

Two Perspectives on the Soul in Plato's Republic

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Program: Philosophy

30 credit points

Autumn 2023

Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas

Faculty of the Humanities



Two Perspectives on the Soul in Plato's *Republic*

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Franco V. Trivigno for all his good advice and his patience throughout my writing process. I would also like to thank my partner in life, Oda Malmin, both for her patience and willingness to read through the essay and contributing with valuable feedback.

Introduction

In the *Republic*, there are two seemingly contradictory perspectives on the soul: Book 4 depicts a stable and harmonious soul where its parts demonstrate a friendly and cooperative relationship. Book 9, however, describes the tyrannical soul. Its characterization is one of utter disorder. The rational part of the soul is enslaved, and the non-rational parts fight and devour each other. It appears as the complete opposite to the harmonious soul of Book 4. These two very different descriptions of the soul in the *Republic* seem to create a problem in the interpretation of the dialogue: If the harmonious soul is the ethical ideal, how can we then understand the fact that as soon as it is accomplished, a corruptive process leads into the tyrannical soul?

In this essay I will argue that these two perspectives are, in fact, aspects of the same soul. As a coin with its two sides, the two aspects of the soul in the *Republic* must be understood as portraying the same object.

I will structure the essay in the following way: I will in the first part of the essay examine the harmonious and the tyrannical soul more extensively and then describe how they come to be, as the process is described in the *Republic*. I will show how the harmonious soul is formed through an educational program intended to attune the non-rational parts of the soul to the true and good understanding of the rational part. The tyrannical soul, I will argue, is the endpoint of a process of degeneration originating in a weakness in the aristocratic constitution.

In the second part of the essay, I will demonstrate how understanding the *Republic* through these two perspectives shed light on some interesting features of the dialogue: In 2.1.–2.4. I will use an analysis of the *Laws* by Susan Sauvé Meyer, to establish, first, that the paradigm of virtue displayed in the harmonious soul results in the spirited part of the soul appearing to lack parts of its essential nature. If its relationship with the other soul parts is fundamentally harmonious and friendly, it seems to be missing the feature that distinguishes it in the first place. Secondly, I will show how this feature – the spirited nature characterized by anger, and desire for honor and victory – reappears in the inferior virtuous souls of the timocrat and oligarch during the degeneration leading towards the tyrannical soul.

In 2.5. I will argue that, according to a reading of the *Republic* where the soul is seen through the two perspectives I have highlighted, neither the paradigm of virtue of the

harmonious soul nor the inferior paradigm of virtue of the timocrat and the oligarch are sufficient to fight the unnecessary appetites within us.

Finally, in 2.6. I will suggest that the two different perspectives of the soul come together by understanding the human soul as both connected to our bodily nature and at the same time to the world of our mind. Situated in tension between these two perspectives, the soul, as a result of our human social nature, is susceptible both to climb up towards the ideals of our mind, but also to be pulled down by the force of the appetitive part of the soul.

1. The harmonious and the tyrannical soul

1.1. The harmonious soul

Near the end of Book 4 of the *Republic*, Socrates reaches his definition of justice. This happens after Socrates and his interlocutors together have founded the city,¹ called Kallipolis, meant to serve as an analogy of the soul. By the enlarged picture provided by the analogy, Socrates argues that justice will be “easier to discern.” (368e)² The city is eventually divided into three classes: the guardians who rule the city; the auxiliary class, which is a military class helping the guardians maintain stability both internally and externally; and finally, the producing class, which is every citizen that does not fit in the two other classes. The city is declared complete by Socrates in 427d, and if it is correctly founded, Socrates says he believes it will also be “completely good” (427e). They locate the four virtues: wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice in the city in the passage 427d–434a, where justice is defined as “doing one’s own work and not meddling with what is not one’s own.” (433a–b) Temperance and justice are described to be virtues concerned with the relation between the classes, while courage belongs to the auxiliary class, and wisdom to the guardian class. The result of their investigation is now ready to be applied to the soul.

In the transition from the analogy of the city to the soul, Socrates and his interlocutors seem to agree that the city has been correctly divided. Still, this does not entail that the three classes necessarily have their corresponding parts in the soul. Socrates therefore demonstrates how the soul must be thought of as analogous to the city. First, the structure of the city is tied back to its citizens by the claim that the properties found in a city must be the result of properties found in its citizens in 435e, which brings some intuitive force to the analogy. Then the argument for the three classes of the city being analogous to three distinct parts of the soul is presented. Socrates says that “[i]t is clear that the same thing cannot do or undergo the opposite things; not, at any rate, in the same respect, in relation to the same thing at the same time.” (436a) Plato’s argument follows the traditional form of the law of non-contradiction where a predicate cannot both be true and not true of any given object simultaneously. Socrates employs different examples to show this, and one of these is of an archer drawing his

¹ I will use the term “city” when referring to the state throughout the essay, to be in line with the cited passages from the *Republic*.

² Reeve (2004). I will refer to Reeve’s English translation for the quotes in this essay.

bow. From Socrates' explanation it becomes clear that the archer's hands cannot be referred to as one single noun when explaining what it means to draw a bow. To give an accurate description of this action, each hand must be referred to individually, where "one hand pushes [the bow] away, while the other draws it towards him." (439b) If not, there would be a contradiction where the same thing, the hands, are performing contradictory actions, pushing and pulling. Socrates says that we must see the soul in the same way. When being thirsty, one can at the same time have a part of the soul stopping the desire to have a drink from materializing, and the retracting force will be a result of rational calculation. (439c–e) Hence, we have a first distinction of the soul, in which the first is the appetitive part, which is "friend to certain ways of being filled and certain pleasures" (439d), and the second is the rational part – the one "with which it calculates" (439d). Next, Socrates distinguishes the spirited part – "the one with which we feel anger" (439e) – from the appetitive part. Because the spirited part, in its nature, exhibits what seems like desires similar to the appetitive part, it might mistakenly be categorized as the same. Socrates, though, shows that not only is it a separate part of the soul, but it also tends to side with reason, rather than appetite. Through some examples, Socrates demonstrates situations of a conflict between someone's appetitive desires and rational analysis, during which the spirited part will tend to reproach and get angry with the desiring tendency. For instance, in the famous example of Leontius, the spirited part clearly sides with reason in its rebuke of the appetitive desire to look at some corpses from a public execution. Finally, to make sure the spirited element in the soul is not merely a part of the rational element, there is a distinction of these two parts. Socrates and Glaucon agree that spirit is easily observable in infants and animals, while both clearly lack reason. In addition, a passage from Homer is cited, where we see that reason rebukes spirit (441b–c).

Socrates and his interlocuter Glaucon seem well satisfied with the proofs for the tripartite distinction and how it matches the parts of the city, and Socrates continues to show how the soul in the same manner as the city can be harmonized by possessing the four virtues. Due to the richness of these following passages and to get a flavor of the description of the harmonious relationship between the parts of the soul, I will include two larger passages from the final part of Book 4 in full: 441e–442e and 443c–443e. I will call them T1 and T2 respectively.

T1:

SOCRATES: But we surely have not forgotten that the city was just because each of the three classes in it does its own work.

GLAUCON: I do not think we have.

SOCRATES: We should also bear in mind, then, that in the case of each one of us as well, the one in whom each of the elements does its own job will be just and do his own job.

GLAUCON: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then isn't it appropriate for the rationally calculating element to rule, since it is really wise and exercises foresight on behalf of the whole soul; and for the spirited kind to obey it and be its ally?

GLAUCON: Of course.

SOCRATES: Now, as we were saying, isn't it a mixture of musical and physical training that makes these elements concordant, tightening and nurturing the first with fine words and learning, while relaxing, soothing, and making gentle the second by means of harmony and rhythm?

GLAUCON: Yes, exactly.

SOCRATES: And these two elements, having been trained in this way and having truly learned their own jobs and been educated, will be put in charge of the appetitive element—the largest one in each person's soul and, by nature, the most insatiable for money. They will watch over it to see that it does not get so filled with the so-called pleasures of the body that it becomes big and strong, and no longer does its own job but attempts to enslave and rule over the classes it is not fitted to rule, thereby overturning the whole life of anyone in whom it occurs.

GLAUCON: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: And wouldn't these two elements also do the finest job of guarding the whole soul and body against external enemies—the one by deliberating, the other by fighting, following the ruler, and using its courage to carry out the things on which the former had decided?

GLAUCON: Yes, they would.

SOCRATES: I imagine, then, that we call each individual courageous because of the latter part—that is, when the element of his that is spirited in kind preserves through pains and pleasures the pronouncements of reason about what should inspire terror and what should not.

GLAUCON: That's right.

SOCRATES: But we call him wise, surely, because of the small part that rules in him, makes those pronouncements, and has within it the knowledge of what is advantageous—both for each part and for the whole, the community composed of all three.

GLAUCON: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: What about temperance? Isn't he temperate because of the friendly and concordant relations between these same things: namely, when both the ruler and its two subjects share the belief that the rationally calculating element should rule, and do not engage in faction against it?

GLAUCON: Temperance in a city and in a private individual is certainly nothing other than that.

SOCRATES: But surely, now, a person will be just because of what we have so often described and in the way we have so often described.

