THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE GOOD AND ITS GUISES: DESIRE AND MOTIVATION IN PLATO'S *GORGIAS* AND *REPUBLIC*

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JOHN U. NEF COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL THOUGHT

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2021

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to my dissertation committee – Gabriel Lear, Agnes Callard and Nathan Tarcov. They have always seen a fuller version of my thoughts than I could see myself. This dissertation is a record of their guidance and care.

Thanks to my close friends and favorite interlocutors: Robert Abbott, Antón Barba-Kay, Jon Baskin, Charlie Comey, David Egan, Rachel Eisendrath, Greg Freeman, Dhananjay Jagannathan, Ben Jeffery, Santiago Mejia, Luke Parker, Bob Simpson and Jonny Thakkar. I worked this dissertation out with them first, bit by bit.

Thanks to the members of the Ancient Philosophy Workshop and the Literature and Philosophy Workshop at the University of Chicago, and especially to Liz Asmis, Arnold Brooks, Elena Comay del Junco, Serena Lai, Josh Mendelsohn and Leon Wash.

Thanks to my many students at the University of Chicago, who enable me to see old books and ideas for the first time again.

Thanks to Linda and Joe, the patient grandparents of this dissertation. Thanks to Julia for her love and support.

And thanks to Sam, who should really finish the *Republic* at some point.

Abstract

In this dissertation I argue for an interpretation of Socrates' views about desire and motivation in Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*. These views are founded on two theses: the Reality Thesis, according to which all desire is for what is really good; and the Appearance Thesis, according to which whenever we act, we must believe that what we do is good, and that our desiderative objects are good. I argue that Socrates maintains these theses in both dialogues, but that in the *Republic* he develops them in several novel directions as he divides the soul, and as he characterizes ontologically lower objects as images, likenesses or imitations of ontologically higher objects.

The Reality Thesis affirms that the ultimate object of our desires is a real thing out there in the world, regardless of whether we grasp its nature; it names the master value that we desire to realize in each action we undertake, and to obtain in each object we pursue; and it identifies the common aim of the psychic forces that motivate all of our actions. I argue that we can understand Socrates' commitment to the Reality Thesis if we take him to be a "provisionalist" about desire: he believes that each desire on which we act is for its object, provided that object is good. This view enables us to explain the provocative conclusion of Socrates' argument at *Gorgias* 467c-468e: if someone does what is not good, she does not do what she wants. This conclusion is true because of a feature of our psychological condition, namely that every desire on which we act is for its object, provided that object is good. The intentional content of the motivating desire explains why doing what is good is necessary for doing what we want, even when we are unaware of whether what we do is good.

I also defend a "maximalist" interpretation of the Appearance Thesis, according to which whenever we act, we believe that what we do is fine and virtuous, that our action comports with our sense of what living well entails. I argue for this interpretation by examining the portrayals of several related figures in the *Gorgias* – primarily Callicles, orators and their audiences – all of whom construe their actions and desiderative objects as fine and virtuous. And I find evidence for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in several features of the *Republic*: agents habitually mistake the ontologically lower objects of their desires for the ontologically higher objects that they imitate; the lowest part of the soul sees its desiderative objects as fine and virtuous; characters like the democratic and the tyrannical man believe their actions and desiderative objects are fine and virtuous, and these beliefs belong to the lowest parts of their souls. As with Callicles, orators and their audiences in the *Gorgias*, these characters serve as useful test cases for the maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis – if it applies to agents like these, it applies to all agents.

Introduction

In this dissertation I will argue for an interpretation of Socrates' views about desire and motivation in Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*. Following Rachel Barney, I will call the thesis on which these views are founded the "Desire Thesis," which holds that all desire is for the good (see Barney 2010: 35). I will develop a set of interpretive claims about the Desire Thesis by examining its two component theses, which, again following Barney, I will call the "Reality Thesis" and the "Appearance Thesis" (see Barney 2010: 35-38).

The Reality Thesis holds that all desire is for what is really good. As I understand it, this entails that even though we are not born with a grasp of what the good is, and may well never discover what it is in our lifetimes, we are naturally endowed with a desire for it.[1] "The good" has two senses, both of which are relevant here: the thing understanding of which would enable us to answer the abstract question of what the good is, which in the *Republic* is the Good itself, or the Form of the Good; and whatever is good, or good for us, among the many other things that exist or might exist. To desire the good entails wanting to achieve something like communion with the good in the former sense; and wanting to do, obtain or promote the good in the latter sense.[2] The desire for what is really good is generally indefinite, in that we generally do not have the Good in view, but we desire whatever it happens to be; and in that we desire whatever is good or good for us, even if we do not know what that is. The Reality Thesis affirms that the ultimate object of our desires is a real thing out there in the world, regardless of whether we

[1] I say "we are not born with a grasp of what the good is" so as to echo Socrates' language at *Republic* 505d-e. It is faithful to the treatment of the Reality Thesis in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* to say that we are not born with knowledge of what the good is, but I have avoided this phrasing so as to steer away from the topic of pre-natal knowledge in Plato (see *Meno* 81a-e, 85b-86c; *Phaedo* 72b-78e; and *Phaedrus* 246d-248d).

[2] I leave aside the desire that things be good. This may be entailed by a desire for the good, but it is irrelevant to my argument insofar as it does not motivate action. And insofar as it does motivate action, it does not stand apart from the desire to do, obtain or promote the good.

grasp its nature; it names the master value that we desire to obtain in each object we pursue, and to realize in each action we undertake; and it identifies the common aim of the forces in the soul that motivate all of our actions.

If there is some mystery about the view that we can desire the good even if we do not grasp what it is, even more mysterious is a corollary of the Reality Thesis for which Socrates argues in the *Gorgias*: whenever we do what is not good, we do not do what we want (see 467c-468d). This claim might appear to explain the failure to do what we want by appealing solely to a matter of fact of which we are frequently unaware, namely whether what we do is good. As I interpret Socrates' argument, this is not quite right. It is true that doing what is not good suffices for not doing what we want. But this claim is true because of a feature of our psychological condition, namely that every desire that motivates us to act is a desire for the good. The intentional content[3] of the motivating desire makes it so that doing what is good is necessary for doing what we want, even when we are unaware of whether what we do is good. To capture this aspect of the Reality Thesis, I will describe Socrates as a provisionalist about desire. His view is that we want to do what we are motivated to do, provided it is good; and that we want each object we are motivated to pursue, provided it is good. As I will explain, the provisions in such formulations are maintained by the agents themselves, in that they belong to the intentional content of their motivating desires.

As I understand it, the Appearance Thesis holds that whenever we act, we believe that the action we are motivated to perform is good, and that the object of our motivating desire is good. Other commentators have argued for what I will call "minimalist" interpretations of the

[3] With this phrase – "intentional content" – I just mean the psychological content of the desire, or what the desire is for by the agent's lights. I do not mean for it to imply that the content of the desire does not fully specify the content of its object, and that in this way it falls short of the extensional object that the desire is for. Although this may be a true description of the intentional content of certain desires – perhaps of all of them – I do not mean to build this description into the phrase "intentional content."

Appearance Thesis, which make the sense of "good" in such claims as flexible as possible, such that so long as we act with a belief that our action is valuable in some way, we thereby comply with the Appearance Thesis (see Barney 2010: 44; Moss 2006: 513-515; Weiss 1992: 92). I will argue for a "maximalist" interpretation, according to which whenever we act, we believe that what we do is fine (*kalon*) and virtuous, or, put more generally, that our action comports with our own sense of what living well entails.

This is not to say that our conception of living well must be highly developed in order for us to act. It may be half-formed, inconsistent, substantially false or highly fluid. We may also possess multiple theories of (or stories about) what is good in this sense, and rely upon them to act in different contexts. Nor do I mean to imply that we consciously check each of the actions we perform against these theories. I mean only that we maintain theories of this kind, and that we must believe the actions we are motivated to perform are harmonious with them. These theories provide us, in turn, with a practical orientation without which we would be unable to act. They guide our sense of what it is valuable to do and to pursue in the world, much like our often under-baked theories of fundamental physical laws are necessary for determining how to move about successfully in the material world and manipulate it as we would.[4] And, as I will argue, because Callicles, and other interlocutors like him, believe that what they do and advocate is good in the maximalist sense, Socrates is able to achieve a kind of argumentative leverage over them that would not otherwise be available to him.

* * *

[4] I owe this analogy to Agnes Callard.

This dissertation began to take shape as I familiarized myself with a dispute in the secondary literature over whether in the *Republic* Socrates breaks with his views about desire from the earlier dialogues. Although I generally accept Gregory Vlastos' argument for dividing roughly 24 of Plato's dialogues into an early and a middle period, I suspected that Vlastos and others overstate the extent to which Socrates revises his views about desire and moral psychology in the middle dialogues. Vlastos claims that with the division of the soul in the *Republic* Socrates countenances the possibility of a kind of intrapsychic conflict that he disavows in the early dialogues, and thereby reverses his view that "wrong conduct can only be due to ignorance of the good" (Vlastos 1988: 99; and see 92-93). Other commentators who broadly agree with Vlastos on this point attribute the change to Socrates' acknowledgment in the *Republic* of what Terence Irwin calls "good-independent desires" – desires that are not for the good, but are rather for the objects that they motivate an agent to pursue regardless of whether those objects are good (see Irwin 1995: 206; and see Anagnostopoulos 168; Annas 129, 139; Cooper 1984: 8-10; Kahn 1987: 85; Nussbaum 106-7; Parry 93-94; Penner 1971: 106-108, 115-117 and n. 20; Reeve 2004: xi, 113 n. 9; Vlastos 1991: 86; Watson 316-320). Another group of commentators has argued that Socrates maintains the Desire Thesis in the *Republic*, in keeping with his views in the early dialogues, treating all desire as "good-dependent," or for the good (see Barney 2010: 45-46; Carone 120-121, 128-129; Gerson 48; McTighe 213-215; Moss 2005b: 61-63; Price 49; Weiss 2007: 89-98). Although this latter group seemed to me to have the better of the dispute, I came to believe that none of its members had made the case for continuity in the right way, primarily because none had adequately captured Socrates' conception of desire in the early dialogues. I was persuaded in part by Terry Penner's work, and in part by my attempts to sort out Socrates' understanding of rhetoric, that the *Gorgias* was the key to recovering Socrates'

views about desire in the early dialogues, and to establishing that he does not break with these views in the *Republic* (see especially Penner 1991).

The *Gorgias* is the only dialogue in which Socrates offers an unambiguous defense of the Reality Thesis (see *Gorgias* 467c-468e; and see *Meno* 77b-e). He does this in what I will call the "Desire Argument," whose provocative conclusion I alluded to above: if an agent does what happens to be bad, she does not do what she wants. In general commentators have dismissed the Desire Argument as incoherent or, in the hope of salvaging it, have either altered its language or read into it extraneous philosophical commitments derived from other dialogues. In Chapter 1 I will attempt to demonstrate that the Desire Argument – on its own, and just as it appears in the *Gorgias* – offers a serious defense of the Reality Thesis, but that to see how we have to attribute to Socrates the provisionalist conception of desire. An agent must believe that an object is good in order to desire it provisionally, as the Appearance Thesis stipulates. But in the event that an agent does something that she mistakenly believes to be good, then even if she never realizes it, her action fails to satisfy the provision within the content of the desire that motivates her, and she therefore does not do what she wants.

In Chapter 2 I will turn to the Appearance Thesis. Nearly all commentators who have published on the Appearance Thesis have adopted a minimalist interpretation of it. They have done so in order to insulate Socrates from some obvious objections – from appeals to cases in which an agent acts without any thought of the good, or does what she believes not to be good. Although the Appearance Thesis dictates that whenever an agent acts she must believe her action is good, the sense of "good" in this formulation is so modest that the Appearance Thesis will apply to all cases in which an agent believes that her action is valuable in some way, and any

kind or degree of value will do. If an agent acts with a belief that her action is pleasant, for instance, or in some way attractive, this will count as a belief that her action is good.

But the text of the *Gorgias* does not support a minimalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis. This is a serious problem for the minimalist interpretation because the *Gorgias* is an unusually rich resource for understanding the Appearance Thesis, in large part because it is a dialogue about rhetoric. I will make the case for this connection by developing an interpretation of some perplexing remarks at the heart of Socrates' account of rhetoric, remarks that have eluded serious scrutiny in the secondary literature. Socrates claims that when an orator succeeds in motivating her audiences to reach collective judgments or to undertake collective actions, she does so by pleasing them, and thereby brings them to believe that she knows how to make them virtuous (459b-c, 462c, 464c-d, 465c-d, 500d-501c, 502d-e, 513d-e, 517a-519b, 521a). For these claims to be clear, let alone compelling, Socrates would need to supply some explanation of the relationship he envisions between audiences' notions about virtue, the motivational effects of the speeches that persuade them and the pleasure these speeches produce. The closest thing he offers is an analogy: orators are like relish-makers (*opsopoioi*), whose tasty confections lead diners to believe that they (the relish-makers) know what is best for the body (462b-463a, 463d-465e). Unfortunately these claims are just as counter-intuitive as Socrates' claims about rhetoric, and raise roughly the same questions about relish-making that we might ask Socrates about rhetoric.

I will argue that the key to understanding Socrates' account of rhetoric is Callicles. Callicles declares "luxury, licentiousness and liberty" to be happiness and virtue, and generally promotes as fine and virtuous a life dedicated to pleasure and political domination (492c; and see 482c-486d, 488b-c, 489b-490a, 490e-492e, 494b-495c, 498a-e, 502d-504e, 509c-511c, 515c-

521a, 522c). Callicles also appears to suffer from the same intellectual deficiencies that Socrates attributes to orators and their audiences when he calls them "senseless" (*anoēton*), as he does repeatedly (see 464d-e, 466e-467a, 492a-c, 505b, 511a-c, 514a-515b, 519b-d). I hope to demonstrate that in both of these respects Socrates takes Callicles to exemplify the mindset that he attributes to orators and their audiences, and that we can discover in the dialogue's depiction of Callicles the content missing from Socrates' account of rhetoric. Callicles conflates pleasure and virtue, and his senselessness leads him to mistake his partial and unharmonious account of the good for a complete and harmonious one. But whereas Socrates draws Callicles' ire by exposing the shortcomings of his account, orators nurture their audiences' sense that their theory of what is good is harmonious and complete, and that they are well off – vigorous and wise, ready for action.[5] And notably for my interpretation of the Appearance Thesis, the kinds of actions that Callicles, orators and their audiences all pursue are precisely the ones that the minimalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis is designed to accommodate: actions that are impulsive, wicked or pleasure-seeking. But as they are portrayed by Socrates and by Plato, none of these people conceives of her actions as good in a minimalist sense. On the contrary, they all conceive of their actions as fine and virtuous – good in a maximalist sense. I will therefore argue for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I will argue that in the *Republic* Socrates maintains the views about desire and motivation that he expresses in the *Gorgias*, although he develops these views in several novel directions as he divides the soul, and as he characterizes ontologically lower objects as images, likenesses or imitations of ontologically higher objects. In the first part of Chapter 3 I will distinguish between several ways to hear the question that I address in Chapters

[5] I owe this description of the inverse relationship between Socrates and orators to Agnes Callard. See also Moss 2005 for an argument that, like a doctor treating illnesses, Socrates characteristically causes pain in philosophical discussion, whereas orators characteristically please with their speeches, just as pastry chefs do.

3 and 4, and explain which rendering of it is relevant to my argument: in the *Republic*, is all desire for the Good? In the second part I will offer a close reading of the "Thirst Itself Argument" in Book 4, in which Socrates concludes that thirst itself is not for good drink, but for drink itself (437d-439b). The Thirst Itself Argument has frequently been cited as definitive evidence that in the *Republic* Socrates acknowledges the existence of good-independent desires, and thereby abandons the Desire Thesis (see Irwin 1995: 206; Penner 1971: 96-97, 115-118; Reeve 1988: 120-123; Vlastos 1988: 99). I will argue that the text of the Thirst Itself Argument does not support this reading, but rather suggests that thirst is for drink as good, and that all desire is for good things. In other words, it suggests that thirst itself is governed by the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis.

In the final part of Chapter 3 I will draw on the discussion of pleasure in Book 9 to argue that Socrates remains a provisionalist about desire in the *Republic*, which is to say that he maintains the same conception of the Reality Thesis as in the *Gorgias*. Throughout the *Republic* Socrates characterizes appetite as desire for pleasure, which has inspired commentators to argue that appetites are good-independent on the grounds that they are for nothing over and above pleasure in the objects that they motivate agents to pursue (see *e.g.*, Annas 129; Brickhouse and Smith 25; Cooper 1984: 10; Kahn 1987: 91-2; Moss 2006: 516 and n. 24; Penner 1971: 118). But Socrates complicates things in Book 9 when he distinguishes between true pleasure and merely apparent pleasure. If an agent is ruled by the appetitive part of her soul, her appetites motivate her to pursue merely apparent pleasures, whereas an agent who is ruled by the reckoning part of her soul (*to logistikon*) enjoys the truest possible appetitive pleasures (see 583b-587a). I will argue that this account is incompatible with the claim that appetites are for pleasure in the objects that they motivate agents to pursue. We can best capture Socrates'

understanding of the relationship between appetites and pleasure by thinking of appetites as provisional desires for pleasure, which is to say that appetites are for the objects that they motivate us to pursue, provided those objects are pleasant. And I will make the case, here and in Chapter 4, that Socrates treats appetites as for the objects that they motivate us to pursue, provided they are pleasant and thereby good.

In Chapter 4 I will turn to the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*. We can find evidence of Socrates' sustained commitment to the Appearance Thesis in his descriptions of various groups of people – the lovers of sights and sounds, the multitude, and the prisoners within the cave – who pursue ontologically lower objects because they mistake them for the higher objects of which they are images, likenesses or imitations. I will argue that although this account draws on metaphysical and epistemological views that do not appear in the *Gorgias*, the beliefs of these people about the objects of their desires are essentially the same as those of Callicles, orators and their audiences, which suggests that the maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis is at work in the *Republic* as well. But arguments that depend on this kind of evidence alone will not persuade those who believe that Socrates abandons the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*. They found their interpretations on passages in which the desires of the lower parts of the soul seem to be good-independent, and regard passages about the mindset of whole agents as unreliable for settling this question. So after explaining the relevance of passages of the latter kind to my larger thesis, I will spend the remainder of the chapter arguing that the Appearance Thesis also governs the lower parts of the soul.

In the account of imitative poetry in Book 10 Socrates presents the inferior part of the soul as ambitious beyond its means, and in a manner that recalls the lovers of sights and sounds, the multitude, and the prisoners within the cave. The inferior part of the soul exhibits a tendency

to respond to appearances as if they were the ontologically higher objects of which they are appearances. And in responding to poetic appearances in particular, the inferior part of the soul manifests a concern for virtue and goodness. Both of these observations sit uneasily with the denial that the Appearance Thesis applies to the inferior part of the soul. But because the Appearance Thesis is meant to govern all actions, arguments for its application to the lower parts of the soul must extend beyond Socrates' treatment of imitative poetry. For although the lower part of the soul reacts with interest to poetic images of virtue, this does not ensure that, when not in the presence of such images, it believes the actions it motivates are fine and virtuous. I will therefore conclude Chapter 4 by arguing that the appetites of the democratic man and the tyrannical man in Books 8 and 9 motivate them to do what they believe to be good in a maximalist sense. As Socrates presents them, these appetites are the dominant desires of the least psychically healthy people, whose characteristic actions are just the kind for which the minimalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis is designed to account. Because the democratic and the tyrannical man nevertheless believe in the fineness and virtuousness of their actions, and because these beliefs belong to the lowest parts of their souls, we should conclude that Socrates maintains a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*, and that it applies to all desires and all parts of the soul.

* * *

There is a danger that someone who is persuaded by my interpretations of the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* will conclude that whatever their other merits, the conception of desire at work in these dialogues is trivially incorrect just about wherever it is counter-intuitive. So over the course of the dissertation I will endeavor to demonstrate the appeal of the views that I attribute to

Socrates. But let me summarize at the outset, all in one place, how I believe these views ought to be defended at what appear to be their weakest points.

As I understand it, the Reality Thesis pertains to what we might think of as the structure or grammar of desire, and, considered by itself, it is compatible with commonsense notions about the phenomenology of desire, emotion and action. Explaining at greater length the content of the Reality Thesis, and its uses in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, should make clear why Socrates believes it is correct and what its value is more generally.

The Appearance Thesis is more likely to seem implausible, and on phenomenological grounds. The most formidable objections to the Appearance Thesis, on my maximalist interpretation of it, will arise from the same intuitions that motivate the minimalist interpretation. The minimalist interpretation is designed to accommodate the soul's susceptibility to disintegration, in the strict sense of the word. Our desires, beliefs, emotions, calculations and so forth can arise or function more or less independently of one another even if, given our general disposition to harmonize these things with one another as far as we can, we ordinarily attempt to modify or eliminate the ones that we believe incompatible with others that we wish to preserve. We say that someone is carried away by a desire if it motivates her to do something that she would not do if she attended properly to her other desires, beliefs and so forth. We say that someone acts impulsively if the desire on which she acts arises suddenly and independently, whether or not it is consistent with the other contents of her soul. Where the Appearance Thesis stipulates that desires such as these can motivate action only if the agent believes that their objects are good, the minimalist interpretation preserves our sense that these desires are relatively isolated within the soul by making their companion evaluative beliefs as modest as possible. The simpler these beliefs, the easier it is to accept that they can exist alongside other

evaluative beliefs with which they would openly conflict if they were more fully developed, that they can arise spontaneously along with impulsive desires, or that they can provide the warrant for wicked or pleasure-seeking actions.

On my own interpretation, the evaluative beliefs that enable our actions are pieces or correlates of larger theories that we maintain about the good. Socrates' account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* is useful for explaining this thought. I will argue that the account of rhetoric is founded on the Appearance Thesis, but we could well imagine Socrates' observations about rhetoric leading him to formulate the Appearance Thesis in the first place. Orators do not persuade their audiences by declaring that the actions for which they advocate will be pleasurable, let alone that they will be pleasurable even though they are base or wicked. Although, on Socrates' account, pleasure is instrumental in motivating audiences to pursue them, orators portray these actions as fine and virtuous. Orators succeed, when they do, by aggrandizing as far as possible whatever they recommend, by rousing their audiences' beliefs about what is good in the highest sense that suits the occasion, and presenting their proposals as good in this sense.

This is not to say that an orator must make this connection to the good explicit, or that she must provide a careful justification for the action she proposes. Quite the contrary. According to Socrates an orator will rely for her success on her audience's intellectual frailties – on the slippery and frequently incoherent nature of its conception of the good, and on its tendency to become so absorbed by a narrow set of considerations aligned with this conception that it overlooks considerations that run contrary to the orator's aims. If an audience is inclined to think that it is already virtuous, and that knowing what virtue entails is a trivial matter, an orator can motivate it by beautifying or otherwise charging with emotional force actions of a kind that the audience would already generally recognize as conducive to or compatible with its

virtue.[6] Her speech can thus be decisive without bringing about a revolution in the audience's thinking or feeling, so long as no such revolution is required for it to fulfil the requirements of the Appearance Thesis. But when an orator persuades her audience to act, the change will consist in its coming to regard the proposed action as good. No less than the occasions on which an orator brings about a more profound transformation in her audience, Socrates can see the success of less momentous speeches as testaments to the Appearance Thesis. If the orator appears to be going through the motions in such cases, the Appearance Thesis explains why the motions must be gone through.

Much of what applies to audiences also applies to individuals. An individual will not flatly identify the good with the pleasant or the attractive, as the minimalist interpretation allows. Some such identification may occur in some cases, but these cases will resemble that of Callicles, whose identification of the good with the pleasant, as I will argue in Chapter 2, is anything but flat. Far from abandoning all consideration of what is good in the more thorough-going sense to which he is alive, Callicles has a detailed account of why pursuing pleasure is fine and virtuous. Without some larger theory like this one, which ties the pleasant in general to goodness, or which portrays the pursuit of pleasure on some particular occasion as good, no one will be content to believe that what is pleasant is good. To the extent that a given agent's intellectual condition permits it, a theory of this kind can fulfil its practical function even if it is crude or unstable. Callicles' sustained faith in his own theory, even as he struggles to keep it steady and consistent, attests to the fact that an agent need not enjoy great command over the

[6] It is fair to ask how my interpretation is to be squared with Socrates' repeated assertions in the *Apology* that the Athenians individually or jointly neglect virtue, and that they attend instead to things like wealth, reputation or dominance (29d-30a, 36c, 41e-42a). As I read him, Socrates does not mean by this that the Athenians are unconcerned with being virtuous, think that virtue is generally unimportant or have not formed beliefs about virtue. He means that the Athenians neglect to investigate virtue because they take it for granted that they know what it is, and that living as they do is virtuous. In pursuing wealth, reputation and dominance they believe they are living virtuously.

rationale for her actions in order for it to be psychologically effective. Those who cannot hold forth on the fine, the virtuous and the good in the way that Callicles does will not order their lives with the same intensity of focus with which Callicles pledges to order his, but some account of these things must provide the foundation for their actions. However ragged this account may be in some cases, it cannot simply omit whatever an agent considers to be the higher evaluative concepts – like fineness and virtue – that underwrite the best actions, or the good life to which they belong.

Nor, on my interpretation, does the Appearance Thesis require that an agent's conception of what is good in the maximalist sense be front of mind when she acts, or that she believe every one of her actions, considered by itself, to be fine and virtuous. The analogy between rhetoric and individual motivation breaks down with respect to the many actions that are too banal to be the objects of speeches, but that inevitably constitute a large part of any person's practical life. Socrates plainly implies in the *Gorgias* that we believe even our most ordinary actions – like sitting, walking or running – are good when we undertake them (see 468b1-4). But we surely do not think that we do something fine and virtuous each time we sit, walk or run. Socrates can allow that even an agent as captivated by his own vision of the good life as Callicles is will think of some of his actions as good in a sense that is merely compatible with this vision rather than essential to it. But Socrates will deny that any action is possible if it does not have some such relation – of compatibility, entailment or conduciveness – to a conception of the good that satisfies its possessor.

Although each evaluative belief that enables an action must somehow be grounded in a conception of the good, such a conception need not – and will not – arise along with each evaluative belief that depends upon it. Hence the larger account that supports an impulsive

action need not be as hastily conceived as the impulse that motivates it, even if an agent forms the belief that this particular action is good just as she undertakes it. And a single agent can possess multiple conceptions of the good, some of which may never make psychological contact with one another. Hence the desire that carries an agent away can belong to a part of the soul with its own beliefs about the good.

This is the kind of case that Socrates has in mind when he divides the soul in the *Republic*, which allows him to explain, among other things, how evaluative beliefs can be sufficiently complex to enable action even if an agent does not avow them wholeheartedly, and even if an agent possesses better-elaborated beliefs to the contrary. Rather than see the native intellectual deficiencies of the lower parts of the soul as evidence of good-independent desires, I will rely on these deficiencies to explain how the lower parts of the soul construe their desiderative objects as good in a maximalist sense. That each part of the soul motivates the pursuit of a limited range of objects does not suffice to establish that it desires nothing over and above these objects. On my interpretation, the lower parts of the soul desire the good no less than the reckoning part, only their inferior intellectual resources constrain their search. They can only search for the good among the objects to which they can attend, objects that in the *Republic* Socrates characterizes as images, likenesses or imitations of higher objects. And the lower parts of the soul cannot withhold their assent that these lower objects are what they appear to it to be, and are valuable in the way they appear to it to be valuable. These parts habitually mistake lower objects for higher objects, and the former provide the material for their beliefs about the latter. Without proper guidance, the appetitive part of the soul, for instance, is liable to find fine, virtuous and good things in what the reckoning part of the soul regards as the unlikeliest places,

and to conceive of fineness, virtue and goodness in something like the way that the democratic and the tyrannical man do.

I share the minimalists' sense that some of the evaluative beliefs that enable us to act must be improvised, transitory, narrowly self-serving or barely defensible. But these beliefs must be founded on a larger vision that an agent or psychic part considers a satisfactory answer to the question of what the good is. The success of an agent's actions will thus closely depend upon her intellectual virtue. The desires that appear to knock us off course, or to dominate us to our detriment, cannot achieve these effects unless they are credentialed by some broader understanding of the good. A person can improve her understanding of the good if she devotes herself to refining it and discovers the means of doing so, although her intellectual achievements will tell in her actions only insofar as they extend, in various ways, to each part of the soul. Socrates suggests, for instance, that the spirited part of the soul can develop a more reliable appreciation of the good through musical and physical education, and that even the appetitive part might do so by tasting the truest pleasures available to it, the pleasures that wisdom prescribes (see 400e-403c, 410b-412a, 413c-414a, 429e-430a, 441e-442b, 586d-587a, 591c-d).

Relative to the minimalist interpretation, my own may seem to be at a philosophical disadvantage insofar as it closely links intellectual virtue to virtue full-stop, and generally embraces a more robust form of intellectualism about desire and motivation. However, so long as the intellect is not concentrated in one part of the soul, but distributed among all parts in the manner that Socrates captures in the *Republic*, my approach does not open the Appearance Thesis back up to the objections from which the minimalists seek to defend it. Although Socrates does not distinguish between psychic parts on the grounds that one is more ambitious to obtain the good than another, he can preserve our intuitions about the soul's susceptibility to

disintegration by allowing that wherever we find desires in the soul, their content and motive force are regulated by distinctive kinds of intellect.

1

How to want what you do: The Reality Thesis in the *Gorgias*

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will offer an interpretation of *Gorgias* 467c-468d, where Socrates leads Polus through what I will call the "Desire Argument" (DA). Put briefly, it is an argument that because everyone wants what is good, if an action happens to be bad, then in performing it the agent does not do what she wants. The DA is, by some distance, the most substantial argument in the dialogues for one of the two component theses of Socrates' Desire Thesis, the view that all desire is for the good (although see *Meno* 77b-e, especially 77d7-e4). As I mentioned in the introduction, I follow Rachel Barney in calling this component thesis the "Reality Thesis," and the other the "Appearance Thesis" (see Barney 2010: 35-38).[1] According to the Appearance Thesis, which Socrates explains most directly in the *Meno* (77b-78c) and the *Protagoras* (358b-d), in order to act an agent must believe her motivating desire to be for what is good, and correlatively she must believe that the action she is motivated to perform is good. In the DA Socrates seems to argue for the Reality Thesis, according to which an agent's desires are only for what is really good.

I say "seems" because commentators have profound disagreements about how to understand the DA. At least some of the blame for this lies with Plato. The DA is brief and deceptively simple. Its conclusion is so paradoxical that commentators have generally thought

[1] I define these theses slightly differently from the way Barney does, and we disagree substantially about how to understand them (see §5-7 below and §1 of Chapter 2). A corollary of the Appearance Thesis appears in a premise in the DA, and because Polus readily agrees to it Socrates does not argue for it (see 468b1-7). In Chapter 2 I will discuss at length the treatment of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*.

that the DA is either unpersuasive or unserious, or else that we must alter the text or import a great deal of theoretical machinery in order to make it plausible. And the dialectical context of the DA is unusually fraught, as Socrates' three interlocutors in the *Gorgias* are among the most cynical and ruthlessly ambitious in all of the dialogues.

At the outset of the DA Socrates is trying to persuade Polus that tyrants and orators do not have great power, that in fact they have the least power of anyone in their cities (see 466b-467c). He argues that although they may do whatever they think best (*dokei beltiston*) or see fit (*dokei*), they do nothing that they want (see 466b-e, 467b).[2] For they want what is good but only do what is unjust and therefore bad, as they have no craft and no understanding (*noun*) of their actions (see 466e9-10, 467a4-5, 468e-479e). Since power is a good thing for the person who has it, and orators and tyrants do what is bad for themselves, they cannot have great power (466e6-8, 468d-e).

Socrates thus piles one provocation upon another in the larger argument surrounding the DA, leaving us a dense collection of puzzles. How we interpret the DA must determine to some extent how we take Socrates' claims regarding the power of tyrants and orators. But it is possible to peel away its context and treat the DA as intelligible and complete on its own, as I will do here.

In this chapter I will defend Socrates' remarks in the DA from what I take to be a set of deflationary readings, each of which deflates different features of the argument. I hope to establish that there is a philosophically attractive conception of desire to be found in the DA, and that we can recover this conception if we take Socrates' reasoning to be sincere, free from error and carefully, if elliptically, expressed.

[2] For Socrates' treatment of these two phrases – think best and see fit – as interchangeable, see especially 466d6-e2.

In §3 to §5, I will consider three different groups of interpretations, each of which attributes a different conception of desire to Socrates in the DA. I name each interpretation after the conception of desire that it attributes to Socrates: "conditionalism" (§3), "perfectionism" (§4) and "normativism" (§5). After presenting each interpretation I will argue that there are textual grounds for rejecting it as a reading of the DA.

Barney's normativist interpretation is the most formidable of the interpretations I examine, and in §6 I will develop my own positive reading of the DA largely in response to Barney. I call the conception of desire that I attribute to Socrates "provisionalism." According to provisionalism, a desire can be for a given object only on the provision that it is good, and can be for the action that it motivates only on the provision that the action is good. On my interpretation there is frequently an asymmetry between an agent's desires and her beliefs, in that her desires can remain indefinite, attached to whatever the good may turn out to be, even as her beliefs about what is good come to be highly specified. This asymmetry enables me to explain Socrates' view that desires frequently motivate actions that they are not desires for, and thereby to make sense of his claim that agents who do what happens to be bad – unbeknownst to them – do not do what they want.

In §6 I will defend my reading of the DA, and I will defend the provisionalist conception of desire on philosophical grounds by way of a series of thought experiments. I hope to demonstrate that the provisionalist conception appeals to some of our core intuitions about desire and motivation, and that if Socrates is a provisionalist about desire, he can reasonably conclude about a representative range of cases that if an agent fails to do what is good, she will fail to do what she wants.

In §7 I will explain how the provisionalist interpretation enables me to defend the DA from Barney's objections, and I will consider some unintuitive features of provisionalism.

In §8 I will conclude with a brief summary of the argument in this chapter, and a discussion of how it relates to my interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*, which I will develop in Chapter 2.

But before anything else I will provide what I mean to be an uncontroversial summary of the DA, divided into its discrete parts.

2. The Desire Argument

> (1) 467c5-e1. People want (*boulesthai*) not what they do on each occasion but that for the sake of which they do it. For example, we want not to take painful medicines but to be healthy; we want not to undertake troublesome sea voyages but to be wealthy.
>
> (2) 467e1-468a4. Everything is either good (*e.g.*, wisdom, health and wealth), bad (*e.g.*, ignorance, debility and poverty) or intermediate, neither good nor bad (*e.g.*, sitting, walking, running and sailing; stones and sticks). The intermediate sometimes partake of what is good, sometimes of what is bad.
>
> (3) 468a5-b8. Whenever people do intermediate things (*e.g.*, walking, standing still; killing or banishing someone, or confiscating her property) they do them for the sake of good things, pursuing what is good. They suppose that doing what they do is better.
>
> (4) 468b8-c8. We do not want to do intermediate things as such (*haplōs houtōs*); if they are beneficial we want to do them, but if they are harmful we do not. For we want good things, not bad things or intermediate things.
>
> (5) 468d1-5. If a tyrant or orator kills or banishes someone, or confiscates her property, supposing that doing so is better for himself, but it happens to be worse, this person does as he sees fit.
>
> (6) 468d5-7. But if these things happen to be bad this person does not do what he wants.

3. Conditionalist Interpretations

Norman Gulley and Roslyn Weiss offer conditionalist interpretations of the DA (see Gulley 1965: 89-90; Weiss 1992: 299-300). According to this kind of interpretation, when Socrates says that any agent whose action happens to be bad does not do what she wants, he means that she would not want to do what she does if she were aware that her action harms rather than benefits her. Conditionalist interpretations dispel the air of paradox about the conclusion of the DA without attributing to Socrates any elaborate views imported from other texts. As these interpretations have it, Socrates does not reject the intuitive claim that people sometimes want to do things that they mistakenly believe to be good. His point in the DA is only that anyone who does what is bad would modify the desire that motivates this action should she come to realize the truth about the action's value to her.

The problem with conditionalist interpretations is that in the interest of making Socrates' thoughts seem sensible, they simply alter the language of the DA's conclusion. This move appears to be motivated primarily by despair at the prospect of achieving a viable reading of the argument just as it is, rather than by positive textual justification.[3] Weiss goes so far as to claim that Socrates is guilty of gross equivocation in the DA, that here as elsewhere his arguments are invalid and unsound, intended to jolt Polus out of his perverse attraction to orators and tyrants

[3] For other objections to the positions of Weiss and Gulley see Kamtekar 2006: 137 and Segvic 52. It is worth noting that Gulley and Weiss have different understandings of the conception of desire at work in the DA. Gulley thinks that this is desire only for ends in themselves, and not for the means to them (see Gulley 83). But this reading does not square with Socrates' language at 468c2-c5, where he says that we desire what is intermediate so long as it is beneficial. Weiss claims that in the DA desire for the good "comprehend[s] all ways in which one can be drawn to something," and that when Socrates uses the word "good" in the argument he just means "in some way attractive" (Weiss 2007: 97). This interpretation would make Socrates' use of the words "good" and "bad" in the DA suspiciously anomalous in the dialogues, and even within the *Gorgias* (see *e.g.*, 474c-476a). And it would prevent us from making sense of Socrates' conclusion that even if they may succeed by their own lights, because they do not do what is good, orators and tyrants do not do what they want. If Weiss' reading were correct, Socrates should say instead that so long as they obtain things like wealth, status and fame orators and tyrants do what is good, and therefore do what they want.

rather than to defend serious views (see Weiss 1992: *passim*).[4] Insofar as my interpretation succeeds in rendering the DA sensible as is, and in locating within it an appealing conception of desire, it undermines Weiss' attacks on the DA and relieves us of the need to attribute to Socrates ulterior motives of this kind.

4. Perfectionist Interpretations

Perfectionist interpretations take the kind of desire at issue in the DA to be unerringly for the good. They treat this kind of desire (*boulēsis*) as just one among others, and charge its fallible counterparts (*e.g.*, *epithumia*) with motivating all actions that are not in fact good. If the kind of unsuccessful action described in the DA is never motivated by infallible desire for the good, but always instead by desire of a different kind, then there is nothing paradoxical about Socrates' claim that we can be motivated to do things that we do not want (*boulesthai*) to do. For the kind of desire that can motivate us to perform actions that are not good (*e.g.*, *epithumia*) is not the same as the desire we invoke when we say that we do not want to perform them (*boulēsis*).

This would be a neat resolution of the interpretive difficulties posed by the DA. But both perfectionist interpretations I will consider have insurmountable problems as readings of the DA.

[4] And for a similar charge see McTighe 208-217.

4.1. The Latent Perfectionist Interpretation

The most influential "latent perfectionist" interpretation of the DA is Charles Kahn's (see Kahn 1983: 112-116; 1996: 138-141).[5] According to Kahn, Socrates' view is that all human beings have an innate and unerringly rational desire for the real good (*boulēsis*). This desire remains largely unconscious unless we cultivate it especially well. But it appears indirectly in conative attitudes whose basis we may not understand, as in the admiration we feel for Socrates. Kahn thinks that desire for the real good provides a set of inchoate but unerringly good-oriented impulses to even the most ignorant people, and that these can serve as starting points for the arduous process of making desire for the real good conscious and fully operative in us.[6]

On Kahn's reading the DA invites us to think of bad actions as motivated by an agent's conscious, misguided desires, which conflict with her largely unconscious but unfailingly good desire. The unjust can go on doing injustice and believe all along that they are doing well, even if they do nothing that they really want (*boulesthai*) to do, because their two sets of desires, and the accompanying conative attitudes towards their actions, inhabit two different parts of their souls, separated by a barrier that is fully breached only very rarely.

Although this interpretation allows Kahn to resolve the apparent tension in Socrates' conclusion, it is unjustifiably extravagant. Apart from what Kahn concedes are only covert allusions that he finds scattered throughout the *Gorgias*, the bulk of the evidence for Kahn's

[5]For work influenced by Kahn's understanding of the DA see *e.g.*, McKim; Cooper 1999; Moss 2005b: 25-26. Dodds offers a similar reading of the DA at Dodds 235-236.

