

"Images of Irrationality"

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Section 1: Introduction

Plato's views about psychology in the later dialogues, such as the Laws, just as in the middle-period ones, such as the Republic, are tightly connected with other important aspects of his philosophy. An individual's character, virtuous or otherwise, is essentially constituted by the content, structure, and ways of regulating his knowledge, beliefs, emotions, desires, pleasures, and so on. Plato's understanding of these items will thus shape many aspects of his views on education, ethics, and political community. But Plato's understanding of these items also will constrain and be constrained by his epistemology and metaphysics.

The main issue that I discuss here is how Plato conceives of non-rational motivations—such as appetitive desires, some kinds of desire for sensory

pleasures, anger, fear, and so on--and how he understands the relations among them and the person's reason. In previous work, I have argued that Plato's psychology in the Laws and other late dialogues differs significantly from that of the Republic.¹ Here I want to consider some worries that have been raised about this account. I begin by noting, without arguing for them here, my earlier claims that are most relevant to the topic of non-rational motivations. Famously, the Republic divides the soul into three parts: the Reasoning part, the Spirited part, and the Appetitive part. This account holds that in the Republic:

- (1) the three parts of the soul are the ultimate subjects of psychic items, such as beliefs, desires, emotions, and so on,
- (2) all the parts have contentful beliefs and desires and this content is, at least partly, conceptual,
- (3) the lower parts do not have the conceptual resources made available by grasping Forms or recollecting concepts that are drawn from Forms, and

(4) the lower parts may well not be permanent parts of the soul and are, in some quite strong way, other than and alien to the Reasoning part.

This account holds that in the Laws:

(1) there are no longer multiple parts of the soul that are the ultimate subjects of psychic items, such as beliefs, desires, and emotions, and so on,

(2) non-rational motivations still essentially involve beliefs or concepts,

(3) at least some aspects of non-rational motivations use resources shared with reason, and

(4) at least some non-rational motivations are not wholly distinct from reason.

There are many other interpretive options and many issues to explore in evaluating them, but here I want to focus on one especially interesting other option that has been endorsed by Charles Kahn and developed in more detail by Hendrik Lorenz in their valuable contributions from which I have learned.² On this view, (a) the three parts of the soul are the

ultimate subjects of psychic items, such as beliefs, desires, and emotions from at least the time of the Republic onwards, and (b) the contents of the Reasoning part and of the non-rational parts are radically different in kind. Rational beliefs and rational desires have conceptual (language-like) constituents, but either none of the items in the lower two parts have conceptual content, or at least none of the items in the Appetitive part do. The content of non-rational desires and emotions is provided solely by the non-conceptual resources of perception (and stored perceptual memories), paradigmatically, by picture-like imagery. So the desires of the lower parts (or, at any rate, the Appetitive part) are not merely brutish in the way that the conceptualized thoughts of a gluttonous human are, but rather, literally have only the sort of epistemic resources available to non-human animals.³

Determining Plato's views on these matters is of intrinsic interest and questions about the role of mental imagery in thought have a fascinating history. But

getting clear on these issues is of ethical importance, since they are essential to understanding Plato's conception of the soul and thus of how human beings can be moved to act and perfected.

Section 2: Non-rational motivations: conceptual and imagistic theories.

To begin, in the late dialogues, Plato has an explicitly linguistic conception of thought and belief: "thought (dianoia) and speech (logos) are the same, except that what we call thought is speech that occurs without the voice, inside the soul in conversation with itself" (Soph. 263E3-5). Plato goes on to point out that speech, whether or not silent, contains affirmation and denial and characterizes belief as silent speech that involves affirmation or denial (Soph. 263E10-264A3). We also find that Plato freely gives accounts of even quite simple non-rational motivations that are conceptualized. Early in the Laws, for example, he characterizes confidence (tharros) as belief (doxa) that pleasure is in the offing, and fear (phobos) as the belief

that pain is in the offing (644C9-D1, cf. Laches 198B and Prot. 358DE). This is exactly what we would expect if such non-rational motivations have conceptual content in the late dialogues; imagery theorists will have to try to find ways of reading away the apparent commitment to conceptualization. But before turning to detailed analyses of particular passages, let us try to make clearer some of the philosophical issues.

Non-rational motivations have two important features. First, at Laws 644E-645A, both rational and non-rational motivations "draw" or "pull" the person to act. So, for example, sometimes an appetitive desire moves the person to act. I, for example, want a martini and the pitcher of martinis is in the refrigerator in the next room. My desire for a drink by itself does not explain my walking to the next room, picking up a glass along the way, and opening the refrigerator. What I also need to explain is how this appetitive desire for a martini interacts with the appropriate information--that

the martinis are in the refrigerator, that drinking my martini is nicer if I put it into a glass and so on--to produce the relevant action.

Second, sometimes the appetitive desire does not move me to act because reason overrides it or intervenes in some other way. In some of these cases, the desire remains and produces (or involves) some inclination to action. The existence of a desire is not, however, reducible to having a disposition to act.

Plato, after all, (unlike, e.g., Ryle) does not have a pure dispositional theory of desire, but thinks of them as psychic particulars. If we accept, as Plato does, that desires can have causal strength, we can say that in these cases the desire's strength is still more or less the same as it would be if there were no opposing rational motivations. In other cases, reason (or reasoning), in some way or another, substantially reduces (perhaps to zero) the appetitive desire's strength. Suppose, for example, a bystander informs me that the pitcher has been poisoned and I believe

this. In at least some cases, the strength of my appetitive desire to drink what is in the pitcher will be substantially reduced. Plato clearly recognizes the existence of all three kinds of case.

In cases in which reason provides essential information or those such that of helpful bystander, the relevant information interacts in some way or another with the appetitive desire. These cases set an essential task for the competing conceptual and imagistic accounts: an acceptable theory of non-rational motivations should be able to explain what is going on in them.