This section of Book 4 displays a successful relationship between the rational and the two non-rational parts of the soul, exhibiting all four virtues. The small part of the soul, reason, is not only put in charge of the appetitive part with the aid of the spirited part, they together are also set to “watch over it”, and “guard” the whole soul. “What is advantageous – both for each part and the whole” is retained, and the three parts are described as a “community”. Especially in the description of temperance the relationship between the three parts is characterized using terms that display collectivity while still being individually beneficial for each of the parts. It is “friendly and concordant” and they all “share the belief that the rationally calculating element should rule”. The phrase “friendly and concordant” is also used earlier in Book 4, when temperance in the soul is first described at 430e. In this description temperance is also characterized as a type of orderliness, in the form of “mastery of certain sorts of pleasures and appetites.” (430e)

T1, as well as these last passages just quoted, is a representative example of how the relationship between the soul parts is described in Book 4. The rational part with the aid of the spirited part is portrayed as having the capacity to be in control, and in such a state, the appetitive part is not limited to a submissive relationship to the other soul parts, it is accepting reason as the ruler, and it is in a friendly relationship with both the rational and the spirited part. This behavior of the appetitive part, characterized as compliance rather than mere obedience, gives the relationship a flavor of domestication. It seems to be engaged in a long-term relationship with the other soul parts, in which these behavioral traits seem to have been habituated. The appetitive part is not displayed as being on the leash of spirit and reason, rather it is compliant and agrees in the question of the rational part being the one that rules.³ The language of agreeableness in this passage makes a fitting backdrop for the following part of the description of the virtuous soul.

Directly after the passage T1, Socrates puts the virtuous soul to some tests of common descriptions of virtue. These tests are meant to remove any remaining doubts about the force of justice, and its ability to produce “men and cities of the sort [they] have described.” (443b) If justice in the soul is compatible with descriptions of justice that is commonly used in society, they have “hit upon the origin and pattern of justice.” (443b–c) In the tests, a person embodying a just soul is exposed to opportunities for embezzlement, theft, betraying friends

³ Wilberding has convincingly argued that due to the appetitive part being described as exhibiting moderation and in a friendly relationship with reason, we should accept that also the appetitive part is at least indirectly subjected to some parts of the training described in Book 2 and 3. See Wilberding (2012), p. 128–130.

or state, breach of agreement, adultery, disrespect of parents, or neglect of gods (442e–443a). Socrates and Glaucon agree that a person with a just soul could not be inclined to this sort of behavior, it would rather “be more characteristic of any other sort of person than of this one.” (443a) They also agree that by this they can now declare that they have hit upon “the origin and pattern of justice.”

The impression of justice as an enabler of the soul parts coming together in friendly concordance, forming a well-ordered structure where reason rules through the acceptance of the non-rational parts, is further strengthened by the passage 443c–443e:

T2:

SOCRATES: And in truth, justice is, it seems, something of this sort (each doing its own part). Yet it is not concerned with someone’s doing his own job on the outside. On the contrary, it is concerned with what is inside; with himself, really, and the things that are his own. It means that he does not allow the elements in him each to do the job of some other, or the three sorts of elements in his soul to meddle with one another. Instead, he regulates well what is really his own, rules himself, puts himself in order, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three elements together, just as if they were literally the three defining notes of an octave—lowest, highest, and middle—as well as any others that may be in between. He binds together all of these and, from having been many, becomes entirely one, temperate and harmonious. Then and only then should he turn to action, whether it is to do something concerning the acquisition of wealth or concerning the care of his body, or even something political, or concerning private contracts. In all these areas, he considers and calls just and fine the action that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and wisdom the knowledge that oversees such action; and he considers and calls unjust any action that destroys this harmony, and ignorance the belief that oversees it.

The first thing to notice in T2 is the description of the inner workings of the virtuous person. This person, says Socrates, is one that “regulates well what is really his own, rules himself, puts himself in order, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three elements together”. This person “binds together all of these and, from having been many, becomes entirely one, temperate and harmonious”. By the rational part’s capacity to regulate the whole soul – which makes him able to “rule himself” – he “becomes his own friend” with harmonized soul parts. Rather than a relationship of domination and submission, what is displayed here is a relationship of parts with differing qualities, occupied with different tasks, but with the rational part in charge, with the approval of the two non-rational parts.

Secondly, there is a prioritization of the inner over the outer spheres of the person. The just person is clearly able to navigate the external world through making wise and

knowledgeable decisions about the actions he involves himself with. T2 describes the interaction of the soul as it faces the outside world, as well as the impressions the outside world can have on the soul. If the soul is in a harmonious state, it will show resistance against the catabolic effects the outside world might have on its harmony, but this requires a previous anabolic process of assimilation through education. As I mentioned above, the tests of the virtuous soul measured against common descriptions of virtue demonstrated the success of the soul in displaying justice also in everyday terms, and this seems to be a necessary move in order to harmonize the definition of the just soul with justice as it is commonly applied. That is, if the just person, as Socrates has described her, will act justly in commonly used terms, it seems like the structure that has been created within must be related to justice as it is commonly used. But another important aspect of placing the soul in a position where it is interacting with the external world, is to emphasize that there is a capacity in the outside world of shaking the soul out of a harmonious state by engaging in activities of a bad kind. If someone engages in activities in the external world that nurture the wrong desires and beliefs in the soul, this will have an effect on the soul, and this is especially important for impressionable children. Because of this, it is important that the significance of the habitat in which the soul develops, is taken into consideration.

There is a large and ongoing debate on whether the *Republic* should be read as a political work, and I will not seek an answer to this here. It is, nevertheless, important to note that the individual that becomes virtuous, in Plato's view, does so in a milieu in the form of a society of some sort, and that this involves an understanding of both *interpsychic* and *intrapsychic* relations, as Jonathan Lear describes it.⁴ I will further discuss this in the next section, where I examine how the soul has come to be as it is described in this section, through the important role of education in Book 2 and 3.

1.2. Achieving the harmonious soul

In Book 2 and 3, the educational program for the guardians⁵ of Kallipolis is established. The delineation of the educational program takes on the appearance of an answer to Glaucon's challenge to the basic model of Kallipolis, where only basic needs were covered. A basic

⁴ Lear (1997), p. 61.

⁵ At this point of the education, both what will be the guardian class and the auxiliary class, are included. As they have not been separated yet, I refer to them collectively.

model of the city will not accommodate for the conventional needs of human beings, and therefore will not be an adequate analogy of the soul. Socrates accepts Glaucon's challenge and seems confident that he can overcome it by means of education. The educational program is initially introduced as using "the one that has been discovered over a long period of time—physical training for bodies and musical training for the soul" (376d), but this is later corrected. In 411e–412a it becomes clear that both physical and musical training are mainly for the soul, especially the spirited and rational part of the soul, "so that they might be harmonized with each other" (411e). Physical training is therefore not for the purpose of the body but will gain from the training "as a byproduct" (411e).

Under the heading of musical training, we find telling of stories. Both false and true ones will be used in the educational program. Because of the vulnerability of the young who are "especially malleable and best takes on whatever pattern one wishes to impress on it" (377a–b), the stories must be shaped in a specific manner, and the storytellers must, thus, be supervised. The idea here seems to be that the earliest impressions of what we are told about the world will create the form in which subsequent narratives about the world will be interpreted. It seems in these descriptions like the mind, in the same way as a living organism – like for instance how a tree will bear with its morphological impressions of early climatic conditions throughout its life – will be calibrated in a way which has some degree of permanency. Socrates says that "the beliefs [the young] absorb at that age are difficult to erase and tend to become unalterable." (378e) Especially emphasized is the portrayal of the gods, which should "whether in epic, lyric, or in a tragedy [...] be represented as [they are]", which is "really good" (379a). Being of such a nature they can neither be the origin of the bad things in the world, nor can they then be the "cause of all things, but only of good ones." (380c)

These regulations, created around poetry and the portrayal of gods, seem to be a way to illustrate that confusion or untrue stories of what is good and true at an early point in life, will make it difficult or unlikely to ever be able to see what is in fact good and true. As the early climatic condition of a tree, like it being bent or impaired somehow, will stay with the tree for the rest of its life, so will false and bad ideas about the world linger in a human being. If the gods are allowed to be portrayed possessing bad human tendencies, as they sometimes are in Hesiod and Homer, they will nurture the bad impulses and desires in us. This will not only bolster our bad tendencies, but it will also legitimize us cultivating them. Our minds must, in other words, be molded in line with what is good and true, but for it to settle and for it to be possible to act on, our feelings must also be the correct ones in the first place. If they are not, the chances that someone will conduct good actions in line with what is good, is not very

likely. This training is needed for a person to be courageous and temperate, which is what is needed for this person to act in accordance with the rational part of the soul.⁶

In addition to poetry, the educational program is concerned with music. Socrates says: “Rhythm and harmony permeate the innermost element of the soul, affect it more powerfully than anything else and bring it grace” (401d). Therefore, musical training is important for the emotional regulation and constructing the correct direction in our emotional life. Socrates analyzes the three different components of music: speech, harmony, and rhythm. Speech does not differ from the conclusions of poetry (398d), and rhythms should be of a simple and pure nature, simulating “the rhythms of life that is ordered and courageous” (399e). The melodies should be the ones that “best imitate the voices of temperate and courageous men in good fortune and in bad.” (399c) Music is thus explained as functioning according to the same pattern as poetry but seems more directed at our emotional life than our actions.

The last part the educational program is concerned with, is physical training. The physical training is only to some extent concerned with the state of the body. It prescribes regulations of diet, of exercise, and the practice of medicine. But it is made clear that focusing on the body is mostly a means to not corrupt the virtue of the soul. If the soul is in a good state, this will also ensure a good body (403d). Too much attention to bodily needs will create distractions from the nurture and care of the soul. Physical training should be “simple and good” (404b), and diet should be uncomplicated and based on what is most available (404c). Medicine is practiced only when strictly necessary, says Socrates. Many diseases are the results of bad souls and bad cultures rather than being real diseases (405c, 407b–c).

