becomes irrational (ἄνους, 44a8), we learn, and as such, the whole living being – the soul (43e) and the body (43b) – also strays around irrationally (ἀλόγως).[110]

As we have seen (in sections 1.2.6.1 and 1.3.1), Timaeus argues that both disorder and irrationality are effects of being involved with the six motions. With regard to the soul's incarnated situation, he does however also further explain the consequences of this. As has been mentioned in passing, proper behaviour, i.e. the rule of reason (λόγος), will amount to reincarnation in the star in which the soul once dwelled. Non-proper behaviour, however, will have quite different consequences. It will, firstly, make you a woman, and, in turn, a beast.

As we shall see, this story of reincarnation is crucial. It does not only further outline how Timaeus understands the disordered condition of the incarnated soul, it also makes it possible to better understand the crucial link between the pre-cosmic condition of the universe and the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul. Let us therefore take a closer look at this idea of reincarnation and let me put it in context.

1.3.2.1. The Argument from Reincarnation

At the outset, Timaeus explains, all souls were sown in a star (cf. section 1.3). They were all in their first incarnation given the same preconditions. Eventually, however, the souls were spread out over the tools of time (the heavenly bodies) in accordance with what was appropriate. Some souls apparently ended up on earth and some of them became humans. The human race was supposed to be the most god-loving of all and it was also made to have a double nature. The best part of this double nature was called man, we learn, and the other, we might guess, woman (cf. 41e-42a).[111]

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[110] One could of course also translate ἄλογος as *lack of proportion*. In this context, as we shall see, ἄλογος is, however, used to pick out the behaviour of an animal, and, accordingly, *irrationality* seems to be the proper translation.

[111] One might perhaps get the impression that the first generation of incarnated soul's lacked gender, since Timaeus only later down the line accounts for the generation of woman, and then as a reincarnated man who has not managed to fully control himself. As Cornford has pointed out, however, there is really nothing in the text that suggests this. There were two genders from the beginning, and although some men get reincarnated as women (in their

Now, if these humans were able to rule (κρατέω) over the perceptions and emotions that their incarnation had involved them in, they would live a just (δίκη, 42b2) life, but if not, they would not. If they would spend their time well (εὖ, 42b3), they would also be reborn as the star they once were. But if they would fail they would be reborn as women (42b, cf. 90e). As if that were not sufficient, however, Timaeus also goes on to explain what happens if not even womanhood would make one avoid what is bad. Given that one persists to live a life of badness, one will in the next life be reborn into the nature (φύσις) of something bestial (θήρειος).[112]

> If even then [after being reborn as a woman] he still could not refrain from wickedness (κακία), he would be changed once again, this time into some wild animal that resembled the wicked character he had acquired.[113] (42c1-4)

In accordance with this idea of reincarnation, Amber Carpenter has perceptively argued that all incarnated beasts, in fact, have the same type of soul, humans and other beasts alike.[114] Given the psychological makeup of the human soul, all animals are also endowed with the tripartite soul. We all have reason, spirit and appetite.

As Carpenter further points out, all incarnated beings do as such also share a similar goal. Referring to 42b, Carpenter argues that we are all on the same path to perfection. We are all to become like the universe, that is, to restore ourselves to our star-like condition.

> The *telos* of animals is the very same as ours: to restore the proper circling of rational activity and thus ultimately to return the soul to its native star. […] Recall that for a horse, say, 'to be good' is exactly the same thing as for a human – it is to restore the natural state of the rational soul.[115]

The ideal condition, for humans and animals alike, is to be in perfect harmony with the universe. All disordered movements are supposed to be restored to circularity. The body should no longer stray about in irrational ways and, as we have seen, this is all accomplished by allowing reason to rule. In this (ideal) condition, the living being is also perfectly harmonized with itself. Just like the universe it is supposed to imitate, it is perfectly unified. Carpenter does not spell it out as such, but granted her discussion of the unity of the soul in general, this is presumably a view she would endorse. According to

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second incarnation) this does not imply that there were only men at the outset. The fact that erotic desire (ἔρως) is a desire Timaeus also ascribes to the first generations of humans also suggests this. See Cornford (1937, 145, n.1).

[112] Cf. also *Phdr.,* 248d, where a similar story of rebirth is being offered.

[113] Translation taken from Carpenter (2008, 48). Her square brackets. My parenthesis. The idea of the resemblance between the human and the animal she becomes is of course important. I shall return to this idea.

[114] Carpenter (2008, 47ff). See also Karfík (2005).

[115] Carpenter (2008, 50).

Carpenter, one of the central reasons for considering the soul to be a single unity is the fact that it ideally should be ruled by reason. It is the rule of reason that unifies the soul and makes it an integrated whole.[116]

> And this activity of concern [the ruling by the rational part of the soul], the process of considering wisely with respect to one another the various bodily and social demands and impulses in a person, makes these otherwise disparate inclinations into a unity.[117]

In the non-ideal condition, however, reason is not in charge. The rational part of the soul has not managed to take the lead, and the living being is still enmeshed in the disorders of irrational behaviour. It is such humans that eventually will be reborn as beasts. As Carpenter accordingly argues, animals can be considered to be like (what Timaeus considers to be) bad humans, i.e. humans that do not live in accordance with the rule of reason.

> [I]n both character and intellect, animals are identical to confused, ignorant human beings: [sharing the same type of soul] their very same circles of Same and Different are running amok in both cases, just as when humans are young and overwhelmed by sensory input or influences. In animals, just as in most humans, the rational part of the soul is at the mercy of the less rational parts of the soul, so that animals are irrational in the truest sense of the word: they *have* rationality, but they consistently fail to follow it; it is, if it operates at all, a slave to the passions.[118]

A human that does not display correct rational behaviour will in his next life be reborn as a beast, and this beast will correspond to the confused and ignorant behaviour of the human. In fact, as Carpenter argues, it is also his irrational behaviour that, in the next incarnation, will determine the type of animal he will be reborn as.

> The soul migrating between two different kinds of body must have the same qualities before and after it migration; for the qualities come first, and so *determined* the second body.[119]

Now, leaving Carpenter's argument for a while (I shall return to it in section 1.3.3), we might also take a look at a few passages from the *Timaeus* that seem to confirm Carpenter's account.

At 90a-92c, for example, Timaeus makes it perfectly clear that a beast is a human (male) that has failed to discipline himself. A beast is a human that has not paid enough attention to "how a man should both guide (διαπαιδαγωγέω) and be guided by himself so as to live a most rational life

[116] Carpenter (2008, 44).
[117] Carpenter (2008, 44).
[118] Carpenter (2008, 51).
[119] Carpenter (2008, 48).

(κατὰ λόγον ζῴη)" (89d4). What determines the course of one's reincarnated destiny is one's behaviour. Not having paid enough attention to philosophy and to the nature of the universe, and thus having failed to appreciate the unity and harmony one is supposed to imitate, Timaeus explains that one will be reborn in accordance with this behaviour.

> And the wild species of animal that goes on foot is derived from those men who have paid no attention at all to philosophy nor studied at all the nature of the heavens, because they ceased to make use of the revolutions within the head and followed the lead of those parts of the soul which are in the breast [i.e. spirit and appetite]. Owing to these practices they have dragged their front limbs and their head down to the earth, and there planted them, because of their kinship therewith; and they have acquired elongated heads of every shape, according as their several revolutions have been distorted by disuse.[120] (91e2-91a2)

In this case we are dealing with humans that have displayed what Timaeus apparently considers to be land-walking characteristics. Human (males) that behave in other non-rational ways will, however, be reincarnated as other types of beasts. Paying too much attention to the skies and being too light and fleeting will make you a bird (90d). Not looking at the skies at all, primarily being stupid (ἄφρων), will make you many-footed (πολύπους) or even legless (92a). Being ignorant (ἀνόητος) and simple (ἀμαθής), and thus not even worthy of breathing pure air, will make you a creature of water (92b), and if you have behaved cowardly (δειλός) and have lived an unrighteous (ἄδικος) life, you will be reborn as a woman (γυνή, 90e). Apparently pertaining to different types of behaviour though they do, there is however also something that connects them all, and the one thing that is the general cause of being incarnated as an animal is irrational conduct and a lack of the rule of reason. No one who would be reincarnated as a land-walker, bird, centipede, worm, fish or woman, has managed to control himself properly. He has, in various ways, been irrational, and the animal type in which he shall be reincarnated corresponds to his type of irrational behaviour.

1.3.2.2. Bestiality

Now, with regard to the argument from reincarnation, it seems, Timaeus' notion of irrationality may be understood in terms of bestiality. As such, bestiality is also explicated in terms of a lack of similarity with the cosmic universe. (This is why an irrational human gets reincarnated as a beast and not as a star.) Not being like the universe means not being unified, rational,

[120] Not having used the circular motions of rational thoughts, their heads have lost their spherical shape. Sedley (1999) points out that the best type of head is a sphere, because proper thought is circular in its motions.

ordered, harmonious, beautiful and proportionate (cf. section 1.2 and 1.3.1). Just like the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, then, this is an irrational condition, and a condition not yet properly ordered in accordance with reason and order.

The *connection* between irrational behaviour and bestiality can thus be said to have been sufficiently outlined. The condition of a non-rational human corresponds to the condition of the beast that this human will be incarnated as. A further question is how we are to qualify this connection.

I shall try to outline an answer to this question in two steps. First I am going to make a short detour and gather some brief points from what Plato has to say about bestiality in the *Republic*, and then try to reconfirm these points by means of the textual evidence of the *Timaeus*. Through these means, I believe, it will be possible to understand the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul in more detail and to further examine why Timaeus considers its behaviour to be bestial.

1.3.2.3. Bestiality in the Republic: A Parallel Case

In the *Republic* bestiality is a notion that is primarily used to describe the lowest type of human behaviour and experience.[121] As is well-known, the lowest part of the soul is in the *Republic* also likened to a beast (θηρίον)[122] – a multi-headed (πολυκέφαλος) one (*Rep.,* 588c7-8). Yet, because of the multiform (ποικίλος, *Rep.,* 588c7, cf. 605a) nature of this beast, this beastlike part of the soul cannot really be given a proper name (*Rep.,* 580d-e). It is called both appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικός) and money-loving (φιλοχρήματος), but these descriptions are also carefully qualified (*Rep.,* 580e). As it appears, the bestial part of the soul can neither be adequately determined nor denominated. Because of its multiform nature ("διὰ πολυειδίαν"), it cannot be given one single name (*Rep.,* 580d-e).

Furthermore, the beast in the *Republic* is also something that represents the unruly behaviour of *the multitude* (οἱ πολλοί). Given the city-soul analogy and with reference to the tripartition of the city, the lowest part of the city, i.e. *the multitude,* is also explicitly likened to a beast (θρέμμα, *Rep*., 493a9, cf. also 588c and 586b). And just like the lowest part of the soul, we learn, the multitude is irrational (ἄλογος, *Rep*., 591c6).

For this reason, the multitude is also in many ways similar to another character-type that in the *Republic* is argued to be governed by the beast-like part of his soul: *the tyrant*. In this context, the tyrant is described to be someone that is living a life totally without law (ἀνομία, *Rep*., 575a2). The

[121] For a further discussion of animality in Plato, see Sorabji (1996) and Sorabji (1993, 9ff).
[122] Θηρίον can also be translated as *wild beast*, such that are hunted, according to Liddell, Scott and Jones's *A Greek-English Lexicon* (henceforth LSJ) or even as *monster*, as might be adequate in passage from the *Republic* (588c).

life of the tyrant is a life in anarchy (ἀναρχία, *Rep*., 575a1) and it is sometimes even described as being governed by madness (μανία, *Rep*., 573b4).

Now, these qualifications, which Plato in the *Republic* seems to associate with bestiality, belong to the same semantic field as those we face in the *Timaeus*. There is a clear semantic affinity between terms like anarchy (ἀναρχία), lawlessness (ἀνομία), irrationality (ἄλογος), multiformity (ποικίλος) and terms like unruly-ness (θορυβώδης), lack of reason (ἄνους), disorder (ἄτακτος), and being beast-like (θήρειος). They are all somehow qualifications that seems to defy the proper order of reason.[123]

1.3.2.4. Bestiality in the Timaeus

Now, returning to the *Timaeus*, we can also confirm these general ideas of bestiality. For also in the *Timaeus,* as we have seen (in section 1.3), is the lowest part of the soul, the appetitive part, likened to a beast (θρέμμα, 70e) – a wild (ἄγριος) one, in fact.[124] This part of the soul is not only incapable of understanding reason (71a) but it is certainly also described in a way that suggests that its nature cannot resist to cause trouble and disturb the rational order. In contrast to spirit (θυμός), then, who may listen to reason and obey, this bestial part of the soul may not (69e and 70a). And, as we have seen (in section 1.3), it was also for this reason that this part of the soul was placed as far away from the head as possible – "[H]oused as far away as possible from the counselling part (τοῦ βουλευομένου), and creating the least possible turmoil and din, [this placing] should allow the supreme part [i.e. reason] to take counsel in peace" (70e5-71a3).

In this context, the appetites, causing such din and troubles, are primarily spelled out in terms of nourishment, i.e. food and drink.

> But then that appetitive part of the soul which has to do with foods and drinks (τὸ δὲ δὴ σίτων τε καὶ ποτῶν ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς), and all the other wants that are due to the nature of the body, they planted in the parts midway between the midriff and the boundary at the navel, fashioning as it were a manger (φάτνη) in all this region for the feeding of the body; and here they tied up this part of the soul like a wild beast (ὡς θρέμμα ἄγριον), but one which they could not avoid sustaining along with the others, if a mortal race were ever to be. (70d7-e5)

[123] All of these terms used so as to pick out and describe what an animal is like do, of course, diverge from the set of terms we today use. Nowadays we rather ascribe a limited set of objects of desire to certain specific animals. Acknowledging our lack of information and research, modern zoology and biology nevertheless consider animals to have quite predictable and comprehensible patterns of behaviour. Regardless of how we should value such a modern conception of animality, Plato does not seem to share it.

[124] For a discussion, see Barker (2000, 93ff).

Although Timaeus does not immediately clarify what he might be referring to in saying that this appetitive part of the soul also pertains to "all the other wants that are due to the nature of the body", we can always make a qualified guess. And just before, at 69d, earlier at 42a, and later down the line at 91b, the bestiality of appetite is also spelled out in terms of *erotic desire* (ἔρως).

At 42a, *erotic desire* is closely linked both to the body and to the motivations caused by (human) incarnation. After having claimed that it is because of necessity that the soul in planted in a body, Timaeus goes on to introduce *erotic desire* as the first effect of this incarnation. This is also repeated at 69d in terms of the mortal soul. Due to its incarnated condition, all of the effects of incarnation are mixed "with irrational sensation and with all-daring erotic desire (αἰσθήσει δὲ ἀλόγῳ καὶ ἐπιχειρητῇ παντὸς ἔρωτι συγκερασάμενοι)" (69d4-5). At 91b, such *erotic desire* and the organs to which it pertains are then further elaborated in terms of their beast-like nature.

> Now because it has soul in it (ἔμψυχος), and had now found a vent [to the outside], this marrow, instilled a life-giving appetite (ζωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) for emission right at the place of venting, and so produced the erotic desire of procreation (τοῦ γεννᾶν ἔρωτα). This is why, of course, the male genitals are unruly and self-willed, like an animal (ζῷον) that will not be subjected to reason, and driven crazy by its appetites (ἐπιθυμίας οἰστρώδεις), seems to overpower everything else.[125] (91b2-7)

This description does presumably only pertain to men, but the organs pertaining to *erotic desire* are equally beast-like in the woman.

> And in women again, owing to the same causes, whenever the matrix or womb, as it is called – which is an indwelling animal (ζῷον) desirous of child-bearing – remains without fruit long beyond the due season, it is vexed and takes it ill; and by *straying* (πλανάω) all ways through the body and blocking up the passages of the breath and preventing respiration it casts the body into the uttermost distress, and causes, moreover, all kinds of maladies;

[125] Zeyl's translation (slightly modified). The context in which this description occurs is a context in which Timaeus seem to be giving a physiological explanation of *erotic desire* (91a). In order to explain the link between the psychological motivation and its physiological counterpart he introduces the marrow. "For life's chains, as long as the soul remains bound to the body, are bound within the marrow, giving roots for the mortal race" (73b). One part of the marrow has a round shape and is located in the head, where it is supposed to receive the divine seeds (73d). The other part of the marrow "was to contain the other and mortal part of the soul" (73d). One of the young gods, we learn, "fashioned […] the marrow, devising it as a universal seed-stuff for every mortal kind. Next, he engendered therein the various kinds of soul and bound them down; and he straightway divided the marrow itself, in his original division, into shapes corresponding in their number and their nature to the number and the nature of the shapes which should belong to the several kinds of soul" (73c). For a further discussion of the basic constituents of the marrow and how the marrow connects all the part of the soul and the body, see Johansen (2004, 150).

> until the appetite (ἡ ἐπιθυμία) and the erotic desire (ὁ ἔρως) of the two sexes unite them.[126] (91b7-d1)

Both desire for nourishment and the organs pertaining to *erotic desire* are in these contexts described in terms of their similarity to beast-like behaviour.

1.3.2.5. Appetitive Motivations

Given what this small detour has offered, we now have reasons to believe that Timaeus understands irrationality as bestiality and, further, that the connection between irrationality and bestiality can be qualified in terms of appetite. As we have seen, the general condition of an irrational human corresponds to the condition of the beast that such a human will be incarnated as. Although Timaeus does seem to admit of some kind of degrees here (e.g. woman, land-walking, many-footed, zero-footed and oyster) the cause of eventually being incarnated as a beast is a lack of rational conduct. All humans that will be reborn as beasts have failed in their task of imitating the universe.

Now, since the humans we are thus dealing with behave like the animals they will become, one promising way to understand their present condition is to look at that aspect of their condition which is most bestial. As we have seen, this is the behaviour that the appetitive part of their souls gives rise to. Accordingly, it is also plausible to think that the primary source of motivation of these beast-like humans is appetite, and that the notion of appetite provides a key to understand their general psychological condition.

As it comes to appetite, Timaeus seems to offer a twofold account. Pertaining to the appetites that are exemplified in the dialogue, i.e. *desire for nourishment* and *erotic desire*, appetite can be *controlled* and appetite can be *free*. Given what Plato has to say about this in the *Republic*, however, and since Timaeus in the *Timaeus* seems to treat these types of appetites as examples, it is plausible to think that they are just that. Accordingly, we should leave it open here whether or not Timaeus also believes that appetite can have other objects than food, drink and sex. Yet, since these are the only examples he explicitly discusses, I shall focus on these.

In the first case, the appetites are controlled and due to the force of reason sufficiently domesticated (cf. 71a). As it comes to nourishment, Timaeus does not really spell out any details of the matter, but given the framework with which he is working we can suppose that properly controlled appetite for nourishment has to do with a sound relationship to food and drink. One eats and drinks in accordance with what is proportionate and appropriate, i.e. not too much and not too little, and this involvement with food and drink is

[126] My italics. For a discussion of the womb and its wandering behaviour, see Adir (1995/1996, 153-163) and Krell (1975, 400-421).

only granted insofar as it is required for survival (cf. 70d-e). With regard to *erotic desire* the principles are supposedly the same. Timaeus does not say much about proper sexual desire either, but given what he says of its opposite, as we soon shall see (in section 1.3.2.7), we might presume that it is quite moderate and that it mainly has to do with the survival of the species.

Thus construed, appetite may look like a puzzle. Appetite is a matter of clear and well-defined needs that can only be satisfied by the correct pieces. Appetite is to be understood in terms of a set of determined objects, the acquisition of which causes pleasure and the lack of which causes pain, and these objects, as we shall see (in sections 1.3.2.6 and 1.3.2.7), are food, drink and children.

In the second case, however, i.e. the case in which appetite is *free*, we shall see that Timaeus has another story to tell; and in this case Timaeus' account of appetite is better understood along the lines of redundancy and immoderation.

1.3.2.6. Food and Drink

First of all, Timaeus is quite clear in describing what an unrestricted relationship to food and drink would look like.

> Those [i.e. the young gods] who were constructing our kind [i.e. the human race] were aware of the overindulgence (ἀκολασία) that would reside in us in respect of drinks and eatables, and how that because of gluttony (διὰ μαργότητα) we would consume far more than what was moderate (μέτριος) and required.[127] (72e3-6)

With regard to our natural and overindulgent relationship to food and drink, Timaeus explains, the young gods also took some measures. For when the body of the mortal kind was created, the young gods installed a pair of physical restraints that were to restrict this appetite and, in fact, help our race to survive.

> So, to prevent the swift destruction of our mortal race by diseases and to forestall its immediate, premature death, they had the foresight to create the lower abdomen, as it's called, as a receptacle for storing excess food and drink. They wound the intestines round in coils to prevent the nourishment from passing through so quickly that the body would of necessity require fresh nourishment just as quickly, thereby rendering it insatiable. Such gluttony (γαστριμαργία) would make our whole race incapable of philosophy and the arts, and incapable of heeding the most divine part within us.[128] (72e6-73a8)

[127] Cf. Steel (2001, 119). On gluttony in Plato, see Stove (1911).
[128] Zeyl's translation, in Cooper (1997).

The free and original appetite for food and drink does accordingly not seem to have anything to do with survival. Would the young gods not have been so proactive the mortal kind would have eaten itself to death.[129] The incarnated soul's appetitive motivations would have taken over, and not only would this have led to the negligence of philosophy and the arts, it would also have killed us all off.

Now, these somatic restraints – supposedly granted to the human race because of the generosity, proactive intelligence and reason of the young gods – are, in this context, also supplemented by another, less external, means of control. Besides foreseeing human gluttony, the young gods also understood that the appetitive part of the incarnated soul would never listen to reason (71a). Even if it would perceive reasons' commands, Timaeus explains, it would not really care. And therefore, Timaeus goes on, the appetitive part must be controlled in other ways.

> [T]hey knew that it [the appetitive part of the soul] would not understand reason (λόγος), and that, even if it did have some share (μεταλαμβάνω) in the perception (αἰσθήσεις) of reasons, it would have no natural instinct to pay heed (μέλω) to any of them [reasons' command] but would be bewitched (ψυχαγωγέω) for the most part both day and night by images and phantasms. To guard against this, one god devised and constructed the form (ἰδέα) of the liver (ἧπαρ) and placed it in that part's [the appetitive part's] abode. (71a3-b1)

Although the appetitive part of the soul may not be possible to influence by argumentation or by a good account, it may be possible to influence by means of using an image (εἴδωλον) or a phantasm (φάντασμα, 71a6). The appetitive part will not listen to reason, but it may apparently be affected by all kinds of perceptible flare (71a). And it is for this reason, we learn, that the appetitive part is not only located close to the stomach, but also in proximity to the liver.

Here the liver functions like a mirror, Timaeus goes on, and on its smooth and even surface *the powers of thought from reason carried down* ("τῶν διανοημάτων ἡ ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ φερομένη δύναμις", 71b3-4) are impressed. This gives rise to images and phantasms which may not only frighten the appetitive part of the soul, as the surface of the liver becomes vexed and uneven, the powers of thought may also make the appetitive part of the soul mild and tame, that is, as the surface of the liver is made smooth and even (71a-d). To these descriptions of the liver Timaeus also adds that the liver contains both

[129] Now, the account Timaeus here offers might seem to be somewhat circular. It is due to the body, i.e. due to incarnation, that we get appetitive motivations in general and the appetite for food and drink in particular. (The star does supposedly not have any appetites.) Yet, it is also due to the body, i.e. due to the construction of the stomach and the intestines, that our appetite for food does not kill us off. So, it is because of the body that we need a body that may restrict and control our appetites.

sweetness and bitterness (71b). When the intellect (διάνοια, 71c4) paints (ἀποζωγραφέω) non-frightening images on its surface, we learn, the liver becomes sweet and this sweetness will subdue whatever bitterness may have been there before (cf. 71a-e, cf. also 19b).

Now, this is an interesting, although perhaps unsatisfactory, account of how appetite may learn to submit to the rule of reason. Even if it does not make it perfectly clear how these images and phantasms are supposed to work, it is nevertheless quite evident that Timaeus here elaborates an account of how reason may restrain appetite, besides the account of the somatic restrains (i.e. the function of the stomach and the intestines).

1.3.2.7. Sex

As it comes to sexual overindulgence ("τὰ ἀφροδίσια ἀκολασία", 86d3), the situation Timaeus spells out is similar. Without proper control by the rational part of the soul, erotic desire goes mad. In the context where Timaeus is describing the general causes of psychic disease ("νόσον […] ψυχῆς", 86b2-3) he also explains how this will come to express itself.

> For when a man is overjoyed or contrariwise suffering excessively from pain, being in haste to seize the one and avoid the other beyond measure (ἄκαιρος), he is unable either to see or to hear anything correctly, and he is at such a time distraught and wholly incapable of exercising reason (λογισμός). And whenever a man's seed grows to abundant in volume in his marrow, as if it were a tree that is overladen beyond measure (πολυκαρπότερον τοῦ συμμέτρου) with fruit, he brings on himself time after time many pangs and many pleasures owing to his appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι) and the issue thereof, and comes to be in a state of madness (ἐμμανής) for the most part of his life because of those greatest of pleasures and pains, and keeps his soul diseased and senseless by reason of the action of his body. Yet such a man is reputed to be voluntarily wicked and not diseased; although, in truth, this sexual overindulgence (τὰ ἀφροδίσια ἀκολασία), which is due for the most part to the abundance and fluidity of one substance because of the porosity of the bones, constitutes a disease of the soul. (86c7-d5)

Due to the body, the soul gets mad of sexual appetite. If not restrained or handled by proper education, as Timaeus goes on to explain (86e), the incarnated being will get insane. Or, to be more precise, due to the body's overproduction of seed the soul will get overpowered by its erotic appetites and this will make it diseased. Distracted by the burden of these seeds, the incarnated soul gets mad. Hastening to seize pleasure and avoid pain beyond measure (ἄκαιρος), it is unable to perform any rational calculation (λογισμός). It cannot see anything correctly, Timaeus explains, and accordingly it becomes mad (ἐμμανής, 86c7).

In contrast to the case of the appetite for food, however, there does not seem to be any natural or bodily restraints in this case. Erotic desire has no natural or bodily limitation. In similarity with the free appetite for food and drink, however, free erotic desire is also a matter of overindulgence (ἀκολασία, 72e4 and 86d3). Uncontrolled erotic desire, just as gluttony, is a matter of a lack of measure or moderation (μέτριος, 72e5, ἄκαιρος, 86c1). And thus, just as in the case of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, before (or unless) reason entered the picture, and ordered the situation in accordance with what is appropriate, the irrational condition of the incarnated soul "[was] in a state devoid of reason or measure (εἶχεν ἀλόγως καὶ ἀμέτρως)" (53a8).

But what, then, is erotic desire after? One answer would perhaps be children. To some extent this does seem to be a good answer. In the case of men, Timaeus explain, the ensouled marrow, and the seeds it becomes, pertains to a life-giving appetite ("ζωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν", 91b3) and an erotic desire for procreation ("τοῦ γεννᾶν ἔρωτα", 91b4). In the case of women, the womb houses an "animal (ζῷον) desirous (ἐπιθυμητικός) of child-bearing" (91c2).

That type of mad appetite Timaeus is trying to capture in terms of a lack of measure does not, however, seem to fit that picture. The erotic desire he is trying to describe is presumably not a (domesticated and timid) desire for procreation. What we are dealing with here is sexual overindulgence ("τὰ ἀφροδίσια ἀκολασία", 86d3). The desire Timaeus is after has presumably also more to do with sexual pleasure (and pain), than with the joy of a new born child. As it seems, the erotic desire Timaeus is here describing has nothing to do with either survival or procreation. It is just lust – mindless (ἄφρων, 86d1), raging (λυσσάω, 86c2) and mad (ἐμμανής, 86c7).[130]

Turning back a few Stephanus pages (to 69c-d) this idea of erotic desire as something beyond the requirements of survival and procreation is also prepared. And in restating what happened when the human race was incarnated on earth, a quite encompassing notion of erotic desire is also offered. The erotic desire (ἔρως) – which once necessarily (ἀναγκαίως) came about when the soul was placed in the human body – is, in fact, enterprising enough to desire *everything* ("ἐπιχειρητῇ παντὸς ἔρωτι", 69d4-5).

Now, this phrase can supposedly be translated in different ways. Zeyl has "all-venturing lust". Bury has "all-daring lust". Both treat the παντὸς as the object of ἐπιχειρητῇ, thus *ready to do everything/all.*[131] But one could supposedly just as well take the παντὸς to be the object of ἔρωτι, thus *an enterprising (erotic) desire for everything*.

[130] Cf. Gill (1987, 60).

[131] Referring to Archer-Hind, Taylor (1928, 500) writes: "'love that ventures all things'. But ἔρως does not mean love in the sense such a phrase suggests, and ἐπιχειρητῇ properly means 'attack'. What πάντων ἐπιχειρητής must mean we see from such words and expressions as πανοῦργος, πᾶν τολμᾶν, πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε. Tr. 'dare-devil lust'". Karfík (2005, 209) translates ἐπιχειρητῇ παντὸς as "capable of everything".

Regardless of how one chooses to translate this phrase, however, the fact that erotic desire seems to give rise to quite unrestrained behaviour remains. It has either such a great impact that its subject is ready to do anything to get satisfied, or, just as unrestrained, it is so disposed that it is ready to take anything as its object (as Plato also argues in the *Republic,* 571c, cf. section 2.4.2). At least in the case of men, the organ to which such a raging (οἰστρώδης) desire pertains, Timaeus explains, tries to rule everything ("πάντων δι' ἐπιθυμίας οἰστρώδεις ἐπιχειρεῖ κρατεῖν", 91b6-7).

1.3.3. Multiformity

With the disordered and irrational condition of the (newly) incarnated soul thus outlined, we can now turn to the third feature I want to point out regarding this condition: its disintegration, lack of unifying properties or, as I shall call it, its multiformity. In order to spell this out I will proceed by summarizing what has been said so far, and in so doing draw attention to the way that disorderly behaviour, irrationality and appetitive motivations can also be said to be disintegrating features.

This will, in the end, give rise to a quite peculiar problem of unity and (psychological) integration. As we shall see, there are reasons to think that the more a soul displays signs of disorder and irrationality, the less it may be said to be an integrated and unified whole. Yet, even if this is the case, someone or something that displays clear signs of disintegration is nevertheless treated or regarded as a single, and thus somehow unified, thing. How can that be? How are we to understand the unity in play here? In what follows I am eventually going to evaluate a pair of possible answers to these questions and before I conclude I shall also try to offer some tentative suggestions of my own.

As we have seen, the initial effects of necessity pertaining to (human) incarnation are disorder and irrationality. Before the incarnated soul is properly ordered it wanders about it all (six) directions. The condition of the soul is described in terms of being irrational (ἄνους, 44a8), and the whole living being strays around irrationally (ἀλόγως). Before (or unless) the rational part of the soul manages to gain proper control, the type of deliberation, "concerning what benefits all, both individually and collectively" (71a1-2), that would be able to give it a proper order, does not exercise its proper influence.

The condition of the incarnated soul is, as such, also spelled out in terms of its fate. As a being subjected to reincarnation, its condition corresponds to the condition of the beast that it, in its next life, shall be reborn as. As we have seen (in sections 1.3-1.3.2.7), in this condition the primary source of motivation is appetite. Instead of having motivations that would order the soul in accordance with what would be moderate, and conform it to the uni-

fied and rational movements of the cosmic universe (44b, 47b and 90b-d), the bestial condition of the incarnated soul is a condition in which it will stray around irrationally in search for all kinds of satisfactions. From an ideal point of view, these satisfactions, and the striving for them, would not only be redundant but also corrupting. Just as in the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, we are here dealing with a condition far beyond moderation (cf. 53a with 86c and 72e).

Now, all of these characteristics of the (newly) incarnated soul can, as we shall see, also reasonably be said to be disintegrating characteristics. The more disordered and irrational the condition of an incarnated soul may be described to be, and the more it is dominated by its appetites, the less unified Timaeus seems to consider it to be. There are three reasons that point in this direction.

Firstly, in the worst-case-scenario an incarnated soul can be said to be disintegrated because it is *disordered*. As we have seen, an incarnated soul is disordered because it moves about in all (six) directions. In contrast to the cosmic universe, and in conformity with the universe's pre-cosmic condition, then, a disordered soul can be said to lack those properties that would be able to unify it and make it a properly integrated whole.

In the ideal condition, i.e. the condition of the cosmic universe, all parts are unified (cf. section 1.2). Proper proportion or analogy (ἀναλογία) "perfectly unites into one both itself [the bound] and the things which it binds together [the parts]" (31c2-3). The universe is united "so that being united in identity with itself it became indissoluble by any agent other than him who had bound it together (ὥστε εἰς ταὐτὸν αὑτῷ συνελθὸν ἄλυτον ὑπό του ἄλλου πλὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ συνδήσαντος γενέσθαι)" (32c2-4).

Furthermore, in such a unified condition the universe has only that one type of motion that is proper to such a unity, i.e. the circular. As a unified whole it circles around itself. All other motions, i.e. the six, are reduced to this one (34a). Pertaining to the unified condition of the universe as it does, circularity is thus a motion that makes all other motions redundant. In the ideal and unified condition, all movements except circularity are useless.

In the case of the disordered soul, however, there are more motions in play. As we have seen (in section 1.3.1), the disordered and incarnated soul is neither unified by means of analogy nor moving in a circular way. Instead, the soul is described so as to stray about in all six directions (42c-d). Just like the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, then, the incarnated soul has supposedly not yet been properly unified.[132]

[132] Thus described, we are only dealing with the bodily aspects of the universe and the incarnated soul. As the story goes, however, these movements also pertain to the soul. The proper motion of the universal soul is circularity, just as the proper motion of the incarnated soul is circularity.

Secondly, an incarnated soul can be said to show signs of disintegration in virtue of being *irrational*. Subject to the laws of incarnation and not having managed to enact proper rational control (cf. section 1.3.2.1), an incarnated soul will be reborn as a being that better corresponds to its present condition. Granted the argument from reincarnation (cf. section 1.3.2.1), the being into which it will thus be reincarnated will also be a being that can be said to be less similar to the unified cosmos. And because the cosmos is the preeminent example of a perfectly unified unity, the further away from similarity with it a being becomes, the more disintegrated it may be said to be.

While the condition of a star, for example, is a condition that properly corresponds to the unity of the cosmic universe, the conditions of all other animals, in different degrees, I take it, have lower degrees of similarity. In the worst-case-scenario, it also seems reasonable to suppose that the being we would be dealing with would be a being (almost) totally deprived of its similarity with the unified cosmos and it would thus be (almost) totally deprived of those features that would be able to make it a unified whole.

Thirdly, we also have reasons to believe that the more an incarnated soul is dominated by its appetites, the less integrated it may be said to be. On the one hand, this seems to be the case because appetite is the primary source of motivation of a soul that shall be reborn as a being less similar to the unified universe. On the other hand, this may also be said to be the case because appetite gives rise to a type of behaviour that is redundant in a properly unified condition. Let me try to spell out the last point.

The condition of an incarnated soul that shall be incarnated as a star is a condition which may be described to be moderate. Its rational part has gained the upper hand and ordered the whole being in accordance with the harmonies and revolutions of the universe (90d). The rational part of the soul is in control of the appetites, and these appetites are restricted in accordance with what is best for the whole (71a). Just like in the case of the cosmic universe, then, all parts of the incarnated being can be said to be in symmetry or harmony (συμμετρία, 69b4) with the whole. In the case of the disordered soul, however, we are dealing with another type of situation. Its appetites have gained the upper hand. Reason has no control. And the appetites are beyond moderation (cf. 86c and 72e). The incarnated soul is motivated by appetites that are far past what reason would ever prescribe, and not being restrained by reason, appetite gives rise to motivations that have no rational function (e.g. survival or procreation). As we have seen (in section 1.3.2.7), its erotic desires are ready to take all measures to get what it wants. Furthermore, were it not for the somatic restraints established by the young gods, the thus disposed being would have eaten itself to death. The disordered and irrational condition of the incarnated soul seems to have motivations that are redundant from the point of view of what would be able to unify it.

Given these reasons, then, the sensible conclusion to draw would be to think that the more a being is motivated by its appetites and the more disordered and irrational it is, the more disintegrated it can be said to be. Accordingly, in the worst-case-scenario, an incarnated soul would seems to lack (almost) all of those basic properties that would be able to integrate it. It would lack proper movement. It would lack likeness to the unified universe. And its motivations would lack those rational restraints that would be able to make it into a unified whole. As such, however, we do seem to face a quite peculiar problem, because although such a soul is displaying all the signs of being disintegrated, it is nevertheless treated as a single thing. Even in the worst-case-scenario – no proper behaviour in play and as far away from similarity with the cosmos as possible – Timaeus nevertheless seems to speak about the incarnated soul as one, single, thing. How can that be?

There are a few alternatives open here that I would like to take into consideration. As it has been pointed out, there are at least two ideas that may help us to understand such a disintegrated unity.

The first idea may be construed to be a matter of a shared goal and a rational ideal. All animals, humans and others alike, despite their level of integration, have the condition of the perfectly ordered and unified universe as their ideal. As such, as we have seen (in section 1.3.2.1), the ideal of all animals is to become like the universe. (An ideal fish may be reborn as a horse, the horse as a human, and the human as a star, or perhaps one can jump directly from fish to star.) Accordingly, the unity of all incarnated souls can thus also be understood in terms of the unification they are to strive after. We are all on the same path towards likeness to the unified universe. The circular motion pertaining to reason and intelligence are not only ideal for the human being. Straying about in all (six) directions is not only bad for us, but also for the fish and for the snake. Since the rule of reason is the only proper means to re-establish circularity and get rid of disorder, this is an ideal that pertains to all animals. In contrast to some lump of trash, for example, this ideal can also be considered to be the aspect of the animal's nature that unifies it. Reason unifies, and so does the ideal of reason. It works as a kind of regulative ideal. Although disintegration abounds, the lack of reason is a significant lack. It is a lack that is not present in things without some kind of unity. All disintegrating features may be considered to be trash. They belong to the incarnate soul only as oysters (ὄστρεα), seaweeds and stones belong to the sea god Glaucus (*Rep*., 611d). Behind or inside these trashy aspects one can find the true being – proportionate, harmonic and rational – and on the path towards proper unification. The unity of even the most disintegrated animal can thus be understood to be a matter of the ideal in which it partakes. A human being, however bestial, disordered, irrational and unlike the universe, can nevertheless be understood to take part in unity as its only proper goal.

A second idea that may help us to understand how the disintegrated soul may be considered to be a unified whole, may be spelled out in terms of what Amber Carpenter has described to be the *phronimon*.[133] The *phronimon*, she explains, is something that pertains to all animals, humans included. The *phronimon* is that intelligent aspect of a creature to which all perceptions report. I shall not here go into the details and evidence of the matter; rather, I stay on the level of how this idea can help us to understand the unity of something seemingly disintegrated. For, given this idea, we can also understand the unity of a disintegrated creature in terms of how all of its perceptible parts somehow report back to a centralized core, i.e. the *phronimon.* This is what Timaeus says:

> When even a minor disturbance affects that which is easily moved by nature, the disturbance is passed on in a chain reaction…until it reaches *to phronimon* (64b5) and reports the property that produced the reaction.[134]

As Luc Brisson has pointed out, we also have reason to believe that this *phronimon* may be understood to be the brain.[135] The brain, and the head in which it is located, is the locus of the intelligent aspect of the soul. And although there might perhaps be reasons to question the textual evidence of this, the idea is nevertheless telling.[136] Because from this point of view we can see how even the most disintegrated behaviour, moving around in all directions in the pursuit of pointless satisfaction, has a unifying core. Even in the most disintegrated creature there is a physiological mechanism that unifies it. Thus, just as in the case of the first idea (i.e. *being on the right path*), the unifying core is intelligence or reason. Carpenter articulates these ideas perceptively and concise.

> So, the multi-faced embodied soul becomes a unity not only through the exercise of reason regarding the whole soul and animal, but also through bodily events affecting the soul, and hence reason, in becoming perception.[137]

Now, both of these alternatives do have explanatory value. They both tell us something important about unity and integration. To some extent, they also tell us something important about the unity that would pertain to an embodied soul in a disintegrated condition. Either it may be said to be unified by means of taking part in unity as an ideal, or it can be said to be unified by

[133] In this context, Carpenter also refers to Brisson (1997, 152ff), who has a similar idea.
[134] Translation taken from Carpenter (2008, 44). The reference is 64b.
[135] Brisson (1997, 154). See also Karfík (2005, 205), where he calls the *phronimon* the "rational part".
[136] Understanding the *phronimon* as the intelligent part of the incarnated soul, and thus as the brain, has, according to Carpenter, been questioned by O'Brien (1997).
[137] Carpenter (2008, 44).

means of having a centralized core to which even the most disintegrated parts would somehow report.

The problem with both these accounts, however, is that without further elaboration they cannot account for the differences in play: There is presumably an important difference between a star, a human and an oyster. That is, there is presumably an importance difference in their degree of integration. Yet, the features suggested by the ideas sketched out above, only account for similarities. Treating an oyster as a unity, by means of saying that it shares ideal with the star, or that all its perceptions report to the same intelligent part, does not explain in what sense this particular oyster's kind of disintegrated condition is a unity. It only explains what unity might be. Some qualifications seem to be required.

In the first case (i.e. *being on the right path*), we seem to be dealing with an explanation, that, in accounting for unity, deliberately neglects the (possible) disintegrating qualities of, say, the individual human it is trying to explain. It treats these qualities as trash. Such an explanation will be able to account for some important aspects of this individual, i.e. aspects that are unifying, but it seems as if it will not be able to explain any of those (possible) disintegrating features that might pertain to this particular person. It will only be able to say something about an ideal condition. In the case of a disordered and irrational human, such a type of explanation will not be able to explain what she actually is. It will only be able to explain what she would be if she were unified. Thus, in taking away or neglecting the disintegrating features, one would of course no longer be talking about the same person.

In the second case (i.e. concerning the *phronimon*), one can say that all parts may perhaps report back to a centralized core, but if that core has no impact on its reporting parts, i.e. if there is no outgoing rational control, it seems implausible to think that the core would be able to unify the whole. If all citizens of the world would write a letter to the king of Scotland, for example, that would not make all these persons Scotsmen or a unified people. He would need to rule them in order to unite them.

So, the problem seems to remain. How can we account for the unity of a disintegrated creature without reducing its most prominent features to the lowest common denominator, as it were? How can we speak about something disintegrated as a comprehensible unity, without reducing its abundant and redundant aspects to a mere lack? That is, how can we explain and understand how something can be one thing and not one thing at the same time?

Now, these are question to which I do not claim to have any conclusive answers. I do, however, find them important. Before I conclude, I shall also try to sketch out some provisional ideas along the lines of which some answers may perhaps be found. Drawing on the similarity between the universe and the soul (a similarity that has shown itself to be helpful before) I shall spell out some yet open-ended thoughts.

To begin with, one could notice that these questions seem to be similar to the basic question that Timaeus starts to discuss at around 47e in terms of necessity and the pre-cosmic condition of the universe: How can one say something stable and secure about something that is multiform and without proper unifying characteristics? As I have argued (in section 1.2.8), the third kind, and its peculiar, bastard, epistemology, was there introduced as a way to answer this question. Granted all the other similarities between the disintegrated condition of the incarnated soul and the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, there are perhaps reasons to take this similarity seriously as well.

In the case of the universe, we had reasons to believe that Timaeus described its pre-cosmic condition as a multiform (ποικίλος) multitude (ποικιλία, 50d5), because it made up a situation which had not yet been properly organized in accordance with the dictates of reason. It had not yet been unified into a cosmos. Vindicated by the many similarities between the pre-cosmic situation of the universe and the pre-ordered condition of the incarnated soul, there are perhaps also reasons to think about the disintegrated condition of the incarnated soul in similar terms. This seems reasonable to do not only because the pre-cosmic condition of the universe is thus called (50d) in virtue of having exactly those features that also make the incarnated soul disintegrated (disorder, irrationality and expressing itself in all kinds of ways), but also because this makes it possible to use the epistemological categories offered in the *Timaeus* to approach the matter.

As we have seen (in section 1.2.8), on the cosmic level, Timaeus spells out three ontological categories that correspond to three epistemological levels. Knowledge answers to *being*, opinion to *becoming* and that peculiar bastard kind of intelligibility to *the third kind* and the pre-cosmic situation. Now, the reason for why Timaeus felt the need to introduce this third ontological category and its corresponding epistemology is that the object that he wanted to describe and understand did not seem to fit the other two categories. Due to its unstable and changing nature it could not be said to belong to the ontological category of *being*. But *becoming* was not an option either, because the third kind was not supposed to be all those changing and unstable copies that it made possible. Instead, the third kind was introduced as something one could say something stable and secure about. Without having to try to capture every movement and change of the objects in the world of becoming, the third kind was introduced so as to be able to say something stable and secure about a multitude in constant motion. As such, however, it was only intelligible in a bastard way. The third kind was not properly intelligible, because only forms are intelligible. But neither was it sensible, and thus a matter of opinion, because the general features of the third kind could not be seen; only understood.

Against this background, it could perhaps be possible to say something similar about the unity of the disintegrated condition of the soul. We seem to have three options. We could (a) describe what we know about it, we could

(b) describe what we believe it to be, or we could (c) describe its kinetic and multiform features in a general way without trying to identify all of the possible ways in which it may appear.

In the first case (a), we could describe the unity and the cosmos-like features in which the incarnated soul takes part. We could describe the regulative ideal. This ideal would supposedly also qualify as something properly intelligible, and in this sense we would be dealing with knowledge. Although this is never explicitly articulated, it seems plausible to think that Timaeus considers unity and integration as things one can have knowledge about. These are rational ideals, and as such they are stable and secure.

As indicated above, however, such a description would fail to pick out its proper object, that is, at least insofar as this object would be any animal besides a star. It would perhaps be able to describe what unity is, and it would be able to offer a properly intelligible account of unity. But such a description would not be able to capture the disintegrated aspects of what it would be dealing with. As it seems reasonable to believe, Timaeus does not think that one can *know* anything about what is disordered and irrational.

Alternatively then, in order to capture the unity of a disordered and irrational being, one could (b) start to engage in a narration of how one particular being will come to express itself in particular situations. This narrative would make up its unity, and as a narrative it would thus also be able to capture all its disintegrated characteristics. A story reporting such behaviour, I think, could in the epistemological vocabulary of the *Timaeus* be called *belief*. One would describe what one sees and hears; and one would try to capture each moment as exactly as possible. This account would be a matter of debate, and the story thus told would be possible to influence by persuasion. As such, however, this would lead to a quite tedious task, since the story one would need to narrate would need to change in accordance with the changes of the appetites and desires of the being in question. The narrative would eventually grow beyond comprehensibility and it would seem to be a somewhat too bulky way to explain the unifying features of the disintegrated soul.

In line with how Timaeus deals with the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, there is, however, also a third alternative open (c). Just as in the case of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe, it seems possible to say something stable and secure about a disintegrated soul without reducing its multiform nature to its regulative ideal. And instead of trying to capture all the details of a disintegrated life, one could try pick out a set of general ways of describing this condition. One could describe it to be disordered, irrational and multiform.

Now, in view of the epistemological categories of the *Timaeus*, what these notions try to pick out is supposedly neither something properly intelligible nor something really sensible. Such notions do not pick out anything properly intelligible, because they do not say anything about forms. But neither do they seem to pick out anything directly sensible, because they do

not try to describe any particular behaviour of any particular person. Disorder, irrationality and multiformity are general notions that try to capture a behavioural pattern that Timaeus often describes to be random. These notions do not describe anything particular. Instead they say something general about the condition of an incarnated soul we could properly describe to be disintegrated.

In accordance with the *Timaeus'* epistemological vocabulary, we may also need to admit that these characteristics only have a kind of bastard intelligibility. They do not contribute to our knowledge of the matter, presumably because there is nothing to be known. Neither do they tell us anything about what we should believe. This we need to assess in the particular situations we encounter. But they do tell us something. They tell us something general about a being that comes to express itself in many types of ways. As such, the object that is to be characterized is somehow also treated as a unity. Just as Timaeus seems to treat even the most disintegrated type of being as a unity, this seems to be necessary. However, this must also be qualified: All animals (and stars) share the same ideal, and in this sense they are all unities. Yet, in the worst-case-scenario, the disintegrating characteristics of the incarnated soul are so strong that its unity only seems to be a faint trace. In comparison to a star, for example, whose ideal it shares, the disintegrated soul cannot be said to be a unity in the same way. Its unity does not seem to be proper. And instead we could perhaps rather speak about *a bastard kind of unity*, because in contrast to the ideal it is trying to reach, it is still a multitude.

1.4. Conclusion

Recent studies on Plato's account of human motivation in general and on appetitive motivation in particular has shown that one central way to characterise appetite is to do so my means of describing it as a motivation that pertains to the body and its needs. As pointed out in the main introduction, this is a basic and important way to characterize appetite, not only because there is a lot of research pointing in this direction, but also because the idea is intuitively appealing. There is something plausible about understanding appetite in terms of our bodies' need for food, drink and sex.

In John Cooper's well-known account of Plato's theory of human motivation, he argues that this is also the most basic sense of appetite.[138] Drawing on the *Republic* and on its famous argument for the tripartition of the soul, Cooper puts it like this: "Socrates' first concern is to convince his interlocutors that there are two independent sources of motivation, reason on the one side and appetite on the other".[139] For this reason, Cooper continues, it was

[138] Cooper (1984).
[139] Cooper (1984, 9).

essential to choose uncontroversial cases. "Hence, by concentrating on [sex,] hunger and thirst as his 'clearest cases' he can convincingly demonstrate the existence of motivating desires what work altogether independent of reasoning of whatever sorts".[140] From this point of view, Cooper goes on, appetite can also be said to be rooted in what he calls "basic recurrent biological urges".[141]

Now, Cooper's account is based on how this is spelled out in the *Republic* (and I shall have more to say about this in the next chapter). But, as Myles Burnyeat has recently pointed out, the *Timaeus*' account of appetite should be understood along similar lines.[142] Burnyeat puts it like this: "Let me suggest, then, that the appetitive part of Plato's divided soul houses desires and tendencies which we have because we are animal bodies programmed to survive (as individuals and as a species) in disequilibrium with a variegated, often varying environment. […] This is not said in so many words in the *Republic*, but it is said [in the] *Timaeus*".[143]

In view of this chapter's account of the work that appetite may be said to do in the *Timaeus*, we can certainly grant Burnyeat the general point. We have appetites because we have bodies (as argued in section 1.3). Yet, as it comes to the connection between appetite and survival, a few qualifications are in order.

