# The Unity of Motivation in Plato's *Protagoras* and *Republic*

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There is a common tendency among scholars to take the theory of the divided soul in *Republic* book 4 as a critique and alteration of the view expressed in the *Protagoras*, according to which no one acts against their considered judgment of what is best.[1] According to this reading, in the *Protagoras* Socrates subscribes to the view that all human motivations are governed by our conception of the good. Since there are no good-independent desires, no conflict between distinct types of motivations can occur, and a fortiori one's reasoned decision to do what is best cannot be overpowered by a non-rational desire. According to the standard interpretation it is in order to reinstate the notion of acting against one's better judgment that in the *Republic* Plato has Socrates introduce a tripartite psychology, according to which the human soul comprises distinct loci of motivation, two of which have desires that are independent of our reasoned conception of the good. By positing such good-independent centers of motivation the *Republic*'s psychology provides a coherent account of psychic conflict and, more specifically, cases where the irrational side in such conflict triumphs over the rational good-oriented one.[2]

In what follows I shall attempt to cast doubt on this interpretation. My contention will be that the *Republic* does not ascribe to human agency a lesser degree of unity than the *Protagoras*.[3] I shall argue that both dialogues are committed to much the same view, namely, that the objects of our passionate motivations are identical with those of our reasoned ones. My argument for this thesis will proceed in two stages. The first consists in an examination of the argument against the possibility of akrasia[4] in the *Protagoras*, in the course of which I shall show that the motivational unity which Socrates attributes

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1 I shall ignore the question whether the views expressed by Socrates in the *Protagoras* reflect those of the historical Socrates, whereas the views he expresses in the *Republic* are a reflection of Plato's mature philosophy. My concern is only with the question about the compatibility or incongruence of the views in the two dialogues.

2 For some notable instances of this interpretation see Irwin (1995) 209; Reeve (1988) 134-5; Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 90, fn. 25; Penner (1992) 129; Taylor (1991) 203; Frede (1992) xv.

3 The traditional interpretation of the relation between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* has already been challenged by Carone (2001), Anagnostopoulos (2006), and Shields (2007), but for reasons which are different and ultimately incompatible with the ones I shall present here.

4 Plato himself never uses the term 'akrasia' in the *Protagoras*, nor in any dialogue for that matter (though it appears twice in the spurious 'Definitions' in 416a) in order to refer to a situation where a person acts against his better judgment due to some conflicting passionate motivation. Nevertheless, owing to Aristotle's usage of this term in EN 7 to describe Socrates' position, it has become part of the standard terminology in the philosophical literature on the Plato's dialogues, and I shall use it here for reasons of convenience.

to the soul in order to combat the view of the Many, that they are often overpowered by pleasure, is restricted in scope. That is, Socrates' theory of psychic unity accepts that certain motivations are independent of the agent's conception of the good, but does not see this as an obstacle for dealing with the view of the Many regarding the existence of akrasia. The second stage consists in an examination of the cases of mental conflict depicted in the *Republic*. I shall argue that these cases divide neatly into two groups: on the one hand, cases in which the passions that conflict with reason are of a kind that falls outside the scope of the *Protagoras*' view of motivational unity; and on the other hand, cases where the conflict between passion and reason is not tantamount to a plurality of objects of desire, and can thus easily be reformulated using the *Protagoras*' analysis of akrasia. After showing that no conflict exists between the two dialogues' view of human motivation, I shall conclude with a tentative positive suggestion regarding the contribution which the *Republic*'s tripartite scheme makes to the coherence of this shared view.

## Unified Agency in the *Protagoras*

The crux of the argument against akrasia is the assumption that pleasure, which according to the Many overpowers their reasoned choices of what is good, just is the good which they seek to attain (353b-354c). Once this is admitted, Socrates shows that an analysis of action in terms of akrasia — according to which an agent willingly chooses an action he knows is bad due to succumbing to a pleasure he knows is not worth this trouble — is ridiculous. Socrates brings out the ridiculousness of this description of human action by substituting, as per the hedonistic assumption, the notion of pleasure with that of the good and pain with that of evil. This results in a description of akrasia as an action in which the agent willingly and knowingly chooses a great amount of evil due to a desire to obtain a small amount of good he knows is outweighed by the evil (355b-e); or, alternatively, as an action in which the agent willingly and knowingly chooses a great amount of pain due to his desire to obtain a small amount of pleasure he knows is outweighed by the pain (355e-356a). Since such descriptions of the psychological state leading to action appear ridiculous, Socrates concludes that the original stipulation according to which the akratic agent was aware of the folly of his action is mistaken, and that there must have been some mistake in his evaluation of the relative size of the goods in question: at the time of performing the action, the agent must have conceived of the lesser good as the greater one. Socrates concludes by claiming that since the problem was due wholly to an error of judgment regarding the relative size of the two pleasures, one should cultivate the art of measurement, as this is sufficient to ensure that one never takes what erroneously appears as a large quantity of pleasure to really be so, thus providing a complete guarantee against wrongful action (356c-357b).