[6] Kahn's interpretation has appealed to many other commentators in part because of its power to shed light upon several vexing aspects of the *Gorgias*. Kahn argues that Plato makes some of Socrates' arguments in the dialogue transparently faulty, and depicts them overcoming the resistance of Gorgias, Polus and Callicles not by way of logical compulsion, but by successfully arousing admiration of Socrates and his positions, and by exposing conflicts between his interlocutors' better intuitions and the positions they espouse. The interlocutors drop out of the discussion in sequence because Socrates successfully activates their perfectly rational but largely unconscious desire for the good (see Kahn 1983: 75-76, 80-84, 94-97, 99-100, 106-110, 112-120; Kahn 1996: 136-146; and see McKim 35, 44-48).

understanding of what Dodds calls the "real man" inside of every agent comes from other dialogues (see Dodds 235-236; and see *e.g.*, Kahn 1996: 138). Evidence drawn from the DA itself is all suggestive at best. The appeal of Kahn's interpretation therefore depends implicitly on the thought that it is impossible to read the DA as a coherent and attractive argument on its own, apart from a background from which it is textually and philosophically remote. I will offer an interpretation that is far more parsimonious than Kahn's, one that renders the DA defensible and relatively self-contained in just the form in which it appears, paradoxes and all.

4.2. The Constitutive Perfectionist Interpretation

Heda Segvic proposes a "constitutive perfectionist" interpretation of the DA. Rather than assign desire for the real good a distinct and permanent place in the soul, she makes it a species of desire (*boulēsis*) that we can possess and exercise only with respect to actions whose goodness we correctly recognize. Segvic offers a helpful formula: "the agent wants to ϕ just in case he desires to ϕ taking ϕ-ing to be the good or right thing to do (in the circumstances in question), and his ϕ-ing (in those circumstances) is (or would be) good or right in the way he takes it to be" (Segvic 54; for her larger interpretation of the DA see 52-58, 80-85). Although Segvic does not compare her interpretation to Kahn's, because she treats the acquisition and exercise of this species of desire as the actualization of a capacity – akin to the acquisition and exercise of knowledge (Platonic conceptions of knowledge as recollection notwithstanding) – rather than as an inalienable possession of all human beings, Segvic can plausibly claim that it is infallible without making it largely unconscious, as Kahn does.

Due to its relative theoretical modesty Segvic's interpretation does not face the same exegetical barriers as Kahn's. Because the views that Segvic attributes to Socrates are simpler

and less eccentric, it is more plausible that Socrates might depend upon them without explaining them within the dialogue. However, given that Segvic characterizes desire for the real good as a conative achievement that is available only to the agent who correctly takes his action to be good, her interpretation is inconsistent with Socrates' language at key points in the argument. Socrates says that whenever we act, or do what is intermediate, we want (*bouletai*, *boulomenos*) what is good (see 467c5-7, 467d6-e1). If Segvic's interpretation were correct, then Socrates' claim should be far less general. He should say that only those who correctly recognize what is good want what is good when they act, or when they do what is intermediate. Socrates also implies that when an action turns out to be bad and the agent therefore does not do what she wants, she wants something other than the end she pursued, or wants something other than the means that she took to it, or else wants something different from both of these things (see *e.g.*, 468d1-e5). He does not conclude that the agent fails to want (*boulesthai*), or does not want anything at all, as he ought to on Segvic's reading. Segvic's interpretation is therefore unfaithful to the text, and should be rejected.

5. The Normativist Interpretation

Rachel Barney's normativist interpretation of the DA has some affinities with Weiss' interpretation and with Segvic's. Like Weiss, Barney argues for a deflationary understanding of "good" in the phrases "we do what is intermediate for the sake of the good" and "we want good things." To count as being for the good a desire need only be for what Barney calls a "mid-level good." For an agent to desire an object she needs to have some universal judgment about it (*e.g.*, this is salty) that can apply to other such objects, and that can be related by the agent either to some at least mid-level sense of goodness at a higher level of generality (*e.g.*, salty therefore

delicious therefore pleasant), or else to goodness as such (see Barney 2010: 40-41, 44). The conception of desire that Barney attributes to Socrates thus avoids the view that agents have goodness in mind whenever they act, a view that is dubious on phenomenological grounds.

But like Segvic – and unlike Weiss – Barney takes the DA to express a thesis about the priority of cognition to motivation, which entails that there is "a certain commitment to objectivity built into our ordinary ways of...desiring," just as there is with our ordinary ways of believing (Barney 2010: 38). If I want to ϕ (*e.g.*, play basketball) for the sake of G (what is good full-stop, and/or some mid-level good that my action can obtain, *e.g.*, fun), my desire to ϕ depends on a prior belief that my ϕ-ing will in fact produce G (*e.g.*, playing basketball will be fun). If my ϕ-ing does not produce G then my action fails to have value, and my desire is faulty according to the same norms that govern my belief about the relationship between my ϕ-ing and G (Barney 2010: 48-49).

Barney also raises two important objections to the DA. The first is that the DA is invalid because its central move depends on an equivocation. Barney argues that from

> Premise 1: whenever someone acts she wants to ϕ because she believes it will be good for her (467c5-e1, 468a5-b8),

a claim that "presents *anticipated* benefit as a cause of *present* desire"; and

> Premise 2: we do not want to do intermediate things by themselves; if these things are beneficial, we want to do them, but if they are harmful we do not want to do them; for we want the good things, but we do not want either the intermediate or the bad things (468b8-c8),

a claim that is ambiguous between subjective and objective construals of "beneficial" and "harmful," "good" and "bad" – between how one believes things are and how they really are; Socrates illicitly infers

> Conclusion: an agent whose action turns out badly does not do what she wants when she ϕ-s (468d5-7),

a conclusion that "presents *real* future benefit as a *criterion* for ascriptions of present desire" (Barney 2010: 48, Barney's emphasis). An agent of the sort imagined in the DA might assent to premise 2 above, "or more simply to the conditional: 'If it doesn't benefit me, I don't want to do it.' But in doing so he would mean to endorse what is really a future-oriented subjective principle equivalent to [premise 1]: if I don't think it will benefit me, I won't form the desire to do it. Socrates instead infers a present-tense claim about the status of the desires that [this agent] in fact avows" (Barney 2010: 48-49). That is, because they motivate an action that turns out not to benefit the agent, Socrates infers that these desires do not exist. Barney argues that Socrates is wrong to conclude, from the fact that an agent fails to obtain the good for the sake of which she ϕ-s, that a desire to ϕ for the sake of this good could not have had her ϕ-ing as its intentional object; and that he is wrong to conclude that the agent's desire to ϕ could not have motivated her ϕ-ing.

Barney's second objection is that if the conclusion of the DA were true, we would no longer be able to specify which desires motivate failed actions. If it were correct that when an action fails to produce the good for the sake of which the agent acted, the agent did not do what she really wanted to do, then the DA would leave unexplained how its "mysterious real desires for the real good actually contribute to our psychological economy" (Barney 2010: 49). And it would leave equally unexplained what the motivational force behind unsuccessful action actually is.

Barney's thought here is that among the psychological causes for any given action must be some kind of desire. In denying that desire for the real good fulfils this role the DA simply deprives us of something we need in order to explain unsuccessful action. And all that it leaves

in the causal role where we expect to find desire is what the agent "sees fit" or "believes to be best." But if an agent's desire does not motivate her action, why should we think that her belief does? In the context of the DA this is an urgent question. Given that Socrates sets such a high bar for successful action, one that only the virtuous will consistently clear, Barney's second objection signals that Socrates' argument would render the desire for the good motivationally inert in most lives.

Barney suggests that we ought to amend the conclusion of the DA in order to capture the serious philosophical position it is trying to express. An agent whose action fails to obtain the good for the sake of which he acts does not *eo ipso* fail to do what he wants; but he may not "want as he wants to want," because the desire that motivates his action is formed in error insofar as it fails to conform to "the underspecified standing desire for 'the good, whatever it may really be'" (Barney 2010: 54). The failure in some such cases will derive from a conceptual error of the sort that Socrates attributes to orators or tyrants, who mistakenly believe that doing injustice will benefit themselves, but who instead visit the greatest evil upon themselves. An action that is motivated by a desire to do injustice, or to do anything else that will harm rather than benefit the agent, is "inadvertent, self-frustrating, and unfree, and the desire itself is inauthentic, false to [the agent's] own aims in desiring" (Barney 2010: 54). But because the agent who performs such an action is motivated by a desire for that action, in acting she does what she wants.

Barney's interpretation of the DA has significant advantages over the others that I have considered. It allows Barney to explain how desire for the good motivates unsuccessful action, something neither Kahn nor Segvic can do without invoking a kind of desire that is oddly absent from the DA. In line with Socrates' language, Barney understands the DA to be about actions of

all kinds and the desires that motivate them, as Segvic does not.[7] And Barney explains how the DA provides insight into a serious view of Socrates', whereas Weiss denies that it does.

If Barney's objections to the DA also held good, and if retaining the sense of Socrates' argument precisely as it appears in the text were fatal to understanding the philosophical purpose behind it, then we would do well to accept her interpretation. But if we can plausibly attribute to Socrates the conception of desire that I will presently argue he articulates in the DA, then neither of Barney's objections are insuperable. We need not alter Socrates' language in order to take the DA seriously.

6. The Provisionalist Interpretation

Barney thinks that the conclusion of the DA can be correctly applied to no cases of unsuccessful action. On my interpretation it can be applied to all such cases. To argue for this

[7] Drawing on Socrates' language at 467c-e and 468a-b (see steps 1 and 3 in §2 above), Rachana Kamtekar argues that the DA is not about actions of all kinds, but only about instrumental actions, in which an agent's desire to do something is derived from a desire for some further end for the sake of which she acts (see Kamtekar 2017: 83). This claim does not seem to be correct, and Kamtekar's justification for it is faulty. Kamtekar makes instrumental actions very broad, insofar as she recognizes the desire for happiness as one possible desire for an end, from which a motivating desire for an instrumental action might derive. She gives the example of doing injustice for the sake of happiness (see Kamtekar 2017: 92). Given the breadth of the actions that Kamtekar would consider instrumental, her interpretation invites the question of to what kinds of actions the DA does not apply. Kamtekar offers one answer, although indirectly. She says that "since the appetites are not instrumental desires [but desires for ends], it does not seem possible to use the logic of instrumental rationality [exhibited in the DA] to deattribute them from the agent" (Kamtekar 2017: 96). Presumably she means that although we may deattribute desires from an agent that motivate her to undertake instrumental actions for the sake of appetitive satisfaction, we cannot deattribute from an agent the appetites (the desires for appetitive satisfaction) themselves. So that if an agent ϕ-s for the sake of some appetitive satisfaction, and if her action breaks down in some way, we can say that she does not want to ϕ; but we cannot say that she did not want to satisfy her appetite, even if doing so is bad. Kamtekar draws this distinction between appetites and desires that motivate instrumental actions on the grounds that appetites are not truth-tracking, and therefore can only be corrected through discipline (*kolasis*), whereas instrumental desires can be corrected by being directed at their proper objects, namely the actions that would in fact secure the ends for the sake of which an agent acts (see Kamtekar 2017: 96). But this justification is inconsistent with the text. Socrates says that discipline is the same remedy for both injustice and unruly appetites, as it should not be if, as Kamtekar claims, the desire that motivates one to do injustice is an instrumental desire derived from a desire for happiness (or perhaps, depending on the agent, for some other end), whereas the desire to satisfy an appetite is a desire for an end (appetitive satisfaction), whether or not this end is good (see *e.g.*, 478a-b). Hence the basis for Kamtekar's distinction between instrumental actions and non-instrumental actions is unsound. For an account of why discipline is meant to be the remedy for the sources of both kinds of action, see Moss 2005b: 234-244.

claim I will work my way through four variations of an imagined case of unsuccessful action, which I mean to provide a representative range of the ways in which an agent who does as she sees fit or thinks best might nevertheless fail to do what she wants. These are cases in which (1) an agent with minimal beliefs about the relevant facts of her circumstances, and about what is best in general, accepts purely on authority a bad recommendation regarding what to do; (2) an agent with expert knowledge of what is best is deceived about just one decisive fact, and therefore does what is bad; (3) an agent with a middling understanding of the facts and of what is best is racked by doubt, but feels compelled by circumstances to act and ends up doing what is bad; (4) an agent with a good grasp of the facts but an extensive network of false beliefs about what is best confidently does what is bad.

In working through these cases I aim to demonstrate how the conception of desire that I attribute to Socrates – provisionalism about desire – grows out of a faithful reading of the text; and to explain how provisionalism is responsive to some of our basic intuitions about desire even as it departs from others. I will argue not that provisionalism is superior to alternative conceptions of desire, but that we should not refrain from attributing it to Socrates on the grounds that it is incoherent or indefensible.

6.1 Astrid

Astrid, a high school senior, has been accepted to two colleges: Best College (BC) and Worst College (WC). WC is an awful place, the worst possible college Astrid could attend. In keeping with Socrates' arguments in the *Gorgias*, let us say that WC specializes in educating aspiring tyrants and orators in how to do injustice and get away with it, and that if Astrid attends she is doomed to spend her life doing exactly that. BC is just the opposite, a school that will

expertly facilitate Astrid's pursuit of virtue and happiness. Astrid wants to attend the college that will be best for her. She has a strong conviction that attending the best college one can is essential for doing well in life. But her anxiety over the decision is so great that she cannot bring herself to research it beyond clicking through the colleges' websites, which seem virtually identical to her. Nor does she have a well-developed sense of what makes a college good or bad. But as it happens Astrid's parents are devoted alumni of WC. They enthusiastically advise her to attend WC, emphasizing that it is the best possible school for her. Although Astrid is unsure about this advice at first, she ultimately feels grateful that it serves to tip the balance, and she sends her signed letter of intent to WC.

It may seem unlikely that Astrid should depend so greatly upon the authority of her parents in reaching a decision that she deems as important as this one. But in this respect she is not miles away from Polus, who repeatedly appeals to the authority of what he claims – not very persuasively – to be everyone else's opinion (see 466a-b, 468e6-9, 469c3, 470c4-5, 471d-472c, 471e1, 473e4-5, 474b6-10). Astrid's condition is also similar to what Socrates describes as the condition of conventionally successful orators, in that they achieve what they think of as power only by becoming "similar in their very nature" (*autophuōs homoion*) to the rulers within their respective cities (see 512b-513c). Among other things, this must entail believing that what is best is whatever the rulers believe it to be.

Now consider the question that Socrates would ask Polus about Astrid: in sending WC her letter of intent, although Astrid does what she thinks best, does she do what she wants?

If we follow Barney's interpretation, we can identify two relatively independent desires in this case – Astrid's general desire to attend the best college and her local desire to send the letter to WC for the sake of attending the best college, and perhaps for the sake of one or several

mid-level goods, like the praise and approval of her parents, or the prestige associated with attending WC, or the fortifying hope of a new and enriching chapter in her life. Astrid's general desire to attend the best college stands in for the "underspecified standing desire for 'the good, whatever it may really be.'" Barney specifies that this desire is, or perhaps underwrites, a second-order desire that bears on more local, first-order desires. To apply this to the present case, Astrid wants to want to send the letter to the best college. But because her desire to send the letter to WC fails in this regard, this desire is "inauthentic, false to [Astrid's] own aims in desiring." The desire to send the letter to WC nevertheless motivates Astrid's action. It is the immediate psychological cause of the action, the desire in virtue of which we must say that in sending the letter to WC Astrid does what she wants.

This last claim is the sort that Barney says undermines the conclusion of the DA, where Socrates falsely implies that whether an agent wants to do something depends on whether the action is actually good, regardless of what the agent thinks about it. Barney would have us say that Astrid wants {to attend the best college, whatever that entails} and wants {to send the letter to WC}, even though the fact of the matter is that WC is not the best college. Barney takes Socrates' argument to suggest that because Astrid wants {to send the letter to WC} for the sake of fulfilling her desire {to attend the best college, whatever that entails}, she wants{to send the letter to WC} provided that WC is the best college, whether Astrid believes it is or not. Because WC is not in fact the best college, Socrates would say that Astrid does not want {to send the letter to WC}. Barney objects that since Astrid is unaware of the fact that WC is not the best college, and since this fact does not enter into the content of the desire on which she acts, it is irrelevant to determining what Astrid wants.

But we need not conceive of Astrid's two desires in the way that Barney suggests. If we think of Astrid's local desire, which motivates her to send the letter, as thoroughgoingly dependent upon her general desire to attend the best college – either as an extension of the general desire, or as a distinct desire that derives from and depends for its content and continued existence upon the general desire – then we can apply Socrates' remarks in the DA to this case without reservations. Consider 468c2-7:

> we don't want to slaughter people, or exile them from their cities and confiscate their property as such; we want to do these things if they are beneficial, but if they're harmful we don't. For we want the good things, as you agree, and we don't want the things that are neither good nor bad, nor the ones that are bad. (adapted from Zeyl's translation)

Barney says that Socrates equivocates here between two thoughts: that if someone does not think an action will benefit her, she will not form the desire to perform it; and that if an action turns out not to benefit an agent, she did not want to perform it. Barney argues that Socrates derives the conclusion of the DA from only the second thought, which she takes to imply that the condition at issue – that an action be beneficial or good – is external to the psychology of the agent, and therefore external to the intentional content of the desire that motivates the action. To put it formally, because we want good things, an agent wants {to ϕ} provided that her ϕ-ing is best. But Socrates' language admits of another interpretation, namely that the condition is internal to the intentional content of the motivating desire. That is, an agent wants {to ϕ, provided that my ϕ-ing is best}.

This is not to say that the agent wants to ϕ and believes that her ϕ-ing is best. Barney and I agree that, according to Socrates, an agent who intentionally ϕ-s must both want to ϕ and believe that her ϕ-ing is best. Nor is it to say that some fact about ϕ-ing (whether it is best or not) suffices for an agent to want to ϕ or not want to ϕ, regardless of whether the agent is aware

of this fact, or of the relationship between this fact and her desire. This is how things would be if the erroneous conclusion that Barney sees in the DA were true: the agent would want {to ϕ} provided that her ϕ-ing is best, and correlatively the agent would not want {to ϕ} if her ϕ-ing were not best. Nor is it to say that an agent's desire to ϕ depends upon two kinds of conditions, which are both necessary and jointly sufficient for her to want to ϕ: her psychological state (her desire for what is best and her belief that ϕ-ing is best) and some fact about the world (that ϕ-ing is best). On my interpretation Socrates should affirm this complex claim, but it does not express the full meaning of my formulation – an agent wants {to ϕ, provided that my ϕ-ing is best}. Finally, it is not to say that the agent wants to ϕ and wants ϕ-ing to be best, which would imply incorrectly that the agent has reasons to desire ϕ apart from ϕ's being best.

Rather, my formulation is meant to capture that it is because of an agent's psychological state that the fact that ϕ-ing is best is necessary for her to want {to ϕ}. Her desire to ϕ functions as an extension of her desire for what is best, just as the desire for some means may function as an extension of a desire for the end to which it is a means. If an agent desires the end, and has no independent desire for the means apart from its serving the end, then if the means turns out in fact not to serve this end, we are warranted in concluding, at least in some cases, that she did not desire this means after all. I will explain this thought in greater detail below, in relation to the case of Astrid. But in general, although an agent's desire for what is best and her belief that ϕ-ing is best are both necessary, and jointly sufficient, for her to want {to ϕ, provided that her ϕ-ing is best}, in order for her to want {to ϕ}, it must be true that ϕ-ing fulfills her desire for what is best – the desire from which her provisional desire derives. And it is because the agent wants {to ϕ, provided that her ϕ-ing is best} that she wants {to ϕ} only if ϕ-ing is in fact best.[8]

[8] I am indebted to Agnes Callard for this approach to explaining the meaning of the provisional formulation. For the distinction between what they call "conditional desires," in which the condition for desiring some object is internal

I will argue that relative to Barney's, my provisional conception of desire sits better with Socrates' reasoning in the DA and captures what Socrates sees as the intentional content of individuated, practicable desires that derive from and depend upon an agent's "underspecified standing desire for 'the good, whatever it may really be.'" Let me begin by applying this conception to Astrid. On my reading of the DA Socrates would say that Astrid's desire {to attend the best college, whatever that entails} is the same desire that motivates her to send the letter to WC.[9] This desire is effectively extended, so as to become or generate the localized desire of sending the letter to WC, only when Astrid's beliefs about what satisfying her desire entails become more specific. But the intentional content of Astrid's general desire does not become more specific in just the same way that her beliefs do. Astrid believes that in sending the letter to WC she is thereby promoting her aim of attending the best college. But her general desire to attend the best college retains its indefinite character. Socrates says that we do not want to do what is intermediate as such, and accordingly Astrid's desire to attend the best college does not become a desire {to send the letter to WC} as such, or a desire {to attend WC} as such; nor does Astrid generate a desire for either of these things that is independent of her desire to attend the best college. We want to do what is intermediate if it is good, and accordingly Astrid wants {to send the letter to WC, provided WC is the best college}, and {to attend WC, provided WC is the best college}. Put generally, with respect to actions that she performs for the sake of this end, Astrid wants {to ϕ, provided that ϕ-ing promotes the end of attending the best college}, where ϕ-ing may be instrumental to attending the best college (as sending the letter to WC is

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to the intentional content of the desire (A desires {X if Y}), and "hypothetical desires," in which the condition for desiring some object is external to the intentional content of the desire (A desires {X} if Y), see McDaniel and Bradley 272. In these terms, the kind of desire that Barney sees in the erroneous conclusion of the DA is a hypothetical desire, whereas what I call a "provisional desire" is a conditional desire.

[9] It might be objected that because what is provisional does not have force in general, if a desire is provisional it cannot have motivational force. I would deny the major premise. Provisional agreements allow things to go forward while a fuller agreement can be negotiated, provisional sleeping quarters afford one a place to sleep until permanent quarters can be secured, and so forth. My thanks to Gabriel Lear for this thought.

meant to be) or constitutive of it (as attending WC is meant to be, or as *e.g.*, turning up to the classes in which she enrolls at WC would be). Although it is true that Astrid does not want {to send the letter to WC} if WC is not the best college, we can explain the relationship between Astrid's desire and this condition by way of the desire's intentional content: {to send the letter to WC, provided WC is the best college}.

We might note on Barney's behalf that her interpretation does not require us to say that Astrid wants {to send the letter to WC} as such, but rather that Astrid wants {to send the letter to WC} for the sake of attending the best college, and/or for the sake of G, where G is (or are) some mid-level good(s). Thus on Barney's interpretation, as on my own, Astrid's desire to send the letter depends upon a desire to attend the best college. But Barney makes this dependence relation weaker than I do. Barney would maintain that if Astrid did not have the desire to attend the best college, she would not have generated an otherwise independent desire to send the letter; whereas on my interpretation the latter desire entirely depends upon the former, and functions as an extension or manifestation of it. Hence I can follow Socrates, as Barney does not, in concluding that because Astrid does not do what is best, she does not do what she wants to do.

Underlying Barney's rejection of such a conclusion seems to be a view that the desire motivating an action must be an independent desire for that action, a view that I reject. Without generating an independent desire {to attend WC}, Astrid's desire {to attend the best college} combines with her belief that WC is the best college, and motivates Astrid to attend WC. It does so by effectively extending itself so as to become or generate a desire {to attend WC, provided it is the best college}. The desire {to attend the best college} is not a desire for the action that it motivates; but neither is the provisional desire {to attend WC, provided it is the best college},

because the action that it motivates fails to meet the provision specified in its intentional content.[10]

6.2. Astrid the Expert

Several unusual features of the Astrid case may seem suspiciously amenable to the conclusions I draw from it. Astrid is ignorant of what makes for a good college in general. Her desire to attend the best college is translated into a desire to send the letter to WC by means of a vanishingly small set of beliefs regarding BC and WC, in that she believes that WC is the better college for her purely on the authority of her parents. All of this makes it easier to accept that Astrid's motivation to attend WC derives entirely from her desire to attend the best college, and that while this latter desire is firmly rooted in her, her motivation to send the letter to WC is not; that what motivates Astrid to send the letter to WC is her desire to attend the best college; and that the intentional content of her immediately motivating desire reflects the unsettled state of her beliefs about WC – she wants {to send the letter to WC, provided WC is the best college}.

It might seem impossible that a desire should remain provisional in this manner if the agent's beliefs about its object are better elaborated. Perhaps Astrid's desire to send the letter to WC could not be a provisional desire if she had a much fuller and more settled set of beliefs about WC.

[10] McDaniel and Bradley argue that in cases in which the provision in a provisional desire (they call it the "condition" in a "conditional desire") is not fulfilled – whether or not the agent believes that this provision is fulfilled – we should conclude that the desire is canceled rather than frustrated (see McDaniel and Bradley 277, 289, 292). It is difficult to tell whether McDaniel and Bradley would see these claims as compatible with Socrates' reasoning in the DA, as I read it. They might claim, for instance, that Astrid has no desire to attend WC, given that this desire is cancelled; and correlatively that, according to Socrates, agents can never desire anything that is not in fact good. Whatever they say about this, one advantage of characterizing Astrid's provisional desire to attend WC as an effective manifestation of her desire to attend the best college is that nothing prevents McDaniel and Bradley from agreeing that Astrid's desire to attend the best college is frustrated by her action rather than cancelled; and that because Astrid's action is motivated by her desire to attend the best college, it is not motivated by a cancelled desire.

But consider an agent who possesses all of the knowledge relevant to her action except for some single, crucial fact, about which she has a false belief.[11] For this purpose let us transform Astrid into Astrid the Expert ($Astrid_E$). $Astrid_E$ also wants to attend the best college that she can. But unlike Astrid, $Astrid_E$ has expert knowledge of the merits of BC and the harm that attending WC will do her. She applies to WC only to appease her parents, but never wants to become a WC student. When she receives both letters of acceptance $Astrid_E$ instantly decides to attend BC, and maintains her resolution throughout her parents' attempts to talk her out of it. Devoted WC alumni that they are, however, $Astrid_E$'s parents turn to subterfuge. They subtly doctor the letter of intent to WC and, when the time comes for $Astrid_E$ to sign, they leave the letter to WC on $Astrid_E$'s desk where she expects to find the letter to BC. $Astrid_E$ is deceived. She signs the letter of intent to WC, believing she is thereby securing her place at BC. And without discovering the truth she mails the letter off to WC.

As was the case with Astrid, so it is plausible to conclude that $Astrid_E$ does not do what she wants. True, the deception only succeeds because at the time at which she acts, what $Astrid_E$ does (sign the letter to WC) appears to her to be what she wants to do (sign the letter to BC). Because of the resemblance we might be tempted to infer that when she acts, $Astrid_E$ wants *e.g.*, {to send the letter of intent that is on the desk}, and that this is just what she does. But this characterization is unfaithful to the subjective content of $Astrid_E$'s desire, even if "$Astrid_E$ sends the letter that she finds on the desk" may be a faithful description, albeit a narrow one, of her action's objective content. There is a strict correspondence between $Astrid_E$'s understanding of the conditions under which sending the letter would be beneficial and the conditions under which it really would be beneficial. $Astrid_E$ knows that sending the letter of intent to BC will secure her place at the best college for her. So we can say, without any danger of equivocation between

[11] This is the kind of case that most concerns Penner and Santas (see Penner 1991: 194; Santas 316).

subjective and objective construals of the protasis, that "if it benefits her, Astrid_E wants to send the letter on the desk." The provision that the letter on the desk is the letter to BC is an essential component of the conscious, subjective content of Astrid_E's desire to send the letter on the desk. She wants {to send the letter on the desk} only under the description {to send the letter on the desk, provided it is the letter to BC}. On this description Astrid_E does not do what she wants. Nevertheless there is no mystery about which desire motivates Astrid_E to send the letter to WC, or how it does so.

6.3. Astrid the Doubter

Astrid and Astrid_E stand at two extremes with respect to the knowledge of what it is best to do in their circumstances. Normally we occupy a middle ground between the two, especially with respect to actions that we anticipate will define the future course of our lives. The vast majority of prospective students choosing between colleges are more like Astrid the Doubter (Astrid_D). Astrid_D is neither as ignorant as Astrid nor as well informed as Astrid_E regarding which college will be best for her, and regarding what makes for a good college in general. She has gleaned what she can from guidance counselors, tour guides, current students, published materials and so forth. But her understanding of the decision she faces remains quite limited. Her parents' judgment that she ought to attend WC is important to Astrid_D but she is far less certain than they are that WC will be best for her. That she believes this is a momentous decision makes Astrid_D's doubts about it all the more uncomfortable. With the deadline fast approaching, and confident only that she will not be able to reach a more reliable judgment before it arrives, Astrid_D sends her letter of intent to WC.

Does Astrid_D do what she wants? If we adopt the provisionalist conception of desire we must say here as well that she does not. As with Astrid and Astrid_E, Astrid_D's master desire is to attend the best college for her, and she wants {to send the letter to WC, provided WC is the best college}. Astrid_D must act on the beliefs in which she puts the greatest stock when the time to act arrives, however much and however frequently these beliefs have shifted as she researches and deliberates. But her desire to attend the best college will not alter along with her beliefs, and will motivate her final decision whatever the state of these beliefs.

We might still deny that Astrid_D's immediately motivating desire can remain provisional, even if her beliefs about which college is best are never settled. Imagine that, at the moment of decision, we ask Astrid_D what she wants to do, and even as she signs the letter of intent to WC, she responds, "I don't know. I just want to attend the best college." If we follow Barney's interpretation, we should say that this is just a manner of speaking on Astrid_D's part, that in spite of her doubts Astrid_D really has two distinct desires – a desire to attend the best college and a desire to send the letter to WC. We might insist on Barney's behalf: "But you're signing the letter to WC just now – clearly that's what you want to do." Suppose that Astrid_D replies, "I'm not sure that I do. But I'm signing the letter anyhow because I'm out of time and I can't figure this out." There are several ways to interpret such an answer.

Barney might hold her ground and say that Astrid_D is evincing a desire to sign the letter to WC, a desire that she does not avow because she is dissatisfied with the process by which she has generated, evaluated or revised it. But we might instead credit claims like Astrid_D's, in which an agent professes ignorance of the desire that motivates her even as she acts, and for one of two reasons, or perhaps for both in some cases. Such an agent might have an imperfect understanding of the contents of her own psyche. Cases of this sort are familiar to readers of

Freud, as when an individual wants X but, by way of a winding series of unconscious associations between X and Y, the desire for X motivates her to pursue Y instead. Alternatively an agent might not yet have mapped to her satisfaction the practical terrain she is trying to navigate, as Astrid_{D} has not. This is similar to the sort of case that is foregrounded in the DA, a case in which an individual wants some object and, before she has determined what this object entails, her desire for it motivates her to act. For the Astrids this object is to attend the best possible college; for all agents, according to Socrates, it is the good. Allowing for either kind of case – the Freudian or the Socratic – entails rejecting the view that for every motivation to perform some action, there must be an independent desire for that action.

Freud allows for cases in which an agent is ignorant of the content of the desire on which she acts even when she feels certain about it, and nothing prevents Socrates from doing the same. Astrid_{D}'s explicit confession of her own ignorance might make us more likely to believe that she does not know precisely what the desire on which she acts is a desire for, but Socrates can plausibly attribute to another agent the same kind of ignorance even if she is disinclined to give such a confession. His claim that tyrants and orators do practically nothing that they want to do involves just this sort of attribution (466d8-e2).

6.4. Astrid the Unjust

Finally consider the case that, among those I will discuss here, comes closest to the kind that Socrates has in mind in the DA, the case of Astrid the Unjust (Astrid_{U}). No less than the other Astrids, Astrid_{U} has a strong desire to attend the best possible college for her. But Astrid_{U}'s parents have done their utmost to ensure that when she is faced with the decision between colleges Astrid_{U} will conclude on her own, without further guidance from them, that

WC is the best college she can attend. From a young age they have acquainted Astrid_U with the ins and outs of their careers in politics and public relations, have explained how their constant efforts to suppress their political enemies are wise and prudent, have made clear how their education at WC has been instrumental in producing the luxury and the status that Astrid_U enjoys, have brought her to admire the underhanded maneuvers of the more notorious WC alumni, and so forth. Astrid_U is thus well informed about WC, and believes it offers her the best education she could possibly receive. She is prepared to attend BC in the event that WC does not admit her. But once both acceptance letters reach her, she does not hesitate to send her letter of intent to WC.

Behind Astrid_U's bad decision is an extensive web of false beliefs about what a good college consists in. Are we therefore compelled to say that, unlike the other Astrids, Astrid_U does what she wants to do? It is true that persuading Astrid_U that she does not want to send the letter to WC would be a far more difficult process than it would be with any of the other Astrids. But a desire to attend the best college may be the primary conative mover for Astrid_U as well. Even if nothing will persuade Astrid_U that WC is not the best college for her, it is possible for her to be motivated to send the letter to WC by a desire to attend the best college, and by no other, independent desire. Understood in this way, we can say just as well about Astrid_U that her desire to send the letter to WC is provisional, and that in sending the letter to WC she does not do what she wants.

7.1. Answering Barney's Objections

Barney's objections to the DA should not prevent us from applying Socrates' argument to cases like those of the Astrids. Consider Barney's first objection, that the key steps of the DA

depend on an equivocation. That this objection need not apply to the Astrid cases becomes clear if we insert their details into the steps in the DA that Barney targets:

> Premise 1: When $Astrid_X$[12] sends the letter to WC, she wants to do so because she believes it will secure her place at the best college.
>
> Premise 2: $Astrid_X$ does not want to send the letter by itself; if this secures her place at the best college she wants to do it, but if it secures her place at the worst college she does not want to do it; for she wants to attend the best college, but she does not want to send the letter to WC as such (what is intermediate), or to secure her place at the worst college.
>
> Conclusion: Because sending the letter secures her place at the worst college $Astrid_X$ does not do what she wants.

Seeing this as an unproblematic account of each of the cases I have discussed depends primarily on accepting two claims for which I have argued: (1) it is possible for a desire for some indefinite end (*e.g.*, attending the best college) to motivate an agent to perform some intermediate action without generating an entirely independent desire for that action; (2) in cases like those of the Astrids, in which an agent is ignorant about some crucial aspect of the object of her motivating desire, this desire may not be for the action that it motivates; on the provisional formulation, this will occur when she acts on a desire {to do X, provided that X is good} and falsely believes that X is good.[13]

These claims also lay the ground for a response to Barney's second objection, that the DA leaves us no sense of which desire motivates an agent to perform an intermediate action that she does not want to perform, or, more generally, of how "real desires for the real good actually contribute to our psychological economy." Among the actions that we think are available to us,

[12] $Astrid_X$ stands in for any of the Astrids.

[13] It is standard to deny voluntariness when an agent is ignorant of the particulars of her action, as Aristotle does (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1110b-1111a). Although it is not standard to deny voluntariness on the grounds that an agent is ignorant of whether her desire is for something good, and Aristotle indicates that this kind of ignorance does not disqualify one's actions from being voluntary (see *ibid*. 1110b28-1111a1, 1111a23-30). I owe this connection to Gabriel Lear.

desire for the good – with the mediation of provisional desires – will motivate us to do whatever we think is best, even if our beliefs about what is best are so faulty that we never do what we want.

So long as claims 1 and 2 are plausible we can arrive at an interpretation of the DA that possesses the virtues of Barney's normativist interpretation but manages to preserve the literal meaning of the text. We can see Socrates articulating a serious philosophical position in the DA, which allows him to explain how desire for the good motivates unsuccessful actions. And if all actionable desires are effectively extensions of a desire for the good, we can understand the DA to be about actions of all kinds.

7.2. Unintuitive Features of Provisionalism

However well it fits the DA, provisionalism does carry several implications that, to borrow a phrase from Callicles, turn our thinking upside down (481c1-4). On the provisionalist conception, a desire will be provisional so long as its object is not good, no matter the state of the agent's beliefs. Astrid_{U}'s desire to attend WC would be provisional even though her beliefs about what she is doing are highly elaborated and firmly established in her soul. Leaving aside Astrid_{E}, who does not want to attend WC at all, every Astrid's desire to attend would remain provisional throughout her time as a student there, and she would not want to do any of the things involved in attending WC even as she does them. She would not want to arrive on campus in time for orientation, to stay awake in class, to complete her exams and so forth.

The provisionalist conception of desire does allow for several kinds of scenarios in which one would do what one wants, however rare they might be. This would occur when one acts on knowledge that what one does is best, or on one of two kinds of true belief that this is so.

Knowledge that one's action is best would be quite demanding, insofar as it must encompass both the relevant particulars of one's action and what is best for one in general, as well as whatever intermediate goods relate the former to the latter. This is the only kind of case in which it is possible to say that an agent's local desire is not provisional. It will be true of the knowledgeable agent as well that she desires what she desires only provided it is best, and that she would no longer be motivated to pursue what she pursues should she come to believe it is not best. But since she knows that the immediate object of her desire is best, her desire for this object is as surely for what is good as her generalized desire for the good is.

Any agent who lacks knowledge that her action is best but nevertheless does what she wants must have true belief that her action is best. Among such agents the one who is intellectually best off will have true beliefs about what she does and why it is good. But she must not understand at least some of the reasons why she is right about these things, or else she would know that her action is best.

An agent with false beliefs about the content of her action might also do what she wants by virtue of some external cause. That is, she might want {to do X, provided that X is best} but unintentionally do Y, where Y happens to be best. Imagine Astrid unintentionally sending her letter of intent to BC, believing it to be the letter to WC. In a case like this the agent would do what she wants in one sense, insofar as she does what is best and thereby fulfills her desire for the good as it pertains to this action; but she would not do what she wants in another sense, insofar as she does not do X. This agent will have true belief that she does what is best, but a false belief about what she does.

An agent might also do what she wants even though she has false beliefs about what makes her action best. That is, she might want {to do X, provided that X is best}, and believe

that X is best because it promotes intermediate good A; but, unbeknownst to her, X is best because it promotes intermediate good B. Imagine that Astrid becomes a philosophy major at BC because she thinks this will allow her to distance herself from her parents. As it happens, she is wrong about what becoming a philosophy major will accomplish – she finds herself bonding with her parents as they have longer, more profound conversations, and she becomes more financially dependent on her parents than she might have been had she become a business major. But because of her philosophy major she forms a habit of thinking seriously about what it means to live well, which benefits her more than any other major would. In a case like this the agent would do what she wants in some respects: she performs the immediate action that her provisional desire is for, and she does what is best. But she does not do what she wants in another respect: her action does not produce the intermediate good in virtue of which she wants to perform it, an intermediate good that she also desires provisionally.[14]

[14] Agnes Callard argues that in the DA Socrates rules out the possibility of this kind of case, one in which an agent does what she wants even though she is mistaken about why her action is good (see Callard 2017 635-636, 638-9). Her argument also implicates the previous kind of case I discussed, in which an agent does what she wants even though she has false beliefs about the content of her action. Callard cites 467c7-d5, a section in which Socrates notes that patients take medicines for the sake of being healthy, and that seafarers make dangerous and troublesome voyages for the sake of being wealthy, and for other such ends. She argues that in this passage Socrates "make[s] the desire to, for example, take a sea voyage depend on the production of wealth specifically" because he means to indicate that when she acts, any agent who does what she wants will have in mind the kind of good that she obtains by means of her action; and correlatively that any agent who, in acting, does not do what she wants thereby fails to achieve the specific kind of good she has in mind when she acts, and so "fails by [her] own lights" (635-636). As an example of this latter kind of case, Callard mentions a tyrant who mistakes his greatest supporter for an enemy, and exiles her in order to prevent her from poisoning him (see 638-9). Because the supporter will not be around to protect the tyrant from the real poisoner, in exiling her the tyrant fails to achieve the specific good that he sought in doing so – preserving his health – and therefore does not do what he wants. But this interpretation is at odds with Socrates' larger explanation of why tyrants fail to do what they want (and therefore have no power – see 467b-479e). This is not because they fail to achieve the kinds of goods they have in view when they act – Archelaus, whom Polus cites as a happy tyrant, succeeded in murdering his rivals and ruled Macedonia for 14 years (see 470d). It is because they fail to achieve a kind of good that they do not have in view, namely justice, and the promotion of their own virtue. For as Socrates argues, doing injustice means suffering the greatest evil, and being deprived of the benefit of any other putative good one might obtain (see 468e-469c, 472c-473b, 476a-479e, 504e-505b, 507a-508a, 510e-511a).

