

The Harmony of the Soul

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Abstract

It is often held by scholars that Plato's notion of the tripartite soul makes him unable to give an account of the unified soul or personality. The aim of this paper is to tackle this problem by proposing the following three views: first, Plato's account of the soul would not commit him to the view that within the each part of the soul there are sub-divisions; second, the unity and harmony of the soul could not be achieved by violence and conversation, but by education. Finally, by exploring Plato's education programme in *The Republic* we can see that it is the only efficient means for bringing the three parts into harmony, and makes them one instead of many.

Keywords: Plato, the tripartite soul, unity, harmony, education

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Plato in the *Republic* notoriously proposes that the human *psychē* has three parts, i.e. reason, spirit, and appetite. By using this theory of the tripartite soul, Plato gives an account of how man can be virtuous. A virtuous man is one in whom the three parts of his soul play their proper roles and are in harmony with one another. It is clear that the notion of order is not only essential to the just state but also to the just man. For, in Plato's view, the just man cannot be identified without referring to his orderly and harmonious soul. Thus human virtue will be dependent upon how these three psychological elements interact with one another.

I propose in this paper to investigate the idea of virtue and an order or harmony in the soul in which every part does its own work. Clearly to understand what is meant by order and harmony we need to know what the parts are and how they are related to each other. Plato deals with these points in great detail in the middle books of the *Republic*.¹ So the main purpose of this paper will be to examine this account and to investigate the moral significance of the tripartite soul. Thus, I have divided this paper into three parts, which are related to Plato's notion of order or harmony in the soul: firstly, the tripartite soul, in this section I will confine my discussion mainly to the different characteristics of the three parts of the soul; secondly, the unity of the soul, how the three parts interacting with one another will be considered. Finally, the problem: How are the three parts of the soul educated? will be explored.

I. The tripartite soul

In order to show that we perform each of the three functions with different parts of our soul, Socrates puts forwards a principle that "one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object" (436b). This principle is termed by scholars the Principle of Opposites or Principle of Conflict.² According to this principle, it is impossible for a thing to be at rest and in motion at the same time and in the same part of it (436c). Plato at 436c-e deals with two likely objections to the principle to remove ambiguities in using it. One is that it is wrong to say that a man, who is standing still and moving his hands, is at rest and in motion simultaneously. Rather we should say that a part of him is standing still and another part of him is moving

¹ The idea of the tripartite soul can also be seen at the *Phaedrus* 246a-257b and the *Timaeus* 68e-70e.

² Annas, Julia. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981:137. Robinson, R. "Plato's Separation of Reason From Desire." *Phronesis* XVI (1971): 39.

(436c-d). The other one is that we should say that a spinning top whose circumference is in motion, but whose axis is at rest (436d-e) is moving in one respect but not in another.³ Plato at this point thinks that this principle is valid, so from 437b onwards he proceeds to use it to demonstrate that there are three different parts in the soul.

Plato says that assent and dissent, impulse and aversion to something are opposite actions or states (437b). So hunger, thirst, and the appetitive desires can be classed as impulses to desire food and drink. However, men sometimes are unwilling to drink or eat even if they are thirsty or hungry (439b-c). Therefore, according to the Principle of Opposites, there is an element, different from the one driving men to crave for drink or food, preventing men from craving for it. The element preventing (*to kōluon*) men from giving way to unhealthy cravings is reason (439c-d).

In addition to the function of prevention, reason is characterized by Plato in several different ways. At 439d reason is said to be the reflective or calculative element. It is also described as being able to make decisions and judgements (440b). In Book VIII in the oligarchic soul, reason is forbidden to “make any calculation or inquiry” except about money making (553d). It is also said to be the part with which we learn (580d). Therefore it seems reasonable for us to conclude that reason, in Plato’s view, is a power by which we reason, learn, and make judgements and decisions. However, it would be misconstruing that Plato sees reason only as the capacity of calculation. For, as commentators point out,⁴ Plato does not only regard reason as a power by which we learn and make judgements but also as motivation. Plato says,

Now, it is clear to everyone that the part with which we learn is always wholly straining to know where the truth lies and that, of the three parts, it cares least for money and reputation.