There are numerous mentions in the *Republic* of people having their set position in society through belonging to a certain class, which implicates that people have, at least to some degree, a set nature in Plato’s view. But they nevertheless seem capable of developing into this nature in different ways. If they engage in activities and are exposed to cultural artifacts that promote the good, they will develop into the best version of themselves within the limits of their natural abilities. Especially important in this process is the idea that we must be molded around true knowledge of the good, in order for the non-rational parts to act in accordance with it. The educational program is described as self-reinforcing in the city, because good people who receive a proper education will educate the next generation even better than they themselves were educated. And in such a way it will “go on growing

⁶ That this is achieved through the educational program, is established in 410d–411a.

cyclically.” (424a) It seems like the educational program ensures that there will be a continuous progression towards an increasing amount of harmony.

Another important point about the educational program is that it is not an education of the rational part of the soul. The educational program at this stage is still concerned with children, without a developed ability for rational thoughts. It is concerned with the rational part solely in its aim of aligning the non-rational parts with the rational. The education of the non-rational parts will not exceed this stage, but they are now receptive of the true knowledge about the good, coming from the rational part.⁷ The specific training of the rational part of the soul is the subject of the education of the philosophers in Book 7. The training at this earlier stage is about establishing the correct directedness, such that the guardian “will welcome reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with himself.” (402a) Reason must, nevertheless, be understood as present in a society in which an educational program of this sort is established. When locating the four virtues in Book 4, wisdom is the first to be found, and it is described as the kind of knowledge belonging to some of its citizens – the complete guardians – that does “not deliberate about some particular thing in the city, but about the city as a whole, and about how its internal relations and its relations with others will be the best possible.” (428c–d) Reason must be present in order for the educational program to have its aim of alignment. The educational program itself can in this way be understood as the rational part of the soul made into a spine of society, and through protecting it, and by the young being guided by it, stability and harmony are ensured.

Finally, for the individual soul, an important lesson from the educational program seems to be that the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul need a strong connection to the rational part in order to be stabilized and align with the good. But the rational part is not properly developed in the child, and therefore reason must be made available externally to it. This is what the educational program provides, and this is why it is an integral part of the educational program that the child is exposed to good and true musical training. When the child grows older, the calibrating effects on the non-rational parts provided by the education will make sense to her, because the rational part in her own soul will come to the same conclusion. The educational program can therefore be understood as a harmonizing procedure in a human life, where understanding is a symbiosis of realizing what is true and good and at the same time being susceptible to do so. It enables individuals to reach a unified self as

⁷ Bobonich (2002), p. 331–332.

adults, where the capacity of the non-rational parts of the soul to take control over the rational part is highly reduced.

1.3. The tyrannical soul

In Book 9 Plato again describes the soul, but this time – in contrast to the harmonious soul of Book 4 – as the endpoint of a process of degeneration. To illustrate what it means to claim that it is profitable to live an unjust life with the appearance of being just,⁸ Socrates creates an image to illustrate the soul. The image is of three beings, of three different species, found within the shape of a human being. The first is a “many-headed beast, with a ring of tame and savage animal heads” (588c). The second and third is a lion and a human being. It becomes clear that believing that injustice pays, is the same as feeding the many-headed beast and the lion, encouraging their growth, while the human being inside will be left to starve. The human being is “dragged along wherever either of the two others lead” (588e–589a). The rational part, described in such a way, seems to fall victim to the desires of the worst sides of the non-rational soul parts, and serves in an instrumental way to whichever is in a dominant position. These sides of the two non-rational parts will engage in a battle with each other, where they are left “to bite and fight and devour one another.” (589a) Importantly, it is “a small part, the most wicked and most insane [that] is master” (577d) in the tyrannical soul, not the whole of the non-rational parts. This means that it is not only the rational part that is enslaved, rather, the tyrannical soul is “full of slavery and illiberality, with those same parts of it enslaved” (577d). “Those same parts” in this context refers to the preceding description of the analogous city in which Glaucon suggests that “pretty much the whole population, and the best part of it, is shamefully and wretchedly enslaved” (577c). The tyrannical soul, then, seems to be ruled by savage parts of the many-headed beast, but also the spirited part of the soul seems to be out of control and is represented here by the lion. The tyrannical soul is further described as “full of disorder and regret” (577e), “poor and insatiable” (578a), and full of “wailing, groaning, lamenting, [and] painful suffering” (578a).⁹

⁸ This claim is the argument presented by Glaucon in Book 2, where he says “[n]o one believes justice to be a good thing when it is kept private, since whenever either person thinks he can do injustice with impunity, he does it” (360c), which is one of the major arguments Socrates sets out to disprove in the *Republic*.

⁹ This description is of the city, but in the subsiding description of the soul Socrates clearly refers to this description when he says: “Do you think *such things* are more common in anyone than in this tyrannical man.” (578a, my italics)

This illustrative picture sums up the image of a person with a tyrannical soul as it is presented in Book 9. The savage part of the many-headed beast is alluded to earlier in the description of the tyrannical soul, where Socrates says: “there are appetites of a terrible, savage and lawless kind in everyone—even in those of us who seem to be entirely moderate.” (572b) These certain types of appetites are the ones responsible for the foundation of the tyrannical nature, because they can “implant a powerful passion” (572e) which they will not only foster, but also nurture and guard until it reaches madness. In this state, the tyrannical passion will eradicate “any belief or appetites [...] that are regarded as good or are still moved by shame” (573b). This state is compared to sleep, where reason also can be seen to release its rule. In our dreams, the raging force of the “bestial and savage element [...] comes alive” (571c).

There seems to be a weakness in the democratically constituted soul that enables this process to take place, and if this weakness is utilized by these lawless appetites, the soul can be corrupted into tyranny. The rule of reason is in a tyrannical state totally abolished, and it is a rather long and complicated process of degeneration that conditions the soul for such a turn to take place. I will in the next section take a brief look at this process.

1.4. The path to tyranny

The depiction of the tyrannical soul in Book 9, which I have outlined above, is the endpoint of a degenerative process, not a spontaneous occurrence. In Book 8, Socrates describes this stage-by-stage process of degeneration from aristocracy to tyranny. On its way from the outer points of virtue – the aristocratic in the good end and the tyrannical in the bad – the corruption runs through timocracy, oligarchy and democracy, with an accompanying description of the corruption of the soul of the individual.

It is worth noticing that the starting point of the corruption is aristocracy. Plato has had Socrates build up the city of Kallipolis from its basic constituents all the way through the lives and educations of the philosopher kings. But now this aristocratic city, and the soul of the philosopher, is what disintegrates. The degeneration of the city and soul is told in parallel, but here I will mainly look at how the soul degenerates. The only exception is the first step, where the city degenerates from aristocracy to timocracy, a process one needs to understand in order to comprehend the steps leading to degeneration of the soul.

The step from aristocracy into what Socrates names a “timocracy or timarchy” (545b) – the rule of honor – is the first of the four steps. *Prima facie* one might think that there is

something in the auxiliary class itself that initiates the corruption, but such an intuition receives an early rejection when Socrates explains the origin of the degeneration in 545d–546c. He illustrates this through a tale of a prayer to the Muses, as if in the hands of Homer. This passage informs us that even if the city has a stabilized structure, there is nevertheless an inherent instability of “everything that comes to be” (546a). Plato draws our attention to the impermanency of any structure in the physical world. The physical world we participate in cannot sustain eternally without deterioration, and some flaw must sooner or later appear. One way to think about this is the passing of generations. Even if the governmental and educational system would at some point reach perfection, the individuals ruling a perfect city will, nevertheless, be vulnerable say to illness, natural disasters, or simply passing away naturally, and must therefore at some point be replaced. In the natural variance between the former and the new generation of rulers, weaknesses might occur. As the system embodies this inevitable connection to the physical world it inherits the vulnerability connected to it as well. The weakness described by the muses is the failure of the ruling class to “ascertain the periods of good fertility and infertility” (546b), and people with an inferior connection to true knowledge and the good will be part of the ruling class. This will lead to declining attention to musical and physical education, which, in turn, initiates the degeneration.

This realization creates a crucial turn of events and is clearly at odds with the idea of Book 4, namely, the idea that a reasonably good city, through generations, will evolve cyclically towards more stability and towards the good, declared in 424a. The degeneration shows how the opposite might also occur. A city with an aristocratic constitution can step by step lose its virtue and might at the outer end evolve into a tyranny. Both Socrates and Glaucon, nonetheless, endorse the tale of the Muses and the result “is that the constitution [is pulled] toward moneymaking and the acquisition of land, houses, gold, and silver.” (547b) By the pull on the one side from the former rulers in the aristocracy as well as the pull on the other side by the new faction guided by moneymaking and acquisition of property, the result is timocracy. In other words, a natural decline in the aristocratic city stimulates the rise of values other than those accepted in the aristocracy – values towards which people of the producer and auxiliary classes will be drawn.

Correspondingly, in the case of the individual soul, there is a similar description. Socrates describes a child of a good father, but his mother experiences feelings of being at a disadvantage compared to her friends. The child must listen to his mother’s complaints about the father’s lack of ambition and interest in money, and from the pull from the differing position of his parents, he develops into the middle position with a timocratic soul. It is said

of the father that he “lives in a city that is not politically well governed” (549c). This seems to link the individual to the city in the sense that living in a destabilized city is causally relevant for individual degeneration. The timocratic soul grows out of having these two factors influence his life, where on the one side, the rational part, and on the other, the non-rational parts, are nourished. The timocratically souled person finally settles in the middle position.