So how do these accounts compare in explanatory value? To begin, let us consider some of the general limitations of images. This is all the more important, since issues about the role of imagery have a long philosophical history.⁴ First, images are ambiguous or indeterminate. Consider, for example, appetitively desiring a soy burger. On the imagistic view, the content of this desire is provided by a picture-like

image of a soy burger. But images have very many representational features. In the given picture, the soy burger is, say, round, sitting on a plate, very thick, and has tomato on top of it. Is this a desire for a round soy burger or one of any shape? Do I want it on a plate or not? Thick or not? Would a burger with the tomato under it also be fine? The picture of a soy burger by itself leaves the content of the desire quite indeterminate, since it does not single out the features relevant to the desire. It is conceptualization and predication that allows us to pick out particular features in a way that picturing does not. And it is conceptualization and predicative structure that the imagery theorist denies to desires. Merely claiming that perceptual imagery has these capacities in virtue of possessing "quasi-predicational" structure without explaining the relevant mechanism and showing its adequacy is simply to declare victory without addressing the real problem.

Second, there are severe limitations on what such pictorial imagery can represent. Suppose I want a martini made with Tanqueray gin; picturing a martini will not do, since that does not capture the idea that it has Tanqueray in it. Perhaps the idea is that this content could be specified by picture imagery associated with memories of certain smells and tastes. (Memories will consist of stored perceptual contents that—insofar as they are available to appetite and interact with appetitive desires—are nonconceptual.) Let us grant (although it is not at all clear that we should grant this⁵) that this is enough to give us the idea of a single thing that has all these characteristics without involving any conceptualization or predicative structure. But what would give the content of my desire for a Tanqueray martini when I have never tasted one? (I have heard that their flavor is excellent, and this desire for one might lead me to perform various actions.) The more general problem is that there are all sorts of features of objects that are not

straightforwardly sensory (much less pictorial) and it is very hard to see how picture imagery could represent them. Consider, for example, the trite characterization of the primitive and indiscriminating erotic desires of the adolescent male: he wants to have sex with someone human and not his parent or sibling. What picture captures the notion of negation involved here?⁶ What picture gives the content of an erotic desire for someone amusing or your neighbor's spouse?

There are two further points to notice here. First, we cannot avoid these problems by attributing these desires to reason or the Reasoning part. They can be present in a person who rejects such objects as not best and putting these desires in the Reasoning part only introduces akratic conflict within the Reasoning part. Second, the problems only become much worse if we consider some central non-rational emotions. Anger, for example, involves the thought that I have been injured or insulted by you and can include the

thought that you have done so unjustly (e.g. Tim. 70AB). What picture captures this?

There are a number of other worries about giving images the primary place in specifying the content of non-rational motivations. Plato interpreters holding imagery theories often do not explain how it is that picture-like imagery provides content to non-rational motivations, but a very common line of thought, for imagery theorists in general, has been that images have the content they do because they resemble the objects of which they are images.⁷ Pictures, so to speak, carry their content on their surface. The fact of resemblance is enough to provide content, and there is no need for the picture to be interpreted or used in some particular way. This issue is a fundamental criticism of image theories; I shall discuss some related issues in connection a consideration of the poverty of associationist connections among images.

It is important to remember that the conceptual theorist need not deny the psychological reality of

mental images, and she can well grant that they play important roles in perception and memory. What she does deny is that they are the sole source of content for all non-rational motivations. It is also important to realize that the sort of imagist interpretation that we are considering is committed to a strong dualism about the content of rational motivations and non-rational motivations. Rational motivations, including rational desires, as well as any item having predicative structure, have content that is expressed in thoughts (or components of thoughts) that are themselves instances of inner speech. The content of non-rational motivations consists of picture-like imagery that is radically different in kind. Thus the judgment of a two or three year-old, "The ball is red." has conceptual and propositional content that makes it vastly more cognitively sophisticated than any possible non-rational motivation. As we shall see, a severe problem for such theories is explaining the possibility of appropriate interaction between these two very different kinds of

content.⁸ This problem is not faced by classic empiricist theories of content since typically in these theories all content, including that of thoughts, is cashed out in terms of images.

Section 3: The Timaeus

These imagery theories have two main motivations. First, it is held that the lower parts of the soul have only the cognitive resources of perception (including, for example, memories consisting of stored perceptions) and that the Theaetetus excludes any sort of conceptualization or predicative structure from perception. Second, the Timaeus explicitly denies belief to the Appetitive part of the soul and invokes, instead, picture-like imagery. Let us consider whether these provide plausible reasons for accepting an imagery theory and begin with the Timaeus. Passage 1 characterizes the Spirited part of the soul; Passages 2 and 3, the Appetitive part.

Passage 1

That part of the soul, then, which partakes of courage and spirit, since it is a lover of victory, they settled . . . between the midriff and the neck so that it might hearken to reason and, together with it, forcibly restrain the part consisting of desires whenever it should utterly refuse to yield willing obedience to the word of command from the citadel. The heart, which is the junction of the veins and the fount of the blood which circulates vigorously through all the limbs, they set in the guardhouse, in order that, when the force of the spirit boils up, as soon as reason passes the word round [tou logou paraggeilantos] that some unjust action is being done which affects them, either from without or even from the desires within, every sentient part of the body [pan hoson aisthêtikon en tôi stômati] should quickly perceive through all the channels both the exhortations and the threats and in all ways obey and follow them.⁹ (Tim. 70A2-B8)

Passage 2

The part of the soul that has appetites for food and drink and whatever else it feels a need for, given the body's nature, they settled in the area between the midriff and the boundary toward the navel. . . . They knew that this part of the soul would not grasp speech [logos] and that, even if it did have some share in the perception of logoi, it would have no natural instinct to pay heed to any logoi, but would be bewitched for the most part both day and night by images and phantasms. Hence the god conspired with this very tendency by constructing a liver . . . situated in the dwelling place of this part of the soul. He made it into something dense, smooth, bright and sweet, though also having a bitter quality, so that the power of thoughts, which proceed from reason, moving in the liver as in a mirror, which receives impressions and provides visible images, should frighten this part of the soul. (Tim. 70D8-71B5)

Passage 3 goes further than Passage 2 and explicitly denies belief to the Appetitive part of the soul.