By far the least.

³ There is no space for the discussions of the validity of this principle, and whether Plato uses this principle to claim that there are three ‘parts’ in the soul. For discussion of these issues, see Stalley, R. F. “Plato’s Argument for the Division of the Reasoning and Appetitive Elements within the Soul.” *Phronesis* XX (1975): 110-128. It may be noteworthy, however, that Aristotle in *De Anima* doubts the validity of the claim that the soul is composed of many parts, for this would lead to argument *ad infinitum* (*proeisin epi tp apeiron*) (411a24-411b30). Instead Aristotle proposes that the soul has three *dunamis*, i.e. vegetative, locomotive, and rational.

⁴ Kahn, C. H. “Plato’s Theory of Desire.” *The Review of Metaphysics* XLI (1987): 81.

Then wouldn't it be appropriate for us to call it learning-loving (*philomathes*) and philosophical (*philosophon*). (581b)⁵

The characteristics of reason then not only include the capacity of calculation, but also the desire to learn. Thus reason is the motivation which leads us to learn and discover the truth, and causes us to participate in philosophical contemplation. It is noteworthy that Plato does not distinguish the difference between the capacity to know and the desire to know, and the difference between theoretical and practical wisdom. For, in Plato's view, they are two aspects of one and the same thing.⁶ Therefore, a philosopher is one whose reason is predominant in the soul. Reason is the ruling element in the soul, for it is able to "reflect about good and evil" (441b-c), and has "the wisdom and foresight to act for the whole" (441e). Furthermore, reason motivates the philosopher to love the truth, and to love the truth, for Plato, is to love the good. Thus due to the fact that Plato does not distinguish between theoretical and practical wisdom, to love the good is not only to engage in contemplating the good but also able to create the goodness and order both in the corporeal world and the soul.

Plato says at 436a that appetite is the element with which the soul "desires the pleasures of eating and sex and the like⁷," and at 439d that it is also "the element with which it feels hunger and thirst, and the agitations of sex and other desires, the element of irrational appetite — an element closely connected with satisfaction and pleasure." In Book IX Plato demonstrates how the life of the philosopher is happier than that of the unjust men, he recalls the theory of the tripartite soul and says,

As for the third, we had no one special name for it, since it's multiform, so we named it after the biggest and strongest thing in it. Hence we called it the appetitive part, because of the intensity of its appetites for food, drink, sex, and all the things associated with them, but we also called it the money-loving part, because such appetite are most easily satisfied by means of money. (580d- 581a)

It seems obvious that Plato's language here indicates that the appetitive part is irrational. However some commentators hold that the appetitive part has, to a minimal extent, rationality. Moline, for example, asserts that Plato assigns a minimal

⁵ Grube, G. M. A. *Plato: Republic*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. Unless otherwise indicated, the passages of the *Republic* quoted in this paper are from Lee, Desmond. *Plato: The Republic*. London: Penguin, 1987.

⁶ Kahn, *op. cit.* 82.

level of calculative capacity to the appetitive part.⁷ Kahn holds that “this passage [437d-439a] has sometimes been thought to imply that the appetite (*epithymia*) in question is a ‘blind craving,’ with no cognitive grasp of its object; but, of course, thirst must recognize its object as drinkable and *hence* as desirable. So a minimum of cognition is implied even for the most elemental appetite.”⁸ Lesses comments that it is crucial to see that all three parts of the soul have the capacity of forming beliefs, in other words, the appetitive part has a cognitive capacity.⁹ In what follows I shall argue that Plato does not see the appetitive part as having the capacity to form belief.