In order to properly assess the moral of the akrasia argument it is important to place it in its proper context. The argument is embedded in, and supposed to contribute to, a refutation of Protagoras' contention that while the virtues of justice, temperance, piety and wisdom are highly similar to each other, courage is distinct from all of them. This, Protagoras claims, is evidenced by the fact that it is possible to find people who are most just, temperate, pious and wise, and yet utterly foolish (349d). Socrates' refutation of

this position is in essence a simple one. He secures Protagoras' assent to two theses: the first is that is that no one willingly goes towards what he takes to be evil (358c-d); the second is that fear should be defined as "a certain expectation of evil (358d)." Once these two theses have been laid down, it immediately follows that courage does not consist in some unreasoned inclination to overcome fear and act properly, as Protagoras seems to think: since fearful things must be conceived as evil, and since no one willingly goes towards what they take to be evil, Protagoras must accept that the courageous do not in fact conceive of the noble things they proceed towards as dreadful, but that they must be acting on the assumption that they are good or beneficial. Since courage is a stable and consistent tendency for proper action, the courageous must have some stable disposition that allows them to consistently grasp which things are good for them. Such a tendency is then identified with wisdom (360c-d).[5]

How does the akrasia argument contribute to the success of the one about courage?[6] I suggest that the akrasia argument is meant to support the one about courage by preempting a foreseeable objection in the form of a counter-example to the principle that no one willingly chooses what is worse. As we saw, the argument that courage is knowledge relied on that principle together with the definition of fear as an expectation of evil. But had Socrates simply assumed in the course of the courage argument the validity of the principle that no one willingly chooses what is worse, without first arguing against the possibility of akrasia, it would have been open to Protagoras to object that all the principle does is delineate constraints on what it is to choose rationally. But, he would have said, people habitually act against their rational choices, as evidenced by the familiar phenomenon of akrasia, where action against one's better judgment is brought about by passionate motivations. What Socrates needs to show in order to counter this possible objection is that there is no cogent (or to use the terminology of the *Protagoras*, non-ridiculous) analysis of human action according to which an agent's decision to act upon his estimation of the good is thwarted by seemingly non-rational motivations.

Precisely how does the akrasia argument achieve this end? In order to answer this question we must recall Socrates' blunt assertion when speaking with the Many, that they will not be able to point to any value over and above pleasure. More specifically, Socrates shows that all the other values that the Many presume to hold, such as health and virtue, are in fact valued merely instrumentally as means for securing pleasure. What lies behind Socrates' assurance that all values are reducible to pleasure?[7] I would

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5 I have simplified the last part of the argument somewhat. What Socrates in fact does is first prove that cowardice just is the consistent tendency to mistake what is really dreadful, and then claim that courage, which is its opposite, must be the ability to distinguish what is and is not dreadful.

6 It is important to note in this regard that the courage argument does not depend on the assumption that pleasure is the human good. For a detailed discussion of this fact, see Morris (1996).

7 There are various answers in the literature to this question. One is that Socrates is himself committed to hedonism, for which see Irwin (1995), Taylor (1996), and Gosling and Taylor (1982). Another is that the assumption of hedonism stems from Socrates' estimation of the vulgar moral sensibilities of the multitude, for which see Vlastos (1969), Zeyl (1980).

like to follow the recent suggestion by Callard,[8] that Socrates' introduction of the hedonistic premise is justified by the Many's own account of their affliction, in which they describe their good-oriented decisions as being overpowered by pleasure. According to Callard, the very fact that the Many themselves describe the pleasure that overpowered them as alluring, yet unworthy of overcoming the good which they had originally chosen to pursue, indicates that they currently see the two options as commensurate with each other. In fact, if the Many had conceived of the rationally chosen good as categorically superior to pleasure, it should have trumped the pleasure-oriented desire, regardless of how appealing the pleasure in question might appear in other circumstances. Since the Many retrospectively describe the pleasure to which they had succumbed as having allure (i.e. their past behavior seems to them explicable), despite being worse than the good they had chosen, they must be thinking of it as contingently inferior to the good, and not categorically so. According to Callard's suggestion then, the very fact of experiencing overpowering bouts of desire for pleasure is, for Socrates, evidence of the agent's beliefs about what is valuable in a human life.[9]