The remaining degradations follow somewhat in the same pattern of generational decay, where the son of a father with a soul of the previous type grows into the next type of soul. Socrates describes the oligarchic soul as the one of a son that has a timocratic father as an ideal. But the father is cheated by his fellow citizens, and he loses all his possessions. The son experiences a childhood in poverty, and because of the fear he suffers in this situation, he abandons the path where his father serves as an ideal. He becomes obsessed by money-making and turns money into his new ideal. The soul of the oligarch through this process grows into disunity. Despite the fact that he has developed a cautious nature out of his concern for his highly treasured possessions, which enables him to fight his unnecessary pleasures, his soul is not united. On the contrary, his oligarchic nature, Socrates says, “makes the rational and spirited elements sit down beneath it, one on either side, and be slaves.” (553c) The lack of unity seen in the oligarch resembles the one I described earlier in the tyrannic soul. The many-headed beast is fed, but in the soul of the oligarch it is its tame appetites rather than the savage ones that are nourished. The other soul parts are used instrumentally to attain the goal of acquiring more money, by having the rational part use all its capacities for this aim, and the spirited part will not “admire or honor anything except wealth and wealthy people” (553d). Feeding the savage appetites would prevent the goal of the oligarch, and he is therefore able to keep them in check, which means that some amount of virtue is still retained in this type of life.

The democratic soul grows out of being exposed both to his oligarchic father, with his capacity to allow only appetites that are regarded as necessary, and on the other hand by the company of people in the city who promote and engage with “multifarious pleasures of every degree of complexity and sort”. (559d) A soul of this kind is certainly subject to the strong pull of the unnecessary pleasures, but still has some of the cautious nature of his father retained in his nature. The result is a long-lasting tug of war between the parts, which ends in him awarding an equal weight to each of them, which leads the person with a democratic soul to “always surrender [...] rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot” (561b). The democratic soul has settled in a middle position where all types of appetites are given equal amount of weight.

Also, in the final step of the degeneration – the one from a democratic soul to a tyrannical soul – this is the case. As in the former steps, the soul of the tyrant is the result of having a father with a soul of the preceding stage of corruption while simultaneously having another external source of influence. In this case the latter source seems to consist of lawless citizens who are driven by the strongest appetites in them and regard the acceptance of these appetites as equal to the more moderate ones, as freedom (572d–e). When observing that the coming-to-be tyrant is also pulled in the direction of his family, who still retain some moderation through their valuing also of the more benign appetites, they strike. They plant a strong desire in him that can attract and utilize the power of other unsatisfied desires, which will drive him to madness (572e–573b). In this state he rids himself of all appetites that have some decency left.

As Tad Brennan has noticed, the process of degeneration seems to follow a system where what is regarded as an essential value in one constitution, contains some part of what will be essential in the next step of degeneration. As he says, “[t]he timocrat values honor, but since the shortest path to honor is the amassing of wealth, the timocracy turns into an oligarchy.”¹⁰ There is then, an inherent capacity for degeneration, even in the aristocratic soul. Our soul, seen from the perspective of tyranny, makes it apparent how the capacity of the degeneration is a result of this capacity in us, where the root of an inferior level of virtue is already present in the superior level. Even a virtuous and good constitution has within it the capacity to corrupt, and the consequence of this seems to be that the work needed to keep the system in check, is never completed. Seen from the perspective of the harmonious soul, education, and the protection of it, seems like a sufficient solution. In the perspective of the tyrannical soul, the virtuous can be torn down.

In the next parts of this essay, I will look at how this opposition in the *Republic* can be understood. If the education of the guardians does not provide a sufficient guarantee for stability through a cyclically improving system, because there is a corruptive process waiting in the end of it, Plato seems to leave us in a somewhat insecure position. This problem seems to require an answer.

¹⁰ Brennan (2012), p. 112

2. Two perspectives, one soul

2.1. A problem created by the structure of the *Republic*

As I have tried to demonstrate, the human soul is presented from two different perspectives in the *Republic*. On the one side there is a happy and unified soul. Through a rigorous educational program, community between the soul parts has been established and the soul parts coexist on friendly terms and together form a unified whole. This is the ideal soul, a product of reason and intelligence, who is able to construct and calculate the components needed for an optimally functioning soul. But it is, nevertheless, a construction of our minds.

On the other side, we are presented with a wretched, unhappy, unfree, and completely disunified soul. The non-rational soul parts fight each other and seek to enslave the rational part. When the soul is seen from the perspective of the tyrannical soul, the appetites increasingly become valued for their contribution to the functioning of the soul, and they will in the end usurp control over it. This happens gradually, where the more benign appetites are the first to receive their gratification. But in the end, larger bits of the appetitive part will gather round a maddening passion launching the whole structure out of control.

The structural feature of the *Republic*, where the tyrannical soul is presented after the lengthy process of building up the harmonious seems important as to how we should understand the relevance of the two perspectives on the soul. If the educational program is the important feature that makes possible a harmonized soul, and if it is in fact meant to do so, then one can ask why it is not presented as a remedy also for the danger represented by the process of degeneration itself? If the educational program alone could serve as a sufficient response to the dangers of destabilization, one would expect that the threat posed by the lawless appetites would receive an explicit treatment in the educational program. But the structure of the *Republic* reveals that what in fact happens, is that the degeneration of the soul starts where the education is regarded complete. Immediately after the philosophers have finished their education at 541b, we are guided straight into the degeneration. The two perspectives stand back-to-back at this point, and the result of the education thus serves as the starting point of the degeneration.¹¹ Also, in the end of this process of degeneration it

¹¹ I regard the education of the philosophers (the rational part) and their discovering of true knowledge as the main achievement of Books 5–7. But, as I demonstrated in section 1.2., reason is already present in the

becomes evident that the threat posed by the lawless appetites becomes explicit by observing the soul from the perspective of the tyrannical soul. It seems to be a threat that is difficult to get a clear picture of when seen through the perspective of the harmonious soul.

In the next section, I will investigate how we can understand these different perspectives by observing how they seem to represent different paradigms of virtue.

2.2. Two models for stability

To understand how these two perspectives on the soul work in the *Republic*, I will make use of an analysis by Susan Sauvé Meyer, of a comparable situation in Plato's later dialogue, the *Laws*. In her *Commentary in Plato: Laws 1 and 2*, she observes that there are two different paradigms of virtue appearing in the discussion between the Athenian and his two interlocutors Clinias and Megillus. She notes that under what she calls the *victory-model*, a person is in an enduring battle towards various pleasures and pains, and it is a matter of fact about the virtuous person that he or she never leaves the battle ground. Being virtuous according to this description includes repressing one part of the self to the benefit of another part. Under the *agreement-model*, on the other hand, all the different motivational features of the soul can exist in a harmonious relationship by cultivation through an educational program inculcated from childhood. Motivational features like pleasures and pains are possible to train, and if this is done correctly, the motivational apparatus of the soul will together accumulate actions that match justice.¹²

These two models of Meyer seem to have some differences and some similarities with the harmonious and tyrannical perspectives on the soul in the *Republic*. One difference is that the structure in which the different models appear in the two dialogues, does not align. In the *Laws* there is a progressive structure. It is here demonstrated how the agreement model should replace the victory model, and this creates a natural progression that makes sense if the purpose is for the interlocutors and the readers of the text to follow along and be convinced that the agreement-model supersedes the victory-model. As I described in the previous

educational program of Books 2 and 3. If the education of the non-rational parts should be aligned with reason, the conditions for this alignment must already be in place in the education in Books 2 and 3. If not, it would have nothing for which it could adjust its aim. It is in this sense that I regard reason to be a part of the harmonious soul, and hence, the perspective of the harmonious soul and the tyrannical soul stand back-to-back.

¹² Meyer, p. 162. Meyer argues that the Athenian is conscious of this distinction and utilizes his interlocutors' acceptance of the "victory model" only in an instrumental manner, in order for them to progress to the "agreement model". However, Meyer says that the Athenian never makes the transparent move of discarding the victory model, which would reveal its instrumental use.

section, the *Republic* firstly presents the harmonious perspective on the soul, while subsequently, the tyrannical perspective is presented as a rupture that breaks when the harmonious soul is at its peak. It is in fact dismantling the model one expects to be the answer to the question of what it would mean for the soul to be just. The importance of this structural feature of the *Republic* is a topic throughout this essay. But there is also another feature that both separates and connects the two dialogues, namely how the paradigms of virtue in the *Laws* and the perspectives on the soul in the *Republic* can be seen in parallel.

Meyer's agreement model of virtue seems to match the perspective of the harmonious soul which is described as an end-point of correct education in Book 4. Cultivation of the non-rational soul parts is here what creates the correct directedness towards reason, and there will be no need to protest its rule as they are all aligned. The education as it is described in the *Laws*, for instance in 653b, emphasizes this important point of education of Book 2 and 3 in the *Republic*. The Athenian says:

If pleasure and liking and pain and hatred develop correctly in our souls when we are not yet able to grasp the account, and when we do grasp the account they agree with it because they have been correctly trained by appropriate habits, this agreement is virtue in its entirety. (653b)¹³

The agreement model and the perspective of the harmonious soul seem pretty much in line in this respect, and the harmonious soul, just as the agreement model, also seems intended as a paradigm of virtue. How the victory model should be understood as somehow present in the *Republic* is, however, less obvious. I will therefore use most of the remainder of this essay to investigate this relationship.