In general, it may seem possible to understand the relationship between appetite and the body in two ways. One the one hand, one can hold appetite to be concerned with the basic needs of the body. On this view, our appetites tell us that we need to eat, drink and procreate. The appetitive part of the soul is solely preoccupied with these tasks. One the other hand, one can consider appetite to be a much more unruly source of motivation. Without reason providing the appropriate ends (such as wellbeing or health) appetite has no natural limitations. Instead of ascribing appetite the independent and important function of providing the motivation to aim at what is needed to survive, one can consider appetite to be so irrational that it cannot even see its own good.

Cooper's account of Plato's view seems to be open to both alternatives. He does argue that Socrates ascribes an independent and survival-oriented

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[140] Cooper (1984, 10).
[141] Cooper (1984, 9).
[142] As explicitly argued by Brennan (2012, 103) and implicitly taken to be the case by for example Karfik (2005, 209) and Moss (2012, 274), *pace* Johansen (2004, 147).
[143] Burnyeat (2006, 8). Burnyeat is here explicitly referring to 70d-e, which he translated like this: "the part of the soul that has appetites for food and drink and whatever else it has a need for *because of the nature of the body"* (Burnyeat's italics). The central word is ἔνδεια. (LSJ gives: want, lack, deficiency, defect, need, poverty). It is here translated as "a need for". This does however not necessarily imply that this *need* is supposed to be understood as a lack that is so fundamental that it, if unfulfilled, will cause death. I often call many of my (unnecessary) cravings needs (e.g. for a cup of tea), just to explain what I have an appetite for at the moment, without this having anything to do with my survival.

function to appetite, but he does nevertheless seem to be open for the idea that appetite may also give rise to other types of behaviour. Burnyeat, however, does clearly argue in favour of the first alternative.

Now, as we have seen (in section 1.3), in the *Timaeus,* appetite is initially exemplified by hunger, thirst and what is called other wants (ἔνδεια) caused by the nature of body. However, with regard to Timaeus' further account of the psychological condition of a soul primarily ruled by its appetites (as spelled out in sections 1.3.1-1.3.3), defining appetite in terms of the basic and essential requirements of the body is somewhat misleading. In view of Plato's account of a soul on the verge of being reborn as the animal its unruly behaviour corresponds to (as argued in section 1.3.2.1), and in the light of how the appetites of such a soul are spelled out (as articulated in sections 1.3.2.6 and 1.3.2.7), we need to specify the idea that appetite is a motivation pertaining to the body in accordance with the following qualifications.

Q1 Appetite can neither exhaustively nor adequately be explained as a motivating force striving towards survival (of the individual or of the species).

Q2 Appetite is as a source of motivation that gives rise to a behaviour that leads to excess and immoderation, a behaviour which, without being submitted to rational control, may ultimately lead to the opposite of survival, i.e. death.

I am thus not trying to deny that appetite may possibly be exemplified by hunger, thirst or erotic desire. However, I am suggesting that one must be careful when it comes to what conclusions to draw from this. As we have seen (in sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.5-1.3.2.7), insofar as one's appetites are not submitted to reason, nothing like health or wellbeing will come about. For appetite can really only be said to be a matter of survival (of the individual and of the species) insofar as it is restrained by, and conformed in accordance with, the results of rational consideration. As this is spelled out in the *Timaeus*, then, Plato does not seem to consider appetite to be a motivating force one can trust, even as it comes to what is best for the body. On the contrary, appetite left on its own – *free* as I put it (in section 1.3.2.5) – will give rise to a psychological and physiological condition far from corresponding to what Plato likes to call a healthy condition.

There are basically two reasons that point in this direction, reasons that spring from the general account of the condition of an incarnated soul not yet rectified in accordance with the rational movements of the cosmic universe, as offered in this chapter.

First of all, that appetite, as a motivating force pertaining to the body, can neither be exhaustively nor adequately explained in terms of survival is clear from Timaeus' explicit account of what I have called the free and original appetites for food, drink and sex (in sections 1.3.2.6 and 1.3.2.7). If left un-

restrained by rational consideration these appetites would immediately diverge from the paths of survival and procreation. Timaeus' examples are gluttony and sexual overindulgence. Would it not have been for the benevolent and rational considerations of the younger gods, for example, as they created the human body, the human race would have eaten itself to death (as argued in section 1.3.2.6).

Accordingly, gluttony and sexual overindulgence are in some sense also better examples of appetite than our everyday need to eat and drink. For in the latter case, that is, insofar as we eat and drink in order to be healthy and, in effect, to survive, reason plays a big part. In the former case, however, reason is supposedly much less involved, and in this case it is thus easier to see the more specific type of behaviour appetite and appetitive motivations give rise to on their own.[144] From this point of view we can also see that unrestrained appetites will lead to excess and immoderation. With regard to the ideal condition Timaeus sets up for the incarnated being (rational, ordered and unified), appetite, in the forms of gluttony and sexual overindulgence, is also properly characterized as redundant.

Secondly, that Timaeus' understanding of appetite can be accounted for in terms of excess and redundancy is also confirmed by his general characterization of the irrational condition of the incarnated soul. As we have seen, a soul in such a condition is primarily dominated by its appetites. It is described to wander about, and its behaviour is characterized as disordered. As argued (in section 1.3.1), the behaviour of a soul in such a condition is explained in terms of a set of motions that are also described to be redundant and excessive from the point of view of an ideal life: In the ideal situation – in the case of the incarnated soul, just as in the case of the universe – there is only one proper motion, namely the circular motion corresponding to reason and intelligence. The other, rectilinear, motions used to explain the irrational and disordered condition of both the soul and the universe should, in the ideal situation, all be reduced to this one. From the point of view of the ideal, then, these (rectilinear) motions are redundant. Before, or unless, these

[144] If survival and health, as I am suggesting, should be understood as results of rational considerations, are there any incarnated beings in whose life reason is not involved in any sense? One example that could be telling with regard to this question is an oyster. According to the argument from reincarnation (cf. section 1.3.2.1) an oyster may be considered to be a human being that has failed to order itself in accordance with the proper condition of the cosmic-order. Accordingly, the oyster should be a being whose behavior is primarily caused by appetite. But an oyster does neither display any signs of gluttony or sexual overindulgence. It seems to be restricted to (proper) eating and procreating. Now, Timaeus does not say anything about this, but one idea could be to explain the oysters' apparently good behavior in terms of somatic restraints. Just as the case of the human stomach, the oyster's possibility of excess may be restrained by it physical disposition. The oyster may have an appetite far beyond what could be explained in terms of survival, but its body, supposedly created by the same gods that made the human stomach, does not allow it to express these appetites. In the human case this is a sign of the benevolent nature of our creator, and this indicates that a similar explanation could also apply to the oyster.

motions are properly ordered, they give rise to what Timaeus describes to be a tribe of appetites, exemplified by what he calls an all-venturing lust.

The *Timaeus* does not offer any examples of appetite beyond an excessive amount of various sorts of food, drink and sex. And although the objects of these appetites cannot arguably be explained in terms of how they contribute to our survival (as individuals and as a species), the *Timaeus* does not really offer any account settling the questions of whether this means that anything unmediated by reason can be a possible object. Beyond the account I have tried to spell out, we learn very little about what further delimits and defines appetite. In the *Republic*, however, Plato offers a somewhat more generous account. And here, as we shall see, he has a little bit more to say about these matters. For although we shall learn that appetite (or rather, the appetitive part of the soul, there likened to a multi-headed monster) is so *multiform* that it cannot really be adequately captured by one name, Plato nevertheless has a few things to say about what this multiformity involves, about the process of appetite formation, and about how this may be exploited for rational ends.

2. The Power of Lies

> The tale of the teeth that were sown, and how armed men sprang out of them. Here, indeed, the lawgiver has a notable example of how one can, if he tries, persuade the souls of the young of anything, so that the only question he has to consider in his inventing is what would do most good to the State, if it were believed; and then he must devise all possible means to ensure that the whole of the community constantly, so long as they live, use exactly the same language, so far as possible, about these matters, alike in their songs, their tales, and their discourses. (663e8-664a7)
>
> Plato, the *Laws*

> A lie is indeed useless to gods, but to men useful as a remedy or a form of medicine.[145] (389b3-4)
>
> Plato, the *Republic*

2.1. Introduction

In the *Republic*, Plato seems to have a somewhat ambivalent relationship to lies.[146] Lies, we learn, are not only hated by the gods, but also by humans (382c). No one wants to be deceived (382b), and philosophers, in particular, are haters of lies (409c). But, then again, Plato did apparently not consider all lies to be useless. If we take only a brief look at how Plato spells this out, there are actually quite a few examples of situations where lying apparently is the just choice to make. According to Plato, one should lie to delusional friends ("who are attempting to do some wrong through madness or ignorance", 382c8-9), one should lie to enemies (382c), and one should tell edifying myths and stories (μῦθοι) to the children, myths which might contain some truth, but which, on the whole, really are lies (ψεύδη, 377a5).

Besides these perhaps less controversial lies, Plato also mentions two more contentious ones. Not only may it be useful, he writes, to lie about history when one does not know what actually happened (382d), some basic type of trick or scheme (μηχανή) is also necessary, we read, when it comes

[145] If not otherwise stated, I follow Shorey's (2006) translation of the *Republic*. When the translations are modified in any noteworthy way, or when the translations are my own, I have so indicated. Occasionally, I have used the newest translation of the dialogue by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C.Reeve, in Cooper (1997) and so indicated. The quote from the *Laws* is from Bury's (2001) translation.

[146] On lies in Plato, see Hesk (2000), Schofield (2006, Ch.6 & 7) and Schofield (2007).

to the education of the citizens of the Kallipolis (414b-c).[147] In order to make its citizens care (κήδω, 412d2, cf. 412c3) for their city and love it (φιλέω, 412d2, cf. also 502e-503a), all of its inhabitants are to be persuaded by what is referred to as a *noble lie* (γενναῖος ψεῦδος, cf. 414b9-c1). Not only are the citizens to believe that they are born from the soil of their city (414b-c and 414d-415d), they are also supposed to think that their social function, as workers, helpers/soldiers[148] and rulers, corresponds to the type of metal – bronze, silver or gold – that permeates their souls (415a-b).[149] Deceived to believe that their city is their mother and nurse, the citizens are to learn to care for the city and love it. All their fellow citizens they should consider to be brothers and natural kin and their social value, they are to believe, a gift of their creator (cf. 414e-415a).

In the following chapter I am going to draw on this idea of a *noble lie* in order to examine how the notion of appetite is brought to bear on one central argument in the *Republic*. As I shall suggest, there are good reasons to consider the noble lie to play a decisive role in this dialogue. And the psychology that can be said to be substantiating the mechanisms by which Plato describes this lie to function, I will argue, does not only shed light on the question of how appetite fits into the argument; at the end this will also help to qualify the idea that appetite, as is often taken to be the case, is a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears.

As is well known, the rule of the philosophers is what ultimately completes the political project in the *Republic*. Only if the philosophers accept to rule, may the city – the Kallipolis – see the light of day (473e). Yet, as is equally well known, the philosophers are also described to be reluctant to pursue the path that will eventually put them in charge. Having reached the heights of the city's philosophical education, and thus "believing that while still living they have been transported to the Islands of the Blessed" (519c5-6), the philosophers will be reluctant to return to the cave of politics. "I think that he [a philosopher] would choose to endure anything rather than such a life" (516e1-2). The philosophers will be "unwilling to occupy themselves with human affairs" (517c8-9). But ruling is what they are designed to do. Their entire education was constructed to prepare them to pursue that path (cf. 502e-503a). And therefore, as Plato's repeatedly puts it, they will need to be compelled to engage in human affairs and eventually rule the city (e.g. 500b-c, 516d, 517c, 519c, 520e or 539e). How?

Over a span of generations and distributed as a part of what Plato in books two and three spells out in terms of the Kallipolis' musical education,

[147] How and why lying is *necessary* and not only convenient is argued by Hesk (2000, 151ff).
[148] Not to confuse this class with the general class of guardians, which initially is supposed to include both rulers and soldiers, I call them helpers/soldiers (ἐπίκουροι, 415a5).
[149] Cf. the *Laws*, 663e-664a. See also Schofield (2007, 161).

I shall suggest, it is the *noble lie* that does the job.[150] Established in the philosophers' souls during their childhood, and tested like "gold in the fire" (413e1-2, cf. 503a and 539e), the noble lie is designed to imbue their souls with a particularly strong kind of patriotism (φιλόπολις, cf. 503a1). By means of the poetical force of musical education, exploiting their malleable and not yet rationally ruled souls, the noble lie is designed to make them love their city. At the end of the day, we also have reasons to think that it is this love that will initially make them return from the Islands of the Blessed and engage in the political affairs of their city. The patriotism established by believing that they are born from the soil of their city, and the city-love emerging from having been brought up to think that all their fellow citizens are their natural kin, will make the philosophers care for their city. And, as I hope to make clear, they will feel that it is only if they rule that the city may persevere. For even if there might be reasons to think that the philosophers will at some point see through the mythical stance of the lie they are told, and thus realize that their patriotic sentiment also has rational and just bearing, I shall argue that it nevertheless is their city-love that primarily will make them pursue the path of politics.

In order to reach this end, the following chapter is divided into four main sections.

In the first section (2.2), *The Return to the Cave*, I will initially sketch out what is at stake as it comes to the question of how to compel the philosophers to engage in the political affairs of their city; and locate my proposed account in this context. I am then going to proceed to take a closer look at those passages of the *Republic* where the reluctance of the philosophers is most clearly articulated. In view of this, I shall then go on to address the question of how the philosophers' political reluctance is overpowered, evaluate some of the most influential answers to this question, and spell out my own proposal against this background.

In the second section (2.3), *The Function of the Noble Lie*, I shall explore the contents of the noble lie, put it in context, and show why it is reasonable to believe that it is primarily addressed to the rulers. I will here also discuss how it is possible to understand the persuasiveness of the noble lie, show that this is plausibly understood in terms of *tradition*, argue that tradition is connected to Plato's ideas about education, and that education thus understood is reasonably accounted for in terms of poetry.

Supplementing the account spelled out in section two (2.3) of how the noble lie ties in with Plato's account of education, tradition and poetry, I will, in the third section (2.4), *The Psychological Background of the Noble*

[150] The account of the noble lie I spell out in this chapter draws heavily on Malcolm Schofield's (2007) suggestion in his article "The Noble Lie". At the end of the day I hope that my account is in line with Schofield's, although I put much more emphasis than him on how the noble lie is connected with Plato's thought about appetite and the mechanisms of appetite formation.

Lie, take a closer look at Plato's account of poetry and its addressees, as this is spelled out in book ten. Here, as we shall see, Plato articulates a conception of the soul that, when ruled by appetite, makes it deeply vulnerable to poetry and to poetical deception. And in order to further investigate how this is said to work, I am in this section also going to turn to the psychology spelled out in book nine and examine the nature of that *multiform* condition of the soul to which Plato, as I shall argue, considers poetry to be primarily addressed. In this way I also hope to offer a further account of the mechanisms of poetry, that is, of the mechanisms by means of which the noble lie, as I aim to show, is designed to be persuasive.

In the fourth section (2.5), I will conclude by laying bare what repercussions the results of this chapter have on the prevailing idea that appetite is a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears. I shall articulate two significant supplements to this idea, one in consideration of the fact that Plato, as we shall see, considers appetite to be *multiform*, and another with regard to the forces of tradition and public opinion as they tie in with Plato's view of the mechanisms of appetite formation.

2.2. The Return to the Cave

As has been argued, there is a lot at stake in accounting for how philosophy and politics are connected in the *Republic*.[151] As we shall see (in section 2.2.1), the philosophers will need to be compelled to pursue the path of politics. Their engagement in the political affairs of the Kallipolis will be demanded, but they will show signs of resistance. Yet, since they have received their entire philosophical education in the city, as we shall also see (in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.5), the demand to make them share the labours of the state is characterized as a *just* demand (520e). The philosophers, it has been argued, have a debt to pay.[152] And since the philosophers are also supposed to be just people (520e), the fact that they are described to be reluctant to engage in the political affairs of their city is often taken to be problematic. The political reluctance of the philosophers and the justice of demanding them to pursue the path of politics are issues the interpretations of which have significant consequences for many central questions pertaining to the *Republic.*

Firstly, for example, the basic thesis that Socrates sets out to defend at the outset of book two, and on the basis of which the rest of the dialogue can be said to be articulated, may seem to be at stake. Here, as is well known, Socrates, provoked by Glaucon, sets out to defend the thesis that, for the agent, it is always better to be just than unjust (357b). With regard to the unwillingness of the philosophers to engage in politics, this can however be taken

[151] I here follow Smith (2010). Woods (2003) has a similar set-up.
[152] See Brown (2000) or Weiss (2007, 112).

to be an example of a situation in which the just alternative is not the best alternative for the agent. It may seem to be better for the philosophers to linger on the Islands of the Blessed. And insofar as the *Republic* is ultimately written to defend Socrates' thesis, this may be said to be a quite decisive problem.

Secondly, the philosophers' reluctance to engage in human affairs does also seem to cast its shadow on the central idea of justice spelled out in book four. Justice is here defined in terms of what Gregory Vlastos once called *psychic harmony,* i.e. in terms of the concord and unity that arises in the soul when all its parts do their designated job.[153] In such a condition, we learn, a person can also be said to be *just*. And insofar as his choices and deeds preserve his inner harmony he will consider them to be just acts (443c-444a). This would thus also seem to entail that the philosophers, who are supposed to have souls in psychic harmony, are just people, and that all acts and choices that preserve the harmony in their souls will be called just. But, again, considering the philosophers' reluctance, we have a problem. *Either*, political engagement will disturb the philosophers' inner harmony; and when Socrates calls the demand to share the labours of the state a *just* demand, he does not seem, then, to be using the notion of justice in the sense of psychic harmony.[154] *Or*, insofar as the demand is just in the sense of psychic harmony, the reluctance of the philosophers seems to be a sign of the fact that their souls are already in some kind of disharmony and thus not just.[155]

Thirdly, and also in view of the philosophers' reluctance to occupy themselves with political matters, there seems to be something wrong with their way of assessing the situation. They do not seem to realize that to pursue the path towards becoming rulers is the just choice to make. The philosophers will need to be forced to do so. Due to their higher education they have seen something they consider to be far more important than political matters and they are described to be unwilling to engage in politics. Yet, insofar as the philosophers are people that *should* be able to understand that their governance is the only rational and just choice to make, there seems to be a problem.[156]

Now, these are vexed and much debated problems. Yet, in a sense they can be said to boil down to one core dilemma: We have reasons to consider the philosophers of the *Republic* to be both ready to engage in politics and unwilling to do so at the same time. On textual grounds, as we shall see, it seems implausible to deny that the philosophers are described to be reluctant to engage themselves in human affairs, but, at the same time, given their psychological makeup, we also have reasons to think that to care and guard

[153] Vlastos (1973, 113). See also Annas (1978, 437).
[154] As argued by Schofield (2007), referring to Nightingale (2004) and Gill (1996).
[155] Smith (2010, 88) spells out a similar problem in terms of what he calls the "psychic disharmony problem".
[156] Smith (2010, 88) calls this the "epistemic fault" problem.

their city should be their natural choice. And at the end of the day the philosophers are also described as accepting the lot they are given.

In what follows I shall argue that we have reasons to take Plato's idea of the *noble lie* into serious consideration in trying to account for this dilemma. The reading I shall propose will however not ultimately solve all the problems outlined above. Yet, I hope that it will clarify some of the basic issues involved. In the end I also think that these problems can be accommodated with regard to the account of the noble lie that I am going to propose.[157] Showing this, however, is not the aim of this chapter; the aim is a much more modest one. By means of taking a closer look at how Plato's characterization of the mechanisms behind the noble lie ties in with the fact that the philosophers are described to be unwilling to engage in politics, I hope to locate the role that the notion of appetite can be said to play in the *Republic*.

[157] The account of the noble lie I spell out in this chapter can, for example, be said to be consistent with Smith's general solutions to these problems. Smith's way of solving these problems, i.e. the "epistemic fault" problem and the "psychic disharmony problem", and the more general problem he considers them to make up, i.e. what he calls the "happy philosophers" problem, is a temporal solution. Having reached the peak of their education, the philosophers will be forced to turn their eyes back to the shadows in the cave (cf. n.158). In this situation something happens. Not yet having acclimatized to the shadowy gloom of the political life in the cave, the philosophers will be confused. Eventually their eyes will get accustomed to the darkness and their confusion will be gone. In the initial state, however, the philosophers will not always make the just assessments. Yes, they have seen true justice and they know what true justice is. Yet, as it comes to the mere shadows of justice lurking in the cave, the philosophers will be confused. And "the very first instance of a 'shadow of justice'", Smith (2010, 97) writes, "is the instantiation of justice consisting in their own return to the cave". From this point of view we can also understand why the philosophers are reluctant to rule. Before they have managed to adapt to the life in the cave, they will not always be able to properly judge the situation. Their souls will show signs of psychic disharmony and their assessment of the situation will not always be correct. Eventually, however, as they undergo the further fifteen years of political training, as Smith explains, their confusion will clear. They will be able to evaluate their situation correctly and their reluctance to rule will also disappear. Without taking a stand on Smith's story, and insofar as I have understood it correctly, the question that I am trying to say something about in this chapter does, however, remain. In the initial stage of the philosophers' path to proper governance of the city, they will be confused. They will be reluctant, and it will be necessary to force them to turn back to the cave. Eventually, however, as they learn to properly evaluate the shadows of justice, force will no longer be required. Yet, at the outset, this need for force is clearly still a problem. Smith does not offer any account of how the philosophers are initially made to turn back to the political life in the cave. Smith (2010, 97) does insist that "[t]hey must be compelled (or persuaded) to do what is right in this instance (and many others like it) for several years to come, perhaps, precisely because they are, as yet, very poor at the task of seeing in the dark". But he does not tell us how the forcing of the philosophers back into the darkness is supposed to be accomplished. As we shall see, Sedley (2007), Brown (2000) and Weiss (2007) do try to spell out how this is supposed to work, yet, as I shall try to show, only at the expense of explaining the philosophers' reluctance away. On Smiths' view, the reluctance of the philosophers cannot be explained away in this way, but must instead be accounted for; and his temporal story seems to be able to do this. The story of the noble lie, that I am here proposing to be in play, would as such also seem to fit within the framework of Smith's account. At the outset, the philosophers need to be forced to rule, and it is the patriotism and the motivations established by the noble lie that do that job. In terms of how Smith spells out the situation, these motivations will eventually be redundant; yet, initially, they can certainly be said to play their part.

Now, in order to do this properly it is necessary to begin from the beginning, as it were; and thus begin by readdressing the question of how to compel the philosophers "to occupy themselves with human affairs" (517c8-9) and return to the cave.[158] I shall start by considering the view that the philosophers are in fact not reluctant at all, try to show that this is an implausible position (in section 2.2.1) and then (in sections 2.2.2-2.2.6) consider the three most challenging alternatives to the one I eventually will spell out.

2.2.1. The Reluctant Philosophers

The question of how to make the philosophers return to the cave and engage in the political affairs of the city is sometimes answered by denying that there is a problem here at all. In taking the political dilemma of the philosophers to be merely an illusory dilemma one has, in various ways, tried to reconcile the philosophers' desire for truth and knowledge with the fact that they are supposed to engage in politics.

One answer along these lines is to deny the philosophers' reluctance altogether.[159] This sort of argument has received a lot of criticisms in the past few decades, and although it might therefore seem to quite outdated, it does nevertheless throw some light on the matter. On this view, it is really in the true interest of the philosophers to pursue the path of political affairs. The philosophers, it is argued, are not only willing to share the labours of the state; they do not only accept the lot they are given, but they want to rule.

Having seen the forms, it has been argued, the philosophers have an inherent wish to imitate (drawing on 500b-d) or express their vision (drawing on the *Symposium*), and a just city is the perfect, if not the only, place for such a task.[160] Ruling a just city, it has been argued, does not only make it possible for the philosophers to embody what they desire in well-ordered

[158] It may be argued that the philosophers' psychological dispositions are different when they at first (at the age of thirty-five) are forced to leave the Island of the Blessed and when they (at the age of fifty) are supposed to engage in proper ruling. At 539e Socrates explains that the philosophers, after five years of dialectical training (at the age of thirty-five), shall be forced to return to the cave and purse the path that eventually shall make them apt for the task of proper ruling. In this passage Socrates also explains that the final goal of the philosophical education shall only be reached after fifteen years of political training; and that the vision of what gives light to everything else, i.e. the form of the good, shall only be apprehended at the age of fifty. This seems to entail that the philosophers, at the age when they are forced to return to the cave, have not yet seen the form of the good, and that this might explain why they are reluctant to return. Other passages do however point in another direction (cf. 519c or 532a-b). In the literature, as we shall see, these stages in the development of the philosophers are rarely acknowledged and the question asked is: what makes the philosophers rule? I believe that one might need to be somewhat cautious here. In what follows, the question I am asking is about what it is that makes the philosophers turn, that is, what makes them leave the Island of the Blessed at the age of thirty-five.

[159] As in Irwin (1995, 313ff) or Kraut (1991). For a critical discussion, see Sedley (2007, 276), Weiss (2007, 108ff) and Brown (2000, 3-6). See also Brown (2003).

[160] See, for example, Kraut (1999), Irwin (1977, 237) or Irwin (1995, 298-317).

and harmonious deeds, but it does as such also allow them to express their vision of the truth in action and make the good and the beautiful see the light of day.[161]

One passage that is often taken to be a sign of the fact that it indeed is in the true interest of the philosophers to rule is 520d. In the context of discussing whether or not it will be an unjust act to force the philosopher to descend and make them live a worse life, when they can live a better (519d), Socrates asks Glaucon if he thinks that the philosophers will resist.

> Will our nurslings (οἱ τρόφιμοι) [i.e. the philosophers], then, disobey us when we tell them this, and will they refuse to share in the labours of state (520d6-7)?

And Glaucon answers:

> Impossible […] for we shall be imposing just commands on men who are just. (520e1)

Taken in isolation this passage seems to imply that it is in the true interest of the philosophers to do what is just, and that ruling the city is precisely such a just thing to do. The philosophers, one can argue, will know that their leadership is the only just leadership and they will take office willingly.

If one takes a closer look at the context of this passage, however, the philosopher's willingness to rule will soon lose its immediate flare. First of all, in the very same breath, Glaucon qualifies his statement. Surely, he says, the philosophers will agree to share the labours of the state, but they will not consider this to be something they want to do. Instead they will consider this task to be something they are compelled to do. Like the other necessities of human life, as Socrates will come to explain much later (at 581d-e), the philosophers will consider ruling to be something necessary. The whole cue goes like this:

> Impossible […] for we shall be imposing just commands on men who are just. Each of them will certainly go to rule as to something necessary (ἀναγκαῖος), however, which is exactly the opposite of what's done by those who now rule in each city. (520e1-3)

In contrast to a city in which the rulers *want* to rule, the Kallipolis will have no eager rulers. Any such desire will be considered base. "Can you name

[161] For a discussion, see Brown (2000, 5). Sedley (2007, 276) dismisses this kind of interpretation in one sentence: "First, we may doubt any interpretation according to which sheer moral goodness or understanding is sufficient to motivate the philosophers to take office". See also Woolf (2009, 17f). Smith (2010, 97f) explains the philosophers' reluctance to rule by means of arguing that although the philosophers initially are reluctant to rule, this reluctance will eventually dissolve as they become accustomed to their roles as rulers. Smith never denies the reluctance, though, but instead insists that it must somehow be explained.

any other type or ideal of life", Socrates soon asks, "that looks with scorn on political office except the life of true philosophers?" (521b1-3). "No, by Zeus", Glaucon answers (521b3). The philosophers of the Kallipolis will not consider ruling something fine, and one fundamental reason for why this is the case is given at 519c.

> "Well, then," said I [Socrates], "is not this also likely and a necessary consequence of what has been said, that neither could men who are uneducated and inexperienced in truth ever adequately preside over a city, nor could those who have been allowed to spend their whole lives being educated [i.e. the philosophers], the one because they have no single aim and purpose in life to which all their actions, public and private, must be directed, and the others, because they will not voluntarily engage in action (ἑκόντες εἶναι οὐ πράξουσιν), believing that while still living they have been transported to the Islands of the Blessed." (519b7-c6)

The latter of the two characters types here alluded to, that is, the well-educated philosophers, do apparently think that their visions of truth have already transported them to the Islands of the Blessed. Having been released from the weights of what is below, Socrates explains, and having been turned towards truth, they will be freed (519a-b). And they will have no desire to turn back (cf. 516d and 517c).

> Come then […] and join me in this further thought, and do not be surprised that those who have attained to this height are not willing to occupy themselves with the affairs of men (οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράττειν), but their souls ever feel the upward urge and the yearning for that sojourn above. (517c7-d2)

Believing that their life is the best there can be, the philosophers will not be willing to engage in the dull affairs of human politics. Recalling their former lives back in the cave, Socrates goes on, this sentiment will also be enhanced. They will remember their old captivated comrades and they will consider themselves blessed. Indeed, Socrates tells us, they would do anything rather than return to the opinions that dominated the life they have now escaped.

> "Yes", he [Glaucon] said, "I think that he [the philosopher] would choose to endure anything rather than such a life." (516e1-2)

The unwillingness of the philosophers is also reinforced as the passage continues. Their reluctance to engage in political affairs is in fact not taken to be an undesirable effect of their philosophical disposition at all. This is rather taken to be a sign of a proper attitude (520d). Repeating a claim Socrates initially made around 347b-d, he says that "the truth is that the city in which those who are to rule are least eager to hold office must be best" (520d1-3).

The philosopher's unwillingness to rule is furthermore also repeatedly emphasized in terms of how they must be forced to rule (e.g. ἀναγκάζω, 519c9 or προσαναγκάζω, 520a8). Eric Brown finds seven passages that explicitly suggest that such a forcing is required (500d, 519e, 520a, 520e, 521b, 539e and 540b).[162] Allow me to quote one passage that captures the context, and which is telling.

> "It is the duty of us, the founders, then," said I [Socrates], "to compel the best natures to attain the knowledge which we pronounced the greatest, and to win to the vision of the good, to scale that ascent, and when they have reached the heights and taken an adequate view, we must not allow what is now permitted." "What is that?" [Glaucon asks.] "That they should linger there," I said, "and refuse (μὴ ἐθέλειν) to go down again among those bondsmen and share their labours and honours, whether they are of lesser or of greater worth." […] "Observe, then, Glaucon," said I, "that we shall not be wronging, either, the philosophers who arise among us, but that we can justify our action when we force (προσαναγκάζω) them to take care of (ἐπιμελέομαι) the other citizens and guard (φυλάσσω) them". (519c8-d7 and 520a6-9)

Politics is neither something fine (540b) nor does it make up a life that is equal or even in the proximity of the contemplative life of philosophical activity (519d). Whatever a life of leadership may involve, Socrates remarks, its more or less important preoccupations and rewards will not be something that the philosophers will desire; they will be reluctant. But, as Socrates accordingly also argues, their reluctance will not be sanctioned. It will not be accepted that they should linger on the Islands of the Blessed. Instead, Socrates repeatedly insists, they must return to the cave and "take care of the other citizens and guard them" (520a7-9).[163]

2.2.2. Making the Philosophers Return

Granted the textual evidence, we can conclude that the philosophers will have a strong reluctance towards political affairs, and that they will need to be forced to pursue the path of politics. There is, however, many ways to understand this. Most natural perhaps, and certainly quite common, is to appeal to the rational disposition of the philosophers. In the following four sections (2.2.3-2.2.6) I shall try out three of the most influential accounts of this, accounts that also are particularly challenging to the one I eventually shall propose. All three do also have something in common. In various ways

[162] Sedley (2007, 280) wants to add 347b-d to the list, although the idea of the philosophers as rulers has not then yet been explicitly expressed there. The reluctant rulers in that passage are merely referred to as good men. Smith (2010, 99, n.8) also wants to add 473d to the list.
[163] The various aspects of this issue are, for example, spelled out by Brown (2000), Sedley (2007), Weiss (2007), Woolf (2009), Schofield (2006) and Schofield (2007). See also below.

they all draw on the sound and rational disposition of the philosophers in order to explain what makes them engage in the politics of their city.

2.2.3. The Dictates of Prudential Reason

According to David Sedley, Plato clearly articulates an account of how to force the philosophers to engage in politics that appeals to their rational disposition. In reminding us of the passage in book one where Socrates discusses why the best must rule, Sedley also offers us a lens through which the necessity of philosophical rule might be easier to see.[164]

In the passage Sedley refers to, around 345e-347e, Socrates argues that the usual rewards for governing either comes as money or as honour. Rewards are also necessary, Socrates explains, for no one rules for the sake of ruling. Just as a professional house-builder builds houses for those that are to live in them, the rulers rule for the sake of their subjects. Ruling is always for the benefit of the one being ruled and never for the benefit of the one who rules (346e). Whenever someone desires to rule it is not the ruling itself they are after, but its rewards or consequences. And some kind of payment is therefore also reasonably necessary. Just as in the case of the house-builder, it seems reasonable that the rulers get something for their efforts.

In the case of the best kind of men, however, neither money nor honour will do, Socrates explains. For the best of men are not willing to accept any payment openly and thus run the risk of being called a hireling (μισθωτός). Nor would they want to take it in secret and risk to be called a thief (κλέπτης). Rule for honour is not an alternative either, Socrates continues, for the best type of men do not desire such (347b-c). Instead, Socrates suggest, they must be motivated in some other way. They need to be forced. And the device Socrates thus suggests, as Sedley points out, is a punishment. They will realize, Socrates explains, that if they do not rule themselves, they will be ruled by someone else; and the worst of all punishments, Socrates continues (347c), is to be ruled by someone worse (πονηρός).

Now, this idea Sedley calls *the dictates of prudential reason*.[165] It is by means of such a dictate, he argues, that the philosophers eventually shall accept to rule. It is in terms of such a self-regulative principle that we must understand the motivation by means of which the reluctance of the philosophers is overpowered, and by means of which they agree to rule.[166]

As one might argue, however, Sedley's *dictates of prudential reason* may seem to be somewhat too inclusive. The reason for accepting to rule seems to be based on an argument and a rationale that *any* prudential or sensible person would accept. Since it is a general and rational principle, the *dictates*

[164] Sedley (2007, 273).
[165] Sedley (2007, 281).
[166] Woolf (2009) has a similar argument.

of prudential reason can at least not be restricted to the reasoning of the philosophers of the Kallipolis. It is supposedly a dictate that should also apply to those gentle souls that, despite their environment, grow up in other cities and develop a philosophical disposition (520a-b). But in their case, as Socrates insists, there is no requirement to rule at all. They have no debt to their city, Socrates explains, and in contrast to the philosophers of the Kallipolis, they have no obligation to take government and rule.

Given that these exo-philosophers (if I may) have the same intellectual capacity as the philosopher of the Kallipolis, however, the fact that they are not subject to obligatory ruling might seem quite strange, that is, given the rationale of Sedley's prudential dictate. If the force by means of which the philosophers of the Kallipolis are made to rule is the fear of being ruled by the worse, this principle should also apply to those blessed souls that pop up elsewhere. Yet, apparently Socrates does not seem to think that that would be the case. And the dictates of prudential reason do not seem to be a sufficient explanation of how the philosophers are forced to rule. Something more seems to be required.

There is also another objection that might further challenge Sedley's account, for there is, in fact, nothing in the prudential dictate itself that would hinder the philosophers to escape. Yes, there is a law saying that the philosophers of the Kallipolis will not be allowed to run away (520b), but the prudential rationale itself does not establish this law. So, given that the philosophers neither love money nor honour, and that the only rewards they thus would have to look forward to would be the punishment of being ruled by the worse, one reasonable alternative, besides the acceptance of rule, and certainly reinforced by the philosopher's unworldly desire, would of course be to run away. They could choose not to be ruled at all. Such free-riders, as they are often referred to, would thus remain on the Islands of the Blessed. They would be where they most of all desire to be, and they would certainly not be subject to the rule of anyone worse.

Socrates does, however, insist that no such free-riders are allowed in the Kallipolis (520b-c). Yet, since the dictates of the prudential reason would not itself be able to persuade them to stay, the prudential reason does not seem to be a viable principle in this context. In order to make the philosophers stay, and eventually engage in the political affairs of their city, it seems to be necessary to invoke some other kind of principle than the principle of not wanting to be ruled by the worse.

2.2.4. The Rule of Law

Eric Brown has suggested that it is possible to argue that it is instead a law that Socrates takes to do the job. Drawing especially on 519e and 520a-d, Brown suggests that the force that will make the philosophers engage in

politics is a legislated principle. According to Brown the law may be summarized as such: *Those who have been educated by the city as philosophers will rule the city*.[167] This law, Brown goes on, is, however, not by itself sufficient. But it will, in combination with a certain conception of justice, do the trick. Understanding justice as a matter of obligatory law-fallowing, he continues, we can also understand how the philosophers are forced to rule. However reluctant they might be, Brown argues, the philosophers are just. And in being just they will obey the law. Since the law also tells them that they are required to rule, they will, in effect, also obey.[168]

Now, the first aspect of Brown's argument, introducing the law, he draws from 519e-520a. Socrates does here certainly also refer to a law when he explains how and why no free-riders would be allowed in the Kallipolis.

> You have again forgotten, my friend […] that the law (νόμος) is not concerned with the special happiness of any class in the state, but is trying to produce this condition in the city as a whole (ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ πόλει τοῦτο μηχανᾶται ἐγγενέσθαι), harmonizing and adapting the citizens to one another by persuasion (πειθώ) and compulsion (ἀνάγκη), and requiring them to impart to one another any benefit which they are able to bestow upon the community, and that it itself creates such men in the state, not that it may allow each to take what course pleases him, but with a view to using them for the binding together of the city (οὐχ ἵνα ἀφιῇ τρέπεσθαι ὅπῃ ἕκαστος βούλεται, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα καταχρῆται αὐτὸς αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὸν σύνδεσμον τῆς πόλεως). (519e1-520a4)

As an answer to Glaucon's complaint that the philosophers will be less well off if they are forced to rule, Socrates invokes the law. Repeating the answer to Adeimantus' objection at the beginning of book four regarding the happiness of the rulers (419a), Socrates turns to Glaucon and says that it is not for the sake of one class of the city that we have laws, but for sake of the entire community (519e). The law, Socrates explains, creates (ἐμποιέω) philosophers in the city not so that they can do whatever they want, but rather so that they may make a bound of union (σύνδεσμος) of the city (520a). The law is there to unite the city, and the production of philosophers is a fundamental aspect of that task. The philosophers are educated to be rulers, and thus educated they have no legal right to escape.

In view of the philosophers' reluctance, Brown also suggests that it is this law that does the trick. Having a law that says that the philosophers are required to rule will make them rule. Insofar as the philosophers have received their education in the city, the law will also work, Brown argues, because the philosophers are law abiding subjects. They have a sense of justice, he suggest, that will make them acknowledge the laws and obey them.

[167] Brown (2000, 9).
[168] Brown (2000, 9).

Now, this second element of Brown's argument is (admittedly) less obvious in the text.[169] Appealing to what Glaucon says at 520e, however, Brown argues that there are reasons to think that there is a conception of justice in play here that does entail obligatory law-following. As we have seen (in section 2.2.1), what Glaucon says in this passage is that since "we will be giving just orders to just people" (520e) there is no way that the philosophers will not obey the command to rule. Accordingly, Brown also argues that "just people are obligated to obey just commands"[170] and in appealing to the notion of justice articulated in the *Crito* and in "the popular conception of justice in Plato's time" he argues that it is also plausible to think that such a notion of justice in also in play here.[171]

The philosophers, Brown explains, will obey just commands, and since they also acknowledge the justice of the law that obligates them to rule, they will obey it. This they will acknowledge, Brown continues, because they will realize the justice of the demand. Having received their entire education in the city, having being fostered and cared for, they will realize that it is now time for them to pay back. Brown calls this idea *the principle of reciprocity*. And in addition to obligatory law-fallowing, this principle, he writes, is also supposed to be taken to be a fundamental part of the philosopher's sense of justice. A just person does not only acknowledge the rule of law, he also has a sense of debt and paying back what he owes.

Accordingly, Brown can also argue that it is two combined factors that force the philosophers to engage in politics: (1) a particularly pregnant notion of justice and (2) a law. This law, he insists, is important because would it not have been for it, the philosophers would not have taken office. Their sense of justice, Brown suggests, would not have been sufficient in itself. Justice, he claims, cannot by itself force the philosophers to choose the less happy life of ruling.

Supposedly Brown here thinks about this in terms of ruling being a too demanding task. Due to their sense of justice, implying a sense of debt, the philosophers would perhaps acknowledge that they owe the city something, but they would presumably not have chosen a less happy life in order to pay this debt back. According to Brown, such a choice would not in itself have been an unjust act, and accordingly, their sense of justice alone, Brown argues, would not force them to rule. In combination with the law, however, whose obedience is just, it may.[172]

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[169] Brown (2000, 10).
[170] Brown (2000, 10).
[171] Brown (2000, 10).
[172] Brown (2000, 10). According to Brown, his account may as such also be possible to reconcile with what he holds to be the *Republic's* general thesis, namely that acing justly is always better for the agent than injustice (cf. section 2.2). As one might argue, the philosophers' reluctance to rule and the fact that they are forced to do so may seem to contradict the idea that the just choice, i.e. the choice to rule, is the best choice for the philosophers. In separating off law from justice, however, Brown (2000, 10) argues that there will be no "in-

Now, this last point of Brown's argument has been reasonably challenged. For although he might be right in arguing that Plato is not at all alien to a conception of justice as obligatory law-following, there are good reasons to believe that Plato is here working with a much stronger conception of justice than Brown wants to admit. As one could argue, there is in fact no need for the law at all. The philosophers' sense of justice is enough.

2.2.5. A Sense of Justice

This last point of view is also clearly articulated by Roslyn Weiss. While Brown suggests that justice alone cannot force the philosophers to rule, Weiss insists that it certainly can. "The only reason the philosophers will obey the law", she claims, "is because of the justice […] argument".[173]

Now, the *justice argument* that Weiss here refers to, is a name of the same passages that Brown invoked to argue for his notion of justice as obligatory law-fallowing, i.e. 520e, in which Glaucon says that the philosophers will agree to share the labours of the state because the demand to do so is a just demand addressed to just people. Drawing on this passage, Weiss also goes on to argue that the philosophers will only listen to such a demand, and obey the law that requires their governance, insofar as they deem it to be a just demand and a just law. So, according to Weiss, the law or principle saying that *those who have been educated by the city as philosophers will rule the city* will only be acknowledged insofar as its justice is also acknowledged. Furthermore, because the philosophers do feel that they are in debt to the city, she argues, they will also appreciate the justice of such a demand.

According to Weiss, then, the philosophers will not accept to rule because there is a (justice neutral) law saying that they must obey for the sake of justice (saying that one must obey the law), but they will obey this law because they consider this law to be just.[174] Instead of judging it necessary to invoke a conception of justice as obligatory law-following, as Brown argues, Weiss claims that the conception of justice that we are here dealing with

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trinsic conflict between the demands of justice and the pursuit of happiness". Would it not have been for the law, Brown (2000, 10) suggests, "the philosophers would act justly and achieve maximal happiness by refusing to rule". Given the law, however, the only just choice is to rule, and happiness can only be achieved by ruling. It would thus be best for the philosophers to choose to rule. As such, Brown (2000, 10) also argues that his idea of justice as obedience (of the law) is also possible to reconcile with the idea of psychic justice or psychic harmony: "With that, if one accepts that justice includes the principle of obedience, then one will have to grant that psychic justice requires living in accordance with the principle of obedience".

[173] Weiss (2007, 111).

[174] The law, Weiss writes, fills another function. It is there to make the philosophers feel wanted. "Philosophers", Weiss (2007, 111) argues, "have no obligation to rule where they are not wanted. They should no more beg to rule than doctors to heal". Yet, insofar as there is a law saying that the philosophers must rule, their services are certainly wanted and they can rule without begging for it.

ought rather to be understood in terms of a sense of debt. It is also in these terms that Weiss finds the most reasonable account of the force that will make the philosophers rule. "It is justice in the form of repaying a debt", she claims, "that motivates the philosophers to rule".[175] It is not an arbitrary law saying that they must rule, because they are in debt, that motivates the philosophers to go back into the cave, she argues, but it is rather their own realization that only if they pay back what they owe may their acts be just.

This realization, Weiss continues, also has to do with the philosophers' basic motivations and disposition. Although it is not the just acts as acts that ultimately motivates their enactment, the philosophers realize that just acts need to be performed in order for justice to arise in the soul. "[I]n order to become just", Weiss writes, "one must act justly, and refrain from acting unjustly, acting justly is 'profitable' (445a, 588e, 589d, 591a): it 'produces and preserves' justice in the soul (443e-445b, 588b-591c)".[176] And this, i.e. the justice in the soul, she argues, the philosophers desire. "It is *being* just, having the condition of justice in one's soul, that appeals".[177]

Accordingly, Weiss goes on, it is also reasonable to account for the motivation that will make the philosophers accept the demand to rule in terms of their sense of justice. They realize, she argues, that they are justly compelled to rule.[178] Since the city has given them "the extensive education and nurture that make philosophy possible (520a-e)", she explains, the philosophers will also realize that they owe the city something. And, since they also have a desire to be just, and know that just acts have an instrumental value, they will also realize that they must accept the demand to rule. This will pay back their debts. It is this, Weiss argues, that will make the philosophers go back into the cave and rule. It is justice, understood to be a matter of paying back their debt to the city, that will make the philosophers acknowledge the justice of the demand obligating them to rule.

From the point of view of the other citizens and from the point of view of the founders, the order and (in effect) the happiness that the philosophers will bring to the city if they rule, is, in other words, a sufficient reason to force the philosophers to rule. From the point of view of the philosophers, however, this is not a sufficient reason. The welfare of the city, Weiss argues, in not a reason strong enough to make the philosophers leave the Islands of the Blessed and return to the cave.[179] The philosophers must have a stronger motivation, and this stronger motivation, Weiss explains, is the philosophers' desire to be just and, in effect, to act justly. It is also here that their debt enters the picture. Since the philosophers not only have a strong motivation to be just, but also since they acknowledge the justice of the act

[175] Weiss (2007, 112).
[176] Weiss (2007, 112).
[177] Weiss (2007, 112). Weiss' italics.
[178] Weiss (2007, 110).
[179] Weiss (2007, 112).

of paying back their debt to the city that has produced them, they will be motivated to rule, and they will acknowledge the justice of the demand to do so.[180]

Now, the reading thus construed is tempting. Viewed from a somewhat different perspective, however, there are a few issues that one might want to take into consideration. And I do think that there ultimately are good reasons to doubt that it is only the philosophers' desire to be just by means of paying back their debt that will make them return to the cave, and pursue the path of political rule. There are three lines of thought that support this doubt.

Firstly, then, as Weiss in some sense also acknowledges, one can doubt any account that argues that the philosophers acknowledge the justice of the demand to rule because of their philosophical insights in general.[181] Since the philosophers' sense of justice is a part of these general insights, there are thus also reasons to doubt that it is this sense of justice alone that will make them accept the demand to rule. This doubt can be spelled out in terms of how Socrates motivates the demand.

> For we will say to them [the philosophers of the city] that it is natural that men of *similar* quality who spring up (γιγνόμενοι εἰκότως) in other cities should not share in the labours there. For they grow up spontaneously from no volition of the government in the several states, and it is *justice* (δίκη) that the self-grown, indebted to none for its breeding, should not be eager to pay to anyone the price of its nurture.[182] (520b1-4)

As we have seen (in section 2.2.3) there is a difference between the philosophers of the city and the philosophers that Socrates explains grow up by themselves, despite the constitution of their city (520b). In contrast to the philosophers of the Kallipolis, the exo-philosophers have no reasons to acknowledge the justice of the demand to rule. Granted that the philosophical insights of the city-philosophers and the philosophical insights of the exo-philosophers are similar, or even the same – including their sense of justice – it can accordingly not be these insights alone that are the reason for why the city-philosophers, in contrast to the exo-philosophers, would acknowledge the justice of the demand to rule. As it seems reasonable to assume, the exo-philosophers are as just as the city-philosophers, but the

[180] Arguably, Weiss story is also possible to reconcile both with the idea that to act justly is always the best choice for the agent and the idea that ruling will bring psychic harmony (cf. section 2.2). The philosophers want to be just (in their souls) and they also realize that acting justly is the only way to achieve this. (Psychic harmony gives rise to just acts, and just acts preserve the psychic harmony.) Insofar as the demand to rule is a just demand to just people, it is also plausible to think that the just choice, i.e. ruling, will give the philosophers want they want, i.e. justice in their souls. As we shall see, however, the problem with this line of interpretation is that it seems to say that the philosophers *want* to rule. As such, it cannot explain the philosophers' reluctance to rule nor the fact that they need to be forced to do so.

[181] Cf. Weiss (2007, 109f).

[182] My italics.

exo-philosophers, Socrates explains, have no reasons to think that the demand to rule (their city) is just. And thus the demand to rule cannot be considered to be just because one's philosophical insights make it necessary to think so. Ruling is not something that one considers to be just to do (only) because one is a philosopher. Accordingly we also have reasons to doubt the claim saying that the philosophers will accept to rule (only) because they are philosophers.

There is of course an important difference between the exo-philosophers and the philosophers of the Kallipolis. The exo-philosophers are autodidact while the philosophers of the Kallipolis owe their philosophical insights to the city that has brought them up and educated them. And this, of course, makes all the difference. The exo-philosophers are not indebted to the city. Although they supposedly will realize that it is just for the city-philosophers to pay back *their* debt to *their* city, the exo-philosophers have no debts to any city. The philosophers of the Kallipolis, however, do. So, accordingly one might also still want to argue that it is the city-philosophers' sense of justice in combination with their debt that will motivate them to rule.