With the akrasia argument in place, Socrates has a ready answer to the possible objection to the principle according to which no one willingly chooses what is bad, which is pivotal for the courage argument. As we saw, had the discussion of akrasia not been undertaken, Protagoras could have objected to the proof that courage is knowledge by claiming that the courageous do in fact perform actions they conceive of as fearful (i.e. ones they think are bad for them), not through any considered decision but through the motivation of some non-rational emotional faculty that overpowers their reasoned attitude towards their action. Following the akrasia argument this option is no longer viable, since by showing that akratics are necessarily hedonists Socrates has exposed the fact that seemingly unreasoned, passionate motivations are but reflections of the agent's considered values and goals. Protagoras is now barred from presenting cowards as people who know what is best but who are nevertheless deterred from acting upon that knowledge by some passionate inclination. Rather, he must agree that their cowardly actions are the result of ignorance; and he must agree that the courageous, who consistently go toward what is in fact good, do not do so in the face of any rational aversion to such action, but because they know their actions are good.

But precisely what sort of knowledge does Socrates have in mind here? The akrasia argument exposed the need for an art of measurement that will enable a proper gauging of the size or quantity of value in each competing option. But remember that the need to measure quantities of value was a direct result of the hedonistic assumption, which was itself relevant only for self-professed akratics. What Socrates proved was that those who experience akratic episodes must in fact be hedonists (contrary to their initial claims to value virtue itself), and that the best way for hedonists to live is to acquire some means of assessing the precise amount of pleasure to be gained by each of their possible

[8] See Callard (2016).

[9] Note that this assumption involves something much stronger than the idea that any passionate motivation includes a value judgment (as per Morris (1996)), as this would have been compatible with the claim that the Many value both pleasure and virtue as ends. Rather, the assumption must involve the commitment that the trumping passionate motivation represents the sole value to which the agent subscribes.

choices. But the moral of the successful attribution of hedonism to the Many, namely, that our passions necessarily reflect our rationally held values, brings with it a different conception of knowledge as a savior: notice that when attributing hedonism to the Many on account of their self-professed akratic behavior, Socrates made sure to emphasize that they know no reason why virtue should be valued other than its contribution to a life of pleasure (354e-355a). This serves as a strong indication that according to Socrates, the akratics' cognitive deficiency does not lie primarily in lacking an art of measuring pleasure; rather, their more basic intellectual shortcoming lies in not understanding why virtue should be treated as an end in itself. The principle that our emotions necessarily reflect our values (which was revealed by showing that those who suffer strong bouts of desire for pleasure are in fact hedonists), taken together with the idea that a genuine attachment to a value requires knowledge of some sort (which is expressed by Socrates' insistence that the Many cannot give an account of what makes the values they originally claimed to adhere to good in themselves), strongly implies that had the Many acquired knowledge of why virtue deserves to be treated as an end in itself, they would have ceased from experiencing strong desires for pleasure that are opposed to their reasoned choices.[10]

How does this interpretation of the akrasia argument in the *Protagoras* bear on the question of its relation to the tripartite psychology of the *Republic*? The akrasia argument shows us that the actions we take necessarily reflect our reasoned conception of the good. I have argued that this should not be understood as the claim that any action necessarily reflects some executive judgment by reason as to which of two choices is preferable (in the sense of embodying a greater amount of some desired value). Rather, I have claimed that the emphasis of the akrasia argument lies in the idea that our emotional dispositions and motivations are direct reflections of our reasoned conceptions of what is valuable in human life, and that the former are amenable to reflection and study precisely in virtue of their "mirroring" relation to the latter. The notion of the good which is at play in the argument needs to be cashed out not by appealing to the agent's practical decision whether to implement some occurrent desire, but by the issue of whether or not the basic orientation of this desire is correct.

But if we accept these claims about the akrasia argument, it becomes crucial to see that the scope of the motivations it seeks to deal with is restricted in an important sense. If the argument is meant to show that many of our supposedly irrational motivations are

[10] There is good corroborative evidence in the *Protagoras* that the conclusion about the sufficiency of knowledge as a savior is not to be taken wholesale with its conception as an art of measurement. In 357b, after securing Protagoras' agreement that measurement is what will save our lives, Socrates proceeds to claim that this entails that knowledge is our savior. But he immediately adds that precisely what sort of knowledge is in question is a matter for a different investigation. Now, this is surely odd, since Socrates has just specified the type of knowledge that is in question, namely, the measuring kind. That he should identify the genus (knowledge) on the evidence of the species (measurement), and then proclaim that it is only the identity of the genus about which he is certain is strong indication that the notion of a measuring art was merely a ladder to be climbed and then thrown away once we have ascended to the idea that knowledge is our savior. Interpreters who take Plato to be seriously committed to importance of some form of measuring art for virtuous living are Nussbaum (1986) and Moss (2014).