8. Conclusion

I have argued that we can make sense of the DA without altering it so long as we see Socrates as a provisionalist about desire. Provisionalism enables Socrates to tie an agent's fulfillment of her desire through action to the real, objective success of the action that it motivates, and therefore to infer from an action's failure to be good that the agent does not do what she wants. I have also argued that even if it is not entirely intuitive, we should not refrain from attributing provisionalism to Socrates on the grounds that it is absurd or otherwise indefensible.

I have said little in this chapter about the nature of the constraints that the provisionalist conception of desire imposes upon all agents' beliefs, apart from the stipulation that in acting, agents believe that what they do is good. Although it rules out the possibility that an agent will perform an action that she does not believe good in any sense, we could imagine this doxastic requirement being fulfilled in any number of different ways. This is as it should be with a theory that narrows significantly the form of the desires that motivate action, in that it must appeal largely to variety among beliefs in order to account for the variety we encounter in the phenomena associated with motivation and action. But I will argue in the next chapter that in the *Gorgias*, wherever we find a characterization of an agent's beliefs in the goodness of her actions,

however impulsive or wicked or pleasure-seeking those actions are, the agent believes her actions to be fine and virtuous, good in a highly demanding sense.[15]

[15] My understanding of Socrates' conception of desire in the *Gorgias* is similar in some respects to Penner's (see Penner 1991: *passim*, especially 170 *ff.*). One notable difference is that Penner identifies the ultimate object of all desire as *eudaimōnia*, a move that some commentators have criticized on phenomenological grounds (see *e.g.*, Barney 40-41). My interpretation avoids this criticism by allowing for greater flexibility on the question of what "good" or "best" entails in formulations of the intentional content of desires. But Penner's critics would likely raise similar concerns about my account in Chapter 2 of what are presented in the *Gorgias* as the doxastic requirements upon action. I hope to demonstrate at least that their concerns should be addressed to Socrates and Plato, and not only to me.

2

Callicles, Virtue Ethicist: The Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I developed an interpretation of the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias* (467c-468e), arguing that it is coherent and sensible as it appears in the text, and that its conclusion depends on a conception of desire that is philosophically appealing. In this chapter I will focus primarily on Socrates' account of rhetoric, and on the conversation between Socrates and Callicles. In doing so I have three related aims.

The first grows directly out of the Desire Argument. The Argument's conclusion, that if someone does what happens to be bad then she does not do what she wants, is a corollary of what I, following Rachel Barney, have called the "Reality Thesis" – the view that everyone desires what is really good (see Barney 2010: 35, 468d1-7). In this chapter I will argue that the *Gorgias* is essential for understanding what Barney calls the "Appearance Thesis," which she characterizes as the thesis that "all desire is for the apparent good – that is, for an object the desiring agent *takes* to be good" (Barney 2010: 35, Barney's emphasis). Because my interpretation of the Desire Argument makes it possible for agents not to desire the objects they take themselves to desire, it requires a revision of Barney's characterization of the Appearance Thesis: in order to act an agent must believe her motivating desire to be for what is good, and correlatively she must believe that the action she is motivated to perform is a good one. This revision avoids identifying the apparent good with the real object of each desire, of which an agent may be unaware. This formulation allows that a desire may motivate an agent to pursue

some object that she does not in fact desire, although she believes that she desires it; and likewise, that a desire may motivate an agent to do what she does not want to do, although she believes she wants to do it. On my reading this is Socrates' preferred description of cases in which an agent does something that is not good, although she believes it to be good.[1] And as I have rendered them, together the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis dictate that all provisional desire is for what an agent believes to be good, provided it really is good.[2]

On any formulation of the Appearance Thesis, however, Socrates employs a corollary of it as a premise within the Desire Argument when he claims that whenever we act we are pursuing the good, thinking it better to do what we do (see 468b1-7).[3] Because Polus accepts this claim straight away it passes by without argument or explanation. Interpretations of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias* have therefore looked elsewhere in order to work out exactly what it entails – to other dialogues in which the Thesis is more prominent, but primarily to general philosophical considerations. Although there are significant differences between them, the overwhelming majority of the recent interpretations of the Appearance Thesis are what I will call "minimalist interpretations." By this I mean that they understand the Appearance Thesis to

[1] It may be wondered how Socrates thinks of the causal and temporal relationship between taking an object to be good and desiring it. Does taking an object to be good cause one to desire it? Must it? Or must taking an object to be good perhaps precede one's desiring it, even if it does not always cause one to desire it? Can taking an object to be good follow from one's desiring it, whether caused by one's desiring it or not? These questions arise most often in discussions of Socrates' views about *akrasia*, and different commentators have given different answers to all of them (see Brickhouse and Smith 24-28; Carone 130-135; Cooper 1982: 581-583; Devereux 392-396; Penner 1996: 199-201; Reshotko 77-88; Scott 29; Weiss 2007: 94-99). By itself my formulation of the Appearance Thesis need not commit Socrates to answering these questions in any particular way, so long as at the moment of action, an agent possesses both a motivating desire and a belief that its object is good. The closest I will come to answering these questions is in Chapter 4, where I will argue that the lowest part of the soul can generate its own beliefs in the goodness of its desiderative objects, and therefore that the reckoning part (*to logistikon*) need not generate any such beliefs, which would be rationalizations caused by the motivating desires that they accommodate.

[2] I owe this combination of the two formulations to Gabriel Lear.

[3] Rachana Kamtekar argues that we need not take this claim as a corollary of the Appearance Thesis, or rather of her version of the Appearance Thesis – "the view that we only want to do what we believe to be the best of the things we can do, and that we either do not have or are not moved to act by any motivations contrary to this desire" – on the grounds that the Desire Argument is only about desires that motivate instrumental actions, whereas the Appearance Thesis is about the desires that motivate all actions (Kamtekar 2017: 83). But as I argued in the previous chapter, Kamtekar's justification for restricting the scope of the Desire Argument in this manner is faulty (see Chapter 1 n. 7).

impose minimal psychological requirements on agents, especially with respect to the sense in which they believe their actions and the objects of their motivating desires to be good. Barney, for instance, maintains that in order to desire a given object an agent must perform, or be capable of performing, what she calls two distinct "cognitive operations":

> One is the taking of some object to have a certain property—or, better, a set of properties, nested at different levels of generality and culminating in one or more 'mid-level' values: this is salty-and-thereby-delicious-and-thereby-pleasant, for instance. The other is the taking of this hierarchy of properties as *good*. There may or may not be an explicit or propositional judgment involved in these acts of cognition; but they are both acts of *classification*, and thus imply the possibility of universal judgments. *This* has *this* feature, and *this* feature is good: implicitly, *any* relevantly similar object would count as having this feature, and *anything* with this feature would count for us as to that extent good. And Plato's point seems to be that in principle, this provides an explanatory schema for the explanation of *all* human desire, which cannot take place without these cognitive acts. (Barney 2010: 44, Barney's emphasis)

Barney builds a good deal of flexibility into this explanation. This is likely in part because Socrates never explains in anything approaching this degree of detail what he takes the Appearance Thesis to mean. But it is certainly because of something that Socrates does make clear, that he takes the Appearance Thesis to hold for all actions of all agents (see especially 468b1-4). In light of its universal scope, minimalist interpretations are designed to enable the Appearance Thesis to adapt to the many actions that we seem to perform without actively or overtly thinking of them as good – actions that we undertake automatically, impulsively or without deliberation; or actions that we do not think of as good if we weigh all of the relevant considerations, although we take them to be pleasurable or advantageous or valuable in some other way. To account for actions of this sort, the thinking goes, the Appearance Thesis cannot entail that agents conceive of each action or desiderative object to be good, so long as either "conceive" or "good" has a robust sense. In formulations such as these, therefore, minimalist interpretations supply a loose sense of either one of these terms or – as Barney does – of both of

them. On Roslyn Weiss' rendering of the Appearance Thesis "good" means "attractive in any way" (see Weiss 1992: 92). Likewise Jessica Moss claims that in the *Gorgias* Socrates treats whatever is pleasant to someone as what appears good to her, a conception of pleasure that greatly reduces the set of actions that might be raised as counter-examples to the Appearance Thesis, or that neutralizes this line of objection entirely (see *e.g.*, Moss 2006: 513-515).[4]

But the *Gorgias* does not support the minimalist approach in one crucial respect. Nowhere in the text is an agent characterized as engaged in impulsive, pleasure-seeking or wicked actions that she conceives of as good in the minimalist sense. On the contrary, wherever there is a discussion of the mindset of such an agent, she is endowed with an expansive conception of the good in general, of the goodness of her actions, or of both. I will therefore argue that although our philosophical intuitions might nudge us in the direction of a minimalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis, the text of the *Gorgias* supports a maximalist interpretation. On this interpretation agents conceive of their actions as good in the sense that Socrates favors – they believe that their actions instantiate or promote good living, and health and virtue in particular. In the absence of a straightforward explanation of the Appearance Thesis from Socrates, I will attempt to tease out its contents from two areas of the text. One is Socrates' account of rhetoric. The other is the dialogue's portrayal of Callicles, who advocates for the kinds of actions that most animate minimalists. Before proceeding with my argument let me explain how I see the relationships between these three topics: the Appearance Thesis, rhetoric and Callicles.

The Appearance Thesis posits a doxastic condition upon action: an agent must believe the action she is motivated to perform is good. Within the confines of the *Gorgias* rhetoric is characterized along similar lines, as a means of laying the doxastic foundation for action,

[4] I will discuss this claim at length in §2.7.

although generally for the actions of groups rather than individuals.[5] Socrates and his interlocutors treat rhetoric as a means of persuading an audience of beliefs that decisively shape its actions in accordance with the orator's purpose (see 452d-e, 466a-b, 502d-e, 510a-511a, 521a-c).[6] If the overlap ended there it would remain possible that rhetoric should be a means of persuading an audience of beliefs that are of some practical relevance, but that are different from the belief that its actions are good – *e.g.*, beliefs about how to undertake actions that an audience already believes to be good. But Socrates also says that the orator convinces audiences that she is an expert statesman, that she knows what is best for them and is able to provide it (see 464a-b, 464d-e, 465b-e). On the understanding of these claims that I develop below, they leave little room for doubt that Socrates thinks the aim of rhetoric is to produce precisely the kind of belief mentioned in the Appearance Thesis.

Socrates' account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* is therefore an invaluable source of insight into the Appearance Thesis. The *Gorgias* does not anatomize the soul in any serious detail, a technique that in other dialogues affords a more direct illustration of the psychological mechanics of motivation and action (see *e.g.*, *Republic* 439c-441c, 553b-554e, 559d-561d, 571a-575a, 602c-603a; *Phaedrus* 246a-248d, 253c-254e; *Timaeus* 69b-72d, 86b-90d). But insofar as it portrays rhetoric as the practice of instilling in an audience beliefs that critically shape action, the *Gorgias* sets up the practice of rhetoric as the political analogue of an intrapsychic process.

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[5] One notable exception to this rule is Gorgias' claim that he often persuades patients to submit to painful medical procedures (see 456a-b).
In several places Socrates implies that the kind of rhetoric he criticizes is only one kind of rhetoric, and that a true craft of rhetoric is possible (see 462e-463a, 480a-481b, 502d-505b, 508b). When I mention rhetoric or orators without qualification I am referring to the kind of rhetoric that Socrates criticizes. And when I mention audiences I am referring to the kind of audience that is liable to be persuaded by rhetoric of this kind.

[6] Notably this is not the only way to think of rhetoric, and nor is it the only way that Plato thinks of rhetoric. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates discusses rhetoric that produces beliefs that are not directly relevant to action, and rhetoric that produces understanding or virtue (see *Phaedrus* 261a-e, 269e-272b, 277a-278b). In the *Republic* he makes it seem as if eliciting a particular emotional response, rather than a belief, may be the primary means by which rhetoric motivates an audience (see *Republic* 493a-c).

In the *Republic* Socrates turns to the just city because, relative to the just soul, it is a larger and therefore more readily intelligible object of investigation (see *Republic* 368c-369a). In the *Gorgias* rhetorical persuasion stands in roughly the same relation to the soul's formation of conviction, and affords similar epistemic advantages to the student of desire and motivation in Plato. If we wish to learn what it means for an agent to believe that an action is good, according to Socrates, we cannot neglect his account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*.

Unfortunately this account is deeply puzzling. At its heart is what I will call the "Grand Analogy," which presents rhetoric as one of four parts of flattery (*kolakeia*), each of which imitates one of the ruling crafts that care for body or soul. To explain the relations between flattery and the ruling crafts Socrates appears to attribute to those who participate in flattery – to the flatterers, the flattered or both – two apparently elemental views.[7] One is the judgment that flatterers are ruling craftsmen, a judgment made on the basis of the pleasure that flatterers provide; the second is a Socratic conception of the ruling crafts. Socrates appears to found on these views a set of beliefs about rhetoric and its bodily counterpart, which I will translate as "relish-making" (*opsopoiikē* – translated by others as "cookery" or "pastry baking"): that the orator provides what is best for the soul and makes it virtuous, and that the relish-maker provides diners with the healthiest breads or grains (*sitia* – translated by others as "food" or "foods"; 463a-b, 463d, 464a-e).[8] These attributions are at once under-explained, startlingly counter-intuitive and central to Socrates' account, but commentators have almost entirely passed them

[7] Socrates suggests that in order to succeed flatterers must become as similar as possible to the people on whom they practice, which gives us license to infer that they are meant to share the same basic views (see 512d-513c).

[8] For the translation of *opsopoiikē* as either "cookery" or "cooking," of *opsopoios* as "cook" or "chef," and of *opsa* as "dishes" or "food" see Arieti and Barrus, Irwin 1979, Lamb, Sachs, Waterfield; for the translation of *opsopoiikē* as "pastry baking," *opsopoios* as "pastry chef" and *opsa* as "pastry" or "pastries" see Dodds, Moss 2005b, Zeyl; and for the translation of *sitia* as "food" or "foods" see Arieti and Barrus, Irwin 1979, Lamb, Sachs, Waterfield, Zeyl. For an explanation of my own unusual translations of *opsopoiikē* and *sitia* – as well as of *opsopoios* ("relish-maker") and *opsa* ("relishes") – see §3 below. It bears mentioning here that Socrates uses two other terms to refer to *opsopoiikē*: *opsopoiia* (see *e.g.*, 462d9) and *tēn mageirikēn technēn* (500b4-5).

over without remark. In this chapter I will attempt to resolve the interpretive difficulties that they present.

If Socrates attributed to those who participate in flattery Socratic or quasi-Socratic conceptions of health and virtue, his general account of their mindset could not avoid being either nonsensical or mistaken. No one acquainted with the basic facts about relish-makers and orators could think that they make people healthy and virtuous in this way. I will argue that Socrates instead attributes to those who participate in flattery a conception of health and virtue according to which the experience of pleasure both realizes and fosters the good condition of body and soul.[9] This interpretation enables us to preserve Socrates' claims in the Grand Analogy and his larger account of rhetoric.

The road to this conception of health and virtue runs through Callicles. As I will demonstrate, Socrates gives several indications that Callicles exemplifies the mindset of orators and their audiences, and of those who participate in flattery more generally. This makes Callicles' disjointed account of the good life, which identifies the satisfaction of maximally enlarged appetites with virtue and happiness, directly pertinent to the interpretation of the Grand Analogy (see 482c-486d, 488b-492e, 494b-495c). I will argue that although Callicles' core views are neither carefully expressed nor well defended, they are substantial enough to plug the psychological gaps in Socrates' account of rhetoric. In a nutshell, I take Callicles to conceive of health and virtue as something like vigor, and to believe that the satisfaction of one's appetites attests to one's being in good condition, properly attuned to good things.

[9] What is the difference between this interpretation and Moss', according to which whatever is pleasant to someone appears good to her? On my interpretation, for an agent who takes what is pleasant to be good, this belief is grounded in a conception of wellbeing that is entirely absent from Moss'. For Moss, there is little to be said about what it must mean to an agent to find something pleasant other than that it appears good to her, and likewise finding something pleasant is just one of the ways of finding it good. Moss' account implies that if we were to try to excavate the beliefs that enable an agent to identify whatever pleases her as good, although we might turn up something for some agents, we need not turn up anything beyond the identification itself.

In Callicles we also have a portrait of an agent who is motivated to perform the kinds of actions concern about which drives commentators to minimalist interpretations of the Appearance Thesis. The minimalist interpretation offers a means of explaining how an agent might believe in the goodness of actions whose value she never pauses to consider, actions that have nothing to recommend them to an agent other than their feeling pleasant at the moment, or actions that most people would consider bad or unjustifiable. Callicles enthusiastically recommends actions like these as he explains to Socrates that the best life is defined by impulsiveness, hedonistic indulgence and freedom from practical restraint of any kind. But in doing so his approach is strikingly maximalist. He assents to the claim that the pleasant and the good are the same, and to a series of questions about whether experiencing pleasure makes one good *qua* virtuous (see 494a, 497e, 498c-e). He declines to argue that his ideal man, the "strong man," is a scoundrel with a kind of prudential genius, or an enlightened egoist in a world in which all considerations of virtue and fineness (*to kalon*) are fanciful nonsense. Instead he embraces the view that the happy person is virtuous and admirable. In making virtues of a set of qualities that, like intemperance and lawlessness, are generally considered vices, Callicles' account of the good life takes on a nightmarish symmetry to Socrates' (see 483b-484c, 491b-c, 491e-492c, 503c-d, 522c4-6). Beyond the content of these professed ideals, the manner in which Callicles advocates for them, as well as his behavior in the dialogue more generally, reveal the contours of his conception of the good, the doxastic grounding for the actions he intends to pursue. And the same tendencies that make Callicles a useful case study for the maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis enable Socrates to get a grip on him in the argument. Because he is invested in being fine and virtuous, and in portraying his ideal life as such, Callicles affords Socrates argumentative leverage over him when he tries to articulate what the

good is or makes sweeping claims about living well.[10] Hence although Socrates never offers a full explanation of the Appearance Thesis, Plato's depiction of Callicles, along with Socrates' account of rhetoric, provide ample substance for a maximalist interpretation of it.

In §2 I will argue that the Grand Analogy poses clear and urgent interpretive challenges, and that what appear to be the most straightforward means of resolving these challenges are insufficient. In §3 I will offer a small but vital clarification about relish-making that has downstream consequences for the way we understand the analogy between relish-making and rhetoric. In §4 I will argue that Socrates attributes to Callicles a conception of health and virtue that can help us fill the conspicuous hole in the Grand Analogy. In §5 I will discuss a distinctive form of intellectual dysfunction that Socrates attributes to Callicles and to those who participate in flattery, one that plays an essential role in explaining the mindset of these people. In §6 I will explain how I understand this mindset and its relationship to Socrates' strange remarks in the Grand Analogy. I will conclude in §7 with some thoughts about the place of this chapter in the larger dissertation.

2.1. The Grand Analogy

Socrates' account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* is odd, and piecing it together is difficult. But some of his individual claims about rhetoric are clear, sensible on their face and carefully integrated into the account: that rhetoric produces conviction without knowledge (454e-455a); that orators generally aim to speak persuasively on matters of public concern without knowing what is best in these matters (459b-c); that in speaking orators aim to say not what is best for

[10] I owe this thought to Agnes Callard.

their audiences but what they take to promote their own private interests (502e-503a); that orators who succeed at persuading are widely mistaken for statesmen (463d, 464b-e, 515c-519b).

The claims about rhetoric that have most interested commentators lack some one or two of these qualities – clarity, intuitive appeal and integration into the larger account: that orators persuade by pleasing their audiences (462c, 464c-d, 465c-d, 500d-501c, 502d-e, 513d-e, 517a-519b, 521a); that rhetoric is not a craft because it aims only at pleasure, and because it does not entail knowledge of the nature of the soul, or of the means by which it produces its characteristic effects (see 463b, 465a, 500d-501c); that insofar as rhetoric aims only at pleasure it is a form of flattery, as are several other craft-like practices (463a-b, 463d, 464c-d, 465b-c, 465d-e, 500d-502d). [11]

In this chapter I will focus on a set of claims that are obviously central to the account of rhetoric but that are neither clear, nor carefully integrated into the account, nor superficially sensible. Or so I will argue in §2.2-2.4. These claims all either belong to or are essential for understanding Socrates' Grand Analogy between what he calls the four "ruling crafts" – two of the body, two of the soul – and four parts of flattery, with each part corresponding to one ruling craft (see 463a-466a). So far as I can tell no commentator has attempted a unified interpretation of Socrates' account of rhetoric that attends carefully to the details of the Grand Analogy.[12] The silence in the literature seems to suggest that with the Analogy Socrates is saying something either more or less self-evident, or else irretrievably obscure or misguided. In §2.4 I will argue that the former view is mistaken, that no successful interpretation of the Grand Analogy can take it to be saying something intuitive. In §3-6 I will argue that the latter view is mistaken as well,

[11] See *e.g.*, Irwin 134-137, 140; Kaufer 75-76; Miller; Roochnik 1994; Wolfsdorf 116-122; Woolf 2004.
[12] Moss has attempted something like a unified interpretation of the analogy, and I will discuss a part of her interpretation at length below. But she offers few responses to the questions I pose below (see Moss 2005b, especially 236, 249-242; see also Irwin 134-136).

that the Analogy is in fact coherent and insightful once we see how it fits with the rest of the dialogue.

2.2. The Demanding Reading and the Moderate Reading

In order to establish that the Grand Analogy presents a clear and urgent set of interpretive problems, I will defend what I will call a "demanding reading" of it. According to this reading the Analogy's four central claims are counter-intuitive, and are given no obvious justification in the text.

> (A) Orators pretend to be judges – or, more likely, statesmen[13] – in something quite like Socrates' sense.[14] Crucially this sense entails that orators pretend to know what is best for the soul.
>
> (B) Audiences credit the persuasive orator's appearance of expertise, believing that she knows what is best for their souls and provides it.
>
> (C) In all of these respects the orator is analogous to the relish-maker, who pretends to possess the craft of medicine and to know which breads (or grains) are best for the body, in the sense of what promotes bodily health and virtue.[15]
>
> (D) By providing them what is most pleasant, the successful relish-maker deceives diners into believing that she has medical expertise.

I will defend the demanding reading by demonstrating that a "moderate reading" of the Grand Analogy is untenable. On the moderate reading Socrates does not attribute to orators and their

[13] I say that this is more likely in large part because of T10 below, the claim that orators and sophists are quite similar and are frequently mixed up with one another (see also 520a-b). Given that sophistry "dons the mask" of the legislative craft, it seems that orators who stray into the territory of sophists thereby pretend to be not expert judges but expert legislators (see T6 and T7 below). Socrates also provides support for this reading over the course of the dialogue, as he generally treats as an orator anyone who speaks with merely apparent authority to public bodies on matters of state (see 502d-503d, 515c-521a).

[14] There are some aspects of Socrates' understanding of judges and statesmen that he plainly does not attribute to orators and their audiences. He cannot maintain, for instance, that orators and their audiences believe that judges and statesmen contend with citizens' appetites and do not give in to them (see 503d-505b, 517a-519b, 521a). As with many facets of the Grand Analogy, it is difficult to say exactly which beliefs about judges and statesmen Socrates attributes to orators and their audiences, and which he does not. I will leave aside the precise nature of these attributions, and focus on the one Socratic beliefs about statesmen that, as I will argue, Socrates unambiguously attributes to orators and their audiences: that statesmen know what is best for the soul.

[15] Socrates mentions beauty and strength as bodily virtues (see *e.g.*, 465b, 504b).

audiences his own beliefs about the function of the expert statesman, nor to the relish-maker or the diner any operative thoughts about medicine, or about what is good for the body in the demanding sense – what promotes bodily health and virtue. This renders his claims far less provocative.

> (~A) Orators pretend to know what is best, full-stop. They do not pretend to know what is best for the soul.
>
> (~B) Audiences believe that the orator provides what is best for them. They do not think this means that she provides what is best for their souls.
>
> (~C) The relish-maker pretends to know which breads (or grains) are best for the body only in an extremely undemanding sense, namely which breads are most pleasant to eat. She does not pretend to know which breads are best for the body in the demanding sense.
>
> (~D) The successful relish-maker convinces diners that she knows which breads are most pleasant to eat, best for the body in the undemanding sense only.

2.3. The Textual Basis of the Grand Analogy

In order to adjudicate between these two readings, and to lay the foundation for the remainder of the chapter, let me now offer what I intend to be a hermeneutically neutral inventory of the claims in the text that are essential for understanding the Grand Analogy. For the sake of clarity I will group some claims together.

> (T1) Even if they know nothing about a particular topic, orators have discovered some device for persuading the ignorant that they know more about it than a craftsman with expert knowledge about it. (459b6-c2)
>
> (T2) To the ignorant, whom she persuades, the orator seems to know more about the just and the unjust, the fine and the shameful (*asichron*), the good and the bad than those who really know about these things. (459c8-e1)
>
> (T3) Rhetoric, like relish-making, sophistry and personal styling (*kommōtikē*), seems to be a craft although it is not one. (463a6-b6, 463d1-2)

(T4) For both the body and the soul there is a good condition, on the one hand, and a merely apparently good condition on the other. There is something that makes the body seem to be well off when it is not, and without expert knowledge of the good condition of the body it is difficult to detect that a body that is merely apparently well off is not actually so. Likewise for the soul. (464a1-b1)

(T5) There are four ruling crafts, which rightfully oversee all of the other crafts that fall within their domains, as well as all of the judgments and actions that fall within their domains. Medicine and athletic training are the ruling crafts of the body and aim at what is best for it, namely health and bodily virtue. The juridical craft and the legislative craft are the ruling crafts of the soul and aim at what is best for it, namely virtue. Medicine corresponds to the juridical craft, and athletic training corresponds to the legislative craft. (464b2-c5, 504b7-c1, 513d1-e3, 517d6-518a5)

(T6) Flattery has many parts, of which four are images (*eidōla*) of the ruling crafts. Flattery divides itself into four and pretends to be (*prospoieitai einai*; or "dons the mask of" – *hupodusa hupo*) each of the ruling crafts. (463a6-b6, 463d1-2, 464c3-d1, 465b1-c3)

(T7) Relish-making is flattery disguised as medicine (*Tē*(*i*) *men oun iatrikē*(*i*)*...hē opsopoiikē kolakeia hupokeitai* – 465b1-2). Personal styling is flattery disguised as athletic training. As personal styling stands to athletic training, so stands sophistry to the legislative craft; and as relish-making stands to medicine, so stands rhetoric to the juridical craft. Rhetoric is the antistrophe of relish-making, relating to the soul as the latter relates to the body. (464d3-4, 465b1-c3, 465d7-e1)

(T8) Relish-making pretends to be medicine and to know the best breads for the body, such that if a relish-maker and a doctor had to contend among children, or among men as senseless (*anoētois*) as children, over which of them knows which breads are good and bad, the doctor would die of hunger. (464d4-e2)

(T9) By means of its deceptive tricks with shapes, colors, polish (*leiotēti*) and clothing, personal styling fosters an alien beauty in the body and causes it to neglect its own proper (*oikeiou*) beauty, which comes about through athletic training. (465b1-6)

(T10) Although rhetoric and sophistry have different natures, because they are near to one another (*engus ontōn*) and deal with the same things, they are mixed up together, and nobody – including orators and sophists – is able to make anything of them (*ouk echousin hoti chrēsontai*). (465c3-7)

(T11) In fact (that is, following on from the previous passage, T10) if the body were its own master and the soul did not preside over it, and if rather than the soul the body judged relish-making and medicine by weighing the gratifications it

> received (*stathmōmenon tais charisi tais pros hauto*), all things would be mixed up together, and medicinal and healthy things would be undistinguished (*akritōn*) from things belonging to relish-making. (465c7-d6)

2.4. The Moderate Reading Fails

Let me present what I consider the two strongest defenses of the moderate reading. The first can be expressed as an objection to the demanding reading: we go wrong if we take too literally Socrates' language regarding pretending and disguises in T6, T7 and T8 above. His claims about intention and psychological attitudes are really "as if" claims that employ figures of speech, meant to apply solely to the behavior of those who participate in flattery. When Socrates says that relish-making pretends to be medicine, or is flattery disguised as medicine, or dons the mask of medicine, he means that just by tempting diners into eating certain breads the relish-maker acts as if she is a doctor – namely, by guiding them to eat certain foods, perhaps by recommending that they do so. He does not mean that the relish-maker thinks she is a doctor, or intentionally passes herself off as a doctor or claims to know which breads are healthiest. Likewise he does not mean that the diner believes the relish-maker knows which breads are best for the body, but rather that the diner acts as if the relish-maker knew these things. She accedes to the relish-maker's guidance as to which foods to eat, as if the relish-maker were an authority on this.

Compare what Socrates says with the following statement: "some parents pretend to be their children's slaves, and in time they convince the children that this is so." Unless it were made under very unusual circumstances we would be wrong to take this statement literally, fretting over all of the strange psychological implications for parent and child. It is simply employing a figure of speech. Likewise where Socrates' remarks seem puzzling, perhaps this is

just because we are taking them too literally. If so, Socrates would be offering a far more intuitive set of conclusions about relish-making and, by extension, rhetoric than he does on the demanding reading.

But the text does not support this defense of the moderate reading. The language of deception appears repeatedly in the Grand Analogy, and it is not qualified in any manner that positively supports this defense. By itself this suggests that according to Socrates the psychological aspects of deception are in fact at work in flattery. But Socrates leaves no room for doubt in T4, where he says that there is something that makes the body and the soul seem to be in a good condition when they are not. This must be the false impression that – as Socrates says in T8 and T9 – the flatterer gives audiences about their own bodies or, by analogy, their own souls. Contrary to this defense of the moderate reading then, Socrates' meaning must be that the flatterer succeeds only if audiences believe that she knows how to make them well off in body or soul.

We might instead try to defend the moderate reading as follows. Although he does not say so explicitly, Socrates means that the relish-maker and her diners deal only in an undemanding sense of what is good or best for the body, whereas the doctor deals only in the demanding sense. That is, the relish-maker might recommend breads that she and her diners believe to be good for the body, but only in that they taste good or are pleasant to eat – they produce some bodily good, namely bodily pleasure. If a doctor deemed the same breads bad for the body she might claim with some justification that the relish-maker has intruded into the medical domain, misleading diners in portraying her breads as good for the body. But the doctor would clarify that the relish-maker and she are thinking of what is good for the body in two different senses, and that the medical sense is the one to which we ought to give priority in our

practical lives. If this were all that Socrates meant to convey with his claims that the relish-maker leads her diners to believe that she knows what is good or best for the body, we would not have to attribute to the relish-maker or her diners any thoughts about what is good for the body, full-stop. I would therefore lack the necessary basis for drawing key inferences from claims C and D above (claims about the relish-maker and the diner) to claims A and B (claims about the orator and the audience). For if Socrates does not mean that relish-making involves deception of the relevant sort, the same will be true of rhetoric.

But a proper understanding of T4 is also fatal to this defense of the moderate reading. The defense maintains that (1) the relish-maker portrays her breads as good for the body in one sense (*i.e.*, they are pleasant), and makes the diner believe that her breads bring the body into a condition that is good in this sense (they give the body pleasure); (2) the doctor believes that the relish-maker's breads are bad for the body in a different sense (they are unhealthy), and therefore that they bring the body into a condition that is bad in this sense (they make the body unhealthy); and (3) the doctor believes that other breads are good in the second sense (they are healthy), and promote a condition of the body that is good in this sense (they make the body healthy). The defender of the moderate reading thereby understands Socrates to be drawing a contrast between a condition that is good in one sense but bad in another (pleasant but unhealthy), and a condition that is good in an entirely different sense (healthy). She does not see here a contrast between the merely apparently good condition into which the relish-maker brings her diners and the genuinely good condition that the doctor promotes in her patients. But if Socrates means his remark in T4 to pertain to the tricks of the relish-maker and the confusion of her diners – a connection that cannot plausibly be denied – then this reading is incorrect. Socrates must mean that the relish-maker's breads bring inexpert diners' bodies into a condition that appears to them

to be good in the same sense in which the condition promoted by the doctor's breads genuinely are good. Put another way, the contrast that Socrates mentions in T4 cannot be between conditions that are good in two different senses – pleased and healthy – as the current defense has it. It must be a contrast between a condition that is apparently good and genuinely good in the same sense.

The moderate reading is therefore not viable. We are stuck with the demanding reading.

2.5. The Apparent Costs of the Demanding Reading

There are many good reasons for wanting to avoid the demanding reading, as it exposes Socrates' account of rhetoric to a series of formidable objections and magnifies problems that the account would have on any reading. Unless one is already committed to Socrates' way of seeing things it is by no means obvious that the function of statesmen is to promote psychic virtue in their fellow citizens. And it is downright implausible that orators and their audiences would conceive of statesmen in this manner, as they must on the demanding reading. Take judges, for instance. Even if one concedes that judges are in the business of promoting psychic virtue, they have a number of functions that appear unrelated to this one – to determine guilt and innocence in legal matters; to protect the innocent and punish the guilty in a fitting manner; to provide redress to those who have been injured; to convert violent or otherwise disruptive conflicts into civil matters, settling them by way of codified procedures, and so forth. When Athenian orators of the 5th and 4th centuries persuaded in courts of law or other political assemblies, these are the kinds of things they tended to speak about. If they presented themselves as knowledgeable about psychic well-being, this was very rarely explicit in their appeals and, so far as the available

evidence indicates, never central to them.[16] So there is little reason to think that orators and their audiences shared Socrates' conception of the statesman, and plenty of reason to deny that orators pretended to be Socratic statesmen, or that their audiences believed them to be so.

The account of relish-making, which is offered to illuminate the account of rhetoric, is of course obscure and objectionable in its own right. It is uncontroversial for Socrates to say that children, or people as foolish as children, preferred the relish-maker's pleasures to unpleasant medical treatments. Not so for his claim that the relish-maker pretended to know which breads are good for bodies, or to be a doctor herself. If anything the intuitive thing to say about people

[16] A brief survey of roughly contemporary forensic and political rhetoric will make this clear. Take the political leaders mentioned in the *Gorgias*, such as those whom Callicles offers as examples of good orators – Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades and Pericles (see 503c). Reports of their speeches in Herodotus' and Thucydides' histories contain very few mentions of the soul or its good condition. Pericles' speeches in Thucydides are by far the most impressive of the bunch. He tends to justify his declarations by appeal to general principles (*e.g.*, "Capital, it must be remembered, maintains a war more than forced contributions. Farmers are a class of men that are always more ready to serve in person than in purse. Confident that the former will survive the dangers, they are by no means so sure that the latter will not be prematurely exhausted, especially if the war last longer than they expect, which it very likely will" (1.141, Crawley-Strassler translation; and see *e.g.*, 2.44.4)), heads off misunderstandings and objections (*e.g.*, 2.61.1), appeals to the history and dignity of the Athenians (*e.g.*, 1.144.3), cautions them about their weaknesses and reminds them of their strengths, and does the reverse with respect to their opponents (*e.g.*, 1.142-1.143). But he barely ever mentions the soul. And when he does he is almost always interested in it as an instrument to some non-psychic end, as when he commends those qualities that are most advantageous for obtaining a military victory and condemns the opposite qualities (see *e.g.*, 2.62.4-5). The one exception is a single sentence, and it is hardly the centerpiece of the speech in which it appears: "they whose minds are least sensitive to calamity, and whose hands are most quick to meet it, are the greatest men and the greatest communities" (2.64.6, Crawley-Strassler translation). Themistocles' speeches in Herodotus contain a few general principles in the style of Pericles, but these tend to appear in exhortations to do X for reasons A, B and C, and for fear of the consequences D, E and F of doing otherwise. The one exception is a tantalizingly brief description of a speech to the fleet at Salamis, related only in the third person: "At dawn the fighting men were assembled and Themistocles gave the finest speech there. The whole burden of what he said was a comparison of all that was best and worst in human nature and fortune (*katastasi*), and an exhortation to the men to choose the better. Then, having rounded off his speech, he ordered the men to embark onto the ships" (8.83, de Sélincourt's translation). That Herodotus withholds the details should break the hearts of all devoted readers of the *Gorgias*. There is a report of only one speech of Militades' in Herodotus and it is unremarkable (6.109). There is no report of a speech of Cimon's. There is a report of only one speech given by Aristides, whom Herodotus admires in much the way that Socrates does, but it contains only a report of the position of the Persian fleet and an exhortation to the assembled Greeks to prepare to fight (see 8.79-81; for Socrates on Aristides see 526a-b). Or take the forensic speeches of the speechwriters Lysias and Isocrates, contemporaries of Socrates' who feature prominently in the *Phaedrus* (see *Phaedrus* 227a-237a, 257b-258e, 278b-279b). In their speeches these writers generally discuss things like the circumstances and severity of the alleged offense, the status, mindset or deeds of victim and perpetrator, problems with the opposing party's case, the relevant laws and the proper means of enforcing them, the importance of the case, and the interests and obligations of the jury. Notably they never mention the soul of the accused, except quite obliquely – as in the occasional and brief accusation of bad character (see *e.g.*, Isocrates' *Against Callimachus* 18.55) – and they never offer any recommendation as to how a soul might be made just (see *e.g.*, Lysias' *Against Eratosthenes* or Isocrates' *Against Callimachus*).

who prepare tasty food for a living is that they please by omitting appeals to health, or else by deliberately driving considerations of health from their diners' minds. It is likewise unintuitive that diners should have confused the relish-maker for a doctor, or thought that the breads she offered were good for the body. Why not assume most diners recognized that the relish-maker offered breads that were merely tasty, and that it is by virtue of an unrelated expertise – medicine – that one determines which breads are good for the body?[17]

We might try to illuminate Socrates' claims about relish-making by holding them up to his brief remarks about personal styling, which seem radiant by comparison. Socrates says that just as relish-making dons the mask of (*hupokeitai*) medicine, so personal styling dons the mask of athletic training – it is wicked, deceptive, ignoble and illiberal (*aneleutheros*), and by means of tricks with clothing, polish and dress it makes its clients assume an alien beauty and neglect their own proper beauty, which arises through athletic training (465b2-6, my close paraphrase here is adapted from Lamb's translation). Socrates seems to be on solid ground here. Many people – perhaps most – conceive of bodily beauty as primarily the kind of attractiveness produced by personal styling, and accordingly care for their own looks by attending to style rather than bodily exercise. And personal styling itself surely bears some responsibility for this. Nor is there any difficulty in understanding why Socrates might imply that just as the most devoted clients of personal stylists were likely to neglect their bodily health – insofar as they neglected their own proper beauty – so the relish-maker's most devoted clients were likely to neglect their bodily health.

But beyond this point the analogy does not appear to hold. It is hardly intuitive that the relish-maker nurtured in diners a conception of bodily health that was different from the doctor's, or that committed diners believed the relish-maker could promote health in this sense.

[17] Irwin objects to Socrates' account of relish-making along these lines (see Irwin 1979: 134).

Without some alternative understanding of bodily health and relish-making that might enable us to substantiate this thought, we would be justified in dismissing the parallel with personal styling as one more leaden weight shaped like a life preserver.