There is, however, a second reason to doubt that the philosophers will pursue the path of politics because they are just persons. And this reason does also include the city-philosophers' debt.

As we have seen (in section 2.2.1), the philosophers are unwilling to occupy themselves with politics and with the human affairs in the cave (cf. 517c8-9), and therefore they need to be forced to do so. There will be a law that will demand this of them, and the philosophers will acknowledge the justice of this law or this demand, because they are just people (520e).

In order to make sense of this, it is plausible to argue along the following lines: The reason for why the philosophers will acknowledge the justice of the demand is because of the philosophical insights that their higher education has granted them. The philosophers have seen true justice and they know what a just act is. They are just people and as just people they do just acts. "And philosophers", Weiss puts it, "qua just men, can be counted on to rule when ruling is what justice demands".[183] Just acts will preserve and produce the justice of the just person. A just act, Weiss explains, "'produces and preserves' justice in the soul (443e-445b, 588b-591c)".[184] The philosophers desire to be just, and their just acts will produce and preserve the justice of their souls.

Now, ruling the city, one can argue, is such a just act. It is the act of a just person, and the philosophers will also realize this. They are just persons, and they will realize that ruling the city is a just thing to do, not only because they know that they owe the city the value of their education but also because they realize that their rule would be able to pay back this debt. They

[183] Weiss (2007, 113).
[184] Weiss (2007, 112).

will realize that it would be unjust to refuse to rule, and they would accordingly also acknowledge that in ruling they would be performing a just act. Accordingly, since the philosophers have a strong motivation to be just and thus to do what is just, they would also have a strong motivation to rule. And in virtue of this strong motivation, they would thus also *want* to rule.

But this is of course the problem, because, as we have seen, the philosophers are describes to be unwilling to occupy themselves with human affairs (517c8-9). "[The philosopher] would choose to endure anything rather than such a life" (516e1-2). They believe that they have better things to do. "For surely, Adeimantus", Socrates explains, "the man whose mind is truly fixed on eternal realities has no leisure to turn his eyes downward upon the petty affairs of men" (500b8-c1). They are not willing ("μὴ ἐθέλειν", 519d4, cf. 517c8: "οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν") to pursue of path of politics. They must be forced do so, and it is their philosophical insights that are the reasons for why they are reluctant. If the philosophical insights acquired during their time outside the cave alone would have made the philosophers realize that the just thing to do would be to engage in politics, they would supposedly have been described to be willing, if not eager, to do so. But they are not. If they would have realized that the politics of the life in the cave is something worthwhile, they would have considered it to be something fine. But they do not (540b). And accordingly, we also have reasons to doubt that the philosophers will return to the cave because their philosophical insight alone has made them want to engage in politics.

Now, besides these two reasons to doubt that the philosophers will be motivated to pursue the path of politics because they are just persons, there is also a third reason pertaining to the value of the debt involved. For even if we admit the idea that the philosophers will engage in politics because their philosophical insights have made them want to rule, that is, even if we acknowledge that they will be willing to rule because they feel that they owe the city something, this line of thought will nevertheless end up with somewhat unattractive consequences.

According to Weiss, the philosophers will agree to rule because they will realize that if they rule they will be able to pay back their debt to the city. This would be a just act. The philosophers desire to be just, and since being just involves doing just acts, they will accordingly also agree to rule the city. Now, insofar as one is to make sense of this type of argument, however, one must also accept that the philosophers in this situation will consider the value of their rule to be equal to the value of their higher education. Otherwise their rule would not be able to pay back their debts. There must be a balance between the value of their rule and the value of their debt. In virtue of their philosophical insights, one will thus be inclined to argue, the philosophers will know that it is a just thing to pay back what they owe. And, in effect, one must also argue that it is in virtue of their philosophical insights that the philosophers value their rule as highly as they value their higher education.

Yet, this is a problematic conclusion, because it implies that one must also argue that Plato writes that the philosophers in this case value political matters just as highly as they value philosophical matters. As we have seen (in section 2.2.1), however, this is not the case. The higher education of the philosophers has not made them value political matters; not even in the Kallipolis. On the contrary, it has taught them the very opposite. For the philosophers, it is only truth and knowledge and the pursuit of such things that have any value. And it is these realizations that have made them reluctant to rule in the first place. It is nothing but their philosophical education that has made them see that political matters have little or no value. As we have seen (in section 2.2.1), there are several passages that make this point.

> [T]hey [the best of men] go to it [to rule] not in the expectation of enjoyment nor as to a good thing (ἀγαθός), but as to something necessary. (347c7-d1)
>
> [The philosopher] would choose to endure anything rather than such a life. (516e1-2)
>
> Can you name any other type or ideal of life that looks with scorn on political office except the life of true philosophers? […] No, by Zeus. (521b1-3)
>
> [B]ut when the turn comes for each [philosopher], toiling in the service of the state and holding office for the city's sake [i.e. for the Kallipolis' sake], [they will be] regarding the task not as a fine (καλός) thing but as something necessary (ἀναγκαῖος). (540b2-5)

The philosophers regard all types of political power with scorn. They do not think that political power has any value, and supposedly this is a rational conclusion to draw. The philosophers realise this because they are rational beings and because their philosophical education has made them realize which pursuits are really worthwhile. Accordingly we also have further reasons to doubt that the philosophers acknowledge the justice of the demand to rule in virtue of what they have learned from their experiences outside the cave. It cannot be their philosophical insights alone that have made them value their rule as highly as they value their philosophical education. And thus we also have reasons to consider an alternative explanation. There must be some other factor involved here that will make the philosophers think that it is fair to force them to pursue the path of politics. But what, then, could this be?

2.2.6. To Care for the City

In order to answer this question, I shall suggest, it might be viable to analyse the reasons for why the philosophers acknowledge the justice of the demand to engage in the politics of the Kallipolis. In order for the philosophers of the

city to acknowledge this, it seems, two criteria must be satisfied. The philosopher must (a) think that it is just to pay back their debt to the city, and the philosophers must also (b) think that their rule of the city has an equal value to the education they have been given by the city. Only then can they consider their rule to be a just way to pay back their debts.

The first criterion can, on its own, be said to have rational grounds. Since the philosophers are also rational and reasonable they will think that it is fair to pay back what they owe. Doing so will also make them just persons. As it seems reasonable to believe, the philosophers value their higher education because it has granted them the most blessed of gifts, and thus they feel that they owe the city the value of what they have been given.

The second criterion, however, does not seem to have equally rational grounds. There is at least nothing learnt in their higher education that has made the philosophers value political rule as highly as they value their philosophical education. The reason for this, as we have seen, is that above all other character types the philosophers are the ones who most strongly detest political matters (e.g. 516e or 51b). Ruling can never be considered to be a fine (καλός) preoccupation, not even in the Kallipolis (540b).

So, why then do the philosophers nevertheless value their rule so highly? Granted that we have reasons to doubt that this can be explained in terms of the philosophers' philosophical insights, why do the philosophers, despite the fact that they consider political power to be of little or no worth, nevertheless acknowledge the justice of the demand that they should pursue the path of politics? Or to put it in other words, what is it that the philosophers actually value when they value their political engagement as something that can pay back their debt?[185]

If we take a look at how Socrates spells this out, we will see that it has to do with the preservation and maintenance of the city. The rule of the philosophers pertains to the city's very existence. And the role that the philosophers are to have as rulers is the role of caretakers and guardians. Socrates articulates this in terms of the law.

> You have again forgotten, my friend […] that the law is not concerned with the special happiness of any class in the state, but [the law] is trying to produce this condition in the city as a whole, harmonizing and adapting the citizens to one another by persuasion and compulsion, and requiring them to impart to one another any benefit which they are able to bestow upon the com-

[185] It may be argued that the philosophers do not need to value political engagement as highly as they value their higher education in order to pay back their debts. It is enough if *the city* values their engagement as highly as the philosophers value their education. But in all fairness, would this not be a deceptive equality? Would this not entail that the philosophers, who thus would think that their political engagement is of little or no real value, are making an unjust deal? The philosophers would not think that they are paying back the value of what they have received, even if the city would perhaps think about it that way. I owe this remark to Alexander Stöpfgeshoff.

> munity, and that it itself [the law] creates such men in the state [i.e. philosophers], not that it may allow each to take what course pleases him, but with a view to using them for *the binding together of the city* (τὸν σύνδεσμον τῆς πόλεως). […] Observe, then, Glaucon […] that we shall not be wronging, either, the philosophers who arise among us, but that we can justify our action when we force them *to take care of the other citizens and guard them* (προσαναγκάζοντες τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιμελεῖσθαί τε καὶ φυλάττειν).[186] (519e1-520a4 and 520a6-9)

The role of the philosophers as rulers is the role of caretakers, unifiers, preservers and guardians. The philosophers should rule because they can keep the city together better than anyone else. "[Y]ou", Socrates says to the philosophers, "we have engendered for yourselves and [for] the rest of the city to be, as it were, king-bees and leaders in the hive. You have received a better and more complete education than the others" (520b5-c1). This being said directly to the philosopher, and here explicitly articulated in order to justify the demand that they should engage in the politics of the Kallipolis, Socrates is also most likely trying to appeal to something that the philosophers already feel. He is not speaking to them as truth-lovers but as citizens and parts of a greater whole. In addressing the philosophers, Socrates is also most likely trying to appeal to something in the philosophers that will remind them of the intimate bounds they have to the city.[187]

Having just a few lines above made it perfectly clear that the philosophers are made as they are in order to unify the citizens and bind the city together, we also have reasons to believe that Socrates here has something similar in mind. The philosophers are supposed to be aware of the fact that it is only if they will come to rule that the city will persevere. It is therefore also plausible to think that the reason for why the philosophers can be considered to value their rule of the city equal to their higher education is because they care for the city, and because they believe that the perseverance of the city is something valuable and important.[188] Despite the fact that their philosophical education has taught them to consider all political activities with scorn (521b), and despite the fact that their primary interests and desires as philos-

[186] My italics.
[187] Cf. Schofield (2007).
[188] As it thus seems plausible to believe, it is also for this reason that the philosophers consider the demand to rule to be just. The philosophers are just people (520e). The demand to pay back their debts is a just demand (520e). The philosophers care for the city and consider the preservation of the city to be valuable. They also realize that it is only if they rule that the city can persevere. Accordingly, they also consider their rule to be as valuable as their higher education and thus something that could pay back their debt. And it is for these reasons, I suggest, that the philosophers are described to acknowledge the justice of the demand that they should rule. The philosophers can (1) be said to value their own role as rulers, since they value the existence and perseverance of the city, and they can (2) be said to be just, since they can pay back their debt to the city by ruling. In order for this to make sense, the philosopher must (a) think that the preservation of the city is just as valuable as their higher education and (b) they must think that the city can only be maintained if they rule.

ophers lie far beyond the political life in the cave, the philosophers must care for the city to such a degree that they consider its perseverance to be something valuable. Whatever the philosophical education of the philosophers has ultimately taught them, it has made them unwilling to rule or engage in political activity. And, as we have seen, there are thus also reasons to doubt that what motivates the philosophers to go back into the cave and rule can be accounted for in terms of their rational or philosophical insights alone. This motivation must also come from somewhere else. It must come from their care. But why do the philosophers care for the perseverance of the city? And why do they care for the city at all? Because they have realized that everything worth to pursue exists on a level far beyond the life in the cave? Because they desire knowledge and truth? Or because of those experiences that have made them look on political matters with scorn?[189] Malcolm Schofield has spelled out a promising answer. The philosophers care for the city, not because their higher education has taught them so, but because this is a sentiment that has been inserted into the hearts of their souls when they were young and malleable.[190]

2.3. The Function of the Noble Lie

Besides being prudent (φρόνιμος) and capable (δυνατός), Socrates argues, one of the basic criteria for becoming an appropriate ruler of the city is that one shows care for it.

> Then, in the first place, mustn't they be knowledgeable and capable, and mustn't they care for (κηδεμών) the city?[191] (412c12-13)

[189] Now, insofar as it comes to the very activity that the philosophers eventually are supposed to perform, i.e. the ruling, one can of course nuance the picture by arguing that they are not supposed to rule all of the time. There are apparently more philosopher-rulers than one and they are to take turns (cf. 540a). In principle then, one can argue, the philosophers realize that the city must be ruled by a philosopher. This realization, one could argue, is a philosophical realization. And thus the philosophers do want the city to be ruled by *a* philosopher, not just by him- or herself. But then again, if it would be a just act to rule the city, and the philosophers would want to do just acts, why would not all of them want to rule?

[190] Schofield (2007). There is one passage in book one (around 332a) that also points in the direction of the necessity of something more than justice in order to establish the feeling of mutual interest between the city and the ruler. Having proved that paying back what one owes is not an absolute definition of justice, because in the case of the lunatic it is better to resist, Socrates and Polemarchos continues to discuss a more qualified definition. Friends (φίλοι), Polemarchos says, are obliged to pay their dues to each other, but only if the paying back does good. If we transfer this idea to the ruler-city situation, we can also see that only if the rulers are friends of the city – as is also clearly one of the basic criteria for being a ruler (412c) – are they obliged to pay their dues. If they are not friends and if the rulers do not love their city, they have no obligation to live up to.

[191] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997).

The greatest of care, however, one shows to something that one happens to love (φιλέω), Socrates explains. And what one loves the most, he continues, is something that one considers to share one's own interests. When it suffers one suffers oneself, and when oneself suffers it suffers too (412d).

> And again, one would be most likely to love that whose interests he supposed to coincide with his own, and thought that when it prospered, he too would prosper and if not, the contrary. (412d4-7)

As Socrates then goes on to explain, it is also for this reason that the rulers of the Kallipolis must be picked out from those that will never diverge from their care and love for the city. Only those that will always do what they find to be the best for the city will do (412e). Most likely referring back to somewhere around 412, Socrates also emphasizes this point at the end of book six.

> We were saying, if you recollect, that they must approve themselves lovers of the state (φιλόπολις) when tested in pleasures and pains, and make it apparent that they do not abandon this fixed faith under stress of labours or fears or any other vicissitude, and that anyone who could not keep that faith must be rejected, while he who always issued from the test pure and intact, like gold tried in the fire, is to be established as ruler. (502e2-503a6)

Only city-lovers (φιλοπόλεις) will be selected, and thus only those whose own interests are the same as the city's will be selected. This concordance of the interest of the rulers and the interest of the city is supposedly fundamental for the ruler-city relationship.

Back in book three, where Socrates spells this out in some detail, he also dedicates some quite strong wordings to the matter. In terms of how to test the city-love of the rulers-to-be, Socrates goes through what he presumably considers to be the greatest threats to such a love (412c-414a).

Socrates mentions three general factors that might change somebody's mind and take away the established conviction (413b). Someone can (1) steel (κλέπτω) it, someone can (2) spirit it away (γοητεύω) and someone can (3) take it away with violence (βιάζω).

The first threat, Socrates goes on to explain, has to do either with persuasion or with time. By a good argument (λόγος, 413b6), we learn, one can be persuaded to change one's mind, and one might also forget.[192] The second threat is explained in terms of pleasure or fear, and the third as the result of pain or sorrow (413b-c). And only those that have been experimentally exposed to all of these threats and that still persist in their love and care for the city will be selected as appropriate rulers (414a).

[192] In the case of forgetfulness, it is *time* that is the thief (cf. 413b).

> Well then, as I was just saying, we must look for those who are the best guardians (ἄριστοι φύλακες) of the indwelling conviction (τοῦ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς δόγματος) that what they have to do is what they at any time believe to be best for the state. Then we must observe them from childhood up and propose them tasks in which one would be most likely to forget this principle or be deceived […] And again we must subject them to toils and pains and competitions in which we have to watch for the same traits [And] must we not institute a third kind of competitive test with regard to sorcery and observe them in that? Just as men conduct colts to noises and uproar to see if they are liable to take fright, so we must bring these lads while young into fears and again pass them into pleasures, testing them much more carefully than men do gold in the fire, to see if the man remains immune to such witchcraft and preserves his composure throughout. (413c5-e2)

But how, then, is such a strong city-love to be established? Although reluctantly, Socrates answers that they must use a lie. But of what kind, Glaucon asks. It is really nothing new, Socrates answers, but something quite familiar.

> [It is nothing] new […] but a sort of Phoenician tale, something that already has happened in many parts of the world, as the poets say, and have induced men to believe, but that has not happened and perhaps would not be likely to happen in our day and demanding no little persuasion to make it persuasive. (414c4-7)

After a few twists and turns, Socrates also spells it out.

> Very well, I will speak. And yet I hardly know how to find the audacity or the words to speak and undertake to persuade *first the rulers themselves* and the soldiers and then the rest of the city, that in good sooth all our training and educating of them were things that they imagined and that happened to them as it were in a dream; but that in reality at that time they were down within the earth being moulded and fostered themselves while their weapons and the rest of their equipment were being fashioned. And when they were quite finished the earth as being their mother delivered them, and now as if their land were their mother and their nurse they ought to take thought for her and defend her against any attack (βουλεύεσθαί τε καὶ ἀμύνειν αὐτούς, ἐάν τις ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἴῃ) and regard the other citizens as their brothers and children of the self-same earth.[193] (414d1-e6)

When Glaucon hears this, he replies that he now understands the reasons for why Socrates was so reluctant to articulate this lie (ψεῦδος, 414e7) in the first place. Quite so, Socrates answers, but continues. Besides believing that they are born from the earth, Socrates explains, the citizens of their Kallipolis are also to believe that their function in the city, as workers, helpers/soldiers or rulers, will depend on the type of metal that the god inserted

[193] My italics.

into theirs soul when they were created (415a-d). Some are born with bronze, they are to believe, some with silver and some with gold.[194]

Believing that they have been born from the soil of their city, the citizens of the Kallipolis will consider each other to be brothers, Socrates explains.[195] But as such they must also know that they are valuable (τίμιος, 415a5) in different degrees. It is of the utmost importance, Socrates goes on, that the citizens notice the type of metal with which new children are born. For although it is most common that parents will give birth to children with their own type of metal, this is not always the case. In stressing the importance that the citizens pay heed to their inherent value and that they accordingly do what is appropriate and make their children do likewise, Socrates also ends the story by explaining that there is this prophecy, saying that when a man of iron or bronze will watch over the city, it will fall and be crushed (415a-415c).

2.3.1. Who is the Addressee of the Noble Lie?

There has been some confusion regarding the addressees of this noble lie.[196] Since this is a decisive point in the argument I am proposing, it seems adequate to take a closer look at this before I proceed. There are two crucial passages (414b-c and 414d).

The first passage comes just before Socrates spells out the content of the noble lie, and is articulated in terms of how to make rulers that would survive the love-tests mentioned above.

> How, then, […] might we contrive one of those necessary lies of which we were just now speaking, so as by one noble lie to persuade first of all the rulers themselves (γενναῖόν τι ἓν ψευδομένους πεῖσαι μάλιστα μὲν καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἄρχοντας), but if not that, the rest of the city? (414b8-c2)

This passage refers back to 382c and 389b, where Socrates discusses the fact that a lie may sometimes be used as a medical drug (φάρμακον). What I want to stress by quoting this passage is however not the fact that Socrates in certain circumstances seems to think that lies may have useful functions, but

[194] The metal that is supposed to permeate the souls of the working-class, a class exemplified by farmers and other craftsmen ("γεωργοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις δημιουργοῖς"), is also said to be iron (σίδηρος) or χαλκός. It is the latter I here refer to as bronze, a word that could also be used to refer to copper or even metal in general according to LSJ. With regard to the expression "helpers/soldiers", see n.148.

[195] "'As really being', or 'as if they were'?", Schofield (2006, 285) asks, "Within the framework of the story the earth, i.e. their native soil, figures as mother (not 'mother, as it were'). But since it would be hard to know what *literally* believing that might be like, the alternatives dissolve into one".

[196] Both Ferrari (1989, 120) and Reeve (1988, 210) argue that it is the guardians that are to tell the lie. Annas has some doubts (1981, 107). Cf. also Annas (1978, 443). Popper (1966, 139) and Schofield (2007) are clear in arguing that the rulers are to believe it.

rather that there is here little doubt as to who the addressee of the lie is. The noble lie is primarily supposed to be addressed to the rulers ("τοὺς ἄρχοντας"). And although it might be argued that Socrates does here express some doubts that this will work at all, the lie's primary target is again specified a few lies below.

> [A]nd [I shall] undertake to persuade (ἐπιχειρήσω […] πείθειν) first the rulers themselves (πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἄρχοντας) and the soldiers and then the rest of the city. (414d2-4)

In this quote there is clearly no hesitation regarding who Socrates is trying to persuade. It is first of all the rulers ("τοὺς ἄρχοντας"), but then also the soldiers ("τοὺς στρατιώτας") and thereafter the rest of the city ("τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν"). All citizens are apparently to be persuaded. There is little doubt that anyone is excluded.[197]

2.3.2. How Does the Noble Lie Persuade?

Granted the importance of the patriotic care that the noble lie is supposed to insert into the soul of its subjects (cf. 412c and 415d), it is of course also of central importance to understand how it is supposed to be believable at all. Indeed, both Socrates and Glaucon express their concern about this matter. Not only is Socrates' introduction of the noble lie full of doubt and hesitation. Socrates also stresses the fact that it will need much persuasion to be persuasive (414c). Glaucon also reflects this doubt. The first generation that will be exposed to the lie will probably not believe it at all, Glaucon says, but, eventually, their sons and their grandsons presumably will.

> No, not these themselves [but] their sons and successors and the rest of mankind who come after [will] (415d1-2)

Socrates answers by elaborating Glaucon's point.

> Well, even that would have a good effect making them more inclined to care (κήδεσθαι) for the city and one another. For I think I apprehend your mean-

[197] Compared to the lowest class of the city, however, the doubt is even smaller with regard to the rulers and soldiers. Although implausible, drawing on 415d-e, one could in fact argue that if any class is to be excluded here it is the lowest class. For as Socrates passes on from the story of the noble lie to discuss the lives of the rulers and soldiers he only refers to them as being earth-born, and he somehow seems to neglect the rest of the city: "And let's now arm our earthborn and lead them forth with their rulers in charge. And as they march, let them look for the best place in the city to have their camp, a site from which they can most easily control those within, if anyone is unwilling to obey the laws, or repel any outside enemy who comes like a wolf upon the flock" (415d7-e3). Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997).

> ing. And this will indeed turn out as tradition itself (αὐτὸ ἡ φήμη) guides. (415d2-6)

Socrates does not here in so many words spell out how this tradition is supposed to work. Whether we translate ἡ φήμη as *tradition*, *hear-say* or even as *rumour*, is it nevertheless quite safe to think that the noble lie is supposed to be persuasive by being a part of the cultural fabric in which new generations are brought up. Although Socrates does not elaborate the matter in this immediate context, he is certainly not silent elsewhere.

As Schofield has also pointed out, it is not at all impossible to locate an account in other parts of the dialogue.[198] Indeed, the second part of book two and most of book three is dedicated to the matter. In these books, Socrates also goes into some detail regarding how tradition is passed on and how new generations are supposed to be brought up.

Now, in books two and three, the job of transmitter of tradition can basically be said to be the job of the poets and mythmakers (377d, 377b-d, 378d-e and 378e-379a).[199] And although it is quite clear that Socrates is also speaking about the stories told by the general public, e.g. by those who nurse the children, Socrates argues that if we look at the greater ("μείζους") products of the poets and mythmakers we shall also be able to say something about the smaller ("ἐλάσσων") stories (377c-d). In terms of how the citizens of the Kallipolis are to be brought up, Socrates also explains that the beginning is most important.

> Do you not know, then, that the beginning in every task is the chief thing, especially for anyone that is young and malleable? For it is then that the person is best moulded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it.[200] (377a12-b3)

> [For] whatever opinions are taken into the mind at that age are apt to prove hard to wash away (δυσέκνιπτος) and unchangeable (ἀμετάστατος).[201] (378d8-e1)

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[198] Schofield (2007, 153).

[199] "This is a job for poets", Schofield (2007, 154) writes, "not philosophers – presumably because it is the poet, not the philosopher, who is skilled in exploring cultural tradition to produce images and narratives with the requisite resonance and power and who is experienced in moulding people's souls by such means". Regarding the addressee of the poets, see Lorenz (2006, 60 & 61, n.5).

[200] Cf. also 463d, 500d and 522a.

[201] Modified translation. I have changed Shorey's "wont to" to Grube and Reeve's "apt to". The "φιλεῖ" thus translated I find difficult to get right, and it might perhaps be more significant than the translation suggest. Both Shorey and Grube/Reeve seem to translate it in terms of *being a friend to the result of the appropriation*. Since what is involved in this appropriation, with regard to the noble lie, is how love and care for the city Plato's choice of word might be more significant that an "apt to" may capture. At 412d2 we read: "Now, one cares most for what one loves (κήδοιτο δέ γ' ἄν τις μάλιστα τούτου ὃ τυγχάνοι φιλῶν)", translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997).

For this reason, then, Socrates goes on, we must also pay careful attention to the stories by means of which the children are brought up (377b). Those stories that are good, Socrates explains, shall be approved, and the others rejected.

> We must begin, then, it seems, by a censorship over our story-makers (τοῖς μυθοποιοῖς), and what they do well we must pass and what not, reject. And the stories on the accepted list we will induce nurses and mothers to tell to the children and so shape their souls by these stories far rather than their bodies by their hands. (377b11-c5)

The stories that Socrates is here talking about are also specified in this context. They are not only the smaller ones, but they are also the greater ones.

> Those [are the stories] that Hesiod and Homer and the other poets related. These, methinks, composed false stories (μύθους […] ψευδεῖς) which they told and still tell to mankind. (377d4-6)

In the Kallipolis, however, most of the products of these poets will not be allowed. Judging from this last quote alone it might seem to be the falsehood of the stories that is the reason to reject them. As Socrates a few lines above has made perfectly clear, however, there are two kinds of accounts or narratives (λόγοι, 376e) in play here. There are false (ψεῦδος) ones and there are true (ἀληθής) ones (376e). As it comes to the stories told to the children, they are all false on the whole, although they may have some truth in them as well.

> Don't you understand […] that we begin by telling children stories (πρῶτον τοῖς παιδίοις μύθους λέγομεν)? And this [the stories], taken as a whole, is false (ψεῦδος), but there is truth in it also. (377a4-6)

All of the stories described to be part of the basic education of the city, including the accepted ones, are, on the whole, lies. The stories may perhaps contain some fragments of truth, but generally speaking they are lies. It is in any case not the falsehood of these stories that will exclude them from the approved list, but rather their contents and their moral value. And the judges of *that* are the founders themselves.

> Adeimantus, we are not poets, you and I at present, but founders of a state. And to founders it pertains to know the patterns on which poets must compose their stories and from which their poems must not be allowed to deviate; but the founders are not required themselves to compose stories (μῦθοι). (378e7-379a4)

The job of making up the accepted stories is the job of the poet. The myths are poetry. Although the founders are to sketch up the appropriate framework, the job of working out the actual stories does still pertain to the poets.

Most of the time Socrates and his friends are also primarily occupied with reasoning about the moral value of already existing stories. They try to pick out the good ones and they discuss why some of the stories are to be excluded. With regard to the contents of the stories, they evaluate what kinds of convictions they establish in the souls of the children and based on that they pick out those who install important habits and convictions. Early in book seven Socrates summarizes the point.

> It [the musical education] educated the guardians (παιδεύουσα τοὺς φύλακας) through habits (ἔθεσι). Its harmonies gave them a certain harmoniousness, not knowledge; […] and its stories (λόγοι), whether mythic (μυθώδης) or nearer the truth (ἀληθινώτεροι), cultivated other habits (ἔθη) akin to these.[202] (522a4-8)

As it comes to one particularly important conviction, however, Socrates does go into some detail. In the case of the noble lie, Socrates apparently thinks that he must be quite specific. For out of the elements of a pair of fairly well-known myths he invents a new story (μῦθος), calls it Phoenician (414c) and, as it seems reasonable to believe, adds it to the censured canon of the Kallipolis.[203]

2.3.3. The Context of the Noble Lie

In view of how Socrates in the contexts of books two and three spells out the general framework of the musical education of the Kallipolis, it is also possible to understand what Socrates may have meant by the fact that his Phoenician myth was to be established in the Kallipolis by means of tradition or hear-say. As Schofield has pointed out, it is certainly also in this context that

[202] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997). Cf. Moss (2008, 57).

[203] The noble lie is basically made up of two elements. The first element is the birth from the earth, and the second the metals in the souls. They are, however, clearly supposed to make up one single whole (cf. 415a). The first element, as noted by Adam (1902, 195) and Guthrie (1975, 462) is presumably an allusion to the story of the foundation of Thebes. Cadmus, we learn, was a Phoenician who once funded this city by means of sowing dragon teeth from which a race of giants was grown. As Page (1991, 22) points out, however, this race did eventually fall in a great civil war. This might be a reason for why Socrates is not satisfied with a simple autochthonous brotherhood, but also introduces the other element into his story, i.e. the metallic flavoured souls. This is an allusion to Hesiod, as Socrates also makes perfectly clear (at 574a), and it is perhaps a way to suggest that the city they are out to design shall, by means of this element, not fall prey to the same fate. The first element, of being earth-born, may also, as has been suggested by Page (1991) and Hesk (2000, 160), be an allusion to the money-making part of the soul, and this suggests that Socrates, as we shall also see, is well aware of the fact that the noble lie is primarily designed to persuade the lowest part of the soul. See also Schofield (2006, 256ff).

the noble lie belongs.[204] For a story that is supposed to persuade by means of tradition and over a span of generations, must, in some way or another, imbue the fabric of the culture. Just like the other stories and myths granted a place in the canonical poetry of the Kallipolis, it seems, the stories about the citizens' earth-born origin and their metal-permeated souls are to become part of the city's everyday life. Although these poetical stories may perhaps only occasionally become the object of recitation at public gatherings, it seems quite safe to think that they are supposed to be told to the children. Just like the other stories of the Kallipolis, the noble lie will be told to the children by their nurses and educators. When Glaucon explains that the noble lie will become more persuasive as the generations progress, it does at least seem likely that it is something along these lines that he had mind (415d). When Socrates in that context also explains that the noble lie shall be persuasive by means of tradition or hear-say it does in any case seem reasonable to assume that he is thinking about tradition in the same terms as he spelled it out in book two and three.

In comparison to the other convictions that the other stories of the Kallipolis' musical education are supposed to establish in the souls of its children, however, Socrates seems to be extra concerned about the noble lie. When it comes down to the patriotism and the care that this lie is supposed to establish, Socrates has also taken some extra measures – at least with regard to the rulers-to-be. As we have seen (in section 2.3), it is also for this reason that Socrates prescribes a pair of tests. The patriotism and the care that the noble lie is supposed to establish, must stand firm, Socrates explains, no matter what. In order to be sure that this conviction has been properly formed in the souls of the rulers-to-be, they must be exposed to the most challenging tests. Their feeling of unity and mutual interest with the city must be unchangeable. Their care, and the means by which it is established, must be of a quite remarkable kind. Like true gold in fire, Socrates explains, it must pass all tests. And the ways by means of which this conviction must be entrenched in their souls, must also be so strong and deep that nothing, not even a good argument (λόγος, 413b6), shall be able to shake its grounds (cf. 413e-414d and 503a).

The power of such a conviction and the force by means of which it apparently is to trump all other experiences and motivations, may remind the attentive reader of the force of such a power that Socrates describes in the *Apology*. However dangerous the accusations and arguments of Anytus, Meletus and Lycon might have been (18b and 23e), there was another, stronger force in play. Socrates' true accusers and the ones he feared the most were not the ones that brought him to court, but the shadows of tradition. It was rumour and hearsay that were his true accusers (cf. 18d). Socrates explains the matter in addressing his audience.

[204] Schofield (2007, 153).

> They spoke to you at an age at which you would believe them most readily, some of you in youth and most of you in childhood [and] the most unreasonable thing of all is this, that it is not even possible to know and speak their names […] (18c5-d1) [205]

If Socrates was right, it was certainly also these unmentionable shadows that persuaded the jury and sentenced him to death.[206] And they did apparently not work by direct argument and rational persuasion, but by the complex and forceful mechanisms of hearsay and tradition. The disadvantageous image of Socrates, that is, the image that ultimately convicted him, became a part of public opinion. It established itself in the souls of the young. While these children grew up, and echoed the stories, the general hostile attitude towards Socrates grew stronger, and eventually killed him.

There is one central passage in the *Republic* by means of which one can imagine the situation.

> [It is] when […] the multitude are seated together in assemblies or in courtrooms or theatres or camps or any other public gathering of a crowd, and with loud uproar censure some of the things that are said and done and approve others, both in excess, with full-throated clamour and clapping of hands, and thereto the rocks and the region round about re-echoing redouble the din of the censure and the praise. In such case how do you think the young man's heart, as the saying is, is moved within him? What private teaching do you think will hold out and not rather be swept away by the torrent of censure and applause, and borne off on its current, so that he will affirm the same things that they do to be honourable and base, and will do as they do, and be even such as they? (492b5-8)

Even if Socrates here characterises this situation as he does in order to expose its absurdities, the passage does nevertheless seem to offer a key to understanding how Socrates takes the forces of hear-say and public opinion to work. No private teaching can stand its ground here, he says. For the currents of public opinion will sweep away even the strongest of private teachings.

Although Socrates' account of education by means of myths and stories is perhaps less spectacular, the force in play seems to be similar. The poetical canon of the Kallipolis is not supposed to educate by means of rational argument, but by means of tradition and hear-say. The selected stories are not only to be told by the designated poets in the theatres and at public gatherings, but indeed also in private, by educators and nurses.[207]

At least as it comes to the noble lie, this seems to be clear. The noble lie is supposed to be established by means of tradition or hearsay (φήμη,

[205] Translation by Fowler (2006).
[206] The word that Socrates here uses to describe his defence against these unmentionable accusers is σκιαμαχέω, meaning just that: to fight against shadows (18d6).
[207] Cf. Moss (2008, 57f).

415d6). Generation after generation, Glaucon suggests, the lie must be retold, and as it thus also seems reasonable to believe, it is the echoes of the multitude that will do the job. It is in the hands of the public that the noble lie will be sufficiently established. Slowly and gradually, we can imagine, it is supposed to be spread throughout the limbs and veins of the state-body, generation after generation. Eventually, as Glaucon points out, all people will believe it (415d). For insofar as this strategy has been sufficiently effective, the convictions established will be "hard to wash away (δυσέκνιπτος) and unchangeable (ἀμετάστατος)" (378d8-e1). Regardless of what the rulers-to-be are exposed to, even if someone tries to steal (κλέπτω) it – by argument or persuasion (λόγος) – spirit it away (γοητεύω) – by pleasure or fear – or take it away with violence (βιάζω) – by pain or sorrow – the patriotism and city-love established in their childhood shall remain (413b). Not even the experience that their higher education is to give them should be able to change this. For the importance of their patriotism or city-love, as we have seen (in section 2.3), is also repeated long after the philosophers has been appointed kings: "We were saying, if you recollect, that they must approve themselves lovers of the city (φιλόπολις) […] and make it apparent that they do not abandon this fixed faith" (502e2-503a6). Even if they will see, what Schofield describes as, "something incomparably more important than the city, and something far more desirable and good [and therefore] need to be *compelled* to take their turn at ruling […] Patriotic conviction", Schofield concludes, "'hard to wash out' and tested in every kind of trial – will remain writ deep in their souls".[208]

2.3.4. Summary: The Role of the Noble Lie

Now, it is fairly safe to say that most modern scholars acknowledge the fact that the *Republic* lays bare an educational program that, by means of poetry and hand-picked myths and stories, is to mould the souls of the children of the city so as to align them with the moral codes Socrates argues for in terms of the value of peacefulness (378a-e), simplicity (380d), ingenuousness (381b) or insusceptibility (387cff and 388e), for example. It is also quite safe to say, although perhaps not as acknowledged, that this poetry and these myths and stories are to be distributed in the city by means of the mechanisms of tradition. The idea that the noble lie is made to be distributed by the same mechanisms and that it as such is also supposed to be the basic device by means of which the philosophers are compelled to love their city and, in effect, to agree "to occupy themselves with human affairs" (517c8-9), is an idea that is less often recognized. As I have tried to argue, however, there are basically two reasons to do so.

[208] Schofield (2007, 162).

Firstly, the alternative explanations we have considered are attractive but end up with unwanted consequences. Although they highlight important aspect of the matter, they both leave the noble lie unexplained and end up explaining away the philosophers' political reluctance.[209] According to the dictates of prudential reason (see section 2.2.3), all philosophically minded persons would realize that their rule is the best alternative. But such an account can neither explain why the exo-philosophers will not agree to rule, nor why the philosophers of the Kallipolis are described to be reluctant. The law (as argued in section 2.2.4) can only reasonably be explained in terms of the philosophers' sense of justice. And in taking this sense of justice (as argued in section 2.2.5) to be the only motivating force in play, it is hard to explain why the philosophers are reluctant to pursue the path of politics in the first place.

Secondly, in contrast to these alternatives, we have reasons to think that it is a sense of patriotism and care that will make the philosophers leave the Islands of the Blessed, because we can thus both account for the noble lie and understand why the philosophers will return to the cave of human affairs, that is, without explaining away the fact that they are also described to be reluctant to do so.

As a part of the poetical canon of the Kallipolis, distributed by the mechanisms of tradition and education, and exploiting the malleable nature of the philosophers as children, the noble lie is designed to establish a love for the city. As we have seen (in section 2.3), only city-lovers are allowed to pursue the path towards becoming rulers. And although the philosophers eventually will come to consider all political matters with scorn – because they will see better things and because they do not want to turn the eyes of their minds towards the darkness of human affairs – they will agree to engage in politics; and they will agree because they realize that this is the only way to preserve the city they love. When Socrates speaks to the philosophers and justifies the demand that they will need to "take care of the other citizens and guard them" (520a7-9), he is speaking to them as patriotic citizens and as parts of the community – not as free-riding dialecticians or exo-philosophers (cf. 520b-d).[210]

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[209] As Schofield (2006, 286) does not.

[210] Although I shall not here attempt to reconcile this understanding of the force of the noble lie with (a) the thesis that doing what is just is always the best for the agent, with (b) the thesis that the philosophers are supposed to be in psychic harmony or with (c) the problem that the philosophers, due to their reluctance, do not seem to understand that the only just thing to do is to rule, I would nevertheless like to point out that there are at least no obvious contradictions at stake (cf. section 2.2): Firstly, I have tried to show that it is plausible to assume that the noble lie makes the philosophers love their city. It makes them care for it. Although their higher education has shown them that nothing but truth and knowledge is worthwhile, the philosophers' love for the city stays firm. The demand to rule is furthermore said to be a just demand. Would it not have been for the noble lie, then, there might have been a conflict of interest here. The philosophers' higher education makes them reluctant to rule and ruling would thus *not* have been the best option for the philosophers. In view of the noble

2.4. The Psychological Background of the Noble Lie

That the musical education of the children of the Kallipolis is a delicate and important matter is clear from the time and effort Socrates dedicates to this topic in book two and three. In that context Socrates does however neither spell out any (child) psychology nor any account of poetry that further explains the delicacy of the matter. Although it is clear that Socrates claims that appropriate poetry and myth can establish strong convictions, convictions that their adult reason, if properly developed, will eventually welcome (cf. 401e-402a), he does not spell out any further details about how this is supposed to work.

In book ten, as is well known, the question of poetry is readdressed. Articulated against the background of the psychology spelled out in book nine, we are here also offered a theory that is able to explain both how the soul can be deeply affected by poetry and an account of what condition the soul must be in for poetry to be effective.

As we shall see, poetry is an art that exploits the souls of people who are not (yet) fully rational, in the sense that they cannot (yet) properly evaluate the appearance of what they hear or see. Poetry, Socrates explains, affects *children* and other senseless people (598c2). And, as I shall try to show, the type of psychological disposition Socrates thus has in mind corresponds to

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lie, however, this problem may be said to disappear. The philosophers love their city and they will agree to rule; not, however, because they realize that this is the only rational thing to do, but because they have a strong desire to preserve the city. Doing the just thing, then, i.e. ruling the Kallipolis, is best for the philosophers; not, however, because the philosophers' higher education has taught them that ruling is a worthwhile pursuit, but because they love their city. And thus there is no conflict between the function of the noble lie and the thesis (a) that doing what is just is always the best for the agent. Secondly, this does as such also imply that my account is not in any direct conflict with (b), because even if we take the demand to rule to be just in the psychic harmony sense (*pace* Schofield (2007, 157)), i.e. that it is called just because it will preserve the philosophers' psychic harmony (cf. 443e), the philosophers will ultimately accept the demand, they will not *do* what is unjust (refuse to rule). Even if their higher education will make them reluctant to rule, they will ultimately not act accordingly. Because they love their city, they will *act* justly and this act will not disturb their psychic harmony. From this point of view one can regard the philosophers' love and care of the city as an appetite in the same sense as the other basic appetites that the philosophers (as incarnated beings) in any case will need to handle in order to preserve the harmony in their souls. They will need to eat, sleep and rule the city, not as things fine and noble, but as things necessary (cf. 540b). As it comes to (c), however, there might seem to be a bigger problem, because in view of the noble lie it does not ultimately seem to be rational evaluation that will make the philosophers accept the demand to rule. There is, however, no obvious contradiction between what the philosophers *should* understand and what the noble lie motivates them to do. Furthermore, even if the philosophers at some point also realize that ruling is the just choice, the motivations instilled in their souls by the noble lie will not be in conflict with this realization. "Will the philosophers' understanding of reality, and above all of the Good, give them an alternative and more deeply rooted source of conviction and devotion – conceivably displacing that implanted by the telling of the Noble Lie?", Schofield (2006, 303) asks, and answers: "Since Plato never has Socrates explicitly address this question, any answer must be to a degree speculative". Cf. Annas (1981, 107f).

the disposition of a soul that is primarily governed by its appetitive motivations.

Now, as I have argued, the noble lie is designed to be a part of the censured poetical canon of the Kallipolis. Distributed by tradition and education, it is meant to be persuasive in the form of poetry. Taking a closer look at the more detailed account of poetry in book ten will thereby also help to capture the mechanisms behind the noble lie. It will make it possible to further understand the psychological framework Plato had in mind in designing it.

In the following four sections (2.4.1-2.4.4) I shall examine poetry and its corresponding psychology by means of exploring how this is spelled out in book nine and ten. In this way I hope to offer an account of the mechanisms by means of which the noble lie is meant to be persuasive; and accordingly, in the end, to show how this ties in with appetite formation and the persuasive force of poetry.

2.4.1. The Addressee of Poetry

One of the central questions of book ten could be said to be to what kind of character or soul condition poetry appeals (cf. 602c and 605a).[211] Poetry – a notion covering everything from "drama, both tragic and comic [to] epic poetry"[212] – is generally defined to be an art that portrays or "imitates human beings", Socrates says, "acting under compulsion or voluntarily, and as a result of their actions supposing themselves to have fared well or ill and in all this feeling either grief or joy" (603c). As such, we read, poetry is also supposed to be able to capture all aspects of human life, e.g. warfare, generalship, city government, education, all crafts and arts, medicine and so on (598c-599c). And, as we shall see in some further detail in section 2.4.3, due to the presumptuous knowledge of the poet, his products cannot be true. No one, Socrates argues, can know all these things. In staging the illusion that he knows everything about everything pertaining to human action and passion, Socrates goes on, it is thus also clear that the poet must be some kind of illusionist or wizard ("γόητί τινι", 598d3), and that his products are phantasms or simulacra (φαντάσματα, 599a2). But who, then, is liable to be affected by such illusions?

Looking back to book three, the answer to this question is already prepared. Poetry, myth and all such untruthful stories are used for educational purposes in childhood, because children cannot properly distinguish the real or underlying meaning (ὑπόνοια) of what they hear and see (378d7). Chil-

[211] As noted by both Moss (2008) and Lorenz (2006).
[212] Lorenz (2006, 60). Cf. 602b and 607a.

dren are not able to understand reason (λόγος, 402a2).[213] And when children are affected by the untruthful myths and stories they are told by poets and nurses, they are affected in virtue of their lack of (rational) judgement.[214]

> For the young are not able to judge (κρίνω) what is, and what is not, the real meaning (ὑπόνοια), but whatever opinions (δόξαι) are taken into the mind at that age are hard to wash away (δυσέκνιπτος) and unchangeable (ἀμετάστατος). For which reason, maybe, we should do our utmost that the first stories that they hear should be so composed as to bring the fairest lessons of virtue to their ears. (378d6-e4)

In book ten, the same idea is spelled out in less forbearing terms. Those that are affected by poetry are souls that are not disposed to listen to reason.[215] They do not properly evaluate their experiences. Instead of being able to see through the illusions they are faced with, by listening to what their rational part tells them, they will waver. And poetry, like all imitative arts, will take advantage of this uncertainty. It will stage an illusion and try to make its addressees believe that what they see or hear is what they get (cf. 603b). The example Socrates offers is articulated in terms of stage-painting and optical illusion.

> [T]he same things appear bent and straight to those who view them in water and out, or concave and convex, owing to similar errors of vision about colours, and there is obviously every confusion of this sort in our souls. And so scene-painting in its exploitation of this weakness of our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft, and so do jugglery and many other such contrivances (καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ τοιαῦται μηχαναί). (602c10-d4)

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[213] If a child has been given a proper musical education, Socrates explain, he will have the right convictions "πρὶν λόγον δυνατὸς εἶναι λαβεῖν", i.e. "even before he is able to understand reason" (402a2-3). This claim is also repeated in the *Laws* (653b-c). Cf. Moss (2008, 57f).

[214] The best tool to judge (κρίνω), Socrates explain, is reason (λόγος), and only a philosopher has the proper tools (582d).

[215] A related difficulty here is of course that there might seem to be a contradiction between the account of poetry and myth in books two and three and the account offered in book ten. In books two and three, Socrates allows some parts of imitative poetry to be included in the educational canon, and in book ten he seems to argue for the condemnation of all types of imitative poetry. Jessica Moss (2007, 417) has argued that this apparent contradiction can be dismantled insofar as we realize that that type of imitative poetry Socrates condemns in book ten is only that type of imitative poetry that is morally corrupting. "Imitative poetry [in book ten] turns out to refer only to poetry that misrepresents human virtue in a dangerous way". In what fallows I shall indirectly articulate a similar view. In addition I also want to point out that there is a difference between the addressees in books two and three and those in book ten. In the earlier books, the primary addressees are children, and the task of selecting appropriate poetry has to do with the malleable nature of the children. In book ten, Socrates is rather speaking about the addressee of poetry as an adult and how poetry staged at the theatre can corrupt and influence them. Nowhere in book ten does Socrates say that he shall forbid the myths told by the nurses to the children, although is it clear from book two and three that these myths are also poetry (cf. 377c-d).

Those that may be affected by the illusions of the imitative arts in general, and by poetry in particular, are persons who, just like children, and thus in lack of better judgement, cannot properly evaluate the underlying reality of what they are faced with (603a).

In contrast to such persons, however, there are those that can. When faced with the witchcraft of imitative poetry they will be able to see through the illusion (603c-d). And this they are able to do because, by means of counting, measuring and weighing, they are able to understand that what they see is not always what they get. These types of operations, Socrates explains, pertain to the rational or calculative (λογιστικός) abilities of their souls (602d-e). For this reason, Socrates goes on, poetry clearly cannot be an art that primarily addresses those with properly working rational capabilities.[216]

> Clearly, then, an imitative poet isn't by nature related to the part of the soul that rules in such a character, and if he's to attain a good reputation with the majority of people, his cleverness isn't directed to pleasing it. Instead, he's related to the excitable and multiform character (ποικίλον ἦθος) […] [217] (605a)

In contrast to a character who can be distinguished by means of her active ability to expose the veils of the illusionists, the primary addressee of poetry is an excitable (ἀγαναϰτητιϰός) and multiform (ποιϰίλος) type of character (ἦθος).[218] This is a person who is not disposed to listen to reason. In this person there is also a conflict. When faced with the illusions of poetry or scene-painting he has two opposing views. On the one hand, reason seems to tell him that the stick is straight, and on the other hand, another part of him seems to tell him that it is bent. He is "at war with himself [and holds] opposite beliefs about the same thing at the same time" (603d1-3).[219] Judging from what we can learn about (psychic) civil war from book four (443c-444c), this is also a person who is not properly unified. He is not disposed so as to always listen to reason. That part of him that is prompt to believe the

[216] I write *primarily* because it is, in this context, clear that even those with rational abilities can somehow be affected. Poetry can affect also the very best of us, Socrates says (605c and cf. 606a). Yet, as we shall see, it is still clear that it is not to their rational part that poetry speaks, but rather to the conflict that such souls can experience when they do not fully trust their rational judgment (cf. 602d and 603c-d). In a soul that is properly ruled by reason, however, there is no conflict and such souls cannot be deceived by the illusions made by the poets. Cf. Lorenz (2006, 64) who makes a similar point.

[217] "because it [this multiform type of character] is easy to imitate", Socrates adds. I shall return to this qualification in section 2.4.3. Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997), modified.

[218] At 611b, Socrates will eventually also come to explain that poetry primarily speaks to a soul that is "full of multiform (ποιϰιλία) variety and unlikeness (ἀνομοιότης) [that] differs with itself". And although Socrates, in that context (at 611b-c), warns his friends to think that this is the outlook of a pure (ϰαθαρός) and true (ἀληθής) soul, it is apparently to a soul in this condition that he considered poetry to appeal.

[219] For this use of belief (δόξα), see n.92. See also Lorenz (2006, 61 & 67f).

illusion disturbs the unified order that would establish itself, reason ruling. In the case of the multiform and excitable character there is instead a conflict. And poetry, just like scene-painting, takes advantage of this conflict. Pertaining to the poetical art of imitating human action in grief or joy (cf. 603c), poetry speaks to our doubts and inner conflicts. Is it not the same, Socrates asks, with poetry as with scene-painting? Does it not try to take advantage of persons with self-conflicting points of views?

> Is a man, then, in all this of one mind (ὁμονοητικῶς […] διάκειται) with himself, or just as in the domain of sight [i.e. optical illusion] there was faction and strife and he held within himself contrary opinions at the same time about the same things, so also in our actions there is division and strife of the man with himself? But I recall that there is no need now of our seeking agreement on this point, for in our former discussion we were sufficiently agreed that our soul at any one moment teems with countless such self-contradictions.[220] (603c10-d7)

Now, as is fairly common knowledge, and as the last quotes also reveal, the answer to the question to what character type poetry appeals is framed in an argument for a division of the soul. As Jessica Moss has pointed out, the example of the optical illusion, as it is construed to also be explanatory for poetry, is made to argue that there must be two soul parts in play here.