Plato shows the appetitive part as being irrational by virtue of discussing our craving for drink (437d-438a). When one is thirsty, there will be a desire for drink in one’s mind. However, it would be wrong to say that one desires a hot or cold drink when he is thirsty. For “for a particular kind of drink there will be a particular kind of thirst” (439a). Plato says, at 437e, that simple thirst is the desire for its natural object, drink, without qualification. From 438b to 439a, Plato proposes an argument to show that appetites are desires without qualification, that is, when one person is thirsty he desires a simple drink, not a hot or cold drink. Plato’s argument is summarized as follows:

- 1) When two terms are correlative it seems that either both must be qualified or both unqualified. (438b)
 - 2) What is larger must be larger than something smaller, and similarly, what is heavier must be heavier than something lighter. It will be the same for the various branches of knowledge. For knowledge of health is medical knowledge, but knowledge unqualified is knowledge simply of something learned. (438b-c)
- So, 3) among correlative terms if the first is unqualified, so is the second; if the first is qualified, so again is the second. (438d)
- Since, 4) desire in itself is without qualification. (439a)
- And, 5) thirst is related to drink, and thirst is a sort of desire. (439b)
- So, 6) thirst is the desire neither for cold or hot drinks, nor for good or bad drinks, but for drink simple.

Thirst in itself is the desire for drink without any qualification. It will not cease to be

7 Moline, J. “Plato on the Complexity of the Psyche.” *Archiv Fur Geschichte Der Philosophie* 60 (1978): 11.

8 Kahn, *op. cit.* 85.

9 Lesses, G. “Weakness, Reason, and the Divided Soul in Plato’s *Republic*.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 4 (1987): 149.

a desire even though there are no hot and cold drinks. For what thirst desires is drink, not hot or cold drink. The epithets ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ are not essential for thirst to be the desire for drink. Therefore, Plato in the *Republic* claims that thirst and hunger as unqualified desires are not to crave for good drink or delicious food, but drink and food pure and simple. It is clear that Plato is not interested in the objects for which the desires crave but in the nature or essence of the desires.

Moreover, Plato’s insistence on the fact that the desire for drink is neither for good nor for bad drink (439a) seems to suggest that desire is “good-indifferent.”¹⁰ It is by this good-indifference that Plato is able to bring out the difference between reason and desire. Parry fairly points out,

Desires are not said to be desires for what is pleasant as opposed to what is good — the definition of good-independent. Indeed, the simple desire for drink is no more for pleasant drink than it is for good drink. Plato’s point is that desire, in itself, is not calculative; it is, let us say, good-indifferent. It is the job of reason to calculate.¹¹

Thus it would be misleading to render the appetitive part as ‘foolish’ or ‘unreasonable.’¹² For the passage at 439d cannot fit in with this interpretation. The comparison between reason and appetite at 439d is the comparison between the rational and irrational, but not between the clever and the foolish. It is impossible, as mentioned above, for the appetitive part, let us say, thirst to desire a good or pleasant drink. Because it is incapable of having any conception of the good. It is reason alone that possesses cognitive capacity.

However, Annas asserts that the appetitive part has the ability to figure out the means to achieve the end it wants.¹³ This interpretation seems to be supported by Plato’s assertion that the appetitive part is the money-loving part (580e). That is to say, the appetitive part is able to use money as a means to acquire what it wants. While the claim that the appetitive part desires money for buying things it wants does not necessarily mean that this is the result of rational calculation. For it could result from habituation without thinking. That is, money in one’s experience has

¹⁰ Parry, R. *Plato’s Craft of Justice*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996: 94; see also, Anagnostopoulos, M. “The Divided Soul, and the Desire for Good in Plato’s *Republic*.” *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic*. Ed. Richard Kraut. London: Blackwell, 2006, 174.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Kahn, *op. cit.* 11, and Lesses, *op. cit.*

¹³ *op. cit.* 145. The same idea also expressed by Bobonich, C. in his *Plato’s Utopia Recast*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 244.

been associated with the satisfaction of desires and with buying things one wants. Take for example, shopaholics, whenever they want something, they are habituated to buy it without any further thought. In this case there is no need to assign the appetitive part any reasoning capacity, for in the situation of habituation reason is under the control of the appetite and serves to work out the means of satisfying the appetite's order.