Passage 3

[The appetitive part of the soul] is totally devoid of belief and calculation and reason [doxês men logismou te kai nou], but does share in perception, pleasant and painful, together with desires. For it is always wholly passive [paschon gar diateleï panta]; its formation has not by nature permitted it, revolving in itself around itself, repelling motion from without and using its own native motion, to discern and reflect on itself. (Tim. 77B5-C3)

On the simple literal reading of these passages, which is adopted by the imagistic interpretation, Plato accepts that the soul is composed of three distinct subjects. Although in the Republic each part had an array of psychic items including beliefs, here the Appetitive part, at least, is much more restricted: it has no beliefs, but only perceptions with allegedly only

imagistic content. Its most important interaction with the Reasoning part is via images that the Reasoning part intentionally projects onto it.¹⁰

But should we take these passages literally? This is an especially pressing question, since, as we shall see, there is another more sophisticated account in the Timaeus. There are a number of reasons not to take the account in these passages literally. First, the proposed explanation of how the Reasoning part interacts with the Appetitive part is that the former projects images on to the surface of the liver that frighten or cheer the Appetitive part. But, taken literally, this is simply a grotesque psychological theory. It requires, for example, that the Appetitive part has a mode of visual perception by which it literally sees the images on the liver. (This is an "inner eye" theory with a vengeance.) Whatever the mistakes or infelicities of Plato's account, we should avoid attributing to him views that are ridiculous.¹¹

Similarly, the Timaeus presents the penis and womb as ensouled creatures that are the subjects of sexual desire (erôs) and the womb as capable of anger.¹² But the elevation of the penis and the womb to genuine subjects of psychic states or activities is surely not intended by Plato to be literally true. They are not genuine psychic subjects, but rather parts of the body that are especially affected by psychic states or activities such as desire. These claims should rather be seen as a metaphor for the literally true claim that psychic states can have direct bodily effects (and Plato correspondingly recognizes that bodily movements can have psychic effects, e.g. Laws 790C-791C).¹³

We see a related phenomenon in Passage 1 above (Tim. 70AB) where the Reasoning part is seen as communicating linguistically with the body. Here, again, taking the passage literally is highly problematic. How could Plato think that every percipient part of the body to which blood flows can understand linguistic commands. And this would also fit very awkwardly

with the idea that the Appetitive part cannot grasp linguistic content: why think that my heart can grasp logoi, but my Appetitive part cannot? We should rather see this, again, as a metaphorical expression of the literal truth that psychic states can have direct bodily effects. The awareness of injustice and anger can cause, e.g., a more rapid heartbeat and breathing, flushing in the cheeks and so on.

These points should make us open to the idea that talking of mortal parts of the soul as subjects is also a metaphorical expression of a literal psychological truth. I return below to the status of the mortal parts.

Next, there are other puzzling features of the mortal parts of the soul in the Timaeus. To begin, Passage 3 claims that the Appetitive part is "wholly passive". This is very problematic in two ways. First, it entails that the Appetitive part is not a self-mover and, on Plato's views in the late dialogues, being a self-mover is an essential characteristic of souls (e.g. Laws 892A-896C). This would seem to make the Appetitive

part not a psychic entity at all. The soul's status as a self-mover might well be consistent with the idea that some psychic items are caused (and in that way moved) by other psychic items, e.g., a belief might cause a belief or a desire. But the Appetitive part, like the other parts of the soul, is, on the imagistic interpretation, meant to be a genuine subject of psychic states and not merely a featureless container of psychic states. Plato never spells out exactly what this comes to, but in a number of places in the late dialogues, he stresses that the soul as subject is active with respect to its affections: it examines, characterizes, and compares them; is asks questions about them, comes to judgments about them and so on.¹⁴

Plato shows no sign of wanting to reduce all this activity to interaction of the psychic items all by themselves. But regardless of whether we see this activity as activity of the soul itself (or its parts) or as an attribute of some psychic states themselves, this

kind of activity is precisely what is denied to the Appetitive part: it cannot "discern and reflect on itself" (Tim. 77B7-8). Why posit a separate subject as a holder of such psychic states, even if the purported subject can never discern its own states?

When we turn to the Timaeus on perception, we shall see that in what goes on in a typical case of seeing, say, a red apple we can distinguish two elements or aspects: both a representation that is in itself unconceptualized and some active conceptualization of it. There I shall take up the analogous suggestion that a typical case of an appetitive desire involves both such elements.

Second, even if we could solve the above worries, there is another problem. As Filip Karfík aptly observes, the Timaeus tells us what affections are found in the mortal parts of the soul and where in the body they are placed, but not what the mortal parts are made of.¹⁵ This is a conspicuous omission, since Plato goes out of his way in the Timaeus to describe

the composition of the World Soul and the immortal part of the human soul. The World Soul is made (at least partially) out of parts of the Forms of Being, Sameness, and Difference and the immortal part of the human soul is made of the same things, but in a less pure form (Tim. 42AE).¹⁶ It is this composition, and the mathematical arrangement of the circles of the immortal part, that allows it to make judgments about both Forms and sensibles that involve the concepts of being, sameness, and difference. The Appetitive part's inability to apply concepts suggests that it is not composed of Forms.

Moreover, whatever the composition of the mortal parts may be, there is no reason to think that there is any significant metaphysical difference between the two mortal parts with respect to their composition (Tim. 69CE).¹⁷ But if the Spirited part is not composed of Forms, it, too, should lack the ability to conceptualize. Yet trying to account for the content of all the psychic items found in the Spirited part—e.g.

anger at injustice, shame and so on—purely in terms of images is very implausible and Plato explicitly associates spirited emotions with linguistic content (see Passage 1 above, Tim. 70A2-B8). But, then, granting that a psychic entity cannot be composed simply of matter, what is there left for the mortal parts to be made of? Peter Lautner and Filip Karfik make the important suggestion, to which I shall return later, that the mortal parts are "nothing but specific motions of the specific tissues in the body".¹⁸ In particular, Karfik suggests that they are just the "specific movement of specific tissues, both arising from the immortal soul and acting upon it."¹⁹ I shall return to this idea below and suggest that it be supplemented by giving some role to the immortal part of the soul in non-rational motivations.

The cases noted at the beginning of this chapter that any account of non-rational motivations needs to explain remain quite puzzling on the literal Timaeus view. We have seen that it is part of the literal

Timaeus story that the Reasoning part sends images to the Appetitive part to frighten or soothe it, that is, especially to dissuade the Appetitive part from acting on its bad desire. (This cannot be seen as trying to get the Appetitive part to make a better decision, since the Appetitive part is not capable of the reflection involved in decision. If, after all, you are not capable of being aware of your desires, in what sense can you decide?)