> In Book 10 […] Socrates […] argues for a divide between the rational part and some other part of the soul […] At 602c-603a he gives an argument based on the cognitive dissonance that sometimes occurs when we experience optical illusion: the rational part calculates the truth and believes in accordance with its calculations, while an inferior part believes that things are as they appear.[221]

Faced with an optical illusion, a conflict appears. On the one hand, one sees the painted wall as concave or convex, and on the other, rational calculation operating, one realizes that it is really flat. This gives rise to a conflict in how one perceives the reality of things. And since it is the main task of the rational or calculative part of the soul to do the evaluation here, it cannot be that same part of the soul that accepts the appearance of the illusion.

> [That] which puts its trust in measurement (μέτρον) and calculation (λογισμός) must be the best part of the soul [and thus] that which opposes it must belong to what is the inferior part in us (τῶν φαύλων ἄν τι εἴη ἐν ἡμῖν). (603a4-7)

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[220] "This", Lorenz (2006, 61-62) writes, "would seem to be another reference to the argument for tripartition of the soul in book 4. As early in that argument as 439 C 5, Glaucon already accepts that it happens to very many people, and very frequently, that they are, for instance, thirsty and, at the same time, averse to drinking".

[221] Moss (2008, 35).

Parallel to the argument from optical illusion, there is in this context another argument that supposedly makes the same point. When someone experiences a great misfortune, Socrates argues, he is often faced with two opposing motivational forces. On the one hand he feels that he wants to express his sadness and do many things in private that he would be ashamed to do in public (604a). Yet, on the other hand there is also something in him that will tell him to do the opposite. Reason and norm ("λόγος καὶ νόμος"), Socrates explains, will offer resistance. Reminding us of the *principle of opposites* articulated in book four (436b-c), Socrates thus concludes that "where there are two opposite impulses (ἀγωγή) in a man at the same time about the same thing we say that there must needs be two things in him" (604b3-4). On the one hand, then, there is one part of this man's soul that will obey reason and norm and try to keep calm. On the other hand, there is another part of his soul that will make him behave like a wailing child (παῖς, 604c). The first part, in its wish to heal the pain, is ready to listen to rational argument or calculation (λογισμός, 604d5), while the second part, driving us back to the pain, is irrational (ἀλόγιστος), passive (ἀργός) and a friend of cowardice ("δειλίας φίλον", 604d10).

The relevant example of poetry in this case, I believe, is when one is or is not similarly affected by the misfortune expressed in tragedy. Socrates spells it out a few lines down.

> I think you know that the very best of us, when we hear Homer or some other of the makers of tragedy imitating one of the heroes who is in grief, and is delivering a long tirade in his lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon ourselves and accompany the representation with sympathy and eagerness, and we praise as an excellent poet the one who most strongly affects us in this way. (605c10-d5)

On the one hand, there is one part of this man's soul that will listen to reason and try to keep calm, and on the other hand there is another part of his soul that will make him loose himself and join in the grief or pleasure of the hero.

Now, in arguing against the claim that the argument from optical illusion cannot be said to pertain to the same soul parts as the argument from emotion, Moss points our attention to 605b-c, which she translates as such:

> [T]he imitative poet…, by making images (εἴδωλα) far removed from the truth, gratifies that part of the soul that is thoughtless and doesn't distinguish greater things from lesser, but thinks that the same things are at the one time large and another small.[222]

Here, Moss argues, Socrates also makes it clear that the two arguments for the division of the soul are supposed to make the same point. "The imitative

[222] Moss' translation (2008, 45).

poet", she writes, "appeals to the part of the soul that believes that a person standing at a distance is smaller than he was when standing closer – that is, to the part of the soul that perceives and believes optical illusions".[223]

Hendrik Lorenz has argued in similar terms. "In fact", Lorenz writes, "he [Socrates] goes out of his way to make it clear that he takes imitative poetry to appeal to the same part that painting [i.e. optical illusion] appeals to".[224] Lorenz also reminds his readers that Socrates at 605c (in describing that part of the soul which is easily excited to grief and pleasure) most probably is referring back to 602c-603b (where the optical illusions of the scene-painters are described).

Now, granted that Moss and Lorenz are right, which I believe they are, we also have reason to ask how this distinction squares with the psychology made earlier.[225]At this point in the dialogue, Socrates' general psychological framework has already been spelled out. Initiated in book four and supplemented in book nine, Socrates has already shown than the soul can be analysed in three parts, that these three parts can be distinguished in terms of their objects of desire (ἐπιθυμία), in terms of their specific pleasure (ἡδονή), and that we accordingly also can distinguish three types of soul conditions depending on what soul-part is the ruling principle (ἀρχή), i.e. the condition of the philosopher, the condition of the victory-lover and the condition of the soul ruled by its appetitive part.[226] Socrates cannot of course have forgotten this when he here, in book ten, comes to argue about poetry. And it seems fairly safe to claim that we have reasons to understand the twofold distinction made in book ten against the background of the threefold made earlier.[227]

Judging from how Socrates articulates the matter, we also have reasons to believe that the illusion-believing part of book ten "is or includes appetite and spirit", as Moss formulates the matter.[228] Let us look at the passages that seem to make this plausible:

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[223] Moss (2008, 45).
[224] Lorenz (2006, 63).
[225] "Another thing that is worth noting", Lorenz (2006, 62) writes, "is that Socrates treats the motivational conflicts familiar from earlier books of the *Republic* as being very much like the conflicting beliefs of book 10: both of these are cases of civil war and opposition in the soul. He does not offer the slightest indication of any theoretical significant difference or discontinuity between the conflicting believes of book 10 and the conflicting desires of earlier books".
[226] Lacking a more appropriate name, as we shall see, this character type is called a lover of profit or money (φιλοκερδής or φιλοχρήματος), because profit and money are the means by which to satisfy its appetites (580e-581a). One can here note that the word φιλοκερδής (581a7) is most often translated as profit-lover, or lover of profit. But in plural, κέρδε', of which the love is, can, according to LSJ, just as well mean *cunning arts* or *wiles*. So the lowest part of the soul can just as well be understood to be a lover of tricks and deceit (used to satisfy his multiform desires, I suppose).
[227] For a similar point, see Lorenz (2006, 62).
[228] Moss (2008, 42).

> Clearly, then, an imitative poet isn't by nature related to the part of the soul that rules in such a character [i.e. a rational and calm character], and if he's to attain a good reputation with the majority of people, his cleverness isn't directed to pleasing it. Instead, he's related to the excitable and *multiform character* (ποικίλον ἦθος) […] Like a painter, he produces work that is inferior with respect to truth and that appeals to a part of the soul that is similarly inferior rather than to the best part. [H]e arouses, nourishes, and strengthen this part of the soul and so destroys the rational one (τὸ λογιστικόν) […] Similarly we say that that 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 (ἀνόητος) part.[229] (605a2-c2)

And later down the line:

> And so in regard to the emotions of sex (ἀφροδισίων) and anger (θυμοῦ), and all the appetites (πάντων τῶν ἐπιθυμητικῶν) and pains and pleasures of the soul which we say accompany all our actions, the effect of poetic imitation is the same. For it waters and fosters these feelings when what we ought to do is to dry them up, and it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled. (606d1-5)

Both Moss and Lorenz interpret these passages to mean that the illusion-believing part is or includes the appetitive part *and* the spirited part.[230] And I generally agree. Firstly, it is clear that it cannot be the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν), since poetry is not supposed to water but destroy this part. Secondly, it is reasonable to believe that poetry appeals to the appetitive part, because poetry is supposed to water all appetites ("πάντων τῶν ἐπιθυμητικῶν"). Thirdly, we have reason to think that poetry occasionally also speaks to the spirited part, because poetry may also water spirit or anger (θυμός).

Now, in addition to this way of trying to square the threefold division of the soul, spelled out in book nine (and in book four), with the twofold division of book ten, so as to further understand to whom poetry is primarily addressed, we also have reasons to read these passages in terms of the *character type* (or soul condition) to which poetry speaks.

In accordance with what we have seen so far, it is possible to distinguish four interconnected criteria that must be satisfied by the character-type who is supposed to be liable to be affected by poetry. (1) There must be a possibility for conflict in his soul. He must be liable to have one part of his soul tell him one thing (i.e. the rational or calculative part) and another part something else (i.e. the illusion-believing part). (2) In view of this conflict, he must also be disposed so as to often side with the illusion-believing part. He must be easily excitable (ἀγανακτητικός) and he must be heavily influenced by what his illusion-believing part tells him. (3) In effect, he cannot be

[229] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997), modified. My italics.
[230] Moss (2008, 45) and Lorenz (2006, 65).

ruled by reason, because reason, by means of calculation and reasoning, would make him immune to the poetical illusions. And (4) he must also be possible to describe in terms of being multiform (ποικίλος).

Accordingly, it is also possible to imagine three scenarios by means of which we can test which soul-condition will do.

In the first we have a philosopher (φιλόσοφος) listening to the poem. As book nine reads, a philosopher desires truth and knowledge, takes pleasure in such and is ruled by his rational and calculative part (581b-e). Since the philosopher will only believe what her rational part tells her, she will see through the poetical illusion and she will not be affected. In accordance with the four criteria described above we can exclude her: (1) There are no conflicts in her soul (cf. 444b). (2) She does not listen to her illusion-believing part. (3) She is ruled by reason and (4) she is never described to be multiform.

In the second scenario we have a lover of honour and victory (φιλόνικος) listening to the poem. The victory-lover has a desire for power, victory, honour and a good reputation (581a-c). He takes pleasure in such things and he is ruled by the spirited part of his soul (439e and 581a-b).[231] Not being ruled by his rational part, he will not be immune to the poetical illusion. The lover of victory and honour may occasionally also be affected by the poem, it seems, *but* mainly insofar as it corresponds to his particular desire. We can imagine him listening to a poem articulated in the vein of the Leontius example (cf. 439e). Let us say that the poem describes the tragic separation of a child and her mother transformed into the guises of a fawn and a white-tailed deer. All the children around the victory-lover start to weep. Eventually the poem also starts to get to him. He feels how his eyes start to water and how his nose stars to tickle. In this situation we can imagine his spirit to kick in. He will not allow himself to be embarrassed in this way. What if somebody would see him? If he starts to weep like a child who has fallen (cf. 604c), he will become a laughingstock. He becomes angry with himself and the spirited part of his soul will accordingly also resist the message of the poem. Yet, he will not get angry because the poem excites spirit or anger, but rather because he realizes that he cannot allow the poem to affect him, that is, if he is to keep behaving in an honourable way. In contrast to the case of the philosopher, it will not be his rational part that makes him resist the message of the poem. Instead it will be his pride and his desire not to become embarrassed. So, although we can imagine poems of honour and glory, which he most likely will devour with great pride, there are also reasons to believe that he will not accept everything he hears. In referring to Socrates' argument from emotion (603e-604e), Lorenz makes a similar point:

[231] Cf. Cooper (1984).

> From spirit's point of view [ruling in the victory-lover], it is a disgrace for a man to behave that way (cf. 605 E 4) [being affected by the grief or pleasure of the poem's hero]. Any enjoyment we may get out of *such* imitation therefore must belong to a part of us below reason and spirit.[232]

In accordance with the four criteria described, we can also test if the victory-lover fits the picture. (1) Since he is not ruled by reason, there might certainly be a conflict in his soul. (2) But it is not as clear that he always, or even often, sides with the illusion-believing part, at least not insofar as this part of his soul is also to extend beyond the desire for honour and victory. (3) He is not ruled by reason, yet (4) he is never described to be multiform. He does not seem to be a perfect match.

In the third scenario we have that character type called a lover of profit (φιλοκερδής) listening to the poem (581e). As we soon shall see in more detail, this character type desires a multitude of things, he takes pleasure in them all, and his motivations do primarily also spring from that part of him from which his multiform (ποικίλος) desires also spring. Indeed, one of those personality types described in book eight and nine as being dominated by this multiform part of the soul is also called multiform. Moss articulates the relevance of this last point perceptibly:

> 'Multicolored' [or *multiform*, as I translate ποικίλος] has earlier been used to describe the democratic character, who is ruled by his appetites (561e; cf.557c, 588c, 559d), and to describe the appetites themselves (588c; see also 404e).[233, 234]

Not listening to his rational or calculative part, the character type ruled by his multiform (ποικίλος) soul-part will certainly also be liable to believe the poetical illusion. Poetry will speak to the part of his soul that motivates him. It will water it, make it stronger (605b and 606d), and the multiform character will have no reasons to resist. In accordance with the four criteria described above, we can also test if this character fits the picture. (1) Since he is not ruled by reason, there might certainly be a conflict in his soul. (2) Being primarily influenced by the appetitive part of the soul, he will mainly, if not always, side with his illusion-believing part. (3) He is not ruled by rea-

[232] Lorenz (2006, 63).
[233] Moss (2008, 43).
[234] In the *Republic,* there are three character types or soul conditions that are described to be primarily ruled by the appetitive or multiform part of their souls: the oligarch, the democrat and the tyrant. Two of these characters types also seem to fit the profile of the one liable to be affected by poetry in book ten: the democrat and the tyrant; the democrat because he is explicitly said to be multiform (ποικίλος, 561e, cf. also 557c and 559d) and the tyrant because he is the primary example of a character who is totally ruled by the multiform (ποικίλος) part of his soul. The oligarch does not seem to fit the profile because he is someone that forbids anything that is not instrumental for making a profit. He will censure anything that has to do with unnecessary desire and pleasure. See Annas (1981, 134 &142), Brown (2012) or Moss (2008, 43).

son, and (4) he can certainly be described in terms of being multiform (ποικίλος).

Now, accordingly it seems reasonable to draw two general conclusions with regard to the addressee of poetry. It is (a) justified to think that the illusion-believing part of the soul in book ten corresponds to the appetitive and spirited parts of book nine (and four). And (b) as I, with Lorenz, want to qualify the matter, we also have reasons to think that although both spirited and multiform character types may be affected by poetry, the primary addressee of poetry is the multiform type.[235]

But what, then, is the soul condition of this character type like?

2.4.2. The Multiform Type of Soul

The multiform type of character is spelled out in book nine (against the background of book four's account of tripartition). As is well known, the human soul, Socrates here says, may be imagined as if it would be like some ancient creature. It is somewhat like the Chimaera, the Scylla or the Cerberus.[236] Encapsulated in the shape of a human, Socrates explains, it consists of three parts. The smallest part is supposed to look like a human and the second smallest part like a lion. The third part, i.e. that part which is the ruling principle (ἀρχή, 580d) in the soul condition we are here dealing with, is described in the following way:

> Mould, then, a single shape of a multiform (ποικίλος) and many-headed (πολυκέφαλος) beast that has a ring of heads of tame and wild beasts and can change them and cause to spring forth from itself all such growths. (588c7-10)

This part of the soul is the biggest. It is irrational (ἄλογος, 591c6). And it may be understood in terms of being like a multiform and multi-headed beast (θηρίον). The heads of the beast sit in a ring and consist of a mixture of wild (ἄγριος) and tame (ἥμερος) ones. The forms of these heads can change, we learn, and the monster can apparently make and change them itself ("ἐξ

[235] Lorenz does, however, articulate the matter from another point of view. It is clear that poetry is supposed to affect the appetitive part of the soul, he seems to argue, and thus also to the corresponding character type. But, Lorenz (2006, 69f, cf. also 65) writes, Socrates also "takes the reach of imitation to be wider than that". Poetry does not only speak to the appetitive part of the soul, but occasionally also to the spirited part, although it primarily speaks to the appetitive part.

[236] In the front part the *Chimaera* is a lion, in the back a serpent and in the middle a goat; and it breaths fire. The *Scylla* is a six-armed sea monster. It has six heads with four eyes on each, and at the lower part of her body she has six hideous dogs with mouths containing three rows of sharp teeth. The *Cerberus* is, of course, the multi-headed dog that guards the gates of Hades.

αὐτοῦ", 588c9).[237] In the case of the type of character Socrates describes to be ruled by appetite, it is also this multiform and multi-headed beast that calls the shots (581b-c). Let us take a closer look at this part of the soul.

In view of its lack of reason and its multiform nature, Socrates has a few Stephanus pages earlier also offered an explanation of how this beast-like part of the soul might manifest itself. At the beginning of book nine, Socrates explains what happens at night. When we sleep, the reasonable (λογιστικός, 571c4, cf. 439d) and tame (ἥμερος) part of the soul falls asleep and the wild (ἄγριος) and beast-like (θηριώδης) awakens (571c). Filled with food and wine, Socrates goes on, the beast-like part of the soul shakes the sleep away and skips out trying to live up to its peculiar character (ἦθος, 571c). As such, it is also totally out of bound, Socrates explains. It allows itself to do anything.

> It does not shrink from attempting to lie with a mother in fancy or with anyone else, man, god or animal. It is ready for any foul deed of blood; it abstains from no food, and, in a word, falls short of no extreme of folly and shamelessness. (571c9-d4)

However unappealing the extreme ways of this part of the soul are described to be, there is, as Socrates goes on to explain, no escaping it. It is there in each and every one of us. The evidence is obvious, Socrates argues, and at night, in the visions of our dreams, it makes itself manifest. It persists, he explains, even in the most moderate of souls (572a-b). However much we may want it to, and although we may perhaps be able to control it (589a-b), neither reason nor argument can make it go away.[238]

Given the evidence from our dreams, the wild and tame heads of the multi-headed beast are also given a further explanation. A few lines above, in

[237] For a discussion of what these different parts of the monster and its different heads represent, see Perry (2007, 408ff). See also below.

[238] In terms of how to take control over the many-headed beast, Socrates says, we must treat it as if it were a garden or a field (589b). Just as a farmer we must weed out what we do not like and accordingly allow the tame heads of the beast to survive. The farmer (i.e. reason) should get rid of all violent and wild plants (appetites) that may sprout, and keep only the tame or domesticated ones. Thus, his garden (his appetite) will eventually only sustain those plants that he (reason) considers to be necessary, that is, necessary for what he (reason) considers to be a good end, e.g. health or survival. In such a way we may be able to refine the tendencies and appetites of the many-headed beast and, by rational control, make it more domesticated and docile (cf. 431c). This way of treating the multiform part of our soul as something one should refine and breed is also very similar to the method Socrates prescribes as the proper way to breed the humans of the Kallipolis. By means of lying (ψεύδω) to, and deceiving (ἀπατάω), the citizens, Socrates explains (459c), the rulers are to enact a mating-feast and a devious lottery of who is to be allowed to procreate with whom (460aff). Behind this charade, however – designed to make the citizens blame chance (τύχη) instead of the rulers – lies a strategy of breeding that is to pair up the best citizens with each other and the worst with as few as possible (459d). This idea of a lottery, and of how the citizens are to be deceived, is of course interesting in this context, but there is a big difference between this lie and the noble lie, for the rulers are not to believe *this* lie themselves (459e).

the description of what happen at night, Socrates introduces something he calls unlawful (παράνομος) appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι). The unlawful appetites, he explains, are also unnecessary (μὴ ἀνάγκη), and they are present in us all, though they are more or less tamed in different persons (571b). It is also under these headings that the appetites he has just described falls.

Besides being an articulation of the difference between *lawful* and *lawless* appetites, this is most likely a reference to 558d, where Socrates makes a more elaborate distinction between *necessary* and *unnecessary* types of appetites. Here Socrates explains that unnecessary appetites are always abundant, but as such also redundant (559c). While necessary appetites are exemplified by bread and relishes, insofar as they aid the wellness of the body, unnecessary appetites are given a somewhat more evasive description. They are characterized in terms of honey (μέλι, 559d), and the image we get has to do with the many possible and impossible types of honeys that we may imagine if we would spend a day or two in the wildness of bestial pleasure (559d).

Accordingly it is also in some sense possible to spell out the taxonomy of the different types of appetites that Socrates has in mind in these contexts. Appetite can be either necessary or unnecessary. Necessary appetites can be understood in terms of food and drink. Unnecessary appetites can either be in accordance with law or they can be lawless. Lawless appetites can be exemplified by incest or bestiality, while unnecessary yet law abiding appetites can be exemplified by, say, prostitution or other kinds of (what in Plato's time was) legal sexual-overindulgence (cf. 559c and 571c-d).

In trying to reconcile this theoretical account of the taxonomy of appetite with the image of the multi-headed beast offered at 588c, Richard Perry has argued that even though it might seem natural to identify the wild heads of the many-headed beast with the unnecessary appetites, and the tame heads with the necessary, such an explanation may cause more problems than it solves.[239] Indeed, if we are to juxtapose the passage on the multi-headed beast with the passage on dreams, all of the heads are really unnecessary and unlawful (571b). At night, while our tame part is still asleep, the beast-like part of our soul awakens, and the whole of this beast-like part of the soul is here described to be wild (ἄγριος, 571c5). So, even though this part of the soul is supposed to have both wild and tame heads, the part itself is described to be wild.

Now, regarding this problem and the general problem of how to capture and determine this part of the soul it might be helpful to make a methodological point. For although the distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary appetites (lawful and lawless) fills a function in determining the moral value and taxonomical scope of the appetite in question, this distinction does not really help us in determining the nature of what we are actually

[239] Perry (2007, 409).

trying to understand. The many heads of the multi-headed beast may be wild and tame. There is certainly a difference in the way they are supposed to be regarded. Likening the heads of the beast to a farmer's field, Socrates also points out, we should grow the tame ones and get rid of the wild (589b). But this does not really explain what these heads actually are or what they may change (μεταβάλλω) into (588c). Indeed, Socrates' account of their shared and more fundamental nature is also spelled out in a different set of terms.

Regarding the first and second parts of the soul, i.e. the human and the lion, there seems to be no greater problems in determining their natures. This is done, simply, by looking at their objects. The human part desires knowledge and truth (581b) and the lion part desires victory and honour (581a). Their distinctiveness as different soul parts and as different sources of motivation seems to lie in the different natures of their objects. As it comes to the third part, however, Socrates is much more cautious, and his description of this part as the appetitive part is carefully qualified.

> One part, we say, is that with which a man learns, one is that with which he feels anger. But the third part, owing to its manifold forms (διὰ πολυειδίαν), we had no one peculiar name to give to it (ἑνὶ οὐκ ἔσχομεν ὀνόματι προσειπεῖν ἰδίῳ αὐτοῦ), but gave it the name of its biggest and strongest element; for we called it the appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικόν) part because of the intensity of its appetites concerned with food and drink and love and their accompaniments (περὶ τὴν ἐδωδὴν ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ πόσιν καὶ ἀφροδίσια καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τούτοις ἀκόλουθα).[240] (580d10-e4)

Because of its multiform-ness ("διὰ πολυειδίαν"), Socrates explains, the multi-headed part of the soul cannot be given any one, single and peculiar (ἰδία, 580e1) name. Calling it *appetitive* ("ἐπιθυμητικόν"), in the sense of being oriented towards such things as food, drink and sex, may give us a hint of the objects it *may* pertain to, but this name does not as such determine or exhaust it (cf. 580e). Many other names are presumably possible.[241] Socrates does, for example, remind us not to forget that this part's desire for food, wine and sex is equally strong as its desire for money. And therefore, Socrates explains, it must also be called the money-loving (φιλοχρήματος) part (580e).

[240] Translation by Grube and Reeve's in Cooper (1997), modified.

[241] "When Plato calls it the part that characteristically desires [i.e. has appetites]", Annas (1981,129) writes, "it is not the *mode* of desiring [i.e. having appetites] that interests him, but rather the fact that desire [i.e. appetite] is characteristically limited to its object without necessarily involving any further considerations. Desire [i.e. appetite] is thought of as a manifold and often chaotic because desire [i.e. appetite] can fix on object of just about any kind; there is nothing that unifies all cases of desiring [i.e. having appetites] except that some particular thing is sought for […] This is meant to be parallel to the productive class in the state, who do not have any unifying ideal but are each set on his or her own particular aim".

> [W]e called it the appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικὸν) part because of the intensity of its appetites (ἐπιθυμιῶν) concerned with food and drink and sex and their accompaniments, and likewise the money-loving (φιλοχρήματον) part, because money (χρῆμα) is the chief instrument for the gratification (ἀποτελοῦνται) of such desires. (580e2-581a5)

Although it might be argued that there are reasons to think that Socrates calls this part of the soul money-loving because it is supposed to have just as many objects of desire as money can buy, Socrates' primary reason for calling it money-loving is because of the instrumental value of money. A money-lover is not someone that loves money because he likes the way it feels in his hand, but he loves money because they can help him to gratify (ἀποτελέω, 581a5) his appetites.[242] The soul part Socrates here describes in terms of being money-loving is most likely also called this in virtue of the multiform (ποικίλος) nature of its objects of desire (588c).

But all of this may seem to be insufficient. Just as the two other parts of the soul, the multi-headed part should also be possible to determine. Just as in the case of the other parts of the soul, one might be inclined to think that there should be a way of identifying it by means of specifying what kind of objects are particular to this type of desire as opposed to the other. Yet, as it seems, in this case such a type of identification causes problems. As it comes to appetite and to the character type ruled by appetite, the possible objects of desire are described to be so diverse that they cannot be properly exhausted. But how, then, are we do understand this?

Socrates account of poetry, I believe, offers a clue here. For although it does not precisely specify the particular type of object pertaining to appetite, it does tell us something important about the process of how its objects are set and about the scope of what may be involved.

In the next section I shall take a closer look at this point and suggest that insofar as we have reasons to identify the character type described in book nine to have multiform objects of desire with that type of soul condition which Socrates, in book ten, calls a multiform character ("ποικίλον ἦθος"), Socrates' account of poetry may help to further outline both what appetite involves and what the process of appetite formation looks like.

2.4.3. Poetry and Diomedean Necessity

As we have seen, poetry may be said to be an art that is primarily addressed to a type of character (or soul condition) that Socrates describes in terms of

[242] The description of the lowest part of the soul as money-loving can also be said to fill another function and also reinforces the argument for thinking that it is towards this part of the soul that the Phoenician story is addressed. The love of money (φιλοχρήματος), Socrates explains in the middle of book four (436a), is commonly known to be something that is present among the Phoenicians and in Egypt. See Page (1991, 21) and Schofield (2006, 257ff).

being multiform (605a). This type of character is not disposed to listen to reason; and not listening to reason, it will not be able to properly evaluate a poetical illusion when faced with one. Of this the poet will try to take advantage. Accordingly, the poet will not address or relate to someone that will not be affected, but "[i]nstead, he's related to the excitable and multiform character (ποικίλον ἦθος)" (605a5). Poetry speaks to that part of this character's soul that is the ruling principle (ἀρχή). And, as we have seen (in section 2.4.1), there are reasons to think that this is primarily the appetitive part of the soul. Poetry waters and strengthens it (cf. 605b and 606d). In fact, when the multiform character listens to poetry he will also be deeply moved. He will give in (ἐνδίδωμι), Socrates explains (605c-d). He will share the grief and pleasure expressed by the poem, and when influenced in this way, his disposition will also be deeply affected (cf. 605c-606d). Socrates initially explains how this works in terms of tragic poetry and its staging.

> If you reflect, first, that the part of the soul that is forcibly controlled in our private misfortunes and that hungers for the satisfaction of weeping and wailing, because it desires (ἐπιθυμεῖν) these things by nature, is the very part that receives satisfaction and enjoyment from poets, and second, that the part of ourselves that is best by nature, relaxes its guard over the lamenting part when it is watching the sufferings of somebody else. […] I suppose that only a few are able to figure out that enjoyments of other people's sufferings is necessary transferred to our own and that the pitying part, if it is nourished and strengthened on the suffering of others, won't be easily held in check when we ourselves suffers.[243] (606a3-b8)

Relaxing our rational guard only for a few moments, the poem will nourish and strengthen that part of our souls that has an appetite for weeping and wailing. And the disposition thus established will also be transferred into our private lives. Faced with sorrow or joy in private, Socrates says, we will start to behave like we behaved when we were enjoying the poem. It does not seem to matter if it is tragic, comic or erotic (cf. 606c-d). Poetry will establish the desire awakened so that we will feel in private what we feel at the theatre. The objects pertaining to the appetites of the poem's hero will thus also establish themself in the poems' addressee. He will start to desire what the hero desires and he will start to feel like him.

Now, not everybody, however, needs to be affected in this way. Keeping the rational part of our souls awake and at its guard, the influence of poetry should be possible to avoid. Instead of listening to that part of our souls that is affected by the poetical illusions, we may listen to reason, look at the poem for what it really is, measure and weigh it, calculate and reason about it, and thus realize that the behaviour staged by the poem is merely a game, as Socrates says (602b).

[243] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997).

For the multiform and easily excitable character, however, this is not an alternative. Not listening to reason and being primarily dominated by the appetites and sentiments of his illusion-believing part, he will be deeply affected by what he hears and sees. The disposition thus awakened in the theatre will be transferred to his character. Just as the wailing hero on the stage, he will weep and cry when he suffers misfortune, and just like the hero in the comedy, he will become a comedian (κωμῳδοποιός) in private ("ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις", 606c8). Poetry will deeply influence his soul and it will determine the way he acts and reacts. It will establish his objects of desire. As it seems reasonable to believe, it will determine how his motivations are disposed.

One crucial question in this context does of course concern the scope of what poetry may thus establish. Given the general definition of poetry spelled out at 603c, Socrates does also offer an answer. Poetry is a matter of imitation. Poetry "imitates (μιμεῖται) human action, forced or voluntarily and as a result of their actions supposing themselves to have fared well or ill and in all this feeling either grief or joy" (603c4-7). As Socrates also goes on to explain, as such, the scope of poetical influence is also limited. Since poetry can only imitate, it is limited by the already prevalent desires and motivations of the general public.

The argument for this is spelled out in terms of how poetry in general is nothing but illusion and simulacrum (φάντασμα, 599a2, cf. 598a-599c). The argument is familiar and we may find it, in a variety of forms, throughout Plato's works.[244] Poets (just like painters, sophist and other charlatans) lay claim to be all-knowing (πάνσοφος, 598d3-4), because they imitate and portray everything with their art (598d, cf. 397a). A poet, Socrates says, must know all skills and all professions; if the poet is to be able to portray and imitate all kinds of persons, in all kinds of situations, he must know what he is going to portray. He must know all aspects of human life: warfare, generalship, city government, education, all crafts and arts, medicine and everything that has to do with human dignity and baseness (598c-599d). If a good poet, Socrates explains, is to make fine poetry about those subject matters he considers, he must also know what he is going to talk about (598e). But no one can know everything. And therefore the poets and their works must be shadows and illusions.

> But for all that, my friend, this, I take it, is what we ought to bear in mind in all such cases: When anyone reports to us of someone, that he has met a man who knows all the crafts and everything else that men know, and that there is nothing that he does not know more exactly than anybody else, our tacit rejoinder must be that he is a simple fellow, who apparently has met some magician or sleight-of-hand man and imitator and has been deceived by him into

[244] E.g. *Apol.,* 22c or 22d, *Gorg*., 464c and 501a-b, *Soph.,* 231b-c or 233c-d, *Phdr.,* 275a-b or *Laws*, 811b or 819a.

> the belief that he is all-wise, because of his own inability to put to the proof and distinguish knowledge, ignorance and imitation. (598c6-d5)

Only someone without the proper ability to evaluate the knowledge of the poet will believe his illusions. In exemplifying this with painting, Socrates explains, children and senseless people will believe (598c2). They will believe that what they see is the real thing, and they will appreciate the images of the poets as if they were reality. But, of course, they are not. As Socrates insists, the images that the poets make have little with reality to do. Poetry only imitates what most people think is the case. The poetical art is only a kind of flattery. And, in fact, Socrates says, the imitating poets neither know what they are imitating nor do they have a correct opinion about this (602a8).

The argument for this is spelled out in terms of a flute. Suppose that the poet is to make a poem about a flute. There are three kinds of arts: (a) the art that uses the flute, pertaining to the musician, (b) the art that makes the flute, pertaining to the flute-maker, and (c) the art that imitates the flute, pertaining to the poet. The musician knows how the instrument works and he knows whether or not a flute is good or bad. This he reports to the flute-maker. And accordingly the flute-maker gets a correct opinion (601d-e). The poet, however, gets nothing. He can neither play the flute nor does he listen to the flute-player when he is making his imitations. His art is neither based on knowledge nor on correct opinion. And instead of listening to those that know, the poet listens to the general public. He listens to the multitude.

> Yet still he [the poet] will none the less imitate, though in every case he does not know in what way the thing is bad or good. But, as it seems, the thing he will imitate will be the thing that appears beautiful to the ignorant multitude. (602b1-4)

Instead of trying to get to know the real nature of the flute, by means of listening to someone that knows this, or at least to someone that has a correct opinion about this, the poet will be satisfied if he manages to make imitations that the general public will approve and find beautiful. And since they, in general, know nothing about flutes either, it is all a matter of unfounded convictions (602b).

One reason Socrates offers in order to account for why this is the case is spelled out in terms of effort. Knowledge and correct opinion are hard things to imitate. And since the poet really only is trying to influence the ignorant multitude, he has no motivations to get to know the reality of things.

> And does not the fretful part of us present many and varied occasions for imitation, while the intelligent and temperate disposition, always remaining approximately the same, is neither easy to imitate nor to be understood when

> imitated, especially by a nondescript mob assembled in the theatre? (604e1-5)

As we have seen (in section 2.4.1), it is also for this reason that poetry is more akin to the multiform character than to the simple and unified one.

> Clearly, then, an imitative poet isn't by nature related to the part of the soul that rules in such a character, and if he's to attain a good reputation with the multitude (τοῖς πολλοῖς), his cleverness isn't directed to pleasing it [the simple and unified soul]. Instead, he's related to the excitable and multiform character (ποικίλον ἦθος) since it is easy to imitate.[245] (605a1-6)

The multiform character type is just like the multitude. Not only is he just as easy to imitate, but he also shares the convictions of the many. When the poet is supposed to make his imitations it is this he must take into consideration. Instead of trying to get to know the reality of things, the poet must learn what the ignorant multitude thinks is the case. And just as in the case of the flute, he must learn to imitate this, that is, he must learn to imitate not the way things really are (the real flute) but the way things appear to be for the general public (what the multitude thinks a flute is). Instead of imitating how an intelligent person, with knowledge of the flute, would use and treat the flute, the poet will imitate what the "nondescript mob" thinks is the case.

Back in book six, this line of thought is also eloquently captured. If one is to please the multitude, one must learn its moods and appetites. Socrates explains how this may work:

> It is as if a man were acquiring the knowledge of the moods and appetites (τὰς ὀργάς […] καὶ ἐπιθυμίας) of a great strong beast which he had in his keeping, how it is to be approached and touched, and when and by what things it is made most savage or gentle, yes, and the several sounds it is wont to utter on the occasion of each, and again what sounds uttered by another make it tame or fierce, and after mastering this knowledge by living and spending time with the creature, and should construct thereof a system and art and turn to the teaching of it, knowing nothing in reality about which of these opinions and desires is honourable or base, good or evil, just or unjust, but should apply all these terms to the judgements of the great beast, calling the things that pleased it good, and the things that vexed it bad, having no other account to render of them, but should call what is necessary just and honourable, never having observed how great is the real difference between the necessary and the good, and being incapable of explaining it to another.[246] (493a9-c6)

[245] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997), modified.

[246] Two interesting notions here used are συνουσία and τρίβω, notions that Plato elsewhere uses to describe the discursive relationship between a teacher and a pupil in a philosophical situation. Literal they means something like *being together* and *rub*, respectively, but are in this context clearly meant to capture something like *in social intercourse* and *spending time together*. Sometimes Plato reserves these notions for the quite peculiar situations in which philosophy is to take place. They involve a fair amount of friendly refutation and discussion,

In order to please the multitude one must study its moods and appetites. One must learn to understand what it likes and dislikes. And to get to know this, one must live and interact with it. One must observe the behaviour of the beast and spend time with it.[247] Only thus may one learn how to please it.

If we take a closer look at the description of what is going on here, one thing that presumably is supposed to strike the reader as absurd is the fact that the knowledge in play is totally void of moral concerns. According to Socrates' description, what we are dealing with is a situation where moral notions, like good and evil, are simply used as names of what the beast likes and dislikes. The knowledge that the beast-keeper has is knowledge of what the beast desires and enjoys. The beast-keeper is no inventor, but rather a flatterer and a parrot. He listens to the beast, learns what it likes and uses this so as to make it happy. Calling the object of its cravings good and honourable, it is a matter of pleasing the multitude by means of imitating its moods and appetites. Socrates describes the situation in this way.

> If anyone approached the multitude (τοὺς πολλούς) to exhibit his poetry or some other piece of craftsmanship or his service to the city and gives them mastery over him to any degree beyond what is unavoidable, he'll be under Diomedean necessity, as it is called (ἡ Διομηδεία λεγομένη ἀνάγκη), to do the sort of thing of which they approve.[248] (493d3-7)

The Diomedean type of necessity ("ἡ Διομηδεία […] ἀνάγκη") Socrates here refers to is, in this context, a matter of being at the mercy of the multitude. The poet is driven forth by the many.[249] The poet and his products become subject to the approval of the mass. Instead of trying to influence it by means of telling it what truly is right and good, the poet uses words like *right* and *good* as names of what pleases and satisfies the moods and appetites of the many.

However we are to understand the details of this, the basic point is quite clear: Insofar as the poet makes his poetry to please the multitude, he is speaking to them in virtue of primarily being subjects to their appetites. Yet, since the appetites of the multitude thus determine the scope and contents of

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but can apparently also produce something in the soul of the learner that no other type of learning or study can. This argument we find most explicitly in Plato's alleged *Seventh Letter* (cf. 344b and 341c-d). The notion of "συνουσία commonly means one or another form of non-verbal intercourse", Sayre (1992, 233) writes, but "it is also not infrequently used by Plato as synonymous with διάλογος (e.g. *Alc.I,* 114d1, *Prot*., 310d2, 335b3, 5, c1, 4, *Soph*., 217d9, *Epin*., 991c3). In this latter use it means 'conversation with a teacher' – i.e. conversation for didactic purposes, for philosophical training".

[247] In the quote above, Socrates is describing the art of a sophist, but, as he goes on to explain, the situation is the same for the poet (493d).

[248] Translation by Grube and Reeve, in Cooper (1997), modified.

[249] The expression *Diomedean necessity* might come from a story about Odysseus and Diomedes in which Diomedes drives Odysseus in front of him by means of striking him on the back with the flat of his sword. See Trzaskoma (2004, 87).

his poems, the objects of appetite that his poems may establish are objects that the multitude already has an appetite for. How these objects became desirable in the first place we learn very little about. They have somewhat enigmatic origins. But it is probably quite safe to say that they do not spring from rational considerations.

Judging from the examples we are offered, the mechanisms of the Diomedean necessity are apparently also something quite common. Supposedly, they are in play every day – in courtrooms, at the theatre, on the battle field and at most meetings of the community (492c-d).[250] Here, we learn, the multitude is at its best. With loud voices and shouts of blame and praise, it strengthens its own convictions and appetites. And by means of some designated poet (cf. 493d), the multitude gratifies itself by making the poet praise what it has an appetite for, calling this good, and blame what it dislikes, calling this bad.

As Socrates goes on to explain, however, the situation is not *status quo*. Something happens. And as they sit there, in the theatre, the words of the poet, and the rounds of applause affirming him, bounce from the walls around and are doubled like echoes. Gathering up to a great flood of resonant sound and noise (492b-c), the voice of the poet, Socrates says, trying to please the multitude, reflects and enhances their sentiments (493d). The poet establishes and re-establishes their already unfounded convictions and appetites. Let us call it a *Diomedean circle*.

2.4.4. A Final Question

Now, before I conclude, there is, of course, one final question to be asked: Can the philosophers and the ruler-to-be be affected in this way? Can the noble lie, as it becomes part of the poetical canon of the Kallipolis, affect the philosophers in the same way as other poetry can establish and re-establish the convictions of the multitude? Insofar as we are talking about fully developed philosophers, the natural answer is no. Firstly, staged poetry would, at least according to book ten, be forbidden in the Kallipolis.[251] Secondly, even if it would have been allowed, the philosophers would not have given in. In a world of reason, calculation, clearness and truth no such lies would work. As fully rational beings the philosophers can hardly be affected. But as children, however, they can. As a part of the censured and yet allowed poetical canon of the Kallipolis, we have reasons to believe that the noble lie is sup-

[250] That also the Kallipolis will be inhabited by an array of poets, actors, theatre-producers, images-makers, rhapsodes, choir singers, carpenters, hunters, doctors, soldiers, and by beds, tables, good meals, perfume, incense and pastries of a variety of kinds, along with servants, hairdressers, wet-nurses, lady's maids, bakers and cooks is also quite clear given that Socrates and his friends as early as in book two give up the idea of restricting the city to its minimal size, i.e. the city of pigs (cf. 372d-374b and onwards).

[251] See n.215.

posed to affect the philosophers-to-be. For the noble lie is not just any lie, but a poetical and mythical lie disseminated into the state-body with quite cunning means. Diluted into harmlessness, a small, well-poised dose of patriotism, distributed by poets and nurses into the realm of Diomedean necessity, will reach the young philosophers' souls before they have properly developed their rational armour.

The *Republic* does not offer any detailed child-psychology that would be able to accommodate these claims, but children are certainly mentioned in the relevant contexts. Children are also certainly described to be deeply affected by poetry (378d-e). They do not (yet) listen to reason (402a), and since they thus do not (yet) have the proper tools to evaluate the truth of what they are told they will believe anything that appears to be the case. This is why the musical education of books two and three is said to be such a delicate matter. In the context of poetry in book ten, Socrates also likens the behaviour of the one affected by poetry to the behaviour of a child (604c); and children, just like other senseless people, Plato writes, will believe the illusions of the poets (598c2). As we saw in the last chapter, Plato does also in other contexts, consider children to have irrational and disordered souls primarily motivated by their multiform appetites. And at least insofar as the souls of the philosophers are not replaced when they grow old, they can certainly be affected. For although we cannot say much about how the fully grown philosophers will conceive of the noble lie in the light of having seen the form of the good, because Socrates never addresses that question, it is in any case quite safe to say that the patriotism, the sense of care and the city-love it was designed to establish will stand firm like "gold in the fire" (413e1-2).

2.5. Conclusion

One often accepted view nowadays is that Plato considers appetite to be essentially linked to the world as it appears. Plato, it is argued, holds reason and appetite to be different and independent sources of motivation, and the difference is best explained in terms of how the former type of motivation springs from rational evaluation and calculation, while the latter emerges from an uncritical acceptance of what merely appears to be the case. Jessica Moss puts it like this: "The appetitive part responds not to reasoning, but instead to 'images and phantasms' […]: that is, to the kind of shadowy appearances that occupy the lowest of the *Republic's* ontology".[252] In the same vein, Hendrik Lorenz explains that appetite "[is] at the mercy of how things appear through the senses […] [It] cannot help being taken in by sensory

[252] Moss (2008, 46).

appearance".[253] John Cooper spells out the matter in terms of the famous example of Leontius' appetite for looking at dead bodies. Leontius' appetite, Cooper explains, is formed "independent of reason's desires to know the truth and to rule his life".[254] Since this cannot reasonably be explained in terms of some set of "basic recurrent biological urges"[255], Cooper suggests that it is better understood in terms of appearance and imagination: "[And] whatever precisely the imagination may be", he explain, "it is on Plato's view linked essentially to the world as it *appears* rather than to reason, understood, as he understands it, as devoted to knowing, and governing in accordance with, the truth".[256]

In the light of this chapter's account of the role that Plato's notion of appetite plays in the *Republic,* it is, however, clear that some aspects of the general idea that appetite is a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears must be supplemented in accordance with the following two qualifications.[257]

> Q3 As a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears, appetite is *multiform*, and its possible objects cannot exhaustively be singled out in virtue of some intrinsic feature or quality.
>
> Q4 Appetite, essentially linked to the world as it appears, and as a motivating force subject to the influence of poetry, is neither formed in an arbitrary nor in an individual way, but rather in accordance with the mechanisms of Diomedean necessity. (Appetite is formed in accordance with tradition and public opinion.)

There are basically three reasons that warrant these qualifications.

Firstly, one line of thought that is left open in arguing that appetite is "at the mercy of how things appear"[258] or in saying that the "appetitive part responds not to reasoning, but instead to 'images and phantasms' […]"[259] is that the appearance involved is a matter of a possible mistake in evaluating the true appetite-satisfying feature or quality of some object. Thus the link between appetite and appearance may also be taken to be a matter of mistakenly supposing or imagining that a certain object can gratify a certain appetite when in reality it cannot.

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[253] Lorenz (2006, 68). As I have pointed out (in section 2.4.1), it should be noted that Lorenz does not think that appetite is the only part of the soul that is at the mercy of appearance. He argues that the spirited part is similarly exposed.
[254] Cooper (1984, 11).
[255] Cooper (1984, 9).
[256] Cooper (1984, 11).
[257] The enumeration continues from the list of qualifications initiated in the conclusion to chapter one (section 1.4).
[258] Lorenz (2006, 68).
[259] Moss (2008, 46).

Let us take thirst and a beer as an example. Anyone who occasionally listens to reason, should, on these occasions, realize that the beer would perhaps quench one's thirst for a moment, but one should also realize that drinking the beer will eventually make one thirstier (or at least more dehydrated) than at the outset, and thus one would refrain from drinking it. A person that is instead inclined to act in accordance with what the appetitive part of the soul suggests would, however, drink it. Unable to properly evaluate the situation in accordance with reason, the beer would appear to be an object with the intrinsic feature or quality of being a quencher of thirst.

Accordingly, the connection between appetite and appearance may seem to be a matter of not being able to assess if a certain object is a proper object of appetite or not. If one is to ascribe this view to Plato, however, it is necessary to assume that he also presupposes that that there is a defined class of things pertaining to one's supposedly (inherent) appetites, a class in which one may mistakenly, or correctly, place things.

As we have seen (in section 2.4.2), however, Plato does not offer any account of such a class. Rather, he is quite careful in pointing out that appetite is a much more complex source of motivation. Instead of offering a definition of some features or qualities that what would be able to single out a possible object of appetite, he argues that the diversity (πολυειδία) of the appetitive part of the soul is so essential to it that it cannot even be given an appropriate name. Accordingly to Plato, appetite is so multiform (ποικίλος) that it is best understood to be like a multi-headed monster (as argued in section 2.4.2).[260] It can change and transform in all sorts of ways. New heads may pop up and old ones may disappear. The explicit examples from the *Republic* are telling. Appetite cannot only be a matter of a variety of different sorts of food, drink and sex, but, as it well-known, it can also be a matter of dead bodies, flute music, different types of athletics pursuits, politics, war, and, on occasion, even doing a little bit of philosophy (cf. 561c-d).[261]

Thus, instead of understanding appetite in terms of a defined class of intrinsic features or qualities, Plato's notion of appetite is better understood with regard to the process that makes something into an object of appetite. As we have seen (in section 2.4.3), this process also captures the link between appetite and appearance.

Cooper's account of Leontius' appetite to look at dead bodies is a telling example. To look at dead bodies, Cooper argues, does not satisfy any inherent need. But if someone, at some point, has come to imagine that dead bodies are "interesting or amusing or thrilling", as Cooper puts it, looking at

[260] This, of course, makes appetite a very large and varied source of motivation. Annas (1981, 129) puts it adequately: "Desire [i.e. appetite] is thought of as manifold and often chaotic because desire can fix on objects of just about any kind; there is nothing that unifies all cases of desiring except that some particular thing is sought for".

[261] Cf. Cooper (1984, 9). Concerning the appetite for philosophy, see section 3.6.

dead bodies will satisfy him.[262] Coming to imagine this would, however, only happen if this person is unable to properly evaluate the situation in accordance with reason. There is nothing truly worthwhile in looking at dead bodies. This is just a matter of how things appear to be. And the fact that Plato calls Leontius' fascination for dead bodies an *appetite* can thus be explained with regard to how Leontius' motivation has been formed independent of rational considerations.

Now, this brings us to the second point, because one central question is thus, of course, how something (such as a dead body) may be established as an object of appetite. In any account such as Cooper's, this is explained in terms of how a person in a certain situation may simply acquire an inclination for a certain thing in virtue of how he imagines this thing to be. "A person simply *finds* certain imaginings interesting or amusing or thrilling", Cooper writes.[263] The process of appetite formation, and the connection between appetite and appearance, may, on this view, be considered to be both an individual and a somewhat arbitrary affair. For any explanation along these lines does at the end leave the question open as to how we are supposed to understand what such a *simple finding* amounts to.

As we have seen (in sections 2.3.2-2.3.4 and 2.4.3), however, Plato has more to say about these matters. And at least within the scope of his account of the influence of poetry, there are strong reasons to believe that the process of appetite formation is neither individual nor arbitrary.

Poetry, we saw (in section 2.4.1), speaks to the weakness of ours souls. According to Plato, it speaks to us in virtue of not always listening to the calculative and evaluative voice of reason. As such, the persuasive force of poetry is also most efficient as it comes to souls that are characterised as *multiform* (ποικίλος), that is, to souls whose motivations principally originate in that part of them that is likened to a multiform and multi-headed beast, i.e. the appetitive part (cf. section 2.4.2). The convictions and sentiments of such souls do not have their source in reason. Their motivations are not formed on the basis of rational measurement and reasoning. Instead they are at the mercy of whatever appears to be the case. They are at the mercy of illusions and imaginations.

When Plato goes on to explain how the illusory imagery of poetry is internalized in the souls of its addressees (as argued in section 2.4.3), he is, also quite clear in pointing out *how* poetry is illusory. Poetry is illusory in virtue of imitating the unfounded convictions and sentiments of the general public. The poet has neither knowledge nor correct opinion, but imitates only what he expects his addressees to find familiar. Against the background of Plato's account of the primary subjects of poetical deception (as spelled out in sections 2.4.1-2.4.3), we also have reasons to believe that the convic-

[262] Cooper (1984, 11).
[263] Cooper (1984, 11). Cooper's italics.

tions and sentiments established by the poets are primarily established as appetites. These convictions and sentiments are formed independently of rational considerations and they are established on the basis of what merely appears to be the case. Consequentially, then, however wide the multiformity of appetite may extend, and however various its forms may be, this is subject to the influence of strong external forces.