In addition to this, the passage at 580e2-581a7 seems to be consistent with the idea expressed at 438b-439b. For Plato's expression "...*kai kalountes auto philochrēmaton kai philokerdes orthōs an kaloimen*;" shows the fact that the appetitive part desires or loves money and profit *for their own sake*, not for a certain end. Therefore, it would be wrong to attribute the capacity of means-end reasoning.¹⁴

Moreover, Moline's assertion that the passage at 571c indicates that the appetitive part is able to unleash its beliefs while the rational part falls asleep,¹⁵ shows that the appetitive part can form belief or opinion. The passage 602c-603b in Book X seems to indicate that the appetitive part can form its own opinion contrary to reason's measurement. However, the interpretation of this passage depends upon how we understand the term *doxazein*. This term is generally translated as 'to have a belief' or 'to have an opinion', however it does not necessarily follow that 'having an opinion' makes the appetitive part have rational capacity. For the language used by Plato here is merely analogous,¹⁶ i.e., Plato is talking of the analogy between the city and the soul, there is no assumption that there is an exact parallel between the two. Thus due to the fact that the appetitive part, having an opinion, is only an analogous expression, it is not necessary to designate the appetitive part as being able to discourse rationally. Also, the problem of there being sub-divisions within the appetitive part will not arise.

Glaucon holds, at 439e, that spirit might be the same as appetite. Whereas Plato appeals to the example of Leontius, whose appetitive part wants to see the corpses, while his spirited part condemns his appetitive part for being immoral, to show that spirit and desire are different. In Leontius' case the spirit seems to take the side of

14 Lorenz, H. "The Analysis of the Soul." *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*. Ed. Richard Kraut. London: Blackwell, 2006, 158-159.

15 *op. cit.* 11.

16 On the idea of analogy, see Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1407a, where Aristotle claims that an analogy is a kind of *metaphora*; for the relation between the city and the soul is analogous, see Ferrari, G. R. F. *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* Ch. 3. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, especially 60-61.

reason to prevent the appetite from doing immorally. However, does this mean that spirit is also different from reason? Plato, at 441a, refers to his ideal state which is made up of three classes, the Guardians, the Auxiliaries, and farmers and artisans etc., to give an explanation of why spirit and reason are different. In our soul, like the ideal state, there are three parts or elements: reason, spirit, and appetite. In the ideal state the Auxiliaries are always to be supportive to the Guardians, so in the soul spirit is “reason’s natural auxiliary.” Thus reason and spirit is distinct from one another.

Although spirit, in Leontius’ case, is identified as the part with which we are angry, it has wider role to play in the soul. At 375a-e the guardians are said to be spirited and gentle, that is, they have to be courageous and wise. The spirited part is by nature the helper of the rational part (441a, 441e). This claim enables us to see why in the first stage of education Plato concentrates on the education of the spirited part for the cooperation between the spirited and the rational part will secure the order and harmony of the soul. The spirited part, unlike the irrational appetitive part, has certain *passive* rational capacity.¹⁷ To have passive rational capacity is not the same as having the capacity of reasoning, but to have the capacity of listening to and accepting the instruction of reason without any reflection. Thus spirit is able to absorb the moral principles presented to it in the education programme laid down by Plato, and also able to stick to the Guardians’ command.

In addition to having the passive capacity of reasoning, the spirited part is said at 581a to be the element that “is entirely devoted to the achievement of success and reputation,” and that “its motives are ambition and love of honour.” The spirited man enjoys the pleasure of honour. It is clear that the spirited element makes us seek self-esteem by competing with others. When participating in a tournament, if we win we feel proud and happy, but if we lose we feel shame and upset. Therefore Plato does not see the spirited part merely as anger, but as involving the emotions with which we feel shame, proud, and honour. Although it has no capacity to form its own judgement, yet its sticking steadfastly to the rational part secures the stability of the soul.