So presumably when the Appetitive part's desire does move the person to act, the desire for a martini with its imagistic content interacts with current sensory information to produce the relevant action. But we saw earlier that there are severe problems for imagistic theories here because (a) images are indeterminately ambiguous in what they represent, and (b) their capacity to represent anything other than simple non-conceptual content is quite limited.²⁰ But consider the case in which the Appetitive part's desire is for something that the Reasoning part rejects. Suppose that Appetitive part has a desire for candy

that the Reasoning part rejects. I have no candy in my room, but I realize that you might, and that I can email you to ask you to bring some over. I have never done this before to get candy, so there is no train of memories in my soul of typing followed by eating candy. The Reasoning part has no reason to provide the relevant imagery (pictures of the keyboard letters, etc.) needed for the appetitive desire to produce the relevant bad action. How, then, could the appetitive desire produce action? The imagistic account thus fails to provide a good account of the ways in which the non-rational motivations operate.

I note two final points before turning to the other account in the Timaeus. First, it is an essential part of Lorenz's account that an appetitive desire with pictorial content can by itself move the person to act. Yet we are often aware of desires for something that is disapproved of by reason, e.g. Jane is aware of desiring to sprinkle spoons of sugar on her cereal and akratically acts on the desire. For Jane, this desire is recognized

and interacted with, at least in part, by virtue of the relevant propositional content, e.g., "I want to sprinkle lots of sugar on my cereal." On Lorenz's story, however, the desire that actually moves Jane to action is the appetitive desire that has only the relevant pictorial content. So if there is also some desire (i.e. some psychic particular) that actually has the relevant propositional content, this desire is causally inert. It is more in the spirit of the imagistic account to hold that there is only one desire present and that this desire has only imagistic content. What has propositional content on this suggestion would be reason's awareness of the unconceptualized desire and reason's awareness need not (and, indeed should not) be a causal element in getting Jane to act on her appetitive desire.

This is not, however, an attractive account. It leaves it far too open that the Reasoning part's interpretation of the appetitive desire might actually come apart from the end aimed at by the appetitive desire: Jane's reason (or her Reasoning part), for

example, rejects what she takes to be a desire to sprinkle sugar on her cereal, but the appetitive desire's imagistic content of a white, granular substance may produce the action of sprinkling salt on her cereal. The imagistic account leaves too much room to open up between reason's interpretation of the desire and the desire's imagistic content and its causal powers. On the imagistic account, our behavior should be much more surprising to us than it actually is.

Second, there is something inherently philosophically odd about (1) holding that appetitive desires have only imagistic content and are related only by associationist mechanisms, and (2) positing a separate psychic subject for these items. A primary motivation for associationist psychology is that it provides a parsimonious account of psychic phenomena.²¹ In basic outline, it attempts to account for the relevant psychological activity by positing (a) certain psychic representations, and (b) certain laws of association that determine the succession of these

representations.²² We thereby obviate the need for any further psychic structure and especially the need for psychic subjects or faculties that operate on these representations via inference.

Consider, for example, the clearest instance of the "association of ideas" in Plato, that is, the account of recollection in the Phaedo. (Memory has historically been the psychic activity that is the central case for associationism.) In the Phaedo, a perception triggers the unconscious stored memory of a Form and it is essential to this story that the process is not one of subject drawing inferences, but is instead simply causal. (If we were moved by inference to the recollected concept, it would not need to be innate.) But in the Phaedo both these trains of association and also genuine inferences are found in a single subject: there is no need for additional subjects. On the sort of imagistic theory we are considering here, there seems to be little, if anything, left for a subject that houses these representations and those linked via association

to them to do except to serve as a substratum for these particulars. We have just seen the problems with making such representations causally efficacious with respect to action. And I have argued above that a "bare substratum" account is an unsatisfying conception of a subject for the late Plato.²³

Section 4: Perception and Pleasure

Consider a theory of perception and perceptual content that posits two basic subjects: one to have unconceptualized representations and another to be aware of and conceptualize these representations. Why posit two subjects? Taking a clue from the Republic's Principle of Contraries, we might think that two subjects are needed when the items in each cannot coexist in the same thing. But positing two subjects as described above for perception seems decidedly unnecessary: the same subject can it seems, quite obviously, have conceptualization and representation. Indeed, such doubling of subjects seems not only unmotivated and extravagant, but is

perhaps simply counterproductive. The conceptualizing subject, after all, needs to be aware of these representations in order to conceptualize them. Positing a distinct, proper subject for these representations only needlessly introduces problems about access.²⁴

We find a philosophically much better story about perception in the Timaeus. Given the close link between perceptions and non-rational motivation, we might hope that this better story about perception can help us find a satisfactory account of non-rational motivations. So let us begin with perception.

The motions produced by all these encounters [of the immortal part of the human soul with parts of the body and with external bodies] would then be conducted through the body to the soul, and strike against it. That is no doubt why these motions as a group came afterwards to be called 'perceptions' [aisthêseis].²⁵
(Tim. 43C4-7)

[When the immortal soul was added to the body] the motions involved with perception joined with the continually flowing channel to stir and violently shake the soul's revolutions . . . They mutilated and disfigured the circles in every possible way so that the [soul's] circles [of the Different and the Same] barely held together and though they remained in motion, they moved irrationally [alogôs]. . . . Whenever the revolutions of the soul encounter something outside of them characterizable as same or different, they will speak of it as 'the same as' something, or as 'different from' something else when the truth is just the opposite, so proving themselves to be false and lacking reason. And at such times, souls do not have any revolution that rules and guides. . . . It is then that these revolutions, however much in control they seem to be, are actually under their control. All these disturbances are no doubt the reason why even today and not only at the beginning, whenever a soul is

bound within a mortal body, it at first lacks reason. [But over time the circles can regain their proper courses.] They then correctly identify what is the same and what is different, and render intelligent the person who possesses them . . . if such a person also gets the proper nurture to supplement his education, he will turn out perfectly whole and healthy, and will have escaped the greatest of illnesses. But if he neglects this, he will limp his way through life and return to Hades uninitiated and lacking reason. (Tim. 43C8-44C4)

This is an account of the origin of irrationality in the Timaeus that does not involve the addition of separate subjects to the immortal part. There is much more to say about these passages than I can discuss here.²⁶

What are most important for us are the following points.