The way that the objects of appetite are set is, in this sense, neither individual nor arbitrary, as Cooper's type of account may be taken to imply. Rather, the formation of appetite is subject to the mechanisms of what Plato calls *Diomedean necessity*: In public and in private, the objects of appetite originate from the unfounded convictions and sentiments of the multitude. And although Plato does not say much about the origin of these convictions, poetry, as imitation and illusion, is nothing but the echo of this (as argued in section 2.4.3). By means of imitating what the multitude finds familiar, poetry deepens and re-establishes the already conceited imaginations of the many. In exploiting the irrational disposition of souls that are yet liable to sometimes fall prey to what has no rational ground, the poets cement the appetites of the many. It is a Diomedean circle.

Thirdly, one might perhaps think that the connection between poetry, appearance and appetite only makes up a very limited case. As we have seen (in sections 2.3.2-2.4.3), however, there are many reasons to doubt such a verdict. Plato does not only consider poetry to be a central player in his account of the moral education of book two and three, he also treats the poet as the craftsman and perpetuator of tradition and culture. This seems to be true with regard to his views of society at large (cf. section 2.3.3), but it is certainly true for the Kallipolis. Poetry is the basic device by means of which its traditions are to be sustained from the beginning. It is poetry that makes up the core of what Plato calls musical education (as argued in section 2.3.2). Before the children of the city have had a chance to develop reason, it is poetry that is supposed to establish their convictions and sentiments. This is exemplified by greater cases, e.g. by the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, but it is supposedly just as important in smaller cases, such as bedtime stories and whatever poetical myths are told by the city's little old ladies and gentlemen.

In view of the idea that poetry in general is an art of deception primarily addressed to souls that are susceptible to what their appetitive parts tell them (as argued in sections 2.4.1-2.4.2), we can also see how the musical education of books two and three links up with Diomedean necessity and the multiformity of appetite. Appetite can come to express itself in a variety of ways. It is multiform. This can, however, also be exploited. Insofar as one begins from the beginning, and has a little patience, poetry can not only be used to deepen the already entrenched appetites of the many, it can also be used to change the old and establish new ones. It may take a few generations (cf. section 2.3.2), but insofar as the selected, and canonised, poetry is made part of what the children are repeatedly exposed to (cf. section 2.3.3), the

source of motivation guiding their lives can be given whatever appropriate form. Their appetites can be moulded to give rise to all kinds of convictions and sentiments.[264] And insofar as the poems take hold in society at large, Diomedean necessity will deepen and cement their message.

The *Republic* offers a few examples that are telling. Children should learn to aim at peacefulness (378a-e), simplicity (380d), ingenuousness (381b) and insusceptibility (387cff and 388e) before they have understood the reasons why. Since the convictions to aim at such behaviour are not formed in accordance with reason, but established independently of any rational considerations (on the subjects part), there are also reasons to think that these conviction are primarily established in accordance with how the appetites of the children are formed.

As it comes to the rulers-to-be one such conviction is of the utmost importance: *patriotism*. Only children that display signs of having this sentiment so deeply rooted that it will stand firm like "gold in the fire" will be selected to pursue the path of higher education. Only city-lovers will be chosen, and only city-lovers may eventually come to rule.

[264] *Pace* Moss (2005).

3. A Multiform Game

> One can deceive a person for the truth's sake, and (to recall old Socrates) one can deceive a person into the truth. Indeed, it is only by this means, i.e. by deceiving him, that it is possible to bring into the truth one who is in an illusion.[265]
>
> *Søren Kierkegaard*

3.1. Introduction

In the so-called second part of Plato's *Phaedrus,* Socrates and Phaedrus are discussing the art and value of the three speeches they have just heard: Lysias' speech, on why to give in to the non-lover, recited by Phaedrus, and Socrates' two speeches, the first articulated in competition with Lysias' on the same subject matter, and the second, the famous so-called Palinode, in defence of love.[266] In this context, Socrates also informs Phaedrus that all three speeches were really just deceptive play. Somehow they were all designed to persuade and allure (cf. 262a and 262d, see also 262a-d, 265b-c and 265c-d). Regarding his second speech, Socrates explains that it might, perhaps, have expressed some truth, but that it, on the whole, really was just a game (cf. 265b-c). A few lines above, both Lysias' speech and Socrates' two speeches (taken as one, cf. 262c) are also described in the same way.

> And by some special good fortune, as it seems, the two discourses contain an example of the way in which one who knows the truth may seduce (παράγω) his listeners by playing in words (προσπαίζων ἐν λόγοις). (262c10-d1)

These passages have given rise to important interpretative questions. Why is the sincerity of the speeches undermined? Why are they said to be examples of seduction? Why does Socrates describe his own hymn to love as a game? And why does he argue that it was all a matter of deception?

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[265] Kierkegaard (1962, 40).

[266] To be more precise, at 274b Socrates concludes that their discussion regarding the art or lack of art pertaining to discourse ("τέχνης τε καὶ ἀτεχνίας λόγων πέρι", b3-4) has been sufficiently exhausted and that they shall move on to the question of the impropriety (ἀπρέπεια) and propriety (εὐπρέπεια, b6) of the same, i.e. regarding when a discourse is articulated in a good or beautiful way ("καλῶς", b7) and when it is articulated in an inappropriate way ("ἀπρεπῶς", b7). At 277b, as we shall see, supposedly referring back to these passages, Socrates eventually also comes to argue that only a certain type of discourse can be considered to have serious value ("ἄξιον σπουδῆς", 277e7-8). Cf. also 277d.

In the following chapter I am going to prepare an answer to these questions, and I will suggest that Plato's thoughts about appetite and appetitive motivation are essential to consider in so doing.[267]

In order to reach this end, I shall draw on two distinctions that Socrates makes at the very end of the dialogue. The first distinction is between a *playful* and a *serious* discourse; the second is between a *multiform* and a *simple* discourse. The first distinction, I will propose, can roughly be said to be a matter of the difference between persuasion and teaching, while the second has to do with *how* to address *whom*. When designed with art, a simple discourse should be addressed to a simple, unified and rational soul, while a multiform soul, primarily motivated by appetite, should be addressed with a multiform discourse.

In view of these distinctions, with regard to how Socrates comes to describe the speeches of the dialogue, and in consideration of how Phaedrus gets characterized, I will suggest that it is also reasonable to classify the speeches of this dialogue as *multiform games*. They can be said to have been designed to influence a soul whose primary source of motivation is appetite. And the notion of appetite thus in play, is to be considered an essential part of the dialogue's dramatic design. As we shall see, and in contrast to the often accepted idea that appetite is exclusively bound to the realm of sensory pleasure and satisfaction, the notion of appetite at work in the *Phaedrus* is a more subtle matter. For with regard to how Plato brings this notion to bear on the wider context of this dialogue, it is plausible to understand appetite as a source of motivation that may also pertain to the pleasure and satisfaction of quite abstract objects, such as articulated discourse. And in order to make sense of Socrates' characterization of the speeches of the dialogue as *deceptive games*, there are also good reasons to understand appetite in this way.

Now, the point of the first distinction is summed up in terms of the difference between something written and something spoken.

> [T]ake a man who thinks that a written discourse on any subject necessarily is much of a game (παιδία), and that no discourse worth serious attention (ἄξιον σπουδῆς) has ever been written in verse or prose, and that those that are spoken (ἐλέχθησαν) without questioning and teaching (ἄνευ ἀνακρίσεως καὶ διδαχῆς), as spoken by the rhapsodes (ὡς οἱ ῥαψῳδούμενοι), are given only in order to produce persuasion (πειθοῦς). […] And he also thinks that only what is spoken by teachers for the sake of learning (τοῖς διδασκομένοις […] μαθήσεως χάριν λεγομένοις), what is truly written in the soul concerning what is just, noble, and good can be clear, perfect, and worth serious atten-

[267] I say *prepare*, because I shall, in this chapter, primarily be concerned with more or less formal aspects of the dialogue and its speeches, i.e. I will be primarily concerned with what Socrates has to say about the speeches in the second part of the dialogue. I am going to look at some parts of the contents of the speeches, but only so as to confirm the formal points I am trying to make, and not in order to say anything comprehensive.

> tion (ἄξιον σπουδῆς) […] Such a man, Phaedrus, would be just what you and I both would pray to become.[268] (277e5-278b4)

Socrates here makes a distinction between what should be considered to be a game and what, in contrast, should be considered to have serious value. Only something articulated in order to teach is serious. And only what offers the opportunity for questioning or investigation (ἀνάκρισις), and thus for understanding and learning, is serious, it seems. Written speeches, just like written texts, are instead articulated for the sake of persuasion. They might, perhaps, be trying to persuade their addressees about something that is the case, and thus true, but they do not seem capable to communicate anything that would be able to teach these addressees to find this out for themselves. Therefore, written speeches, just like written texts, are nevertheless not of serious value. Only a discourse that is able to make its addressee capable to help herself out is serious (cf. 274c, 275a). And *dialectic*, referred to a few lines above (276e-277a), is the only example we get of what such a discourse should amount to. In contrast to written speeches, Socrates explains, articulated for the sake of amusement and "telling stories about justice and other subjects" (276e2-3), there is a serious and much nobler art.

> [B]ut, in my opinion, serious discourse about them [justice, and other subjects] is far nobler, when one employs the art of dialectic (τῇ διαλεκτικῇ τέχνῃ χρώμενος) and plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help (βοηθέω) themselves and him who planted them, which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process for ever, and which make their possessor happy, to the farthest possible limit of human happiness. (276e4-277a4)

A few lines below this passage, yet before the distinction between playful and serious discourse, Socrates summarizes the point of the preceding discussion and spells out another distinction. In terms of how anyone who is to write or speak with art must know the soul of the one he is addressing, Socrates distinguishes two soul-types and two types of discourses.

> A man must know the truth about all the particular things of which he speaks or writes, and must be able to define everything separately; then when he has defined them, he must know how to divide them by classes until further division is impossible; and in the same way he must understand the nature of the soul (ψυχή), must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature, and must arrange and adorn his discourse accordingly, offering to the multiform (ποικίλος) soul multiform (ποικίλος) and elaborate discourses (λόγοι), and

[268] Unless otherwise stated, I follow the English translation by Fowler (1999). When the translations are modified in any noteworthy way I have so indicated. The translation of this quote is a slightly modified version of Nehamas and Woodruff's translation, in Cooper (1997).

> simple (πλοῦς) to the simple (πλοῦς). Until he has attained to all of this he will not be able to speak by the method of art, so far as speech can be controlled by method, either for purposes of teaching or of persuasion (οὔτε τι πρὸς τὸ διδάξαι οὔτε τι πρὸς τὸ πεῖσαι). This has been taught by our whole preceding discussion. (277b5-c6)

In addition to knowledge of the truth (gained by dialectic, as we shall see), an artfully designed discourse must also be designed with its addressee in mind. Psychology is of decisive importance. A simple soul must be addressed with a simple speech, while a multiform soul must be addressed with a multiform speech. Read together with a passage at the very beginning of the dialogue (230a), the distinction here established is often taken to be a distinction between a soul ruled by reason and a soul in lack of such rule.[269] Instead of listening to reason, a multiform soul has another source of motivation. And in view of the brief, but central, passages on psychology (in Socrates' second speech), I shall also propose that this source is best understood in terms of appetite. While a simple soul can thus be addressed with reason and direct argument, a multiform soul cannot. It will not listen, and instead it must be influenced by other means. It must be persuaded and seduced.

As I am going to suggest, what we are dealing with in the *Phaedrus* is also a *multiform game*. Phaedrus, as we shall see, displays signs of having a multiform soul. His motivations are primarily characterised in terms that suggest that they are of the appetitive type. He is in it for the pleasure. And when Socrates sets out to address his friend, the discourse Socrates offers is of the multiform type. This, I will argue, is also the reason for why it was said to be an example of a playful seduction. Just like Lysias' (public) speech, designed to seduce a multi-headed audience, so are Socrates' (private) speeches also addressed to a multi-headed soul. They are articulated to address a soul not yet apt to receive the message of reason.

Now, as it has been argued, however, one of the passages I shall take to be explanatory of the value, art and psychology pertaining to Socrates' attempt to address Phaedrus, should be read to make another, more sophisticated, point. Although (as I believe) Socrates here makes it quite clear that the distinction between playfulness and seriousness is articulated in order to say something about the principles and mechanisms behind the dialogues' speeches (Lysias' and Socrates' two, cf. 277b), it is argued that we should understand the point of this distinction in another way. A written piece of discourse, Socrates here says, should never be taken to be of any serious value, because it cannot teach and because it does not offer the opportunity for questioning and learning. Yet, a text that is able to show this, it is argued, must be handled with some care; for insofar as this is a serious and philosophically crucial thing to understand, Plato's text has something serious

[269] See Rowe (1986a, 212), Rowe (1986b, 113), Nightingale (1995, 146f) or Griswold (1986, 40). Cf. also White (1993, 280).

about it nevertheless. It is trying to teach its reader something. And thus, despite the fact that we should think that Plato's has undermined the value of his own text by means of having undermined the value of all written discourse, there are still reasons to read the dialogue as a serious piece of philosophical teaching.

In what follows I shall argue that although these are in many ways intriguing thoughts, there is a more straight-forward way to understand the passage in which Socrates makes the distinction between seriousness and playfulness. Instead of reading these passages as designed to provoke the reader by undermining the value of the dialogue as a text, I am going to read them as written to say something important about the speeches internal to the dialogue. From this point of view, I shall argue, they offer a key to understanding the dialogues' speeches, and the distinction here made, understood in connection with the distinction between a simple and a multiform discourse, also offer us reasons to classify the speeches of the *Phaedrus* as multiform games.

This chapter is divided into five main sections.

In section one (3.2), *A Serious Line of Interpretation*, I shall claim that doubts remain regarding any reading that tries to argue that Socrates' distinction between seriousness and a playfulness is primarily articulated to let the reader understand that the dialogue is a serious discourse. I am going to focus on three version of this line of thought; two that pertain to the dialogue as a whole and as a text,[270] and one with only Socrates' second speech in focus.[271]

In section two (3.3), *Serious and Playful Discourse*, I shall take a closer look at the distinction between playful and serious discourse. I shall argue that although Socrates does use the written and spoken media as prime examples of what is playful and what is serious, this distinction is not primarily introduced to say something about text and voice. Instead it is better understood in terms of being introduced to distinguish persuasive discourse from teaching discourse. In this section, I am also going to draw attention to those passages where Socrates' explicitly describes both his own speeches and Lysias' speech as *games*, and I shall accordingly offer reasons to further investigate the nature of their playful character.

In section three (3.4), *Multiform and Simple Discourse,* I will continue to pursue the question of the nature of these playful discourses. I am going to examine those passages where Socrates argues that a playful discourse is also a *deceptive* and *seductive* discourse and show how this connects with the idea that while a *simple* soul should be addressed by a simple discourse, a *multiform* soul should be addressed by one that is multiform. I shall then move on to argue that we have reasons to believe that Phaedrus has a multi-

[270] As argued by Mackenzie (1982), Griswold (1986) and Kastely (2002).
[271] As argued by Heath (1989).

form soul, show that multiformity is a psychological condition deeply connected to appetite and appetitive motivations, claim that Socrates addresses Phaedrus in virtue of being multiform and conclude that the discourse thus offered can be classified as a *multiform* game.

In the fourth section (3.5), *The Deception of the Multiform Soul*, I am going to take a closer look at a few passages in the dialogue in some more detail, and try to exemplify the deceptive strategies involved in Socrates' playful attempt to influence and persuade Phaedrus' multiform soul.

I shall then end this chapter with a short concluding section (3.6), evaluate the often accepted idea that Plato considers appetite to be a source of motivation that gives rise to sensory pleasure and satisfaction and argue that, in view of the notion of appetite at work in the *Phaedrus*, we have reasons to revise and qualify this idea.

3.2. A Serious Line of Interpretation

Reginald Hackforth concludes his now classic commentary of the *Phaedrus* by giving his verdict on the dialogue's distinction between a serious and a playful type a discourse. Spelled out in terms of the difference between written and spoken discourse, Hackforth takes this distinction to also have bearing on the written dialogue itself. Plato, Hackforth argues, writes "in a vein of deep seriousness".[272] Yet, due to the fear of dogmatism, in respect of his teacher, who never wrote, and aware of the fact that true wisdom comes only by long study and reflection, the claim that a written piece of discourse can never be of any serious value must undoubtedly be taken to be Plato's own view.[273] This type of position has caused many reactions, and although it may be said to capture many important aspects of Plato's authorship, it does not, as has been claimed, solve the basic problem – for why did Plato write at all if he deep down really did not think that his texts would be able to communicate any serious message? This question has of course been given a variety of answers. Deeply connected to the notion of playfulness though it is, its answers are ever so often attempts to explain away the playfulness of

[272] Hackforth (1952, 163, cf. 162 & 164).

[273] The so-called esoteric perspective, at least in its Szlezákian form, is in its basics assumptions quite similar to Hackforth's position (often referred to as *standard*, as Ferrari (1987, 207)). It takes Plato's condemnation of the written word at face value and it assumes that Plato's true teachings cannot be swiftly learned by reading a text, but must be communicated slowly and in a conversational situation. Writing is insufficient, because it does not do any teaching. It cannot prepare the reader for the reception of the doctrine. It is, however, claimed that there *is* such a doctrine. There is a platonic doctrine that could have been written down. Yet, because Plato wanted to communicate this doctrine only to those that were ready to understand it, he never wrote it down and spoke it only. In contrast to the standard view, then, the esoteric perspective is based on the assumption that Aristotle is our best source for this doctrine. For a discussion of Szlezák's view, see Nicholson (1999, 81ff).

the dialogue. Plato's text, it has been argued, cannot be a mere game. There must be something more serious going on.

In contrast to the proposal I eventually shall come to spell out – suggesting that the distinction between written and spoken discourse is first and foremost articulated so as to clarify and analyse the value, art and psychology behind the dialogue's speeches (Lysias' and Socrates' two) – there are three types of arguments along the serious line that have been particularly influential. Relocating the object of what is taken to be a distinction between text and voice from the speeches within the dialogue to the dialogue itself, as a text, it has been argued that we should read the relevant passages as an attempt on Plato's part to turn the text on itself and thus communicate something philosophically crucial to its readers.

3.2.1. The Antinomy of Writing

The first type of argument we shall take a closer look at takes its point of departure to be Socrates' distinction between a serious and a playful type of discourse. Spelled out in terms of text and voice, it is argued that Plato here writes that that no written discourse is supposed to be taken seriously. No written discourse can be said to offer the opportunity for questioning. Yet, without offering this a text cannot teach, and thus it cannot be considered to have serious value. But, if Plato then "writes to convince, he writes that writing should not convince us; [but] if what he writes does convince us, it convinces us that it should not convince us".[274] This, a *full-blooded antinomy*, as M.M. Mackenzie once described the situation, is no accident.

An antinomy, Mackenzie explains, is, at the same level as an "innocuous paradox", a subgroup of paradox in general. While a paradox in general is like a pun, a paradox is also something the effect of which is lost when interpreted. This feature is a feature of both the "innocuous paradox", as she puts it, and of the antinomy. Yet, while the "innocuous paradox" always will end up telling us something plausible or true, an antinomy, just like a dilemma, is much more threatening.[275]

An "innocuous paradox", Mackenzie continues, may be exemplified by Heraclitus' alleged verdict that one cannot step into "the same (in all respects) river twice".[276] On the face of it, this seems paradoxical or even false. Yet, as soon as we reflect a little, we will be inclined to think that it is true. The river is strictly speaking never the same, and thus we will think that Heraclitus is telling us something that is true. "Thus ordinary paradoxes tend

[274] Mackenzie (1982, 65).
[275] Mackenzie (1982, 64).
[276] Mackenzie (1982, 64).

to have two faces – their initial, paradoxical one, where they appear false, and their truth, apparent upon reflection".[277]

Now, against such a mild type of paradox stands the antinomy proper. And though an antinomy, Mackenzie argues, may also end up having beneficial effects, it always threatens to revolutionize the point of view with which it is initially grasped. An antinomy – like the proposition: "I am lying" – she goes on, always runs counter to common sense. Our immediate reaction is always to try to solve it. We try to juggle ἔνδοξα and παράδοξα "until they fall consistent".[278] As such, however, this is doomed to fail, because as soon as we choose a reasonable interpretation, the antinomy adapts and makes that interpretation false. (If we trust the proposition, we cannot trust it. If we do not trust it, we consequentially trust it.) In order to "solve" the antimony, we must instead view it from above. We are forced to question the presuppositions by means of which the antinomy is designed. And in one way or another we must develop a kind of meta-theory about its nature and function.[279]

It is also this job, Mackenzie argues, that the antinomy of the *Phaedrus* does. It forces its addressees to reflect, and thereby it also answers to, and is made exempt from the verdict that all written types of discourse are not to be considered to have serious value.

A written piece of discourse, Mackenzie reminds us, does, according to the *Phaedrus,* lack the ability to offer the opportunity for questioning. But a text that would be able to do this cannot be said to be unserious in the same way. A text that speaks to the reader, by challenging the medium with which she is engaged, as well as the contents she thinks it defends, may in fact be said to speak to the reader in a way that would correspond to a full-blooded question. Such a text triggers speculation and reflection. It makes the reader think, not only "about the logic of the dilemma", but also, "about its content, and about its theoretical underpinning".[280] And this, Mackenzie argues, is exactly what the *Phaedrus'* critique of written discourse does. For by means of challenging the very presumptions with which the reader reads these passages, it also transforms the reader into an interlocutor of the dialogue. And thus the antinomy also snaps her away from the lazy position of a passive reader.[281] Plato's use of the *antinomy* of writing in the *Phaedrus*, Mackenzie argues, is designed to teach the reader something fundamental. And rather than the meta-theoretical solution it might provoke, it is instead the activity

[277] Mackenzie (1982, 64).
[278] Mackenzie (1982, 65).
[279] Mackenzie (1982, 65).
[280] Mackenzie (1982, 69).
[281] Although it might perhaps seem as if the *Phaedrus* is a dialogue between the characters of the text, Mackenzie (1982, 69, cf. 68ff & 70) argues that "Plato is [really] doing dialectic with us, not with the dummies". Cf. Murray (1988).

of realizing that such a theory is required, and the attempts to figure that theory out, that is the point.[282]

A serious discourse, Plato writes, should be something written in the soul of the learner (276a, 276e, 278a). It should come from within; and the one articulating it should be able to defend it without external aid (cf. 276a). A text that not only provokes its reader to question what she is reading, but that also provokes her to question the very medium by means of which this critique is communicated may thus also be said to provoke independent thinking. From this point of view there is something quite intriguing about Mackenzie's reading. As it seems to put forth a notion of philosophy fundamentally amounting to a matter of autonomy and independent thinking, it also offers an account that not only might seem to apply to Plato in general, but which, I think, is philosophically attractive as well. As it comes to the function of the antinomy in the *Phaedrus,* however, a few objections must be taken into consideration.

One objection, originally raised by Christopher Rowe in 1986, has to do with whether there actually is an antinomy in play in these passages at all. Insofar as Plato writes so as to convince us that one should not be convinced by what one reads, there is an antinomy. But if, instead, Plato writes not so as to convince us that one should not be convinced by what one reads, but that one should not be convinced that a text can actually teach philosophy, Rowe argues, there is in fact no antinomy at all. This is, according to Rowe, also a more plausible reading of this passage. "Plato writes", Rowe argues, "to convince us that what he writes can only convince us, not teach us".[283] Plato's critique of writing does thus also apply to his own text, but not in a way that undermines its own message. It only shows, Rowe argues, that one must make a difference between serious philosophical teaching and convincing discourses. And while the former can provoke independent thinking, and teach the pupil to answer for herself, a convincing speech can only convince. Yet, Rowe adds, "[i]f we cannot be taught, it is still desirable that we should hold the right convictions".[284] And since a text can never teach, only convince and persuade, he argues, the *Phaedrus* is more likely to be of the latter kind than of the former.

Rowe's critiques can, however, in some sense be handled within the framework of Mackenzie's account. For even if Rowe's solution might be correct, this kind of solution – arguing that we must make a distinction between teaching and persuasion in order to understand what is going on in these passages – might be exactly the kind of meta-theoretical solution that Mackenzie describes. And thus the antimony might still be said to be there.

[282] Mackenzie (1982, 69).
[283] Rowe (1986b, 115).
[284] Rowe (1986b, 114).

Rowe is someone that has been provoked to reflect by exactly those means that Mackenzie describes.

However, there is, to my mind, a more crucial objection to Mackenzie's general idea. As one might argue, there is something self-refuting in play here. For if the antinomy is made to provoke independent philosophical thinking, the one who is supposed to be provoked must already have been engaged in the activity that the antinomy is designed to provoke. And thus the text's intention will seem to be futile. Allow me to spell this out a little.

If the reader, whoever it might be, is neither engaged in the activity of scrutiny and questioning, nor endowed with the ability to think independent (philosophical) thoughts and defend them, one might wonder how she would react to the antinomy.[285] As it seems plausible to think, even if she would notice the antinomy, which is unlikely, she would presumably not engage in it. Instead, it seems reasonable to assume that she would just think that Plato thought that writing was bad, that one should not trust what one reads and that spoken discourse is the only serious alternative. The engagement and provocation Mackenzie speaks about seems to require more from the reader than she thinks. For insofar as the result of the provocation that the antinomy is supposed to accomplish is nothing fancier than a serious engagement in independent thinking, as she argues, it would seem as if the reader must already have had such an engagement before she realized that the antinomy actually provoked her. Only a philosopher would be provoked. And if the reader's philosophical instincts are required to see the provocation of the antinomy, it cannot be said to have been the text that awaked them.

As one might argue, however, this objection is perhaps too crude. Just as I argue that Mackenzie demands too much of the readers of the *Phaedrus*, one could argue that I demand too little. The reader might perhaps not be a full-fledged philosopher, but she might nevertheless be someone who notices the antinomy. One does not have to be a fully developed philosopher to appreciate the text's provocative design. In this way one can perhaps still argue that the text can teach such a reader something. By means of provoking her, it can further engage her on the path of independent thinking.

The problem with imagining such a semi-philosophically minded reader, however, is that it also makes much of the dialogue's content redundant. A semi-philosophically minded reader might notice the antinomy, and she might start to engage in the meta-theoretical activity that it provokes. But where would she go from there? Since she now has realized that the text cannot be trusted, except insofar as it has taught her to think for herself, the only serious message she can ascribe to it is that it has told her to stop reading. By means of the antinomy, the text has taught her not to trust what she reads. If she wants to do serious philosophy she had better start to think for

[285] Mackenzie (1982, 69) also thinks that Plato's text was not addressed to some specialist audience.

herself. She could not return to the text, because the text has already done all it can do, namely to provoke her to start to think for herself. If a text can be said to be serious philosophy only in virtue of teaching its reader to stop trusting what they read, one cannot, at the same time, say that the text tells them to continue reading. And if this is the point Plato is trying to make in the *Phaedrus*, one might wonder why he devoted so much time to write the dialogue at all. If the point of the *Phaedrus* is to bring forth philosophically independent thinkers by means of teaching them to stop reading and start to think for themselves, why all this hassle with long elaborated speeches and an equally long analysis of them? It would in any case not matter if the message is put in dialogue form, or if what makes it convincing that one should not trust what one reads is said by Socrates or Phaedrus, that is, aspects of the dialogue that are often considered to be essential.

In line with these doubts about the texts' seriousness, one can also continue to challenge the scope of the antinomy and its didactic purpose. If there are reasons to think that the *Phaedrus* is a serious text with a serious message in virtue of its thought-provoking design, one can question how far this seriousness reaches. If only that which provokes thinking by means of antinomy can be said to be serious, there are certainly many passages in the *Phaedrus* that would not qualify. Granted that the self-referential passages at the end of the dialogue are structured like an antinomy, how shall one thus value the rest of the dialogue? Lysias' speech, for example, would presumably not qualify as being provocative enough, nor would Socrates' first. They are both built on probability and common opinion and presumably not designed to make its addressees think for themselves. For although they might perhaps be said to contain some kind of provocation (*don't make love to someone that loves you*), the arguments for that position do not in any way challenge the point of view by means of which we are supposed to be persuaded by it. There are supposedly no antinomies in play there.

In order to save the whole text, the self-referential critique of writing at the end of the dialogue will not suffice. Instead, there must be some other way to make the whole text embody a provocation in the same way as the text-critique does. As has been argued, although not by Mackenzie herself, there is also such an alternative open to us. Instead of arguing that it is only the self-reflective antinomy inherent in Plato's thoughts about writing that is the thought-provoking trigger, this job is claimed to be done by the form in which the dialogue is set.

3.2.2. The Dialogue Form and its Significant Break

Insofar as the seriousness of a written piece of text may be said to lie in its ability to offer an opportunity for questioning, the *Phaedrus*, it has been argued, may be said to be serious in virtue of its form. "Plato's dialogues

[and *Phaedrus* in particular] do ask and answer questions", it has been argued, "in that they pose riddles and aporiai […] some of which are obvious, *like that of the unity of the Phaedrus*, and some of which are not […] to the reader and then supply, in the form of deeper strata of significance, partial answers to the questions".[286]

These deeper strata of significance, it is argued, are thus inscribed in the dialogue so as to appeal to the philosophically minded reader. We get hints not theories, it is argued, so as to understand that philosophy is an activity. Dialectic, for example, taken to be the skill of asking and answering questions, is accordingly *portrayed*, it is argued, not explained. It is something to be learnt "only by the practice of it".[287] The text makes this point not by telling us what dialectic is, but rather by showing us the insufficiency of a text trying to explain this.

Socrates, it is argued, explains that the written word will fail because it cannot seduce the reader to engage in "the lifelong search that is the love of wisdom".[288] But Plato's text can, because of its anonymity, its lack of apparent dogmas and especially because of its peculiar way of interacting with the reader. Accordingly it may also be said to be serious, that is, despite the fact that Plato does write that no written text should be thus valued.

This type of argumentation, which I here base on Charles Griswold's nuanced and philosophically rich book on the *Phaedrus* and self-knowledge, is quite comprehensive.[289] It is therefore somewhat hard to approach on a general level without having to cover, for the purposes of this chapter, too extensive grounds. As it comes to its approach to the *Phaedrus*, however, there are a few assumptions in the details that I do not want to leave unnoticed.

One issue that Griswold takes as a significant example of a reason to consider the text to be serious, and ultimately designed to teach, pertains to the question of the *Phaedrus'* unity. The *Phaedrus'*, he argues, "pose[es] riddles and aporiai […] some of which are obvious, like that of the unity of the *Phaedrus*".[290] According to Griswold it is also these riddles and aporiai that stratify the text and open it up to the reader as a philosophical and serious text.

The question of the unity of the *Phaedrus* is a question that has given rise to a quite extensive debate and this question is often considered to be a watershed.[291] In line with Griswold's general claim, it has also been argued that it is no accident that the thematic continuity of the dialogue is so abruptly broken off. According to James Kastely, it is not arbitrary that Socrates and Phaedrus all of a sudden leave the subject matter of love, which permeated

[286] Griswold (1986, 222). My italics.
[287] Griswold (1986, 223).
[288] Griswold (1986, 223).
[289] Griswold (1986).
[290] Griswold (1986, 222).
[291] See Rowe (1986b), Rowe (1989) and Heath (1989).

the first half of the dialogue, and start to discuss the art and value of speaking and writing. Instead, he argues, this discontinuity "functions philosophically by registering a central tension within rhetoric that opens rhetoric as a philosophic and not merely technical question".[292] In trying to locate the unity of the dialogue, Kastely explains, the reader or interpreter will encounter a paradox, because insofar as the reader will propose or assume a unifying principle "the experience that provoked the interpretation is discounted by the interpretation".[293] If one finds the dialogue unified by a single theme – say self-knowledge or love – the original reason for searching for such a unity, i.e. that is seems to be broken-off, is undermined. And this is a paradox.

Rather than trying to explain away the discontinuity of the dialogue, one should therefore understand this paradox as a way for Plato to address the reader. It is not the characters in the dialogue that face this problem, but the reader. "[T]he form of the dialogue", Kastely argues, "is structured as a question".[294] Granted Plato's treatment of the philosophical status of written discourse, it is thus not far-fetched, he claims, to suggest that Plato here has discovered a "principle of formal organization that both unsettles the dialogue and requires readers to question it as well as the assumption with which they read a philosophical text".[295]

The consequence of this idea is supposedly twofold. Not only does it imply that any attempt to find the unity of the dialogue is futile, it also suggests that provoking such attempts is the very point of having structured the text in such a broken-off way. The dialogue's broken-off formal structure provokes the reader by instantiating a paradox. And thus it may be said to ask a question. Accordingly, the text as a whole may also be said to be a serious piece of discourse, that is, insofar as this question is forceful enough to make the reader realize that she must start to think for herself.

Now, this line of thought is certainly appealing to anyone that wants to argue that there is something unattractive about Hackforth's conclusion, i.e. that Plato's considered view is that a written piece of discourse can never be of any serious value. As I see it, however, the consequences of this line of thought do unfortunately also have some unattractive aspects. It necessitates three problematic interpretative positions. (1) It makes it necessary to consider the addressee of the dialogue to be an already philosophically minded reader, making the thought-provoking purpose of the paradox somewhat futile. (2) It undermines the value of the contents of the dialogue, and (3) its formal nature also makes the criteria for a serious discourse too generous.

[292] Kastely (2002, 141).
[293] Kastely (2002, 141).
[294] Kastely (2002, 141).
[295] Kastely (2002, 141).

(1) The premises upon which Kastely's reading builds are more or less the same as in the case of the antinomy-interpretation. It presupposes that the addressee of the dialogue is already apt to capture its philosophical provocations. In Kastely's argument, this is never made explicit, but in Griswold's book, articulating the same idea of the dialogues' provocative design, it seems to be. The *Phaedrus* (in line with Plato's other dialogues), Griswold claims, is only open to an already philosophically disposed reader.[296] Only someone who is already inclined to see the riddles and aporiai that the dialogue instantiates will, in effect, be able to appreciate the question that the (disrupted) formal structure of the dialogue is designed to ask. Insofar as the dialogue may be considered to be serious by instantiating an interpretative paradox designed to provoke its reader, it can thus only be considered to be serious in virtue of having readers that can appreciate its provocative design.

Read as such, however, one might of course wonder what work the dialogue really is supposed to do; especially if one stays committed to the claim that the *Phaedrus* is fundamentally designed to teach. If the dialogue's interpretative paradox may only be appreciated by someone who is already thinking for herself, its design may seem to be in vain. And if one wants to argue that the dialogue, as a text, is designed to teach, it seems strange to also argue that Plato has hidden the thought-provoking trigger so deep in its fabric that only an already independent philosopher would be able to see it. Such a design would seem to be without purpose.

(2) Accordingly, it would make more sense to suppose that the addressee of the dialogue's paradoxical composition is someone whose philosophical eyes have not yet opened. But even if we (*pace* Griswold) are allowed to suppose this, the consequences would still be somewhat unattractive; because even though we suppose that the text has a purpose in virtue of being addressed to someone who is not yet a philosopher, the result is the same as in the case of the antinomy. If the *Phaedrus* is designed to provoke independent thinking by means of entangling the reader in an interpretative para-

[296] Griswold (1986, 212). In contrast to the serious business of dialectic (as we shall see), Plato does also offer an account of the function of written discourse along these lines: In the hands of the writer himself, or, by stretching it, also in the hands of someone that shares his knowledge, a text can work as a reminder (ὑπόμνημα, 276d3). When the writer gets old and forgetful, he can use the text to refresh his memory (276d). This does also seem to be along the lines of what Griswold and Kastely are suggesting. The Phaedrus contains serious philosophy, but this content is only available to someone that already knows what it is about. Insofar as a text can fill the function of being a reminder, one must of course also admit that Plato allows for a text to have some kind of philosophical value. Granted that, however, one must nevertheless be quite careful here, not to go too far. Because as it comes to how Plato makes Socrates qualify the matter, it seems quite clear that this function, as a reminder, is at best a kind of playful amusement ("παιδιᾶς χάριν", 276d), a little bit nobler ("καλλίων") than drinking parties and other kinds of entertainment perhaps, but supposedly not by much (276d-e). Despite its function as a reminder for the one that already knows, the text is apparently still a text. It cannot teach. And that does not seem to be what Griswold and Kastely want the *Phaedrus* to be.

dox, the contents of the dialogue do not seem to be that relevant. Even if such a reader would start to think for herself by having been provoked by the paradox, this could have been accomplished by a much less complicated text. Phaedrus' character, for example, would make no difference, nor would the long elaborated analysis of the art of discourse. And assuming any unifying theme would in fact result in the same paradox, it would not matter if we claim that the dialogue is unified by the theme of *love* or by the theme of *parrots*. The paradox would still be there, and the text could still be said to ask questions and be serious.

(3) In addition, granting that the text's formal structure has a thought-provoking purpose, this does not really seem to help to further answer the interpretative questions that this formal structure puts in play. If, as suggested by Griswold, the *Phaedrus* is a text that is designed to make its reader realize that the text asks questions that it cannot fully answer, this will perhaps make the reader start to think for herself, but it will not help her to understand what the text is about.[297] In fact, this line of thought even makes it harder; especially when it comes to the very distinction that it builds upon. For if we assume that the text can be said to be serious in virtue of the question it asks, in the form of its formal paradox, we must also assume that the distinction between a serious and a playful discourse is tailored, on Plato's part, to allow all texts, thus designed, to qualify as serious. When Plato makes Socrates say that a serious discourse is a discourse that allows the opportunity for questioning and teaching, we must accordingly assume that by questioning and teaching he also means provoking by means of paradox. This would, however, also imply that Plato has designed the distinction between a serious and a playful discourse to make any text that can be said to instantiate a paradox serious. And if instantiating paradoxes and questioning may thus be equated, being paradoxical would be a basic criterion for being a serious text. However, if that would have been the point, we would also have reasons to believe that the distinction between a serious and a playful discourse was not only designed to make the *Phaedrus* serious, but it was also designed to make a whole genre of paradoxical texts serious. Yet, that seems far-fetched.

As I see it, and as I eventually shall come to argue, there is a more straightforward way to read the passages in which Socrates distinguish a serious discourse from a playful one. These passages, I will suggest, were not primarily articulated to make their reader relocate the focus of the distinction to be about the text as a text, but they were designed to say something crucial about the dialogue's speeches. They were designed to let the reader realize how and in what way the speeches of the dialogue were games.

[297] Cf. Griswold (1986, 221ff).

3.2.3. Defending the Palinode

Now, although Socrates' distinction between a serious and a playful discourse may not primarily be considered to have been articulated to make the reader realize that Plato's text is serious, one might nevertheless want to argue that the distinction is made with a similar yet less comprehensive purpose. Along these lines, Malcolm Heath has also argued that Socrates' second speech, the so-called palinode, is to be taken to be a serious piece of discourse.[298] Heath's interpretation is, as we shall see, quite close to the one I shall eventually propose. It suggests that the focus of the distinction *serious/playful* is to be found within the narrative of the dialogue. But before I go on to spell out my own take on the matter, I would first like to take a brief look at Heath's argument.

In contrast to the other speeches of the dialogue, Heath argues, the palinode displays clear signs of being portrayed as a piece of serious philosophy. Not only are we here faced with a variety of philosophical themes known from many other dialogues (e.g. recollection, the immortality of the soul, the soul's tripartite nature or the forms), Socrates' way of treating this speech, Heath claims, does in fact also make it serious.

As we have seen, one criterion for being a serious discourse, a criterion that is often taken to be decisive, is that it should be able to offer the opportunity for questioning; and only a discourse that offers the opportunity for questioning may be said to be able to teach (cf. 275d, 276e and 277e). "Strictly speaking [however]", Heath writes, "it is not the presence or absence of questioning that Socrates makes decisive, but the *possibility* of questioning".[299] Since Socrates is in fact present within the narrative of the dialogue, which really makes questioning possible, at least this criterion, Heath argues, may be said to be met. "Indeed", he explains, "Phaedrus does in effect [also] raise a question at 257c1-7, although it is one concerned not with the content of Socrates' [second] speech but with the propriety of making such speeches at all".[300]

A connected criterion that also picks out serious discourse is that it should be able to defend and stand up for itself. If we question it, it must be able to answer (cf. 276e-277a). In the case of the Palinode, Heath argues, this criterion may also be said to be met. When Phaedrus questions the speech, Socrates answers.[301]

The way Socrates answers, however, is not exactly articulated in the way Heath would want it to be articulated (cf. section 3.4.1). First of all, as Rowe has also perceptively pointed out "Phaedrus' 'question' at 275 C is about the

[298] Heath (1985, 160).
[299] Heath (1985, 158). My italics.
[300] Heath (1985, 159).
[301] As argued by Heath (1985, 159).

propriety of *writing,* or more specifically about whether speech-writing of the kind that Lysias practices is a worthwhile activity, to which Socrates ultimately replies that it is not, unless Lysias radically changes his attitudes and methods".[302] For even if we grant Heath the benefit of a doubt, allowing for Socrates' defence of his speech to come later in the dialogue, the qualifications Socrates makes of his own (second) speech cannot really be said to be a defence of its seriousness – at least not without stretching the text too far. Besides qualifying his (second) speech as a speech that might have been on the right path, Socrates is quite clear in pointing out that it also led astray (265b). More crucial, however, Socrates describes the Palinode in terms of its playful character (265c). As we shall see in more detail in sections 3.3-3.3.5, there are good reasons to think that the Palinode is at least not considered to be serious by Socrates himself. It is rather to be understood as an example of what he calls a seductive game. In line with Lysias' speech, and in line with his own first speech, the Palinode is also to be considered to have been a game (262c-d, cf. 265b-c).

As it comes to the criterion that a serious discourse should be able to defend itself, there does thus not seem to be any greater reason to claim that Socrates' second speech is thus defended. As it comes to the other criterion, i.e. that a serious discourse should also be able to offer the opportunity for questioning, let us turn to the relevant passages in more detail. Instead of approaching Heath's argument head on, I would like to offer an interpretation of the whole context on which he bases his claims. Heath argues that Socrates' mere presence gives us reasons to consider his (second) speech as a discourse that is able to meet the criterion of offering the opportunity for questioning. Yet, besides the fact that this argument would make both of Socrates' speeches serious, which Heath does not want to say, his argument also raises a pair of questions that is central to my argument: What does it actually mean for a discourse to offer the opportunity for questioning, that is, insofar as this opportunity makes the discourse a matter of teaching and, in effect, serious? And how are we to value and understand a discourse that does not?

3.3. Serious and Playful Discourse

According to Heath, any type of discourse in the proximity of which the speaker is located may be said to meet the criterion of offering the opportunity for questioning. In so doing it is also to be considered to be serious. Socrates' mere presence, he argues, is enough. As I shall suggest, however, this is not the point Socrates is trying to make. Offering the opportunity for questioning is a much more demanding affair, and the distinction between a

[302] Rowe (1989, 184).

serious and a playful type of discourse is primarily designed to make that point. At the end of the day there is only one type of discourse that really is serious, namely dialectic. Dialectic is the exemplary discursive art in which the opportunity for questioning can be said to be offered, and all other types of discourses are in different ways games.

When Socrates introduces the distinction between a serious and a playful discourse, one point he is trying to make, I take it, is to point out in what way his second speech *also* was a game. In line with the dialogue's other two speeches (i.e. Lysias' and Socrates' first) the Palinode was also designed to seduce and persuade.

The question, I want to propose, is thus not *if* Socrates' speeches are games, but *how* they are games. As I am going argue, it is also for this reason that Socrates eventually makes the further distinction between simple and multiform discourse and initiates a quite elaborate argument to establish how discursive games are supposed to be understood. Before I pursue these matters, however, I shall first, in the following five subsections (3.3.1-3.3.5), try to make the presuppositions of this reading plausible. By taking a closer look at how Socrates spells out the distinction between a serious and playful type of discourse, I will argue that Socrates offers us good reasons to believe that all of the speeches of the dialogue were games and that the distinction was primarily introduced to make that point.

3.3.1. Written and Spoken Discourse

The distinction between serious and playful discourse is prepared from the very beginning of the *Phaedrus*. The inspired and erotic atmosphere of the dialogue's setting suggests that we are dealing with something that could be called a serious game. Love is in the air, but also seduction and deception. The relevant terms, i.e. game (παιδία) and seriousness (σπουδή), come in little by little. The verb, *to be serious* (σπουδάζειν), is introduced in a context where it in fact is often translated in terms of the serious dedication to matters of love (cf. 243a).[303] The noun, game (παιδία), is not introduced until 265c8, and then it is used to qualify Socrates' second speech.[304] The more technical distinction is, however, not spelled out until the very end of the dialogue:

> [T]ake a man who thinks that a written discourse on any subject necessarily is much of a game (παιδία), and that no discourse worth serious attention (ἄξιον σπουδῆς) has ever been written in verse or prose, and that those that are spoken (ἐλέχθησαν) without questioning and teaching (ἄνευ ἀνακρίσεως

[303] Fowler even translates it, in context, as *enamored* (243a).

[304] The adjective playful (παιδικός), in its substantive form, e.g. τό παιδικόν, is in the *Phaedrus* frequently used to refer to a beloved, i.e. the object of love, and can as such be translated as *darling, favourite* or just *lover*.

> καὶ διδαχῆς), as spoken by the rhapsodes (ὡς οἱ ῥαψῳδούμενοι), are given only in order to produce persuasion (πειθοῦς). […] And he also thinks that only what is spoken by teachers for the sake of learning (τοῖς διδασκομένοις […] μαθήσεως χάριν λεγομένοις), what is truly written in the soul concerning what is just, noble, and good can be clear, perfect, and worth serious attention (ἄξιον σπουδῆς) […] Such a man, Phaedrus, would be just what you and I both would pray to become.[305] (277e5-278b4)

Now, as I shall suggest, in this context, Socrates also introduces the notions of writing and speaking so as to be able to further enhance the point of the distinction he is trying to make. A serious discourse is articulated in order to teach. It offers the opportunity for questioning or investigation (ἀνάκρισις). Set speeches, written speeches and speeches of rhapsodes, just like written texts, voiced without such opportunity are only articulated for the sake of persuasion. And as such they must be considered to be games. Generally speaking, there are three closely interconnected reasons for why a written discourse cannot be said to be serious: (1) its defencelessness, (2) its senselessness and (3) its repetitious nature.

Firstly, a text cannot be considered to be serious, because although it might appear to be intelligent, this appearance disappears as soon as you question it (275d7, see below). Quite literally, if you criticize it, it cannot answer. Unlike a person, it cannot defend itself. And if it is to be saved at all, when it finds itself in the hands of the general public, it always needs its father's aid (275e).[306] A text cannot be taken to have serious bearing, it seems, because it cannot stand on its own.

> And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself. (275d9-e5)

Secondly, and closely connected, written discourse cannot be taken to be serious because it does not know when to speak and when to be silent. This I shall call its senselessness. Generally speaking, a text cannot adjust itself to its reader, because "it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak" (275e3). Once written, a discourse can be understood to be context-insensitive in a way that a truly living discussion never is.

Thirdly, the written medium cannot be taken to have serious bearing because it always says the same thing. Once a message is written down, it cannot change. It can only repeat itself.

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[305] Translation by Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper (1997), modified.
[306] Cf. Rowe (1989, 185). See also below.

> Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very much like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written speeches; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence (δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν), but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. (275d4-9)

The alternative to written discourse is also made clear in this context. The only serous alternative is the spoken voice of someone that knows what he is talking about. It is only by means of the genuine (γνήσιος, 276a1-2), "living and breathing word of him who knows" (276a8), Socrates explains, that the problems that pertain to the written word can be avoided. Generally speaking, only a spoken discourse can escape the defencelessness, the senselessness and the repetitiousness nature of what may be written in a book (cf. 275d and 275e).[307]

The "living and breathing word of him who knows", Socrates explains (276a8), is the legitimate (γνήσιος, 276a1-2) brother of the written word (275e-276a). The living and breathing discourse of the one who knows cannot only defend itself, as the written word apparently cannot, but it also has the power to know to whom it shall speak and with whom it shall remain silent (276a). Living speech is therefore neither liable to the charge of being senseless (275e), as the written apparently is, nor to the charge of being merely a repetitious machine. As opposed to the pamphlet-like life of a written text, the living discourse of him who knows cannot only adequately be adapted to the encountered person, but its superior intelligence (φρόνησις) is apparently also made manifest by its capability of answering questions (cf. 275d7).

Now, used to spell out the distinction between a serious and a playful type of discourse, the distinction between the written and the spoken medium has, in this context, already been prepared. Introduced at 274c in terms of what is often referred to as the *Egyptian myth,* the general differences between the written and the spoken have already been established.[308]

From the ancients, Socrates explains, he has heard that there once was a god called Theuth – an inventor of many things (274c-d). Not only was he the inventor of arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, but, among other things, also of the games of draughts (πεσσεία) and dice (κυβεία).[309]

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[307] In the *Protagoras* we read: "just like books, incapable of either answering you or putting a question of their own (ὥσπερ βιβλία οὐδὲν ἔχουσιν οὔτε ἀποκρίνασθαι οὔτε αὐτοὶ ἐρέσθαι)" (329a). For a discussion, see Griswold (1986, 206).

[308] The *Egyptian myth* is more precisely introduced in terms of the question of the impropriety (ἀπρέπεια) and propriety (εὐπρέπεια, 274b6) of writing, which Socrates claims is still to be investigated (274b), and it is due to this question that he retells what he has heard (274c) and articulates the story of Theuth and Thamus.

[309] Theuth is also mentioned in *Philebus* (18b). See Frede (1993, xxvi).

Once upon a time, we read, Theuth approached the god Thamus, ruling over Egypt from his residence in the city of Naucratis (274c-d), in order to display his inventions. Theuth explained and described them. He praised their benefits and pointed out their disadvantages. Yet, as he came to his most important invention, the letters (γράμματα, 274d2), he could not but admit his pride.

> [F]or it is an elixir of memory and wisdom that I [Theuth] have discovered (μνήμης τε γὰρ καὶ σοφίας φάρμακον ηὑρέθη). (274e6-7)

Thamus, here also to be referred to as Ammon, was however not as excited as Theuth; and with the calm voice of a sensitive judge, Thamus explained to Theuth that his invention, in reality, did the very opposite of what Theuth thought.