To briefly summarize this section, Plato’s psychology is not only concerned with showing that there are three parts in the human soul. What he advances to do in the theory of the tripartite soul is to give an account of how an orderly soul can be achieved. For, in Plato’s view, to have an orderly soul is essential for a person to be virtue or just. In the course of discussion I disagree with the claim that there is a ‘degree of rationality’ among the three parts. I argue that reason is not only able to

17 Gill, C. “Plato and the Education of Character.” *Archiv Fur Geschichte Der Philosophie* 67 (1985): 13.

exercise the capacity of calculation, but also a kind of motivation which motivates us to learn and seek the truth. Unlike the reason, the appetitive part is completely irrational. I have rendered the spirited part as having a *passive* capacity of calculation, but it is no better than the appetitive part, because like appetite it is unable to form its own judgement. However, it is able to recognize, after receiving proper education, what reason approves or disapproves of. The advantage of this interpretation is that it does not lead to the infinite regress as the homoculus theory does. That is, we do not have to face the problem of the sub-divided soul, which troubles many commentators.

II. The unity of soul

According to 439e, there was a conflict between Leontius' spirit and desire, when he noticed some corpses lying on the ground. 'Internal conflict' or 'civil war' (*stasis*) is the most common expressions used by Plato to describe the interaction among the three parts of the soul. Socrates in Book I claims that in a group of men the function of justice will produce harmony and friendly feelings, and the function of injustice will produce the opposite (351d-e). He goes on to say that similarly injustice will produce the same effect in the individual, that is, "it renders him incapable of action because of internal conflict and division of purpose" (352a). Socrates talks of the appetitive element as trying to force a person to do something his reason does not approve of (440a-b). An unjust man is one the three parts of whose soul are in a state of civil war (444b). In Book VIII where Socrates gives an account of the corrupted states and characters, the language of civil war plays a dominant role (545d-547b, 554d, 556e, and 560a).¹⁸

¹⁸ In talking of the soul the German scholar in classics B. Snell, in his monumental work *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York: The Dover Publications, 1982: 31 and 158), claims that the notion of autonomy and integrity is absent from the Greek notion of *psychē*; and in examining Plato's notion of the soul the British scholar Adkins, A. W. H. in *From the Many to the One* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970, 166-167), asserts that Plato's account of personality is less fragmented than Homer's, but it is still fragmented. From these two influential scholars' assertions it seems to follow that it is impossible to find the unity of the soul in the Greek psychology in general, and in Plato's psychology in particular. This paper therefore will indirectly respond to Snell's and Adkins' claims. For recent scholarship that asserts Plato's talk of the tripartite soul in the *Republic* denies the unity of the soul, see Bobonich, C. *op. cit.* 254-257.

The internal conflict in the soul can be described, according to Bobonich,¹⁹ on two different models, i.e. the 'Command Model' and the 'Force Model.' On the Force Model the conflict between, let us say, reason and appetite is described as that of two forces pulling in opposite directions. It is just like two group of people play tug-of-war the stronger side will win the game. However, this interpretation gives rise to some problems. Firstly, as Bobonich himself points out,²⁰ if human action is determined by the strength of a desire, then what would be the content of the strength? For without knowing the content of the strength it would be impossible to give a satisfactory explanation of why a person acts in this way but not otherwise. Secondly, the passages at 440b and 441a seem to suggest that reason without the aid of spirit is unable to combat with appetite. Although the joint forces of reason and spirit can make sense of the Force Model, one could still question whether the model can fit in adequately with what Plato says.

The second model Bobonich proposes is the 'Command Model'. This model, according to Bobonich, relies on the idea that the three parts can communicate with one another.²¹ A similar idea was put forth by Moline twenty years ago. Moline claims that the three parts of the soul are like the three classes in the just state, they are persuadable agents. So "the business of the wisdom-loving part is to guide the other parts by persuasion, to transplant into alien parts its own opinions, or, more accurately, opinions corresponding in content to its knowledge."²² This interpretation is certainly more attractive than the Force Model in that Plato puts strong emphasis on the harmony of the soul. The three parts of the soul can be harmonious with one another. However if the discussion in the first section is correct then it would be difficult for us to see how reason can be in charge of the soul by persuasion. For the appetitive element is said to be irrational and has no capacity of calculation. Moreover, if each part of the soul has the capacity of reasoning then within appetite there are sub-parts, i.e., reason, spirit, and appetite. For the term 'persuasion' implies that conversation or dialogue takes place among the three parts of the soul. Therefore to persuade the appetitive part is to make it to do something by reasoning or arguing. It follows that the appetitive part has the ability to calculate whether it is or is not beneficial to follow reason's command. So there will be an inner conversation within the appetitive part, and the conversation among the