The victory model of virtue is related to the perspective of the tyrannical soul in the sense that it is attentive to a potential uproar from the appetitive part. There seems to be no expectation that the non-rational soul-parts can be fully tamed through education. However, the victory model as it is presented by Clinias in 626e,¹⁴ seems to have a rather wide scope. Both Clinias and Megillus, with whom the Athenian is in dialogue, are characters meant to represent members of warrior cultures that furnish the soul with a strategy originating from their culture (625c–626e). When warrior culture is applied to the internal struggle of an individual, its operational feature will be one in which one part of the self can conquer another part. What is regarded bad, in other words, must be fought by striking it down. To

¹³ Meyer (2015). I will refer to Meyers's English translation for the quotes from the *Laws* in this essay.

¹⁴ Meyer (2015)

reach virtue, in the victory model, is tantamount to domination of what is regarded bad. This is a rather general model and relative to the values or parts inserted into the model. It could be body versus soul, for instance, where the soul strikes down on impulses from the body, like the way soul relates to body in the *Phaedo*.¹⁵ In the framework of the *Republic*, with its three soul parts, it could also mean that the spirited part is in control, like in a timocratic soul. Within the ethical framework of the *Republic*, however, it seems to mean that the spirited part of the soul sides with reason and uses its protective dog-like nature (376a) to guard the rational part from desires of the appetitive part – controlling them by force. The presence of such a structure in the *Republic* is what I will investigate in the next section. I will argue that the presence of the spirited part of the soul in the way described above, where it uses its protective dog-like nature, seems to disappear as the harmonious soul develops, but that this feature reappears in the degeneration leading to the tyrannical soul.

Addressing whole parts of the soul in the *Republic*, however, seems too general. It is necessary to understand how the different types of motivational features within the parts of the soul work, because different types respond in different ways, which is a characteristic shared by all the parts of the soul in the *Republic*. Many of the types of appetites we find in the appetitive part of the soul, for example, seem to be responsive to education,¹⁶ while another type – the lawless kind – is immune and seems capable of stirring up the other appetites. Most relevant for the victory-model of virtue, however, seems to be the spirited part. I will therefore first discuss some features of the spirited part, before I return to some difficulties of the appetitive part in the subsequent section.

2.3. The spirited part of the soul and the role of anger, victory, and honor

As I described in 1.1., Socrates introduces the spirited part of the soul as a necessary component to understand how we deal with the appetitive part. The division of the soul into three parts and how it can be understood as a feature in Plato's philosophy diachronically, is a controversial subject, most of which I will not engage with here. But one important aspect of this controversy is a major development from the discussion in the *Phaedo* of a non-divided

¹⁵ See 66c and 81b. Louis-André Dorian made me aware of these passages. See Dorian (2012), p. 39.

¹⁶ There are multiple indications of this in the *Republic*. For instance, the passage I refer to in section 2.5., 571b–c, describes some appetites as lawless, which necessarily indicates that others are responsive to law. As well, as I referred to in footnote 3, Wilberding (2012) has demonstrated how the appetite part of the soul shows moderation and can be in a friendly relationship with reason, which indicates it having been subjected to education somehow.

soul being in opposition to the body, and to different parts of the soul being what is believed to be in opposition to each other, in the *Republic*. And following from this, as Louis-André Dorion has noted, how this development in Plato's understanding of human psychology proves a shift where the concept of *enkrateia* – self-control or self-mastery – is now applied to the soul.¹⁷ Mastering or controlling oneself is in the *Republic* a question of investigating opposing forces in the soul, and evidently, it has at this point become acceptable for Plato to talk about the soul as being in conflict with itself.

An indication that Plato understands *enkrateia* in a way where a strong notion of control is necessary, is found in the introduction of the spirited part of the soul in Book 4. As I mentioned above, Socrates tells the story of Leontius in the tripartition of the soul, where the appetites of Leontius pull him towards some corpses from a public execution outside the city walls. His anger towards himself in this situation is used as a proof of the existence of the spirited part. Socrates says that “the story suggests that anger sometimes makes war against the appetites.” (440a). In the next passages, there are also a few more general situations described. If someone has acted unjustly, for instance, the spirited part of the soul of this person will remain unaroused, even if “he suffers hunger, cold, or the like at the hands of someone whom he believes to be inflicting this on him justly” (440c). In other words, his spirited part is tracking the prescriptions of justice by the rational part. Him suffering in this situation is just, and his spirited part is unaroused because it is attuned to the rational part's analysis of it as such. In a final example we are told that the spirited part's inclination in a situation where the person is treated unjustly, is reacting with anger – again, in line with the rational part. To see justice fulfilled, the spirited part will endure suffering, “not ceasing its noble efforts until it achieves its purpose” (440c–d). When justice is restored, the spirited part “is called back by the reason alongside it and becomes gentle” (440d).

It seems, with these three cases, that the spirited part displays three different traits: in the case of Leontius, the spirited part rebukes the appetitive part; in the case of someone being treated harshly, but in line with justice, spirit remains calm; while in the third case, where the person is treated unjustly, the spirited part is aroused and will cause the person to seek actions that will restore justice, and if accomplished, it will withdraw and become gentle. In these descriptions we see that in two of the three cases, the function of the spirited part is to display

¹⁷ Dorion claims that it is evident in the *Charmides* that Plato regards it as absurd to use *enkrateia* reflexively, but that a development in this view is traceable to the *Gorgias* and sees its full use in the *Republic*. See Dorion (2012), p. 33–35.

anger, in the first internally, in the second externally. Especially, the first case displays an operational feature that involves striking down in order for the soul to reach virtue.

This is, however, an exception in Book 4 of the *Republic*. As I have demonstrated, the relationship between the soul parts described in the harmonious soul in Book 4, is rather one of communion and friendship between all the parts of the soul, and the educational program is meant to attune the non-rational parts to the rational part. The descriptions seem mostly to be in line with the result in the second case above, where spirit remains calm, although that specific situation seem to portray the reaction of the spirited part to actions done to the person, not a description of an internal relation between soul parts. In a passage in T1, for instance, the education was said to have a “relaxing, soothing, and [gentle-making]” (442a) effect on the spirited part. These are, nonetheless, rather general descriptions. Few are directed specifically at the relationship between the spirited and the appetitive part, even if a substantial part of the function of the spirited part seems to be to control desires arising in the appetitive part. The focus of the educational program is rather the relationship between the non-rational parts and the rational, in order for them to be in harmony with its prescriptions.

From Book 8, however, the relationship between the spirited and appetitive part is treated more extensively, and it is depicted in line with the victory-model, where the spirited part is described as “victory-loving”.

When I use the term victory in relation to the soul, it is important to emphasize that I understand it in the sense described by Meyer: “[p]leasures and pains are forces that the virtuous person struggles against and overcomes; thus internal conflict and struggle is an inevitable feature of virtuous experience.”¹⁸ Such an understanding can be distinguished from a social understanding of victory, where connotations would bring to mind terms like competition and performance. I understand both Meyer and Plato in Book 8 to as using the term victory to describe a relation between soul parts as self-mastery – the capacity for internal control by use of force and domination. Victory is in this sense a sign of stability, or at least it describes a model for how to achieve it.

Nonetheless, as a descriptive term related to the soul, it is first used in this way early in Book 8. Socrates there describes the five types of soul that correspond to the five types of cities, and the one dominated by the spirited part is described as “victory-loving and honor-loving” (545a). Throughout the degeneration process Plato uses this description repeatedly.¹⁹

¹⁸ Meyer (2015), p. 162

¹⁹ 548c, 548d, 550b, 551a, 555a. Reeve (2004), *General Index*, p. 351.

Furthermore, in two of the steps of degeneration there are some passages which seem to demonstrate a conception of *enkrateia* in the victory-model sense. The timocratic soul is portrayed as pulled towards victory and is “a lover of ruling and of honor, who does not base his claim to rule on his ability to speak” (549a). Rather the timocrat bases it “on his exploits in war and anything having to do with war” (549a). Because of this, he “is not pure in his attitude to virtue” (549b). In the oligarchic soul, some appetites are characterized as “beggars[,] and others evildoers [and they] are *forcibly* kept in check by his general cautiousness” (554b–c, my italics). And further in the oligarchic soul, “something good of his is *forcibly* holding in check the other bad appetites within; not by persuading them [...]; nor taming them by a word, but using *compulsion and fear*” (554c–d, my italics). In the context of these descriptions, it is the traits belonging to the spirited part that cause this. He is cautious because he loves and honors money, and what is good in him, has to do with him being appraised as a man of “good reputation and is thought to be just” (554c). In other words, the spirited part seems to exert control by force in these passages.

In the development of a democratic soul, the son of an oligarch inherits some of his traits. Socrates says that “he too would rule by force the [unnecessary] pleasures that exist in him” (558d), but through his engagement with “creatures who can provide multifarious pleasures of every degree of complexity and sort” (559d) he develops an equal regard of the different types of appetites.²⁰ There is in the fully developed democratic soul no trace of the victory model. There are no appetites that need to be controlled with such measures, as they are all regarded as equal.