in fact amenable to reason and study, it follows that motivations and attractions that are not amenable to such means are not relevant for the discussion. To illustrate the difference between passionate attractions that are relevant for the *Protagoras*' argument and those that are not, consider the difference between the desire to eat a sweet-tasting cake, and the simple desire to eat when hungry. It would be reasonable to construe an agent who habitually experiences, and acts on, powerful desires for sweets, as someone who values the pleasures of taste, and this regardless of the agent's own explicit testimony about the value he places on such pleasures. It would also be reasonable to expect that a deeper understanding of the value of temperance and more generally the human good will, with time, diminish those desires (or, it is at least reasonable to think that Socrates thought so). On the other hand, the desire to eat when in need of food cannot be treated as evidence for the agent's values or beliefs and, moreover, it is unreasonable to expect any amount of study or philosophical reflection to alter it in any way (and it is unreasonable to suppose Socrates thought differently). So while the *Protagoras* offers us a highly integrative account of the soul, one that takes the passions to be essentially rational phenomena, it is important to bear in mind that some psychological motivations will nevertheless resist this integration. Desire for food and drink in times of physical need are ineradicable drives that afflict all biological beings. Not merely do they not serve to distinguish between different human "characters" — as the desires for delicacies or sexual indulgences do; they do not even distinguish between man and irrational animals.

But while Socrates' intellectualistic theory of desire in the *Protagoras* is limited in scope, it is also tailor made for dealing with the specific affliction from which the Many are said to suffer. This is made evident by Socrates' description of how self-labeling akratics tend to describe the psychological forces that disrupt their reasoned pursuit of the good: they are described as "sometimes anger, sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain, at some time love, and often fear" (τοτὲ μὲν θυμόν, τοτὲ δὲ ἡδονήν, τοτὲ δὲ λύπην, ἐνίοτε δὲ ἔρωτα, πολλάκις δὲ φόβον; 352b) and as pleasures of food and drink and sex (ὑπὸ σίτων καὶ ποτῶν καὶ ἀφροδισίων κρατούμενοι ἡδέων ὄντων; 353c). All these akratic motivations correspond to the criteria I have delineated by being expressions of preferences or aversions.[11] This is especially apparent in the emphasis in 353c on the fact that what overpowers the akratics (according to their own testimony) is not mere desire for food drink and sex, but desire for them qua pleasures. Further corroboration comes from the fact that the akratics are said to be rationally averse to these pleasures because they take them to be bad (πονηρά 353c). The characterization of the pleasures in question as bad indicates that they belong to a specific category of excess and

[11] One might object here that the mention of pain should count as an exception to the rule I have laid down since pain is a bodily sensation whose frequency or intensity has nothing to do with one's rational outlook on human values. But that is not the only way to interpret the notion of pain, as it could quite easily correspond to the 'pangs' of desire, and signify the discomfort one experiences due to lack of desire-satisfaction. I suggest that in the present context, taken together with the other objects of passion, this is the proper way to read the notion of pain. For more on the same issue see also the footnote below. See also in this context Aristotle's claim in NE 3.11, that the intemperate person is not overly sensitive to pains as such, but only to the pain of not having his desire for pleasure fulfilled (1118b30-32).

indulgence, and are not those that naturally issue from taking mere food and drink. After all, considered as a category, the latter are beneficial rather than harmful.[12]

The condition of which the Many complain is not that of someone who undergoes an isolated episode of, say, lacking the strength to resist an extreme bout of thirst. And, accordingly, Socrates' psychological theory in the *Protagoras* tells us nothing about what the proper analysis of such a scenario is. Rather, since Socrates' initial description of the Many makes it clear that they are plagued by reprehensible desires, the innovation implicit in his analysis of their condition is in revealing that, contrary to their initial claims, these reprehensible desires are fully congruous with their values. Socrates' further innovation is in making explicit the criteria for truly holding a value: we saw that the Many were exposed as having only superficial attachment to values such as virtue and health, since they were unable to provide any account of what makes them ends in themselves. It stands to reason then that learning why virtue and health should be considered as ends and not merely as instrumental goods will allow them to function as real values in the agent's rational conception of the human good. And, once these notions are genuinely conceived as values, the agent should cease from experiencing base and reprehensible desires that are inherently opposed to them.

The significance of this interpretation for the question of the relation between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* is that contradiction between the two dialogues will arise only if the very same kinds of passionate motivations that in the *Protagoras* are said to be reflective of our rationally held values are presented in the *Republic* as fully independent of them. More specifically, contradiction will arise if the examples of psychic conflict depicted in *Republic* 4 portray situations where the agent's rational motivations are opposed by some of his desires where the latter are of a kind which the *Protagoras* would treat as reflections of the agent's reasoned values, and so as lacking any capacity to oppose them.[13]