19 Bobonich, C. "Akrasia and Agency in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*." *Archiv Fur Geschichte Der Philosophie* 76 (1994): 5.

20 *ibid.* 10.

21 *op. cit.* 11-12.

22 *ibid.* 15.

sub-parts will lead to infinite regress. It follows from the regress that it would be difficult to give a sufficient account of what a single individual is. In other words, individual identity is at stake, because the individual character is shredded into pieces.

In addition to these two models, I propose a third model, the 'Educational Model'. The passage at 442c is taken by Bobonich to mean that the agreement on who should rule is the result of the internal communication. However the term 'agreement' does not necessarily mean that the lower parts have the capacity of forming their own opinions. For, as mentioned, the analogy between the state and the individual does not commit Plato to make the assertion that there is an exact parallel between the two. So, Socrates' statement that "when reason and its subordinates are all agreed that reason should rule and there is no civil war among them" (442c) does not mean that appetite sees that following the rule of reason will make it better off. It rather means that the appetitive element is *well trained* so they will only desire what reason approves of. The Educational Model is explicitly appealed if we refer to 554b-c where Socrates says,

I suppose that his [the oligarchic man] lack of education will breed desires in him, like the pauper and criminal drones, which his general carefulness will keep under restraint.

This passage, it seems to me, indicates that if the oligarchic man were properly educated then his 'unnecessary' desires would be restrained or starved, and only those 'necessary' ones can grow and be active. Finally the Beast image at 589b shows that the appetitive element needing to be trained for both the Force Model and the Command Model does not fit in with this passage. The former, as mentioned, is incompatible with Plato's notion of harmony within the soul, and of the latter we cannot find any trace of persuasion in the text. The method of training the many-headed beast, says Socrates, is to look after it like the farmer looks after crops. That is, nursing and cultivating its tamer parts and restraining or preventing the wilder ones from growing. Therefore, it can be seen that Plato sees education as the cornerstone for achieving the inner harmony of the individual soul. Without the proper education programme for the three parts of the soul, the inner conflict will never be eliminated. Now let's turn our attention to the issue on 'How are these three parts educated?'

III. The education of the soul

Before I enter into the discussion of the education of the tripartite soul, I would like to first discuss whether in Plato's mind the term 'character' and the term

'nature' are different from each other. R. S. Peters says in "Moral Education and the Psychology of Character" that

Character-traits are shown in the sort of things a man can *decide* to be, where it may be a matter of forcing himself to do something in the face of social pressures or persistent temptations. In this way a man's character is contrast with his nature. A man just is stupid or lacking in vitality; he cannot decide to be either of these. But he can decide to be more or less honest or selfish. His inclinations and desires, which are part of his 'nature', may suggest goals; but such inclinations and desires only enter into what we call a man's 'character' in so far as he chooses to satisfy them in a certain manner, in accordance with the rule of efficiency ..., or in accordance with the rule of social appropriateness²³

Peters claims that a desire for money, for example, reveals a person's nature, but his character is revealed in the manner in which he carries out the desire for getting money. Therefore he might get the money he wants dishonestly, if his way of satisfying his desire is not in accordance with laws.