The development I have described above, does not demonstrate that Plato’s intention in Book 4 is to include a notion of *enkrateia*, in the victory model sense, in a fully virtuous soul, even if the story of Leontius is important for the tripartition of the soul, and the dog-like nature of the guardians (376a) appears in the description of the development of the harmonious soul.²¹ Plato, after all, seems dedicated to the search for harmony, communion and friendship in the soul. Neither does the development I have discussed, demonstrate that

²⁰ Socrates in the passages I have quoted here, speaks of pleasures (*hêdonê*), but when he goes on to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary in the next passage, it is appetites (*epithumia*) that are distinguished. Plato, also in other passages, seems to use pleasure and appetite interchangeably, which might be the reason why it is pleasure, not appetites, that is said to be ruled by force.

²¹ In the story of Leontius, rebuking the desires of the appetitive part of the soul does not seem to be very efficient. Socrates says: “For a while he struggled and put his hand over his eyes, but finally, mastered by his appetite, he opened his eyes wide and rushed toward the corpses” (439e–440a). It is difficult to say whether this indicates an intended devaluing of a victory model-approach on Plato’s part, or if the story is merely told as it is commonly known. The story serves its function of distinguishing the spirited part nonetheless, even with its limited effect. Hence, there might not be an intention to include *enkrateia* in a victory model sense in the part of the *Republic* that discusses the harmonious soul.

the intention in Books 8 is to encourage internal attacks on the appetitive part from the spirited part in line with a victory model of virtue.

However, the mentions in Books 8 demonstrate that a notion of *enkrateia* in a victory-model sense is still present in the dialogue. And importantly, the depiction in Book 8 seems to display what appears to be a natural function of the spirited part of the soul that, except for the mention in the case of Leontius and the dog-like nature of the guardians, is not discussed explicitly in the description of the harmonious soul.

The presence of the victory model in the *Republic* can perhaps be understood to serve as means not to lose the interlocuters, as they have not received the necessary education and cannot attain true knowledge nor see the good. As Meyer has noted about the presence of these paradigms in the *Laws*, the Athenian never discards the victory-model openly²², which might be the result from an attempt of letting the interlocuters develop. This sort of analysis makes sense in the perspective of an ongoing dialectical process, but with respect to the *Republic*, however, this interpretation seems more problematic, due to the arrangement of the perspectives, where the tyrannical destabilizes the harmonious.

Another solution might be that Plato in fact see some value in the victory-model. Traits in line with this model is frequently discussed in the timocratic and oligarchic soul, and the fact that the harmonious and tyrannical soul stand back-to-back in the way I have described, does not only signal the potential for corruption in the aristocratic soul. It also signals that the types of soul that stands closest to the aristocratic retains the highest amount of virtue. In the beginning of Book 8 Socrates states something in this direction. In the discussion leading into the degeneration Socrates and Glaucon agree that they have “described the one [individual] who is like aristocracy, the one we rightly describe as good and just.” (544e) Socrates then says:

Mustn't we next describe the inferior ones—the victory-loving and honor-loving, which correspond to the Laconian constitution, followed by the oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical—so that, having discovered the most unjust of all, we can oppose him to the most just and complete our investigation into how pure justice and pure injustice stand with regard to the happiness or wretchedness of the one who possesses them. (545a)

The types of soul seem to appear on a continuum of decreasing virtue, which, as I demonstrated, is further established in the degeneration itself: The timocrat is “not pure in his

²² See footnote 12.

attitude to virtue”, and in the oligarch “something good of his is *forcibly* holding in check the other bad appetites within”. There seems still to be virtue in these types of soul, and one can ask if Plato does see some value in them. There is after all only a very few individuals that could ever reach a perfectly harmonious soul. But even if it should turn out to be the case that Plato believes these types of soul to have some value, inherent in the souls of the timocrat and the oligarch is still the capacity for degeneration, and I will in the next section argue that this is intimately connected to lack of education.

2.4. Lack of education erodes virtue

Iakovos Vasiliou has pointed to something that might suggest multiple levels of virtue in the *Republic*. He argues that there are three distinguished types of virtue in the *Republic*: genuine; political or habitual²³; and slavish. He argues, in a somewhat contrasting view to Irwin and Bobonich, that political virtue “may have substantial ethical value.”²⁴ He further claims that through both aiming at and training for virtue through the education described in Books 2 and 3, the person of political/ habitual virtue is distinguished from a person of slavish virtue. The person with political/habitual virtue is through the process of education – given by someone with true knowledge – *directed* at genuine virtue.²⁵ This description seems to be in line with the one I have described in the perspective of the harmonious soul. However, in the perspective of the tyrannical soul there is also virtue present in the types of soul inferior to the aristocratic. Vasiliou never discusses this part of the *Republic*, but it offers an interesting contrast.

Throughout the discussion of degeneration in the *Republic*, the danger of corruption is always due to desires belonging to the appetitive part arising. That these are allowed to rise, as in the three first steps, is in turn answered by inadequate education. In a timocracy they have “neglected the true Muse, the companion of discussion and philosophy, and honored physical training more than musical training.” (548b–c) And of an oligarchically souled person, Socrates says that he does not suppose that “someone like that has paid any attention to education.” (554b)²⁶ In the case of the relationship of the oligarchic father and a democratic

²³ Vasiliou lends the notion of “political or habituated virtue” from a mention in the *Phaedo* 82a–b and in the *Republic* 430a–c and 522a. See Vasiliou (2012), p. 13 and p. 27, footnote 35.

²⁴ Vasiliou (2012), p. 13; see footnote 8 and 9 for references to their position. In short, Bobonich takes political virtue to be slavish virtue, while Irwin believes that there is a middle position possible, but without knowledge the individual will nevertheless remain non-virtuous.

²⁵ Vasiliou (2012), p. 27 and 30.

²⁶ For all the discussions of education in Book 8, see 548e–549a for the transition to a timocratic soul; 552e and 554b for the transition to an oligarchic soul; and 559b, 559d and 560a–b for the transition to a democratic soul.

son, education seems to be even more neglected. The democrat is reared in an “uneducated and thrifty manner” (559d). The descending amount of education, it seems, gives way for appetitive desires to flourish. Lack of education is, however, never mentioned in the final step from a democratic soul to a tyrannical soul. When the democratic soul reaches its final developmental phases, in fact, it is said that it is “empty of the fine studies and practices and the true arguments that are the best watchmen and guardians in the minds of men loved by the gods.” (560b)

It seems like especially the timocratic but also the oligarchic soul should be understood as having some connection to virtue through education. Either this can be in a reduced version of the educational program, as seen in the example from a timarchy, or the influence from the father can be regarded as having educational repercussions that reverberate through the generational step. This seems to be the case with the oligarch, as he does not seem to participate in an educational program directly, but still has “something good” (554c) in him that can deal with bad appetites. The numerous mentions of education and how it diminishes in the first three transitions, and the lack of any mention of it when transitioning from the democratic to the tyrannical soul, indicate that at this point, the influence of education is finished. Even if he encounters some amount of virtue through his father, the democratic soul is in the end claimed to be empty of fine studies, and it will “always surrender [...] rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot” (561b). This indicates that if the democratic soul engages with virtue, it is pure coincidence, not a result of any form of connection to virtue through education.

As I described in 1.4., a problem with the connection to virtue in the timocrat and oligarch is that both stages hold within them the root to the next stage of corruption. When looking at it from the perspective of the harmonious soul, which also Vasiliou does, it seems possible to establish a type of virtuous person who has received the education of Books 2 and 3, and thereby appears to contain virtue by being directed to virtue. But when Plato turns the tables in Book 8, there is this lack in the two lower virtuous types, in addition to – or maybe because of – the more undisguised fact that they do not display all the four virtues to a sufficient degree. The lack of all four virtues, however, seems also to be a fact of the politically virtuous person depicted by Vasiliou, as this person would be without wisdom but directed at it.

Even if honor-seeking and moneymaking persons retain some connection to virtue, the fact that they have made these values the central one in their soul, will make them vulnerable to further corruption. When there is no distinction made between good and bad

when it comes to appetites and pleasures, the door is left open for tyranny. The transition unlocked by this feature of the democratic soul is what I will discuss in the next section.

2.5. The embrace of unnecessary appetites

In the final transition, from the democratic soul into the tyrannical soul, all connection to virtue even as arbitrary which was the case in the democrat, is finally abandoned. Socrates says:

If [the popular tyrannical leader in the soul] finds any beliefs or appetites in the man that are regarded as good or are still moved by shame, it destroys them and throws them out, until it has purged him of temperance and filled him with imported madness. (573b)

That Plato seems to believe that the democratic soul has no relation to virtue, provides a good explanation for the transition into a tyrannical soul. If there is no stability or protective structure left to protect against the danger that some features of the appetitive part of the soul constitutes, the soul is left vulnerable to the worst type of unnecessary appetites.

The types of appetites that constitute this threat, are discussed in the beginning of Book 9. Socrates says that so far in the discussion they have not “adequately distinguished the nature and number of appetites. And if that subject is not adequately dealt with, our investigation will lack clarity.” (571a) This is a deviation at the start of the description of the nature of the tyrannically souled person, and the constitution of the nature of appetites therefore seems critical to further understand the development into a tyrannical soul. This is, however, not the first time Socrates identifies different sorts of appetites. To understand the democratic soul, it was vital to realize that there is a difference between necessary and unnecessary appetites, and that the problem with a person with a democratic soul was that he or she does not make any judgement on the better or worse quality of the different sorts of necessary and unnecessary appetites. To a democratic soul, they are all equal.²⁷ This distinction between necessary and unnecessary, however, does not seem adequate to understand the tyrannical soul. Socrates says that:

²⁷ There is mention of “bad appetites” in 554c and 561c. Still, these seem to exist at a more general level in which they represent the contrast highlighted by necessary and unnecessary appetites.

among unnecessary pleasures and appetites there are some that seem to me to be lawless.²⁸ These are probably present in all of us, but they are held in check by the laws and by our better appetites allied with reason. In a few people they have been gotten rid of entirely or only a few weak ones remain, while in others they are stronger and more numerous. (571b–c)²⁹

The way I understand this passage, it both introduces the idea of the lawless appetites and distinguishes two groups of people³⁰ in whom they might occur: those in whom “they have been gotten rid of entirely, or only a few weak ones remain”, and those in whom “they are stronger and more numerous”.