> You have invented an elixir (φάρμακον) not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction (ἄνευ διδαχή) and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise. (275a5-b2)

Besides the three main charges of the written word, i.e. its defencelessness, its senselessness and its repetitious nature, a fourth, perhaps more severe, accusation is here articulated. Written discourse is not merely feeble and defenceless (cf. 275d-e), but, in the wrong hands, it may also be dangerous.

In terms of its dissembling ways a text might appear to be a helpful remedy (φάρμακον, 274e6), but as a matter of fact is it rather a quite cunning poison (φάρμακον, 275a5).[310] Endowed with the powers to seduce and deceive, the written word may not only make people appear to be wiser than they are, it may also make these people believe it themselves. They will be quite hard to get along with, we learn, not, however, because they are unwise or because they have a bad (faculty of) memory, but rather because they will think the opposite. They will appear (to themselves and to others) to know many things (πολυγνώμων, 275a7-8), yet without actually having a clue about what they think they know. And although they will have been deceived, their situation, as Griswold has perceptively pointed out, is not at all that they are empty, but rather that they indeed are quite full.[311] Being well-read (πολυήκους, 275a7), these people will be able to repeat a world of in-

[310] In Jacques Derrida's much inspiring reading of the *Phaedrus* (1981, 95-96), he seems to argue that Plato's play on the word φάρμακον may or may not be intentional, thus suggesting that Plato is somehow only half aware of his own ambiguous use, a half-awareness significant for his position in the western philosophical tradition. For a discussion, see Ferrari (1987, 207 & 214f).

[311] Griswold (1986, 206).

formation.[312] Yet, because they are without instruction ("ἄνευ διδαχή", 275a7), Socrates explains, their knowledge will be senseless and they will themselves be quite smug.

The difference between spoken and written discourse may thus be spelled out in terms of the idea that while the former can contain wisdom and sustain memory proper, the latter may only apparently do so. The word in ink is neither an elixir for memory (μνήμη) nor for wisdom, but at most, an elixir for remembering (ὑπόμνησις, 275a5, cf. 275d, 276d and 278a). The written word may be used to recall the main points, perhaps. Yet, used as a substitute for memory proper, it will only make things worse (275a). The use of external characters, i.e. the letters, will not only inhibit memory, due to the lack of practice that they will invoke, but they will also, and more importantly, turn the reader away from what may come from within.

> Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them.[313] (275a3-5)

Somewhat perplexingly, however, Socrates goes on to qualify this internal origin in terms of writing. Besides being empowered by the means of self-defence, and backed up by knowledge of character (cf. 271e), a genuine (γνήσιος, 276a1-2 and 278a6) discourse (λόγος) should also be "written with knowledge in the soul of the learner" (276a5-6).[314]

However playful this qualification may seem, arguing that a genuine spoken discourse is always also somehow written (γράφω, 276a5-6 and 278a3), it may at least initially be understood quite straight forwardly.[315] It is only with its origin written in the soul that the spoken word may be described as a *living* (ζῶντα) and *breathing* (ἔμψυχος) discourse (λόγος, 276a8).[316] It is, in other words, only a discourse that comes from within that may be said to encourage memory proper and that may make people truly wise and not just apparently so. What is written in the soul is genuine or authentic (γνήσιος,

[312] The adjective πολυήκους does literally mean something like 'having heard a lot', yet it is usually taken to mean 'well-read'. For a discussion of this notions and its use in this context see Nightingale (1995, 137). Socrates is here probably also playing with the themes of rumour and origin that he explicitly initiated at the beginning of his first speech, describing himself as being filled though the ears as a pitcher (235c-d), and which is alluded to from the very first letter: "Oh dear Phaedrus, whither away, and where do you come from? (ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε, ποῖ δὴ καὶ πόθεν;)" (227a1).

[313] This passage is sometimes taken to be a reference to Plato's so-called theory of recollection, but since Plato does not here elaborate the matter, or make any explicit references to it here, I will not pursue the matter. For a discussion see Griswold (1986, 207).

[314] Modified translation. The Greek goes: "μετ' ἐπιστήμης γράφεται ἐν τῇ τοῦ μανθάνοντος ψυχῇ" (276a5-6). See also 278a3.

[315] See Ferrari (1987, 213).

[316] The fact that these claims are qualified in terms of being written *in the soul of the learner* ("ἐν τῇ τοῦ μανθάνοντος ψυχῇ") at 276a5, and in terms of the *word of the knower* ("τὸν τοῦ εἰδότος λόγον") at 276a8 does not make the argument less perplexing.

276a1-2), because it has its source within. What is written in ink is not, since its source is to be found in something external.

In contrast to a discourse flowing from the soul itself, a written discourse comes from something external. Writing, as the Egyptian myth has it, may be said to be a tool for externalization. And it may, as such, be understood as a tool for producing what we today sometimes call facts. These facts may certainly be repeated. They may be passed on and they might even be true. Yet, insofar as they are communicated without proper teaching, they will not be grounded in the one who eventually will come to repeat them. If the one who repeats them does not have the capability to answer for their claims, he cannot be said to know what he is talking about, although he might be telling the truth. Just as we today often rely on facts that we have no way of either confirming or defending, these facts are mere factoids. They are rumours. Externalized and bandied about in public, the text, Socrates seems to say, is something that needs the care of a responsible parent (cf. 275e). As soon as something is written down, it can no longer defend itself. Because it no longer has any subject that can stand up for it, its claims are also made objective and detached. The text comes from no one. It has no clear source and its unbiased stance is gained at the expense of its origin. Just like hearsay and the word of mouth, it is anonymous. One may perhaps find the name of its author, but faced with the text itself, this name is but a part of what is read and the author is never present in person.

Being both orphan and uncared for, the text may certainly seem quite defenceless, as Socrates also mentions (275e). Yet, as we have seen, and as soon as we take a closer look at that claim, we realize that this apparent defencelessness is but a charade. In reality it is a quite dangerous potion. It may make people inflated by rumour-like facts and certainly quite hard to get along with (275b). Appearing to know many things, these people will indeed be quite smug; and by means of being well-read they will speak with the versatile voice of the Typhon (cf. 230a4). They will appear to know a lot. Yet, nothing of their thus acquired polyphony will come from themselves.[317] Their dependence on external sources will be so deeply rooted in the ever-changing structure of factoids, that it indeed will be perplexingly hard to locate the position from which they speak.

Socrates' alternative to this polytrophic potion, i.e. the living and breathing word of him who knows, may thus, at least negatively, be understood as what can avoid all of this. The inauthenticity, the undermining of memory, the mirage of wisdom, the defencelessness, the inability to know to whom to speak, the inability to answer questions, and the constant repetition of the

[317] "For, as Hesiod's detailed description of this creature in the *Theogony* reveals (819-35)", Nightingale (1995, 134) writes, "what distinguishes the Typhon was not simply his hundred snake heads with their dark tongues but the fact that each tongue could utter sounds of every kind".

same, all of these flaws can be avoided, it seems, as long as we stick to living and breathing speech. As long as we stick to what comes from within and as long as the voice of the speaker can be traced back to what is written in his soul (cf. 276a and 278a), the authenticity of the discourse can be secured and a true origin distinguished.

3.3.2. The Neutrality of the Medium

As has been argued by both G.R.F. Ferrari and Monique Dixsaut, however, the distinction between writing and speaking is a quite subtle matter. Ferrari is also quite clear in pointing out its delicacy. Plato's account of written and spoken discourse, he argues, must be understood in terms of how these supposedly different practices may intermingle. "[S]peech too", he argues, "is liable to the dangers of writing [and] writing can partake of the advantages of speech".[318] If we take it for granted that a spoken discourse is always good and a written always bad, we will, at the end of the day, fail to appreciate the most important point being made here.

Implicitly agreeing with Ferrari, Monique Dixsaut also argues that the basic categories of writing and speaking must be qualified.[319] We must take Plato's use of the notion of writing metaphorically, she argues.[320] *Writing*, rather than being the proper name of a certain kind of art having to do with letters or ink, is a notion comprising a whole field of dubious activity. In order to make this point clear, she articulates a definition of the written that pertains to what is written in ink just as much as to what is articulated by the voice.[321]

> [T]out discours commandé par le double effet qu'il cherche à produire – sur les autre, en faisant des spectateurs capable seulement d'approuver ou de rejeter, et sur son auteur, qu'il est censé immortaliser – est un 'écrit'.[322]

It is thus not only what is written with letters that may be subsumed under the heading of 'text', but indeed, she argues, everything that can meet these two criteria may. A text is everything whose judgment of merit lies in the hands of its audience and that may make their originator (seem to be) immortal. It is not only what is written in ink that can be orphan and stray around in public without the power to defend itself, such is also the case with the echo of a voice. The power to immortalize also permeates what may have been said. The inflexible and obstinate repetition of the same, identifying what is written by hand, she continues, may just as well be the identify-

[318] Ferrari (1987, 207).
[319] Dixsaut (2003).
[320] Dixsaut (2003, 20).
[321] Dixsaut (2003, 20).
[322] Dixsaut (2003, 20).

ing mark of a tedious speaker. The goodness or badness of a discourse, Dixsaut argues, lies not in its medium, but in its content (cf. 258d). Being spoken is not itself that mysterious kind of power that guaranties against ignorance, secures authenticity and makes articulation of truth necessary.[323] No, it is of little or no importance, she claims, if the originator communicates his message through the signs on a papyrus or not.[324]

As Ferrari has sensitively pointed out, Phaedrus' very own personality also emphasizes this kind of argument. For once we understand the nature of Phaedrus' love for speeches we will also realize that his treatment and comprehension of them is just as liable to the charges pertaining to the written word as he himself is to that of being a lover of their effects.

Bringing us back to the opening scene of the dialogue, where we for the first time encounter Socrates and Phaedrus pursuing the course of their excursion, Ferrari depicts the relationship between Phaedrus and the piece of speech he hides under his cloak. Phaedrus has brought this speech with him to learn it by heart and thus eventually to be able to voice it himself. The purpose of this exercise, as Ferrari points out, is, however, not to scrutinize and question it, but to be able to transform the written word to an oral speech and thus to be able to reproduce its impact as he himself has experienced it.

> Phaedrus' behaviour reveals that what he long for above all is to produce the *effect* of Lysias' speech. [This behaviour] clearly shows that the dangers which Socrates attributes to writing are not mechanically confined to the context of the written word.[325]

Phaedrus would thus presumably appreciate the distinction between *what is written in the soul* and *what is written in ink*. Yet, from his point of view it would not be a matter of distinguishing what is truly known from the mere effect of appearing to know, but of knowing it by heart or not. The distinction between *what is written in the soul* and *what is written in ink* could, from Phaedrus' point of view, really be said to be a matter of prestige. If you know it by heart, it is you who will be considered the source of its effects, but if you merely read it out loud, the effects will be ascribed to the text.[326]

> For although the upper bound of [Phaedrus'] efforts would be an exact reproduction of the written words, he wants, somehow, for the inspiration to be

[323] Dixsaut (2003, 20).
[324] Dixsaut (2003, 21).
[325] Ferrari (1987, 209).
[326] Cf. Ferrari (1987, 208ff). In a sense, one could here say that Phaedrus has only understood half of the Egyptian story. He knows that memory proper is good, but he praises this side of the story so much that he tends to neglect the other part, i.e. that memory is not enough. One must also try to become wise, not merely memorizing what other people have said.

> his; want to re-create for himself the magical aura that those words trail with them.[327]

Ferrari does not pursue the consequences of this interpretation so as to conclude that Plato indeed considered ink and voice to be equally dangerous. Rather, he recoils, insisting that the very condition for such a possibility lies within the medium of the text itself. It is only the "illusion that the written text has frozen this moment"[328], Ferrari argues, that is the basis for Phaedrus' treatment of the spoken word as something written.[329] Just as Hackforth, Ferrari does also take Plato's condemnation of the written word at face value – modifying this somewhat, similar to Dixsaut, in claiming that what the written word represents has perhaps a broader range than being merely confined to letters in books.[330]

There are, however, more indications in the dialogue than pointed out by these scholars, reinforcing the view that any straightforward understanding of Plato's condemnation of the text in favour of speech might be misleading. First of all, and perhaps in contrast to what he will say later down the line, Socrates is quite neutral in his initial scrutiny of the status of written discourse.

> *Socrates*: Then that is clear to all, that writing speeches is not in itself a disgrace. *Phaedrus:* How can it be? *Socrates:* But the disgrace, I fancy, consists in speaking or writing not well, but disgracefully and badly. *Phaedrus*: Evidently. (258d1-6)

This conclusion, initiating the discussion in the second part of the dialogue, is also repeated with a somewhat different wording at 259e. Here Socrates asks Phaedrus if it is not so that the value of a text or of a speech should be judged in terms of the knowledge of its writer or speaker and not by means of the medium that is being used.

> *Socrates*: We should, then, as we were proposing just now, discuss the theory of good (or bad) speaking and writing (τὸν λόγον ὅπῃ καλῶς ἔχει λέγειν τε καὶ γράφειν καὶ ὅπῃ μή). *Phaedrus:* Clearly. *Socrates:* If a speech is to be good, must not the mind of the speaker (τὴν τοῦ λέγοντος διάνοιαν) know the truth about the matters of which he is to speak (εἰδυῖαν τὸ ἀληθὲς ὧν ἂν ἐρεῖν πέρι μέλλῃ)? (259e1-6)

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[327] Ferrari (1987, 209). Cf. also 268b, where Socrates describes how the effect of a pharmacist's drug has no effect if the one using it does not know the nature of his patent. Anyone who has just read about it in a book (βιβλίον) or just stumbled upon some medicine (φαρμάκιον) will imagine that he can do the work of a doctor (ἰατρός) when he actually cannot.

[328] Ferrari (1987, 209).

[329] Ferrari (1987, 209).

[330] Thus, as Ferrari (1987, 212) also acknowledges, he eventually ends up in more or less the same position as Hackforth.

Both of these passages make more or less the same two assumptions. (1) Writing and speaking can be grouped together and discussed in terms of the generic notion of a *discourse* (λόγος), and (2) they are both to be judged by their quality and content and not by their medium.

The second passage does however also seem to make a further point, namely that the merit of a discourse depends on the quality of its origin, namely on the quality of *the mind of the speaker* ("τὴν τοῦ λέγοντος διάνοιαν"). If it is to be a good speech, the one articulating it must know the truth. Hence, insofar as one can argue that a text itself cannot be judged in terms of such a source, because it is orphan, the argument can of course be made that Socrates is here merely referring to a spoken kind of discourse.

However, Phaedrus' response to Socrates' question does point in the opposite direction (cf. 260e), because what Phaedrus here brings up to judgment is certainly not something that originates from him. Instead he takes up something that he has heard. He introduces a rumour.

This rumour, claiming that only what *seems* to be the truth matters (260a), is here, as elsewhere, introduced by the word(s) *to hear* (ἀκούειν, 259e7).[331] And that type of discourse now brought up to discussion is accordingly just as much an orphan as a text may be said to be. It does, just like any rumour, lack a clear origin. It has no father present to defend it and it is certainly liable to most of the charges raised against the text. It can neither speak for itself, nor answer if we question it; and as if we would be pitchers for water, its straying discourse flows in through our ears and makes us appear to be full of knowledge and truth, when we apparently are not (cf. 235c-d).[332] As a rumour, that is, as a discourse originating from the voice of some unknown speaker, a voiced discourse may be just as liable to the accusation of not having any (clear) origin, as a written text may be. And insofar as the merit of a discourse (λόγος, cf. 259e1) should be judged in terms of the knowledge of truth that its articulator has, text and speech are equally exposed.[333] In the form of rumour, the spoken word may be just as liable to the charges of being defenceless, senseless, repetitious and dangerous as the written text may be.

[331] The verb ἀκούω and its cognates occur 55 times in the dialogue, indicating that the nature of what is heard, that is, rumour, is clearly a theme that waters the dialogue from beneath. For a discussion, see Nightingale (1995, 136ff).

[332] For a similar view, see Nightingale (1995, 135): "[I]t is clear that the *logoi* which Socrates has *heard* function in the same way as *written* discourse – as aliens that have (allegedly) occupied Socrates psyche".

[333] It is also in order make this point clear, I presume, that Socrates goes on to tell the story of the ass (cf. 260b-c). See section 3.4.8.

3.3.3. Oak and Rock

Besides these negative indications that the spoken word may be just as bad as the written, Socrates has, however, also implied that there might be a positive alternative. Answering Phaedrus' accusation of too easily making up stories of foreign land, Socrates says that we should not judge *who* we listen to, but the truth of what we hear (275b-c). Referring to his own story of Theuth and Thamus, Socrates also defends it by means of another story.

> They used to say, my friend, that the words of the oak in the holy place of Zeus at Dodona were the first prophetic utterances. The people of that time, not being so wise as you young folks, were content in their simplicity (ὑπ' εὐηθείας) to hear an oak or a rock, provided only it spoke the truth; but to you, perhaps, it makes a difference who the speaker is and where he comes from, for you do not consider only whether his words are true or not. (275b5-c2)

In hearing this defence, Phaedrus acknowledges Socrates' rebuttal of his own depreciation of the Egyptian story, admitting that its value should not be judged in terms of its medium, but in terms of its truth (275c). Regardless of its source, the merit and blame of the message lies in the truth it communicates. It does not seem to matter if we are here dealing with an oak, a rock or the king of Egypt himself. And thus is should not matter if we are dealing with text or voice.

Read in isolation, the point of this passage seems then to be quite straight forward. It seems to argue for the neutrality of the medium. Read in context, however, this point becomes problematic, because it is in the very next sentence that the first charge against the written word is articulated.[334]

> He who thinks, then that he has left behind him any art in writing, and he who receives it in the belief that anything in writing will be clear and certain, he would be full of simplicity (εὐήθεια), and in truth ignorant of the prophecy of Ammon, if he thinks written words are of any use except to remind him who knows the matter about which they are written. (275c3-d2)

Socrates initial devaluation of the written word, here argued for in terms of the prophecy of Ammon, is thus defended against the accusation of being just a made up story by a story that itself defends the neutrality of the medium.

In support of his Egyptian story, Socrates refers to those people that used to listen to oak and rock. These people – described as being content by the force of their simplicity ("ὑπ' εὐηθείας") – are presumably also introduced in the discussion because they are to stand as an example for Phaedrus. Soc-

[334] Cf. Nightingale (1995, 146).

rates apparently wants Phaedrus to judge what Socrates is saying by its truth (that the written is dangerous) and not by its medium (the Egyptian myth).

In his next cue, however, Socrates again refers to this simplicity (εὐήθεια), yet this time in the very opposite sense. Now, this simplicity is ascribed to those people who have not understood the prophecy of Ammon and that accordingly takes the written word to be of serious value (275c-d).

Thus, what Socrates, perplexingly enough, says is the following. On the one hand, when it comes to the communication of truth, the medium does not matter. One should judge the truth of the message and not of the medium. On the other hand, however, Socrates does also seem to claim the opposite. Anyone, he says, who believes in the clearness and certainty of what is being communicated by what is written is an utterly simple person (275c-d). As it seems, the medium does both matter and not. One should not judge what is being communicated in terms of its medium, but one should nevertheless always also distrust what one reads.

Now, it stands to reason that one cannot make both of these claims at the same time without qualification. Insofar as Socrates is here using the words somewhat more metaphorically, however, as Dixsaut also suggests, a possible qualification suggests itself. For, Socrates' claims *do* make some sense insofar as we may understand them as a way to chisel out a kind of medium-neutral, yet inevitably always authentic, discourse; that is, a discourse, spoken or written, which may stand as a positive equivalence to the shared inauthenticity of both media. If *written* is taken to mean *communication that may corrupt*, a feature not exclusive to letters and texts, the passage might seem to be less perplexing. Instead of condemning a certain medium, i.e. the text, the notion of something *written* is rather trying to isolate a kind of discourse that does not have the beneficial features that are ascribed to something *spoken*. Something *written* does thus not necessarily refer to a text, but rather to something that may be a text, insofar as the text may corrupt, but which may also be something spoken. Insofar as we may understand rumour, hearsay and the word of mouth as something that also belongs to the category of what is *written*, Socrates' medium-neutral condemnation of what is written does make some sense: One should always judge the truth of the message in a medium-neutral manner, but insofar as *written* refers to a medium that may corrupt and that may make the *reader*, that is, the receiver of the message, smug and hard to get along with, because he thinks that he is wise merely by means of being able to repeat what he has read (or heard), one should indeed never trust what is *written*. A text is thus not necessarily something written, and the message a text is trying to communicate may be judged medium-neutral. So, if it turns out that a text runs the risk of corrupting its readers (or hearers), by making them smug, we may label it *written*. Insofar as it does not run that risk, however, we might presumably rather label it *spoken*. In-

deed, as Socrates will go on to explain, there does also seem to be such a *spoken* discourse, a discourse we will get to know as *dialectic*.[335]

3.3.4. Dialectic

In the middle of the passage on the down-play of the written medium Socrates makes a distinction between a quite amusing kind of activity and a much nobler one (καλλίων, 276e5). The first activity pertains to someone that we might call *the gardener of letters* (ὁ τῶν γραμμάτων γεωργός, cf. 276b and 276d). This gardener is someone that during his life will write down what he realizes, so that he, when he grows old, can read it and remind himself of that which he will have forgotten due to his old age. Instead of dedicating his life to drinking parties and banquettes, he will dedicate his time to the cultivation of a garden of letters – a garden that he will plant for his own amusement so as to keep his knowledge in stock.

> The gardens of letters he will, it seems, plant as a charming game (παιδιᾶς χάριν), and will write, when he writes, to treasure up reminders for himself, when he comes to the forgetfulness of old age, and for others who follow the same path, and he will be pleased when he sees them putting forth tender leaves. (276d1-5)

In this garden of letters Socrates describes how the gardener – a man endowed with the ability to play with words ("ἐν λόγοις […] παίζειν", 276e2) – sows his discourses on justice (δικαιοσύνη) and on other similar subjects (cf. 276e). In the hands of the right reader, his text may presumably also do some good. It may remind its readers of what they have already once realized. In the hands of someone without that realization, however, the effect may presumably be much worse.

In addition to this game (παιδιά, 276d2) with words ("ἐν λόγοις", 276e2), Socrates informs us that there is also another activity, which is much nobler and, in contrast to this one, quite serious indeed.

> [I]n my opinion, serious discourse (σπουδὴ) about them [justice and similar subjects] is far nobler (καλλίων), when one employs the art of dialectic (τῇ διαλεκτικῇ τέχνῃ χρώμενος) and plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process for ever, and which make their

[335] Now, whether or not a written discourse (e.g. a rumour) will corrupt or not is, of course, also a matter of who reads or hears it. If the text is read by an independent and rationally governed philosopher it should not be able to corrupt him. If it is read by someone less independent, it may. In contrast to a *written* discourse, however, a *spoken* discourse would never corrupt.

> possessor happy, to the farthest possible limit of human happiness. (276e4-277a4)

Alluding to the description of the spoken word as ideally being something written in the soul of the learner (cf. 276a), Socrates here contrasts the playful activity of the writer to the serious discourse of the dialectician (cf. 266c1). While dialectic is serious, writing is a game.

The words that are sowed in the soul of the leaner by means of this art get rooted, we learn, in a way that something grasped as if in a book can never be. In emphasizing this point Socrates also insists on describing the art of dialectic in terms of that special kind of communication that ideally may happen between a teacher and a pupil.

> [And he] who thinks that only in words about justice and beauty and goodness spoken by teachers for the sake of learning and really written in a soul (τῷ ὄντι γραφομένοις ἐν ψυχῇ) is clearness and perfection and serious value (τό τε ἐναργὲς εἶναι καὶ τέλεον καὶ ἄξιον σπουδῆς), that such words should be considered the speaker's own legitimate offspring (ὑεῖς γνησίους), first the word within himself, if it be found there, and secondly its descendants or brothers which may have sprung up in worthy manner in the souls of others, and who pays no attention to the other words, – that man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray that we ourselves may become. (278a2-b4)

Only this type of situation can be taken to have serious value. In contrast to a discourse that is "spoken (ἐλέχθησαν) without questioning and teaching (ἄνευ ἀνακρίσεως καὶ διδαχῆς), as spoken by the rhapsodes (ὡς οἱ ῥαψῳδούμενοι)" (277e8-9), articulated "only in order to produce persuasion (πειθοῦς)" (e9), the serious discourse is "spoken by teachers for the sake of learning (τοῖς διδασκομένοις […] μαθήσεως χάριν λεγομένοις)" (278a1). Only in an honest teacher-pupil relationship is there opportunity for questioning and examination (ἀνάκρισις) and, in effect, for teaching (διδαχή, cf. 277e-278a) – the lack of which ("ἄνευ διδαχή") was exactly that which may made reading dangerous and the reader smug (275a).

> [T]hey will read many things without instruction (ἄνευ διδαχή) and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise. (275a7-b2)

Now, dialectic, a philosophical art whose technicalities are really only briefly discussed in the *Phaedrus,* is nevertheless given some undeniable characteristics. (I shall shortly turn to these technicalities.) Basically, it is a way to communicate by means of planting seeds in the soul, that is, seeds that eventually also are to be "able to help themselves" (276e7-277a1). Dialectic is not only a matter of communicating something that supposedly is to be writ-

ten in the soul of the learner (276a), it is also supposed to be something that "should be considered [to be] the speaker's own authentic offspring" (278a6). As we might suppose, dialectic does something that a book may not do, insofar as they both are a matter of communication. And although the image of the seed might perhaps suggest that the teacher of dialectic communicates something less than the book, the image is probably supposed to display something else. As Andrea Nightingale has pointed out, the image of the seeds is presumably rather used in order to say something about philosophical independence.

> It is important to note that the philosopher's [or teacher's] *logoi* enter into another person's soul as *seeds*; the philosopher does not hand over knowledge that is ready-made (or, to continue the analogy, fully grown), since knowledge can only be achieved if the student rears up the seeds himself.[336]

Now, even if the description Nightingale is here referring to, given at the end of the dialogue, does suggest that dialectic is a matter of finding it out on your own, dialectic does, however, also get a more technical description some Stephanus pages earlier. In contrast, perhaps, to the description of dialectic as a matter of planting seeds, Socrates does also elaborate its technicalities in some detail.

Dialectic, Socrates explains, is basically a matter of two things: On the one hand, it is the process of gathering under one idea (ἰδέα, 265d3) the scattered particulars (265d). On the other hand it is a matter of division (διαίρεσις, 266b4). The first part is done in order to make it clear with which kind of phenomenon one is dealing. This is a matter of defining (ὁρίζω, 265d4) and collecting (συναγωγή, 266b4). The second part is a matter of analysing the defined idea, and accordingly a matter of dividing it along its natural joints (ἄρθρα, 265e1).

As such, dialectic also seems to be a matter of generating a field of well-distinguished classes or forms (εἶδος, 265e4) that eventually are supposed to be used in order to classify the specific phenomenon that one is trying to understand, say love.[337]

Dialectic may thus seem to be a kind of rigorous laying-bare of a taxonomic field within which the phenomenon sought after may be located. But although the knowledge gained accordingly might appear to be a kind of unbiased description and taxonomy of the world, thus presumably also possible to write down, Socrates does not seem to want to make that point. The medium of dialectic is rather contrasted to what is *written* (276e). Dialectic is rather confined to a medium that is supposed to generate something genu-

[336] Nightingale (1995, 167).
[337] For a discussion and a good selective bibliography on these much discussed matters, see Nicholson (1999, 56-74f).

ine (γνήσιος, 276a1-2). It is supposed come from within (276a). The merit of dialectic does not seem to lie in the unbiased facts or in the particular field of taxonomy it may produce, but rather in the process that it enacts. It does not seem to be a one-time accomplishment, because if it is written in the soul and thus able to defend itself, the process will continue forever (cf. 276a, 276e and 277a).

Instead of the *products* of the dialectical process, it seems, it is rather the person one is to judge. Not only is it the case that Socrates likens the ability of the dialectician to a god (266b), the dialectician is certainly also someone that can make it on her own. She is able to defend herself and she knows when to speak and when to be silent. Capable of both gathering the scattered particulars into a comprehensible idea and indeed also able to see the natural joints (ἄρθρα, 265e1) of reality, it is the dialectician, and not what she produces, that seems to be what one ought to praise (cf. 277e-278b). Her ability does not seem to be something that can be communicated or learned in any straight-forward manner. Anyone that does not do dialectic and who merely reads (or hears) what the dialectician might have written down (or spoken of) will supposedly be able to repeat the taxonomy that the dialectician has drawn. Yet, without being involved in the process, the reader (or listener) will never fully comprehend the taxonomy he is facing. He will presumably not understand why the divisions are made where they are made, nor will he understand the unifying idea. In this sense dialectic is also so deeply rooted in the dialectician that it could even be said to be written in her soul. It comes from within and it is not something that can be externalized or communicated in a book. It is only if you do it yourself, it seems, that you will be able to also understand what the dialectician is saying. Dialectic does not seem to be something that can be understood by reading about it, since it is a way of reasoning that the dialectician has learned from her teacher-dialectician.

> [The one] who thinks that only in words […] spoken by teachers for the sake of instruction and really written in a soul is clearness and perfection and serious value, that such words should be considered the speaker's own authentic offspring, first the word within himself, if it be found there, and secondly its descendants or brothers which may have sprung up in worthy manner in the souls of others, and who pays no attention to the other words – that man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray that we ourselves may become. (278a2-b4)

Dialectic is something that apparently is to be learned in a *spoken* situation. By means of questions and repeated investigation (ἀνάκρισις), in a situation for teaching (διδαχή, cf. 277e-278a), it is possible for the teacher to transmit the art to the pupil. The teacher plants seeds (276e). This is, however, not a matter of communicating something that may be subsumed under the heading of something *written* (e.g. a rumour). Rather, it is a way of transmitting

something that must reside in the eye of the beholder. Although the dialectical art seems to be teachable and possible to communicate, the ability to do it does seem to be something you must develop yourself (cf. 252e-253a).

3.3.5. Games

Insofar as we have reasons to believe that it is only in a living and breathing conversation that dialectic can take place, and that it is only by such means that true knowledge can be acquired, one might, of course, also be tempted to think that the *Phaedrus* represents such a situation. The dialogue is an image of a spoken conversation, one might argue, and as such it is a portrait of dialectic. The dialogue, in virtue of being a dialogue, is exempt from the critique of writing and we should treat (at least) Socrates' words as if they were spoken. In a closer reading, however, we learn that no such assumption can reasonably be made.[338] Besides the fact that it is clear that Phaedrus and Socrates are not engaged in any elaborate collecting and dividing activities, as the interlocutors of both the *Sophist* and the *Statesman,* for example, can be said to be, Socrates is also quite explicit in qualifying the nature of the speeches of the dialogue as games (παιδιαί).[339]

One central passage in which this happens we find in the middle of the so-called second part of the dialogue. Socrates and Phaedrus are discussing

[338] It is, however, sometimes argued that Socrates does claim that he has actually been doing dialectic. In reflecting upon the two speeches he just made, he is sometimes taken to argue that he not only articulated a gathering definition of love as madness (at around 238c), but that he then also divided this notion in two halves represented by his two speeches, the first half being a kind of left-hand love, a human disease and not that good (265a), while the other half, represented by the second speech, identified a kind of right-hand love; divine, and as such a release from the customary habits (cf. 265a and 265e-266b). It is thus also argued that it is within this field of different madness and diseases that the notion of love is located. The discrepancy between Socrates' actual speeches and his retrospective analysis of them (at 265d-266b), has thus also been taken to be, as Hackforth puts it, 'serious difficulties'. Leaving the discussion of these obvious difficulties aside, the problem with the claim that Socrates has not done what he claims to have done is that he actually does not claim this. What he claims, as I will also discuss more elaborately below, is that within the game (παιδιά, 265c) that he played when he articulated his two speeches – the first speech really improvised in the spur of the moment (αὐτοσχεδιάζω, 236d5) and the second one certainly made from chance (ἐκ τύχης, 265c9) – there were two principles (εἶδος) involved. Socrates' retrospective analysis of his own speeches is not an identification of them as being dialectic, but it is a way to explain, now perhaps in a more explicit manner, the basis for what he formerly did. The phenomenon now analysed was not itself dialectic, but improvisation and play. If anything is close to being dialectic, it is Socrates' reflection on his speeches, because it is certainly this analysis that does the collecting under one idea and the division at the natural joints. See Hackforth (1952, 133) who also summarizes the different aspect of these problems. For a discussion see Ferrari (1987, 61f) and also Nicholson (1999, 62). Cf. also Burger (1980, 81).

[339] In both the *Sophist* and in the *Statesman* the art of dialectic is quite elaborately discussed, defined and, as it seems, practiced. However, it is also in these dialogues said that the dialectic practiced is only there for the sake of learning. Not even in there do we get the real thing. See the *Statesman,* 285d and 286a-b. For a discussion, see Gill (1996).

the art of Lysias' speech, and Socrates is slowly but gradually starting to undermine its virtues and artfulness. Phaedrus, however, does not like this. "You are mocking our speech (σκώπτεις τὸν λόγον ἡμῶν)", Phaedrus says (264e3). Socrates, who apparently does not want to hurt Phaedrus' feeling, lets it be, and instead turns on his own speech.

> We described the passion of love in some sort of figurative manner, expressing some truth, perhaps, and perhaps being led away in another direction, and composing a somewhat plausible discourse, we chanted a *playful* and mythic hymn in meet and pious strain to the honour of your lord and mine (μυθικόν τινα ὕμνον *προσεπαίσαμεν* μετρίως τε καὶ εὐφήμως τὸν ἐμόν τε καὶ σὸν δεσπότην), Phaedrus, Love (ἔρωτα), the guardian of beautiful boys.[340] (265b6-c3)

Socrates is here clearly referring to his second speech. Despite the serious tone of that speech, being articulated in fear and respect of love (243d), the seriousness of the moderate and auspicious hymn is certainly toned down.[341] It was just a matter of playing games (προσπαίζω).

A few Stephanus pages before this diminution of the *Phaedrus'* great speech, Socrates' reflective eye reaches even further; and here, in referring not only to his own Palinode (cf. 243b and 257a) but to the entire discourse, encompassing not only Lysias' speech but also both of his own two speeches, Socrates establishes the playfulness of the discourse far beyond the borders of his second speech.[342]

> And by some special good fortune, as it seems, the two discourses (τὼ λόγω) contain an example of the way in which one who knows the truth may seduce his listeners by playing in words (προσπαίζων ἐν λόγοις παράγοι τοὺς ἀκούοντας).[343] (262c10-d2)

This qualification, to which I shall shortly return, is also repeated a few lines below, yet now only in terms of his own two speeches.

> It seems to me that the others [Socrates' two speeches] have played [with us] in really being a game (τῷ ὄντι παιδιᾷ πεπαῖσθαι). (265c8-9)

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[340] My italics.

[341] Hackforth's (1952, 137) explanation of this cold water, as he calls it, being poured on the heat of Socrates' second speech, he articulates in terms of the distinction between serious philosophy and entertainment. Socrates' self-reflective verdict of the great myth as a mere game is, according to Hackforth, supposed to be understood in terms of the serious philosophy that this speech, taken together with the other speeches, is supposed to exemplify, namely the new dialectical method and the collection and division therein.

[342] There might be some interpretative issues regarding the scope of what Socrates is actually referring to here. I follow de Vries and Ferrari in taking Socrates' reference to the two speeches ("τὼ λόγω") to be quite inclusive. According to Ferrari (1987, 61), Socrates is here referring to "Lysias' speech and his own two considered as a single effort".

[343] I shall soon return to the knowledge-aspect of this claim.

Although these qualifications have been interpreted as saying the opposite of what they appear to be saying, I believe we have reason to read them as they stand. And as such they do make a quite powerful point. None of the speeches of the dialogue are to be considered to be serious, at least not in the sense that dialectic is serious. And their value and function must be sought elsewhere.

3.4. Multiform and Simple Discourse

Accepting Socrates' explicit qualification of the speeches of the dialogue as games gives rise to one basic question: How are we to understand these games? Fortunately, Socrates is not reluctant to explain. In the following subsections I shall try to spell out how I take his explanation to work. I will begin by taking a closer look at how Socrates articulates the dissembling aspects of the speeches (in section 3.4.1), continue to discuss the presuppositions in play (knowledge and dialectic, in section 3.4.2) and then move on to discuss the conditions of what Socrates, in this context, comes to call *rhetoric* (in section 3.4.3). I set out to show that the notion of rhetoric here introduced is ultimately defined in terms of psychology, and that a good rhetorician must be able to identify the type of soul he is addressing (in sections 2.4.4 and 3.4.5). I am going to argue that Socrates here spells out two general psychological conditions corresponding to two general forms of discourse – simple and multiform (in sections 3.4.6-3.4.8). Against this background I will then sketch out the basic connection between seduction and multiformity (in section 3.4.9) in order to finally argue that we have reasons to classify the speeches of the dialogue as multiform (in section 3.4.10).

3.4.1. Seduction and Deception

As we have seen, Socrates seems to consider all of the three speeches of the dialogue to be games. In addition, the games played were also further qualified to have been designed to deceive (ἀπατάω, 262a5, 265b2) and seduce (παράγω, 262d, cf. 262a-d).[344] In contrast to a discourse offering the opportunity for questioning, the speeches that Socrates is referring to were supposedly not articulated to teach. Like speeches of rhapsodes, they were instead designed for the sake of persuasion ("πειθοῦς ἕνεκα", 277e9).

These are points that are of paramount importance. They do not only explain Socrates' qualification of the speeches as games, but they do also let us know how we should value their content. Adopting the criteria from the last part of the dialogue, Christopher Rowe writes that the description of a discourse designed "to produce conviction without questioning or teaching

[344] Cf. 261e5 where the noun ἀπάτη (i.e. *deception*, *trick* or *fraud* according to LSJ) is used.

applies precisely to Socrates' second speech (and also, incidentally, to his first): it was a persuasive set-speech, parallel to Lysias, which both Phaedrus and Socrates treated as complete in itself".[345]

Now, Rowe's last remark ("treated as complete in itself") does also enhance the point that the speeches are to be considered to have been games. This has to do with the speeches' inability to offer the opportunity for questioning. Would they have been dialectical, or portraits of the dialectical process, there would at least, besides the enactment of proper collecting and dividing activities, have been some questions, or some kind of opportunity of interaction here. As the speeches stand, however, we have nothing of that sort, and therefore the speeches are treated as complete and finished.[346] In regard to Socrates' second speech, Rowe also goes on to argue that "however fine [and complete] it may have been […], it is ultimately 'not worth much serious attention' […] that is, by comparison with the different kind of λόγος employed by the dialectician".[347]

These claims are also restated in Rowe's reply to Heath's objection that Socrates' mere presence nevertheless makes such questioning possible (cf. section 3.2.3). "But according to Socrates' criteria", Rowe writes, "the palinode [for example] cannot count as 'philosophy' [or dialectic], or as fully serious, unless [Socrates] does 'come to its aid' – because philosophy (which alone possesses full seriousness) is a dynamic and open-ended process, whereas a speech, like a book, is static and closed".[348]

Now, since Socrates never actually comes to the aid of his speech, and since Phaedrus never asks any questions about its content, but treats Socrates' speech like a static and complete piece, there is at least nothing explicit that might indicate that we should treat it as a serious piece of discourse. Socrates' Palinode, just like the other speeches, is more or less capable "of persuading us", Rowe concludes, "[but] not of teaching – because it is (literally) incapable of answering our questions".[349]

3.4.2. Persuading with Knowledge

As it has often been assumed, however, there is something more going on here. Besides being designed in an exemplary fashion to lead his listeners from one understanding of the subject matter to another, it is often argued that Socrates has not fashioned his speeches without knowledge. In contrast

[345] Rowe (1986b, 112). Cf. also 277e
[346] "[T]he question", Rowe (1989, 183) writes, "is whether the speaker or writer speaks or writes *in order to* raise questions, or rather in such a way that suggests that his *logos* is already complete in itself. This is obviously that Lysias does […] My claim is that that palinode follows the same pattern".
[347] Rowe (1986b, 112).
[348] Rowe (1989, 186).
[349] Rowe (1989, 187).

to Lysias, one can assume, Socrates knows what he is doing. And the reason behind this assumption is the fact that Socrates is quite clear as it comes to how to efficiently design deceptive speeches.

> [H]e who does not understand the real nature of things will not possess the art of making his hearers pass from one thing to its opposite by leading them through the intervening resemblances, or of avoiding such deception himself.[350] (262b2-8)

The basis for the ability to seduce and deceive is thus not ultimately, as one might think, appearance and illusion, but it is instead identified in terms of knowledge of the real nature of things.

> Then he who is to deceive (ἀπατήσειν) another, and is not to be deceived himself (αὐτὸν δὲ μὴ ἀπατήσεσθαι), must know accurately the similarity and dissimilarity of things (τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῶν ὄντων καὶ ἀνομοιότητα ἀκριβῶς διειδέναι). (262a5-7)

Clearly alluding to the art of dialectic, Socrates here informs us that the basis for deception (ἀπατάω, 262a5, cf. 265b2 and 261e6 where the noun, ἀπάτη, is used) is truth and knowledge. In order to deceive, and not to be deceived yourself, one must not only know the real nature of things, one must also have the ability to see the similarities and dissimilarities that gather and diversify these things. Socrates' analysis of the game of his own discourse (both speeches) also makes this point clear.

> It seems to me that the others [Socrates' two speeches] have played [with us] in really being a game (τῷ ὄντι παιδιᾷ πεπαῖσθαι); but in these chance utterances were involved two principles (δυοῖν εἰδοῖν), the essence of which it would be gratifying to learn, if art could teach it. (265c8-d1)

The two principles or ideas ("δυοῖν εἰδοῖν") that Socrates is here referring to are the two dialectical principles of collection (συναγωγή) and division (διαίρεσις, 266b4). Socrates' point in alluding to these principles is, however, presumably not to say that the speeches themselves were proper dialectic. Such a claim would at least seem quite perplexing having just argued that they really were games, designed to deceive and seduce. A more plausible account would rather be to say that dialectic is the basis of this game (cf. 277b-c). As Socrates also explains, if one is to seduce, one will need to know what one is talking about (259e, 262a, 262b and 269b-c269d, cf. also 270b and 271d-272b). The act of seduction and persuasion, however, is, for that very reason, not the knowledge acquisition process itself. Seduction and deception is not dialectic, even if dialectic and, in effect, teaching, seems to

[350] This passage is really phrased as a question, but the answer is as clear as ever: "No, not ever (οὐ μή ποτε)" (262b9).

be required in order for such acts to be effective.[351] As Socrates will also soon come to explain, knowledge-based seduction is more properly captured in terms of *rhetoric*.

3.4.3. The Art of Leading the Soul

The notion of *rhetoric* (ἡ ῥητορικὴ, 261a7) that Socrates thus comes to develop is basically also a combination of knowledge and seduction. Yet, as Socrates elaborates this notion in terms of leading the soul (ψυχαγωγία, 261a8), another aspect is also made manifest. Not only is it clear that the notion of rhetoric that Socrates develops involves knowledge of the matter (acquired by dialectic) and some basic skills in the manifold of rhetorical techniques (apparently to be read in the many textbooks on the matter, cf. 266d), but it is also clear that it involves something more. There is a certain further aspect that a good rhetorician will need to know. He will need to know to whom he is speaking. Insofar as the speaker does not know the nature of the soul of his addressee, we learn, his words will not be effective (cf. 261a-b and 271d). A rhetorician that does not also know his listener would be like the lunatic who had stumbled upon some medicines (φαρμάκιον, 268c3) and who merely for that reason considered himself to be a doctor (268c3). By itself the drug is not sufficient. One must also know which drug fits which person. Just like the doctor, who must know the body that he is to cure, the rhetorician must know the soul which he is to lead (cf. 270b and 268a-b). In this way, Socrates explains, the art of rhetoric is just like healing.

> The method of the art of healing is much the same as that of rhetoric. (270b1-2)

The art of rhetoric involves a number of aspects that, according to Socrates, should be captured in the following way. Firstly, he explains, anyone that is to teach the art of rhetoric should begin by describing the nature of soul. He should make clear whether it is one (ἕν) and the same (ὅμοιος) or, if, like the body, it is of a multi-form (πολυειδής) nature (271a). Secondly, he is to describe how this soul acts (ποιέω) and how it is acted upon (πάσχω, 271a10). Thirdly, the teacher of rhetoric should classify the different types of discourses (λόγοι) and the different types (γένη) of souls and then continue to explain why one certain type of speech will, by necessity, persuade a certain

[351] We seem to have two options open here; either one can persuade about something that is not the case, and thus lie, or one can persuade about something that is true, and thus tell the truth. The one who is persuading must, however, in both cases know the truth of what he is talking about. And this knowledge he must have acquired by dialectic. So, one can thus teach without persuasion, but one cannot properly persuade without having been taught. Accordingly, one may also persuade about something that is true, but truth cannot be understood by persuasion, only by dialectic.

type of soul and not another (271b, cf. also 271c-d).[352] The art of rhetoric is not only a matter of knowledge of reality, knowledge of soul and of speeches, but it is also a matter of understanding the harmony between the speech and its addressee. As we have seen, these points are also quite neatly summarized at the very end of the dialogue.

> A man must know the truth about all the particular things of which he speaks or writes, and must be able to define everything separately; then when he has defined them, he must know how to divide them by classes until further division is impossible; and in the same way he must understand the nature of the soul, must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature, and must arrange and design (διακοσμῇ) his discourse accordingly, offering to the multiform (ποικίλῃ) soul multiform (ποικίλους) and elaborate (παναρμονίους) discourses, and simple (ἁπλοῦς) to the simple (ἁπλῇ). Until he has attained all of this, he will not be able to speak by the method of art, so far as speech can be controlled by method, either for purposes of instruction or of persuasion. This has been taught by our whole preceding discussion.[353] (277b5-c6)

As the simile with the doctor captures, the good rhetorician cannot be someone that just uses his drugs by the book (cf. 268c). Although his knowledge of soul, in particular, and his knowledge of reality, in general, might seem to be central to what he supposedly is to do, these skills must also be backed up by the ability to single out his addressee. Someone that is supposed to persuade with art must be able to know what kind of speech is supposed to be addressed to what kind of soul.[354] The drug itself cannot do the trick, because the speech must also be properly tailored. Granted the general categories

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[352] As Socrates continues his exposition of how a good teacher of rhetoric is to describe his art, these three steps are also supplemented by a description of what we perhaps might call *timing*. In terms of how a good speech is to be written (γράφω, 271c4), we learn, and insofar as it is supposed to be written with art (τεχνικῶς, 271c4), the above mentioned epistemological aspects of rhetoric are not sufficient. Besides knowing the truth, the nature of soul in general, the nature of particular souls, all types of speeches available and what type of speech is to be adapted to what type of soul, the good rhetorician must, in addition, not only be able to identify the soul of the one that he is to be addressing, but he must also be able to do this in the spur of the moment. See 271e-272a.

[353] The word "παναρμονίους", in this context, is often translated as harmonious. As Nightingale (1995, 146) suggests, "includes all modes" is a better way to capture what Plato is here trying to write. This is also the way Plato uses the term in the *Republic* (399c), where he is describing the type of music made by the flute. It can play all modes and types of music. At 404d-e in the *Republic* a similar point is also made. In discussing "song expressed in the panharmonic mode (ᾠδῇ τῇ ἐν τῷ παναρμονίῳ)", Socrates says the following: "Multiformity engendered licentiousness (ἀκολασίαν ἡ ποικιλία ἐνέτικτεν) […] While simplicity in music begets sobriety in the souls (ἡ δὲ ἁπλότης κατὰ μὲν μουσικὴν ἐν ψυχαῖς σωφροσύνην)". I have chosen the term *elaborate* in the translation here so as not to be forced to use *multiform* twice. Perhaps *variegated*, *intricate* or the neologism *all-joined* would also have been appropriate.

[354] For a discussion of this apparent harmony between rhetoric and philosophy, see Nussbaum (1986, 203 & 224f).

Socrates here points out, he must accordingly also know if he is dealing with a *simple* soul or with a soul that is *multiform*.

3.4.4. A Scale of Perfection

The assumption that the speeches of the dialogue can, and should, be treated as speeches that meet all of these criteria has, however, been argued to be somewhat too optimistic. Of the speeches we are offered in the dialogue, Socrates' Palinode is the one speech singled out as a likely candidate. But not even this brilliant piece of word-play will do. This is not the case because one can now finally argue that Socrates shows signs of lack and inability, but rather because the criteria of rhetoric that Socrates establishes are so extremely hard to fulfil that no incarnated being at all will actually suffice. "The demand placed upon true rhetoric", Robin Waterfield argues, "make it not just unlikely (as Phaedrus ironically says at 272ba and 274a), but impossible".[355]

One way of arguing for this impossibility has to do with the addressees of the rhetorician's speech. Socrates assumes, Waterfield points out, that the rhetorician most often will be dealing with great audiences. Insofar as we have reasons to believe that Socrates is indeed speaking about the audience of rhetoric in the plural, this also seems to be correct (e.g. "τοὺς ἀκούοντας", 262d2). As Waterfield thus correctly points out, however, this has some quite perplexing consequences. If a proper rhetorical speech is supposed to be adapted to the individuality of each soul it is addressing, one might wonder how this is supposed to be enacted. "This is not just difficult", Waterfield argues, "but indeed impossible".[356]

Daniel Werner agrees, writing that "in addressing a mass audience such as the Assembly or a pool of jurymen, how could an orator possibly fit his speech to the hundreds (or thousands) of soul-types who would be represented within that audience?"[357]

Just like Waterfield, Werner also draws our attention to a more epistemological problem here. And in taking Socrates' statement at the beginning of the Palinode at face value, where he claims that knowledge of soul is knowledge beyond human capabilities (246a), they both also point out that this criterion is explicitly a criterion that is designed to be impossible to satisfy.[358]

Accordingly, there are certain limits to what happens in the dialogue. We have reasons to think that neither dialectic nor rhetoric proper is portrayed in the dialogue. And as one might add, Socrates is also quite explicit is re-

[355] Waterfield (2002, xxxv).
[356] Waterfield (2002, xxxvi).
[357] Werner (2010, 27).
[358] Werner (2010, 31ff). Waterfield (2002, xxxvi).

nouncing the art of rhetoric he describes (262d). Since we, at the end of the day, have no way of telling what Socrates is supposed to know, except from what comes to be expressed in the dialogue, one should nevertheless be somewhat cautious here – for Socrates does apparently know a lot about the art he knows nothing about. Furthermore, even if Socrates, as a speaker, cannot perhaps be said to meet the criteria of the rhetorical art he sets up, there are still reasons to use these criteria in trying to understand the nature and function of the discourses we are dealing with in the dialogue.[359] Firstly, Socrates characterises his own two speeches by using similar terms as when he develops the notion of rhetoric. Secondly, it seems as if we might here be offered a kind of scale.