However it might not be the case for Plato. For in Plato's view there seems to be no difference between one's 'nature' and one's 'character.' Plato holds that in the ideal state each class needs both the right natural qualities and the right education. Plato, right after his discussion of the first stage of education, at 415 a-d says that those who possess gold in their nature should be the Guardians, those whose nature is silver should be the Auxiliaries, and those who possess bronze and iron in their nature should be the farmers and artisans, etc. That is, how the three classes behave will be decided by their natures and upbringing. And in Books VIII and IX the different types of individuals, i.e. the timarchic man, the oligarchic man, the democratic man, and the tyrannical man, are all decided by their different types of natures. Therefore the difference between one's nature and character, for Plato, is blurred. Plato may, I think, regard them as one and the same thing. A person who by nature craves for luxurious food will decide to get the food at whatever expense in that his reason is under the control of his appetitive desire. Surely character is the product of the combination of nature and upbringing, and it is character which determines behaviour. However, in Plato's writings we find an ambiguity about whether we require some kind of character from nature.

²³ Peters, R. S. "Moral Education and the Psychology of Character." *Philosophy* 37 (1962): 38-9.

Furthermore, the term character or personality has two general meanings. First, a person is the combination of qualities which constitute some kind of cohesive unity. Second, the combination of qualities makes a person different from others, that is, he has some distinct individuality.²⁴ Plato's not being interested in the concept of individuality is overtly expressed when Socrates is taken to task by Adeimantus for not making the Guardians happy (419a). Plato says the purpose in founding the ideal state is not to promote the particular happiness of one class, but of the community as a whole (420b, 466a, 519e). Therefore, the educational programme proposed in the *Republic* is not to serve to develop each person's individuality, but to produce an integrated psychic whole. That is, in the soul the three parts can be in harmony with one another, and likewise, in the state the three classes can work harmoniously and cooperatively with one another. In the following portion I shall concentrate on the issue: How by education the three parts of the soul can be in harmony with one another and so the order is in place?

Plato's educational system is divided into two stages: the first stage is literary and physical education and the second stage is education of the philosopher, or intellectual education. The aim of the first stage is to train the young guardian's body and to educate his mind and character (376e). With regard to literary education, an important part of this education is comprised of poetry, narrative, and music. Plato holds that inappropriate verse and prose cannot be used in educating the young guardians. For, they are not useful in encouraging them to be *sōphrontes* (390a). Does the first stage aim at educating the soul as a whole or it aim at a single part of the soul? The answer to this question can be found at 375a-376c, where the guardians are compared to watch dogs. Plato says: "the natural qualities needed in a well-bred watch-dog have a certain similarity to those which a good young man needs for guardian-duty" (375a). What kinds of qualities are needed both in a well-bred watch dogs and the guardians? They are high spirit, speed, strength, and philosophical disposition. As Gill claims, the first stage of education serves to educate the young guardians whose dominant tendency is *thumoeides*.²⁵ The spirited part is not only designated as the element with which we get angry (436a, 439e), but as the source of being courageous (375a), and as ambition or the love of honour (581a). The first stage of education is to educate the spirited part to listen to and cling fast to "the orders of reason" (442c), and to be the ally of reason (441a).

24 Gill, C. "Plato and the Education of Character." *Archiv Fur Geschichte Der Philosophie* 67 (1985): 1-2.

25 *ibid.* 9.

However the young guardians being required to possess philosophical disposition does not mean that at this stage the young guardians are required to be analytical and critical to the norms being presented to them. What they are required to do is to “retain principles laid down by the educator about what should, and what should not, be feared.”²⁶ To instill the right ways of life in the mind of the young guardians is to expose them in the right kind of music, poetry, and narrative. For,

[A]ll man-made objects and cultural forms (including visible objects like paintings and buildings as well as the cultural forms whose effect was already being recognized) are representative, in some ways, of ethical qualities, and thus contribute to the formation of the child’s character.²⁷

And at this stage of education the young guardians are not required to understand the principles laid down by the educator. Whereas through the education they become *habituated* to behaving in accordance with those principles. Thus the philosophical disposition required at this stage is no more than a passive rational capacity, the ability to appreciate the moral principles without any reflection presented in the first stage of education.²⁸