The passage in 571b–c is followed by a description of the lawless appetites’ appearance in the dream of a person where these are left to rule when the rational part rests, and its opposite, the “healthy and temperate” (571d) soul, where the lawless appetites never reach command. The two dreams seem to designate a coming-to-be tyrant and a person with a harmonious soul.

The lawless appetites seem to be an uncontrollable subspecies of the unnecessary appetites. It is, however, difficult to understand if they are to be understood as lawless or law-abiding in some other non-direct way, at least in the nature of their appearance in the first group. If a type of appetite is singled out by the feature of being lawless, it makes no sense that they are “held in check by law”. For this not to be a contradictory claim, it seems to require some explanation. The first group can seem to refer to an aristocratic soul, and as they are described in the passage, it may seem like they are able to handle lawless pleasures somehow. This makes it appear like the educational program could be sufficient for achieving a virtuous soul. To argue that this is the case would require that lawless appetites could be

²⁸ This is the first mention of appetites as lawless. The terms *anomia* and *paranomia*, which both mean lawless or lawlessness, is used 7 times before this in the *Republic*, but none of them with reference to appetites. See Reeve (2004), *General Index*, p. 350. In 424d, however, Glaucon says: “this sort of lawlessness easily inserts itself undetected.” He refers to Socrates’ stated emphasis on the need to protect the education and “not allow [it] to become corrupted without [the guardians] noticing it.” (424b) Although these passages address the importance of education to prevent corruption, they still seem to indicate a possibility for undetected lawlessness to occur. It seems, in these passages, that education most likely will have a positive preventive effect, but that this cannot be guaranteed.

²⁹ One interesting consequence of this is that if this species of appetite distinguishes itself by not responding to regulations, it indicates that the rest of the appetites are in fact responsive to regulation. The better ones, it is claimed, can even serve as an ally of the rational part.

³⁰ The disjunctive form of the first group makes it somewhat ambiguous. It might designate just one group where it is not clear if they have gotten rid of the lawless appetites completely. Alternatively, there might be both people with *few* and people with *no* lawless appetites within this group. In either case, there seem to be lawless appetites present in some individuals in this group. And Socrates soon after states “there are appetites of a terrible, savage, and lawless nature in *everyone*—even in those of us who seem to be entirely moderate.” (572a, my italics) The group with no lawless appetites might have philosophers as its target, but as I am not going into detail about the nature of philosophers in this paper, I will not delve further into this distinction. I will stick to the option that this group has members within it that possess lawless appetites, but where these, apparently, are controlled.

kept in check without responding to laws directly. It is clear in the passage that the lawless appetites are “freed from all shame and wisdom” (571c). In other words, they do not respond to laws created by the rational part, or by the self-controlling mechanism of shame. For this to work, they must rather be held in check by not being given an option to do otherwise. For something to be able to follow its nature, on a general level, it seems like some degree of negative freedom must be available. With regards to the lawless appetites one can then say that if all paths are blocked with impenetrable obstacles, their bestial and savage nature cannot materialize. To see this more clearly, one can follow Socrates’ example of making a larger analogy, so that the question “will be easier to discern.” (368e)

Imagine a person in the middle of a crowd of a sold-out concert. This person is very unhappy with the concert and wants to leave. However, she is trapped in the middle of the audience. While being trapped, she gets angry and wants to express her dissatisfaction by yelling profanities to the artist and to throw things on stage. The security guards can see the maliciousness in her eyes, but because she is in the middle of the crowd, they are unable to reach her, and she does not even sense their presence. Being in this position, trapped in the middle of the crowd, her options are quite limited. The enthusiasm of the rest of the crowd drowns her profanities, and if she does not have anything in her immediate presence that she can throw on stage, this impulse will not get an outlet. Furthermore, she will be unable to resist following the crowd if they are encouraged by the artist to move in one direction, and if encouraged to go in the other direction, she will again be pulled along with the rest. This means that even if she is never stopped directly by the security guards and does not herself respond to the artist’s request for the audience to move, she still acts in accordance with the commands of the artist. In a well-educated soul, it would appear, the lawless appetites – represented by the girl – seem possible to repress with this strategy, because they indirectly behave in the way the rational part – represented by the artist – wants them to, because the rest of the appetites has been well-educated. If the density is high enough, the lawless appetites apparently have no choice.

A situation where the lawless appetites are not allowed to express themselves, seems to be what Socrates lays out in the passage describing the sleep of a harmonious soul. Before going to sleep, a person with a harmonious soul “neither starves nor overfeeds“ (571e) the appetitive part, and “soothes the spirited element in a similar way and does not get angry and falls asleep with his spirit still aroused.”³¹ (572a) The rational part is left to feast on “fine

³¹ Again, the spirited part is portrayed as soothed and not supposed to get angry in a harmonious soul.

argument and investigations” (571d). The dreams of this person, it is said, “are least lawless.” (572b) If the soul is in good order, it seems, stability will come naturally. Even if the lawless pleasures are present in the soul of this person, the encouragement of right behavior – just as the educational program prescribed – prevents the lawless pleasures from gaining traction. In the ideal situation of my concert analogy above and in the description of this dream, even the lawless appetites seem possible to keep in check if most of the other appetites were domesticated. This story appears to make education a sufficient response also to the lawless appetites. If the rest of the system functions properly, arguably, lawless appetites will be affected indirectly, and hence, they will not be able to cause destabilization.

When we follow the description in the *Republic* of the tyrant, however, we again see the opposite perspective. Socrates says that in the dream of a coming-to-be tyrant,³² “the bestial and savage element, full of food and drink, comes alive [...]. In a word, it does not refrain from anything, no matter how foolish or shameful.” (571c–d) And when describing how the tyrant evolves in the pattern through generations, Socrates writes that “these terrible enchanters and tyrant-makers [...] contrive to implant a powerful passion” (572e). And further: “when other appetites come buzzing around—filled with incense, perfumes, wreaths, wine, and all the other pleasures found in such company, they feed the drone [the passion]” (573a). In this perspective it seems like the analogy of the girl attending a concert must be reinterpreted. It seems that her means, rather than protesting against the artist (the rational part) or against the security guards (the spirited part), she, and her fellow tyrant-makers, locates the strongest among them and starts the process of attracting other appetites to join the riot. One can imagine the girl and her friends attracting other members of the audience (other appetites) with their attractive looks and seductive perfumes, offering them free drinks if they join in. This seems to make them able to corrupt even without being able to move out of the crowd, and the lawless appetites seem to have found a strategy that makes them truly lawless, and with an alternative way of executing their inclinations. In this perspective they seem impossible to stop.

The lawless appetites might be seen to represent a serious threat with their capacity to corrupt even in this situation. It does not, however, seem like the lawless appetites are in fact the origin or corruption throughout the process of degeneration, which this version of the story would require. Rather, it becomes clear in the description of the degeneration that it is in the rise of the democrat that the tyrant-makers are able to overturn the system. It is only when

³² It becomes clear that this dream is a description of a coming-to-be tyrant in 574d.

virtue through education has eroded completely, that the door is opened. In the story of the girl in the crowd, one can argue that only when the rest of the crowd loses their focus on the authority of the artist, will she and her likeminded friends be able to reach them with their seductive lures. And this happens when the security guards are not able to do their job of maintaining order in the crowd, commanded by the artist, because their training has deteriorated.

Thus, none of the two sides of the story of the girl at the concert appears to portray the picture in a complete manner. It seems like the educational program goes a long way in establishing a robust protective system against the lawless appetites taking control. Still, its role in shaping the spirited part for the task of controlling the appetite, is unclear and appears almost abandoned in the description of how the harmonious soul functions in Book 4. In the case of an aristocratic soul, it looks as if the security guards have no real means to control the crowd, as long as they are not meant to be aroused or display anger. One can ask how it is meant to “do its own job” (441e). If the crowd, the artist, and the security guards are in concord with each other, this would create no problem, but as the degeneration demonstrates, this will not always be the case.

In the perspective of degenerated forms of virtuous souls of the timocratic and oligarch soul, on the other hand, the security guards would have at their disposal a means of controlling any revolt occurring in the crowd. They could use their nature as victory-lovers and capacity to display anger for the sake of protecting the rational part. However, it is within this nature a seed for further corruption is harbored. One can imagine the harsh treatment of the crowd by the security guards leading to dissatisfaction and an increased willingness to follow the seductive tyrant-makers, which in the end would lead to total chaos and the security guards and the crowd fighting each other and enslaving the artist in order to use it as a means to power, just as in the tyrannical soul.

The ambiguity when it comes to the description of the role of the spirited part, is a difficult feature in the *Republic*. I suggested in 2.3. that one solution might be that Plato saw some value also in a victory model of virtue, but this explanation does not seem to get any explicit attention, at least not in the *Republic*. Plato might, of course, see value in it, in the sense that the timocrat and the oligarch do have some degree of virtue. But it is not described as valuable in the sense of a paradigm of virtue that he endorses. But somehow the paradigm of virtue seen in the harmonious soul still seem to depend on something more than the education for it to create stability and prevent corruption, and in this respect, Plato, to some extent, seems committed to a victory-model of virtue. In the next section I will look further

into this and demonstrate how the two perspectives on the soul connect through the mutual dependency of human beings.