And notably the rhetoric-sophistry pairing seems to have the same problem as the pairing of relish-making and personal styling. Socrates notes in the *Gorgias*, as he does in other dialogues, that sophists commonly profess to make their students virtuous (520b-521a). There is no good reason to suspect that orators do this with respect to their students, let alone with respect to their audiences. Indeed Gorgias appears to admit that he teaches his students "the just and the unjust, the fine and the shameful, the good and the bad" without any sense that he is thereby implying – at least, according to Socrates – that he makes his students virtuous (459c-460a; and see 460a-461b; and *Meno* 95b-c, where Meno says that Gorgias would never promise to teach virtue, and ridicules those who do). Although sophists were widely understood to be in this business, orators were not. The analogy between rhetoric and sophistry is therefore puzzling on this point in just the way that the analogy between relish-making and personal styling is. Where our intuition, historical understanding and acquaintance with the dialogues prepare us to expect that sophistry and personal styling aimed to give people the appearance of psychic and bodily virtue, respectively – if not also the real thing – we cannot say the same for rhetoric or relish-making. But in the Grand Analogy Socrates asserts that all four practices pretend to promote virtue and health.

Then there is Socrates' claim that orators persuade by means of pleasure. We might resist this claim by noting that there are any number of rhetorical means[18] of persuading people, not all of which appear to involve pleasing them – issuing threats or warnings, for example, or

[18] Which is at least to say means involving non-didactic speech (see 453c-455a).

rebuking one's audience, or delivering difficult news.[19] Unless we are to take Socrates' account of rhetoric as a broad caricature with limited explanatory value, we should be able to give some account on his behalf of how all of these forms of rhetorical persuasion achieve their effect by inducing pleasure in audiences. But no such account is obvious in the dialogue. And even if we accept that pleasure is involved in all rhetorical persuasion, it is unclear what kind of pleasure Socrates has in mind.

Beyond the difficulties involved in digesting these claims it is far from obvious what they add in the way of clarity or persuasion to the conclusions about rhetoric and statecraft for which Socrates argues more straightforwardly, and that appear to be of greater practical importance for his interlocutors: that the essential aim of statecraft is to promote psychic health and virtue, just as the essential aim of the ruling crafts of the body is to promote health, beauty and strength (see 464a-c, 499d-e, 500d-501c, 503d-505b, 513d-514a); that the ruling crafts ought to supervise all of the other crafts, because in the absence of this supervision the other crafts are either bad for us, of no value or of uncertain value (see 504e-505b, 511c-512e, 517a-519b); that one can only acquire the political crafts through education and practice (see 514a-515c); that rhetoric, at least as Polus and Callicles conceive of it, does great harm to both orators and audiences, and fails to fulfil the knowledge requirements on all crafts (see 463d-468e, 474c-481b, 500d-501c, 502d-505b, 507a-508a, 509c-511a, 512e-514a, 517a-518a, 518c-519b). For all of these conclusions Socrates offers arguments that stand independently of the odd claims he makes about rhetoric and relish-making. Why did Plato not just leave well enough alone?

[19] For a striking example see Pericles' final speech in Thucydides' *History* (2.59-2.65, especially 2.63-2.64). I discuss this example in §6.2.

2.6. Is Socrates Cheating?

We could tidy up this entire interpretive mess by concluding that Socrates is making the same kind of illicit move with respect to rhetoric and relish-making that commentators have accused him of making in the Desire Argument: he conflates *de dicto* and *de re* senses of key terms, and at all of the crucial junctures (see McTighe 205-207; Weiss 1992: 307 n. 19). The diagnosis might go as follows. Let us grant to Socrates that orators often persuade audiences that they know what is best in matters of state; and that however they frame the appeal of their recommendations, by posing as authorities they are effectively assuming the role of Socrates' statesmen. Regardless of the beliefs that an audience might have, therefore, it treats the orator as if she were a Socratic statesman. An audience might have the kinds of thoughts that an admirer like Polus might have about Gorgias: "now Gorgias, there's a man who speaks well about justice"; or perhaps "now Gorgias, there's a man who knows about justice." But none of this means that audiences or orators share Socrates' conception of statesmen, that orators pretend to be statesmen in this sense or that audiences believe they are statesmen in this sense. These people think about statecraft entirely differently from the way Socrates does, a fact that Socrates' account either ignores or deliberately obscures. Into the *de dicto* content of the audience's beliefs and the orator's appeals (something like, "this speaker knows what is best in this matter") Socrates has smuggled *de re* conclusions about what exactly is the matter at hand (a matter of justice or statecraft more generally, whose aim is to promote psychic virtue in its subjects) and who is knowledgeable about it (statesmen, who have expert knowledge of psychic virtue). So his account of rhetoric is misleading at best. And likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for his account of relish-making.

This solution does help make sense of the Grand Analogy, but we should adopt it only as an emergency measure. If we cannot supply a justification for Socrates' strange remarks that is clearly rooted in the text and that renders them philosophically defensible, then perhaps we ought to write them off as errors[20] or sophistical tricks. In the previous chapter I argued that we could avoid such a reading of the Desire Argument, and here I will argue that we can do the same with respect to the Grand Analogy.

2.7. Moss' Solution

Before moving on let me present the one interpretation in the literature that holds the promise of a unified account of Socrates' Grand Analogy. Jessica Moss claims that according to Socrates, the flattering orator pleases his audience by praising and censuring what it thinks good and bad, by affirming its values and by making it think itself wise. Simply because the orator pleases it, the audience believes that what she proposes is beneficial (See Moss 2005b: 241-242; 2006: 512-513, 515). For according to Moss, Plato's view is that the kind of people who are susceptible to rhetorical persuasion "fail to distinguish between what pleases them and what is good for them" (Moss 2005b: 244-245; and see 2006: 513-515).[21]

Moss' interpretation has several notable strengths. It renders Socrates' account of rhetoric faithful to the phenomena, so far as it goes. Orators do succeed when they make an audience feel wise, and can accomplish this by means of praise and blame that accord with an audience's sensibilities. Her interpretation allows Socrates to account for cases in which orators persuade by provoking unpleasant emotions like fear, as one can frighten an audience even as

[20] As Irwin does (see Irwin 1979: 134).
[21] For other interpretations regarding the nature of the pleasure that the orator provides see Cooper 1999: 55; Miller 114; and Penner 1991: 157 n. 14. Notably none of these other interpretations includes an explanation of how Socrates might have us think of speeches that appear to be unpleasant but that are persuasive nonetheless.

one affirms its sense of what is praiseworthy and blameworthy (*e.g.*, "you know better than anyone how grave the threat is, and how vital it is to neutralize it"). And the claim that successful orators make their audiences feel wise goes some way toward explaining why audiences should think that the orator does what is good for their souls.[22]

But the psychological principle underlying Moss' interpretation – that some people think beneficial whatever pleases them – is insufficient for explaining the analogy between rhetoric and relish-making, in that it cannot tell us why the judgments of goodness that attend upon pleasures should take the particular form that Socrates says they do. The clearest case is his claim that by pleasing them the relish-maker deceives diners into thinking that she has the doctor's expertise, and that she knows which breads are best for the body in the sense of being healthiest for it. Moss' principle leaves us to wonder why the diner should think that the relish-maker is a doctor rather than another craftsman who cares for the goodness of food in some manner, and why the diner should think that the relish-maker's breads are healthy rather than beneficial in one of several other senses.

We might say on Moss' behalf that by pleasing diners the relish-maker makes them think that she benefits them in the domain of food, and because the doctor produces benefit in the domain of food, diners think that the relish-maker is a doctor.[23] But whereas this inference assumes the diners think that there is only one craft that produces benefit in the domain of food, Socrates indicates in the *Gorgias* that there are many such crafts. We might classify in various ways the crafts that operate in the domain of food, *e.g.*, by saying that there are crafts of obtaining the basic ingredients of food, like farming and hunting; crafts involved in the trade and

[22] Although an audience can be made to feel wise without concluding that the person who elicits this feeling makes it wise. Moss does not explain how Socrates would justify this further thought. Then again, Moss' remarks about the Grand Analogy are not part of a dedicated interpretation of it, let alone an interpretation that purports to be comprehensive, so her silence on points like this one is to be expected.

[23] I am indebted to Gabriel Lear for this thought.

curation of food, like the crafts of the merchant or shopkeeper (*kapēlos*); crafts of transforming raw ingredients into consumable products, like winemaking and cake-baking (*artokopia*); and crafts involved in the use of foods, like medicine and athletic training, which oversee all crafts that might promote the good order of the body (see 490a-e, 517d-e). If we are to explain how in producing pleasure, the relish-maker convinces diners that she possesses some single craft that operates in the domain of food, it does not suffice to invoke Moss' principle – that some people mistake pleasure for benefit, or mistake the producer of pleasure for someone who is knowledgeable about what is good for us. For each craft I have mentioned produces its own distinctive good with respect to food. It is of course slightly more plausible that a diner should mistake the relish-maker for a doctor than for some of the other craftsmen, *e.g.*, a vintner. But we must nevertheless be able to say more than Moss offers us if we are to explain why the diner mistakes the relish-maker for a doctor in particular.

There are also different ways in which the relish-maker's breads might be thought good, beyond their being good for bodily health and virtue. A diner might think that they are beneficial for her mood, that eating them makes her palate more sophisticated, that they promote conviviality at meals, *etc*. Moss' principle cannot account for why the diner should believe that the relish-maker's breads benefit her body in particular.

Moss' interpretation therefore cannot provide answers to some of the key interpretive questions I mentioned above.

3. Rhetoric and Relish-Making

My own proposal for resolving the puzzles within the Grand Analogy will rely primarily on an examination of Callicles. But it also requires an independent interpretation of the mechanics of the Analogy itself, which I will present here before moving on.

Commentators have split on the question of how Socrates presents the relationship between speeches, pleasures and the attitudes, beliefs, measures, projects or policies for which orators advocate (for simplicity's sake I will call the set of things for which orators advocate "undertakings").[24] One essential piece of evidence, which has been universally overlooked or

[24] "Undertakings" is an imperfect term for this set insofar as it does not naturally refer to attitudes, the eliciting of which is the primary aim of epideictic speeches like Pericles' funeral oration. It is not clear whether Socrates means for his account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* to extend to epideictic speeches, but I see no decisive reason for denying that it is meant to do so, or that it could do so. Moss says that orators successfully advocate for certain undertakings by praising and censuring what their audiences praise and censure, thereby affirming their audiences' values (Moss 2005b: 241-2). Woolf is understandably cagey on this topic, saying that orators succeed by preying on people who mistake feeling good for being good, and insofar as they make people feel good orators claim to produce what is best for them (Woolf does not specify to whom orators make this claim – to third parties only, or also to the audiences whom they persuade; clarity on this point is essential for determining the relevance of his interpretation to readings of the Grand Analogy – see Woolf 2004: 121, 124-125). Miller is not careful with the details of his interpretation. At one point he says that a gullible audience will think true anything that an orator tells it, so long as what she says is pleasant to hear. By way of example, Miller says that if an orator campaigns on a theme of hope and change for the better, her audience will believe that she will in fact bring about the needed changes, given that her theme is a pleasant one (Miller 115). But later Miller says that Socrates' account would leave us unable to explain how orators might "argue both sides of an issue…because no audience would find a claim and its contrary equally pleasant" (Miller 118). This remark suggests that Miller takes the relevant pleasure not to be pleasure in anything so loose as the theme of a speech – since an orator might use the same theme to argue for one claim and its opposite so long as the theme is suitably flexible – but rather to be pleasure in the claim(s) that a speech makes. It is unclear what Miller would count as a claim of the relevant sort: the proposal of a particular undertaking, or only factual or evaluative claims, or something else entirely. Penner says only that the orator's practice entails finding some idea in which an audience takes pleasure, and then leveraging this pleasure in order to persuade the audience of some belief. Penner offers one example, which suggests that orators might present undertakings as means to pleasures of various kinds: "other teenagers of the opposite sex will want to kiss you if you brush your teeth with…" (Penner 1991: 157 n. 14). Cooper provides a refreshingly detailed set of answers to the questions I am considering. He says that Socrates perhaps illegitimately conflates an audience's pleasure in undertakings with its pleasure in speeches themselves, "some sort of refined delight at finding one's own ideas approved, recommended, and manipulated by a grandiloquent speaker to yield a perhaps unexpected conclusion." (Cooper 1999: 55 and n. 40). He suggests that Socrates thinks rhetorical persuasion depends on either one or both of these kinds of pleasure. Cooper also claims that an orator persuades by bringing an audience to take pleasure in thinking a particular action just or unjust (Cooper 1999: 40). But the textual basis for this claim is underwhelming. The claim seems to derive from Gorgias' brief remarks on the topic, which Socrates does not obviously endorse, and perhaps from Socrates' assertion that rhetoric imitates the juridical craft (see 454b). And Cooper's reading is an impediment to the task of making Socrates' account reasonably responsive to the phenomena, given that appeals to justice were not often present in the kinds of speeches given by the people whom Socrates considers orators (like Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades and Pericles).

misconstrued in the literature, comes in the language with which Socrates presents the Grand Analogy. As I noted above, *opsopoios* is most commonly translated as "cook" or "pastry chef," *opsopoiikē* as "cookery," *opsa* as "pastries," and *sitia* as "food." These translations imply that with the phrase "*hē opsopoiikē… prospoieitai ta beltista sitia tō*(*i*) *sōmati eidenai*…" (commonly rendered as "cookery pretends to know the best food for the body") Socrates is trying to convey that the *opsopoios* portrays her *opsa* as good for the body, and that diners are prone to think *opsa* are healthy because they are so tasty (464d3-5).

But this reading is badly misleading. It fails to bring out the proper contrast between *opsa* and *sitia*, and between the *opsopoios* and the *sitopoios* (bread-baker), which cannot be omitted from a sound interpretation of the analogy between relish-making and rhetoric.[25] These contrasts are natural enough in the Greek to be in force even though we are not explicitly alerted to them in the *Gorgias* (see *e.g.*, *Republic* 559a-b, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 3.14.2-4). *Opsa* were often meat or fish but included a wide range of flavorful dishes, which one ate along with bread or grains (see especially Xenophon 3.14.5). These are the more literal referents of *sitia* – breads or grains – and the referents that Socrates must have in mind in the Grand Analogy, given the implied contrast with *opsa*. Anglophone commentators and translators have all opted instead for translations that employ the metonymic use of *sitia*, according to which its referent is food or provisions. This is a small mistake, but a costly one.

Under ordinary circumstances *sitia*, in the narrow sense that is pertinent to the analogy, were considered the healthier base of a meal. *Opsa* were eaten as a topping for *sitia*, and consuming an excess of *opsa* in proportion to *sitia* made one *opsophagos* – gluttonous (see Xenophon 3.14.3). So a more faithful translation of "*hē opsopoiikē… prospoieitai ta beltista sitia tō*(*i*) *sōmati eidenai*…" is "relish-making pretends to know which breads (or grains) are

[25] For Socrates' treatment of the relish-maker and the bread-baker as distinct craftsmen see 517e1-2.

good for the body." The thought is not that the relish-maker offers her relishes as healthy, but that in serving breads with appetizing relishes she somehow pretends to know which breads are healthy. Hence the relish-maker is trespassing in the doctor's domain by attracting diners to some breads rather than others, given that she lacks knowledge of which breads conduce to health. The pleasure she provides is not in the first instance pleasure in the breads about which she pretends to have knowledge, but pleasure in the relishes with which she serves breads.

The importance of these details becomes clear if we follow the analogy with rhetoric. Just as the relish-maker tops bread or grains with pleasant relishes, so the orator attracts her audience to some undertaking by adorning it with a pleasant speech. Hence the characteristic pleasures of rhetoric are not pleasures in the undertakings an orator proposes, but pleasures in the speeches with which she attracts audiences to them. On the basis of these pleasures her audience believes that she knows which undertakings are good for their souls.

This interpretation suggests that Socrates places narrower limits on the persuasive power of rhetorical speech and the suggestibility of audiences than commentators have maintained. From Socrates' emphasis on pleasure as the means by which orators persuade, most have inferred that with audiences who are "as senseless as children," pleasure suffices for rhetorical persuasion (464d6-7).[26] But because breads play a distinct role in the seduction of diners, the analogy should lead us to conclude that undertakings play a distinct role in the persuasion of audiences. Translating *sitia* as "breads" rather than "food" removes the basis for the inference that diners think relishes are healthy. Rather, diners think the relish-maker's breads are healthy.

[26] Woolf says this explicitly (see Woolf 2004: 121). Miller appears to agree with him (see Miller 115, 118). Moss and Cooper maintain that producing a certain kind of pleasure suffices for persuading by means of rhetoric (See Moss 2005b: 236, 241-2, 244-5; 2006: 513; Cooper 1999: 40, 55). Roochnik takes this line of interpretation to the greatest extreme, claiming that Socrates suggests a relish-maker may pretend to be a doctor by prescribing a cookie as good for an upset stomach (see Roochnik 183). This pushes Socrates' thoughts about the relish-maker, and his related remarks about the orator, definitively beyond the bounds of good sense.

These need not be the very breads that a doctor would recommend, but they are instances of the kind of food that doctors would in fact recommend, and diners will identify them as such. Hence the deception perpetrated by the relish-maker is far less wild than it must be on the standard translation.

If we follow the analogy, Socrates' thought appears to be that audience members will judge that a particular undertaking is good for their souls only if two conditions obtain: the orator who proposes it must speak in a manner that pleases them, and the proposed undertaking must be the sort of thing that they believe a genuine statesman would propose. Just as the diner can recognize breads as such, and roughly understands their role in promoting health, the analogy suggests that audiences can recognize pieces of statecraft as such and can roughly understand their role in promoting virtue. In general, then, Socrates implies that pliable audiences are motivated by the experience of pleasure to judge that certain undertakings are good for them, but that these judgments are constrained by the audiences' relatively independent beliefs about statecraft and virtue. His view need not be that simply by pleasing it, an orator makes an audience think that she is a statesman who knows what is best for the soul and makes the audience virtuous.

I mean for these conclusions to be preliminary, in that they leave unexplained why pleasant speeches should make orators and audiences think that the undertakings for which they advocate are good for souls, or why pleasant relishes should make relish-makers and diners think that the breads on which they are served are good for bodies. I will turn to these and related questions presently.

4.1 Callicles and the Grand Analogy

The missing cornerstone of the Grand Analogy is an account of the mindset of orators and their audiences, one that explains how and why they form the strange beliefs about rhetoric that Socrates attributes to them. The dialogue provides two especially clear indications that Callicles is meant to exemplify this mindset. The first is Callicles' assertion that Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades and Pericles were true statesmen (503a-c). The second is the dialogue's portrayal of Callicles as afflicted with "senselessness" (or "foolishness," "thoughtlessness" – *anoia*), an intellectual condition that Socrates repeatedly ascribes to orators and their audiences.

The evidence for the first indication is more straightforward. When Socrates entertains the thought that rhetoric is two-fold, that one incarnation of it is flattery and the other is a healthy practice, Callicles asserts that Themistocles, Cimon, Militades and Pericles practiced the latter (502d-503c). With this assertion Callicles implies that in their capacity as political leaders these men spoke and acted as they did in order to promote psychic virtue in the Athenian citizens, that they succeeded in this aim, and that this indicates they were true statesmen (see 503c-504e, 515c-521a). Socrates responds to these thoughts in stages, but his immediate reaction is to say that Callicles is right about this only if the satisfaction of appetites is virtue, as Callicles has earlier claimed that it is (503c). I will return to this exchange below, but for now let me note how closely Callicles' attitude toward the old Athenian leaders resembles the one that Socrates attributes to audiences persuaded by orators in general, and by implication to the Athenian citizens persuaded by these leaders in particular.[27] Just as Socrates claims that audiences mistake

[27] The claim that Socrates portrays the four Athenian leaders as practitioners of flattering rhetoric requires some defense, as Socrates says explicitly that these leaders "practiced neither true rhetoric – or else they would not have been cast aside – nor the flattering kind" (517a5-6). This remark might be fatal to my argument here, except that Socrates contradicts it very soon afterward when he says that the four leaders practiced servility (*diakonikē*) in politics, and then that servile political practice is flattery (517b-518e, 521a-b). He also tacitly accuses Themistocles and Pericles of practicing flattering rhetoric a good deal earlier, in conversation with Gorgias (see 455d-456a, 462e

orators who please them for rulers who make them virtuous, so he claims that Callicles mistakes orators who satisfied the Athenians' appetites for rulers who made the Athenians virtuous.

It requires more work to gather up the instances in which Socrates describes orators and their audiences as senseless, as well as the instances in which Callicles is either called senseless by Socrates or revealed to be senseless by his own behavior. Socrates offers overlapping criticisms of the intemperate, of flatterers and of those who are susceptible to flattery (see 462b-c, 464d-e, 465c, 481b-482c, 501c-502d, 504e-505b, 510a-511a, 512e-513d, 517c-519c). In his attempts to capture the intellectual condition of these people the word he uses most frequently is "senseless," along with its variants. He says that flattery "hunts after senselessness by means of what is most pleasant at each moment" (464d2). That children, or people as senseless as children, will believe that the relish-maker knows which foods are good for the body (464d-e).[28] That orators do not "have sense (*noun*)," which means that if they do what they think best they will not do what they want (466e-467a). That the wicked person, who is licentious and intemperate, is senseless (505b). That it is senseless for someone who pretends to be a statesman to claim that if her city turns on her it treats her unjustly; for true statesmen make their cities just, and therefore cannot, as a result of this service, be treated unjustly by their cities (519b2-d5). And in the first allegorical image with which he attempts to persuade Callicles that cultivating intemperance will make him miserable – a passage that I will discuss at length below – Socrates says that the "part" (*touto*) of the soul of the senseless person in which the appetites reside is like

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ff.). Fortunately there is good evidence that we should treat as a joke Socrates' remark that the four leaders did not practice flattering rhetoric, as he makes roughly the same joke about Meles, a cithara player who, Socrates says, must not have been a flatterer because his playing and singing failed to please his audience (502a). Plainly implied here is that Meles was at least an attempted flatterer, but that he failed even by the standards of his pseudo-craft. Likewise for the four leaders, all of whom fell out of favor with the Athenian *dēmos*, and therefore must have failed to please them consistently. Although even if they were not entirely successful practitioners of the flattering kind of rhetoric, Socrates' view is that these four leaders had some success in satisfying the Athenians' appetites by means of it.

[28] See also 497e, where Socrates asks Callicles whether he has seen a senseless child, or a person as senseless as a child, enjoying herself.

a leaky jar, which cannot contain whatever is poured into it; and that the soul of the senseless person, on account of its forgetfulness (or obliviousness – *lēthēn*) and incredulity (*apistian*), is like a sieve with which the senseless person tries in vain to convey water into her jars (492a-c).

On two occasions Socrates also characterizes Callicles as senseless, if slightly indirectly. The first is an exchange about Callicles' warning that a wicked person might have a good person put to death by bringing false charges against her in court (see 511a-c). Callicles asks whether this isn't just what is irritating about the situation of a good person who is vulnerable because she neglects to learn rhetoric. Socrates responds that their argument indicates this would not irritate anyone who "has sense" (511b7). His thought seems to be that anyone with sense would focus in this case on what they have established is most important – virtue – rather than on what is less important – avoiding suffering injustice. The virtuous person who is killed unjustly will have suffered a lesser evil in the course of avoiding a greater evil, namely doing injustice and thereby damaging one's soul (see 474c-479e, 508b-509d, 522c-e). Offering this thought in response to Callicles' expression of indignation, Socrates is slyly accusing Callicles himself of senselessness. Unlike the person with sense, Callicles cannot keep his thoughts or emotions in line with the arguments they have just gone through.

The second occasion comes about three Stephanus pages later, when Socrates remarks that it would be senseless for someone to attempt to construct public buildings or perform public medical service if she had no reputable teachers, no training and no noteworthy achievements along these lines, just as it is senseless for Callicles to attempt to do politics when he cannot point to any person whom he has made better (514a-515b). That Socrates' argument applies just as well to practicing orators and political leaders as it does to Callicles is another indication that he takes Callicles' senselessness to be typical of theirs.

The argument that Socrates compares Callicles to the Athenian *dēmos* in this way might seem implausible on its face. Callicles stresses his superiority to ordinary people, and claims that anyone who embraces Socrates' naive views about justice and the rest of virtue is either a self-interested member of the *dēmos* or one of its slaves (see 483b-484a, 492a-c). And however misguided, Callicles' views do evince a degree of sophistication that surely distinguishes him from the masses. But even more directly than in any of the passages I have cited thus far, Socrates implies that Callicles is, or is on his way to becoming, "like [the *dēmos*] in his very nature," a necessary accomplishment for any orator who hopes to win the favor of the ruling power in her city, and thus to be protected from suffering injustice (513b4; and see 512b-513c). This thought seems to stun Callicles into a rare concession that there is something to what Socrates is saying (513c). Perhaps he also finds it surprising that Socrates has a point in comparing him to the *dēmos*.[29]

At this stage I hope to have established only that Socrates' language points us down this path. He attributes to Callicles the attitudes and the intellectual condition that define the mindset of those who participate in flattery, at least as he portrays it. This suggests that if we wish to gain insight into this mindset we can look to Callicles as a model. To that end, from §4.2 to §5.3 I will attempt to unpack Socrates' conclusions in the passages I have discussed here: that Callicles assumes the audience's attitude toward orators because he believes the satisfaction of appetites is virtue, and that Callicles suffers from senselessness.

[29] I owe a good deal to Gabriel Lear for the thoughts in this paragraph.

4.2 Virtue as Appetite Satisfaction

The view that the satisfaction of appetites is virtue plugs several of the explanatory gaps in the Grand Analogy. If diners held this view they could draw on it to conclude that insofar as the relish-maker satisfies their appetites, and thereby pleases them, she makes them healthy. The same applies to audiences who conclude that orators make them virtuous. We would still need to explain why diners should think that the relish-maker – rather than someone else who satisfies their bodily appetites – is a doctor, or why audiences should think that the orator is a statesman. But we would gain a substantial foothold in the pursuit of answers to these questions. And as I will explain, although Callicles' precise justification for the view that the satisfaction of appetites is virtue is unlikely to be shared by diners and audiences, reconstructing his justification should take us most of the way to determining their justification for the same view – that is, at least as Socrates understands these justifications.[30]

Socrates' immediate response to Callicles' defense of intemperance can be divided into five sections: two allegorical images, the so-called "Catamite Argument," and the two arguments against the claim that pleasant and good are the same, the first of which is commonly called the "Compresence Argument," and the second of which I will call the "Leveling Argument" (492e-493d, 493d-494b, 494b-495c, 495c-497d, 497d-499b). I will argue that in the middle section – the Catamite Argument – Socrates argues that if someone follows Callicles'

[30] I should note that before Socrates attributes this claim to him Callicles does not say exactly that the satisfaction of appetites is virtue. At first he declares that temperate people who "rule themselves" – who are self-controlled with respect to the pleasures and appetites within them – are foolish (*ēlithious*); that to live correctly one must allow one's appetites to become as large as possible and satisfy each of them; and that luxury, licentiousness and liberty are happiness and virtue (491d-492c). A bit later he says that to live pleasantly means to eat when hungry and to drink when thirsty, and, "having all the other appetites and the ability to fulfil them, to live happily enjoying oneself" (494b-c, 494c2-3). Later still Socrates accuses Callicles of failing to distinguish good pleasures from bad ones, and asks whether he thinks that pleasant and good are the same, to which Callicles responds that consistency requires him to say that they are (494e-495a). The relations between these statements are conspicuously loose, and I will return to this fact below. I should also note here a necessary piece of the rationale for grouping together all of these passages: Socrates and Callicles both treat pleasure and the satisfaction of appetite as interchangeable in the *Gorgias* (see 491e-492d, 494a-c, 494e-495b, 503c).

advice to enlarge her appetites, she is liable to undergo transformations that Callicles would find perverse. Drawing on this reading I will propose a fuller reconstruction of the view that the satisfaction of appetites is virtue, as Socrates understands it. But before anything else I will provide a brief summary of the Catamite Argument.

When Callicles asserts that living pleasantly and happily entails having all the appetites and satisfying them, Socrates asks whether if one has an itch and can scratch, unbegrudged, throughout one's life, one would live pleasantly and therefore happily (494c). Callicles mocks Socrates for the question, calling him odd, a regular street orator (*dēmēgoros* – 494d1). And Callicles appears to be scandalized when Socrates then asks whether someone who lives as a catamite would likewise live pleasantly and happily (494d-e). Callicles asks whether Socrates isn't ashamed to bring the discussion to such a topic, to which Socrates responds that the person who has brought them here is the one who fails to distinguish good pleasures from bad ones, which is to say Callicles (494e-495a).

The most intuitive way to read this brief argument is as a response to Callicles' claim that the happy person has all of the appetites and fulfils them. This claim is so sweeping that Socrates turns to some of its more troubling implications, asking about two appetites that Callicles has perhaps unwittingly ascribed to the best kinds of people – one appetite that it would be strange to eulogize, and another appetite that most Athenians consider shameful. And Callicles reacts accordingly: to the question about the scratcher he responds that Socrates is strange, and to the question about the catamite that Socrates is shameless. Of course, in making this accusation Callicles evinces a feeling of shame about having such an implication drawn out of his own position. And with the Catamite Argument Socrates likely aims to induce this feeling of shame in Callicles so as to sour him on intemperance, as the two allegorical images did not.

But this reading is incomplete, and in some respects it is misleading. Socrates provides a hint that he is also targeting Callicles' earlier claim that the happy person will allow his appetites to become as great as possible, a corollary of which is his more recent claim that the happy person achieves maximal intake of appetitive satisfactions (491e-492a, 492d). In following a question about scratching (*knaō*) with a question about the life of a catamite (*kinaidos*), Socrates is implicitly drawing on an etymological relation between the two words.[31] The verb that names each of the relevant actions is the same – *knaō*. This link suggests that Socrates is interested not only in leading Callicles from a question about an appetite that would be an odd means to happiness to an appetite that exposes its possessor to political and social marginalization. Rather, as I will argue presently, he is implicitly treating the catamite's appetite as an enlarged version of the appetite for scratching.

Beyond the etymological relation there are several good reasons to think that this reading is correct. If Socrates' sole aim in the Catamite Argument were to make vivid some of the disconcerting implications of Callicles' claim that the happy person must cultivate a wide variety of appetites – that she must have all the appetites and satisfy them – then it would make little sense for him to ask about two figures whose lives, as Socrates stipulates, are defined by a single appetite, namely the happy scratcher and the catamite (see especially 494c6-8, 494d6, 494e4).

Second, unlike the first reading my own enables us to explain why Socrates calls the life of the catamite the "culmination" (*kephalaion*) of the things Callicles has just said about the happy scratcher, and why he notes that Callicles would become aware of this "if someone should ask [him] in order all the things that follow from" his prior statements (494e). On the alternative

[31] This may be a fanciful relation. Dover says that *knaō* names "the action of the boy's body on the penis of the erastes" (123 n. 9). But surprisingly he also says that the word *kinaidos* is "etymologically mysterious" (17). Socrates is less scrupulous than Dover, in any case. He frequently invents false etymologies in the dialogues, as he may be doing tacitly at this point in the *Gorgias*.

reading, in calling the life of the catamite the "culmination" of what Callicles has said about the scratcher, Socrates must mean that it is the most shameful appetite. But there are many shameful appetites, and we would be hard pressed to say why Socrates should take for granted here that the catamite's is the most shameful. On my reading there is no mystery about Socrates' language: the catamite's appetite is the culmination of the present line of reasoning because Socrates is addressing the project of appetite expansion. The catamite's appetite can be understood as the developmental culmination of such an expansion for someone who enjoys scratching. And in saying that Callicles would become aware of this if someone should ask him in order all the things that follow from his prior statements, Socrates seems to be treating the conclusion that the catamite is happy as the logical culmination of Callicles' endorsement of appetite expansion. If one can live happily indulging one's appetite for scratching, then if one wishes to be as happy as possible, one should enlarge this appetite and satisfy it, which means becoming a catamite.

Finally, if we grant that the two appetites belong to a single developmental series, we can draw on Socrates' own criteria to determine that the catamite's appetite is the larger of the two, and will therefore be developmentally posterior to the appetite for scratching for someone who engages in a Calliclean course of appetite expansion. In the second allegorical image with which Socrates responds to Callicles' praise of intemperance, Socrates tells Callicles to picture two men with jars full of milk, honey, wine and other things that are difficult to obtain. He says that the temperate person is like a man whose jars are sound, who can take his fill of their contents and rest easy, whereas the licentious person is like a man whose jars are leaky, and who must devote all his time to replenishing them or else suffer great pains (493d-494a). The image suggests that the most salient difference between the intemperate person's appetites and the temperate

person's is that the former are more costly, the source of unending troubles for their possessor. The catamite's appetite resembles the intemperate person's appetites in this respect to a far greater degree than the scratcher's. The practical obstacles to fulfilling the catamite's appetite are clearly more formidable, as the scratcher can fulfil her appetite on her own. Nor does she incur the loss of status to which the catamite is liable if his behavior becomes public (see Dover 103). And although being unable to scratch an itch may be irritating, Plato frequently characterizes sexual desire and frustration as consuming, painful states, either akin to madness or forms of it (see *e.g.*, *Phaedrus* 244a-245c, *Republic* 402e-403b). He seems untroubled by the role of itchiness in our lives, the present passage aside. We can therefore safely conclude that Socrates treats the catamite's appetite as enlarged relative to the scratcher's and indeed, given the other evidence, as an enlarged version of the appetite for scratching.

On this reading Socrates' purpose in the Catamite Argument is to confront Callicles not only with an embarrassing logical implication of his prior claims, but with some of their unsettling practical consequences. The appetite for scratching may strike Callicles as innocuous, such that even if a life devoted to scratching strikes him as strange, Callicles sees no downside in admitting that it would be a pleasant life and therefore a happy one. But if someone were to enlarge this appetite – as Callicles has claimed that we should – by indulging it with the dedication of the happy scratcher, it would develop into the catamite's appetite. If this person also abided by Callicles' counsel to satisfy all of one's appetites, he would engage in behavior that Callicles deems shameful.

What is most important about this passage for my argument is that it gives us a window into the more general view that Socrates attributes to Callicles, that the satisfaction of appetites is virtue. Callicles' claim that "luxury, licentiousness and liberty, if they have the support of force

(*ean epikourian echē*(*i*)), are happiness and virtue" strongly implies that the satisfaction of maximally enlarged appetites is virtue, which entails in turn that the possession of maximally enlarged appetites is essential for virtue (492c4-6). For as Callicles has it, a person experiencing maximal pleasure must have maximally enlarged appetites.

Socrates implies in the Catamite Argument, among other places, that the means by which one enlarges an appetite is to indulge it repeatedly (see 504e-505b; *Republic* 606d). But in doing so, the Argument suggests, one is liable to alter the appetite's object in a manner that one did not anticipate. This transformation will entail coming to see the new object as valuable even if one previously found it shameful or repulsive. But if Callicles is correct that the satisfaction of maximally enlarged appetites is virtue, then the possessor of the newly enlarged appetite is valuing correctly an object whose value she had previously missed. The larger her appetites, and the more pleasure she derives from them, the stronger her claim to recognize what is valuable as such. Her enlarged appetite enables her to see the appetite's object as valuable and to take pleasure in obtaining it, and these are activations of her good physical and psychic condition, instantiations of virtue. As Callicles agrees in the Leveling Argument, the greater the pleasure one derives from the satisfaction of one's appetites, the better off one is (see 498c-d, 499a-b). Likewise, insofar as satisfying one's appetites sustains them or enlarges them, the satisfaction of appetites fosters virtue.

This interpretation might seem odd to readers of the *Gorgias* who take the rest of Callicles' views about intemperance to be founded on the claim that pleasant and good are the same, the claim that Socrates targets in the Compresence Argument and the Leveling Argument. In assenting to this claim we might understand Callicles to be expressing his commitment to a narrow form of hedonism that eschews all notions of virtue, that values only the experience of

pleasure as good and that draws no systematic connection between the experience of pleasure itself and appetite in the sense in which I have defined it.

But for two reasons this reading cannot be right. One is that Callicles himself rejects a version of it at the beginning of the Compresence Argument, noting that he is accepting the claim that pleasant and good are the same so as to maintain consistency with his earlier statements (495a). By this point in the dialogue he has already claimed that the happy person is virtuous, and that enlarged appetites are necessary for happiness. Hence he must regard the identification of pleasant and good as consonant with his earlier claims and the larger position to which they belong, and not as an alternative to this position.

The second reason is that although in the Compresence Argument Socrates posits that the experience of pleasure is good, and is what we might call the "good-maker" (the thing whose presence purportedly makes one good), in the Leveling Argument he treats as good-maker not the experience of pleasure but the capacity for pleasure (498c-d, 499a-b). Within the Leveling Argument Socrates establishes that bad people (the foolish and/or cowardly) experience pleasure and pain in roughly equal measure as good people (the wise and/or courageous), although the cowardly may experience both to a greater degree than the courageous; and that those who enjoy themselves are good and those who feel pain are bad (497e-498c). Socrates then concludes that according to this argument bad people (the foolish and/or cowardly) are as good as good people (the wise and/or courageous), or perhaps better (perhaps the cowardly are better than the courageous – 498c-d, 499a-b). If Socrates had in mind here that the good-maker is just the experience of pleasure, and that the "bad-maker" is just the experience of pain, then he should conclude that the cowardly are not simply better than the courageous, but better and worse – a paradoxical conclusion that would serve his argumentative aim just as well. Instead, on the basis

of their purported capacity for experiencing both pleasure and pain in greater measure, Socrates determines that the cowardly are perhaps better than the courageous. And although the satisfaction of appetites is not foregrounded in the Leveling Argument, in the second allegorical image Socrates has already portrayed the intemperate person as relevantly similar to the coward. The intemperate person experiences greater pleasures and greater pains on account of her intemperance, just as the coward experiences greater pleasures and greater pains on account of her cowardice. Here it is clear that the intemperate person owes her greater capacity for pleasure and pain to her enlarged appetites (see 493e-494b). Hence we can apply to Callicles' views about the intemperate the conclusions that Socrates draws about the cowardly: insofar as enlarged appetites afford one a greater capacity for pleasure, they make one better off. All of this tells in favor of my interpretation: Socrates attributes to Callicles the view that virtue entails having maximally enlarged appetites and satisfying them, that having greater appetites makes one better off, and that the satisfaction of one's appetites both realizes and fosters virtue.

According to Socrates, on this interpretation, Callicles treats appetites as our most practically important means of determining what is valuable, and as the ultimate source of our motivations for pursuing it. Although Callicles appears to recognize other aspects of virtue, like what he calls "courage" and "wisdom," Socrates demonstrates in the Leveling Argument that for the purpose of determining whether someone is good, Callicles' remarks about intemperance commit him to holding courage and wisdom to be at least subordinate to the condition and exercise of a person's appetites, if not altogether irrelevant (see 497d-499b). For Callicles, as Socrates understands him, possessing maximally enlarged appetites is the master virtue, experiencing maximal pleasure is a sufficient indication of virtue, and one is good in proportion to the magnitude of one's pleasures.

5.1 Senselessness

At this point I have to issue a substantial qualification. My attempt to recover the views that Socrates attributes to Callicles is complicated by the fact that Socrates characterizes him as senseless, and thereby suggests that Callicles is not in control of the views to which he appears committed. This reading might be little more than a hunch had Socrates not provided us with something quite like an analysis of the concept of senselessness, at least as he uses it within the *Gorgias*. As I mentioned above, in the first allegorical image Socrates says that the "part" (*touto*) of the senseless person's soul in which the appetites reside is like a leaky jar, which cannot contain whatever is poured into it; and that on account of its forgetfulness (or obliviousness – *lēthēn*) and incredulity (*apistian*), the soul of the senseless person is like a sieve with which she tries in vain to convey water into her jars (493a1-c3). Without explaining himself in this brief passage Socrates mentions four distinct but clearly related qualities: insatiability, forgetfulness, incredulity and practical incompetence. The first of these qualities needs no explanation. For help understanding the remaining three we can turn to Callicles' behavior elsewhere in the dialogue, and to Socrates' commentary upon it.