The immortal part of the human soul is comprised of the circle of the Same and the circle of the Different

in a certain mathematical structure. These circles move and I agree with commentators going back to Plutarch that Plato ascribes actual spatial motions to these circles.²⁷ On the cognitive side, the immortal part contains the soul's innate resources, including the concepts of Being, Sameness, and Difference and at least the concept of Being is necessary for any belief.

According to Tim. 43C, perceptions (aisthêseis) are motions (a) in the body that originate from the body's contact with external objects, and (b) reach and affect the immortal part of the soul. These motions are unconceptualized until they reach the immortal part of the soul that then characterizes them. It is the property of motion that provides the basis for the interaction of the psychic and the material. Both the soul and material things are capable of being in spatial motion and of bringing about and being affected by spatial motion (material things bring about motion by having been moved themselves, the soul is a self-mover). Interaction is possible because what is psychic

and what is material share a common property, that is, motion.

It is the interaction of these motions (Tim. 43E-44A) that (at least partially) constitutes the conceptualization of perception by the resources of immortal part. The upshot of such interaction is that the soul characterizes something as the same or different and this characterization is straightforwardly conceptual and propositional, that is, the soul says that this is the same as or different than something and what it says is either true or false (Tim. 43E-44A). This is silent speech or thought that culminates in belief (doxa) as the Sophist characterizes them (263E-264A).²⁸ And as Kamtekar aptly points out in her contribution to this volume, in Laws Book 10, Plato identifies items such as deliberation (bouleuesthai), belief (doxazein), pleasure and pain (chairousan lupoumenên), boldness and fear (tharrousan phoboumenên) and hatred and love with psychic motions (89E-897A).

The passage at Tim. 42Eff. describes ordinary perceptual encounters that occur shortly after the entry of the immortal part into the body: the immortal part provides the conceptualization of perception and this happens very early, for example, in young children.²⁹ There is no invocation of and no need for the mortal parts of the soul as separate subjects that are aware of and house perceptions. (Indeed, as we have seen, the Appetitive part cannot be aware of its own states, cf. Tim. 77BC.) Perception and perceptual belief are not described as involving separate, distinct subjects being added onto the immortal part, nor as the immortal part of the soul giving rise (e.g. by fission) to separate, distinct subjects.³⁰ At least with respect to perception, all that is going on is motion reaching the soul and then being characterized in virtue of affecting the motions of the immortal part. The connection between the immortal part and the perceptions is direct. What remains throughout the interaction are the circles of the Same and the

Different and their basic structure. The elements of this story are the (i) original circles of the Same and the Different, (ii) the motions that strike these circles, and (iii) the resultant motions of the circles which are, so to speak, the composition of these motions.

Further, from very early on, conceptualized perception is a basic input of ordinary action (Tim. 43AC and 43E-44C). There is no hint of a subject that houses unconceptualized images that interact via association to produce action. In ordinary and early action (much of which will be in service of non-rational desires), perception plays its role as part of a larger whole including conceptualization. Ordinary visual experience that is relevant to action may include image-like representations, but these are conceptualized so as to give rise to true or false beliefs, e.g., that this is different from that.

Given the close links between perceptions and non-rational motivations, we should expect a similar story about the latter. Part of the content of these

motivations might often be perceptual or derived from perception and sometimes imagistic, but as they are part of our ordinary experience and enter into our actions, they will also be conceptualized. Remember that the imagist theories we are considering hold that all non-rational motivations have only imagistic content, the conceptualist interpretation that I advocate only requires that some human non-rational motivations have conceptual content. This is entirely consistent with the idea that non-human, non-language users do not possess concepts or that non-language using human babies' psychic states have only imagistic content. It is also consistent with the idea that some (or even many) non-rational motivations in normal, adult human language users have only imagistic content. All that is necessary to reject these imagistic theories is that at least some human non-rational motivations have conceptual content. The evidence and arguments that we have considered and will consider, however, warrant stronger conclusions.

In a later passage in the Timaeus there is a suggestion as to how non-rational motivations may involve the resources of the immortal part of the soul and have conceptual content.

The most important point that remains concerning the properties that have a common effect on the body as a whole, pertains to the causes of pleasures and pains in the cases we have described as well as all cases in which perceptions are registered throughout the bodily parts, perceptions which are also simultaneously accompanied by pleasures and pains in those parts. . .

When even a minor disturbance affects that which is easily moved by nature, the disturbance is passed on in a chain reaction with some parts affecting others in the same way as they were affected, until it reaches that which is intelligent (or cognizant) [to phronimon]³¹ and reports the property that produced the reaction . . .

This, then, is what we should understand about pleasure and pain: an unnatural disturbance that

comes upon us with great force and intensity is painful, while its equally intense departure, leading back to the natural state, is pleasant . . . All those bodies which experience only gradual departures from their normal state or gradual depletions but whose replenishments are intense and substantial are bodies that are unaware of their depletions but not of their replenishments, and hence they introduce very substantial pleasures in the mortal part of the souls but not any pains. (Tim. 64A2-65A2)

Here motion is transmitted through the body until it reaches the "that which is intelligent" (to phronimon). The phronimon here must be the immortal part of the soul. If, as is plausible, we follow the parallel with Tim. 43B-44C there will be interaction between the phronimon and the incoming motion and the resultant composite motion should partially constitute the awareness.³²

The awareness of the motion reaching the immortal part is thus at least a necessary constituent of anything that counts as a pleasure (even of appetitive pleasures). So pleasure, as such, only has psychic effects when the immortal part has the necessary awareness of the relevant motions. Accordingly, no pleasures are fully characterizable simply as a movements belonging to the mortal part of the soul. They do count as pleasures and enter into their typical psychic interactions, for example, giving rise to certain desires, only with this contribution of the immortal part. Thus a paradigmatic item in the lower part relevant to non-rational motivations only is what it is and has the psychic effects that it does at least partially in virtue of the deployment of the immanent resources of the immortal part.³³

Does such awareness include conceptualization? Since awareness is an operation of the immortal part of the soul, there is nothing to prevent simultaneous conceptualization. The parallel with Tim. 43B-44C

suggests that conceptualization is typically part of the interaction (when there is interaction) between the immortal part and the motions coming through the body, as was the case, for example, in the perceptions of young children.³⁴ And if we were to hold that all pleasures are unconceptualized and given their content simply by picture-like imagery, we would again face the problems noted above for imagistic theories of content.