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12 It has already been argued by some scholars (see Devereux 1995; Reshotko 2006; Brickhouse and Smith 2010) that Socrates could not possibly conceive of all human desires as manifestations of the agent's conception of the good, and that we must take him to recognize at least some desires as being bare urges. But these scholars offer a different (and substantially incompatible) account than the one I do here of how this phenomenon can be squared with the akrasia argument in the *Protagoras*. Whereas I claim that any desires that are not reflective of the agent's values are simply not relevant for the argument against the Many, these scholars all attempt to reintegrate "bare urges" into the agent's evaluative scheme by assuming that some executive judgment, which is expressed in good-related terms, mediates between these urges and any action that the agent undertakes (though they provide subtly different ways of construing the precise nature of the contribution bare urges make to the forming of the intellectualistic executive judgment about proper action). I cannot devote in the present context ample discussion to this interpretative strategy. But, very briefly, it seems to me that at least one serious detriment this interpretation suffers from is that it saddles Socrates with the highly infelicitous view that, from the standpoint of a moral psychology, there is no substantial distinction to be made between a man who gives in to his hunger and breaks a hunger strike, and a glutton who cannot avoid reaching for sweets. In both cases, the agents are equally inculpable for experiencing the desires they are plagued with, and equally culpable for surrendering to them.

13 Notice that contradiction between the two dialogues will ensue even if one claims, as Carone does (2001, 124-130) that in the *Republic* each part of the soul is attracted towards its

### The Tripartite View in *Republic* Book 4

The division of the soul in *Republic* 4 is supported first and foremost by the so-called principle of opposites, according to which one and the same thing cannot at the same time be disposed in opposite ways towards the same thing (436b-437a). So, for example, no one thing can simultaneously push and pull the same object; and nothing can be simultaneously in motion and at rest in the same respect. The relevance of this principle to the human psyche begins to surface when Socrates claims that attraction and aversion, and assent and dissent, are pairs of opposite attitudes of the relevant kind as to fall under the principle in question, so that nothing can be attracted and averse to the same object at the same time and in the same respect (437b-c). Once this principle is accepted, the way to describing mental conflict in terms of the simultaneous contrary action of distinct parts[14] in the soul is paved.

There are four scenarios depicting psychic conflict in *Republic* book 4 which Socrates uses in conjunction with the principle of opposites in order to distinguish between three parts of the soul. The first depicts a struggle between a sick man's desire for a drink and his rational aversion to that same drink, on account of his realization that it is unhealthy for him (439c-d). The second depicts Leontius, a man walking outside the city's walls, who upon arriving at the site of executed bodies feels a strong urge to view them, and at the same time a revulsion from doing so (439e-440a). The third scenario is general in character, and describes the phenomenon of babies, who are said to lack reason, experiencing a bout of anger (441a-b). The final scenario is taken from Homer, and depicts Odysseus torn between the urge to kill the insolent maids consorting with his wife's suitors, and his knowledge that doing so will expose his identity and vitiate his plan to retake his house and kill the suitors (441b-c). In order for these examples to provide a contrast with the *Protagoras* view as I have interpreted it, they must be construed as cases in which the agent's reason is opposed not merely by some desire, but specifically by one which the *Protagoras* would construe as reflective of the agent's values. As we saw, such desires are ones that testify to the agent's unique character and can reasonably be expected to change as a result of philosophical reflection.

As a candidate for proving a discrepancy between the two dialogues, the first scenario in book 4 is an obvious non-starter, since it clearly falls outside the scope of the *Protagoras*' discussion. Socrates is even explicit that the thirst in question is not merely bodily in nature, but is the result of a physical dysfunction (διὰ παθημάτων τε καὶ νοσημάτων 439d2). This means that even according to the *Protagoras* it would in no way reflect any meaningful fact about the agent's beliefs, nor would it be reasonable to expect it to dissipate or even lessen upon reflection or study. The thirst in question is a brute bodily drive which Socrates in the *Protagoras* would not treat as any evidence for the agent's preferences. And it is indicative neither of the agent's education nor the state of his knowledge.

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objects qua good. As long as such an interpretation takes the notion of the good proprietary to each soul-part to be independent of that of reason, the integrative approach of the *Protagoras* I have outlined will appear to have been superseded.

14 For my purposes, it is enough to speak of 'parts' of the soul without going into the metaphysical question of whether they really are distinct parts or merely aspects of the soul.

The Leontius case is the one that presents the obvious difficulty for my interpretation, since the desire it depicts as opposing the agent's reasoned conception of the good[15] is clearly not an inherently or generically human one, but appears to point to a unique psychological fact about its bearer. Since the desire seems to be sexual in nature (as is hinted by Leontius' self-loathing), and since its object is of a deviant kind compared to the normal range of sexual objects human beings usually go for, the case of Leontius seems to fall neatly within the scope of relevance for the *Protagoras*' argument against akrasia, and thus to contradict what Socrates says there about the relation between passion and reason.