5.2 Incredulity

I take Callicles to manifest incredulity in two different ways. On the one hand there is his general hostility to philosophical discussion and to persuasion by means of it. He frequently disengages when one of his claims appears to be refuted by Socrates, and at the only moment in which he admits being attracted to Socrates' views he says that, although Socrates seems to be speaking well, he remains unpersuaded (497a-c, 498d, 499b, 501c, 505d, 512e-513c, 515b). On

the other hand is Callicles' rejection of basic moral and practical notions. He declares commonplace ideas about justice and temperance to be naive fictions devised by the weak in order to dominate the strong (483b-484c, 492a-b). He denies that doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it (483a). And he says that the person who has the ability to indulge his appetites and practices restraint for any reason thereby makes himself a slave to the talk (or perhaps argument – *logon*), the law and the censure of the many (492b).

5.3 Forgetfulness

Socrates charges Callicles with forgetfulness fairly directly when, after they have repeatedly agreed that statesmen are the ruling craftsmen of the soul, Callicles cites Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades and Pericles as true statesmen (502d-503c). These are men whom Socrates considers flatterers bordering on subordinate craftsmen, in that their great political achievements made Athens wealthy and dominant but not virtuous (517a-519d). He notes that with the conception of the true statesman, as with many other claims, although at one moment Callicles seems to understand what he has agreed to, he later says something not at all in keeping with his agreement (517c-518e; and see 516d). This tendency is one that I take Socrates to have in mind when he describes the senseless as forgetful.[32]

We can also see Callicles' forgetfulness in his struggles to keep his statements, beliefs and attitudes stable and consistent throughout the discussion. His account of the strong man twists and expands under questioning (see 488b-c, 489e, 491b-c, 491e-492c). His claim that

[32] One might object that this is not obviously a case of forgetfulness, as it may be that Callicles has not entirely grasped the earlier agreement, or perhaps that he does not care about the agreement enough to abide by it. But Socrates charges Polus with a failure of memory when, after Socrates claims that rhetoric is a part of flattery, Polus asks whether Socrates thinks that rhetoric *is* flattery – a slip that is more plausibly the result of a failure of attention or understanding than of forgetfulness (466a). So even when he uses the more precise language of memory failure Socrates is deploying a broad conception of forgetfulness. But his use of the word *lēthē* is likely even looser, far closer to obliviousness, or to the condition of being scatter-brained, than the objection presumes.

consistency requires him to affirm that pleasant and good are the same misrepresents his own remarks in the preceding conversation, none of which constrain him in this manner (495a). Later he defends rhetoric from Socrates' attacks on the grounds that pursuing it enables one to preserve one's life – a far more modest position than the one he assumes in his opening remarks – and on this point Socrates accuses Callicles of holding discordant attitudes, insofar as he disdains many crafts that preserve our lives, like swimming, piloting and "engineering" (the craft of making siege engines – 511b-512d).

In the dialogue's penultimate sentence Socrates mentions that he and Callicles are in a shameful state at present, believing they are something when they are nothing, so poorly educated that they never have the same beliefs about the same things, and the most important things at that (527d-e). If we credit Socrates' claim that he himself cannot keep his own beliefs consistent from one moment to the next, then so much the worse for Callicles. Along with the other moments I have mentioned, this remark recalls the state of psychic disharmony to which, as Socrates claims at the outset of their conversation, Callicles is doomed so long as he does not refute the conclusions of the discussion with Polus (482b-c). And it contrasts with the order that Socrates says is an essential characteristic of the virtuous soul (503d-504e).

Finally, at various points Callicles fails to appreciate the implications of his own statements, or to see the relevance of Socrates' inquiries into them. Two moments are especially illustrative. In response to Callicles' claim that the strong, whom he identifies as the wise and the courageous, should have more than others, Socrates asks a series of questions about whether craftsmen deserve more of the things about which they are wise – whether the doctor should have the largest portion of food and drink, the weaver the largest cloak and the finest clothes, the shoemaker the largest and the most shoes, the farmer the most seeds (490a-e). This proposal is

absurd on its face, but it suggests a keen insight into Callicles' proposal. Craft-wisdom entails standards for the consumption of craft goods. The doctor's wisdom entails knowing how much food and drink to allow each person so as to promote her health, and therefore precludes allowing someone too much food and drink just as it precludes allowing her too little. Likewise weavers makes their cloaks, and shoemakers their shoes, the right size for each body and no larger, and farmers plant the right number of seeds to suit their lands and no more. In short, craft wisdom dictates that goods be fashioned and distributed in the manner that is most useful, and not in proportion to the wisdom – or, for that matter, to the strength or courage – of the recipients. So abiding by their own wisdom would prevent craftspeople from consuming their own goods in excess. That Socrates treats the statesman's wisdom as craft-wisdom suggests that he believes this general principle applies just as well to the strong man, whom Callicles envisions as a ruler of some kind (see *e.g.*, 488b). Callicles has no patience for any of this. He complains that food, drink, doctors, clothing and shoes have nothing to do with his account of natural justice (491a). It is difficult to tell exactly what offends Callicles about Socrates' questions – whether he does not understand the principles toward which Socrates is gesturing, whether he discerns the principles but rejects the parallel between strong men and craftspeople, *etc*. But Socrates provides some help on this point in an exchange that occurs during the Compresence Argument.

There he argues that if pleasant and good are the same (and if pains and bad things are the same[33]), someone who experiences the pain of thirst and the pleasure of drinking at the same time must be doing badly and doing well at the same time, which Callicles has agreed is impossible; this means that experiencing pleasure and doing well cannot be the same, and the

[33]This premise is only implied in the Compresence Argument. It is not mentioned explicitly until shortly afterward, in the Leveling Argument (498d).

pleasant and the good cannot be the same (497a). Callicles refuses to acknowledge this conclusion or to cooperate any further, complaining that Socrates is just doing what he always does, asking small and worthless questions and refuting the person who answers (497a-c). Socrates responds that Callicles is blessed to have been initiated into the greater mysteries before the lesser, which Socrates thought was not permitted (497c). With this remark Socrates' thought seems to be that Callicles professes to have knowledge about grand and supremely important topics, like justice, happiness, virtue and goodness; but such knowledge is only available to someone with sufficient understanding of any number of smaller, related topics; and Callicles plainly lacks this understanding.[34] He has not thought carefully enough about the topics of the Compresence Argument – pleasure and pain, doing well and doing badly, desire and satisfaction, and so forth – to sustain his thesis about the pleasant and the good, just as he had not thought carefully enough about the topics of the previous stretch of argument – wisdom, craft, consumption and so forth – to be entitled to his conviction that the strong deserve more than the weak. Socrates has suggested earlier that Callicles believes wisdom should be pursued only up to a definite point, and Callicles has openly ridiculed those who philosophize as adults (484c-486d, 487c-d). It is tempting to conclude that Callicles' contempt for "the lesser mysteries" and his supreme confidence in his own wisdom are mutually reinforcing, and perhaps to see one of these attitudes as causally responsible for the others. But suffice it to say that Socrates connects them to one another, and to Callicles' struggles in the argument.

In general, then, we should exercise caution in attributing to Callicles a philosophical position like hedonism, as many commentators have done (see *e.g.*, Austin 36-37; Berman 118,

[34] Earlier, in his first allegorical image, Socrates explicitly calls the uninitiated "senseless" (493a7). In saying that Callicles has not been initiated into the lesser mysteries Socrates is therefore implicitly calling him senseless, or at least attributing to him one of the hallmarks of senselessness. This should put beyond doubt the relevance of this later remark at 497c to the larger pattern I am trying to capture in this section.

126; Irwin 1979: 196; Kahn 1983: 106-107; Klosko 1984: 130; Moss 2005a: 16; White 145-146, 150). The same applies to the positions that I have argued Socrates attributes to him. Callicles lacks the basic intellectual resources necessary for commanding these positions, and he is an unfit expositor and defender of his own declared views.

This conclusion could make things awkward for my argument. Thus far I have set us up to discover among Callicles' stated and revealed positions some that can underwrite the strange beliefs that Socrates attributes to those who participate in flattery, namely that flatterers know what is best for body or soul and provide it. But if Callicles can only hold philosophical positions in a manner that is confused or unstable, how can my interpretation continue along this path? The key to answering this question is that my ultimate interpretive target is not the mentality of those who participate in flattery, but rather this mentality as Socrates understands and portrays it. What is most relevant to determining the latter is therefore Callicles' mentality as Socrates understands and portrays it.

Our best indications are that even as he accuses Callicles of senselessness Socrates attributes full-blown philosophical positions to him.[35] This may be part of a larger tendency of Socrates', on display in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere, to credit his interlocutors and others with views that are more substantial than any they are able to articulate or defend (see *e.g.*, 466b, 474b, 511c-512b).[36] But I see it as closely related to the Appearance Thesis. As I will argue is true in the *Republic* as well, Socrates' commitment to the Appearance Thesis manifests itself in his occasionally wobbly characterizations of the mindsets of people whose motivations appear

[35] Hence although I think many commentators go too far in identifying Callicles as a philosophical hedonist, Socrates' arguments with Callicles may nevertheless be understood as arguments against hedonism, or against other positions that Callicles is unable to command. These arguments are likely not as fully elaborated as they would be if Socrates had attempted them with a more serious interlocutor, but they are formidable arguments nonetheless, and directed at claims that Socrates seems to consider worthy targets.

[36] This resembles his tendency to provide suspiciously robust justifications for popular beliefs, stories, practices or institutions (see *e.g.*, *Apology* 23a-b; *Cratylus* 390e-427d; *Phaedrus* 274c-275c).

either straightforwardly wicked, or insufficiently intellectualized to count as being good-oriented, or both of these. In the *Republic* Socrates resorts to images in order to capture such mindsets, as with the lovers of sights and sounds, who deny the existence of the beautiful itself but nevertheless believe in it in the way that, while we remain asleep, we believe in the things we encounter in dreams (see *Republic* 476b-d). As I have explained above, the Appearance Thesis entails that a desire is actionable only if it comes along with an account that portrays the actions it motivates as good. The general treatment of senselessness in the *Gorgias*, and Callicles' performance in particular, suggest that an agent might be able to preserve such an account even if it is flimsy and poorly coordinated, so long as it is not properly scrutinized or subjected to serious pressure, and so long as it is abetted by intellectual deficiencies like forgetfulness and incredulity. Likewise the case of Callicles suggests that although serious intellectual impairment may be necessary for anyone to believe that wicked actions are good, Socrates treats senselessness as no barrier to possessing elaborate justifications for wicked actions.

5.4 Practical Incompetence

Before returning to the Grand Analogy let me offer an interpretation of the most puzzling aspect of Socrates' image of senselessness: his portrayal of the senseless person's soul as a sieve, with which she attempts to carry water to her jars. Socrates seems to mean that in addition to being insatiable, due to their forgetfulness and incredulity the senseless struggle to obtain the objects that their appetites motivate them to pursue and consume.[37] But everywhere else in the

[37] It may seem as if the representation of the senseless person's soul as a sieve is meant to indicate that she is insatiable. But the inclusion of the leaky jar in this image would suffice for this point, just as leaky jars communicate the insatiability of the licentious person's appetites in the second allegorical image. The jars in the two images are meant to receive and contain substances in a manner that is reminiscent of the way a stomach or a bladder receive and contain food or drink, whereas the sieve in the first image is meant to convey water into the senseless person's jar, and therefore stands in for her means of obtaining the objects of her appetites. Just as

dialogue where intemperate and therefore senseless types are considered – Gorgias' orators who enslave other craftsmen, the orators and tyrants whom Polus admires, the clients of the relish-maker and the audiences of the orator, Callicles' strong man, the happy scratcher and the catamite, the person who lives like a thief, the Athenian *dēmos* – it is taken for granted that they are quite effective at obtaining the objects they pursue, and Socrates focuses instead on whether this effectiveness is good for them (see 452d-453a, 464d-e , 467c-468e, 470b-471d, 491d-492e, 494b-495c, 504e-505b, 507a-508a, 510a-511c, 517a-519b). This element of the allegorical image therefore appears to be at odds with the larger treatment of intemperance and senselessness in the dialogue.

The piece of text that is most useful for resolving this conflict is the one to which I devoted the previous chapter – the Desire Argument. In it Socrates argues that because everyone wants what is good, if someone does what is bad she does not do what she wants (see 467c-468d). And he implies that those without sense inevitably do what is bad (see 468d-e). On my reading of the Desire Argument Socrates believes that although the senseless person's appetites motivate her to pursue what is not good, her appetites – like all of her desires – are only for what really is good. This reading provides a warrant for Socrates' portrayal of the senseless person as incompetent, despite any and all appearances of worldly success. Insofar as she fails to form true beliefs about what is good for her she will fail to grasp what her appetites are for, and will therefore generally fail to obtain their objects, even if – in her own eyes and in the eyes of all the world – she appears to obtain them. [38]

Socrates notes that the substances contained in the jars in the second image – milk, honey, wine and other such things – can be obtained only with difficulty by the orderly and the licentious man alike, so the representation of the senseless person's soul as a sieve in the first image indicates that she has special difficulty in obtaining the objects of her appetites, not only in being sated by them once she has obtained them. For a similar understanding of the relationship between sieve and jar see Kamtekar 2017: 96.

[38] This connection between the Desire Argument and the allegorical image is unavailable to those who attribute two contrary desires to the unsuccessful agent of the Argument (see *e.g.*, Kahn 112-116; for a fuller list of such

Socrates' allegorical images appear to persuade Callicles no more than the Desire Argument appears to persuade Polus. Callicles reacts to these images by embracing leakiness, as it were, on the grounds that it is necessary for living pleasantly, which entails experiencing the largest amount of inflow (494a-b). And he almost certainly rejects the suggestion that the senseless person is incompetent at obtaining the objects of her desires, which is directly at odds with his portrait of the strong man.

But whereas the Desire Argument leaves quite abstract the principle that those without sense do not do what they want, and the comparison of the senseless person's soul to a sieve does little more to make it vivid, Socrates' final words of the dialogue bring this principle down to earth by tying it directly to Callicles. When Socrates tells Callicles that at present they cannot maintain the same beliefs about the same things, he infers from this that they are wrong to boast as though they are something, and that they should accordingly practice justice and the rest of virtue, taking up politics or providing counsel to the city only after they have done so (see 527d-e). Implied in this advice is that because Callicles is incredulous and forgetful, he is preparing to embark on a career in politics without a stable understanding of what good this might accomplish or how to accomplish it. The notions about goodness by which he is guided at present are in fact profoundly mistaken, and by acting on them Callicles will harm both himself and others. Callicles may come to believe himself successful in the projects that he plans to undertake, but so long as he remains senseless he will fail to do what he wants.

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interpretations see §4.1 of Chapter 1). On this alternative reading of the Desire Argument, Socrates should say in the allegorical image that the senseless person is successful at carrying some problematic substance to his jars (too much wine, for instance, or perhaps poison) but has some separate desire for something that really is good (like water). Instead Socrates portrays the senseless person as unable to carry to his jars the very object that his appetites are said to be for (water). That my reading of the Desire Argument sheds light on this puzzling element of the image is further evidence in its favor.

6.1. Health as Vigor

Although Socrates suggests that Callicles' views are shared by those who participate in flattery, we have good reasons to resist the conclusion that they are meant to share the fullest version of these views. It would be implausible for Socrates to attribute to *e.g.*, orators' audiences precisely the views that he attributes to Callicles: that the experience of pleasure both fulfils the promise of and further nurtures the good condition of one's body or soul, and that the greater the pleasure one experiences, the better off one is in body or soul. In this form these views are too complex and too unusual to be attributed to the many. That Socrates characterizes those who participate in flattery as senseless gives us reason to think that they are meant to possess a simpler, hazier version of the views that he attributes to Callicles. What remains is to explain how views of this kind can serve as the psychological content missing from the Grand Analogy.

Let me make the case for a conception of health that provides the basis for the requisite views, a conception that is conveniently similar to the meaning of the English word "vigor." In fairly ordinary usage "vigor" can be used to tie large appetites to growth, convalescence or vibrancy, and to suggest that satisfying large appetites is healthy activity in its own right.[39] It names a kind of health as liveliness, as the inclination to bold, energetic action, along with the fitness for it. Although it does not encompass some of the tricky philosophical claims that he makes under pressure from Socrates, the conception of health as vigor is strikingly apt as a foundation for Callicles' professed beliefs, and as a practical ideal that shapes Callicles' behavior.

[39] See for instance *Moby Dick*: "So, in good time my Queequeg gained strength; and at length after sitting on the windlass for a few indolent days (but eating with a vigorous appetite) he suddenly leaped to his feet, threw out his arms and legs, gave himself a good stretching, yawned a little bit, and then springing into the head of his hoisted boat, and poising a harpoon, pronounced himself fit for a fight" (476).

Callicles' statements demonstrate a high regard for vigor in this sense. He decries self-restraint and shame as forms of slavery (483b-484a, 492a-c). He identifies the primary harm of doing philosophy into adulthood as withdrawal from the world of action (484c-486d). He describes the strong man's courage as the ability to execute his designs without flinching (491b). He asserts that if those who want for nothing are happy then stones and corpses would be happy, and that the person who satisfies her appetites and rests contented lives like a stone (492e, 494a-b). He declares happy the person whose motivations and exertions are unified by the demands of her appetites (491e-492a).

Callicles also exhibits excessive boldness in the discussion. He delivers with great confidence each claim that strikes him as correct or even useful at any given moment, regardless of whether he has reflected upon it adequately. We can find a rationale for this tendency in his ethical program, which founds good living upon the reflexive embrace of one's impulses. We can also explain it by appealing to Socrates' treatment of senselessness: Callicles becomes wholly absorbed by the positions that he rushes to endorse because he temporarily forgets the beliefs that conflict with these positions, or else because he is oblivious to the relationship between them. But whether we are inclined to think that Callicles' intellectual deficiencies cause him to adopt the practical ideals that he articulates, or that his practical ideals are causally responsible for his intellectual deficiencies, each factor appears to draw strength from the other.

Given its simplicity, we can also plausibly attribute the Calliclean conception of health to those who participate in flattery. And it slots nicely into Socrates' account of rhetoric. When an orator grips an audience with the prospect of some undertaking, she draws it into an enthusiastic consensus, emboldening it, stilling its doubts and conflicting attitudes. Although the audience may have only a partial theory of why the undertaking is good or what it entails, the orator

makes it feel as if it has a full theory.[40] It experiences pleasure in the prospect of the undertaking and revels in its own ability to appreciate its goodness. Like Callicles, it takes this pleasure to be manifestly healthy, and takes the prospective undertaking to be beneficial in proportion to its power to invigorate. The audience thereby rests secure in the orator's wisdom, sensing its own powers waxing along with its appetites.

6.2 Three Objections

In this abbreviated form my interpretation is open to three important objections. The first is one that I raised against Moss' interpretation in §2.7, namely that it leaves unclear why an audience should believe that any orator who persuades it is a statesman, rather than another kind of craftsman who produces some psychic good. My answer draws upon a clarification that I offered in §3. Just as the diner recognizes that it is the role of the doctor to know which breads are healthy, so the audience recognizes that it is the role of the statesman to know which public undertakings are good. This recognition stands apart from the audience's assessment of undertakings as good in accordance with the degree to which they are invigorating. But among those who advocate for public undertakings, it identifies as statesmen those whose advocacy invigorates it to the greatest extent.

Second, my interpretation runs the risk of violating the distinction between speeches and undertakings, a distinction that, as I argued in §3, is crucial for understanding the Grand Analogy. My explanation of the Calliclean conception of virtue focuses on a relationship between two things – agent and pleasure. An agent takes herself to be virtuous insofar as she is attuned to some pleasure, which she takes to be good for her. But my proposed account of

[40] I am indebted to Agnes Callard for this way of putting the thought.

relish-making and rhetoric details relationships between three things – diner, relish and bread; audience, speech and undertaking. The text suggests that the diner takes pleasure in the relish but judges the bread to be good, which implies that the audience takes pleasure in the speech but judges the undertaking to be good. Whereas on the Calliclean conception of virtue agents are pleased by the same thing that they judge good for them, the Grand Analogy depicts agents who are pleased by one thing (relish, speech) and judge another thing (bread, undertaking) to be good for them.

The key to resolving this apparent discrepancy is the relationship between relishes and breads. Given their proximity, breads served with tasty relishes might become tasty themselves, or else relishes might make the confection of bread and relish tasty. A diner with a Calliclean conception of bodily health would judge a bread to be good for her body on account of its tastiness, and the relish-maker's bread would depend for its tastiness upon the relish with which it is served. Audiences are subject to a similar kind of slippage in their judgments about invigorating speeches and the undertakings they propose. When an orator's speech prevails, her audience is liable to conflate its pleasure in the speech with pleasure in the prospect of the undertaking. If the audience also has a Calliclean conception of virtue it will conclude that the skillful orator knows what is good for it, and that her proposed undertaking will make it virtuous. The speech frames the undertaking for the audience, and any attitudes elicited by the speech attach themselves to the prospect of the undertaking.

It is true that in this form the interpretation contains a notable point of disanalogy between the account of relish-making and the account of rhetoric. Diners eat relishes and bread at the same time, and the two foods physically intermingle as they are eaten, whereas speeches are distinct in kind and, for the most part, temporally removed from the undertakings for which

they advocate.[41] But it is the function of rhetorical speech, if not of speech of all kinds, to represent – to make an image of – what it is about, which means that there will be no temporal distance between a given speech and its images of the undertaking for which it advocates, at least.[42] And it is also possible for an undertaking to be suffused with rhetorical pleasures in something quite like the manner in which bread can be suffused with the flavors of relishes. The speech that motivates someone to endorse or pursue an undertaking can inform her attitudes to it for however long those attitudes remain with her.

This is one of the bedrock principles of the most widespread form of contemporary rhetoric: commercial rhetoric.[43] The pleasure that one takes in advertisements for BMWs, for instance, can attend upon one's experience of actually buying and driving a BMW. Perhaps an ad campaign makes someone think that BMWs are sleek and powerful, that driving them is a mundane thrill, that BMW drivers are outstandingly virile, and so forth. After this person becomes a BMW driver the ad continues to work on her. It has shaped her attitudes toward all things BMW, and will therefore shape the pleasure she takes in her car. Or to take an example from the *Gorgias*, the Athenians' pleasure in assembling Themistocles' wall stone by stone – of feeling secure behind it once it was completed, of believing that the city would be less vulnerable to retaliation as it projected power abroad – would have been continuous with the pleasure in Themistocles' speech portraying the wall as a worthy undertaking. The Athenians' attitudes towards the wall itself would have derived in large part from the attitudes generated by the

[41] This objection recalls Cooper's criticism of Socrates' account of rhetoric, which I mentioned in n. 21 (see Cooper 1999: 55 and n. 40).
[42] Thanks to Gabriel Lear for this thought.
[43] Neither Plato nor Aristotle mentions this form in their discussions of rhetoric, likely because commercial rhetoric – speech designed to persuade someone to engage in commerce in some fashion – was informal among their contemporaries, and was accompanied by none of the trappings or conventions of oratory as they knew it.

speech. This is not to say that all rhetorical speeches will have this effect on all audiences. But the more successful the speech, the more pronounced this effect will be.

Finally, I argued in §2.7 that other interpretations fail to explain how Socrates might account for speeches that persuade even though they appear to displease their audiences, by provoking fear, shame or other unpleasant emotions. To defend my interpretation from the same objection requires that I elaborate upon the conception of vigor as I have presented it thus far. As I envision it, the feeling of vigor carries with it the emotional trappings of wisdom. By mastering a limited set of ideas and intellectual skills, the wise person thinks, speaks and acts well in an unlimited sense – in an unlimited set of circumstances, with respect to an unlimited variety of topics, in response to an unlimited number of challenges, and so forth (see *e.g.*, 507a-c; *Republic* 517b-c, 520c; *Phaedrus* 269e-272b, 275d-276a). And the wise person's feelings keep pace with her abilities. Wisdom is accompanied by resolution and confidence, immunity from doubt or confusion about what is good and true – or, rather, about what is best and "truest," to borrow the language that Socrates uses when discussing the Forms (see *e.g.*, 527c-e; *Republic* 484c, 509b).

The orator provides a simulacrum of these feelings without the wisdom that should underwrite them. She answers the question of what is good in some matter, and – what is more important for producing conviction – she focuses her audience narrowly enough on her own answer that the audience becomes uncritical, oblivious to any grounds for doubting the answer and uninterested in reflecting upon it further. We might capture this second effect by saying that the orator induces in her audience the oblivion of senselessness, bringing its desire for what is good to what seems to it to be a definite resting point. Although the audience has only a partial

theory of (or story about) what is good, the orator makes it think that it has a full theory. For the audience this experience is invigorating.

Although this experience is pleasant in itself, it can be brought on by a speech that provokes unpleasant emotions, so long as the speech offers clarity about what is good and how to be in touch with it in some manner. A speech that causes fear can invigorate, but only if it is accompanied by clarity about how to meet the fearful thing, and about the paramount importance of doing so. If a speech elicits fear that is sufficiently strong but leaves its audience unclear about how to meet its object, the audience is liable to feel enervated or paralyzed by it. If a speech elicits fear that is insufficiently strong, its audience will not feel activated by it. Likewise for shame, and for other negative emotions. If speeches that induce these emotions offer clarity about how to confront their objects and about the singular importance of doing so, they are invigorating and therefore pleasant.

When the plague broke out in Athens and the Spartans were ravaging the Attic peninsula, Pericles rebuked the Athenians for losing their nerve and blaming him for their troubles, and he warned them that if they capitulated to the Spartans they would face even greater dangers (see Thucydides' *History* 2.60-2.63). If we follow Socrates' account, this speech was persuasive not because any of these themes are pleasant, but because it focused the Athenians upon an impressive set of evils and provided them a clear means of dealing with them: stay the course with the strategy that Pericles had proposed at the outset of the war. Pericles' claim that this needed to be done was persuasive to the Athenians insofar as it invigorated them, and to the extent that it did it was pleasant to them.

7. Conclusion

By this point I hope to have answered a question that I posed in §2.5: why did Plato bother to include the Grand Analogy in the *Gorgias* at all? We should not be misled by the Analogy's brevity or opacity into thinking of it as a trifle. It is a highly compressed presentation of one major strain of Socrates' account of rhetoric. A full interpretation of the Grand Analogy vindicates the larger account from charges that in its haste to condemn rhetoric it is blithely insensitive to the relevant phenomena (see *e.g.*, Irwin 123-124, 134; Miller 115, 118).

In order to patch up the holes in the Grand Analogy I have drawn together pieces of the dialogue whose affinities call out for the kind of broad, synthetic interpretive approach I have taken: the corollary of the Appearance Thesis within the Desire Argument, the Grand Analogy, the larger account of rhetoric, Callicles' glorification of intemperance and the pursuit of pleasure, and the dialogue's treatment of senselessness. I have made two kinds of arguments for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis. On the one hand I have presented direct evidence for this interpretation in the elaborate conceptions of the good offered by or on behalf of agents whose actions are wicked, impulsive or aimed at pleasure. On the other hand I have attempted to demonstrate the value of the maximalist interpretation in making sense of Socrates' remarks about rhetoric. Although we find in the *Gorgias* a number of characters and character types whose means of discovering what is good are severely limited, none of them is presented as disengaged from the self-conscious pursuit of the good, or as focused on so narrow a set of goods that she does not care about virtue. Socrates' own pursuit of the good is distinguished from theirs not by his possession of a complex account of how to live well, but by his humility in trying to discern the true magnitude of the task, by his relentlessness in seeing it through, and by the extraordinary intellectual gifts at his disposal.

In the remaining two chapters I will argue that Socrates retains in the *Republic* the same basic set of views about desire that he has in the *Gorgias*, but that the division of the soul and the portrayal of imitation as a structural feature of the cosmos provide him means of developing these views in several novel directions. In the *Republic* we hear less about the elaborate conceptions of the good that individual agents possess, which means that it does not offer the same kind of fodder for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis as the *Gorgias* does. Instead misguided agents and the lower parts of the soul mistake ontologically lower objects for ontologically higher objects, and seek virtue, the fine and the good within the world defined by their intellectual limitations. As I will argue in Chapter 4, both of these features of the *Republic* attest to Socrates' sustained commitment to a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis.

3

Appetites, Good-Dependence and Provisionalism in the *Republic*

1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 I argued that we should explain Socrates' commitment to the Reality Thesis in the *Gorgias* by thinking of him as a provisionalist about desire. His view is that all desire is for its object, provided that the object is good. This interpretation enables us to make sense of Socrates' provocative conclusion in the Desire Argument that if an agent does something that happens to be bad, then regardless of whether she recognizes it as bad, she does not do what she wants (see 467c-468d). For doing what is bad necessarily entails failing to do what one wants. In Chapter 2 I argued for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*, according to which every agent believes the actions she is motivated to perform are good in a full, quasi-Socratic sense – that these actions are fine and virtuous. In the *Gorgias* this principle governs the beliefs of agents who are wicked, or who are habitually guided by impulse or the pursuit of pleasure. These are extreme cases that confirm the principle's universality: if a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis applies to agents like these, it applies to all agents.

In this chapter and the next I will argue that in the *Republic* Socrates preserves his larger view that all desire is for the good, and that he further develops the versions of the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis that I found in the *Gorgias*. This development is directly tied to two of the core philosophical innovations of the *Republic*, the division of the soul and the treatment of imitation as a structural feature of the cosmos. In making the case for this interpretation I will focus on what Socrates designates the lowest parts of the soul and agents who are dominated by

them, and for the same reason that I focused on the intemperate, the senseless and those who participate in flattery in the *Gorgias*. Agents and psychic parts of this sort serve as useful test cases for the universality of Socrates' theses about desire. If the theses apply in these cases, they will also apply to agents and psychic parts whose intellectual condition is superior, and whose beliefs about what is good are more reliable.

Although I will turn to the relationship between desire and imitation in Chapter 4 only, let me briefly explain here how I envision it. Socrates speaks about imitation in several places in the *Republic*. The most obvious are the discussions of imitation in poetry and music (*mousikē*), as well as in crafts and craft-objects of all kinds, in Books 2-3 and Book 10 (see 376e-403c, 595a-608b; see also 500b-501b). But in the discussions of metaphysics and epistemology in Books 5-7 Socrates treats the Forms as originals imitated by the things that participate in them, and more generally he treats ontologically lower objects as images, likenesses or imitations of ontologically higher objects, whether visible or intelligible (see 475b-476d, 509c-516c, 520a-d, 529d-e, 534b-d). Socrates makes clear enough that all of this carries implications for perception and thought, that our perceptual and intellectual contact with images, likenesses and imitations depends in various ways upon the higher objects that govern them. Less clear in the dialogue, and far less prominent in the secondary literature, are the implications for desire and conation. Whereas I argued for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias* by teasing out the complex notions about health and virtue that Socrates attributes to those who participate in flattery, I will argue for a similar interpretation of the *Republic* by focusing on its portrayal of agents and psychic parts whose vision – to borrow Socrates' imagery – is trained upon what is lower, but who believe they are in touch with what is higher, and who therefore pursue lower objects as if they were the higher objects of which they are images, likenesses or

imitations. I will also argue that Socrates attributes to the lowest part of the soul operative beliefs that the actions it motivates and the objects it pursues are fine and virtuous, good in the sense that the maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis requires.

With the arguments in this chapter and the next I am targeting interpretations that belong to three distinct camps. One is a large group of commentators who believe that Socrates attributes to the appetitive part of the soul so-called "good-independent desires" – desires that are not for the good – and that in dividing the soul Socrates breaks with his view from earlier dialogues that all desire is for the good. I will call this position "GID." Another camp attributes to Socrates what I will call "apparentism," the view that all desire is for what an agent believes to be good, but need not be for what is in fact good. The third camp favors a minimalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis, an interpretation that I discussed at length in Chapter 2.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. In §2 I will give an overview of the most salient versions of what I will call "the Desire Question": in the *Republic*, is all desire for the good? There are nearly as many renderings of this question as there are answers to it, and I will begin by situating my argument in relation to several groups of question-answer pairings.

The star passage for all variations of GID is the discussion of thirst in Socrates' argument for the first division of the soul, which distinguishes the reckoning part of the soul (*to logistikon*) from the appetitive part. In §3 I will argue that proponents of GID have gotten this passage wrong. It does not compel us to deny that thirst is for the good, and to see in it a rejection of the Desire Thesis, which holds that all desire is for the good. In fact, the Socratic-sounding objection that frames the passage, as well as the examples that Socrates offers as he responds to it, provide indications that thirst is indeed for drink as good.

In §4 I will examine the discussion of pleasure in Book 9, where, among other things, Socrates argues that when they obtain the objects that their desires motivate them to pursue, people who are ruled by the lower psychic parts do not experience pleasure, but only apparent pleasure, the relief from pain; and that people of this sort do not know which activities and objects are pleasant, and do not understand what pleasure is. It is difficult to square this account with Socrates' characterization of appetite as desire for pleasure, and in this section I will evaluate several formulations that attempt to capture what exactly Socrates thinks the appetites of such people are appetites for. I will argue that we should reject formulations that seem amenable to GID and to apparentism, and embrace a provisional formulation: this sort of appetite is for its object, provided the object is pleasant.

I will conclude in §5 by examining some evidence for why we should think that appetite, which is provisionally related to its objects as pleasant, is also provisionally related to its objects as good. My argument for this claim will continue into Chapter 4.

2. The Desire Question

In the *Republic*, is all desire for the good? In recent years commentators have generated a great variety of answers to this question, in part because they have taken it in different ways, often without explicitly noting the differences. So before answering it I need to explain how I want the question to be heard. To do this I will outline the most relevant ways that the question can or has been heard and answered. Disambiguating the question in this manner will allow me to clarify the obstacles to accepting my own view, and to demonstrate what is novel about my understanding of desire in the *Republic* relative to interpretations that are otherwise harmonious with it.

2.1 Desire for the good as an objective (but not necessarily apparent) fact

One rendering of the Desire Question takes it to be about what we might call third-personal facts regarding an agent's motivations. This version of the question focuses on whether it is a felicitous feature of human psychology, perhaps down to the sort of providential cosmology captured most vividly in the *Timaeus*, that even our more primitive desires are so natured as to motivate us to pursue the kinds of objects that are good for us in general, or under the right conditions, or other things being equal (see *Tim* 69b-92c).[1] For instance, food, drink and sex are all good for human beings in this sense, so regardless of whether goodness figures in the intentional content of an agent's hunger, thirst and lust, or of whether an agent believes that these desires are for their objects as good in any sense, we might think that her appetites are for good things because they motivate her to pursue objects that benefit her.

This view is similar to the Reality Thesis, in that it sees the objects of our desires as good in fact, at least in one important sense. But unlike the Reality Thesis, it excludes characterizations of particular objects as good for reasons that do not appeal to the kinds to which they belong, or to the general needs of human beings. There are many factors that might determine whether some particular object is in fact good for the agent who desires or is motivated to pursue it, and its being the kind of object that is good for human beings in general is only one such factor. The Reality Thesis specifies only that all desire is for what is really good. It can therefore license inferences of the kind that Socrates makes in the Desire Argument in the

[1] For a discussion of this kind of *ceteris paribus* good in the *Lysis*, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Apology* and *Crito*, see Vlastos 1991: 214-231. For a treatment of this connection between desire in the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*, see Kamtekar 2017: 130, 138, 147, 154-155.

Gorgias – for instance, even if her hunger motivates her to pursue it, we can infer that an agent does not desire some particular food on the grounds that she has already eaten too much of it, or on the grounds that it belongs to someone else and it would therefore be unjust for her to eat it, or on the grounds that eating it would distract her from a crucial opportunity to secure some higher good. The view that our desires motivate us to pursue kinds of objects that are good for us in general does not provide any license for such inferences.

This view also does not explain the claim that we desire what is really good for us in the same way as the Reality Thesis does. According to the Reality Thesis, it is because I desire objects only on the provision that they are good – where the provision that they are good is internal to the intentional content of my desire – that whether I desire some particular object depends upon its being good in fact. As I put it in Chapter 1, it is because of an agent's psychological condition that the fact that ϕ-ing is good is necessary for her to want {to ϕ}. More specifically, it is because she wants {to ϕ, provided that her ϕ-ing is good} that whether she wants {to ϕ} depends upon ϕ-ing's being good in fact. Whereas the explanation of the fact that our desires motivate us to pursue things that are in fact good for us in general need not depend upon the intentional content of our desires. It only requires that whenever we act, we are motivated by a desire to pursue an object of a kind that happens to be good for us in general.[2]

Although it seems right to say that, as they are portrayed in the *Republic*, our desires motivate pursuit of things that are good for us in general, this rendering of the Desire Question bypasses the matters that concern me in this chapter and the next: the relationship between an agent's desires and her beliefs about what is good, and whether and how goodness figures in the

[2] Consider a parallel claim about the non-conscious motions of plants: they turn towards sunlight because they are so natured as to move towards what is good for them in general. This need not entail any claims about the intentional content of their desires, or about their psychological condition when they turn towards the light.

intentional content of the desires themselves. I will therefore leave this version of the question aside.

2.2 Rationality

The core strategy of proponents of GID is to argue that a desire can be for the good only if it is rational, and they have therefore taken the Desire Question to be inextricable from the question of whether all desire is rational. For those who pursue this strategy, a desire is rational only if it stands in the right relation to other things within the soul, although different commentators have treated different relations as the relevant ones.

Terence Irwin takes appetites in the *Republic* to be both non-rational and good-independent because they cannot be directly influenced by an agent's deliberation or beliefs about what is good (Irwin 1977: 192-193). That is, it is never in response to deliberation or beliefs about what is good that one's appetites arise, persist, vanish, take a new object or alter in intensity. And Irwin specifies that only the reckoning part of the soul deliberates, and only the reckoning and spirited parts of the soul generate beliefs about what is good. On this interpretation, if an agent does what she believes to be good because she believes it to be good, her motivation for acting can never derive from the appetitive part of her soul.[3]

Like Irwin, Terry Penner ties his argument for GID to the intellectual inferiority of the appetitive part of the soul. On Penner's reading of the *Republic*, appetites are good-independent because on their own they cannot yield to conflicting desires for what an agent believes to be better, and because they never cease to assert their claims for their respective objects purely in

[3] Devereux also takes irrational desires to be good-independent, and on the same grounds as Irwin (see Devereux 382 n. 2).

response to such a conflict (Penner 1971: 115-117 and n. 20).[4] These claims can be evaluated and overruled by the reckoning part of the soul, or else appetites can overrule the reckoning part if they are strong enough, but on its own the appetitive part is incapable of and unresponsive to deliberation of this kind. Once the appetitive part desires a particular object, this desire will persist until there is some kind of non-rational change in the agent to do with physiology or non-rational perception.[5]

Several commentators have rejected interpretations like these because they attribute to the appetitive part of the soul a kind of intellectual poverty that cannot be squared with the text. Although all parties to this dispute agree that the appetitive part of the soul cannot perform all of the intellectual functions that the reckoning part can, opponents of GID argue that the appetitive part is capable of making normative judgments (like the judgment that the reckoning part should rule), of being persuaded by the reckoning part, and of recognizing as such or even determining the means to a given end (see Bobonich 237, 243-245; Carone 126; Moline 10-12; Moss 2008: 37).

Although this question – how the appetitive part of the soul and its desires relate to the beliefs, deliberations and desires of the other parts – has featured more prominently than any other in work that supports or opposes GID, it is almost entirely orthogonal to the question I will consider in this chapter. For what is good could figure in the intentional content of appetites even if they, or the appetitive part of the soul in general, were entirely unresponsive to the other parts, and to their beliefs, deliberations and desires (see Kamtekar 2017: 143, 147; Moss 2008: 62-65; Price 47-49). Likewise two different people might desire with equal intensity what is

[4] Anagnostopoulos agrees with Penner on this point (see Anagnostopoulos 168).
[5] Cooper agrees with Penner on this point (see Cooper 1984: 9-10). For other endorsements of GID see Annas 129, 139; Cooper 1984: 8-9; Irwin 1995: 206; Kahn 1987: 85; Nussbaum 106-7; Parry 93-94; Penner 1971: 106-108; Reeve 2004: xi, 113 n. 9; Vlastos 1991: 86; Watson 316-320.

good or best for both of them, but if they disagree about what this is, they might still come into intractable conflicts with one another over what to do. If they have great trouble communicating, or if there is a significant disparity in their cognitive abilities, so much the worse. Although I will not make an entry into the longstanding and complex debate over whether the parts of the soul are full-fledged agents, this analogy captures quite well how I believe things stand between the appetitive part of the soul and the other parts.[6]

2.3 Desire for the apparent good

Among commentators who reject GID, most have done so on the grounds that in the *Republic* Socrates believes the Appearance Thesis is true, and not on the grounds that he believes the Reality Thesis is true. Those who favor this interpretation have different views about whether the appetitive part of the soul or its desires are irrational in quite the way that Irwin, Penner and other proponents of GID think they are. But on two points the apparentists agree: that the appetitive part of the soul has its own beliefs about what is good, and that appetites are for what the appetitive part of the soul believes to be good, or for what appears to it to be good.[7]

I agree with the first of these claims, for a number of the reasons cited by other commentators, as well as for reasons that I will present in the next chapter. But I reject the second claim as a sufficient characterization of the intentional content of appetites. In the form

[6] For helpful discussions of this debate see Annas 130, 144-145; Gerson 48-50.