As Socrates repeatedly seems to indicate, the criteria for rhetoric can be more or less met. It might be a matter of a closer or more distant approximation. At 271c7-8, for example, Socrates also explicitly makes such a qualification. Here he says that he is going to explain how one must write speeches "if one is to do it, *so far as possible* (καθ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται), in a truly artistic way".[360] Summarizing the criteria for rhetoric proper at 273e, a similar qualification is also made. And here, as Socrates indicates, it is a matter of enacting such rhetoric within the scope of what is possible for a human. At 277c4-5 a related idea is also expressed: "Until he has attained to all of this", Socrates says having just repeated all the criteria of how to speak with art, "he will not be able to speak by the method of art (τέχνη), *so far as speech can be controlled by method* (ὅσον πέφυκε μεταχειρισθῆναι τὸ λόγων γένος)".[361] So, even if the speeches of the dialogue in general, and Socrates' speeches in particular, do not display signs of being perfectly enacted to meet the criteria of rhetoric proper, they may nonetheless be understood in accordance with the principles that these criteria are articulated to display. Accordingly, we may also ask: What conclusions can we draw from this?

3.4.5. Multiform Speech to Multiform Souls

Besides knowledge of the matter, acquired by dialectic and knowledge of the soul in general, Socrates informs us that rhetoric proper is also a matter of being able to design speeches that are appropriate for the type of soul that is being addressed (277b-c). And here, as we have seen (in section 3.4.3), Socrates also makes a twofold distinction. A simple soul, he says, should be addressed with a simple speech, while a multiform soul should be addressed

[359] I see three alternatives here: (1) Socrates is doing perfect rhetoric. (2) Socrates in not doing perfect rhetoric and what he is doing it rather just knack (τριβή) and routine (ἐμπειρία, 270b). (3) What Socrates is enacting is a kind of approximation of rhetoric proper. It is not perfect, but an attempt to be as perfect as possible. I am inclined to favour the last alternative. Werner (2010, 42ff) has a similar inclination.
[360] My italics.
[361] Cf. also 274a. For further arguments for this point, see Werner (2010, 37ff).

with a multiform speech. A rhetorician "must understand the nature of the soul, must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature", and he "must arrange and design his discourse accordingly (οὕτω τιθῇ καὶ διακοσμῇ τὸν λόγον)". In so doing, Socrates continues, he must be "offering to the multiform soul multiform and elaborate discourses (ποικίλῃ μὲν ποικίλους ψυχῇ καὶ παναρμονίους διδοὺς λόγους), and simple to the simple (ἁπλοῦς δὲ ἁπλῇ)" (277b8-c3).[362]

Now, as we know from the beginning of the dialogue, this distinction is decisive. There, arguing for the pre-eminence of the search for self-knowledge and this search's priority over the quest for what we may perhaps understand to be a naturalized epistemology, Socrates also suggests two alternatives along the lines spelled out at 277b-c. Either one is a simpler creature ("ἁπλούστερον ζῷον"), to whom a divine lot has been given by nature. Or one is a monster, more complicated ("πολυπλοκώτερον") and more furious ("μᾶλλον ἐπιτεθυμμένον") than the Typhon (230a).

The rule of right-speech-to-right-soul being applicable, and insofar as the distinction between simple and multiform gives us at least a general principle by means of which to classify the playful speeches of the dialogue, we do have a few further passages that may help us out here. Lysias' speech, for one, is explicitly said to be multiform (ποικίλος, 236b7-8) and since Socrates' first speech is articulated in competition with Lysias', it seems reasonable also to classify this speech as such. Trying to escape from his promise to give a speech with which to contest Lysias', Socrates identifies what is at stake.

> Have you taken my teasing to be serious, Phaedrus, because, to tease you, I laid hands on your beloved (ἐσπούδακας, ὦ Φαῖδρε, ὅτι σου τῶν παιδικῶν ἐπελαβόμην ἐρεσχηλῶν σε), and do you really suppose I am going to try to surpass the rhetoric of Lysias and make a speech more multiform (ποικιλώτερον) than his? (236b5-8)

After a few twists and turns, however, Socrates does of course recoil and his first speech is articulated in competition with Lysias'. And, as we thus might reasonably assume, Socrates' speech is spelled out as a multiform (ποικίλος) speech.

As such, this does unfortunately not really tell us very much about how to understand what a multiform speech involves. Insofar as these speeches are to be considered to be persuasive and seductive set-speeches, there are some indications that their multiformity has to do with this persuasiveness. Since Lysias' speech is also written to be a public speech, and as such a speech designed to be addressed to a multi-headed and thus multiform audience, it could perhaps also seem reasonable to think that at least this speech is to be

[362] On the use of the word παναρμόνιος here, see n.353.

considered to be multiform in virtue of the nature and number of its audience.

Socrates' first speech (and indeed also his second) has only one addressee, however, namely Phaedrus, and one could perhaps thus come to think that this speech is supposed to be a simple speech in virtue of its single addressee.[363] But since Socrates' first speech, articulated in competition with Lysias', is to be considered to be a multiform speech, it does not make sense to think that it is a simple speech at the same time. With regard to the number of addressees, it is not clear how the speeches should be classified.

If we take a closer look at how Phaedrus is characterized, however, and compare his characteristics with what Socrates has to say about the distinction between a simple and a multiform soul, a somewhat clearer picture will emerge. If we furthermore also examine this picture against the background of the psychology Socrates comes to express within the frames of his second speech, it becomes reasonable to suggest that Phaedrus is in fact supposed to be considered to be a multiform soul, and that Socrates' speeches are of the multiform kind.

In the following five subsections I shall try make this point in some detail. I shall begin to take a closer look at the distinction between a simple and a multiform soul (in section 3.4.6), then I will examine how Phaedrus is characterised in general (in section 3.4.7) and in relation to the psychology of Socrates' second speech (in section 3.4.8), spell out the connection between multiformity and deceit (in section 3.4.9), and eventually sum up the argument so far (in section 3.4.10).

3.4.6. The Image of the Typhon

Socrates initially makes the distinction between the simple and the multiform soul at 230a.[364]

> And so I dismiss these matters [i.e. the matters of trying to explain away mythological phenomena, like Centaurs and the Chimaera, in reasonable ("εἰκός", 229e2) terms] and accepting the customary belief about them, as I was saying just now, I investigate not these things, but myself, to know whether I am a monster more complicated and more furious than Typhon or a

[363] I take for granted the assumption that Socrates' speeches are addressed to Phaedrus. Most scholars share this assumption. See Nightingale (1995), Griswold (1986) or Ferrari (1987). One could perhaps argue for a different addressee. Not restricting the argument to the narrative of the dialogue, but considering the dialogue as a text, it may accordingly be suggested that it might be addressed to (i) Isocrates, because Socrates, at the end of the dialogue, seems to turn to him (278e); to (ii) the Academy, the text being a kind of intellectual exercise; or to (iii) Plato himself as the author, since Plato, at the end of the dialogue, does inform his readers that a text should function as a reminder for the writer when he grows old and forgetful. I owe this remark to David Crane.

[364] As argued by Nightingale (1995) or Griswold (1986, 40). Cf. also White (1993, 280).

> gentler and simpler creature, to whom a divine and quiet lot[365] is given by nature.[366] (230a1-6)

The Typhon, as we know it from Hesiod's description in the *Theogony* (819-835), is the multi-headed monster once defeated by Zeus, the father of men and gods, so as to secure the reign of the gods.[367]

> From his shoulders [the Typhon's] grew an hundred heads of a snake, a fearful dragon, with dark, flickering tongues, and from under the brows of his eyes in his marvellous heads flashed fire, and fire burned from his heads as he glared. (820)

Plato does not in the *Phaedrus* recapitulate the details of this description, but assuming that he knew the stories of Hesiod, the passage at 230a is also often read together with a passage from the *Republic* (588c) where (as we saw in the last chapter, in section 2.4.2) Socrates describes the lowest part of the soul in terms of just such a multi-headed monster.[368] The lowest part of the soul, Socrates there explains, is a multiform (ποικίλος) beast (588c). It defies the rule of reason, and in virtue of its inexhaustible nature, the motivations that this part of the soul gives rise to cannot be said to be properly unified. In that context we learn that a soul ruled by its multiform part is not only a soul with many parts but, further, a multiform soul. As it has been argued, and as we soon shall see in some detail (in section 3.4.8), there are also good reasons to understand the typhonic type of soul of the *Phaedrus* in similar terms and thus further cement the connection between the distinction made at 277c with the distinction at 230a.

As Andrea Nightingale has pointed out, there is, however, another relevant feature that Hesiod ascribes to the Typhon, a feature that is of direct relevance to the context in the *Phaedrus*. Besides being endowed with hundreds of snake heads, with dark flickering tongues lingering in their mouths, each of the Typhon's heads also has a voice.[369] They can all speak.

> On the one hand they could speak in such a way that 'the gods could understand'; on the other hand, they could imitate the 'voices' of animals such as bulls, lions, puppies, and hissing snakes.[370]

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[365] Cf. *Ion*, 542a, *Men.*, 100a, *Phd.*, 58e and *Prt.,* 322a.
[366] See Griswold (1986, 39ff) or Nightingale (1995, 134ff).
[367] Cf. Nightingale (1995, 134). In Howland's (1992) review of Charles Griswold's book on the *Phaedrus,* we get a somewhat different Typhon: "[A] Typhon is described by Apollodorus as part man, part beast, and winged all over […]; this mythical figure thus anticipates Socrates' 'much more edifying and beautiful, but nonetheless equally monstrous and unnatural, image of the soul's idea' as a charioteer and two horses, all of which are winged", here quoting Griswold (1986, 95).
[368] See, for example, Rowe (1986a, 140 & p.212).
[369] As also noticed by Griswold (1986, 40).
[370] Nightingale (1995, 134).

The soul likened to the Typhon at 230a may plausibly also be spelled out in terms of just such a polyvocality. Read together with the passage at 270d, where the simple soul is contrasted to what is described to be multi-form (πολυειδής, 270d1), we may also understand the multiformness of the multi-form (ποικίλος) soul to be a matter of voice and speech. In contrast to the simple soul, blessed by its divine lot, a multiform soul has as many voices as it has heads.

The non-simple soul identified at 230a is, however, also given two other presumably quite important qualifications, qualifications that also seem to indicate that Plato is here indeed paraphrasing Hesiod, or at least referring to the same myths.[371]

Firstly, a soul that is not simple, is instead said to be "μᾶλλον ἐπιτεθυμμένον" (230a4-5) than the Typhon, i.e. *more inflamed* or *more furious* than that monster Hesiod describes to throw flashes of fire from its eyes. Secondly, this type of soul is also said to be πολύπλοκος, or more precisely "πολυπλοκώτερον" than the simple soul, i.e. *more multi-twined* or *more much-braided* (230a4).[372]

The adjective πολύπλοκος can mean something like tangled, twined, braided or tortuous; but, in effect, it can also mean something like complex, crafty, subtle or acute; and it is as such a word also often used to describe complicated structures, like the corridors of a labyrinth or the windings of the brain perhaps.[373] In Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne's lucid book on the Greek μήτις, we get a glimpse of the Greek meaning.

> To the Greeks the octopus is a knot made up of thousand arms, a living interlacing, network, a *polúplokos* being. The same adjective is also used to describe the snake with its coils and folds; and the labyrinth, with its mazes of halls and passages. The monster Typhon, too, is *polúplokos*: a multiple creature 'with a hundred heads' whose trunk tapers out into its eel-like limbs.[374]

This being an accurate use of the word Plato has chosen to qualify the type of soul he contrasts to the simple, we can conclude that such a soul is quite complicated. It is just as multiform and vexed as the Typhon; not only, however, in the way it appears, but, supposedly equally as important, also in the way it speaks. It is a kind of soul whose discursive expression seems to defy a unified characterization. Such a soul seems to be a disunited soul, because

[371] Apollodorus' version of the Typhon is somewhat different from Hesiod's. In Apollodorus, just as in Hesiod, the Typhon is a creature made up of a many parts. Unlike Hesiod, however, the Typhon that Apollodorus describes has two parts that are more prominent that the others. It has a man-part and a beast-part. Apollodorus also describes the Typhon to be winged all over. The similarities between Apollodorus' image and the image of the soul in Socrates' second speech are, of course, striking. For a discussion, see Griswold (1986, 39f).
[372] The first is my suggestion of translation, the other is Griswold's (1986, 40).
[373] According to LSJ, πολύπλοκος comes from πλέκω meaning something like twine, twist, device or contrive.
[374] Vernant and Detienne (1978, 37).

we have no indications that there is any one voice holding it together. In fact, as 271b makes clear, the multi-form (πολυειδής) soul, just like the body, is neither one nor the same. Instead of describing the voices inhabiting the multiform soul in terms of a shared origin, the source of its polyvocality is more likely to be accurately captured in terms of a labyrinth or by means of describing it as a network of hundreds of interlacing thoughts. The unity and origin often taken to be the sign of an autonomous subject or agent is absent. Instead we have a complex of external voices. Indeed, drawing further on its similarity to the Typhon, the voices of the multiform soul do not come from itself – for they are stolen from the animals and gods whose voices now flow from its dark tongues. It always speaks like something else; like a bull, like a lions or like a hissing snake. It is a multitude of echoes. The complexity is one of external voices, voices of something or someone else. And although it apparently can make itself understood, it never speaks with its own voice.

3.4.7. The Multiformity of Phaedrus

Now, as we shall see, Phaedrus shares many of the central features ascribed to the multiform, or typhonic, soul thus interpreted. Not only is he portrayed to be the echo of a number of voices, these voices also appear to argue in favour of treating discourse as rumour. In view of the fact that Socrates' speeches are addressed to Phaedrus, and granted that the principle of right-speech-to-right-soul is effective, it would thus also seem appropriate to classify Socrates' speeches as multiform. They are addressed to a multiform soul. But before jumping to this conclusion, let me spell out some reasons for why it seems reasonable to think that Phaedrus has a multiform soul.

One important characteristic of Phaedrus is his love of discourse. Ferrari has argued that Phaedrus, in general, may be understood in terms of a kind of impresario.[375] And, as has been pointed out by Nightingale, Phaedrus' love of discourse may as such also be understood in terms of pleasure.

> As Socrates put it coyly at 242a-b, Phaedrus is "divine about discourse" […] for he has "produced more *logoi* that anyone else in his generation, either by delivering them himself or by compelling others to speak". Recall the "delight" (γάνυμαι) that Phaedrus takes in Lysias' speech (234d); his willingness to use force on Socrates to get him to deliver the first speech (236c-d); his assertion that Socrates announcements that he will make a second speech that is the "most pleasant" utterance imaginable (243b); […] And, finally, his extraordinary response to Socrates' question whether he would like to carry the inquiry further: "what else should one live for…other than pleasures such as

[375] Ferrari (1987, 4ff & 208ff).

> these?" As these passages reveal, Phaedrus philology is undiscriminating and oriented towards pleasure.[376]

In the characterization we get at the very beginning of the dialogue, Phaedrus' pleasure-oriented relationship to discourse is, however, also supplemented. When Phaedrus encountered Socrates on his health-stroll outside the city-wall (227a) his intentions was not only to read the speech of Lysias, but it was also to learn it by heart so as to be able to repeat it (cf. 227a-230e). As has been clearly shown by Ferrari, Phaedrus is not interested in the contents of the books, speeches and sayings he appears to admire. (And there are more of them than just Lysias' speech, cf. 227a, 257c, 259e-260a, 261b, 266d or 270a.) Phaedrus is rather interested in their external flare. Instead of being concerned with examination and critical evaluation, Phaedrus is rather like a parrot. He repeats what he reads and hears. Just like the ignorant rhetoricians described at 260a, Phaedrus does not seem to think it is that important that he knows what he is talking about.[377] To be more precise, what Phaedrus does, when it comes to the question of whether or not a speaker should know the truth about the matters he speaks about, is that he repeats something that he has heard (259e).

> On that point Socrates I [Phaedrus] have heard that one who is to be an orator does not need to know what is really just, but what would seem just to the multitude who are to pass judgment, and not what is really good or noble, but what will seem to be so; for they say that persuasion comes from what seems to be true, not from the truth. (259e7-260a4)

Phaedrus' pleasure-oriented relationship to speeches, his consumption of words and his amazing ability to sound like an echo of a rumour, are also characteristics confirmed by a number of disperse passages throughout the dialogue. As Nightingale has persuasively argued, if Phaedrus would be only one thing he would be a repeater of rumour.

> In addition to his rehearsal of the speech of Lysias, Phaedrus quotes, for example, the doctor Acumenus, who has recommended walks on the roads (227a); the politicians who rail at the practice of logography (257c); the rhetoricians who deny that orators must have knowledge of the truth (259e-260a); people who have defined rhetoric as an art confined to public gatherings (261b); the authors of books on rhetoric (266d); and Hippocrates' theories on physiology of the human body (270a). […] Clearly, the text highlights Phaedrus' reliance on the opinions and statements of other people.[378]

The identification of Phaedrus as a repeater of rumours is outlined in his first contribution, that is, by his reading of the speech of Lysias. Phaedrus' inten-

[376] Nightingale (1995, 147).
[377] Cf. *Rep.,* 492b-d, 493d and 602b.
[378] Nightingale (1995, 136f).

tion, as we have seen, was not just to read it, but rather to reproduce it by learning it by heart, relocate its origin, and make it sound as if coming from him. When Phaedrus encounters Socrates, however, he is not yet sufficiently prepared for such a full-blown performance. He has not yet had enough time to learn the whole speech by heart. Yet, persistent though he is, Phaedrus nevertheless attempts to try out what he has learned thus far. He says that he will at least summarize the main points. But at the very moment when he is to engage in his effect-seeking summary, Socrates stops him; and the very speech itself – the hard scroll that Phaedrus has hidden under his cloak – shatters the staging of the speech, and Socrates sees though his illusion (cf. 228c-229a).

In the company of Socrates, Phaedrus is not allowed to do his thing. Instead of being allowed to merely repeat Lysias' speech, Phaedrus' focus becomes somewhat dislocated. He is forced to express what might appear to be his own point of view. After having read the speech out loud to Socrates, this is also made manifest in a short praise of what Phaedrus calls the extraordinary (ὑπερφυής) speech (234d). Somewhat pressed by Socrates, claiming that the speech really was just a two- or threefold repetition, Phaedrus also explains that this, the repetition, he thinks, is the very special merit of discourse.

> *Socrates*: It seemed to me, Phaedrus, unless you disagree, that he said the same thing two or three times, as if he did not find it easy to say many things about one subject, or perhaps he did not care about such a detail; and he appeared to me in youthful fashion to be exhibiting his ability to say the same thing in two different ways and in both ways excellently.
> *Phaedrus:* Nonsense, Socrates! Why that is the especial merit of the discourse (λόγος). (235a3-b2)

Socrates' critique of Lysias' speech was, however, never articulated in order to properly evaluate the speech. Admittedly, Socrates rather attacked the speech so as to tease (ἐρεσχηλέω, 236b6). However wily this teasing might seem, it is certainly quite effective. For as he reacts to it, Phaedrus does not only say that repetition is the special merit of discourse, he also says something more. In response to Socrates' claim of having ready a speech both better and more multiform than Lysias', the nature of Phaedrus' character shines through. And in reply to Socrates – who has just explained how he, like a pitcher of water, has been filled through the ears with voices of an origin he has forgotten (235c) – Phaedrus makes it perfectly clear that he does not really care about such things.

> But, oh most noble, you have spoken most beautifully! Don't tell, even if I beg you, how or from whom you heard it; only do as you say; promise to make another speech better than that in the book and no shorter and quite dif-

> ferent. Then I promise, like the nine archons, to set up at Delphi a statue as large as life, not only of myself, but of you also. (235d4-e1)

Although Phaedrus's philology is now triggered by the promise of a new and quite different speech, he does seem to care about from where, or from whom, it comes. He neither considers the repetitious nature of discourse to be a problem, nor does he want to know anything about the origin of the speech he is about to hear.

Now, judging from this general outline of the character of Phaedrus, a few things seem to be clear. Phaedrus has a pleasure-oriented relationship to discourse. He considers discourse to be something that should be repeated, and he does not treat the origin of discourse to be something that really matters. Instead, Phaedrus treats discourse as rumour, and in echoing such rumours Phaedrus also shares the basic characteristics of the Typhon. Just like the Typhon, Phaedrus speaks with a multiform tongue. His voice is not his own, for it is stolen from the authorities he quotes. He speaks like someone else; like a doctor (227a), like a politician (257c), like an orator (259e-260a) or like a physiologist (270a). And inside his soul there is presumably a variegated landscape of echoes, streaming out of his mouth in accordance with what he is told.

3.4.8. The Internal Discourse of a Multiform Soul

The claim that Phaedrus' soul is like a variegated landscape of echoes is, of course, only a guess. The dialogue never explicitly tells us what he is like inside. As it comes to the internal mechanisms of his soul, we can only draw conclusions from what Plato makes him say and do. There is, of course, another passage in the dialogue that has to do with the soul. Within the mythological framework of Socrates' second speech there are also quite a few points that may help us to further understand what motivates the behaviour Phaedrus displays. As we shall see, this passage reflects the distinction between the multiform and the simple soul.[379] And in view of how Socrates' myth captures this distinction there are also good reasons draw some important conclusions with regard to Phaedrus character, and, in effect, with regard to how to classify the speeches.

As is famously known, Socrates here describes the soul in terms of a winged charioteer with (at least) two horses (246a). In these terms Socrates also makes a distinction between what is described to be a divine soul and the soul of others ("τὸ […] τῶν ἄλλων", cf. 246b1). In contrast to a divine soul, a non-divine soul, a soul like ours ("ἡμῶν", 246b1), Socrates says, is something *brought together* or *mixed* (μίγνυμι, 246b1). In the case of divine souls, the charioteer and the horses are all good and of good decent (246a-b),

[379] As also acknowledged by Nightingale (1995), Griswold (1986) and Rowe (1986b).

while our souls apparently have a less perfect nature. In contrast to the well-balanced (ἰσόρροπος, 247b2) relationship permeating the divine chariot, the parties of the non-divine soul are not, as we shall see, always properly united.

Common to both types of souls, however, is the charioteer. And as this is often read, the charioteer is to be understood in terms of reason (νοῦς, e.g. 247d8). The charioteer is also that part of the soul Socrates repeatedly refers to as *the better* or *the best part* (256a8 and 248b7). It is this part of the soul that has a clear connection to what is divine (θεῖος, 249c3). It is only this part of the soul that is allowed into the mystery (τελετή, 249c7) of having seen what makes divinity divine (249c, cf. also 247d). Only the pilot of the chariot can see the calm, happy and fundamentally simple (ἁπλοῦς) vision (φάσμα) that holds the region above the heavens (247c-d), i.e. that region towards which the chariot's wings are also destined to carry (246d-e). It is only this, the best part of the soul, that has access to the "colourless, shapeless, and untouchable truly existing being (ἡ […] ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα)" (247c6-7).[380]

Of the horses, however, there seems to be two different accounts. In contrast to the gods, our horses are limited to two, of which one is pale and one is dark (253d-254b, cf.246a-b).[381] The pale horse is ever so often identified as being a representation of what Plato elsewhere, primarily in the *Republic*, calls the spirited part of the soul, while the dark horse, in a similar way, is often understood in terms of the appetitive part.[382] While the pale horse is noble and of noble breed – "a friend of honour (τιμή) joined with temperance (σωφροσύνη) and modesty (αἰδώς)" (253d6) – the dark horse is not only crooked (σκολιός), heavy (πολύς) and randomly put together ("εἰκῇ συμπεφορημένος"), but he is also a friend of hubris (ὕβρις) and of false pretension (ἀλαζονεία, 253e1-3, cf. 246b).

Although Socrates clearly holds the pale horse to be better than the dark, they are, however, both described to be the cause of the unruliness of having a human soul (cf. 248a4: "θορυβουμένη ὑπὸ τῶν ἵππων"). This unruliness is

[380] Modified translation. The realm above the heaven is, as such, also associated with a number of distinct realities. Although really presented as examples, they are here said to be justice itself ("αὐτή δικαιοσύνη"), soundness of mind or moderation (σωφροσύνη) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, 247d7). As it comes to knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), Socrates says that it is not such knowledge that we from one time to another call knowledge, but "the knowledge which is in that which is while really being (τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν)", 247e6-7. Later down the line, Socrates will also add beauty (κάλλος) and intelligence, or prudence (φρόνησις), to the list (250d). However, Plato never really discusses these notions in terms of being forms (ἰδέα or εἶδος), as elsewhere. He rather describes them as realities or as being really, really real. As Griswold (1986, 88ff) has also pointed out, the word ἰδέα is used many times in the *Phaedrus*, yet only once in a more technical sense; and then in referring to the immortal soul (246a).

[381] Socrates never explicitly limits the number of divine horses to two, as in the case of our, human horses (cf. 246a).

[382] Cf. Ferrari (1987, 185).

also clearly a characteristic that is exclusive to a non-divine soul. In the case of the gods, their horses are *always* well-balanced (ἰσόρροπος, 247b2) and, in contrast to the horses in our souls, they submissively obey the rains of the charioteer (247b2). In contrast to the gods, then, and in line with the distinction between the simple and the multiform soul, our situation is a situation of division and, indicative of this, of struggle. While the gods are always unified (ὁμονοητικός, 256b1), blessed (μακάριος, 256a8), self-controlled (ἐγκρατής) and well-ordered (κόσμιος, 256b1-2), because they have nothing that scatters their souls, our souls are thrown into a situation of unruliness and internal difference. In contrast to the gods, we must struggle to get united. Indeed, we must actually be quite violent. Not only do we need to enslave that part of us which causes evil (256b2), this enslavement is also described to be a matter of bloodshed and violence (254e).

In addition to these general similarities between the simple/multiform distinction and the divine/human distinction, there is also a clear semantic affinity between the words used to characterize the dark horse and the words used to describe a multiform (ποικίλος, 277c2) soul. When differently translated, this becomes more apparent. The word translated above as *crooked* (σκολιός), for one, can, just as the word translated as *multiform* (ποικίλος, 277c2), be used to describe something *tangled* or *intertwined;* like a braid or an embroidery in the case of ποικίλος, and like the intestines in the case of σκολιός. In a figurative sense, both words can thus also refer to something that is not straightforward or frank, i.e. to something *cunning* or *indirect*. This is also reinforced by the additional qualification of the multiform soul being πολυπλοκώτερον than the simple soul, i.e. more *multi-twined* or more *much-braided* (230a); a word that also can be used to describe indirect and wily means. And since Socrates also calls the multiform (ποικίλος) soul *multi-form* (πολυειδής, 271d1) and the dark horse *heavy* (πολύς), a word that could just as well mean *many,* it does not seem unlikely that Plato is here playing around with the semantics. Further, the substantivized version of πολύς is of course also a notion that Plato uses in the *Republic,* for example, to refer to the *multitude* (οἱ πολλοί, cf. *Rep.,* 505b), which is also, just like the lowest and multiform (ποικίλος) part of the soul, likened to a beast (cf. *Rep*., 493a-c). In addition, the dark horse is also said to be *randomly put together* ("εἰκῇ συμπεφορημένος"), that is, it is not put together with a coherent and unifying principle. The dark horse is not to be understood as a properly unified one (ἕν), because there is no principle that could be said to make it proportionate or similar to itself (cf. 271a6).

Now, besides the fact that the contrast between our souls and the souls of the gods seems to further define the distinction between psychological multiformity and simplicity, there is another aspect of this story that points in the

same direction.[383] As Socrates comes to elaborate the distinction between the divine and the human type of soul, he does not only say that this has to do with the possibility of being or not being psychologically differentiated; this differentiation, just as in the case of the Typhon (cf. section 3.4.6.), is also spelled out in terms of *voices*.

Set up in terms of what happens to the human soul when faced with beauty, Socrates describes a quite elaborate discursive activity as taking place in the soul. We are here not only faced with a situation of persuasion, proposals, retributions and eloquent deceit, but also of verbal agreement and an evil-speaking tongue ("κακηγόρον γλῶτταν", 254e3). Nightingale has concisely summarized the relevant passages.

> Note in particular, the eloquence of the black [or dark] horse. [F]irst he gets the other parts of the soul to 'agree to do his bidding' (ὁμολογήσαντε ποιήσειν τὸ κελευόμενον, 254b3'; when they break this agreement, he 'censures' (ἐλοιδόρησεν) and 'reviles' (κακίζων) them for 'abandoning their posts out of cowardice and unmanliness (c7-8); having 'agreed to their request that they put the matter off' (συνεχώρησεν δεομένων εἰς αὖθις ὑπερβαλέσθαι, d2), he later 'reminds them when they pretend to have forgotten' (ἀμνημονεῖν προσποιουμένω ἀναμιμνήσκων, d3-4); he then compels the other parts to approach the boy 'with the same proposals' (ἐπὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους, d5-6) and, when the lover is lying down with this beloved, he 'has something to say to the charioteer, and claims that he deserves a little enjoyment in exchange for so much suffering' (ἔχει ὅτι λέγῃ πρὸς τὸν ἡνίοχον, καὶ ἀξιοῖ ἀντὶ πολλῶν πόνων σμικρὰ ἀπολαῦσαι, 255e5-256a1).[384]

This is clearly a description of an elaborate discursive activity. Although the dark horse is often (accurately) identified with irrational appetite, he is here undoubtedly also described to be able to both speak and to negotiate an agreement. So, in addition to the rational command (λόγος) of reason, which the charioteer articulates and the pale horse is said to obey without objection (253e), the dark horse is here ascribed the ability to handle discourse (λόγος). "Different kinds of logoi, the *Phaedrus* indicates", Nightingale writes, "represent different parts of the soul".[385] Inside the human soul, there is a multitude of voices. If the voice of reason rules, the many voices of the soul are unified and made univocal. But if the voices of the dark horse are allowed to govern, there will be nothing of that sort.

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[383] The fact that Socrates also describes the souls of the gods to be able to disconnect their horses (247e) also seems to make a similar point. For the souls of gods, the horses are apparently not essential. The gods are rather pure reason. One central question in this context is of course why gods have horses at all. This is presumably a question that eventually would have to be answered in terms of the relationship between the gods and that which makes divinity divine (249c), and presumably also in terms of their desire for truth. However, answering this question reaches beyond the scope of the present study. For a good, illuminating discussion, see Griswold (1986) or Ferrari (1987).

[384] Nightingale (1995, 143). For a similar account see Ferrari (1987, 185ff). My underlining.

[385] Nightingale (1995, 143).

Besides acknowledging how closely these passages are entwined with the passages in which the distinction between the multiform and the simple soul is articulated (230a, 270d, 271a and 277c), Nightingale does, however, also seem to assume that the voices we are dealing with, in the case when the dark horse is at charge, must, despite not being properly unified by the voice of reason, nevertheless be understood in terms of how they *breathe together*.[386] Just as the hundred voices of the Typhon, she argues, the voices of our souls "conspire".[387] And although qualifying this assumption somewhat, writing that the voices "conspire with and against one another, depending on their divine or bestial orientation"[388], she still argues that the human soul, a soul she holds to be multiform, should nevertheless be understood in terms of a shared origin.

Depending on what we take *origin* to mean here, this assumption may seem reasonable enough. From what we could call a *descriptive* point of view, taking origin to mean a point of reference that does not necessarily have any impact on the disposition or state of the soul, it may seem reasonable to ask: Is it not the internal mechanism of *one* soul we are dealing with? We often speak about disorganized things as units, such as heaps, crowds, or, as Plato might have suggested, the general public (οἱ πολλοί).[389]

From what we could call a *normative* point of view, however, a shared origin is something much more demanding. For insofar as we understand origin in the sense of a unifying principle, in line with the distinction between the unified soul, and the not yet unified state of the polyvocal and mixed one (246b1, cf. 256b1), I am not so sure that a shared origin is a feature that Socrates would have wanted to ascribe to them both.

In contrast to the disposition of the souls of the gods, the possible unity and harmony of our souls are not features that are acquired without effort. To become unified one must engage in a quite violent life of self-control.[390] One must enslave the cause of evil, and the inclinations of the dark horse must be submitted to the rule of one's charioteer. If that is not the case, however, and the voice of reason does not rule, is it still then reasonable to talk about a well-balanced, well-ordered and unified condition of an integrated whole?

As it comes to the internal hierarchy and power-balance of the human soul, Socrates spells out two alternatives. Either the better element of the soul rules (256a) or the love of honour rules (256b). In the former case it is the charioteer that has control, and in the latter it is the pale horse.

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[386] Nightingale (1995, 134).
[387] Nightingale (1995, 134).
[388] Nightingale (1995, 134).
[389] Annas (1981, 129) writes that Plato, in the *Republic,* clearly considers the general public to lack (normative) unity: "[T]he productive class in the state [does] not have any unifying ideal but are each set on his or her own particular aim".
[390] Cf. Griswold (1986, 94).

If reason or the charioteer rules, this will lead to a blessed and unified life of philosophy, self-controlled and well-ordered (256a7-b1). As it seems reasonable to believe, the soul will be unified by means of the object towards which the whole soul is oriented. This object will be established by the charioteer. He who has seen the truth will be able to know what is right and what is wrong, and the motivation of the whole soul will be set accordingly. He will remember what he got a glimpse of when he journeyed outside the ridge of the heavers and he will know what is worthwhile (cf. 249c-d). If reason is not fully successful, however, and the pale horse comes to rule, this is nevertheless not that bad, because this will still lead to a life of honour. The soul will occasionally fall prey to the evils of the dark horse. In moments of lack of better judgement, as when drunk, Socrates says, it might fall prey to negligence, but only infrequently, we read, apparently because such behaviour is not approved by the whole (256c).

The absence of a third alternative here is telling. There is supposedly no such thing as a unifying rule of the dark horse. The situation may as such also be understood along the lines that Plato spells out in the *Republic* (cf. 571aff). In the life of a multiform soul, a life primarily dominated by the souls' appetitive inclinations, there is no self-control, no order and thus no proper unity.

The characterization of the dark horse as being a friend of hubris (ὕβρις, 253e3, cf. 254e6) also seems to confirm this idea, because as hubris is defined in Socrates' first speech, this is a matter of lost control: "When appetite (ἐπιθυμία) irrationally drags us toward pleasures and rules within us, this rule is called hubris (ὕβρις)" (238a1-2).[391] In view of the fact that this kind of rule is defined in terms of being dragged, this indicates that we are not dealing with a rule in any stronger sense. Or it is in any case not such a type of rule that would be able to control the soul and transform it into a well-balanced and integrated whole. On the contrary, hubris is said to be the very opposite of self-control (237e3).

In his first speech, Socrates does also say a little bit more about hubris that further indicates that what we are dealing with in the *Phaedrus* is in line with the account of appetite in the *Republic*. This also tells us something more about how we may understand the type of motivation that the "rule" of the dark horse gives rise to.

Hubris, Socrates explains, has as many names (πολυώνυμος) as it has limbs (πολυμελής), and it has as many limbs as it has parts (πολυμερής, 238a3). Echoing Socrates' description of the appetitive part of the soul in the *Republic* (588c), then, where he calls it multiform (ποικίλος), Socrates, in the *Phaedrus*, also seems to understand appetite, the dark horse and its hubris in terms of multiformity.

[391] Modified translation.

In the (only) context in the *Phaedrus* where Socrates discusses hubris, i.e. in his first speech, we are also offered three examples along these lines. The first example has to do with the irrational appetite for food. This is called gluttony (γαστριμαργία). The second example has to do with strong drinks or boozing (μέθη). Although Socrates does not spell this out, the name of the one involved in the irrational appetite for strong drinks, he explains, is clear (238a). The third example has to do with the irrational appetite for the pleasure of (bodily) beauty, a type of hubris Socrates there calls *love* (238b-c).[392]

As these examples indicate, hubris is a matter of excess and, as the definition of hubris also makes clear, the type of excess at stake has to do with pleasure (ἡδονή). In lack of rational control, our appetites go wild, and the general name of the psychological condition of someone with such inclinations is hubris.

Now, although all three examples of hubris seem to allude to some kind of body-oriented need (i.e. eating, drinking and procreating), this cannot be the whole story, because all examples indicate that hubris (i.e. the rule of appetite) gives rise to motivations far beyond the necessities of survival and procreation. Gluttony, as we also learned from the *Timaeus* (in section 1.3.2.6), can actually have the very opposite effect, and excessive eating is, in any case, far beyond what the body needs. Boozing has of course nothing at all to do with survival, despite the fact that it is a matter of drinking. And love, as Socrates' first speech has it, is certainly not a matter of procreation. The fact that Socrates indicates that there are *many* more types of hubris also shows that he most likely does not think that appetite can be exhaustively defined in terms of a desire for some well-defined class of things. Appetite, it seems, needs a more inclusive definition.

One suggestion, a suggestion that would also be compatible with the account of the *Republic*, is to try to understand appetite in terms of appearance; and – in line with the general theme of the *Phaedrus* – as the influence of *rumour* or *hear-say*.

Without rational control our appetites go wild. The general name of such a condition is hubris. Instead of having motivations pertaining to the well-being of the whole, we are dealing with a source of motivation oriented towards anything that *appears* to be pleasurable. For gluttons, drunkards and lovers, for example, excessive amounts of food, booze and bodily beauty seem to be objects that will give rise to pleasure if consumed. But reason is not involved in forming these motivations and the true value of the objects sought after has not been assessed. Put differently, if the charioteer rules, the object towards which the whole soul strives is determined by that part of the soul that has seen the truth. This offers a set of criteria in accordance with

[392] In Socrates' second speech, as is well known, this *left-hand* type of love, as he later calls it (266a, cf. 256a), is contrasted to a *right-hand* type of love, a type of love that, in contrast to the left-hand type, is divine.

which the apparently attractive object can be evaluated. If appetite rules, however, the soul is instead at the mercy of what merely appears to be the case.

In accordance with the general theme of the *Phaedrus*, this idea of appearance can also be understood in terms of *rumour* and *hear-say*. Just as an apparently attractive object can give rise to an unfounded motivation to pursue that object so can hear-say also give rise to unfounded sentiments and convictions regarding what one should consider valuable or worthwhile. In both cases it is a matter of accepting the appearance of what one is faced with – what one sees or hears – without submitting this to rational evaluation. Hear-say, as we have seen, can be said to be a type of discourse that, in the wrong hands, is able to make its subjects inflated with the idea that they are wise, when they are in fact ignorant. If one does not have the proper tool (reason) to assess the truth about what one hears (or sees), one will be left at the mercy of appearance. And one will thus be deeply liable to be affected by anything that sounds attractive or reasonable.

In the *Republic,* as we have seen (in section 2.4.3), these types of mechanisms are spelled out in terms of what is called *Diomedean necessity* ("ἡ Διομηδεία […] ἀνάγκη", 493d6). In the *Phaedrus* it is spelled out in terms of a story about politics and an ass. To make a long story short it can be paraphrased in the following way:

If we would assume, Socrates ask Phaedrus, that none of us would know what a horse is, I knowing that you just have some hear-say kind of notion about it, thinking that it is one of the tame animals which has the longest ears, do you not think, that if I made a praising speech of the ass, calling it a horse, that you would come to appreciate its qualities as a horse. This would certainly be ridiculous, Phaedrus answers. In politics, Socrates goes on to ask, would it not be equally ridiculous? If a rhetorician that does not know anything about what is good or bad, would try to persuade a city about what is good by means of making a praising speech about what is not, calling it good, would not the results be devastating? Not very good at least, Phaedrus answers (cf. 260b-d).

Now, in these situations there are a lot of discourse but no truth and no knowledge. Since nobody knows the truth, nobody can accurately evaluate that is going on. There is a lot of talk, but no reason. Insofar as the arguments are effective, and insofar as these situations might come to pass, Phaedrus would buy himself an ass, thinking that it is a horse, and the city would start to do evil deeds, thinking that they are good.

The motivations involved here, I am suggesting, would also qualify as appetitive. Phaedrus and the city would have motivations to do this or that, but these motivations would have no rational foundation. They would have been set by the influence of rumour. Labelling something an *appetite* could, accordingly, also be said to be a way of describing an inclination towards an object established without the influence of reason. Appetite can be under-

stood to be a source of motivation originating in what merely appears to be the case. And in view of the story of the ass, this can be a matter of discursive appearance and rumour just as it can be a matter of perceptual or sensory appearance.

Against the background of this understanding of appetite and its connection to the influence of appearance and rumour, we can now return to Phaedrus and take another look at his character.

Firstly, the characterization of the dark horse as a friend false pretension (ἀλαζονεία, 253e3) clearly connects Phaedrus with the black horse. Phaedrus, as we have seen (in sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.7), is someone who has a tendency to think that he will appear to be wise by echoing what he has heard. Without the proper ability to evaluate the discourses he encounters, he is just like those in danger of thinking that they know a lot (πολυγνώμων, 275a7-8) by having heard a lot (πολυήκους, 275a7).[393]

Secondly, we can from this point of view also further understand Phaedrus' relationship to discourse. We can understand this in terms of hubris and appetite. Appetite, as we have seen, is a matter of pleasure, and pleasure is the primary motivation for why Phaedrus is such a lover of discourse. Phaedrus' philology is clearly motivated by pleasure.[394] The object, towards which Phaedrus, in virtue of taking pleasure in discourse, is oriented can thus be said to be an object set under the influence of the appetite part of his soul. Phaedrus is not in it to rationally evaluate the discourses he consumes. He is in it for the pleasure. Instead of submitting what he hears to the scrutiny of reason, he accepts everything that appears to sound appealing. Just as the lover (in Socrates' first speech) has an appetite for beautiful bodies, so does Phaedrus have an appetite for discourse.

3.4.9. Multiformity and Conceit

Let us now return to the bigger picture. Insofar as it makes sense to read Socrates' speeches as parts of the same story, i.e. as parts of the story of psychology and rhetoric articulated in the second part of the dialogue, it is also reasonable to understand these speeches in the light of the distinction between the simple and the multiform soul. Against the background of Socrates' explicit claim that his speeches were designed to seduce and deceive, the connection between the multiform soul and the deceptive nature of the discourses can thus also be further outlined.

As we have reasons to suppose, this connection goes back to the general principle of right-speech-to-right soul (summarized at 277c). This principle is developed within a context where Socrates is trying to explain to Phaedrus

[393] I here render the adjectives πολυγνώμων and πολυήκους quite freely, an alternative would have been *much-knowledgeable* and *well-read*.
[394] Nightingale (1995, 147) endorses a similar view.

what is required of a good rhetorician (cf. sections 3.4.1-3.4.6). In order to persuade, Socrates explains, a good rhetorician must not only have proper knowledge, in general, and proper knowledge of rhetorical techniques, in particular; a good rhetorician must also – *just like a doctor* (270b) – know with whom he is dealing. Just as the doctor must investigate the body of his patient and accordingly adapt his drugs, the rhetorician must investigate whether the soul of his addressee is multiform (πολυειδής) or one-and-the-same ("ἓν καὶ ὅμοιον") and adapt his speech to the result of this investigation (271a).

If the soul is simple, and thus ruled by reason, it may be addressed in virtue of being a rational agent with rational motivations established by its rational soul-part. If, however, the soul is multiform, it cannot be addressed as such. The multiform soul is a diversified soul. It is not properly unified, and there are even reasons to doubt if such a soul can be said to be an autonomous agent at all. Its motivations and the objects towards which it may be said to be inclined are not mediated by reason, but are instead the effects of the influence of appearance and rumour. In contrast to being a simple soul and a rationally governed agent, being multiform involves suffering from that type of psychological condition that arises in the soul when there is no proper order and when the soul is not well-balanced. Indeed, from Plato's point of view, this condition of the soul is an unhealthy condition.

The fact that Plato makes Socrates liken the rhetorician to a doctor also enhances this point. And although this image may have been used in order to emphasize the importance of knowledge and art, is seems likely that it is also chosen to make a further point. If the rhetorician is supposed to be like a doctor, and the doctor is supposed to heal, there should be something to cure.[395]

[395] Socrates does not here really flesh out why he thinks that rhetoric is like healing. He certainly elaborates the comparison, explaining that the good rhetorician must, just like a doctor, analyse (διαιρέω) his patient, and that the good rhetorician must proceed from art (τέχνη) and not merely from routine (τριβή) and experience (ἐμπειρία), yet he never really states the reason for these comparisons (cf. 270b). Cf. the *Gorgias*, where Polus describes Gorgias' rhetorical art as being the result of ἐμπειρία (448c). Hackforth's take on this issue is that Socrates does the comparison so as to explain that the rhetorician, just like the doctor, must know the general nature of his field before he proceeds to particular cases. According to Hackforth (1952, 149f), this is also the reason for why this passage also explicates the rhetoric of Pericles as being in debt to Anaxagoras. Pericles, described as the most perfect orator of all, owes the perfection of his natural abilities to Anaxagoras, because Anaxagoras taught him about the nature of reason (νοῦς). In this way Pericles' art was perfected, we read, because it thus got the conversation (ἀδολεσχία) and the lofty speculations (μετεωρολογία) that all great arts need. I believe that this might be a necessary kind of explanation. It is, however, not sufficient, because not even this explanation accounts for why he chose the doctor as the image. If it was just a matter of arguing for theoretical or speculative primacy, he could either have rested with Anaxagoras or taken a mathematician as the example. Ferrari (1987, 77ff) notes the problem but does not elaborate. He just takes the comparison as it stands, developing it somewhat in claiming that the rhetorician, just like the doctor, knows the effects of his drugs, that is, the rhetorician knows what emotions his speech will cause in the audience.

As Plato elaborates this point in the *Sophist*, the psychic equivalent of somatic disease is falsehood, self-deception and the illusion of wisdom (*Soph,* 227d-228e and 230d).[396] With regard to the simile of the doctor, and in the light of these ideas from the Sophist, we can also suspect that something similar is at stake in the *Phaedrus*.

Since Socrates elaborates this matter in terms of the critique of writing, this suspicion may also be possible to confirm. The dubious poison Socrates labels *written*, e.g. the spoken echo of a rumour, may not only make people hard to be around, it may also invoke a dangerous illusion. Due to what they have read in books, or stumbled upon via hearsay, people will start to think that they are wiser than they really are (cf. 274c-275b).

These people are presumably not as unspecified as such a phrasing may seem to indicate, however; for in terms of the distinction between the simple and the multiform soul, they seem to be possible to classify. Those liable to smugness and conceit are presumably of the latter kind. They have no active principle by means of which to scrutinize and evaluate what they hear, or at least this principle does not have any privileged position. In a multiform soul, the dominating motivations are set unmediated by reason. These motivations are instead established by means of the impact of appearance and hear-say, and a soul disposed in this way, will also soon be inhabited by a number of voices. Just as in Phaedrus' case, anyone endowed with a multiform soul will eventually become quite full. In line with Socrates' critique of the danger of *written* discourse we can also assume that the more such a soul hears, the more he will become someone that has heard a lot (πολυήκους, 275a7), and the more he has heard, the more he will think that he knows. By having heard a lot, and being able to repeat it, he will eventually also think that he knows a lot (πολυγνώμων, 275a7-8). And it is presumably this kind of soul that the rhetorician, as a doctor, is supposed to address with a multiform type of discourse.

Now, in the case of bodies, it might perhaps be reasonable to attack the disease head on, as it were. It might even be reasonable to cut the body open and take the problem away. As it comes to the soul, however, this approach might not be as viable, because although the negative effects of conceited knowledge might perhaps make itself evident at the end, its status as a disease will not be clear to the one who suffers from it.

A person with a well-read and multiform soul, who, due to his unfortunate encounter with many non-dialectical discourses, thinks that he knows a

[396] From the *Sophist* we learn that it is ignorance which is the basic deformity of the soul, but the greatest kind ignorance is however not identified merely with the lack of knowledge, as one might perhaps presume. The greatest kind of ignorance is rather qualified as conceited knowledge. It is a matter of thinking that one knows one thing, although one actually does not (229c). This kind of ignorance is also called stupidity, and against this kind of ignorance, mere instruction and teaching is feeble. Another art is required, we read. And however reluctant the interlocutors are to admit it, they finally call it a noble kind of sophistry (231b).

lot, will evidently not believe that he is living in an illusion. No, he will rather cherish his self-conceited knowledge and argue for its benefits. (He will buy the ass, and do bad deeds thinking that they are good.) Yet, insofar as the doctor-rhetorician is able to identify his condition and is still eager to address him, he will also realize that he cannot approach this patient directly. Assuming that the rhetorician we are here dealing with is an ideal rhetorician, and thus a rhetorician whose rhetoric is based on knowledge and truth, he will also realize that his addressee would not even see the truth if it stood right in front of him. He cannot just tell his patient that he is living in an illusion and spell out the truth that the patient apparently lacks, because in the place of truth the well-read and multiform soul will have something that he has read in a book.

As it seems, there are basically two reasons for why the doctor-rhetorician cannot address the multiform soul directly. Firstly, the multiform soul is not ruled by that part of him that is able to recognize truth (i.e. the charioteer) and thus, even if the doctor-rhetorician would be telling the truth, his patient or addressee is not motivated or ruled by that part of his soul that would be able to recognize this. Secondly, the multiform soul is also prone to be smug. In lieu of a lack of knowledge and truth he will have a lot of rumours and unfounded opinions. And thus, if the doctor-rhetorician would try to tell him the truth directly, he would not believe it. As in the example of the ass, the multiform soul will believe that it is the ass that is the horse, and if someone were to approach him saying that it is the horse that is the horse, he would have no reasons to believe him. He would already have his mind set, and in order to change his mind, he would need to be persuaded. The doctor-rhetorician cannot just spell out the truth. He must use other means. He cannot just pour the waters of truth straight into the ears of his addressees, because he must assume that there is an illusion in the way. The problem is not merely the absence of knowledge, but, more importantly, the presence of its pretence. Søren Kierkegaard once articulated the problem quite effectively.