Moreover, there is good evidence that Plato in the Philebus thinks that at least some non-rational pleasures have intentional and conceptual content and it is even clearer that he also accepts there that non-rational hopes have conceptual content (Phil. 39E-40A).³⁵ In the Timaeus itself, the primary constituents of the mortal part of the soul are "pleasure, a powerful lure to what is bad, then pains which make us flee what is good; besides these, confidence [tharros] and fear [phobos], foolish counselors both [aphrone sumboulô]; then also anger [thumon] hard to assuage and hope

[elpida] easily lead astray" (Tim. 69D1-4). Confidence and fear have conceptual content for Plato (Laws 644C9-D1, cf. Laches 198B and Prot. 358DE) as does hope, as we have just seen, so this passage is sufficient by itself to show that not all the psychic states or activities attributed to the mortal have only imagistic content. We have also seen the difficulty of giving a purely imagistic theory of anger. We should instead see whatever imagistic representation is involved in non-rational motivation as an aspect of a broader state that includes conceptualization and whose effects depend at least in part on its conceptualization.³⁶

To sum up, as we saw in the analysis of Tim. 42Eff., irrational perceptual beliefs are the result of the composite motions of the immortal part of the soul and motions coming through the body and from such beliefs certain actions arise. In the case of pleasure, the analogous story is quite straightforward. Insofar as some non-rational pleasures involve perceptions that

include the awareness of the immortal part, they are like the perceptual beliefs at Tim. 42Eff. They are a result of the interaction of motion coming through the body and the immortal part's activity including conceptualization. This account can and should be extended to include other non-rational motivations such as fear, anger, hope, desire and so on.

Irrational perceptual beliefs, such as those at Tim. 42Eff., are not irrational because they are unconceptualized. They are wrongly conceptualized because of the influence of the incoming motion. Just as irrational beliefs are not unconceptualized beliefs, but wrongly conceptualized ones; non-rational motivations are not unconceptualized, e.g. desires, but are wrongly or incompletely conceptualized.

It is sometimes thought that such an interpretation makes Platonic psychology essentially Stoic, that is, that it gives Plato a theory in which all motivation is rational. But to think this would be a mistake. Plato in the late dialogues certainly does not

think that, e.g., spirited emotions or appetitive desires involve or stem from a judgment about what is the best thing to do all things considered. At the metaphysical level, the motion that underlies irrational perceptual beliefs at Timaeus 42E_{ff}. is not simply an instance of the immortal part of the soul's own circular motion, but is a composite of this and motion coming through the body. This will also be the case for at least some pleasures and I have suggested that such an account can be extended to other non-rational motivations. Further, Plato continues to accept that spirited emotions and appetitive desires can cause action without the endorsement of reason: Plato is not a Stoic. But I have argued that at least some of these motivations will have conceptual content and this can only come from the resources of the immortal part. There is no place left for mortal parts of the soul that are separate, distinct subjects with exclusively imagistic content.³⁷

Section 5: Conclusion

An ethical psychology should provide, at least in very broad outlines, some view of how people think, feel, and are moved to act, how they can be ethically educated and offer some understanding of their perfected ethical condition. In all these ways, the imagistic theory attributes to Plato a worse theory than he actually has.

First, the canonical interaction for the imagery theorist is the projection of images by the reasoning part on the liver. This is not something of which one is typically aware and it reduces the central interaction of reason and appetitive desire to unconscious levels. This worry does not depend on a general skepticism about unconscious psychic activities, but it is a high cost to make unconscious the large majority of reason's dissuasive effects on appetitive desires. Worse, it makes the relation between the input of reason and the effect on the appetitive desire disturbingly contingent: any aversive image should do and, even worse, what may really do the work are pain

and the prospect of pain. The relation between reasoning and non-rational motivations thus becomes oddly manipulative. Indeed, it is difficult to make sense of the distinction between the manipulative and the non-manipulative if we are restricted to the causal interaction of associationistically connected images.

Second, as we have seen, because this theory identifies the non-rational motivation with its imagistic representation it makes our non-rational motivations, as we are normally aware of them, causally inefficacious. Third, restricting the content of non-rational motivations to picture-like imagery has a surprising, but logically straightforward consequence. If, e.g., a desire or an emotion has conceptual content, it cannot be a non-rational motivation and must instead be a rational motivation. Desires that actually have the conceptualized content "I want a Tanqueray martini." or "I want to sleep with my neighbor's spouse." (or emotions such as being angry that you have done me an injustice) either simply cannot exist or must count

as rational motivations. Neither consequence seems acceptable and the latter option threatens to reintroduce akratic conflict among rational motivations.

Fourth, as we have also seen, what we wanted was some account of, e.g., our appetitive desires that would do the following work.

(1) It should explain how the representations involved in non-rational motivations can fix upon a certain object, e.g., a round soy burger. Here the imagery theory faces, without attempting to address, the problem of the ambiguity of images.

(2) It should explain how the representations involved in non-rational motivations can represent something that is not an object of sensory awareness (either present or stored), e.g., a martini made of Tanqueray gin, but we found no such resources in the imagery theory. It is simply a fact about human psychology that non-rational motivations in adult language-users can take as their objects very complicated and sophisticated objects, e.g., one's neighbor's spouse.

The imagery theories we have considered do not attempt to meet this challenge.

(3) It should explain how appetitive desires interact with each other and relevant pieces of information such that we can explain our ordinary experience of having appetitive desires, having them be affected by other appetitive desires, having them change in light of information, and move us to action. We found that the imagery theory had no account of how images and linguistic information could interact, since there seems to be no common denominator allowing such interaction and we also found that trains of associationistically connected images seemed much too impoverished to guide even primitive appetitive desires.

In sum, we have seen no reason to think that such a model could be anything other than woefully inadequate for describing human psychology. It is in no way an adequate substitute for the conceptual and linguistic characterization of non-rational motivations

that we saw that Plato actually gives (e.g. Laws 644C9-D1).