[7] For rejections of GID on the grounds that in the *Republic* all desire is for the apparent good, see Barney 2010: 45-46; McTighe 213-215; Moss 2008: 61-63. Gerson rejects GID on the grounds that in the *Republic* all desire is for the real good (see Gerson 48). Different opponents of GID construe "good" in different ways, and therefore render the Desire Question in different ways. To cite just three, Moss takes appetites to be for what the appetitive part of the soul believes to be "the thing most worthy of pursuit" (see Moss 2008: 62-3). Barney takes appetites to be for what the appetitive part of the soul believes good in at least some mid-level sense. That is, appetites are for objects that strike the appetitive part of the soul as valuable in some way, where this sense of its value can be linked by the agent to an ascending chain of values that terminates in what is good full-stop (see Barney 2010: 44-46). Price argues that appetites must be for what the appetitive part of the soul takes to be good, but that because Plato gives us no precise guidance as to what this means, we should not be committed to any one version of what it means (see Price 49).

in which the apparentists embrace this claim, it is misleading. Rather, as I will argue in §4.3, appetites are provisional desires for pleasure. Each appetite is for what the appetitive part of the soul takes to be pleasant, provided it really is so. And as I will argue in §5 and Chapter 4, appetites are also provisional desires for the good. In combination with false beliefs about what is good, therefore, appetites can motivate us to pursue objects that they not are for, and therefore – as the formulation from the *Gorgias* has it – to do what the appetitive part of the soul does not want us to do, even if we do what this part believes to be good and motivates us to do.[8] Insofar as this conclusion prevents us from identifying the object of an appetite with whatever the appetitive part of the soul believes to be good and motivates an agent to pursue, it is incompatible with the apparentist interpretation.

3. The Thirst-Itself Argument

3.1 The structure of the objection and Socrates' response

Socrates' aim in the larger context of what I will call the "Thirst Itself Argument" is to demonstrate that in cases in which a person is thirsty (and therefore wants to drink) but restrains herself from drinking, it must be that different parts of her soul motivate her simultaneously to undertake these opposite actions (see 439c-d). This conclusion depends on what is often called in the literature "the principle of opposites" – the principle that the same thing cannot do or undergo opposites at the same time and in the same respect (see 436b-437a; and see *e.g.*, Woods 32-34). Having established this principle, Socrates and Glaucon agree that there are certain

[8] I reject Rachana Kamtekar's claim that the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias* does not apply to the desires of the lower parts of the soul, since these parts of the soul "are designed to go after objects of specific kinds, serving our real, overall good when regulated by reason" (Kamtekar 2017: 157; and see 140). The disagreement turns on our different understandings of the Desire Argument, and especially of the meaning of its conclusion that the agent who does what is bad does not do what she wants (see Chapter 1 n. 7, and my interpretation of the Desire Argument in Chapter 1).

happenings in the soul that constitute opposites – "assent and dissent, wanting to have something and rejecting it, taking something and pushing it away" – and that appetite, wishing (*to boulesthai*) and willing (*to ethelein*), paired with appetitive aversion, wishing-not (*to aboulein*) and being unwilling (*to mē ethelein*) respectively, are opposites of this kind (437b-c). Because the thirsty person who declines to drink is possessed of two opposite motivations at the same time, these cannot belong to her in the same respect, but must reside in two distinct parts of her soul.

The Thirst Itself Argument is framed by an objection to Socrates' characterization of thirst, insofar as it is thirst, as an appetite for drink itself, and not for drink of a certain sort, such as hot drink or cold, much drink or little (see 437d-438a). To this characterization of thirst, Socrates says, someone might object that "nobody desires drink, but rather good (*chrēstou*) drink...since everyone desires good things (*tōn agathōn*)" (438a3-4; and see 437d-e). This explicit objection seems to be the basis for a second, implicit objection that threatens more directly Socrates' larger argument for the distinction between the appetitive part of the soul and the reckoning part: if thirst is desire for good drink rather than drink itself, the thirsty person who declines to drink may do so because she has determined that the drink available to her is not good drink, and is therefore not what she desires (for the larger argument see 435e-439d). This would not be a case of intrapsychic conflict, as Socrates needs it to be, but of a mismatch between what the thirsty person wants and what she believes is available to her. In order for Socrates' example to work, thirst itself had better be for drink itself, rather than for good drink. Only then would the thirsty person's declining to drink suffice to demonstrate that she has a countervailing aversion to the drink before her.[9]

[9] My analysis of the role of the objection in Socrates' argument for the first division of the soul overlaps a good deal with Kamtekar's (see Kamtekar 2017: 134).

Proponents of GID have argued that the objection that "nobody desires drink, but rather good drink" derives from the Desire Thesis – the position that all desire is for the good – of which, as I understand it, the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis are components. Thus in overcoming the argumentative obstacle to the first division of the soul, proponents of GID take Socrates to be denying that all desire is good-dependent (see especially Irwin 1995: 206; Penner 1971: 96-97, 115-118; Reeve 1988: 120-123; Vlastos 1988: 99).

I will argue in the following section that this reading is incorrect. The objection that Socrates considers in the Thirst Itself Argument takes the form of an inference from a premise ("everyone desires good things" – *pantes gar ara tōn agathōn epithumousin*) to a conclusion ("nobody desires drink, but rather good drink").[10] Proponents of GID take Socrates to be arguing that the conclusion is false because the premise is unsound. But he could instead be arguing that the conclusion is false because it does not follow from the premise, making the inference invalid. Socrates offers no explicit guidance as to which of the two readings we should prefer. But there is compelling evidence that tells against the former reading and in favor of the latter.[11]

[10] It might be objected, on behalf of a reader standing outside of the debate I am considering, that this phrase ("everyone desires good things") suggests that the passage concerns a proposal regarding not what all desire is for, but what everyone desires – good things. Good things may be desired by all people even if not all desires are for good things, as some desires of all people, or some desires of some people, may not be for good things. But the justification for taking the phrase to mean what proponents of GID have taken it to mean – that all desire is for good things – is clear enough. If it were not taken in this way, the objection on which it is based cannot get off the ground. From the claim that everyone desires good things it cannot plausibly be inferred that thirst is for good drink, as it must be if the objection is to stand. Whereas this inference can plausibly be drawn from the claim that all desire is for good things.

[11] Carone reaches a similar conclusion about this passage. But the evidence that she cites generally comes from outside of the passage, and although this evidence supports the conclusion that there is some good for the appetitive part of the soul (the kind of thing that is also true about parts of non-conscious living things, and about parts of artifacts), it is insufficient for the conclusion that Carone draws from it, namely that thirst itself is for drink itself as good – a fact about the intentional content of thirst itself (see Carone 120-121, 128-129). Weiss proposes an anti-GID reading of this passage that has a similar structure to mine, but her argument is quite different. She takes the premise of the objection to be trivially true because here "good things" means "things that are attractive in any way." In my view this concedes far too much territory to GID, and I don't find hers to be a credible construal of the meaning of *tōn agathōn* or its variations in Plato in general, or in the *Republic* in particular (see Weiss 2007: 89-98).

In offering this alternative interpretation, my aim is primarily to block the conclusion that in the Thirst Itself Argument Socrates rejects the Desire Thesis, and therefore the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis. By itself the Thirst Itself Argument does little to substantiate either the Reality Thesis or the Appearance Thesis, let alone the versions of these theses for which I argued in Chapters 1 and 2. But explaining why it is compatible with these theses is also useful for demonstrating how the division of the soul makes Socrates' understanding of desire more complex.

3.2 Drink as good

Socrates concludes the Thirst Itself Argument with the claim that "a particular sort of thirst is for a particular sort of drink. Thirst itself, however, is not for much or little, good or bad, or, in a word, for drink of a particular sort; rather, thirst itself is by nature just for drink itself" (439a4-7). He arrives at this conclusion by likening the relationship between thirst and drink to the relationships between pairs of relata in two sets of examples.

In the first set are six pairs of predicates, all but the last of which are pairs of relative predicates: greater and less, more and fewer, double and half, heavier and lighter, faster and slower, hot and cold (438b-c). Socrates observes that each of these predicates itself relates only to its own proper relatum itself. It is only when one relatum in a pair is qualified that the predicate to which it relates is also qualified. For instance, what is greater is greater than what is less. If it is much greater, it is much greater than what is much less; if it is going to be greater, it is going to be greater than what is going to be less, *etc*. (438c-d).

In the second set of examples Socrates turns to knowledge. He says that knowledge itself is of what is knowable itself (*mathēmatou autou*), whereas particular kinds of knowledge are of

particular kinds of knowable things – *e.g.*, house-building is knowledge of building houses, medicine is knowledge of health and disease (438c-d). In other words, only by adding a qualification to knowledge itself do we get a particular kind of knowledge, like house-building or medicine. Likewise only by adding a qualification to what is knowable itself do we get the particular subject matter of house-building or medicine.

Thirst, Socrates argues, works in the same way. It is only when a person's thirst is somehow qualified that it is for drink that is qualified. When a person is hot she desires cold drink; when she is very thirsty she desires a great amount of drink (see 437d-e, 439a-b). Hence thirst itself is for drink itself by nature, and not for good drink.

Proponents of GID take this to be either decisive evidence for their position or the central piece of evidence for it. But consider the relationship between two pairs of relative predicates in the first set of examples: the greater and the less, and the double and the half. While it is true that the double itself is double the half itself, what is double stands to what is half as something greater to something less. That is, the relationship between the double and the half falls under the broader class of relationships between the greater and the less. And although this is not the essential feature of the double-half pairing that distinguishes it from all other pairs of relata, it is a necessary rather than an accidental feature of the pairing. What is double is necessarily greater than what is half, simply in virtue of being double. Likewise although double and half are mutually defining relata, this does not mean that each relatum relates by necessity exclusively to the other relatum and to nothing else. For the double is necessarily double something less than it, and the half is necessarily half of something greater than it. And notably the same line of reasoning could tie all of the other relative predicates in Socrates' first set of examples to the

greater and the less: the more is greater than the fewer in number, the heavier is greater than the lighter in weight, and so forth.

Similar observations apply to the pairs of terms in the second set of examples. While it is true that medicine is strictly knowledge of health and disease, medicine stands to health and disease as some kind of knowledge to something knowable. The relationship between medicine and health and disease falls under the broader class of relationships between knowledge and the knowable. So although medicine is distinguished from other kinds of knowledge by its relationship to health and disease, rather than to what is knowable, it is also a necessary feature of medicine to be related to what is knowable.

Now let us return to the pairs of relative terms on which the argument is focused: thirst and drink, and desire and good things. If the GID-friendly reading of this passage were correct, the examples Socrates uses to illustrate the nature of the relationship between thirst and drink should not allow for the possibility that thirst for drink belongs to the broader class of desires for good things. But these examples suggest nothing of the kind. They do suggest that drink is the defining relatum of thirst, and that good drink is not, which in turn implies that thirst is not for good drink. But they do not rule out the possibility that drink is one of the good things, or that thirst is for drink as one of the good things.

On the contrary, just as the double is necessarily greater than something less, and medicine is necessarily knowledge of something knowable, Socrates' analogy invites us to think of thirst as a kind of desire that is necessarily for some object of desire. And the only candidate for a class of objects of desire that is mentioned in the Thirst Itself Argument is "good things," which appears in the premise for the framing objection: everyone desires good things (438a3). Socrates' conclusion that thirst itself is for drink itself does nothing to undermine this premise.

And the examples he uses in the argument invite us to see the premise as compatible with the argument's conclusion. We should therefore take Socrates to deny that the hypothetical objector's inference is valid, not that the premise on which it rests is sound. We cannot infer from the premise (everyone desires good things) that thirst itself is for good drink. But the argument suggests that all desire is for good things, and thirst itself is for one kind of good thing: drink itself.

Does the text treat thirst for good drink as one among many kinds of thirst? It appears to do so, given that Socrates does not seem to reject the existence of thirst for good drink, but only to deny that thirst itself is the same thing as thirst for good drink. But if so, can the Desire Thesis allow that thirst itself is distinct from thirst for good drink? If all desire is for what is good, and thirst itself is a desire for drink itself, why not say that thirst itself is a desire for good drink?[12]

As Socrates makes clear, thirst itself is a simple form of thirst that may become further specified under certain conditions. As Socrates puts it, "if heat is present in addition to thirst, won't it cause the appetite to be for something cold as well, whereas the addition of cold makes it an appetite for something hot? And if there is much thirst, because of the presence of muchness, won't it cause the desire to be for much drink, and where little, for little?" (Reeve's translation with small modifications, 437d11-e4). The thought seems to be that when one's body is hot, this causes one's thirst to be for cold drink, and when one's body is cold, this causes one's thirst to be for hot drink. Likewise whatever bodily condition causes one to have a great thirst makes one's thirst for much drink, and likewise for what causes one to have a little thirst, which makes one's thirst for little drink.

With this explanation Socrates seems to imply that in certain circumstances one can have a thirst that is just for drink itself, and not for a particular kind of drink – say, if one's throat is

[12] Thanks to Gabriel Lear for pressing me to address these questions.

dry, and drinking any potable liquid will do. Under these circumstances it seems reasonable to say that an agent does not desire good drink, since any drink will be good for her and truly satisfy her desire, insofar as it is drink. Likewise there may be circumstances in which one has a simple thirst but one's body is also so cold that any hot drink will do, or is so hot that any cold drink will do, and so forth.

There is no good reason to deny that the Appearance Thesis and the Reality Thesis can apply to cases like these. Even if thirst for hot drink or for cold drink belongs strictly to the appetitive part of the soul, as Socrates indicates that thirst itself does, nothing in the Thirst Itself Argument rules out the possibility that the appetitive part will believe the object of its desire to be good.[13]

Can the appetitive part of the soul have such beliefs? Can it have beliefs at all? Socrates indicates plainly in Book 10 that what he calls there the inferior part of the soul – which I take to include the appetitive part as well as the spirited part – has beliefs.[14] There Socrates tells Glaucon that when we experience optical illusions, but can tell by measuring, calculating, counting or weighing that the truth about what we see is not as it appears to be, the inferior part of our souls still "believes (*doxazon*) contrary to the measurements," whereas the superior part of

[13] For a different argument that reaches substantially the same conclusion, see Kamtekar 2017: 134.

[14] Within this section of the text Socrates speaks primarily of a superior and an inferior part of the soul. The superior part is clearly meant to be what he refers to elsewhere as the reckoning part (see 602e1-2, 603a, 605a-b). Things are not so clear with the inferior part of the soul, which various commentators have argued is the appetitive part of the soul, or else the spirited part, or a combination of these two parts; or that it is some lower portion of the reckoning part (see Adam II 406; Annas 131; Barney 1992: 286-287; Kamtekar 2017: 142; Lorenz 59-60; Moss 2006: 520-521; 2008 44-46; Murdoch 5; Murphy 1951 239-240; Nehamas 265-266; Penner 1971: 100-101; Reeve 1988: 127; Storey 83; for other interpretations see Belfiore 52-53; Price 68-69). I favor the third of these interpretations, that Socrates means what he says about the inferior part of the soul to apply to both the spirited and the appetitive parts, largely because Socrates attributes to the element within us on which imitative poetry achieves its effect sexual desires, anger and appetites (606d). But my argument is compatible with all but the last interpretation, that the inferior part of the soul is some lower portion of the reckoning part. This interpretation does have some textual basis in the discussion of imitation and mimetic poetry (see 602e4-6). But it also depends on the claim that the appetitive and/or spirited parts of the soul are too intellectually primitive to be susceptible to errors of the kind discussed here. Several commentators have argued persuasively that this claim does not sit well with a number of passages in the *Republic*, and I agree with them that it should therefore be rejected (see Barney 1992: 286-287; Bobonich 243-245; Carone 123-124, 126; Moline 10-12; Moss 2008: 37, 39-40; Price 47-49).

our souls is capable of believing in accordance with them (603a1, and see 602c-603b, 605b-c). I will discuss the status of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic* at length in Chapter 4, where I will argue, among other things, that the appetitive part of the soul believes that the objects of its motivating desires are good.

It is also possible for an agent who acts on a thirst for drink itself, or for objects like hot drink or cold drink, to be mistaken about the kind of drink that is good for her. If she obtains her object in acting, then in keeping with the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias*, the provision in her provisional desire for drink will not be satisfied, and she will therefore not do what she wants. This would occur if, say, an agent has a thirst for {hot drink, provided that it is good}, and it turns out either that hot drink is not good for her, or that only a particular kind of hot drink is good for her and she drinks a different kind. The same conclusion would apply if an agent acted on a thirst for {drink itself, provided it is good}, but it turned out that only a particular kind of drink was good for her, and she drank a different kind of drink. In §4.3 I will argue that from Socrates' discussion of pleasure in Book 9 we should conclude that appetites are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant, and in §5 and Chapter 4 I will argue that we should also think of them as provisional desires for their objects as good. For now, suffice it to say that if appetites are provisional desires for their objects as good, the Reality Thesis – along with the conclusions of the Desire Argument – applies to appetites in the manner I have outlined here.

Granting all of this, it may be possible to desire good drink provisionally. That is, it may be possible to desire {good drink, provided it is good}. The two instances of "good" in this formulation are not redundant, given that it might be bad for some agents to obtain good drink on some occasions. But it would be misleading to say that the appetitive part of the soul can desire good drink provisionally. Since – with his remarks about optical illusion, and in the larger

discussion of mimetic poetry – Socrates indicates that the inferior part of the soul is incapable of holding beliefs that run contrary to the way things appear, as the reckoning part can, it can have no conception of what good drink might be apart from the particular drink, or the particular kind of drink, that it motivates an agent to pursue. To say that the appetitive part of the soul desires good drink provisionally would therefore be less informative than saying that it desires drink itself provisionally, or that it desires hot drink provisionally, or that it desires a strawberry milkshake provisionally. And it would tell us nothing more than the Appearance Thesis already does, namely that at least when it acts on them, the appetitive part of the soul regards the objects of its desires as good.

This is not to say that all attributions of provisional desire for good drink would be similarly flawed. The reckoning part of the soul does not suffer from the same intellectual limitations as the appetitive part. If the intentional content of a provisional desire for drink could be shaped by the reckoning part of the soul, perhaps in combination with the appetitive part, then it might be informative to attribute to someone a provisional desire for good drink. This would be possible, for instance, if the reckoning part of an agent's soul had a belief that some kind of drink is good, although she does not have an appetite for this kind of drink; and if the reckoning part wanted to obtain only the drink that is good for her, even if it realized it did not know what kind of drink this is.[15] To make this a bit less abstract, imagine an athlete in training who has taken some trouble to learn the difference between good and bad food, but who realizes that she is ignorant about what kind of drink is good. Whenever she is thirsty, she may have an appetite for drink of a certain kind – say, for cold water after she exercises on a hot day – but also an

[15] For evidence that the reckoning part is uniquely able to determine which objects, among those sought by the other parts of the soul, are the good ones, see 441e-442b, 443e-444a, 586d-e. For evidence that the lower parts of the soul are unable reliably to arrive at sound judgments about which desiderative objects are good for them, largely because they are ignorant of the criteria that the reckoning part employs in reaching its judgments, see 439c-d, 441e-442c, 443d-44a, 586d-587a, 590c-590d, 602c-603a, 603e-604d, 606a-d.

independent desire for good drink. In some cases like this the appetitive and the reckoning parts of her soul would come into conflict. But as Socrates' characterization of temperance indicates, it is possible for the appetitive part of the soul to recognize that it should be ruled by the reckoning part, in which case the reckoning part would either overrule the appetitive part or modify the intentional content of its desire for cold water in some manner (see 441e, 442c-d, 586d-587a).

Given Socrates' larger purpose in the context of the Thirst Itself Argument, this analysis suggests one possible reason that Socrates rejects the identification of thirst itself with thirst for good drink, even if he allows that the latter is a kind of thirst. In arguing for the division of the appetitive part of the soul from the reckoning part, Socrates appeals to cases in which an agent restrains herself from drinking even though she is thirsty. Because the appetitive part of the soul cannot generate thirst for good drink without a contribution from the reckoning part of the soul, this cannot be the kind of desire that the reckoning part would restrain an agent from fulfilling. So in order for his argument to work Socrates cannot focus on the restraint of thirst for good drink, and he focuses instead on the restraint of thirst itself. Nevertheless, it is compatible with the Desire Thesis for the appetitive part of the soul, or for an entire agent whose reckoning part does not modify her desire, to desire drink itself, provided it is good – or, put another way, to have a provisional desire for drink itself as good.

We therefore need not resort to the drastic explanation of the Thirst Itself Argument offered by proponents of GID. Plato may have tucked into the premise of the enigmatic objection that frames the argument a corollary of one of the core ethical theses of the Socratic dialogues. But he has not rejected the corollary, and the thesis along with it, in such short order.

4.1 Tripartition, the Desire Thesis and Apparentism

Even if we accept that the Thirst Itself Argument is compatible with the Desire Thesis, we might still worry about the tripartite division of the soul. In attributing a limited range of desiderative objects to each psychic part – food, drink, sex and money to the appetitive part; honor, victory and domination to the spirited part; learning, understanding and the good of the whole soul to the reckoning part – Socrates might seem to be indicating that the desires of at least the lower parts of the soul are for just these objects, and not for the good (see 439c-441c, 548d-549a, 554a-555a, 558c-561d, 571a-576b, 580d-581e).

The apparentists offer a solution to this problem. Because they see the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic* and not the Reality Thesis, they can claim that each part of the soul desires what it believes to be good, and conversely that what each believes to be good is defined by the range of its characteristic desiderative objects. This enables the apparentists to reject GID on the grounds that every desire is for its object as good. And it enables them to leave aside a feature of the Reality Thesis that becomes more troublesome with tripartition: if the lower psychic parts desire what is really good, we often cannot identify the objects of their desires with the objects that these desires motivate them to pursue, the objects that they believe to be good. Their inferior intellectual condition makes these parts unable to investigate the good in the manner in which the reckoning part can, and they seem bound by their nature to pursue the good only among their characteristic desiderative objects. But even though what is really good is sometimes to be found among these objects, it extends well beyond them. To claim that the lower psychic parts desire what is really good therefore seems to endow them with a kind of ambition of which they seem incapable.

In §4.2 and §4.3 I will argue that just as appetites are for their objects as pleasant, so their relationship with pleasure is best understood as provisional. Because it is possible for the appetitive part of the soul to mistake apparent pleasures for true pleasures, appetite is for some object, provided that object is pleasant. If this argument is correct then we need not be troubled by the claim that maintaining the Reality Thesis in the *Republic* would be incompatible with the portrayal of the lower psychic parts as unable to investigate the good seriously, or to motivate pursuit of objects outside of the ones to which they are attuned by nature. The appetitive part of the soul has the same relationship to pleasure and what it believes to be pleasant as it does to the good and what it believes to be good. If it is capable of desiring pleasure, so it is also capable of desiring the good.

As I mentioned in the introduction, in the following sections and in Chapter 4 I will focus on the appetitive part of the soul and its desires, but I mean for my conclusions to apply to the spirited part of the soul as well. We might think of this as an *a fortiori* strategy. Because Socrates portrays the spirited part of the soul as intellectually and conatively advantaged relative to the appetitive part, the barriers to demonstrating that the Reality Thesis and the Appearance Thesis apply to the appetitive part of the soul are greater, and no different in kind, from the barriers to demonstrating that they apply to the spirited part (see 440a-442b, 579d-580b, 586e-587b, 588c-589b). If they apply to the appetitive part of the soul, they apply to the spirited part too.

4.2 Appetite as desire for pleasure

Nearly all commentators who write on the topic treat appetite in the *Republic* as desire for pleasure (see *e.g.*, Annas 129; Brickhouse and Smith 25; Cooper 1984: 10; Kahn 1983: 91-2;

Moss 2006: 516 and n. 24; Penner 1971: 118).[16] This formulation comes from no one passage by itself, although many provide evidence for it. Socrates introduces the appetitive part of the soul as the part with "an appetite for the pleasures of food, sex, and those things closely akin to them," and soon afterward he characterizes it as "friend (*hetairon*) to certain satisfactions (or "repletions" – *plērōseōn*) and certain pleasures" (436a10-b1, 439d6-8). He says that the appetitive part of the soul is made big and strong to the extent that it is "filled with the so-called pleasures of the body" (442a8). He commonly describes those who are ruled by the appetitive part as "ruled by pleasure," which is to say that they make pleasure the primary aim of their practical lives (see 505b, 506b, 561a-d, 607a6). And especially when he is speaking about their dangers, Socrates treats the objects of appetite as if there is nothing to them over and above pleasure (see *e.g.*, 519b1-2).[17]

Nevertheless, characterizing appetite as desire for pleasant objects does not suffice to distinguish it from the desires of the other parts of the soul. In the extended discussion of pleasure in Book 9, Socrates says that each part of the soul has its own peculiar pleasures. The spirited part takes pleasure in domination, honor and victory, and the reckoning part in intellectual and practical excellence, just as the appetitive part takes pleasure in food, drink, sex

[16] I have encountered one notable exception. Michael Woods argues for GID on the grounds that in the Thirst Itself Argument, Plato has in mind appetites that arise only in special circumstances, from the "feelings and diseases" (*pathēmatōn kai nosēmatōn*, 439d2) of people in ill health. The thought is that certain forms of illness engender desires in us that, unlike the desires of healthy people, are entirely good-independent. These are compulsions to pursue certain objects without any consideration of whether they are good, or even of whether they are pleasurable (see Woods 41-2). Although these appetites are uncommon, they serve to demonstrate that the orientation toward what an agent finds pleasurable is a separable component of all appetites. Thus Woods argues that appetites are generally for pleasure – and even for pleasure as good – but need not be (see Woods 46). Woods' analysis is strikingly original. But it rests too heavily on the passing phrase I quoted above – *pathēmatōn kai nosēmatōn*. This is the only evidence to suggest that in the Thirst Itself Argument, Socrates is discussing a kind of desire that arises as a result of a select group of illnesses. If Woods' reading were right, Socrates should give us a more distinct signal. And given how often Socrates links appetite in general to pleasure throughout the *Republic*, the weight of evidence is against Woods' interpretation. There is also a plausible alternative explanation for the mention of *nosēmatōn* here. Socrates treats appetitive desires as painful, and *nosēmatōn* may simply be meant to capture the pain of bodily disorder (however temporary or common this disorder is) that either partially constitutes or coincides with appetite (see 583c-586c).

[17] And see *Charmides* 167e, where Socrates identifies pleasure as the generic object of appetite.

and money (580d-581b, and see 585a-e). So why is it more proper to think of appetite as *the* desire for pleasure? Why not also think of the desires of the spirited or reckoning parts in this way? Those who defend this characterization of appetite generally do so by appealing to the portrait of the democratic person in Book 8. Ruled by the appetitive part of his soul, he "lives from day to day, gratifying the appetite of the moment," and pursuing pleasures of all kinds – whether he prefers at a given time to "drink heavily while listening to the flute," or "drink only water and be on a diet," "go in for physical training" or be "idle and neglect everything," "engage in what he takes to be philosophy," be a moneymaker or a soldier, and so forth (561c-d). The case of the democratic man suggests that we should not think of appetitive pleasures as linked with a neatly delimited set of objects, as the pleasures of the spirited or reckoning part are. Rather it seems that appetites can be for pleasure in anything that one can desire and pursue.

Thus when he says that thirst itself is for drink itself, nearly all commentators take it to be Socrates' considered view that thirst itself is for drink itself as pleasant. But proponents of GID take appetite to be for its objects as pleasant full-stop, while opponents take appetite to be for its objects as pleasant and thereby good – or to put the same thought slightly more elegantly, they take appetite to be for pleasure in its objects as good.[18] My own view, as I will explain below, is closer to the latter: appetite is for its objects, provided they are pleasant and thereby good.

It is difficult to work out the precise relationship between these three items in the intentional content of appetites – object, pleasant, good. But the Thirst Itself Argument provides some guidance. I have already claimed that with his handling of the objection, Socrates suggests "good things" are the generic object of desire, just as thirst itself is the object of drink itself. And I have claimed that just as thirst itself is a kind of desire, so drink itself is a kind of desiderative

[18] Notably opponents of GID have different understandings of the relationship between "pleasure" and "good" in this formulation. See n. 7 above.

object, a kind of good thing. Put more precisely, when the appetitive part of the soul has a thirst for drink itself, drink itself is the object that it takes to be good. Similar observations apply to appetite, which is intermediate between desire and thirst itself. Appetite is a kind of desire, and thirst itself is a kind of appetite. Hence appetite is for pleasure as good. And just as thirst itself is for drink itself as good, so it is also for drink itself as pleasant. What is true about thirst itself in this respect is also true, *mutatis mutandis*, for any particular appetite or kind of appetite.

In §4.3 I will leave aside the good as I argue that we ought to think of appetite as provisionally related to pleasure – as for its objects, provided they are pleasant. In §5 and in Chapter 4, I will argue that appetite is also provisionally for what is good. Put in terms that emphasizes the Reality Thesis, I will argue that appetites are provisional desires for pleasure, and thereby for what is good. Or, in language that emphasizes the Appearance Thesis, appetites are desires for their objects as pleasant and thereby good.[19]

4.3 Appetite as Provisional Desire

In Book 9 Socrates tells Glaucon that pleasure is not the same thing as apparent pleasure. He says that people who are ruled by the appetitive or spirited part of the soul systematically mistake for pleasure their relief from pain, a relief that they experience as they are restored to a neutral state between pleasure and pain (583b-585a). These people err out of ignorance. They mistake their restoration to the neutral state for pleasure because they have never experienced true pleasure (583b-584a). They experience an image (*eidōlon*) of true pleasure or a "phantom"

[19] Kamtekar argues for a view that is similar to mine, namely that each part of the soul desires and "pursues the good under a more-or-less adequate conception (pleasure, honour, overall goodness)," with the lower parts of the soul desiring the good under a partial conception of it (Kamtekar 2017: 155; and see 147, 154). I will focus on appetite, but here and in Chapter 4 I hope to explain in greater detail than Kamtekar what it means for appetite to be a desire for pleasure as good. And although Kamtekar also believes that Socrates maintains the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*, I will argue, as Kamtekar does not, for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*.

pleasure, which takes hold of them like a kind of sorcery (586b4). Socrates goes on to conclude that when they are ruled by the reckoning part of the soul, each of the lower parts enjoys its own proper pleasures. These are the truest and best pleasures that the lower parts of the soul are capable of enjoying, even though they are not as true or as good – and nor do they partake of being to the same degree – as the pleasures of the reckoning part (or, as it is called at this point in the dialogue, the philosophic part – see 585a-587b).

The Book 9 discussion of pleasure contains several textual puzzles, most of which I will pass over here because they are not germane to my argument.[20] But on any reading of this passage, I will argue that it presents an irresolvable tension between two interpretive claims that are central to all of the most prominent versions of GID:

> (A) Appetites are desires that are for their objects just because they are pleasant to the agent.
>
> (B) Appetites are for nothing other than pleasure in the objects that they motivate agents to pursue.

Take the case of a gourmand, a person whose dominant desire is an appetite that motivates him to eat. According to Socrates, what does the gourmand desire? I will consider 7 possible answers to this question.

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[20] For instance, what exactly does Socrates mean when he says that truer pleasures are those that partake of being to a greater degree? How does this line up with similar language in Books 5-7? Are the truest and best pleasures that the lower parts of the soul are capable of enjoying also phantom pleasures, given that they fall short of the pleasures of the reckoning part in truth and goodness? If not, why not? Thanks to Gabriel Lear for posing these last two questions, but I am unsure how to answer them. Within this third argument for the claim that the life of the philosopher is more pleasant than the life of the money-lover and the honor-lover, Socrates makes a pivot between the first part, in which he relies on a hard distinction between true and phantom pleasures (583b-585a), and the second, in which he talks about pleasures that are more or less true and good (585a-587b). He does not explain how to reconcile the different criteria by which he classifies pleasures and their near relatives in these two parts of the argument. It seems safe to say that the objects in which we take true pleasure are better and partake of being to a greater degree than the objects in which we take only phantom pleasure. But it is difficult to say much more than this without speculating a bit wildly. James Warren at least provides a good explanation of Socrates' pivot: the second part of this third argument is "based on the prior acceptance of, broadly speaking, the metaphysics of forms — intelligible, eternal, and perfect existents – and their perceptible, impermanent and imperfect imitations; the [first part] is intended as a dialectical argument to persuade even those who have no commitment to such claims" (Warren 116; and see Warren 130-135).

(1) The gourmand desires the pleasure of eating.

This is the most obvious answer to give if we retain interpretive claims A and B. But it raises an immediate difficulty, as Socrates says that it is impossible for the gourmand to experience the pleasure of eating, given that he is ruled by the appetitive part of his soul. When the gourmand eats, this merely relieves his pain and restores him to a neutral state.[21]

Consider a parallel case. Lydia is a young girl who is profoundly lonely. She is shunned by other kids her age, while at home her only real company are pets, books and electronic devices. One day she is assigned a group project at school. The students in her group interact with Lydia only as much as they have to, and are otherwise indifferent to her presence. But Lydia is naive enough to think the other students are treating her as a friend, and that this is what friendship must be. So long as the work continues Lydia feels a giddy relief from her loneliness. But once the project is completed, the other students return to ignoring Lydia, and she longs for the relationships that she believes existed during that brief period.

For Socrates, saying that the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating is like saying that Lydia desires her old friendship with the other students. There never was any such thing. Lydia was relieved of her loneliness but she did not experience friendship. She does not grasp what friendship is. Her longing may motivate her to try to rekindle what she thinks was her friendship with the students in her group, but if she meets with the same treatment, she will be mistaken that what she is experiencing is friendship. Socrates implies that the gourmand's condition is similar to Lydia's. He does not experience the pleasure of eating, and nor does he grasp what pleasure

[21] Since gourmands are defined by their disposition to eat even when they are not hungry, we might doubt whether the gourmand's eating can entail the kind of restoration to the neutral state that Socrates describes as only apparently pleasurable. But even if the gourmand's desire to eat does not always arise out of hunger pains, it must be that having the desire to eat either entails or is occasioned by the sort of pain that Socrates associates with appetite, and that eating to excess will neutralize this pain. Hence on Socrates' account, even the gourmand's phantom pleasure will attend upon a restoration to the neutral state.

is, or what the pleasure of eating is. The gourmand pursues what he thinks is the pleasure he feels when he eats, but he is mistaken that what he feels is pleasure. It is not pleasure, but the mere cessation of pain.[22]

According to Socrates, can the gourmand desire something that he does not experience or grasp, even though he believes he experiences it? Understood in the right way I believe that he can, although I favor what I will argue below is a more illuminating formulation of the intentional content of the gourmand's appetite. For now I will only note that accepting this first formulation (the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating) entails rejecting interpretive claim B (appetites are for nothing other than pleasure in the objects they motivate agents to pursue), which is a pillar of GID. For the gourmand derives no pleasure from the objects that his appetites motivate him to pursue. But lest I declare victory over GID too quickly on this point, I will consider some alternative formulations, several of which might seem more congenial to it.

(2) The gourmand desires to eat, regardless of whether it is pleasant.

This answer includes within the intentional content of the gourmand's appetite the action that the gourmand performs, but it makes his appetite unconcerned with pleasure. This allows us to push aside the messy questions raised by Socrates' account of true and phantom pleasures, and it provides a clear explanation of how the gourmand's dominant desire motivates him to eat. But given how consistently Socrates characterizes appetite as desire for pleasure, it is implausible to attribute to him the view that the gourmand's desire is not for pleasure. So this formulation will not do.

[22] This analogy, and some of my language here, might seem to imply that there is a genuine pleasure of eating that is not a relief from pain – in this case, a relief from hunger. For some thoughts about this please see my remarks below.

(3) The gourmand desires pleasure, regardless of whether he can obtain it by eating.

This answer avoids the problem with the previous answer, in that it makes the gourmand's appetite a desire for pleasure. But it also omits the essential link between the gourmand's dominant desire and eating, the activity that it motivates. Nor is it of use to proponents of GID, in that it excludes from the intentional content of the gourmand's desire the object he pursues and, like the first formulation, includes something that the gourmand has never experienced and does not grasp – pleasure. It should therefore be rejected as well.

(4) The gourmand desires to eat and to experience pleasure.

This answer imagines what appears to be one desire as two conjoined desires – a desire to eat and a desire for pleasure. It provides a full accounting of the relevant items in the intentional content of the gourmand's appetite and explains the connection between his appetite and his actions. But the gourmand is dominated neither by two distinct desires (the desire to eat and the desire to experience pleasure by whatever means) nor by a desire for two distinct things. Rather, he desires a single thing – to experience pleasure in eating.

(5) The gourmand desires the relief from pain that he experiences in eating.

This answer has some notable strengths. It includes eating within the intentional content of the gourmand's appetite. And it does not include anything of which the gourmand has no experience. But it aligns the intentional content of the gourmand's appetite with what Socrates presents as a factual, third-personally available description of what the gourmand experiences and pursues. The thought behind this answer could be that the gourmand possesses a wealth of memories of enjoying himself while he eats, at least so far as he knows, and what he desires is to have that experience again – the experience of eating, complete with the feeling that attended

upon it. If this is relief from pain rather than pleasure, so be it. Whatever the feeling he has when he eats, that is what the gourmand desires.

But like the second formulation, this one omits any mention of pleasure, and therefore runs into the same problems. It does not do justice to Socrates' characterization of appetite as desire for pleasure. So although it captures what the gourmand's appetite motivates him to pursue, this cannot be the right formulation of its intentional content. And it is inconsonant with interpretive claim B (appetites are for nothing other than pleasure in the objects that they motivate agents to pursue), so it is unhelpful for proponents of GID in any case.

(6) The gourmand desires the phantom pleasure of eating.

This formulation accounts for the connection between the gourmand's appetite and his motivation to eat. It provides some accommodation for the gourmand's practical orientation to pleasure while respecting Socrates' distinction between true and phantom pleasure. And it does not make the object of the gourmand's desire something he has not experienced. This formulation is similar to apparentist formulations of desire for the good, insofar as it makes the relevant value of the object of desire an apparent value – the gourmand desires phantom pleasure, or what appears to him to be pleasant, just as agents desire what appears to them to be good.

But if we retain the view that appetites are for pleasure, and if we take seriously Socrates' distinction between true pleasure and the mere appearance of pleasure, then this proposal does not comport with what we might think of as the logic of desire. Consider the parallel case I mentioned above: Lydia desires to experience her old friendship with the kids at school. Is the object of her desire to experience what merely appears to be friendship, which was nothing more than the relief from the loneliness that accompanied

her brief interaction with her project group? Even if this is exactly the kind of thing that Lydia's desire motivates her to pursue in the future, the answer must be no. When we are motivated to pursue the appearance of something and mistakenly believe that it is the real thing, our desire is for the real thing, not for the appearance. Desires do not reach out for mere appearances of their objects, but for the objects themselves.[23]

That this is indeed Socrates' position is suggested by an image that he offers to illustrate what a phantom pleasure is. He says that phantom pleasures are so vivid and intense for those who experience them that these people will even fight over them, "as Stesichorus tells us the phantom of Helen was fought over at Troy – through ignorance of the truth" (586c3-5). That is, the Greeks and Trojans fought because they both desired possession of Helen and mistook the phantom for her. They did not desire the phantom (compare 584e-585a). The gourmand likewise desires pleasure in eating and, because he mistakes the phantom pleasure for the real thing, his desire motivates him to eat. But he has no desire for the phantom pleasure of eating. Likewise it is not because we desire the apparent good that we pursue the apparent good, but because we desire the good and mistake what we pursue for the good.