But it is precisely its extreme perversity that gives grounds for doubting whether the Leontius case really is meant as a rebuttal of the rationalistic view of passionate motivation described in the *Protagoras*. The problem in fitting Leontius' sexual desire into the conceptual frame of the *Protagoras* is that its outlandishness makes it difficult to see how the Socrates of the *Protagoras* would construe it as reflective of the agent's view of the good. One way to think of the problem is as follows: when it comes to normal sexual desires, we naturally expect their owner to describe their objects in terms that are good-related. To give but one example from the *Republic* itself: the lover of boys in book 5 cannot but describe the objects of his erotic passion in good-related terms even when they might seem to others to be less than deserving of aesthetic praise (474d-475a). The point of the passage is that insofar as the boy-lover's desires are integrated in his personality, he is inclined to conceive and describe their objects as worthy of being taken, i.e. as good in some sense. In the case of the boy-lover, it seems that both the *Republic* and the *Protagoras* would offer a psychological analysis that describes how both "passions" and "reason" are oriented towards the same objects.

But would the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* diverge in their treatment of Leontius, so that only the latter would analyze his psyche as disjointed? In the *Protagoras* the Many were initially described as succumbing to pleasures they take to be base, where following a dialectical engagement with Socrates they were willing to admit that they in fact value the pleasures in these base actions. If the *Protagoras* would offer the same sort of analysis for the case of Leontius, claiming that he can ultimately be shown to value the objects of his passion, then it does seem to stand in conflict with the *Republic*, since in the latter dialogue it is clear that Leontius' reason is opposed to the satisfaction of his appetite's desire.

In order to see that the *Protagoras* would not analyze the Leontius case along the same lines as it does other cases of giving in to "base" pleasures, notice first that it would be futile to expect Leontius' necrophiliac desire to be susceptible in any way to reasoned argument. In contrast to recurring desires for sweets or more conventional forms of sexual indulgence which one would reasonably expect to be responsive to

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15 Carone (2001), who also wants to exonerate the examples in book 4 from the charge of conflict with the *Protagoras* attempts to argue that there is no explicit indication that in the case of Leontius, desire is opposed to reason rather than merely to spirit. But her claims seem to me less than convincing: Socrates is explicit that the spirited part is the natural ally of reason (440a-e), where this means that the latter's values are reflected by those of the former. It would therefore be odd to claim that a desire contradicts the values of spirit but not those of reason.

profound changes of attitude towards human values, a sexual desire for the dead would likely persist through such changes. The reason for this difference between necrophiliac and other sexual desires is not hard to see. A defining feature of the unified soul in the *Protagoras* was that the objects of the so-called passions become integrated in the agent's system of values, and could be approached by means of a philosophical conversation that exposes his reasons for caring for some objects and disdaining others. But necrophiliac desires do not conform to this general paradigm, since there are no possible human values with which the erotic love of corpses is congruent. People are bound to be embarrassed and disgusted by their necrophiliac tendencies no matter what view of the human good they happen to hold. In contrast to the akratics in the *Protagoras* who claim to give in to pleasures they describe as shameful but are then persuaded to redescribe these same pleasures in good-related terms, it is hard to imagine the necrophile goaded into redescribing his shameful sexual interaction with corpses in terms that reflect any of his considered values.[16] The point simply put is that necrophilia is a psychological illness and not a manifestation of the peculiarity of one's sexual 'taste'.

This interpretation of the Leontius case is also supported by the peculiar way Leontius is said to respond to having his desire satisfied. If Leontius' desire is of a type which the *Protagoras* would construe as a manifestation of psychic unity, we would expect giving in to the desire to result in some form of pleasure or satisfaction, even if these were followed by, or even mingled with, a sense of shame and remorse. But, significantly, Socrates does not describe Leontius as taking any pleasure in the sight of the dead bodies. Rather, succumbing to desire has two marked effects on him: the first is pain which, we learn, is inflicted by the spirited part in response to the situation at hand. The second is an immediate attempt to dissociate himself from any sense of fulfilment, by claiming that it is only his eyes that are capable of taking pleasure in such a spectacle (ἰδοὺ ὑμῖν, ἔφη, ὦ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος; 440a3-4). I suggest that this highly deviant response by an agent to a desire fulfilment is meant to signal that he suffers from acute psychic disintegration, to the extent that the desire in question is one which the *Protagoras* too would refuse to treat as any sort of representation of his values.[17]

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16 I take it that when calling the sight in question 'beautiful' (καλοῦ θεάματος 440a4) in the course of reproaching his eyes Leontius is being merely sarcastic. What he really means is that the sight is a hideous one, and that his eyes are blameworthy for treating it as if it was anything else. I say more on Leontius' address to his eyes in what follows.