In conclusion, I would like to return to the ethical implications of such imagistic theories for understanding the training of non-rational motivations and ethical education in general and the value of having, at last, well-ordered non-rational motivations. First, since pictures cannot by themselves plausibly represent non-sensible value properties, they cannot be ways of grasping, even partially and infirmly, truths about value. (This is an especially implausible result for spirited emotions.) Having one's non-rational motivations in good condition thus seems only to have instrumental value insofar as this avoids psychic turmoil or interference with rational belief and desire of the sort we find in *akrasia*. The idea that the only states that have non-instrumental value are rational motivations gives us a Plato who is all too Stoic.

Second, the imagistic account also fails to provide a plausible account of the role of non-rational

motivations in ethical learning. Once again, they seem only capable of instrumental value or disvalue. But in the Laws, Plato is concerned to stress the importance of some sensory pleasures. Plato conceives of value properties in quasi-mathematical terms, e.g., as certain kinds of symmetry or orderliness. He also emphasizes the importance of children engaging in and taking pleasure in the right sorts of movements, e.g. in dance, from very early ages (e.g. Laws 653A-654A). These pleasures will be identified (at least in part) by the children having them in linguistic terms, in particular, in terms that make some reference to harmony or order. Desires for pleasures thus have more than pictorial content, and thus cannot be assigned to the appetitive part of the soul on the imagistic theory. But such pleasures and desires for them need not, and typically in youths, will not be the product of an all things considered judgment of what is overall best and can come into conflict with such judgments. Thus we cannot put them into a distinct and separate reasoning

part. Nevertheless, they provide the building blocks for later and more sophisticated conceptions of order.³⁸

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¹ Bobonich (2002). I would like to thank Emily Fletcher, Corinne Gartner, and Rachana Kamtekar for their comments and help.

² Kahn (2004) and Lorenz (2006). I shall not record the detailed differences between Kahn and Lorenz, but (1) Kahn denies that any items in the lower parts have conceptual content; Lorenz agrees about the Appetitive part, but is reticent about the Spirited part, and (2) Kahn thinks that Plato's account of the Appetitive part is "not fully coherent" (2004, 355). I shall not keep repeating these differences.

³ E.g. the lower parts of the soul "have beliefs only in the Humean sense of animal belief as implied by behaviour" Kahn (2004, 354).

⁴ For an overview, see Thomas (2008). These issues about images' limitations are surprisingly absent from the Platonic secondary literature. For a good brief discussion of Aristotle with further references, see Caston (2009, 331-5).

⁵ Thinking of an object as one, different from other objects and so on requires the use of concepts (Th. 184D-186B). The unity of the sense object would seem, on the present associationist story, to consist merely in the sensory qualities' co-occurrence (whether in perception or memory).

⁶ The suggestion at Stsmn. 285D-286A that we can sometimes give an adequate account of something by pointing to a perceptual likeness of it (a picture or model) does not entail that we can grasp such things by having entirely non-conceptual representations. The entire exchange at Stsmn. 285Dff. is a linguistic

interaction. You ask me what an avocado (or weaving) is, I point to a picture or model of one and you grasp, satisfactorily for everyday purposes, what an avocado is by applying the concepts of green, rounded and so on. See Owen (1986).

⁷ For a classic criticism of this view, see Fodor (1975, 174-95) and an overview with references in Thomas (2008).

⁸ This theory holds that the images themselves provide the content of non-rational motivations; it does not attribute to Plato a theory in which the content of picture imagery is provided by a functionalist or a causal historical account. Functionalist or causal theories of content may give a central place to imagistic representations (e.g. Prinz (2002)), but this is quite different from the imagistic interpretation we are considering here.

⁹ Translations in this chapter draw on Cooper (2005) and Pangle (1980).

¹⁰ There is no evidence that Plato allowed at least some beliefs to have only imagistic content in the Republic and denies this for all beliefs in the late period while allowing at least some desires and emotions to have imagistic content in both the middle and the late period. First, in Republic 4 the argument for the division of the soul relies on attributing to all desires both causal force and linguistic content (cf. Bobonich (2002, 216-47)). Nevertheless, if we had strong evidence that up to the Republic Plato had an imagistic theory of beliefs and desires, we might try to read away the parts of the Republic that do not fit this picture. But Plato in the early dialogues takes it as obvious that beliefs and desires have conceptual content. Plato, for example, takes it as obvious that a person's only ultimate (or at any rate decisive) desire is for her own happiness and thus that once she realizes that X is best overall for her she will (try to) do X. A necessary condition for finding this so obvious is seeing the logical relations between the contents of the belief

and the desire that rationalize the action. One might still think that akrasia is possible, but without accepting the semantic and logical relations between belief and desire, there is no prima facie reason to accept either the rationality or necessity of acting when the belief and desire fit together as above.

¹¹ In (2006, 101) Lorenz, with commendable restraint, admits that the Timaeus' solution is "less than successful", but thinks that Plato had no better idea until the Philebus. In unpublished work, Lorenz may move to the idea that in the Timaeus these images are directly transmitted through motions in the body's internal fire from the Reasoning part to the Appetitive part so that the Appetitive part becomes aware of the images. But this option still leaves the images painted on the liver with no essential part to play.

¹² Cf. Karfik (2005, 209-10).

¹³ For more discussion, see Kamtekar (this volume).

¹⁴ See, e.g. Tht. 191A-196D (the Wax Block), and Bobonich (2002, 279-82, 330-1).

¹⁵ Karfík (2005, 203-4).

¹⁶ Here, again, it is very hard to take these details literally. In the construction of the World Soul (Tim. 35B-36D), the parts of the Forms that go into the World Soul are spatially extended. It is very difficult to make good sense of this construed literally (even if one were to think of Forms as scattered particulars).

¹⁷ Bobonich (2002, 321).

¹⁸ Lautner (2005, 246, n. 28) and on plants' souls, see Karfík (2005, 213-4).

¹⁹ Karfík (2005, 214).

²⁰ Again, this is not to deny that a language user could use images to represent very abstract conceptual content.

²¹ This is stressed by Fodor (1996, 23-38), but is also well noticed by Frede (1990). For an account of the strengths and weaknesses of associationism, see Fodor (2005).

²² Cf. Fodor (1996, 27).