(7) The gourmand desires to eat, provided that it is pleasant.

This is the provisionalist formulation, and it has several advantages as an answer to the question of what the gourmand desires. It follows Socrates' broader characterization of appetite by including pleasure and eating within the intentional content of the gourmand's desire. It

[23] This is not to say that the object of a desire cannot be the mere appearance of something, perhaps even if the agent with this desire *also* desires the real thing. For instance, I might desire to dream of winning the Super Bowl every night until I actually win the Super Bowl. That is, I might want both to experience the appearance of winning the Super Bowl and to experience the real thing. It is also possible to desire only the appearance of something, but not the thing itself. I might desire to dream of wrestling with sharks even if I have no desire to wrestle with sharks. But if, while I am dreaming of wrestling with sharks (and I am unaware that I am dreaming), I have a desire to prevail, this is not a desire to experience the mere appearance of prevailing, but a desire to prevail. In this case my desire is for the real thing.

allows us to explain how this desire motivates the gourmand's behavior: because he believes that eating is pleasant, the gourmand's provisional desire to eat motivates him to eat. And as I will explain presently, it does justice to two key features of Socrates' account of pleasure that the first formulation – "the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating" – does not, even though the first formulation is accurate so far as it goes.

In the second half of Socrates' third proof of the superior pleasantness of the philosopher's life, he begins to speak of degrees of pleasure, where he has previously spoken only of true pleasure and merely apparent pleasure (see 585a-587b). He says that pleasures are truer, better and more one's own if they entail the filling of something – of one's body or soul, or of some part of one's soul – that partakes of being to a greater degree, with an object that partakes of being to a greater degree, where what partakes of being to a greater degree approximates more closely what is always the same, immortal and true (see 585a-c). Socrates says that

> even where the desires of the profit-loving and honor-loving parts [that is, the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul] are concerned, those that follow knowledge and argument (*logō*(*i*)), and pursue with their help the pleasures that wisdom prescribes, will attain – to the degree that they can attain true pleasures at all – the truest pleasures, because they follow truth, and those that are most their own; if, indeed, what is best for each thing is also what is most its own. (586d-e)

This passage makes clear that even if there is no such thing as a genuine pleasure of eating – insofar as apparently pleasant eating will always entail relief from pain, as phantom pleasures do – there is at least something that approaches the pleasure of eating as nearly as possible (see 584a-c). Presumably Socrates has in mind something like the kind of eating that conduces to bodily and psychic health, that has its rightful place in a life that is orderly and well lived. When she eats, a temperate and wise person, whose lower psychic parts submit to the rule of a sufficiently well-informed reckoning part, will enjoy the (quasi-)pleasure of eating.

But the gourmand's characteristic appetite does not follow knowledge and argument, and therefore does not motivate pursuit of the (quasi-)pleasure of eating. Nevertheless, in order to have a desire for the pleasure of eating it is not necessary that this pleasure exist, or that it exist in quite the form that the desiring agent believes that it exists. As the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias* has it, a tyrant might want {to murder a political enemy, provided that it is good}, even if murdering a political enemy is never good; likewise a gourmand might want {to eat, provided it is truly pleasant}, even if eating is never truly pleasant, insofar as it always entails relief from pain.[24] Thought of in this way, the gourmand's relationship to both elements in the intentional content of his appetite – pleasure and eating – are aspirational. He does not understand what pleasure is, mistaking for it what is actually the relief from pain and restoration to a neutral state. And although he has some reliable beliefs about eating, he does not know what kind of eating is (quasi-)pleasant, in that he does not know the kind of eating "that wisdom prescribes."[25]

I agree with the claim that the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating. But the provisionalist formulation makes clearer how the intentional content of the gourmand's desire can include things that the gourmand does not grasp. His present misconceptions and behavior notwithstanding, the gourmand desires to eat, however this must be done in order for it to be pleasant, and whatever "pleasant" means. His appetite is in touch with the relevant objects – pleasure and eating – but he has false beliefs about these objects, and about the relationship between them. So although he is not presently motivated to pursue pleasant eating, but rather

[24] Thanks to Gabriel Lear for pressing me on this point.

[25] If we follow Socrates' account of the well-regulated crafts within Kallipolis, and of the musical education necessary for appreciating the beauty of these crafts, it becomes clear that it is no trivial matter to know the kind of eating that wisdom prescribes. This knowledge entails an ability to recognize virtue in all of its guises, and to see how the material body of Kallipolis enables the good life (see 398c-403c, especially 400d-402c; and see *Grg*. 517c-518a). A gourmand may be genuinely concerned by the counsel of his doctor or of his reasonably health-conscious friends (or he may scoff at it), but even if he understands what they recommend we should not presume that he knows the kind of eating that wisdom prescribes. Socrates suggests that knowledge of this kind is unavailable to those who lack a proper musical education.

what he believes to be pleasant eating, the gourmand's appetite is for pleasant eating nevertheless. The provisionalist formulation foregrounds the fact that the gourmand must believe that eating is pleasant in order for his desire to motivate him to eat, and alludes to the complex relationship between eating and pleasure that I have described. The alternative formulation – the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating – is true as far as it goes, but without substantial qualification it is misleading.

The provisionalist formulation also foregrounds, as the alternative does not, the conditions of motivational transformation suggested by Socrates' account of true and apparent pleasure. Socrates argues in Book 9 that of the three kinds of people he is considering – the philosophic, victory-loving and profit-loving – the philosophic is best qualified to judge which of their lives is the most pleasant, in part because she alone has experienced the more or less true pleasures that define each of these lives (see 582a-c). In this passage Socrates indicates that to experience a higher pleasure is to feel its appeal, to "taste how sweet" it is (582b4). This thought, along with the claim that one is motivated to pursue the neutral state as if it were pleasure only if one has never experienced true pleasure, implies that anyone who experiences pleasure adopts it as a motivational aim. The provisionalist formulation highlights the ignorant agent's susceptibility to an alteration of this kind by specifying what she must believe about an object in order to be motivated to pursue it. The ignorant agent is disposed to cease pursuing one object, and to pursue a different object instead, if she comes to believe that the latter object has the value that she has falsely attributed to the former. To say that the gourmand desires the pleasure of eating obscures the fact that if he discovers the truth about eating – that the way he has been eating is not pleasant, but that eating in another way is as pleasant as eating can be – he will be motivated to pursue the kind of eating that is, or most closely approximates, what he has

desired all along. We can capture the gourmand's susceptibility to this kind of change by saying that he only provisionally desired his old way of eating, along with the pleasure that he believed he derived from it.

5. Conclusion

In declaring that truer pleasures are better and more our own, that they fill the parts or aspects of us that partake of being to a greater degree, and with what itself partakes of being to a greater degree, Socrates indicates that true pleasures are genuine goods. Hence the pleasure that appetite desires is in fact good for us, or as good for us as (quasi-)pleasure in appetitive objects can be.[26] But from this observation alone it would be too hasty to infer that appetite is desire for pleasure as good, as I have claimed it is. For Socrates could mean by this that pleasures happen to be good for us whether we realize it or not, rather than that goodness figures in the intentional content of desire for pleasure – that appetite is desire for pleasure as good, or that appetites are desire for pleasures on the provision that they are good.

On this point two regrettably brief remarks in a passage in Book 6 are useful for my argument. One of these remarks appears to make plain, all on its own, that in the *Republic* as well, the good figures in the intentional content of all desires:

> Is this not clear, that many people would choose things that are believed to be just and fine (*kala*) even if they were not really so, and would do these things and acquire them and believe them? But that, nevertheless, no one is satisfied to acquire things that are believed to be good, but rather they seek what is genuinely good (*ta onta*), and that everyone disdains mere reputation in this matter?
>
> Very much so, he said.

[26] For an argument that in the *Timaeus*, Plato assigns desire the teleological purpose of moving us towards what is good for us in fact, and assigns to the desires of each part of the soul the purpose of moving us towards different kinds of things that are good for us in different ways, see Kamtekar 2017: 130, 157. As Gabriel Lear has pointed out to me, this is a plausible and interesting explanation of why Plato believes that the Desire Thesis is true.

> That, then, is what every soul pursues and for its sake does everything (*panta prattei*), intuiting (*apomanteuomenē*) that it is something, but confused and unable to grasp sufficiently what it is, or to acquire the kind of stable belief about it that it can manage about other things… (505d5-e3, adapted from Reeve's translation)

For the purpose of my argument against GID, the key here is the claim that the soul does everything for the sake of the good. This claim implies that in all of its actions, including those whose motive force derives from the appetites, the soul strives to do or obtain what is good. But Socrates' language in this passage is too general for it to be knock-down evidence for the view that all desire is for its object as good, and defenders of GID have accordingly read it in a manner that is favorable to their position.[27]

Just prior to this passage, however, Socrates suggests that many people pursue pleasure in the guise of the good, namely those who "define pleasure as the good" (505c6). This claim implies that at least some people draw the connection between pleasure and the good that I am after here, that when they are motivated to act by appetite *qua* desire for pleasure, this is desire for pleasure as good. Proponents of GID may grant that people who believe pleasure to be good thereby believe the pursuit of appetitive objects to be good. But they can still contend that this belief is generated solely by the reckoning part of the soul, perhaps exclusively in those souls in which the reckoning part is dominated by the appetitive part and compelled to generate beliefs about the good that accord with the soul's appetites (see 553b-d). Considered in isolation from the reckoning part – their argument might go – the appetites of such people are good-independent, and for nothing over and above pleasure in their objects.

[27] Irwin offers one such alternative reading: *panta prattei* can mean "goes to all lengths." If we read the phrase this way, it is compatible with the interpretation that only the reckoning part of the soul pursues the good, while the appetitive part does not (Irwin 1977: 336 n. 45; and see Moss 2008: 61-62, n. 60). Or it may be argued, as Gabriel Lear has suggested to me, that even in a soul dominated by appetite, reason is present and desiring. So the soul as a whole desires the good because the rational part desires the good.

I will not be able to address this objection until the next chapter, where I will examine in detail the evidence for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*. But for now I hope to have provided a firm basis for three interpretive claims. The Thirst Itself Argument does not, as defenders of GID have it, establish that thirst is a good-independent desire. If anything it suggests that drink belongs to the class of good things, and therefore that thirst is for one of the good things. Second, on the evidence of the discussion of true and phantom pleasures, the provisionalist interpretation provides the best means of capturing the relationship between appetite and pleasure. As is apparent in the case of people who are dominated by their appetites, like the gourmand, the relationship between appetites and their objects is best understood as provisional. Hence in the *Republic* appetites are best understood as provisional desires for pleasure. Finally, there is strong, *prima facie* textual support for the claim that according to Socrates, people commonly pursue pleasure as good.

In the final chapter I will argue, among other things, that there is also strong textual support for the claim that the appetitive part of the soul can generate beliefs that pleasure is good without the aid of the reckoning part, and therefore that in the *Republic* the Appearance Thesis also remains intact. If this argument succeeds, then appetites, like all other desires, are for their objects as good, and are for their objects, provided that they are good. Because appetites are provisional and are governed by the Appearance Thesis, we can infer that they are governed by the Reality Thesis as well.

4

Aesthetes, Dreamers and Scoundrels: The Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*

1. Introduction

In Chapter 3 I offered two parts of a larger argument for the claim that in the *Republic* Plato preserves and develops the Desire Thesis, the view that all desire is for the good. In the first part (§3) I argued that we should not treat the Thirst Itself Argument as evidence, let alone definitive evidence, that in the *Republic* Socrates abandons the Desire Thesis. In the second part (§4) I argued that the conception of appetite that emerges from the discussion of pleasure in Book 9 is a provisionalist conception. This is the conception of desire that, as I argued in Chapter 1, we must attribute to Socrates if we are to see the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias* as intelligible and compelling. The Desire Argument offers the fullest case anywhere in the dialogues for the Reality Thesis, the view that all desire is for what is really good, regardless of whether any given agent's beliefs about what is good are at all reliable. Socrates trains the Desire Argument upon hard cases: orators and tyrants, agents whose desires motivate them to pursue, with great regularity and self-assurance, bad things that they believe to be good. One of his aims in doing this is to make the Reality Thesis more persuasive. If it applies to agents like these, it will apply to agents of any kind. The division of the soul in the *Republic* gives rise to a similar set of challenges for the Reality Thesis as the ones posed by orators and tyrants. Even if it applies to all agents, does the Reality Thesis apply to all desires? Even to desires that derive from the lowest parts of the soul? From the lowest parts of the most disordered souls? In

Chapter 3, on the basis of an examination of the discussion of pleasure in Book 9, I gave the beginnings of an argument that Socrates would have us answer yes to each of these questions: the appetites of appetitive people are provisionally for the good, or for their objects, provided that they are pleasant and thereby good.

In this chapter I will fill in the remainder of this argument as I turn to the Appearance Thesis, the view that in order to act, an agent must believe her motivating desire is for what is good and must believe that the action she is motivated to perform is a good one. For Socrates to maintain the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic* would require that even the lowest desires of the lowest parts of the soul are for their objects as good. If appetites are for their objects as pleasant, they must therefore be for their objects as pleasant and thereby good.

In Chapter 2 I argued for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*, and against the minimalist interpretations favored by all recent commentators, according to which the requirements of the Appearance Thesis are satisfied even if agents conceive of their actions and desiderative objects as good in an exceedingly modest sense. These minimalist interpretations are designed to account for agents who act impulsively, wickedly or for the sake of pleasure, and whom we might therefore expect to be the least mindful of considerations of goodness when they act. But, as I argued, wherever such agents appear in the *Gorgias* they are depicted as possessing elaborate conceptions of health and virtue, which underwrite their correspondingly elaborate beliefs about the goodness of their actions. They believe that their actions are beneficial, conducive to virtue, whether bodily or psychic.

Other commentators have argued that the deviant character types discussed in Books 8 and 9 of the *Republic* – the timocratic, oligarchic, democratic and tyrannical men – believe they are virtuous, albeit according to notions of virtue that reflect their own peculiar psychic

constitutions (see *e.g.*, Hitz 103, 123). This sort of interpretation might be alleged in support of a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*. But it leaves aside a striking development in the dialogue relative to the *Gorgias*, namely the manner in which Socrates adapts the Appearance Thesis to the theory of Forms, and to his related division of objects into ontological tiers. Socrates variously identifies ontologically lower objects as likenesses, images or imitations of the ontologically higher objects on which they depend (see 476c-480a, 510a-b, 510d-e, 516a, 520c, 534b-c, 597a, 598b-c, 600e). He thus makes imitation a structural feature of the cosmos.

I will argue that Socrates portrays intellectually blinkered agents, agents whom he characterizes as "dreamers," as disposed to mistake ontologically lower objects for the higher objects that they imitate, and to pursue or react to the lower objects as if they were the higher objects. Although Socrates does not focus explicitly upon what these agents consider good, his treatment of them serves as evidence of a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis at work within the *Republic*. Dreamers pursue or react to the lower objects in question because they desire the higher objects that the lower objects imitate and mistake the lower for the higher; not because they have independent desires for the lower objects, as opponents of the Desire Thesis might allege, or because they believe these objects are good in a minimalist sense. Their conviction that the objects to which they respond are the higher objects they desire is akin to Callicles' belief that "luxury, licentiousness and liberality…are happiness and virtue" (492c4-6). In both cases the agents cast their practical lives in grand evaluative terms that they do not adequately comprehend. Their practical ambitions extend beyond the bounds of their understanding, and their failure to appreciate or accept this disparity ensures that their desires

motivate them to pursue only the objects that they are better able to grasp, and not the higher or grander objects that they believe they are pursuing.

But however useful this line of interpretation is for tracing the development of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*, it does not address the new challenges for the Appearance Thesis that derive from the division of the soul. Commentators who see good-independent desires in the *Republic*, and therefore take Socrates to renounce his commitment to the Appearance Thesis and the larger Desire Thesis, argue for their position on the basis of passages that are not about the practical psychology of entire agents – like the deviant character types or the dreamers – but about the lower psychic parts in isolation from the rest of the of the soul (see *e.g.*, Annas 129, 139; Cooper 1984: 8-9; Irwin 1977: 192-193; Irwin 1995: 206; Kahn 1987: 85; Nussbaum 106-7; Parry 93-94; Penner 1971: 106-108, 115-117 and n. 20; Reeve 2004: xi, 113 n. 9; Vlastos 1991: 86; Watson 316-320; Woods 41-46). These commentators can always dismiss as ambiguous any evidence that misguided agents are oriented toward the good, or toward higher objects. Even if it is true that when any agent undertakes an action, she believes that her action is good, must the part of the soul from which her motivating desire originates believe that the action is good? For it could be that an agent's belief in her action's goodness is only ever generated by, and only belongs to, the reckoning part of the soul (*to logistikon* – see 518e-519b, 553c-d). If Socrates allows for this possibility, then he should concede that the Appearance Thesis need not apply to the lower parts of the soul, whose desires may be for their immediate objects, regardless of whether these objects are good. He should also concede that when a soul is ruled by one of its lower parts, and its reckoning part is compelled to generate the belief that an action that the ruling part desires is good, this belief is little more than a rationalization: the agent does not want to do what she does because she believes it is good, but rather she believes

that what she does is good because she wants to do it. This concession would set off a cascade of tricky implications for Socrates' views about the role of discussion, and of intellectual training more generally, in moral education and the pursuit of virtue (see *e.g.*, *Gorgias* 513c-d; *Protagoras* 358b-d; and see Brickhouse and Smith 29-31, 34; Cooper 1982: 581-583; 1999: 32, 57-59, 61-63, 66-67, 74-75; Irwin 1979: 215-216, 218, 222, 232; Kaufer 64-65, 75-76; Klosko 1983: 583-587; 1993: 35, 44-45; Moss 2005: 2, 25, 28, 33; Penner 1988: 164, 170-172; Scott 15-16, 25, 29, 31-36; Sedley 62-65; Vlastos 1988: 99; Woolf 2000: 32-36).

In §3 and §4 I will argue that we can avoid these complications by attending to passages in which Socrates treats the lowest parts of the soul as bound by the Appearance Thesis. In §3 I will turn to the discussion of mimetic poetry in Book 10, where what Socrates calls the "inferior part of the soul" exhibits the same tendency as the dreamers: it motivates the pursuit of lower objects because it desires the higher objects of which these lower objects are imitations, and mistakes the lower objects for the higher objects. Importantly for my argument, in responding to mimetic poetry, the higher objects upon which the inferior part of the soul is focused are goodness and virtue.

In §4 I will examine passages about the democratic man and the tyrannical man in Books 8 and 9, where Socrates again discusses the lowest parts of the soul in isolation from the reckoning part. Here as well Socrates portrays the lowest parts of the soul as oriented to what is good in a maximalist sense – to what is fine (*kalon*) and virtuous. There is no mention of lower and higher objects in these passages, but they are useful for my argument in ways that the discussion of mimetic poetry in Book 10 is not. Because the latter passage deals with people who are passive observers and deals with them in the relatively specialized context of poetic performance, we might hesitate to infer from it any claims about all desires of the inferior part of

the soul, or about the actions that these desires motivate. The passages about the democratic and the tyrannical man have no such limitations, as the beliefs and desires at issue in these passages motivate a wide array of their agents' characteristic actions. Socrates also offers these agents as exemplars of impulsiveness and depravity, which makes them ideal test cases for the Appearance Thesis, given that, relative to people who are better off, it is more difficult to understand how the democratic and the tyrannical man might believe their desires and actions to be fine and virtuous. I will argue that even the lowest parts of these agents' souls harbor such beliefs, and that we should therefore conclude that a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis persists in the *Republic* and extends to all desires and all parts of the soul.

So long as it succeeds, the argument in this chapter supplies the final pieces of the argument that I began in Chapter 3, for the claim that appetites are provisional desires for the good, and therefore that in the *Republic* the Reality Thesis governs all desires. In Chapter 3 I established that appetites are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant. But I lacked two further elements necessary for concluding that they are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant and thereby good. One element is the claim that agents motivated to act by appetites believe the pleasure they pursue to be good. I will argue for this claim in §4 as I examine Socrates' treatment of the democratic and the tyrannical man. The other missing element is the claim that beliefs of this sort can belong to the part of the soul to which appetites belong, the appetitive part. I will argue for this claim in my discussion of imitative poetry in §3, and, again, of the democratic and the tyrannical man in §4.

This argument for the view that the Reality Thesis is preserved in the *Republic* relies upon an inference from an agent's belief that her desire is for the good to the conclusion that her desire is for the good. Is this inference warranted? Or could the democratic and the tyrannical

man, or the lowest part of the soul, believe that their desires are for the good when they are not? In the Desire Argument in the *Gorgias* Socrates takes for granted that agents who are motivated by a desire for the good also believe, when they act, that what they are doing is good (see 467c-468d, especially 468b1-6). He argues that this belief is fallible, in the sense that agents are frequently mistaken that what they do is good, and mistaken about what the good is more generally. But he also suggests that such a belief does not misrepresent the value that the agent desires in acting, namely the good. In the *Meno* Socrates offers a more direct argument for the claim that if one believes one's desire is for the good, it must be for the good. There he explains that if someone desires something that happens to be bad, thinking that it is a good thing, she really desires the good (or, perhaps, she really desires the good thing that figures in her mistaken belief about the bad thing – see *Meno* 77d7-e4).

And with my examination of the democratic and the tyrannical man, I will argue against the most common justification drawn from the *Republic* – and the most promising justification – for the claim that an agent who believes that what she does is good may not be motivated by a desire for the good. This is the claim that the belief belongs to one part of the soul that is capable of relating to the good, and the desire belongs to another part of the soul, which neither desires the good nor forms beliefs about it. I will argue in §4 that the appetitive part of the soul itself believes that its desires for pleasure are desires for the good. Given that these are also provisional desires for their objects as pleasant, as I argued in Chapter 3, then we can safely infer that they are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant and thereby good. Hence the Reality Thesis remains intact in the *Republic*.

2. The Dreamers

The first group of people whom Socrates identifies as dreamers are the lovers of sights and sounds, or "sight-lovers" for short, a group that Glaucon brings up in order to apply pressure to Socrates' proposed criteria for determining who counts as a philosopher. Socrates has said that philosophers are distinguished by their natural, indiscriminate love of knowledge (*mathēmata*) and learning (*to manthanein* – 475c). But, Glaucon objects, surely the sight-lovers – people who seek out every festival and choral performance but avoid serious discussions – are not philosophers (475d-e). Socrates responds with a detailed account of the defining intellectual and conative differences between philosophers and sight-lovers, and of the different objects to which the two groups are devoted (475e-480a). Whereas philosophers love the objects of knowledge, or what is (*to on*), the sight-lovers belong to a larger class of people who love the objects of belief, which are between what is and what is not, and partake of both. Whereas philosophers love the Beautiful (*to kalon*), which is a single thing, the sight-lovers love the many beautiful particulars, each of which will seem both beautiful and ugly. Sight-lovers believe that each beautiful thing is beautiful, but do not acknowledge (*nomizei*) the Beautiful itself, cannot be led to it and deny its existence (see 476c, 479d-e).

Thus far Socrates' description of the sight-lovers is reasonably straightforward, so long as we follow his distinctions between belief and knowledge, and between their respective objects. But in claiming that the sight-lovers are dreamers, Socrates throws the larger picture into doubt. He asks, "isn't this dreaming – whether one is asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness, but that it is the thing of which it is a likeness?" (476c5-7). He explains that the many beautiful things are likenesses of the Beautiful, and thereby implies that sight-lovers mistake the many beautiful things for the Beautiful, the likenesses for the thing itself (476c-d). But this

explanation appears directly at odds with his claims that the sight-lovers do not acknowledge the Beautiful, cannot be led to it and deny its existence.

Say that I dream I have captured the Loch Ness monster. While I am dreaming I will be unaware that I am dreaming, which is to say that I will fail to recognize my hallucination as a hallucination. I will take the hallucinated experience, along with all of its particulars, to be real. I will believe that I am really on a boat on the loch, hauling the monster to shore in a giant net. All of this requires that so long as I am dreaming, I believe in the existence of the things I encounter in the dream – the boat, the loch, the monster, the net. Otherwise it cannot be true that I believe the likenesses of these things are the things themselves. Socrates' brief analysis of dreaming implies that we should think of the sight-lovers in the same way. In order to believe that the many beautiful things are the Beautiful itself, the sight-lovers must believe in the Beautiful itself. How can this be squared with Socrates' remarks to the contrary?

Commentators tend to gloss over this problem.[1] Some do so by observing that the sight-lovers are meant to be people who recognize only one "level of reality," namely that of the many particulars, and who deny the existence of the Forms (see *e.g.*, Karasmanis 152-153; Moss 2008: 47; Tanner 91). This reading encourages us to ignore or modify Socrates' description of dreaming, and to put stock in only his non-figurative claims that the sight-lovers do not acknowledge the Beautiful, cannot be led to it and deny its existence. Terry Penner takes the dreaming imagery more seriously. He argues that the sight-lovers are nominalists (see Penner 1987: 62-63, 110-111). When Socrates describes the sight-lovers as dreamers who think that the many beautiful things are the Beautiful itself, he means their considered view is that the

[1] One notable exception is Verity Harte, whose lucid analysis of the mistake that Socrates attributes to the sight-lovers agrees with my own, at least so far as our interpretations overlap (see Harte 30, 33). Harte's primary aim is to account for the commonalities between the characterization of the sight-lovers as dreamers in Book 5 and Socrates' account of recollection in the *Phaedo* (see *Phaedo* 74a-e). I will attempt to tie the portrayal of dreamers in a series of passages in the *Republic* to the Appearance Thesis, especially as it is presented in the *Gorgias*.

Beautiful itself does not exist, and that there is nothing to beauty other than the many beautiful particulars (and nothing to justice other than the many just particulars, and so forth for other such things – see 479a-b; and see Penner 1987: 60). This reading reconciles Socrates' dreaming imagery with his non-figurative remarks about the sight-lovers. But it cannot be squared with similar remarks elsewhere in the dialogue.

Penner makes the sight-lovers out to be intellectuals of a kind – if not philosophers, then at least people who "give us a particular account, one Plato thinks false, of the answer to the question 'What is beauty?'" (Penner 2006: 247; and see Wilberding 133-134). Perhaps they are not conventionalists about beauty in the way that Thrasymachus is a conventionalist about justice, but they are self-conscious opponents of any theory that posits the existence of Forms (see Penner 2006: 246). The problem with this reading is that Socrates characterizes the multitude in Book 6 in a manner that unmistakably recalls his treatment of the sight-lovers. Just as the sight-lovers do not believe in (*hēgeitai* – 479a2) the Form of the Beautiful and cannot tolerate (*anechomenos* – 479a4) claims that the Beautiful is one thing, so "there is no way that the multitude will tolerate (*anexetai*) or believe (*hēgēsetai*) that the Beautiful itself exists, as opposed to the many beautiful things" (493e2-494a). Socrates infers from this description that it is impossible for the multitude to be philosophic, which recalls his purpose in examining the sight-lovers, namely to distinguish them from philosophers (494a). The resemblances between the two passages suggest that Socrates is attributing to the multitude the same qualities in virtue of which he identifies the sight-lovers as dreamers. Given that the multitude cannot be comprised of committed nominalists, or of intellectuals of any kind, we should resist Penner's claim that when Socrates says the sight-lovers are dreamers, he means they are nominalists.[2]

[2] As Gabriel Lear has pointed out to me, this leaves the possibility that the multitude are implicitly committed to nominalism. But this would mean that Penner's explanation of why Socrates characterizes the sight-lovers as

This conclusion receives additional support from another use of dreaming imagery in Book 7, in a passage in which Socrates pretends to address philosophers who have already completed the upward journey and must now be persuaded to return to the cave:

> When you're used to it, you'll see vastly better than the people there, and you'll know each of the images for what it is, and of what it is an image, since you'll have seen the truth about fine, just and good things. And in this way the city, governed by you and by us, will be awake and not dreaming, like the majority of cities nowadays, which are governed by people fighting over shadows and struggling with one another over who will rule, as if that were a great good. (520c3-d1, adapted from Reeve's translation)

Socrates says explicitly here that most cities are dreaming, but he treats the rulers of these cities as dreamers by implication. Just as a city is wise only if its rulers are wise, so whether a city is awake or dreaming depends upon the intellectual condition of its rulers (see 428b-429a). This passage is one more impediment to accepting Penner's reading. The sight-lovers are not unusual insofar as they are dreamers, as they must be if they are committed nominalists. If the multitude and the rulers who "fight over shadows" are also dreamers, Socrates must think that far more people are dreamers than are awake.

The evidence suggests that Socrates attributes the same basic intellectual condition to the sight-lovers, the multitude and the prisoners, although he focuses on different aspects of this condition in each passage. He notes that belief, the defining intellectual state of the sight-lovers, is clearer (or brighter, more easily visible – *phanotera*) than ignorance but less clear (or darker, more obscure – *skotōdestera*) than knowledge, and likewise that the objects of belief are clearer than the objects of ignorance (what is not) and less clear than the objects of knowledge (what is – 478c, 479c-d). The analogy between visual and intellectual perception is also central to the Cave allegory. When she is forced to look at the fire in the cave for the first time, a prisoner will flee

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dreamers does not quite apply to his description of the multitude, or to his description of the rulers in the next passage I discuss.

towards the shadows, which she is able to see, and will believe that they are really clearer (or more distinct – *saphestera*) than the things she is now being shown (515d-e). The prisoner's initial repulsion at the fire and the statues is less absolute than what Socrates calls the sight-lovers' inability to follow someone who would lead them to the Beautiful itself (see 476c, 479d-e). But in his portrayal of these two kinds of people Socrates notes the same unwillingness to turn towards things that are clearer, and the same comfort with things that are in between what is clearest and what is most opaque.

Likewise in the Cave allegory Socrates says that although the higher objects are truer, and are more – that is, they partake of being to a greater degree – the prisoners believe the truth is nothing other than the shadows on the cave wall; and he says that when she first encounters the statues passing before the fire, a prisoner will mistakenly believe that they are less true than the shadows (515c-d). Socrates' talk about truth here recalls a remark in Book 6, in which he ridicules all existing arguments for the claim that what the multitude believes to be good or beautiful truly is so (493d). And his talk about what is recalls his claim in Book 5 that the objects of belief are between what is and what is not and partake of both. Like the multitude, the prisoners believe that the lower objects are truly good, beautiful and so forth. And like the sight-lovers, in determining what beauty is, the prisoners look to the lower objects, to objects that are beautiful – or, more accurately but less gracefully, to objects that are what beauty is – to a lesser degree (see 596e-597a; and see Burnyeat 245-246; Penner 1987: 94, 123; Vlastos 1991: 66).

My aim here is not to provide anything like an exhaustive interpretation of these three passages, but only to infer from their striking similarities that in all of them Socrates means to capture roughly the same mindset. In forming their conceptions of what is beautiful, just, good, equal and so forth, and about what beauty, justice, goodness and equality are, the dreamers – the

sight-lovers, the multitude, the prisoners in the cave and the rulers among them – look to different objects from those to which philosophers look (see *e.g.*, 479d-e). The dreamers look to the many particular objects that partake of the Beautiful, the Just, the Good and the Equal, whereas philosophers look to the relevant Forms.[3] And the likenesses, images or imitations of higher objects attract dreamers to them because they desire the originals, and mistake the former for the latter.

Several features of the passages about dreamers recall the portrayal of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias*. The dreamers' characteristic error about the objects they pursue indicates that they take these objects to be supremely valuable, and that they conceive of the objects' value in grand terms. The sight-lovers, for instance, do not think only that the many choral performances or handicrafts they seek out are beautiful, but somehow that they are beauty itself. Callicles does something quite similar in equating the pleasant and the good, in declaring luxury, licentiousness and liberty to be happiness and virtue, and in praising the strong man as fine and virtuous. As do orators when they beautify the undertakings for which they advocate, portraying them as ennobling or vital, and likewise for the audiences persuaded by these speeches.

In Chapter 2 I said that according to Socrates' account of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*, orators give audiences the feeling that they have a full theory of (or story about) what is good when they only have a partial theory. A similar analysis applies to dreamers in the *Republic*.[4] Knowledge of the higher objects suffices for a complete understanding of things like beauty, justice and goodness. And although the lower objects are not fragments of the higher objects that they

[3] In the Cave allegory Socrates' thought must be a slightly more complicated one. In saying that the statues and the fire are truer and clearer than the shadows, and partake of being to a greater degree than they do, he suggests that those who have managed to investigate these intermediate objects, but not the higher objects in the outer world, may look to them in forming their conceptions of beauty, justice, and so forth (*contra* Murphy, who denies that there is a meaningful distinction between the statues and the things in the outer world; see Murphy 1932: 97-98).
[4] I owe this connection to Agnes Callard.

imitate, in mistaking their beliefs about the lower objects for understanding of things like beauty, justice and goodness, and especially in taking these beliefs to be sufficient for knowing which things are valuable to them, the dreamers do mistake a kind of partial theory about what is good for a full theory about it.

I argued in Chapter 2 that the *Gorgias* explains various practical errors to which Callicles, orators and audiences are liable by portraying them as senseless. Among other things, senselessness accounts for Callicles' tendency to focus so intently upon the claims he is advancing at any given moment that he fails to notice their relationship to other claims he has made. Likewise when an orator succeeds in persuading her audience, she induces in it a feeling of oblivion. The audience becomes absorbed in the prospect of the undertaking for which the orator advocates, which keeps it away from any questions that might expose its sense of what is good as partial or otherwise deficient. The dreamers are possessed of similar attitudes. The sight-lovers are so devoted to the many beautiful particulars, the multitude to the many things that it believes to be beautiful (or fine), good or just, and the cave-dwellers to the shadows, that they keep at bay any disruptive questions about these things, along with anyone who raises such questions (see 493b-494a).

Socrates' description of the multitude, in particular, contains several notable parallels to his description of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*. In both Socrates says that an audience will confer success upon orators, sophists, poets and other craftsmen who please it and satisfy its appetites, and that the audience compels these people to assimilate to its own character. In the *Republic* this entails compelling them to call good, beautiful and just whatever the multitude does (see 493b-c; *Gorgias* 463d-466a, 501c-503d, 512e-513e). Likewise hostility to philosophers and resistance to philosophical inquiry is common to Callicles and to all of the dreamers (see 477c-e,

479a, 479d-e, 493e-494a, 515e-516a, 516c-517a; *Gorgias* 497a-c, 498d, 499b, 501c, 505d, 512e-513c, 515b). These attitudes seem to grow out of a sense that they are already in touch with what is good, beautiful, just and generally valuable, and a suspicion that philosophy and the people who do it will divert them from the truth about these things.

In Chapter 2 I denied that Callicles is a philosophical hedonist on the grounds that he lacks the basic intellectual abilities necessary for maintaining such a position. I have similar reasons for rejecting Penner's claim that the sight-lovers are nominalists: this claim renders their relationship to beauty excessively intellectual and insufficiently dreamy. Their conception of Beauty itself, and of its relationship to the many beautiful particulars, is hazier than Penner suggests it is.[5]

Before moving on, let me take a moment to analyze the condition of the dreamers in the *Republic* in relation to the provisional formulation of desire. Socrates indicates that knowledge of the Forms either is or suffices for knowledge of the things of which they are Forms (see 476e-480a, 505d-506c, 508d-509a, 511a-e, 516a-c, 517b-c, 533c-534c). So knowledge of the Good is or suffices for knowledge of goodness, knowledge of the Beautiful is or suffices for knowledge

[5] Consider one more remark of Socrates' in the Cave allegory: when the prisoners speak about the shadows on the wall, they "believe that they are naming the things they see passing by" (515b4-5; Burnet has rendered this sentence otherwise in his edition. But the Greek on which my translation is based is well attested in the manuscripts, and is preferred by Bloom, Grube, Reeve and Shorey). This clearly implies that the prisoners are not naming the things they see passing by. Given that the shadows derive from the fire's light upon the statues, and that the statues and the fire derive in turn from the objects in the upper world and from the sun, Socrates is suggesting that in speaking, the prisoners are really naming either some or all of these higher things (see 509d-510a, 516b-c, 517a-e, 520c, 532a; and see Penner 2006: 253-254). This remark is too brief for us to be able to determine exactly what Socrates means by it, and crucially whether it is meant to have some bearing upon the psychology of the prisoners, or whether it is meant to be about their language alone and not about their psychology at all. That is, he could mean that when the prisoners speak about *e.g.*, the shadows of justice, they are somehow thinking about Justice itself, or perhaps about the equivalent of justice among the statues, or some combination of these things; or he could mean that when they speak about the shadows of justice, the prisoners' language refers to Justice itself and/or justice among the statues, whether or not these things enter into the prisoners' thoughts in any manner (see 517d-e). I will happily sidestep the task of providing a definitive interpretation of this remark. I mention this passage only because it reinforces the conclusion that Socrates does not envision a hard boundary between the objects that the sight-lovers, the multitude and the prisoners can see, and the higher things that they cannot access. Beliefs, thoughts, conative attitudes, actions and speech that are directed towards material particulars can somehow also be about the higher things. For a very brief but similar reading of this passage, see Owen 145 n. 20.

of beauty, and so forth. And knowledge of this kind enables one reliably to make true judgments about objects governed by the Forms that one knows (see 488d-e, 511b-c, 520c-d, 540a-b, 582d-e, 596b). So insofar as dreamers mistake the many particulars for the Forms that govern them, they presumably take themselves to have knowledge of the relevant values (beauty, justice, goodness, and so forth) desire for which motivates them to pursue these particulars. This effectively collapses the distance between the two elements in the provisional formula of desire. If the sight-lovers, for instance, desire the many beautiful particulars, provided they are beautiful, and they mistake the many beautiful particulars for the Beautiful itself, then they should accept unreflectively that when they pursue them, these particulars are the objects they desire. The question of whether these particulars are in fact beautiful cannot be a live one for the sight-lovers, because they do not distinguish the criterion for judging these particulars as beautiful from the particulars themselves.

3. The Ambitions of the Inferior Part of the Soul

Passages about the dreamers, or about the mindset or actions of any agent considered as a whole, are not the preferred ground for those who deny that the Desire Thesis – and the Appearance Thesis along with it – survives in the *Republic*. They generally rely on passages in which Socrates considers some lower part of the soul and its desires in isolation from the rest of the soul (see *e.g.*, Annas 129-130, 139; Cooper 1984: 7-9; Irwin 1995: 206; Penner 1971: 115; Reeve 1988: 120-123; Vlastos 1988: 99; Woods 41-46). And there is good reason for caution in drawing conclusions about desire in general from descriptions of its function within complex souls, as Socrates gives several indications that the various parts of the soul can make distinct contributions to a single action, or to what appears to be a unified motivational or intellectual

state (see 439a-441b, 518e-519b, 553b-d, 606a-c). Among these, the one that it is most urgent for me to address concerns the oligarchic man, whose psychic constitution resembles that of an oligarchic city. Socrates says that the money-making element – the appetitive part – sits on the throne of the oligarchic man's soul and enslaves the other two elements, forcing the reckoning part to consider and deliberate about nothing other than how to turn a little money into a lot (553b-d). Socrates' language suggests that in this arrangement the reckoning part performs a relatively narrow intellectual function. But several commentators have taken this passage to indicate that in any similarly configured soul, all sophisticated intellectual tasks will be performed strictly by the reckoning part (see Anagnostopoulos 168; Cooper 1984: 20-21; Kahn 1987: 88).