2.6. Connecting the perspectives through mutual human dependency

The dream of the coming-to-be tyrant, described above, seems to point to the presence of lawless appetites within us, but in a situation where they are only let out in sleep, when the “rational, gentle, and ruling element—slumbers” (571c). The transition to a tyrannical soul is a development originating in the “unruly mob [...], some of which have come in from the outside as a result of his bad associates, while others came from within, freed and let loose by his own bad habits” (575a). Partly, the transition to a tyrannical soul is due to external bad influence, while it is also due to the presence of lawless appetites within, which have now been set free. The lawless appetites emerge as a natural and destructive part of our soul, and will both be influenced by external forces and at the same time reinforce its own bad habits. There are both interpsychic and intrapsychic forces at play, in other words, which amount to a potential for corruption. This also became clear throughout the earlier part of the degeneration. From the start, it was the external forces, pulling in different directions, that intermixed with the development of the child creating an intermediate amalgam soul.

This interconnectedness has its origin early in the *Republic*. The city, which is utilized as an analogy of the soul, is formed in expanding stages, and in developing it, there are already clear signs of the fundamental roots to other human beings. In the first stage of the development, labeled “the city of pigs” by Glaucon, we are introduced to two important principles. What is traditionally regarded as the most important of these, is the principle of division and specialization of labor³³ (369e–370c), because it serves as the model by which justice will later be defined. The other principle, which I will focus on here, is the one that makes the city as an analogy a viable model, and the one that sets the stage for human societies as a fundamental part of our lives. This principle is that “none of us is individually self-sufficient, but each has many needs he cannot satisfy.” (369b) I will call this the principle of mutual dependency.

By the introduction of this principle, Plato attributes to each of us an essential dependency on other human beings,³⁴ and it is from this principle that the state emerges. What

³³ The principle is not phrased in these terms in the *Republic*. I adopted this phrasing from R.C. Cross and A.D. Woozley. See Cross and Woozley (1964), p. 79.

³⁴ Interpretations differ on this principle. Some interpret the principle as one of merely self-interest (Cross and Woozley 1964, p.80), others as a sign of sociability as an essential feature in Plato’s understanding of human

the basic city is supposed to tell us about the soul, is not stated explicitly, and it is not discussed much in the later books of the dialogue. In one of the few remarks that are made about it later in the *Republic*, Socrates says: “You see, what we laid down at the beginning when we were founding our city, about what should be done throughout it—that, I think or some form of that, is justice.” (432e–433a) From this, the principle of division and specialization of labor receives its use as the model for how we must understand justice. The principle of mutual dependence, however, is never referred back to explicitly in the same way, but throughout the *Republic* the interpsychic as well as the intrapsychic parts of our existence as human beings are continually referred to. There is no educational program without the interaction of other persons and a society in which it occurs, and the process of degeneration is an intrapsychic process that develops out of an interpsychic one. The development of the new types of soul is clearly an effect of human relationships as well as internal development between the parts of the soul. In this respect, the perspective of a harmonious soul and the one of a tyrannical appear connected. Our development in either direction is predicated upon external influence of other human beings. In the educational program the guardians are pulled up by a system deeply rooted in other people’s understanding of true knowledge, and the practices of musical and physical training both involve other human beings. Unfortunately, this is no different in the process of degeneration. The role of external influence seems crucial to the development of the soul, even if it looks as if the infrastructure of the soul has the components needed for corruption within it: the three parts are included in the soul; the natural difference in the size of the soul parts; and the lawless appetites that linger in everyone (572b). But the degeneration still seems to rely on external factors to trigger each of these steps. The framework, in both directions, arguably presupposes the presence of other human beings as a necessary condition for its development. The reliance on human interaction is also highlighted by the dialectical process displayed in the *Republic*, and in other works of Plato, by the dialogue form. The process requires connection with others.³⁵

nature (see Annas 1981, p. 75.). I believe this principle postulates a genuine lack in each individual that other human beings need to fill, for a person to be able to live a good and virtuous life. This implies a claim of a social nature embedded in the idea of a human being. If the principle on the other hand implied merely a human interest to maximize one’s own situation, it is difficult to differentiate the principle founding the basic city from the developmental features leading to the expansion into the second city, the feverish city (372e). There, our *wants* are the driving force, rather than our *needs*, a difference which seems to mimic the differentiation of necessary and unnecessary appetites. Furthermore, the lives of the citizens of the basic city are described as displaying a social nature, “feast[ing] with their children” (372b) and “enjoy[ing] having sex with each other” (372b).

³⁵ One can argue against this, by referring to the slave in the *Meno* acquiring knowledge by the use of his own reason, but Plato’s work as a philosopher and writer still signals the value he puts on dialogue. Furthermore, the

With regards to Plato's ethical system, not merely as dependent on the pull in either direction by the presence of other human beings, but as a process of realization of the ideal, Hans-Georg Gadamer says:

It is true that for Plato, no less than for Aristotle, [the] unattainableness of the ideal of pure theory is an essential characteristic of man's humanity; but Plato always sees man's existence, and thus the true relations between ethos and praxis, in the light of this characteristic—which means that he presents them as defined by the process of going beyond them. Man is a creature who transcends himself. ³⁶

It seems to me that Plato in the *Republic* intends the two perspectives of the soul to maintain this sort of conception of human beings: as capable of going beyond boundaries imposed by our bodily confinement and reaching for conceptual objects in an aim to incorporate them in the process of achieving virtue. Still, this does not seem to discard the situatedness of the soul with material bodily life. It seems, in the *Republic*, that Plato takes human souls to both be able to transcend and to live an embodied existence. Even if one accepts the soul to be understood as immortal in the *Republic*, it is its situation while embodied that Plato seems to deal with in this dialogue. And as Vasiliou points out, the theory of recollection, where the soul's capacity for understanding is interpreted as a sign of previous non-material existence in the world of ideas, is not present in the *Republic*. To Vasiliou, this does not necessarily mean that the *Republic* diverges from the *Phaedo*, where recollection is clearly present,³⁷ but still, I would argue, it signals that the focus of the *Republic* is on human existence as taking place in two distinguished but connected worlds. It seems like both our existence as mind and as body connects us to other human beings, which seems to be the reason why Plato emphasizes this aspect of human nature in the "city of pigs".

Finally, the connectedness of the two perspectives is further highlighted by the fact that the soul in the *Republic* includes the appetitive part and its desires. In earlier dialogues, like the *Phaedo*, appetitive desires belong to the body. Even if they clearly take care of bodily needs also in the *Republic*, they are, nonetheless, a feature of the soul. Plato seems to think of these desires as distinguished from the bodily, although at the same time connected with it. And however much the lawless appetites can wreak havoc and lead to the ruin of the soul, they are not denied their origin in the soul, even if it sometimes suggested that they should be

example in *Meno* can be understood as merely a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, not a paradigm of epistemology.

³⁶ Gadamer (1991), p. 4–5

³⁷ Vasiliou (2012), p. 15.

banished. Their internal, not just external, origin makes them part of human existence. Because of this, Plato appears, as I argued in the end of the previous section to some extent committed to a victory-model of virtue. The fact that the spirited part does not appear to be allowed to serve its own nature in the harmonious soul, and the occurrence of such a nature in the souls of inferior virtue could be regarded as a flaw in the *Republic*.

However, it might also be that Plato, while writing the *Republic*, concluded that the victory model had no place in an ideal version of virtue, but that the dual existence characterizing human life – with its pursuit of the ideal on the one side, and the bodily embeddedness on the other – could not completely abandon this model. Regarded this way, the victory-model can be understood as part of how we observe the soul from the perspective of the appetitive part of the soul, in particular when the unnecessary appetites become increasingly present. I believe this essay have demonstrated that this latter interpretation appears to be the solution to the conundrum of the role of the spirited part in the *Republic*.

Conclusion

I have argued that the soul in the *Republic* can be understood as a coin with two sides. Through our rational capacities the human soul can be understood and envisioned in an idealized manner, while from the perspective of our appetitive part, which connects human beings to a bodily material world, the soul becomes vulnerable to corruption. The fact that the soul has these two sides to it, requires that we regard it from two perspectives simultaneously, where one of them builds us up, at the same time as the other constitutes a perpetual threat of pulling us down. When we see the human soul through these two perspectives, I have argued that the role of the spirited part of the soul becomes particularly interesting. In the harmonized soul this part seems to lose some of its function as a watchdog against the appetites, whilst the same function apparently reappears in the path to a tyrannical soul. In the paradigm of virtue represented by the harmonious soul, it seems, there is no room for this trait, while in a paradigm of virtue displayed by a timocratic and oligarchic soul, it thrives. This, I have argued, raises the question of whether Plato might be committed to a paradigm of virtue inferior to the ideal harmonious one. This, however, seems problematic, and Plato does not seem to endorse it. In fact, the inferior constitution of the timocratic and oligarchic soul is furnished with a root to further degeneration, which in the end will lead to a tyrannical soul. Rather, I have suggested in this essay, the human situation is one both of mind and body, and

through our natural connection to other human beings we can be pulled both up in the direction of our minds and down towards the enslavement of our worst appetites. It seems like Plato, in addition to establishing the ideal soul, wants us to open our eyes also for the potential danger of degeneration. By doing this, he might seek to make us understand which is the more attractive option for a human life.

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