17 That the example of Leontius should not count as a regular case of akrasia (regardless of what one's preferred analysis of akrasia is) is supported by Aristotle's discussion of beastliness (θηριότης) in NE 7.5. There Aristotle claims that people who succumb to highly deviant desires such as eating flesh, tearing out their hair, or eating nails or earth and even homosexuality (1148b27-29) should not be classed as incontinent, since incontinence is reprimanded as a vice, which implies that it is somehow under our control; whereas such individuals should be considered as impaired or diseased, and as not responsible for their condition. What makes Aristotle's discussion especially relevant here is his claim that the objects of desire relevant for the phenomenon of *akrasia* correspond to those of *akolasia* (intemperance), in which the agent chooses them through a reasoned decision (1148a4-17). Part of the reason why the examples of being overcome by perverse desires for actions such

This leaves as a final possible proof of discrepancy between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* the two examples introduced in order to prove that the spirited part of the soul is distinct from the reasoning one. The first is the case of children who immediately from birth are full of spirit, while still lacking reason for many years to come. Is the example of angry children one which the *Protagoras* and *Republic* would analyze differently? Since the example stipulates that the experience of anger in question occurs prior to the development of reason, it immediately follows that it occurs prior to any reasoned conception of the good. But if this is so, there is no conflict with the *Protagoras* since the situation lacks one of the basic prerequisites for an analysis according that dialogue's psychological theory.

The second example meant to distinguish spirit from reason is that of Odysseus torn between the desire to strike down the maids consorting with the suitors and his realization that doing so will vitiate his plan to reclaim his house. Presumably, Socrates in the *Protagoras* would construe the struggle in question as some attempt to deliberate about which is greater, the apparent good in killing the insolent maids on the spot, or the long-term one of regaining control of Odysseus' house. The analysis of the scenario by means of the tripartite division of the soul in the *Republic* will contradict this analysis if it is committed to the idea that the part of the soul which advises to refrain from slaying the maids is the sole bearer of the dictates of reason, whereas the part that is admonished by it does not reflect Odysseus' reasoned values.

But in fact, this is not the proper analysis of the Odysseus scenario according to the tripartite view. When discussing the role of the spirited part Socrates makes clear that it always sides with reason against appetite when the latter two are in conflict (440a-e). This means that the desires of the spirited part inherently reflect something of the values and attachments of reason. This analysis is fully in line with the details of the story as it appears in the Odyssey: Odysseus is not portrayed there as having any qualms about the moral rectitude of killing the maids. He merely realizes that doing so prematurely will hamper his plan to retake his home; when the conditions become ripe, Odysseus goes on to kill the maids. So while the spirited part is portrayed in the *Republic* as distinct from reason, its desires in a mature adult nevertheless reflect those of reason. Consequently, any conflict between reason and spirit in the *Republic* can be modeled using the scheme of the *Protagoras* which construes apparently conflicting desires as commensurate with each other, and as ultimately aimed at the attainment of one and the same goal. The fact that the *Republic* associates each side in the internal debate about the good with a distinct soul part does nothing to vitiate the congruence between the two dialogues.[18]

I conclude that none of the examples of mental conflict presented in *Republic* 4, nor their analyses in terms of distinct soul-parts, are in conflict with the *Protagoras* view. In

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as nail-biting do not count as cases of akrasia for Aristotle then is that if they did they would disrupt the symmetry of objects between akrasia and akolasia, since no one would ever perform such actions out of choice.

18 One might wish to object to this claim about the congruence of ends between the spirited and reasoning part in the *Republic* by claiming that the spirited part conceives of its object in terms related to the notion of 'the noble' whereas reason thinks in terms of 'the beneficial'. While I do not wish to object to the idea that the spirited part is sensitive to considerations of what is fine or base, one should note that in book 8 the content of these notions is explicitly described as deriving from reason (560d).

fact, it seems that Plato took great care in formulating these examples precisely to avoid such conflict. After all, if he did want to contradict the view of the *Protagoras* it would have been easy enough to use examples in which the irrational desires that oppose reason would, under the *Protagoras* view, represent the agent's reasoned outlook. Thus, the case of disease-induced thirst could easily have been substituted by a case of a desire for a sweet but unhealthy food, which the *Protagoras* would treat as representing a reasoned attachment to the pleasures of the tongue. All Plato would have had to do in order to create a discrepancy between the two dialogues would be to have Socrates claim that the desire for the pleasure of drink stems from the desiderative part, and is resisted by the reasoning part which cares nothing for pleasure and views health as an irreducible value. And instead of discussing Leontius' deviant desire for corpses, Plato could have presented an example of a sexual desire that would immediately be taken by his readers as having direct implication for the agent's character and values, such as a strong predilection for boys. The fact that Plato chose to steer clear of such examples is strong evidence that by separating parts of the soul he has something else in mind than contradicting the *Protagoras* view.