On the basis of this reading, we might be tempted by the thought that even if I am right about the dreamers – even if what it means to be a dreamer is to have a practical orientation to objects like Beauty itself and Justice itself, however false or underdeveloped one's beliefs about these objects might be – we cannot infer from this conclusion anything certain about the beliefs or desires of the dreamers' psychic parts. For Socrates' characterization of the dreamers' orientation to higher objects may apply only to the reckoning parts of their souls. It may be that when some lower part of a dreamer's soul motivates her to pursue a particular material object, it desires this object as such, and believes it to be nothing other than what it is – say, a choral performance or an amphora. If the dreamer believes that the objects she pursues are Beauty itself, this belief will belong strictly to the reckoning part of her soul. Even if this belief fulfils the requirements of the Appearance Thesis, and serves as a kind of doxastic imprimatur necessary for acting on the desires of one of the lower parts of the soul, it will still belong to the reckoning part alone. On this interpretation, the tendency of the dreamers, or of whole agents of

any kind, to mistake lower objects for higher ones is evidence only of a truncated version of the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic*, one that does not apply to all actions and the desires that motivate them, as it does in the *Gorgias* and other dialogues. Lower parts of the soul will motivate the pursuit of objects that they need not believe to be good, let alone good in a maximalist sense, and their desires need not be for objects that they believe to be good.

The discussion of imitation and mimetic poetry in Book 10 provides a path forward, in that it presents the inferior part of the soul as naturally prone to intellectual errors that resemble the illusions of the dreamers: the inferior part of the soul mistakes the lower objects to which it responds for higher objects, which only the superior part of the soul can grasp.[6] This should prevent us from identifying the objects of lower desires strictly with the lower objects that these desires motivate agents to pursue. And it exemplifies Socrates' habit of attributing the dysfunctions of the inferior part of the soul to its disposition to confuse the objects it desires with some other objects, and to motivate pursuit of the latter as a result. This is one of the central features of Socratic intellectualism, namely the explanation of practical errors by way of intellectual errors, rather than by way of desires for bad things (see *e.g.*, *Meno* 77a-78b; *Protagoras* 355e-357e, 360c-d, 361a-b; *Euthydemus* 278e-282c; *Gorgias* 509e).

At the center of the discussion of imitation and mimetic poetry is a tripartite analogy between optical illusion, painting and poetry. I will discuss the first two parts before moving to the third. Socrates says that although a painter does not know anything of substance about carpentry, from a distance his painting of a carpenter will trick children and senseless people into believing that they see a real carpenter, not a painted image of one (598b-c). To achieve this effect the painter exploits the native tendency of the inferior part of the soul to believe that things

[6] On the distinction between the superior and the inferior part of the soul, and the way it maps onto the distinctions between psychic parts in the tripartite soul, see Chapter 3 n. 14.

are just as they appear to be. Socrates notes that this part of the soul is liable to believe that the same object is smaller when it is more distant and larger when it is nearer; that straight objects submerged in water are bent; and that the same object is at one time concave and at another convex (602c-d). The superior part of the soul, by contrast, is capable of measuring, counting and weighing, and of abiding by the results of these operations. It can therefore reliably determine a material object's physical properties, like its size, curvature and concavity (602d-e). To the extent that the superior part rules in us, we are not mastered by the inferior part's "wandering of vision," the shifting and inaccurate beliefs founded on the unaided application of our senses to visible objects (602c12; and see 602c-603a). Children and the senseless are not ruled by the superior parts of their souls. As for those of us who are so ruled, once we have taken our measurements and the superior part of our souls has indicated that things are other than they appear, "things simultaneously appear the opposite way to us" (602e5-6). The superior part "believes (*doxazon*) in accord with the measurements" and the inferior part "believes (*doxazon*) contrary to the measurements" (603a1-2; see also 605b-c).

In this account the inferior part of the soul is portrayed as ambitious beyond its means. It relies solely upon appearances to arrive at beliefs – this is a carpenter, that stick is bent, and so forth – that cannot be settled by means of appearances alone. The problem is not simply that the inferior part of the soul is intellectually feeble or untrained. Rather, its beliefs are about objects that belong to a level of reality that the inferior part of the soul cannot access directly (see 509d-510a, 511d-e). It can make direct and substantial intellectual contact with appearances only, but its beliefs are about material particulars, the objects of which the appearances are appearances.[7]

[7] With this reading I disagree with Ganson, who argues that because the inferior part of the soul forms its beliefs solely on the basis of appearances, it cannot have the aim of holding these beliefs only if they are true, and it cannot believe that these beliefs are about a world that might exist independently of its representational states (see Ganson 184, 188, 191). As with his characterization of the dreamers, Socrates' portrayal of the inferior part of the soul as

These claims rely upon a connection to the Divided Line in Book 6. Socrates describes the product of the imitator in a manner that clearly recalls the shadows and reflections belonging to the lowest segment of the Divided Line (see 509d-510a, 596b-e, 597e-598b). Likewise the objects that a painting imitates correspond to the objects belonging to the higher segment of the visible portion of the Divided Line, objects of which the reflections and shadows belonging to the lower segment are images (see 510a, 597d-598c). When a viewer believes that a painting of a carpenter is really a carpenter, the material for this belief is drawn only from what is portrayed in Book 6 as the lowest level of reality, but the belief pertains to what belongs to the next level up, to the higher segment of the visible portion of the Line.[8] And just as the inferior part of the soul cannot rely upon measuring, counting and weighing to prevent itself from being taken in by optical illusion, so it cannot rely upon an understanding of carpentry to prevent itself from being taken in by the false appearance of a carpenter in the painting. So, in sum, the inferior part of the soul forms beliefs about material particulars on the basis of appearances alone, and although there are crafts (or kinds of knowledge) that enable us to determine the truth of the matter in such cases, the inferior part of the soul is incapable of using these crafts or abiding by their determinations.[9] The inferior part of the soul forms these beliefs independently of the superior part, and in some cases its beliefs will conflict with those of the superior part.

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intellectually ambitious is designed to convey that it can do both of the things that Ganson denies, even though it is ill-equipped to fulfil its own ambitions.

[8] The parallel with optical illusions is a bit trickier. Perhaps we can say that mirrors and shadows find equivalents in the bodies of water in which straight objects look bent, and in the colors that mislead us into thinking that the same things are both concave and convex (see 602c-d). Socrates also compares illusionist painting (*skiagraphia*) to mirrors fairly directly, and says that it deceives us by exploiting the same part of our nature as optical illusions do (see 602d). But the tendency of objects to appear smaller when they are more distant does not involve anything like an intervening medium, or an image that is separate from the object and the observer, as with the reflection in a mirror. In cases like these the lower part of the soul does form beliefs about material objects on the basis of their appearances, but not on the basis of what are obviously likenesses, images or imitations of these objects.

[9] Although I disagree with Penner about the practical orientation of the inferior part of the soul, my argument that the discussion of optical illusion portrays the inferior part of the soul as intellectually ambitious in this manner owes much to his interpretation of this passage and others (see Penner 1971: 100-108). I disagree with Ferrari over the question of what enables the superior part of the soul to avoid being corrupted by optical illusions, paintings and

Especially noteworthy for my larger argument is that the beliefs of the inferior part of the soul are similar to the beliefs of dreamers. The inferior part of the soul does not mistake material particulars for the Forms that govern them, but it makes an analogous set of intellectual mistakes. Lacking more direct and reliable means of insight into material objects, it takes the appearances of each object to be sufficient for achieving an understanding of its material properties. Likewise dreamers lack direct or reliable means of insight into the Forms, but take their likenesses, images or imitations to be what the Forms are, or to be *e.g.*, what beauty is. The inferior part of the soul can only draw on appearances to form its beliefs, but somehow its beliefs are about objects that cannot be reduced to appearances or understood purely in terms of appearances. Likewise the dreamers can only draw on likenesses, images or imitations to form their beliefs, but somehow these beliefs are about things – *e.g.*, Beauty itself – that cannot be reduced to likenesses, images or imitations. If the inferior part of the soul does not exactly mistake fragmentary accounts of what each material object is for the object itself, it does something very similar – overweighting the available appearances of any given object in its account of what that object is.

The first two parts of Socrates' tripartite analogy deal with purely intellectual failures of this kind, but he intends for these to serve as models for the intellectual and conative failures that he attributes to the poet's audiences. Socrates notes that the part of the soul that reacts with great passion to mimetic poetry is the same part that is taken in by optical illusions, namely the inferior part of the soul (see 602c-603a, 605b-c). He attributes to audiences two kinds of practical error: they engage in excessive lamentation when presented with depictions of characters suffering

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imitative poetry in the way that the inferior part of the soul is. Ferrari claims that this is the reckoning part's ability to care for the whole soul, which entails synthesizing various impressions across time (see Ferrari 132-134). Ferrari's claim is plausible when considered at a remove from the text, but there is no allusion to this ability in the Book 10 discussion of imitative poetry.

misfortunes, and they take pleasure in inappropriate kinds of humor (see 606a-c).[10] I will follow Socrates' lead in focusing upon the former kind of error, and especially upon the nature of the mistaken beliefs to which this reaction is tied. In so doing I will argue, first, that these beliefs belong to the inferior part of the soul; and then that these are beliefs about virtue and goodness.

Aside from the mistaken belief that there is no harm in lamenting along with a grieving character, Socrates alludes to two errors of recognition involved in this kind of lamentation: the audience member takes the grieving character's misfortune seriously, believing it to be a truly bad thing (*oute dēlou ontos tou…kakou tōn toioutōn* – 604b10-11; and see 603c5-6); and she identifies the grieving character as a good person (*anēr agathos* – 606b2; and see 600e5, 605d1; see also 600e-601a, 604b-d, 605c-e, 606a-b). Socrates specifies that because we cannot know what is good and bad when it comes to apparent misfortunes, reason and law urge us not to take them seriously, to put aside grieving as quickly as possible and to deliberate about what is best for us to do in light of what has befallen us (see 603e-604d, 605d-e; see also 387d-e). He does not say what kind of understanding enables someone to avoid mistakenly identifying poetic characters as good people. But this must be an understanding of virtue.

Do these false beliefs about the grieving character – that his misfortunes really are bad, and that he is a good person – belong to the inferior part of the soul? This question is tricky to answer. The passages in which Socrates comes closest to assigning each false belief to a particular part of the soul are all fairly ambiguous on their own. Socrates tells Glaucon that the inferior part of the soul is insatiable for weeping and lamenting, and cannot heed the law when it says that it is best to lament one's own misfortunes as little as possible, since what is really good or bad in such matters is unclear (604b-d, 606a-b). He says that when even the best of us hear

[10] Socrates also says that imitative poetry nurtures sexual desires, anger, and all appetites, pains and pleasures, establishing them as rulers in our souls (see 606d). But he does not explain how these effects relate to the conative and intellectual failures that I discuss here.

Homer or another tragic poet imitating a grieving hero, we take the hero's suffering seriously and take pleasure in grieving along with him (605c-d). Socrates makes clear that this pleasure belongs to the inferior part of the soul (606a). But he also indicates that if we are not sufficiently educated, the superior part of our souls allows the inferior part to enjoy itself in lamentation because "it is watching the sufferings of somebody else and thinks there is no shame involved for it in praising and pitying another purportedly (*phaskōn*) good man who grieves excessively" (606b1-3, Reeve's translation; and see 606a-c).

In claiming that the superior part of the soul alone is capable of heeding the law that discourages excessive lamentation, Socrates' thought seems to be that the superior part alone is capable of encountering apparent misfortune without believing it really is bad. However bad some misfortune appears to the inferior part of the soul, by contrast, is how bad the inferior part believes this misfortune really is. But someone who sees good-independent desires in the *Republic*, and who would deny that the inferior part of the soul has beliefs about what is good and bad, could interpret Socrates' claim otherwise: the inferior part of the soul has a blind desire for lamentation, which it can activate without having any accompanying belief that what it laments really is bad; only the superior part of the soul can have such a belief. Likewise it seems that the inferior part of the soul believes that the hero in a poetic work who is purported be a good man is in fact a good man. But then again, Socrates attributes the thought that the hero is a purportedly good man to the superior part of the soul (see 606a-c). Perhaps he means only that this thought helps to persuade the superior part that there is no harm in lamenting along with the hero, and not that the inferior part of the soul believes the hero is a good man. If so, then it is possible that the inferior part has no beliefs about whether the hero is a good man or a bad man.

It motivates the spectator to lament only because it naturally takes pleasure in lamentation and has met with an occasion for lamentation.

But this interpretation is at odds with two important features of the account of mimetic poetry. First, Socrates' claim that the wisdom of imitative poets is directed towards pleasing the inferior part of the soul implies that the common features of tragic poetry are designed to please the inferior part (605a). And he calls poets "imitators of images of virtue" (600e5). So he must think that poets make their heroes seem good so as to appeal to the inferior part of the soul. It is difficult to see why this would appeal to the inferior part if it lacked beliefs about virtue and did not care about it. And second, as I have argued, in the first two parts of the tripartite analogy the inferior part of the soul is depicted as intellectually ambitious beyond its means. It forms beliefs entirely on the basis of appearances, but these beliefs are unreliable because they are about properties of objects that are not reducible to appearances. There are crafts (or forms of knowledge) that can determine which beliefs about these kinds of objects and their properties are true, but the inferior part of the soul cannot be guided by these crafts. So, we are meant to infer, entirely on the basis of poetic appearances the inferior part of the soul forms beliefs that the purportedly good heroes are good and that their sufferings are bad. Its beliefs are unreliable because it cannot be guided by the counsels of the law or by an understanding of virtue.[11] Preserving the relationships between the three parts of the analogy thus requires that we attribute these beliefs to the inferior parts of the soul.

To summarize my conclusions thus far, despite its inability to make substantial intellectual contact with them, the inferior part of the soul forms beliefs about and is affectively attuned to the higher objects from which poetic appearances derive – good and bad fortune,

[11] Tellingly the law counsels the person suffering misfortune to do precisely what the larger account of mimetic poetry depicts the inferior part of the soul as unable to do, namely to refrain from believing that the misfortune is as bad as it appears.

virtuous and vicious people – if not to the Forms that govern these objects, namely the Good and Virtue (or Justice, Wisdom, Courage and Temperance). Put more colloquially, the inferior part of the soul cares about what is good and bad, who is virtuous and vicious, and about goodness, badness, virtue and vice in general, even though it can only access appearances or imitations of these things.[12]

This account carries two important implications for my larger argument. One is that the inferior part of the soul is emotionally responsive to the goodness of good things, and to the virtue of virtuous people. Given the way that Socrates treats the relationship between desire, the passions and their respective objects, the fact that the inferior part of the soul is emotionally responsive to goodness and virtue – that it is distressed when apparently bad things befall apparently good people – suffices to establish that it desires them (see *e.g.*, *Laches* 198b, *Protagoras* 358b-360d, *Philebus* 32b-36d, 39c-41c). The second implication is that the inferior part forms beliefs about goodness and virtue, which means that it is capable of having the kinds of beliefs that satisfy the requirements of the Appearance Thesis, on my maximalist understanding of it – beliefs about what is fine, virtuous and good.[13]

But I must take care not to overstate these findings. That the inferior part of the soul is practically oriented to goodness and virtue suffices to establish that it believes these things to be objects of its desires. And just like the dreamers, the inferior part of the soul tends to take an interest in higher objects with which it cannot make direct and substantial intellectual contact.

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[12] Belfiore organizes the relations between all of these things in a similar manner, although she sorts them according to a distinction between *phainomena* and *onta*, whereas I prefer the more general distinction between higher and lower objects (see Belfiore 50-51). There is no unambiguous basis in Book 10 for applying Belfiore's distinction to all of the relevant objects involved in optical illusion, painting and poetry; it is also difficult to square this distinction with some of Socrates' remarks in Book 10 (see 597a1-5, 598b1-4), and with his distinction in Book 5 between what is, what is not, and what is between what is and what is not (see 477c-479d).

[13] My understanding of the tripartite analogy in Book 10 owes much to Belfiore and Moss, although they do not draw from this analogy the conclusions that are most important for my argument – that the inferior part of the soul is practically oriented to goodness and virtue, but cannot make direct and substantial intellectual contact with higher objects (see especially Belfiore 44; Moss 2007: 439-440).

But, as I have emphasized, the Appearance Thesis is meant to be universal in its scope. Although the Book 10 discussion of mimetic poetry surely provides general insight into the nature of the inferior part of the soul, this passage has limited value for my argument. When it responds to mimetic poetry the inferior part of the soul manifests an interest in goodness and virtue. But this takes place in a special practical context, in which the objects to which the inferior part of the soul responds are imitations of virtue. The inferior part of the soul may take on beliefs in accordance with the appearances of virtue and goodness that the poet has fashioned, but it is largely passive in receiving them.[14] Is it capable of believing that actions are fine, virtuous and good when their objects – like drink itself – do not come along with their own poetic appearances of virtue and goodness? This would require the inferior part of the soul to form and maintain its own beliefs about what is fine, virtuous and good, and for these beliefs to inform its actions even when it is not responding to the works of an imitator. The discussion of mimetic poetry cannot help us determine whether Socrates thinks this is possible.

I will address this question by examining Socrates' treatment of the same kinds of agents who featured in my argument for a maximalist interpretation of the Appearance Thesis in the *Gorgias* – agents whom Socrates considers the worst off among us, the ones most prone to impulsive, pleasure-driven and wicked behavior. In the Cave allegory Socrates observes that people who are called wicked but wise have extremely sharp vision that – because of their "kinship with becoming," their gluttony and their appetitive pleasures – is fastened in place, fixed upon lower objects (519a10-b1; and see 519a-b). Although he discusses similar kinds of people in the passages I will examine presently, Socrates does not speak about the objects of their desires as ontologically lower, or as likenesses, images or imitations of higher objects (although see 584e-587a). But he locates their motivating beliefs and desires unambiguously in

[14] For a similar observation see Kamtekar 2017: 188-189.

the lowest parts of their souls, and he portrays these people as believing that their characteristic actions are fine and virtuous.

4. Democratic and Tyrannical Appetites

Socrates notes in several places in the *Republic* that those who hold political power speak as if their actions and the things they value are fine and virtuous, although there are good reasons to doubt that Socrates believes these people are sincere (see 426d-e, 488b-d, 493a-c). He attributes a similar kind of speech to the democratic man. But the sincerity of this speech is beyond doubt, as Socrates locates it within the citadel of the democratic man's soul. The democratic man undergoes two dramatic motivational transformations in Socrates' narration. Having inherited an oligarchic constitution from his father, he is first converted into a profligate sensualist, and then into the mature democratic type who honors all of his appetites equally. The democratic man's associates initiate the first transformation when he is still young, filling him with multifarious pleasures and desires, all of them unnecessary appetites, challengers to the necessary appetites that have dominated his soul during his earliest, oligarchic period (see 558d-559e). These unnecessary appetites multiply as the young man indulges them, and eventually come to occupy the citadel of his soul along with false, "impostor" arguments and beliefs (*pseudeis…kai alazones…logoi te kai doxai* – 560c2; and see 560b-c). When his relatives try to talk sense into the young man, their words are denied entry to the citadel of his soul by the impostor arguments, which call reverence "foolishness," temperance "cowardliness," moderate and orderly expenditure "boorishness and illiberality"; they call wantonness "good breeding,"

anarchy "freedom," extravagance "magnificence" and irreverence "courage" (560c-561a).[15] With some luck the democratic man outgrows his libertinism and welcomes back the exiled necessary appetites. From this point forward he holds all of his appetites to be equal, is ruled by whichever appetites arise in him at a given moment, and bars from the citadel of his soul any arguments that some pleasures are superior and should be indulged to the exclusion of others (see 561a-d).

Because they accompany the unnecessary appetites in occupying the citadel of the democratic man's soul, and because they portray as virtues the habits and character traits that conduce to his dissipated lifestyle, and as vices the ones that interfere with it, the impostor arguments serve as suggestive evidence that the appetitive part of the democratic man's soul is governed by a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis – that it believes a life devoted to fulfilling its dominant appetites is a virtuous one. But Socrates does not say which part of the soul is responsible for the impostor arguments, which leaves open the possibility that they belong to the reckoning part. If so, then although the young democratic man believes that his is a virtuous lifestyle, and although his dominant desires are for what is good in a maximalist sense, this will not be the case for the appetitive part of his soul, considered in isolation from the reckoning part.

But a parallel discussion of the tyrannical man reinforces the conclusion that the lower parts of the soul have their own beliefs that their dominant desires, and the actions they motivate, are virtuous, fine and good. Within the tyrannical soul one sub-class of unnecessary appetites

[15] Dominic Scott argues that in this episode the democratic man's unnecessary appetites determine which beliefs he holds, just as, in a passage I will discuss below, the tyrannical man's lawless appetites determine which beliefs he holds (see Scott 29-31; and see 571b-d, 574d-575a). On Scott's reading the impostor arguments and the tyrannical man's beliefs are therefore rationalizations. But the text supports just as well the reading that neither the unnecessary appetites nor the impostor arguments possess this sort of causal primacy, and that they operate in tandem. The same is true for the tyrannical man's lawless appetites and the beliefs that accompany them.

ultimately gains ascendancy – the lawless appetites, whose leader is "Craving" (*Erōs*). Socrates describes lawless appetites as those "that wake up during sleep, whenever the rest of the soul – its reckoning, gentle, and ruling element – slumbers. Then the bestial and wild part, full of food or drink, springs to life, throws off sleep, and seeks to go and satisfy its own characteristic instincts" (571c3-7). This part of the soul is unbounded in its licentiousness. It motivates the tyrannical man to eat and drink to excess, to have sex with anyone at all and to commit all manner of violence. "In a word, it does not refrain from anything, no matter how senseless or shameful" (571d3-4).

Because Socrates emphasizes that the lawless appetites belong to a part of the soul that is as wolfish and impulsive as can be imagined, this portrait holds great value for my argument. For in spite of their depravity, we learn that the lawless appetites are accompanied by beliefs about what is fine and shameful. Just as the impostor arguments occupy the citadel of the democratic man's soul along with the unnecessary appetites, so a group of enabling beliefs – I will call them "lawless beliefs" – comes to rule the tyrannical man's soul along with his craving. As the tyrannical man comes to finance his debauchery with money and goods that he violently seizes from his parent, and that he steals from houses, passersby and eventually temples,

> his old childhood beliefs about fine and shameful things, beliefs that are accounted just, are mastered by the ones that have been newly released from slavery, which are the bodyguard of Craving and rule along with it. These are the [beliefs] that used to be freed in sleep as a dream, when he himself was ruled democratically, by the laws in him and by his father. But under the tyranny of Craving, what he used to become occasionally in a dream he has now become permanently in waking life, and so there is no terrible murder, no food, and no act from which he will refrain... (574d5-575a1, adapted from Reeve's translation)

So even when his soul is in what Socrates calls a state of "complete anarchy and lawlessness" the desires that motivate the tyrannical man do so in combination with lawless beliefs (575a1-2).

Do these lawless beliefs belong to the appetitive part of the soul? Socrates says that they are Craving's bodyguard (574d7). Perhaps this subordination indicates that the lawless beliefs belong to the reckoning part of the soul, which is enslaved within the tyrannical soul just as it is enslaved within the oligarchic soul. We might feel compelled to adopt this interpretation because of how depraved and insane Socrates makes the ruling element within the tyrannical man out to be (see *e.g.*, 573a-b). If any psychic part is incapable of maintaining the evaluative beliefs that serve to legitimize its rule within the soul, it will be the appetitive part, especially once the tyrannical man has been purged of "any beliefs or appetites…that are regarded as good or are still moved by shame" (573b1-3, Reeve's translation). But this proposal should be rejected on the basis of Socrates' remark that the lawless beliefs first arise in dreams, when "the rest of the soul – its reckoning, gentle, and ruling element – slumbers." Given that it is the only part of the soul that is active at this moment, the appetitive part must be solely responsible for the lawless beliefs. Although when they come to rule along with Craving they are waking beliefs, which master the other beliefs that stand in the way of their rule.[16]

Socrates does not make explicit what the content of the lawless beliefs is. But the evidence strongly suggests they are beliefs that whatever contributes to the tyrannical man's lifestyle is fine and virtuous, and that whatever impedes it is shameful and vicious. There is the parallel with the impostor arguments in the democratic soul, which also rule the soul along with a set of desires, and which are themselves about what is virtuous and vicious. There is the fact

[16] In describing the tyrannical man as dominated in waking life by desires and beliefs that first arose in his dreams, does Socrates mean to group him with the sight-lovers and the other dreamers? Perhaps. They might all be called waking dreamers. But they are not waking dreamers in the same sense. The sight-lovers will only dream of the Beautiful itself, which philosophers can relate to in a waking state. Whereas the tyrannical man does in his waking life what many people do in their dreams. The sight-lovers' intellectual condition is a pale imitation of a higher intellectual condition, whereas the mature tyrannical man's intellectual condition is an actualization of what was once lowest in himself, a state in which he acted out brutish fantasies in relation to the likenesses that populated his dreams. And the sense of the contrasting terms – dreams and the waking state – is literal in the case of the tyrannical man, whereas the sense of these terms is extended in the case of the sight-lovers.

that the lawless beliefs master the tyrannical man's old, conventional beliefs about what is fine and shameful, which suggests that they are competing beliefs about the same topic. And Socrates implies elsewhere that some of the lawless beliefs concern what the tyrannical man deserves, which is either what he considers just or a close relative of such a belief. In considering what will happen when the tyrannical man first finds himself short of money to feed his lawless appetites, Socrates asks, "just as the late-coming pleasures within him got the better of (*pleon eichon*) the older ones and stole what is theirs, won't he himself, young as he is, think he deserves (*axiōsei*) to get the better of his father and mother…?" (574a6-9, adapted from Reeve's translation). This question does not concern a desire on the tyrannical man's part to get the better of his parents, or an instrumental belief about where he will obtain the money to feed his appetites. It concerns an evaluative belief about the relative worth of the tyrant's parents and of himself, which serves as a justification for his decision to take their money by force.[17] All of this suggests that it is one of the lawless beliefs that Socrates mentions. As for the content of this belief, Socrates' description of it recalls Callicles' claim that natural justice requires that the strong should get the better of the weak, and Thrasymachus' claim that the unjust person – whom Thrasymachus identifies as virtuous – gets the better of the just one, especially if he commits injustice on a grand scale (see *Gorgias* 483d, 488b; *Republic* 343d-344c, 348c-e). These are claims about what is fine and just. Likewise for the tyrannical man's belief about what he deserves.

Since the lawlessly appetitive part of the soul – the lowest part of the soul in what Socrates portrays as the most brutish condition it can assume – maintains beliefs about what is fine and virtuous without the aid of any other part, there should be no question as to whether the appetitive part of the democratic man can be responsible for the impostor arguments. Socrates'

[17] Thanks to Gabriel Lear for help elaborating this thought.

treatment of the lawless appetites directly undermines the claim that the reckoning part of the soul must be responsible for any belief that the objects of lower desires are good. This claim is therefore no barrier to accepting my larger argument.

Likewise the scope of the impostor arguments and the lawless beliefs is exceedingly broad. They are not confined to poetic objects, as the inferior part of the soul's beliefs about grieving heroes are. They are beliefs about the values that govern about as wide a set of actions as the young democratic man or the tyrannical man might engage in. That these beliefs can belong to the lowest parts of the soul should allay any remaining suspicion that their intellectual or moral inferiority prevents these parts from being governed by the Appearance Thesis.

It is fairly straightforward in the text that the democratic man – at least so long as he remains in his profligate period – and the tyrannical man desire the objects of their appetites as pleasant and thereby good in the maximalist sense. Within the democratic man, the rule of the unnecessary appetites is secured by the impostor arguments, which call temperance "cowardice" and anarchy "freedom," among other things (see 559d-561b). These arguments clearly construe pleasure in the objects of the unnecessary appetites, and pursuit of these pleasures, as fine, virtuous and good. We do not hear enough about the democratic man's beliefs to know whether he conceives of health as vigor, the conception of virtue that, as I argued in Chapter 2, entails that the satisfaction of appetites both instantiates and further nurtures virtue. But what little we do hear about the democratic man's beliefs is consistent with this conception. Once the democratic man has matured, and has again opened the citadel of his soul to the necessary appetites, he will never accept "that some pleasures belong to fine and good appetites and others to bad ones, and that he must practice and honor the former and restrain and enslave the latter. On the contrary, he denies all this and declares that they are all alike and must be honored on an

equal basis" (561b-c, Reeve's translation). At this point the democratic man's soul has become properly democratic, insofar as he honors all of his appetites equally. But the text is helpfully plain on the point that at this point he considers all of his appetites fine and good, whereas during his wild period he considered only the unnecessary appetites fine and good.

Likewise once the tyrannical man comes to be ruled by the lawless appetites his primary aim is pleasure in satisfying them (571b-c, 573a, 573d, 574a, 575d). He seems to be distinguished from the democratic man in the quality and intensity of his appetites – the tyrannical man's Craving is lawless and insatiable, and it is accompanied by a crowd of similarly anarchic appetites – and by his mad conviction that he deserves to get the better of anyone who stands in the way of his pleasures, human and god alike (see 572d-573c, 574a, 574c-575a). These differences will surely tell in the tyrannical man's conception of virtue, which will be monomaniacal and domineering where the mature democratic man's is amenable to all pleasures and therefore likely broadly flexible. I have already argued that the tyrannical man believes the satisfaction of his appetites is fine and good, in keeping with the maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis. Since he desires the objects of his appetites as pleasant, he must desire these objects as pleasant and thereby good. And if, as I established in Chapter 3, his appetites are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant, they must also be provisional desires for their objects as pleasant and thereby good. This confirms that in the *Republic* even the lowest desires are provisional desires for the good, and that the version of the Reality Thesis that I found in the *Gorgias* is preserved in the *Republic*.

5. Conclusion

I hope to have established that in the *Republic* Socrates maintains a maximalist version of the Appearance Thesis, and to have captured the shape that the Appearance Thesis takes in light of some of the core philosophical developments in the dialogue – the division of the soul and the treatment of ontologically lower objects as likenesses, images or imitations of higher objects. Accepting my argument does not require that we impose any new limits upon the range of objects that lower soul may motivate us to pursue, the kinds of intrapsychic conflicts to which it is prone, or the array of behaviors to which it may drive us. But unlike interpretations that see good-independent desires in the *Republic*, on my interpretation when Socrates says that the good "is what every soul pursues, and that for the sake of which it does everything," he means this to apply to every part of the soul along with its desires. And unlike minimalist interpretations, my own does not allow us to file down the meaning of "good" so far that in some contexts it is synonymous with words like "attractive" or "pleasant" (see *e.g.*, Weiss 1992: 92). Not even the lowest part of the soul is so intellectually primitive as to motivate actions about which it has no evaluative beliefs, or about which it has only the thinnest and least demanding evaluative beliefs imaginable. It conceives of the actions that it motivates as fine and virtuous, good in a maximalist sense.

And, as I explained in the introduction to this chapter, my argument that the Appearance Thesis applies to the appetitive part of the soul rounds off the argument that I began in Chapter 3, for the claim that the Reality Thesis is preserved in the *Republic*. Because the desires of the appetitive part of the soul are desires for their objects, provided they are pleasant, that this part is governed by the Appearance Thesis suffices to demonstrate that its desires are for their objects, provided they are pleasant and thereby good, and therefore that its desires are provisional desires

for the good. Because the desires of the lowest part of the soul are governed by the Reality Thesis, we can conclude that in the *Republic* all desires are governed by the Reality Thesis.

Conclusion

I have argued that in the *Republic*, as in the *Gorgias*, Socrates preserves and develops the Desire Thesis, the view that all desire is for the good, along with its two component theses: the Reality Thesis, the view that all desire is for what is really good; and the Appearance Thesis, the view that when any agent acts, she must believe that her action is good, and that the object of her motivating desire is good. I offered interpretations of the two component theses as they appear in the *Gorgias*, and then argued that Socrates remains committed to them in the *Republic*, albeit in a modified form. I explained that we can understand Socrates' handling of the Reality Thesis in the *Gorgias* if we take him to be a provisionalist about desire, to believe that all desire is for its object, provided that object is really good; or for the action that it motivates, provided that action is really good. With these formulations I mean to convey that because of one aspect of the psychological condition of each agent, namely the intentional content of her motivating desire, an agent can desire a given action or object only if it is in fact good. Hence if an agent does what is not good, it follows that she does not do what she wants. I argued that in the *Republic* the appetitive part of the soul's desires are provisional desires for pleasure, which is to say that it desires its objects, provided they are pleasant and thereby good. Because the Reality Thesis applies to the desires of even the lowest part of the soul, we can infer that it applies to all desires.

Much of my argument that appetites are provisional desires for their objects as pleasant and thereby good depends upon my argument for the claim that the Appearance Thesis persists in the *Republic*, and that it applies to all parts of the soul. On my interpretation, Socrates has a maximalist understanding of the Appearance Thesis, according to which we believe not only that our motivating desires are for what is good, but that they are for what is fine and virtuous, or for

living well. That is, we maintain theories of (or stories about) what is fine and virtuous, although these theories are often shifting, half-baked, riddled with falsehoods or maintained without reflection. In order to act, we must believe that our actions and desiderative objects comport with these theories – that they are fine and virtuous, or that they are otherwise compatible with what is fine and virtuous. I argued that relative to the *Gorgias*, Socrates develops the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic* as he introduces the division of the soul and treats imitation as a structural feature of the cosmos. In the *Gorgias*, Callicles, orators and their audiences possess a tangled set of beliefs to the effect that cultivating and satisfying one's appetites is fine and virtuous. In the *Republic*, Socrates repeatedly discusses agents who mistake ontologically lower objects for the ontologically higher objects of which they are likenesses, images or imitations. And he indicates that even the lowest part of the soul – the appetitive part – is capable of errors of this kind. Drawing on its acquaintance with the lower objects, with which it can make intellectual contact, the appetitive part of the soul forms beliefs about the higher objects that it desires. It maintains its own notions about what is good in the maximalist sense, and believes that the pleasures at which it aims are good in this sense. Because the appetites of this part of the soul are for their objects provided they are pleasant, they are for their objects provided they are pleasant and thereby good. My argument that Socrates remains committed to the Appearance Thesis in the *Republic* thus anchors my argument that he remains committed to the Reality Thesis as well.

Having argued for these claims, I feel obliged to address a handful of outstanding questions even though, in my estimation, the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* do not enable us to give precise answers to them. If it cannot make substantial intellectual contact with ontologically higher objects, what exactly does it mean for the appetitive part of the soul to be practically

oriented to them, to desire them and have beliefs about them? Which practical concepts inform the thinking of the appetitive part of the soul, and what kinds of beliefs can it have about them? If the appetitive part of the soul does not have a minimalistic conception of the good, when it pursues objects like drink itself as pleasant and thereby good, how does it conceive of the relationship between goodness and pleasure? I will venture some answers that, although they are consistent with the texts as I understand them, cannot help but involve speculation.

The appetitive part of the soul wields the same basic set of practical concepts as the reckoning part of the soul – the good, the fine, virtue, pleasure, what is real or true, and so forth. And it accords these concepts the same fundamental importance in the formulation of its desires and actions. Only the appetitive part of the soul lacks the many intellectual advantages of the reckoning part – its ability to withhold assent from appearances, to turn away from lower objects and investigate higher objects, to refine its understanding of practical concepts by reflecting on them in a systematic manner, testing them for consistency and stability. And it lacks the reckoning part's natural desire to engage in all of this work, and its related intolerance for superficial answers (see *e.g.*, 581b-c). The appetitive part desires what is really fine and virtuous, but in determining the contents of these concepts it is satisfied by appearances because it mistakes them for the real thing, for the higher objects from which they derive. The intensity of its motivations to pursue an object that appears to it to be valuable in some way is proportional to its sense that this is the real thing – that what appears to it to be *e.g.*, outstandingly beautiful really is outstandingly beautiful, and that it serves to answer outstandingly well the question of what beauty really is. Objects that appear to the appetitive part of the soul to be outstandingly valuable in any way will absorb its attention. It will drag the whole soul towards them with a

degree of urgency that the reckoning part of the soul deems appropriate only to the pursuit of the highest objects.[1]

If the appetitive part of the soul believes that whatever is pleasant is good, its attitude towards these terms will resemble Callicles'. Slipshod though it is, Callicles' identification of the pleasant and the good does not, as the minimalist interpretation might have it, entirely assimilate the latter term to the former, and thereby deny "the good" the meaning that it has in ordinary speech and thought. In treating the pleasant as the good, Callicles relies on an account that draws in the other values he cares about – he emphasizes courage, wisdom, liberty and justice, and I have argued that underlying these is a conception of health and virtue as vigor. In Callicles' judgment, at least for as long as he remains confident in it, this account answers the question of what is best and leaves no remainder.

Similar observations apply to the tyrannical man. More than any other soul considered in the *Republic*, his is dominated by one of its psychic parts (see *e.g.*, 573a-b). His conviction that he deserves to get the better of his parents – or of anyone else who has something that will feed his appetites – should therefore represent reasonably well the thinking of the appetitive part of his soul, considered by itself, and when it is not ruled by the other parts (see 573c, 573e-574b). When the appetitive part of the tyrannical man's soul desires some object with great intensity, it conceives of the ruthless pursuit of that object as a testament to the tyrannical man's vigor, perhaps to his courage and his wisdom, and to his natural right to claim the object in virtue of his superior strength and liberty.

Likewise when the appetitive part of the soul pursues, say, drink itself as pleasant and thereby good, the strength of its desire will depend upon the extent to which it believes that pursuing drink itself is something like the right and the wise thing, perhaps a manifestation of its

[1] For some textual support for these thoughts see *Phaedrus* 253e-254b, 255e-256a.

vigor. Its grip on these concepts should be even hazier than Callicles' or the tyrannical man's, given that they are at least capable of forming their views on the basis of more than appearances alone. But insofar as appearances are imitations, likenesses or images of what is wise, courageous, good and so forth, the appetitive part of the soul will rely upon them in evaluating its desiderative objects. The value that it sees in any object it desires will thus be rooted in some larger theory about the good. And the objects that it desires with the greatest intensity will be the ones that provide the greatest substance for its answer to the question of what the good is.

It might seem absurd on its face to claim that the appetitive part of the soul, whose characteristic desires are for food, drink, sex and money, is guided in this manner by conceptions of what is fine and virtuous. The world of its concerns seems so remote from these lofty things that it is hard to see how it could get any grip on them, or what difference it could make if it did. But in addition to the passages I examined in Chapter 4, in which Socrates indicates that fineness and virtue figure in the beliefs and desires of the appetitive part of the soul, there is a passage in Book 3 in which he tells Glaucon that fineness and virtue are in fact there among the kinds of objects to which the appetitive part of the soul attends.

As he rounds out his account of musical education, Socrates explains that the good forms of speech, harmony and rhythm found in songs all follow from and conform to good character, and that where we find good speech, harmony and rhythm, there we will also find grace (see 398c-400e). Because grace and gracelessness are not only in songs, however, but also in all crafts, craft-objects and living bodies, images of character, both good and bad, are also in all of these things (400e-401a, 402b-c). As a result, in the city that Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus are founding in speech, special care must be taken to ensure that crafts, craft-objects and living bodies are graceful. And one function of the city's musical education is to enable its students to

"know the different forms of temperance, courage, generosity, high-mindedness, and all their kindred, and their opposites, too, which are carried around all over the place; and [to] see them in the things in which they are, both themselves and their images (*eikonas*)…" (402c2-6, Reeve's translation).

This passage is among the most mysterious in the *Republic*, and I will not attempt a careful exegesis of it here. It suffices for my purposes to note that according to Socrates, all crafts, craft-objects and bodies contain images of virtue and vice, and one is truly musical only if one can distinguish the content of each such image. Socrates says that musical education trains the reckoning and the spirited parts of the soul, and suggests that it affects the appetitive part only insofar as it prepares the other two parts to rule over it (see 441e-442b). Thus when the appetitive part sees fineness and virtue in the food and drink that it likes, in the bodies to which it is attracted, in money and the things it buys, it is likely to commit regular errors of judgment. But its belief that fineness and virtue are there among the things to which it attends is substantially correct. Intellectually limited thought it may be, the realm in which the appetitive part of the soul sees fineness and virtue is one in which the higher psychic parts of the best people also see them. And although the intellectual reach of the appetitive part does not extend beyond this realm, the good that all parts desire is the same.

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