²³ I am unsure of how Lorenz thinks of psychic subjects and his position on the Republic's Principle of Contraries is puzzling. Since the Principle as stated in Rep. 4 is not transparent in its application to conflicting desires, there has been a long debate in the secondary literature over whether there is some plausible formulation of it that produces exactly the three parts of the soul that Plato wants. Proposals have been made, found open to counterexamples and new, modified proposals offered. Lorenz announces that he will defend the "simple picture" according to which "the simultaneous occurrence of a desire and an aversion towards one and the same object . . . reveals a partition of the soul" (2006, 41). He also agrees that the Principle requires that it is impossible (not just uncommon or technologically difficult) for a single thing to have genuine contraries (23, 49, 202). But he also allows that counterexamples to the Principle are possible in unusual, but possible circumstances (51-2). He does not consider the range of cases that scholars

have seen as counterexamples to the simple picture and thus does not give a satisfactory account of the sorts of cases in which the simple picture fails. Even those proposing counterexamples do not think that conflict within a soul part is the norm (cf. Bobonich (2002, 217-54) and Irwin (1995, 212-21, 234, 290-5)). But in any case, such a strategy is to hold that the simple picture is not adequate, not to defend it.

²⁴ Positing a second subject or system might be warranted if it engaged in operations on the input that are cognitively inaccessible to the Reasoning part. (Cf. Fodor's notion of modularity (see Fodor (1996)) discussed in Bobonich (2002, 257).) But the motions coming from outside in the case of perception (and as we shall see pleasure) are simply transmitted, not processed.

²⁵ For the etymology, see Taylor (1928) ad loc.

²⁶ This extends the account in Bobonich (2002).

²⁷ Plutarch De an. procr. 1014ff, cf. Sedley (1997) and (1999).

²⁸ It is also phantasia as Soph. 264B2 characterizes it, that is, "a mixture of perception and belief summeixis aisthêseôs kai doxês]". Cf. Silverman (1991). It is important to note that phantasia is not independent from belief.

²⁹ Plato in the Laws is concerned with establishing and maintaining the proper motions in children's souls as part of the education, e.g. Laws 653D-654A and 790Cff. For an important discussion of this, see Kamtekar's contribution to this volume.

³⁰ For details about hearing, see Lautner (2005).

³¹ It is very implausible to think that Plato would use such a term to refer the Appetitive part, which lacks belief and the ability to reflect on itself or discern its own states (Tim. 77B5-C3). Also, the parallel with Tim. 43B-44C supports the identification of to phronimon with the immortal part. For a good discussion of the issue, see Lautner (2005, 237-46).

³² In the case of both pleasure and perception, the motions coming through the body are not self-

reflexively aware and there is no awareness of hem until they reach the mortal part. The Appetitive part is not aware of itself (if it is a bare substratum, there is nothing to be aware of) and as Tim. 77BC shows it is not aware of its own states. It transmits the relevant motions, but all awareness is the job of the immortal part. Tim. 77BC may suggest that there is awareness of he bodily motions involved in perception and pleasure only when these motions are taken as objects by a higher-order state or a subject, but it leaves it open that the immortal part is self-reflexively aware.

³³ I have argued that the mortal part of the soul is not a genuine subject and that some of the affections attributed to it are composites of the motion of the immortal part of the soul and the motions coming through the body. But it is not easy to give an exact catalogue of the affections attributed to or classed under the mortal parts and in a longer discussion we would have to consider, e.g., the motions arising in the body as a result of motions sent by the immortal part.

Consider, for example, the effects noted at Tim. 70AB; a difficulty here will be distinguishing what is purely bodily and what is in some way psychic. It would also be a mistake to think of the three "parts" of the soul as located simply in the head, the chest and the midriff. Sexual desire (erôs) may be localized in the genitalia (Tim. 91AB) and the immortal part may extend throughout the marrow and interact with other motions in places other than the head (Tim. 73BD, 81DE). For discussions, see Johansen (2000), Karfik (2005), and Lautner (2005).

³⁴ This interpretation is supported by the claim that bodily motions when they reach the mortal part of the soul "report [exaggeilê] the property that produced the reaction" (Tim. 64B5-6).

³⁵ For some who accept that some non-rational pleasures have propositional content, see D. Frede (1985), (1993, xlv-liii), Gosling and Taylor (1984, 440-1), Harte (2004, pp. 114-20), and Irwin (1995, 319-21, 328-30).

³⁶ Cf. n. 37 on Plato's wider notion of perception.

³⁷ It is sometimes thought (e.g. Lorenz (2006, 102-7)) that Philebus 32B-36C and 38E-40C provide support for the imagistic theory, but this is doubtful. In the first passage, memory is said to be involved in certain pleasures and desires for both humans and other animals. If animals' desires and pleasures have only imagistic content, one might infer that neither do the corresponding human ones. But this is not a good inference. Plato never says that the mechanism of animals' and humans' memories is exactly the same. In humans, memories might produce conceptualized desires and pleasures, while animals' memories might only be imagistic. Phil. 36A7-C1 may attribute hope (elpis) to both humans and animals, but at least for the former such hope has propositional content. (Note also that Phil. 34a3-5, cf. Tim. 43C-44A, seems to count as "perception" the combination of the motion of the body and the motion of what the Timaeus passage describes as the immortal part of the soul

which includes conceptualization. For a similar use of "perception" in a list including memory, see Laws 645E1-2.) At Phil. 38E-40C in discussing certain anticipatory pleasures, Plato says that there is a scribe in the book of the soul that writes sentences (logoi) and a painter that follows the scribe and paints images (eikones) of these sentences. If Plato were to hold that such images by themselves provide the content for, e.g., appetitive anticipatory pleasures, this would, in this case, at any rate, support the imagistic interpretation. But Plato never says here that the images by themselves are all that are available to appetitive pleasures and the images and sentences seem to go together. Further, if, as many interpreters think (cf. n. 34), at least some non-rational anticipatory pleasures are true or false in a semantic sense, that is, as beliefs are, then their content cannot be provided by pictures alone. Theaetetus 184B-186E holds that attaining truth in the semantic sense requires grasping being or predication and Lorenz

(2006, 86-8) agrees that pictures alone cannot do this. It is, of course, possible to use a picture to stand for a proposition, e.g., a skull and crossbones to stand for the proposition "This is poisonous", but this a different matter.

³⁸ For further discussion, see Bobonich (2002, 350-73). For a distinct view, see Kamtekar's contribution to this volume.