If the *Republic*'s conception of human action does not contradict the one in the *Protagoras*, why does Plato choose to formulate it in the elaborate terms of a tripartite soul?[19] A full answer to this question falls outside the scope of the present paper. I will therefore conclude with what is no more than a tentative suggestion: I suggest that the tripartite scheme of the *Republic* is meant to bolster the account of the *Protagoras* by providing the psychological apparatus needed for explaining certain prevalent forms of error about value. That is, the divided soul is meant to help explain how it is that people come to hold the sort of erroneous conception of the human good which the *Protagoras* attributes to them. After all, while Socrates in the *Protagoras* may have exposed the hedonistic values of the Many who claim to suffer from akrasia, the account he gave there told us nothing about why most people are prone to develop this "reasoned" attachment to pleasure.

Once we accept that in the *Republic* Plato was interested in exposing the reasons for error about human ends it becomes clear why he took care to choose as examples of psychic conflict just the ones we find in book 4. Plato's objective was to exhibit the unique and peculiar orientations of each part of the soul, while retaining the idea that in adult human beings these orientations ultimately tend to become fused. There are, Plato thinks, distinct natural irrational forces acting in the human soul; but in normal adults these are almost never manifested in a brute manner, since during the agent's development they undergo a process of rationalization and appropriation. Once this process is complete, it becomes very difficult to distinguish these distinct psychological elements, as the agent is wont to add a rational stamp of approval to his irrational desires by conceiving of their objects in good-related terms. Plato's problem then was how to

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19 One obvious reply to this question is that in the *Republic* Plato is interested in constructing an analogy between the city and the soul, and that this dictates the analysis of the soul into three distinct parts. But this answer ignores the fact that in the *Republic*, Socrates explicitly presents the investigation of the just city as subservient to the investigation of the soul. If Socrates' claim is in any way reflective of Plato's thought (and not a mere rhetorical ploy) we should look for some purely psychological motivation for the soul's partition.

expose the various basic motivational orientations of the soul without thereby implying that each of them exercises autonomy in controlling adult human action.

The solution was to present cases in which traces of these desires, in a state unsullied by rationality, could still be identified. On the side of the appetitive drive, these were instances of brute desire for drink, and a sexual desire so perverse that no agent would conceivably brand its object as good. On the side of the spirited part, the solution was to present a case of its activity in childhood prior to any possible process of psychic integration. These cases succeed in exposing the various causes of motivational error in an adult human being, while remaining in themselves neutral about the question of what degree of integration normally characterizes the mature soul.

And, in fact, once we turn to books 8 and 9 we find that each time Socrates attributes to the appetitive part of the soul a desire of the sort which the *Protagoras* would treat as reflective of the agent's reasoned conception of the human end, this occurs in the soul of someone whose reasoning part has already been perverted to the point of accepting such desires as values. Thus, though the desiderative part itself is sometimes described as "money-loving" (φιλοχρήματον) because money is the best means of attaining food, drink and sex (580e-581a), there are no instances in the *Republic* where a desire for profit afflicts someone whose reason is not already convinced to some degree that pleasure is the supreme human value. In fact, such love of money, originating in the *epithumetikon* is said to be the oligarchic man's sole reason for acting temperately in the face of desires for unnecessary pleasures (554d-e). Here, just as in the *Protagoras*, one who is afflicted by desires for pleasure that conflict with his conception of proper action is described as holding a merely instrumental conception of virtuous action — valuing it merely for its tendency to maximize some end that is identical to the apparently conflicting desire (temperance preserves one's fortune, and money is needed to secure food, drink and sex). And the emerging democrat who is assailed by a plethora of desires for pleasure stemming from the *epithumetikon* is convinced to an even lesser degree than his oligarchic father of the importance of virtuous rules of conduct. And once he surrenders to the sway of these desires, the immediate effect this has on his soul is that his reasoning part begins to conceive of such behavior in good-related terms (560b).

Thus, when we look at how the *Republic* accounts for cases of psychic conflict in which the appetitive desires in play are neither necessary, nor perverse, we see that it offers a description that is in essence very close to the one we find in the *Protagoras*. Both dialogues describe cases in which agents give in to a "base" desire for pleasurable indulgence in the face of their rational objection to doing so, as ones in which reason's objection to the passionate desire is based merely on instrumental considerations, and is never the result of a conflict of values or ends. I conclude then that the examples of psychic conflict in book 4 do not serve as proof that human souls are habitually torn apart by conflicting motivational forces, in contrast with the *Protagoras*' integrative view of motivation; rather the examples in book 4 serve as basic elements in a proposed etiology of psychological "types," one which is carried out in full in books 8 and 9, and

which gives rise to a psychology that is fully congruent with the deflationist analysis of psychic conflict in the *Protagoras*.[20]

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