> Assuming then that a person is the victim of illusion, and that in order to communicate the truth to him the first task, rightly understood, is to remove the illusion – if I do not begin by deceiving him, I must begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposed that the receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed. But here such is not the case; an illusion stands in the way. […] But what does it mean, 'to deceive'? It means that one does not begin directly with the matter one wants to communicate, but begin by accepting the other man's illusion as good money.[397]

A person whose illusion is that he thinks that he knows what he does not know will not think that he is suffering from an illusion. And he cannot just

[397] Kierkegaard (1962, 40).

be told the truth. If one wants to make this person believe it (the truth), one cannot just say it. One must begin in another way.

One approach familiar from the poetical arts spelled out in book ten of the *Republic* is to use images and myths. As we saw in the last chapter (in sections 2.4.1-2.4.3), poets and other imitators exploit the conceitedness of their addressees. They address their audience with images that are effective in virtue of their familiarity. As we have seen (in sections 2.4.1-2.4.3), the poet does not resort to truth when he makes his images, but he makes his images so that they will appeal to what his addressees think is the case. In making his poems he has neither the use of truth nor of right opinion. Only what his addressees think is the case matters. And this, Plato writes, is also why his images are as effective as they are dangerous. They water the illusion. (Cf. *Rep.,* 602b and 605a.)

As it comes to the doctor-rhetorician in the *Phaedrus*, a similar type of mechanism is in play. Knowing that his patient is a multiform soul and thus a soul prone to conceit and smugness, the doctor-rhetorician will supposedly also realize that he cannot be direct. Instead will realize that a better approach is to begin with the familiar, that is, with what the patient thinks is true, and pursue from there. In this way, one can imagine, the rhetorical strategy might also be effective. The doctor-rhetorician starts by trying to make his addressee believe that he is accepting his point of view (the illusion) as good money. The doctor-rhetorician does not only use images and myths, he also starts by articulating a point of view that his addressee finds plausible and familiar. Accordingly, the soul-doctor also makes it appear as if he has adapted the basic assumptions of his addressee. He stages an agreement. But this, of course, is an illusion. Yet, insofar as the doctor-rhetorician is thus granted the benefit of the doubt, his addressee is supposedly more likely to listen. The doctor-rhetorician may pursue *ad hominem.* The images may be elaborated. And the initial point of view may be gradually dislocated. Socrates explains how a deceptive discourse should be enacted: "And if you make a transition by small steps from anything to its opposite you will be more likely to escape detection than if you proceed by leaps and bounds" (262a).

As we soon shall see (in section 3.5), the *Phaedrus* does also contain a few telling examples of this kind of deception. Appealing to the familiar is, however, not only the strategy behind image- and mythmaking, but it can also be staged by many other means. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates arsenal is also quite complex. Before I proceed to give a few examples of this, however, allow me first to summarize what has been said so far.

3.4.10. Summary: A Multiform Game

As I hope to have shown, we have compelling reason to think that the distinction between a serious and a playful type of discourse is articulated, on Socrates' part, to qualify the art and value of the speeches that he and Phaedrus have voiced. Socrates is quite clear about the fact that he does not consider any of the speeches of the dialogue to be serious (cf. section 3.3.5). At the end of the day, only dialectic is serious. Only dialectic, set in a situation offering the opportunity for questioning, can teach. And only a discourse that is designed to teach can be considered to be serious. The speeches of the dialogue are, instead, to be considered to be games. As games, Socrates explains, they were designed to seduce and persuade. In virtue of being persuasive games, however, the speeches are also submitted to a further analysis. A rhetorical speech designed to persuade cannot be haphazardly articulated. If it is to be designed with art, it does not only need to secure its persuasive power by knowledge of the matter, it also needs to ensure its efficiency by means of being properly tailored to fit the soul of its addressee. A simple soul should be addressed with a simple speech, while a multiform soul should be addressed with a multiform speech. And given that Phaedrus shows the signs of having a multiform soul, we also have reasons to believe that Socrates' speeches were designed with Phaedrus' soul in mind. As we have seen, just like the soul likened to the Typhon, Phaedrus is characterized as having a soul that does not exhibit any signs of being properly unified. Phaedrus echoes what he hears and has neither the interest nor the capability to question and evaluate what he is told. Phaedrus is not oriented towards truth but towards the pleasure of discourse. He has an appetite for discourse. In terms of the mythological psychology Socrates expresses in his hymn to love, we can accordingly also say that Phaedrus is not ruled by his charioteer. And this lack of proper rule comes to express itself as multiformity and polyvocality. Phaedrus repeats what he is told, and he does not care about the origin of these rumours (cf. section 3.4.7).

If this is on target, then, it is also reasonable to think that Socrates' speeches were designed with such a type of soul in mind. They were multiform games. They were designed to seduce, and they were designed to seduce a soul primarily led by appetite. Just like Lysias' speech, Socrates' speeches also had a multi-headed addressee. Just like Lysias' speech, and Socrates' first speech, qualified as being multiform, Socrates' second speech, the Palinode, is also of the multiform type. Alone in the forest, Socrates speaks to Phaedrus. But Phaedrus is not a simple soul, and Socrates cannot address him as such. Socrates might be trying to tell the truth, but insofar as Socrates knows that Phaedrus will not be able to appreciate the soundness of reason, nor the truth, even if it stood right before him, Socrates also realises that other means are required.

3.5. The Deception of the Multiform Soul

So far we have primarily looked at what is going on in the *Phaedrus* based on what Socrates' has to say about this in the second part of the dialogue. In the light of Socrates' analysis of Lysias' and his own speeches we have seen that it is possible to understand and classify these speeches in accordance with the distinctions and arguments offered in the second part. Insofar as the reading I have tried to offer is sound, however, there should be plenty of more concrete examples. If Socrates really is trying to persuade Phaedrus, and if he has also designed his speeches to address a multiform type of soul, there should be telling examples by means of which we can see how Socrates resorts to what could be considered to be ways of persuasion suitable to a multiform soul. Fortunately, there are plenty. Socrates' deceptive strategies also involve quite a few unorthodox moves, at least from a dialectical and serious point of view. Not only does he use images and myths, lie, conceal his honest intentions, and pretend to be something that he is not, he also stages a somewhat perplexing character phasing. In the following sections (3.5.1-3.5.2) I shall highlight a few examples that I find telling.

3.5.1. An Intellectual Mirror

Socrates' speeches are full of images and mythological elements. In line with what Socrates has to say about this in the *Republic*, as we saw in the last chapter, this can also be understood in terms of how such means are efficient persuasive tools in virtue of the familiarity they imitate and exploit. The *Phaedrus* does not spell out any detailed theoretical account of images and myths.[398] It does not, contrary to the *Republic*, offer a theory of how poetical imitation appeals to what is familiar and how an external discourse may be internalized by the soul of its addressees (cf. sections 2.4.1-2.4.3). What is spelled out in the *Phaedrus*, however, is a story that nevertheless may seem to be possible to describe with similar principles in play. Besides using images and myths, Socrates may also be said to take Phaedrus' position as good money in another way.

One telling passage in which this becomes apparent we find in the interplay between Lysias' speech, recited by Phaedrus, and Socrates' first. Here, as we have seen (in section 3.4.7), Socrates stages a kind of intellectual teasing (ἐρεσχηλέω, 236b6) in order to get Phaedrus to speak his mind. The teasing being effective, Phaedrus also says that he thinks that the special merit of discourse lies in its repetitious nature and that the origin of a discourse is of no greater importance (235d-e and 236a-b). Socrates, clearly not

[398] Although the *Phaedrus* does not offer any detailed theoretical account of poetry and image-making, as the *Republic* does, one can nevertheless argue that we do get something around 245a in terms of madness and inspiration. For a discussion, see Nussbaum (1986).

satisfied with this answer, does, however push forward. Recoiling from his initial claim to make a speech that is better than Lysias', Socrates also gets Phaedrus to articulate a more substantial point of view.

> I concede your point [that one cannot be absolutely original when making such a speech and that some assumptions must be allowed], for I think what you say is reasonable, so I will make this concession: I will allow you to begin with the premise that the lover is more distraught (μᾶλλον νοσεῖν) than the non-lover; and if you speak on the remaining points more copiously and better than Lysias, without saying the same things, your statue of beaten metal shall stand at Olympia beside the offering of the Cypselids. (236a7-b4)

To spell out such a point of view, however concise, was not Phaedrus' intention at the outset. Yet, now, in the company of Socrates, he is forced to say more that he once intended; and in so doing, although of course still just repeating Lysias' point of view, he also expresses the basic premises upon which Socrates' first speech will be based, namely that the lover is more distraught that the non-lover (236b1).

With the basic concession Phaedrus accordingly grants Socrates we also have a clear indication that Socrates is trying to initiate an argument based on Phaedrus' (borrowed) point of view. And although it would perhaps be wrong to claim that Socrates does not elaborate the premise that he has been granted, it is nevertheless possible to see how Socrates' argument may be traced back to the intellectual point of departure that Phaedrus has stolen from Lysias. As Socrates (in his first speech) develops his argument for the praise of the non-lover, he eventually also ends up with a definition of love that runs like this:

> So I say that the desire (ἐπιθυμία) which overcomes the rational opinion (λόγου δόξης) that strives toward the right, and which is led away toward the enjoyment of beauty and again is strongly forced by the desires that are kindred to itself toward bodily beauty, when it gains the victory, takes its name from that very force, and is called love (ἔρως). (238b7-c4)

This definition is clearly more elaborated than Phaedrus' short concession. Yet, insofar as the only contribution to the argument from which this definition draws the conclusions, really does conform to the general outlook of Lysias' speech, it does not really seem to alter the situation.[399] Indeed, it was Phaedrus who voiced it, and this contribution, the consequences of which also make up most of Socrates' first speech, is of course that "to anyone that is of unsound mind (νοσέω) everything is pleasant which does not oppose

[399] That Lysias' speech should neither be judged in terms of its originality, is also persuasively argued by Nightingale (1995, 139f). Lysias' speech is rather an articulation of the common opinion about the subject matter. This is presumably also what Socrates means at 236a when he claims that Lysias' speech should be praised for its arrangement (διάθεσις) and not for its invention (εὕρεσις).

him" (238e4-5). It is this little addition to the premise that the lover is sick (νοσέω) that makes the difference (cf. 236a and 238e); yet this second premise is certainly not original. Even though Socrates does claim that his speech will be quite different from Lysias', the difference does really not lie in the content but, if at all, in the form (cf. 235d and 232c-d).[400] And nevertheless, it is really not on Socrates' definition that his first speech is based but rather on the two shorter premises. Indeed, it is from these premises that Socrates draws all the conclusions that make up the account arguing that a lover will make his beloved the most unpleasant of favours (cf. 239a-240e).

Socrates' actual contributions to the discourse come much later, at 244a-b, where he, in his second speech, takes his first speech back and suggests that an unsound mind is perhaps not always as bad as they have assumed; and then supposedly only after he has already sufficiently prepared Phaedrus. For, however grand and pious the staging of the second speech may be, Socrates' attempts to seduce Phaedrus are not that hard to see. He adapts to Phaedrus' Lysian point of view, and proceeds more or less *ad hominem*: The premises are already there, the lover is sick (231d2 and 236b1, cf. 228b6) – on this point Phaedrus has spoken himself – and therefore the lover is not of sound mind (σωφρονέω, 231d2). Yet, when the love ceases, Socrates says, and the lover is released from his sickness, his disease – love – is replaced by reason (νοῦς) and soundness of mind (σωφροσύνη, 241a3). But the opposite of reason and soundness of mind is madness (μανία), Socrates claims; and in a subtle, yet for the argument quite a decisive way, Socrates has thus changed the subject matter from being *sick* or *disturbed* (νοσέω) to *madness* (μανία, 241a4).[401] Although the break between Socrates' first and second speech is quite explicit, the continuity is also quite clear.

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[400] Cf. 232c-d where this point of view is expressed in Lysias' speech.

[401] In Socrates' second speech, as is famously known, love is located as a quite particular type of madness within a broader field of mad inspirations. The different types of mad inspirations with which Socrates levels love are (1) the gift of prophecy by oracles like those at Dodona or in Delphi, (2) the rites and purifications conducted in private, and (3) the poetical inspiration from the Muses (see 244a-245c). The characteristic that they all share is that they are a kind of release from an ordinary, sane conduct of life (cf. 245a). Although they all somehow bring divinity to the mortal kind, love has a quite distinct role. Its power to release the lover from the human conditions will, at least accordingly to Nussbaum (1986, 217), lead to a mysterious transformation: "The erotic appetite", she writes, "is now not a blind urge for the 'replenishment' of intercourse […] it is responsive to beauty and serves as a guide as to where true beauty will be found […] *erôs* sets its sight very high, searching for a sensual experience that will lead to a mysterious transformation of the entire soul, including the intellect. [The] appetite [of love] is curbed not by contemplative intellect, but by the demands of the passion that is has awakened". In the *Phaedrus* we are faced with a situation in which Plato does not seem to favour the straight part of the distinction between soundness of mind and madness. Whether or not Nussbaum is correct in her chronology, as has been debated, she is at least definitely right in identifying the fact that Plato is here articulating a defence of a kind of intelligence that he elsewhere (or earlier, as she has it) is famous for dismissing. As Nussbaum points out, this becomes quite evident in the hierarchy of the souls, where the philosophical soul is merged with the soul of the lover of beauty and with some kind of musical or delicate (μουσικός) soul that has a loving nature (248d). For a discussion of this in terms of what

3.5.2. The Mirror, the Kolax and the Fox

Besides the fact that Socrates' discourse may be said to take its point of departure from Phaedrus' (alleged) intellectual point of view, there is also another peculiar similarity between Socrates and Phaedrus. While Socrates goes on to articulate his speeches he is also doing something more. He imitates Phaedrus' behaviour. Not only does Socrates argue, more or less *ad hominem*, from the premises that Phaedrus' has granted him, he also makes it look as if they were both sitting in the same boat. As has been pointed out by both Griswold and Nightingale, Socrates is trying to make it appear as if he not only shares the basic intellectual point of view with Phaedrus, but that they also share character.

There are also a number of passages that point in this direction. Most telling perhaps is Socrates' description of himself as a *pitcher of water* (235c-d). "As Griswold has observed", Nightingale argues, "Socrates is engaging in a sort of ironic mimicry in the passage, 'pretend[ing] that he is very much like Phaedrus into whom Lysias' speech has been poured'".[402] Just as Phaedrus might be said to have been filled through the ears by the speech of Lysias, so does also Socrates claim that he, like a pitcher of water, has been filled through the ears by an alien discourse (235c-d). Indeed this type of behaviour is also reinforced by Socrates' iterated claim that his first speech was not his own. It did not have its origin in Socrates, Socrates argues, but in Phaedrus (244a, 238d and 242e).

Another passage that also indicates that Socrates is really trying to deceive his friend by means of such a phasing is found in Socrates' introduction to his first speech. Here he makes a quite peculiar gesture, a gesture that may be said to be an imitation of Phaedrus' behaviour at the outset of the dialogue (228d-e). Socrates veils his face (237a). And just as Phaedrus once tried to hide the origin of the speech that he was going to deliver (228d-e), so does Socrates hide the source of his voice.

> I'm going to keep my head veiled while I talk so that I may get through my discourse as quickly as possible and so that I may not, in looking at you, become totally perplexed by embarrassment.[403] (237a4-5)

Now, this is a strange kind of behaviour. Although it may seem plausible to think that this act is a part of Socrates' attempt to make Phaedrus feel that they are sitting in the same boat, and thus strengthen the force of his argument *ad hominem* by means of character phasing, this is only a guess. Insofar are there are more indications that something like this is going on, how-

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Vernant and Detienne (1974) calls μῆτις, see Nussbaum (1986, 310). This subject matter deserves its own treatment, and I will therefore not pursue it here. See also Kofman (1983).

[402] Nightingale (1995, 137). She here quotes Griswold (1986, 53).

[403] Modified translation.

ever, we can strengthen our guess. If we take a closer look at some of the passages wherein this phasing actually happens, their deceptive characteristics are also reinforced.

One passage that certainly makes this plausible, is found in the middle of Socrates' first speech (at 240b) and in terms of the image of the *kolax* or flatterer; an image here invoked so as to capture the entangling ways of the lover.[404] This is how Socrates describes such a character:

> Now there are also other evils but some divinity has mingled with most of them some temporary pleasure; so, for instance, a flatterer (κόλαξ) is a horrid creature and does great harm, yet nature has combined with him a kind of pleasure that is not without charm, and one might find fault with a courtesan as an injurious thing, and there are many other such creatures and practices which are yet for the time being very pleasant. (240a9-b5)

The *kolax* is someone that looks good, but is bad. He is someone who knows how to make himself look appetizing, when he in fact is disgusting. Just like the angler fish, the *kolax* fools his victims by making them believe that he offers something pleasant. The *kolax* knows that his intentions are devious. Yet, in order to get what he wants, he also knows that he will need to hide this.

In terms of the lover, it is certainly also such a picture that Socrates draws. Not only does the lover try to make his beloved unmarried, childless and homeless, Socrates explains (cf. 240a, 239b), but he will also try to dissociate him from advantageous intercourse (συνουσία) with others. The lover will keep the beloved away from philosophers especially, we read, so that he can keep the boy as week and, as this lover likes it, as subordinate as possible (cf. 238e-239a). The lover will, however, of course try to hide these distasteful strokes of character. When in love, he will try to appear to be as pleasurable as possible. He will make many promises, Socrates explains (240e). He will eulogize the deeds with which he will bless his beloved, and he will thus make himself appear to be quite charming ("οὐκ ἄμουσον", 240b2-3).

As Socrates goes on, this charade has a limited time-span. When the love of this lover has ceased, and his madness is replaced by reason, his true character shines forth. His charming disguise will crack, and he will no longer try to look good (cf. 241a-b).

Now, the subtle, yet evidently self-reflective stance of these passages becomes clear as soon as we take a look at how Socrates introduces his first speech at the outset (237b). It is then we will also realize that Socrates never actually holds the views that he there defends. Socrates' description of the lover as a *kolax* was never meant to be the final word, but it was articulated to deceive. Consequently, that is, insofar as all deceptions must be deemed

[404] Cf. *Gorg.*, 466a, *Rep.,* 575e, 579a and 579e or *Soph.*, 222e.

to be vicious, Socrates' first speech was really itself the speech of a *kolax*. For if the lover is just as bad as Socrates describes him to be, Socrates is here also describing himself, or at least himself as he is trying to appear.

> Now there was once upon a time a boy or rather a stripling, of great beauty: and he had many lovers. And among these was one that was particularly cunning (αἰμύλος), who was no less in love, but had made him believe that he was not in love; and once in wooing him, he tried to persuade him of this very thing, that favours ought to be granted rather to the non-lover than to the lover; and his words were as follows.[405] (237b2-6)

Socrates, who here claims to be in love, must accordingly hide his feelings in order to make himself look pleasant. He must make himself appear to be a non-lover, when he in fact is a lover.[406] Just like the *kolax*, Socrates makes himself appear to be as delightful as the non-lover he describes, that is, in order to hide the fact that he, as he says, really is just as in love with Phaedrus as any other of Phaedrus' suitors (237b).

The skill of being able to make yourself appear to be something that you are not is, however, not only illustrated in terms of the devious ways of the *kolax*. In this passage Socrates also uses the image of the fox. Or to be more precise, when Socrates here declares his love for Phaedrus and describes the situation they are in, he explicitly calls himself cunning or *foxy* (αἰμύλος, 237b4).[407] This is presumably no accident.

The adjective translated as *foxy* (αἰμύλος) can mean something like cunning, wily or sly, but it is also the distinguishing feature of the fox (ἀλώπηξ). In the Greek context (as in ours), the fox represent many things, but two things are here of particular importance. The fox represents the forces of cunning in general, and in particular it represents the ability to, what Vernant and Detienne call, *reverse* itself.[408] However perplexing this choice of word

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[405] My italics. What Socrates is here referring to is his own first speech.

[406] That Socrates might just as well pretend to be in love, however, does not make the hoax less difficult to understand.

[407] Cf. *Laws*, book 7, 823e-824a, where the laws of hunting are elaborated. Here we are taught that only straight hunting is allowed, that is "the hunting of quadrupeds with horses and dogs and the hunter's own limbs, when men hunt in person, and subdue all the creatures by means of their own running, striking and shooting", neither nets, traps, poisonous liquids nor anything alike is to be allowed. And thus we learn that the cunning (αἰμύλος) love (ἔρως) of hunting the winged (πτηνός) ought never to enter the young ones, that being a quite ungentlemanlike (οὐ σφόδρα ἐλευθέριος) pursuit. Even if this is less than explicit, one might of course wonder if Plato is here alluding to his own description of the course of love in the *Phaedrus*.

[408] Vernant and Detienne (1978, 34, cf. 34ff). See also *Rep.,* 365c where Plato alludes to the cunning ways of the fox in terms of Archilochus. Adam (1902) notes that "Archilochus seems to have canonized the fox as the embodiment of cunning in Greek literature: fragments are preserved of at least two fables of his in which the fox appears (86-88 and 89 ed. Bergk). In the second (89. 5, 6) occur the lines τῷ δ' (sc. πιθήκῳ) ἆρ' ἀλώπηξ κερδαλέη συνήντετο / πυκνὸν ἔχουσα νόον. The κερδαλέαν καὶ ποικίλην of Plato corresponds in meaning to κερδαλέη – πυκνὸν ἔχουσα νόον, and may have ended one of the iambics in this or another

might seem, the behaviour that it is supposed to capture is nevertheless quite clear. The fox can reverse itself insofar as it can make itself appear to be the opposite of what it is. And when hunting, it may make itself look dead, when it really is alive. By means of deviously hiding its sharp teeth it makes itself appear to be totally defenceless. And when it sees the beauty of a delicious flock of birds, for example, it stretches out on the ground, totally still and silent. It closes its eyes. Its heartbeat slows down. It looks dead and defenceless. And then, all of a sudden, when its prey is close enough, it strikes.[409]

Although Socrates is perhaps not as lethal as the fox, he is certainly as cunning. Not only does he make Phaedrus believe that he, due to lack of capability, is reluctant to speak, so as to make himself look weak and defenceless, Socrates also does this by using exactly the same means as Phaedrus did when he once lured Socrates outside the city walls (cf. 230d). Just as when Phaedrus shook Lysias' speech in front of Socrates, Socrates now dangles another speech in front of Phaedrus; an even better one than Lysias', he says. Yet, as soon as Phaedrus is ready to hear it, Socrates again recoils, expressing his worry about how he – merely by improvising (αὐτοσχεδιάζω) – could ever compete with the premeditated speech of Lysias.

> But, my dear Phaedrus I shall be ridiculous (γελοῖος ἔσομαι), compared to the excellent author if I, a mere amateur, improvise (αὐτοσχεδιάζων) on the same subject (περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν).[410] (236d4-5)

Phaedrus, who perhaps is not as cunning as Socrates, is, however, not without means himself. In recalling exactly what Socrates said to him when he was himself reluctant to speak (228a-b), Phaedrus now begins to persuade Socrates (236c). In addition to the rehearsal of what apparently was efficient before, Phaedrus also attacks Socrates with an arsenal of speech-provoking arguments. Not only does he remind Socrates of the force of his body and their loneliness in the forest (236c-d), but he also tries to lure Socrates with the promise of a life-size statue of him at Delphi (cf. 355d). As if those charms were not sufficient, Phaedrus does eventually also find the right means. He swears that if Socrates does not voice the speech (λόγος) with which he is filled, Phaedrus will never again tell him another (236e). And thus, Socrates, a self-declared lover of discourse (φιλόλογος), cannot but give in (236e).[411]

Archilochean fable: it is at all events clear that they are from Archilochus. 'The crafty and subtle fox of Archilochus' means simply 'the crafty and subtle fox of which Archilochus speaks': the rest of the imagery is due to Plato".

[409] Cf. Vernant and Detienne (1978, 34).

[410] Modified translation.

[411] The words that Phaedrus here uses in order to describe Socrates' reluctant behaviour, i.e. the behaviour that Phaedrus is also trying to overcome, are especially καλλωπίζω (236d) and στρέφω (236e). While the verb καλλωπίζω (accordingly to LSJ) means something like making the face or eyes look beautiful, show off, embellish or to take pride (as at 252a), it can

Now, Socrates was most likely never reluctant in the first place. But he tries to make himself appear to be reluctant in order to give a less dangerous impression. Behind Socrates' apparent coyness there lies a fox. As it comes to addressing a soul like Phaedrus', however, this is perhaps not that surprising. Phaedrus is inhabited by a myriad of voices, and he is supposedly not properly ruled by the rational part of his soul. He has no dominating internal voice that makes him unified or consistent. The views he adopts are supposedly not adopted by means of any rational criteria. They are not mediated by reason, but are instead uncritical echoes of what other people have said. Phaedrus is influenced by external voices. He is influenced by Lysias, just as he is influenced by the doctor telling him to take a walk outside the wall (227a), the politicians that said that speech-writing is bad (257c), the orators that said that rhetoric has nothing to do with truth (259e-260a) or the physiologist that said that one needs to know the whole body to know anything about its parts (270a). These are the voices that rule in him – not the voice of his own reason. Socrates is apparently also quite aware of Phaedrus' polyvocality. For face to face with Phaedrus, he proceeds by indirect means. He does not assume that Phaedrus can be addressed directly. Instead he deceives. Not only does he articulate a seductive speech adapted to the point of view that Phaedrus, for the moment, has taken on, i.e. that of Lysias', but little by little Socrates does also allow his deceptive methods to shine through. He admits that he is cunning (237b). He explains that he has been seductive, and eventually he also initiates a formal analysis of what this really was all about.

3.6. Conclusion

Understanding appetite as a source of motivation that gives rise to behaviour aiming at sensory pleasure and satisfaction may be said to be just as intuitively appealing as it is common. That Plato shares this view is also often taken to be the case. In accounting for the appetitive part of the soul in the *Phaedrus*, Reginald Hackforth makes this position clear:

> The description of the evil horse, and the account of its behaviour, call for no special comment. [T]he part of the soul for which it stands [i.e. the appetitive] is *wholly concerned with sensual satisfaction* […] In our passage [around 253d-e] Plato brings out with great force the headstrong, ruthless

also, as here, mean to fool. Στρέφω, on the other hand, often means just to *turn* or to *rotate*; yet, in this context, being a description of Socrates' reluctant behaviour, it must rather mean something like *twisting and turning*. However we choose to translate these words, both of them are apparently words that pick out a sly kind of behaviour. They depict the acts of disguise and of being sleek like an eel. Cf. *Crit.,* 53d, where it is suggested that Socrates should disguise himself and run away from the prison he is in. The word there used is ἀποδιδράσκω, a word that not only means *to run away* or *escape*, but also *to run away by means of disguise* or *stealth*. As is well known, Socrates, of course, renounces this offer.

> character of carnal desire, its ἀναίδεια [shamelessness], its ὕβρις [hubris], its κακήγορος γλῶττα [evil speaking tongue].[412]

There can be no doubt that Plato tends to describe and exemplify appetite in terms of what Hackforth here calls carnal desire. As we have seen (in section 3.4.8), there are certainly reasons to think that the hubris of the appetitive part of the soul may come to express itself in a variety of ways pertaining to sensual satisfaction and pleasure, e.g. as gluttony or sexual overindulgence. It is however also often assumed that these examples and descriptions justify the further conclusion that appetite, as Hackforth puts it, *wholly*, and thus exclusively, gives rise to behaviour aiming at sensual or sensory satisfaction.[413] Plato, it is thought, considers appetite to be a source of motivation that cannot extend to objects outside the realm of what can be touched or seen. Appetite is a type of desire limited to objects of the somatic kind, i.e. to objects like food and drink. And although one, on this view, may be able to also accommodate examples like Leontius' appetite to look at dead bodies (an example discussed in the conclusion to the last chapter, in section 2.5), thus extending the scope of appetite beyond thirst, hunger and erotic desire, appetite is still held to be limited, and thus defined, by its somatic orientation. On this view, the appetitive part of the soul is also considered to lack "the conceptual capacities required for […] speech", as Rachana Kamtekar puts it.[414] And the variety and scope of the objects pertaining to appetite is defined by the limitations that this type of motivational source thus is taken to exhibit.

In view of this chapters' examination of the work that the notion of appetite does in the *Phaedrus*, there are, however, reasons to revise this further conclusion in accordance with the following qualifications.[415]

Q5 Appetite is not solely a source of motivation that gives rise to behaviour aiming at sensory pleasure and satisfaction.

Q6 As a source of motivation, appetite can bring about behaviour aiming at intellectual pleasure, such as the pleasure of listening to speeches, reading them and articulating them.

There are two reasons that justify these qualifications, reasons that emerge from a consideration of how the psychological and rhetorical framework of the *Phaedrus* links in with its dramatic design.

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[412] Hackforth (1952, 107). My italics.
[413] See White (1993, 40), Kastely (2002, 145) or Buccioni (2002, 339) for some contemporary examples with regard to the *Phaedrus*.
[414] Kamtekar (2012, 95). It should be noted that Kamtekar is here also speaking about the spirited part of the soul. The lack of the ability to speak is something she ascribes to them both.
[415] The enumeration continues from the conclusion to the last chapter (section 2.5).

Firstly, in the *Phaedrus*, as we have seen (in sections 3.4.6-3.4.8), appetite may be spelled out in terms of Phaedrus and his relationship to discourse. In general, appetite can certainly be said to be a matter of sensual satisfaction, but such cases do not exhaust its scope. Appetite, understood as a source of motivation that works independent of reason, and whose mechanisms of formation (as argued in section 3.4.8) are plausibly understood in terms of the influence of appearance and rumour, can also come to express itself as what we might perhaps call discursive overindulgence. Discourse, just as food, may be consumed in too great quantities and for the wrong reasons. Phaedrus, as argued (in sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.5-3.4.8), also displays all the signs of relating to discourse in this way. Phaedrus has an appetite for discourse, and the notion of appetite thus in play must be taken to extend beyond the realm of sensory pleasure and satisfaction.

To understand Plato's notion of appetite in this way is also supported by how this is spelled out in other contexts. The idea that appetite cannot be properly exhausted in terms of sensory pleasure and satisfaction is, for example, captured by the case of the democratic man's pleasure of dabbing at philosophy, known from the *Republic*. The constitution of the democratic man reveals that he is primarily dominated by the appetitive part of his soul. As such, however, he is also described to have appetites for a variety of things. John Cooper puts it in this way:

> [T]he democratic man, whose principle of life is said (561b2-c3) to be to give free and equal scope to each of his appetites, is credited not merely with a large variety of particular appetites for many different kinds of foods and drink and sex, but also with appetites for various athletic and political pursuits and even, on occasion, for, as he imagines it, doing a little philosophy (561c-d).[416]

The democratic man's interest in philosophy is telling. Yet, it is telling not for philosophy but for appetite. His interest in philosophy is, first of all, not based on any type of rational consideration. It is not reason, nor a desire for truth and knowledge, that is the cause of his occasional inclinations to want to do some philosophy (nor a matter of some bodily craving). Instead, the democratic man is supposedly interested in philosophy with regard to the pleasures it, in virtue of its superficial aspects, may be said to give rise to. "What does lead him?" Cooper asks. "Presumably, he simply finds something appealing about it: the manipulation of words, the process of deduction, the surprise of discovery, or whatever, interests and amuses him".[417] And, Cooper goes on, "since this is unconnected with any serious pursuit of the truth, philosophy remains only a *game*".[418] As such, the democratic

[416] Cooper (1984, 9).
[417] Cooper (1984, 11).
[418] Cooper (1984, 11). My italics.

man's interest in philosophy is also best understood as an appetite. "His desire to philosophize, then, counts as an appetite", Cooper writes, "because he attends only to the superficial, 'visible' aspects of philosophy, features of it that he happens to find interesting".[419]

Secondly, the qualifications Q5 and Q6 are reasonable to make, because if we understand the notion of appetite at work in the *Phaedrus* in this light we can make sense of Socrates' characterization of the speeches of the dialogue as deceptive games.

As we have seen (in section 3.3), it is sensible to understand this characterization against the background of the two distinctions that Socrates articulates at the very end of the dialogue; the first between a *serious* and a *playful* kind of discourse, and the second between a *simple* and a *multiform* kind of discourse.

The first distinction, we saw (in section 3.3), is reasonably understood to have been articulated, on Socrates' part, to expound the art and value of the speeches that he and Phaedrus voiced. Socrates is, further, quite clear about the fact that he does not consider any of the speeches to have been serious. Only a discourse that can teach can be considered to be serious, and only dialectic can teach. The speeches of the dialogue are instead said to have been games. They were designed to persuade.

Understood as persuasive games, there were also reasons to look at the speeches in the light of the other distinction Socrates made in this context. As we saw (in section 3.4), a speech designed to persuade, if designed with art, must be articulated with the psychological disposition of its addressee in mind. A simple soul should be addressed with a simple speech; a multiform soul with a multiform speech. And while the simple soul, it was proposed (in sections 3.4.5-3.4.8), ought to be understood as having rational motivations, the motivations of the multiform soul should rather be spelled out in terms of appetite and the impact of appearance and rumour.

With regard to this distinction it was also argued that Phaedrus' characteristic motivations are primarily of the latter sort. Phaedrus displays signs of having a multiform soul. He is interested in discourse because he imagines that this will give him pleasure. And the behaviour he exhibits shows no signs of having any rational orientation. He has neither the ability nor the intention to submit the discourses he involves himself with to rational evaluation. Instead he trusts what merely appears to be the case; and this he also internalizes. Just like the multi-headed Typhon, Phaedrus imitates the voices of others, and soon he becomes a polyvocal echo of rumour. Phaedrus' motivation for engaging in the activity of listening, reading and articulating discourse is primarily an appetite. And when Socrates addresses him, and articulates his two speeches, it is sensible to think that they were designed with the psychological disposition of a multiform soul in mind. They were

[419] Cooper (1984, 11).

meant to persuade and address a soul not yet able to cope with the rationality and simplicity of a serious discussion. Although we cannot reasonably believe that Phaedrus was only in it for the sensual pleasures he hoped his association with Socrates would bring, there are still reasons to say that his source of motivation was primary of the appetitive kind.

Conclusion

Mould, then, a single shape of a manifold and many-headed beast (588c7-9)

Plato, the *Republic*

This book has been a study of Plato's notion of appetite in the *Timaeus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*. Its overall aim has been to evaluate and qualify central aspects of the way that this notion is often understood, in the light of an examination of how it, directly and indirectly, connects to the more specific themes and inquiries of these dialogues. By means of asking, and answering, three questions individually and closely linked to the central arguments of the dialogues – *What can the universe teach us about the conditions of embodied life? Why do the philosophers of the Kallipolis return to the cave?* And *why does Socrates characterize the speeches of the* Phaedrus *as deceptive games?* – this dissertation has, in three chapters, set out to meet this end.

Plato's notion of appetite may, in accordance with recent research, be understood along the following three lines. (1) Appetite is a motivating force pertaining to the body. (2) Appetite is essentially linked to the world as it appears (rather than to how it really is). And (3) appetite is a source of motivation that gives rise to behaviour aiming at sensory pleasure and satisfaction.[420]

Depending on dialogue and context, it is often thought that these ideas also warrant a set of further conclusions. It is thought (1) that Plato considers appetite to be a source of motivation explicable in terms of survival (of the species and the individual), (2) that he claims that appetite is a source of motivation pertaining to a class of distinct and clearly defined objects that may be correctly or mistakenly assessed (leaving the underlying mechanisms of appetite formation unexplored), and (3) that he argues that sensory pleasure and satisfaction sufficiently and exhaustively define the class of objects to which appetite may relate.

[420] Cf. Cooper (1984, 8-11). These views, and the further conclusions they are often taken to warrant, are, as we have seen, also to be found in Burnyeat (2006), Karfík (2005), Annas (1981), Lorenz (2006), Moss (2008), Johansen (2004), White (1993), Kastely (2002), Buccioni (2002), Hackforth (1952) or Kamtekar (2012), depending on dialogue and context.

As we have seen (in sections 1.4, 2.5 and 3.6), there are, in the light of the results of the chapters of this book, reasons to revise aspects of these further conclusions in line with the following six qualifications:

Q1 Appetite can neither exhaustively nor adequately be explained as a motivating force striving towards survival (of the individual or of the species).

Q2 Appetite is as a source of motivation that gives rise to a behaviour that leads to excess and immoderation, a behaviour which, without being submitted to rational control, may ultimately lead to the opposite of survival, i.e. death.

Q3 As a motivating force essentially linked to the world as it appears, appetite is *multiform*, and its possible objects cannot exhaustively be singled out in virtue of some intrinsic feature or quality.

Q4 Appetite, essentially linked to the world as it appears, and as a motivating force subject to the influence of poetry, is neither formed in an arbitrary nor in an individual way, but rather in accordance with the mechanisms of Diomedean necessity. (Appetite is formed in accordance with tradition and public opinion.)

Q5 Appetite is not solely a source of motivation that gives rise to behaviour aiming at sensory pleasure and satisfaction.

Q6 As a source of motivation, appetite can bring about behaviour aiming at intellectual pleasure, such as the pleasure of listening to speeches, reading them and articulating them.

Q1 and Q2 were justified in the light of chapter one: In the account of appetite offered in the *Timaeus*, appetite is, firstly, considered to be a source of motivation that, if unrestrained by reason, may give rise to behaviour that ultimately leads to death. Secondly, in view of what Timaeus' account of the pre-cosmic condition of the universe may teach us about the pre-ordered condition of the soul, a condition whose primary source of motivation is appetite, it is reasonable to assume that the behaviour that appetite gives rise to is best understood in terms of excess and redundancy. Just as in the pre-cosmic situation, the six basic movements that the pre-ordered soul's behaviour is explicated by are superfluous from a rational and ideal point of view.

The arguments for Q3 and Q4, spelled out in chapter two, may be summarised along the following lines. It is clear that Plato does not specify any criteria for the intrinsic quality of an object of appetite. Instead he argues that appetite is *multiform*. According to Plato, it seems, an object of appetite cannot ultimately be identified in virtue of what it is. Because even if some objects may intuitively be identified in this way (e.g. food), not all can. What makes something into an object of appetite is thus better, and more inclu-

sively, understood in view of the process by means of which something is established as an object. This is a process the mechanisms of which are spelled out with regard to how motivations are formed in the absence of rational evaluation and calculation, and thus a process that is particularly suited to capture the motivations of, what Plato calls, a *multiform* soul, i.e. a soul primarily ruled by its appetitive part. The process is accounted for in terms of appearance. Without access to the point of view that reason and rational scrutiny may provide, multiform souls will be at the mercy of what merely seems to be the case. They will be at the mercy of illusion. Such souls are also further explicated in terms of how they are deeply liable to the influence of *poetical* illusion; and, since poetry, accordingly to Plato, is a fundamental part of the cultural fabric of any society, not least of the Kallipolis, poetry's dependence on, and imitation of, public opinion (although this may be exploited) delimits the possible objects of appetite, and defines the process of appetite formation, in accordance with the principle that Plato calls Diomedean necessity.

In chapter three, Q5 and Q6 were argued to be warranted qualifications of the general idea that appetite is a source of motivation that gives rise to behaviour solely aiming at sensory pleasure and satisfaction, because it is reasonable to believe that one object of appetite discussed in the *Phaedrus* is *discourse*. Appetite, in the *Phaedrus*, is plausibly understood along the basic lines of the *Republic's* account, and thus as a source of motivation whose objectives are determined in accordance with how things appears to be. As such, appetite can also be considered to be the primary type of motivation pertaining to what Plato, in the *Phaedrus,* calls a *multiform soul*. Likened to the multi-headed and polyvocal Typhon, a multiform soul may be identified as a soul whose behaviour does not have any rational foundation. Instead of working out its course of action by means of rational deliberation, it goes for whatever seems to give pleasure. Phaedrus, it was further argued, displays all the signs of having a soul of that type. Unable and unwilling to critically assess the contents of the discourses he consumes, he is attracted to them because he believes that they will please him. He has an appetite for discourse. And just like the Typhon he is described to imitate and echo the many voices of his environment. Classifying Phaedrus as such, it was argued, does not only help to explain the relationship between Phaedrus and Socrates. With regard to the psychological and rhetorical framework Socrates spells out in the so-called second part of the dialogue, this also makes sense of Socrates' qualification of the speeches of this dialogue as deceptive games.

What general conclusion can we draw from this?

Unlike Aristotle, Plato has no generic notion for desire.[421] Instead, as we have seen (in section 2.4.1), Plato tends to use the same word both for the species, appetite (ἐπιθυμία), and for the genus, desire (ἐπιθυμία). Yet, it is nevertheless reasonable to speak about appetite as *a type of desire*, also in Plato, to distinguish appetite (ἐπιθυμία) from reason, a desire (ἐπιθυμία) for truth and knowledge, and spirit, a desire (ἐπιθυμία) for honour and victory, in accordance with how this is spelled out in the *Republic*.

Furthermore, also unlike Aristotle, Plato uses one particular notion in all contexts where appetite and appetitive motivation are at stake: In the light of the similarity between the soul and the universe, as this was spelled out in chapter one, there are reasons to understand the soul's pre-ordered condition – a condition primarily dominated by the appetitive part of the soul – as a multiform (ποικίλος) condition. In the *Republic*, Plato explicitly characterises both the appetitive part of the soul and the character type dominated by its appetites as multiform (ποικίλος). And as it comes to the *Phaedrus*, it is plausible to assume that the soul condition Plato calls multiform (ποικίλος) is a psychological condition whose source of motivation is primarily of the appetitive type.

Now, the Greek word here translated as multiform, ποικίλος, can be said to have two basic meanings.[422] It may be used to refer to things that are *manifold* (i.e. many and diverse), and it may be used may refer to things that are *deceptive* (i.e. illusory and cunning). Manifoldness and deceptiveness are connected. One example we get from the LSJ is a labyrinth. A labyrinth is a manifold construction of corridors and dead ends designed to deceive the one who finds herself caught in its complexity.

In the light of what we have seen unfold in the pages of this book, it is plausible to think that Plato had both of these meanings in mind when he decided to characterise appetite as multiform (ποικίλος). There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, as we have seen, Plato does not only identify the possible objects of appetite in the plural, e.g. various kinds of food, drink, sex, dead bodies, politics, athletics or philosophy, he also repeatedly stresses the various different sorts of overindulgent behaviour the domination of the appetitive part of the soul may come to manifest itself as, e.g. gluttony, sexual overindulgence of various kind such as bestiality or prostitution, alcoholism and even discursive overindulgence. The manifold nature of appetite is most explicitly stated in the *Republic*. The appetitive part of the soul is likened to a multi-

[421] Burnyeat (2005, 15): "Under the generic heading 'desire' (ὄρεξις) Aristotle distinguished rational desire (βούλησις) for the good, spirited desire (θυμός) for the noble and admirable, appetite (ἐπιθυμία) for the pleasant (e.g. DA II 3, 414b 2)". Cf. Lorenz (2006, 3, n.2) and Modrak (2011).

[422] According to LSJ, ποικίλος can mean many things: many-colored, spotted, pied, dappled or even tattooed; wrought in various colours, cunningly wrought or complicated: changeful, diverse or manifold; intricate, complex or subtle; artful or wily; changeable or even unstable.

headed beast, and it is said to be so diverse that it cannot ultimately be given any one single adequate name.

Secondly, appetite, as we have seen, is not only a type of desire whose objects are manifold, appetite is also deceptive. The mechanisms of appetite formation may be reasonably understood in terms of appearance. A person governed by the appetitive part of the soul does not listen to reason. Such a person does not measure and assess the truth of what he is presented with. Instead he is at the mercy of what merely seems to be the case. Insofar as this gives rise to behaviour that, for example, is redundant from the ideal point of view, such a person can be said to have been deceived. In the *Timaeus* this idea is also articulated in terms of how the appetitive part of the soul may be influenced by images and phantasms. In the *Republic*, a similar thought is spelled as a part of Plato's account of poetry and its possible subjects. Although this might be exploited for rational ends, poetry is basically illusion and phantasm. Without (yet) being able to evaluate these illusions in accordance with reason, one may come to believe any type of lie. Children were the telling example. In the *Phaedrus*, as we have seen, a similar type of mechanism was articulated in terms of politics and an ass. If nobody has access to the truth, anyone can be deceived to think anything. And the one type of soul condition primarily liable to such deception is the one Plato considers to be ruled by appetite.

We can thus draw the following general conclusion.

C1 Appetite, according to Plato, is a *multiform* desire.

This conclusion must, however, be immediately qualified. For although there are many similarities between the dialogues that point in this direction, it is important to acknowledge that there are also significant differences. Let me give two examples and bring this book to an end by spelling out the methodological challenge that the co-existing similarities and differences mount.

Even if there are reasons to understand the *multiform* character type explicitly identified in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic* along the lines of how the pre-ordered condition of the soul is spelled out in the *Timaeus*, for example, it is nevertheless not ultimately clear that we are dealing with the same notion of soul in these dialogues. The psychology of Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus* is most likely supposed to be applicable to a disembodied soul. Whether the psychology of the *Republic* also pertains to a disembodied soul is debated.[423] But in the *Timaeus*, it is at least clear that the mortal parts of the soul are accounted for in terms of being embodied.

Furthermore, in all the three dialogues we have looked at, Plato considers appetite to be at the mercy of appearance. In both the *Republic* and in the

[423] See Robinson (1967).

Phaedrus this may be spelled out using a discursive vocabulary: Poetry can influence appetite. The black horse can negotiate an agreement. In the *Timaeus* appetite is clearly not characterised in this way.[424]

Now, in general, similarities are often easier to handle than differences. Similarities offer themselves to the process of gathering the scattered particulars under one idea (cf. *Phdr*., 265d), while differences need to be explained; and are thus often more interesting. As it comes to Plato's dialogues, there are many general ways to handle the differences (in and) between the dialogues.[425] From a very broad perspective one can say that either one can do it from a sceptical point of view or one can do it from a dogmatic point of view.[426]

From a sceptical perspective, crucial differences (in and) between the dialogues may be accounted for, either (a) in terms of how Plato's texts are only the echo of a number of different voices and views, or (b), as Christopher Rowe puts it, in terms of how Plato's "chief or ultimate aim was to encourage us to do philosophy, and think things out for ourselves rather than supposing that we can get what we need from others, or from books".[427] Both of these alternatives should be sensitive to the dramatic casting of the dialogues, and the question of interpretation will ultimately rest on settling the question of the dialogue form.[428] In a similar sceptical vein, one might also (c) cast doubt on the assumption that we have direct access to the original or intended meaning of the material at all, leaving the task of informing Plato's texts to the reader.[429]

From a dogmatic perspective, crucial differences between the dialogues are better understood, either (d) in developmental terms, assuming that Plato, as authors often do, changed his mind over time, or (e), as the ancients did, by assuming that all differences may ultimately be accounted for by one unified and basic Platonic creed or theory.[430]

The conclusion (C1) would fall under the last heading (e). It is a conclusion based on the assumption that Plato articulates and defends his own ideas in the dialogues. And although its claim is limited to three dialogues, it also assumes that Plato, in these dialogues, uses his characters to communicate his own considered views. It is also based on the assumption that it is, to

[424] See Lorenz (2006, 75ff & 95ff) and Moss (2008).
[425] The following methodological remarks are not supposed to be exhaustive, they only serve the purpose of roughly positioning the conclusion I have drawn. For a more detailed discussion of these matters, see Rowe (2006), McCabe (2006) or Dorter (1996).
[426] I here follow Rowe (2006). From a sceptical perspective, it is not at all certain that Plato had doctrines that are defended in the dialogues. From a dogmatic point of view, he did, although not necessarily in the dialogues. The so-called *Tübingen School* would argue in favour of the last point. For a discussion, see Nicholson (1999, 81ff). See also n.273.
[427] Rowe (2006, 13). Cf. section 3.2.
[428] See McCabe (2006).
[429] This would be a description of what Rowe (2006, 14) calls post-modern readers.
[430] Cf. Rowe (2006, 15) or Annas (1999, especially Ch.1).

some extent, feasible to neglect the many differences between the dialogues in favor of highlighting the similarities. But since it is far from clear that any of these assumptions are warranted, it is reasonable to qualify the conclusion (C1) as a *hypothetical conclusion*. By *hypothetical conclusion* I mean that it may serve as a reasonable point of departure, a hypothesis, in a more detailed *comparative* study of the dialogues.

Throughout this book, except in this conclusion, I have tried to stick to what Dorothea Frede once explained to be the "sound maxim that a Platonic dialogue should not be interpreted in terms of what Plato says elsewhere".[431] Accordingly, the qualifications (Q1-6) articulated at the end of each chapter in relation to how Plato's notion of appetite has often been understood were *not* based on the assumption that they would have general application. They were dialogue specific.

In a further comparative study, trying out whether C1 would hold in view of the many differences between the dialogues, these qualifications could serve as material to make up good test cases in accordance with the following types of questions: Is it possible to claim that Plato considers appetite formation to be subject to the same mechanisms in the *Timaeus* as in the *Republic*? The account of appetite in the *Timaeus* suggests that if appetite is set free, this may lead to a fatal end. How does that square with the idea of necessary appetites articulated in the *Republic*? Or, if appetite, as suggested in the *Phaedrus*, is open to the influence of discourse, would this influence be of the same type as what we get in terms of poetry in the *Republic*? And, is it thus reasonable to say that Socrates' deceptive strategies in the *Phaedrus* and his account of musical education in the *Republic* are developed against the background of a similar theory of appetite formation?

Whether answering these questions will lead to a developmental interpretation, if they will be better answered from a skeptical perspective or if there will be another more appropriate approach is up to further research to show.[432]

[431] Frede (1996a, 29).

[432] There are already some good studies out there that could prove to be viable in shouldering this further task. Focusing on the notion of *belief* in connection with appetite in Plato, Hendrik Lorenz (2006, 59), for example, has argued that one can trace a development in doctrine from the *Republic*, via the *Theaetetus*, to the *Timaeus*. (See n.92.) In comparing the tripartite psychology from the *Phaedrus* with that of the *Republic*, Eva Buccioni (2002) has argued that the way Plato articulates the tripartite psychological framework in these dialogues is so deeply intertwined with the characterizations of the characters and the drama of the argument of the specific dialogues that any similarities must be considered to be superficial; thus pointing in a more skeptical direction.

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