The second stage, unlike the first stage, which is habituated in method, is intellectual in nature. This stage of education is to enable the future philosophers to see the Forms and to give a coherent account of what they know. But why does Plato have to emphasize this stage of education? Plato thinks that without being able to see the Forms the philosophers are unable to lay down rules in *this* world about what is right and what is wrong. Plato says,

But surely “blind” is just how you would describe men who have no true knowledge of reality, and no clear standard of perfection in their mind to which they can turn, as a painter turns to his model, and which they can study closely before they start laying down rules in this world about what is admirable or right or good where such rules are needed, or maintaining, as Guardians, any that already exist. (484d)

Thus it is necessary for the philosophers to see the Forms, for seeing the Forms will make them closer to reality (514c), and will enable them to make proper judgements about this-world affairs. It is clear that the faculty with which the philosophers are able to see the Forms is reason. So this stage is the education of reason. To see the

²⁶ *op. cit.*

²⁷ Gill, *ibid.* 10.

²⁸ *ibid.* 13.

Forms will actualize the potentiality of reason,²⁹ that is, it will have wisdom and foresight to act for the soul as a whole (441e). Similarly, the philosopher's seeing the Forms will not make them interested in the special welfare of any particular class in the ideal state, but that of the state as a whole (519e).

Two points need to be noted here. First, the language used here clearly indicates that for Plato theoretical wisdom will entail practical wisdom. Plato does not make the distinction between these two types of wisdom.³⁰ For in Plato's view, reason is not only a desire for the knowledge of the Good, but a desire for the good. That is, to know the Form of Justice will motivate the philosophers to act justly. However, while in not distinguishing between theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom Plato makes the philosophers perfect candidates for government, one question still has to be answered: How are the philosophers who have theoretical wisdom able to know when, for example, to raise the interest rate better than an economic expert? I suppose that Plato might think that details of economic policy were a matter of *technē* rather than philosophical wisdom. In the *Gorgias* Socrates questions Gorgias about his professional expertise—rhetoric. Professional expertise or *technē* is said to be transmissible, that is, an orator can teach others to be able to practice the skill of rhetoric (449a-b). And a *technē* has its specific product. Weaving is concerned with the production of clothes, and music with the creation of melodies (449c). Philosophic wisdom however, for Plato, is not limited in a specific field. When the philosopher makes a decision he will take all situations into account. Thus the philosopher, unlike the economic expert who is only specialized in economic issues, will take society as a whole into account when he makes a judgement on raising the interest rate. Second, Plato's emphasis on the capacity of knowing the Forms is not to lead the philosophers to criticize and reject the values and the norms by which they organize their state, but to uncover the meanings of moral terms, such as justice, courage, and wisdom, etc.. Gill asserts that this leaves Plato's psychological theory with an odd combination of emphases. Gill says,

He [Plato] lays great stress on the idea that an individual should learn to think for himself (if his intellectual education is to be complete), but he does not seem to expect these thoughts to lead to any individual conclusions about the way to organize his life.³¹

I agree with the latter part of Gill's assertion, but disagree with the former part. For after completing his intellectual education the philosopher has to take up the job of

²⁹ Gill, *op. cit.* 17.

³⁰ See note 6 of this paper.

³¹ Gill, *op. cit.* 18.

government when his turn comes (540b). Although the philosophers will be happier if they live the contemplative life, yet it is necessary for them to rule the state. For it would be disastrous that if the state were to be ruled by a worse man (347c). Thus the philosophers who have completed their intellectual education will not only think for themselves, but also of the state as a whole. The philosophers' taking up the job of government benefits themselves and also the state as a whole. Due to the fact that the philosophers identify their own interests with those of the state as a whole, in taking up the job of government the philosophers do not sacrifice their own interests. For what is good for the state as a whole will be good for the philosophers.³² Therefore the intellectual education will enable the philosophers to seek the good of the state as a whole, and in the meantime their own good is fulfilled.

What is the educational programme for the appetitive part? After discussing the two stages of education it seems natural to ask this question. If there is no educational programme for appetite, then how is Plato able to say that after receiving the intellectual education the harmonious soul is achieved? It is said at 439d that the appetitive element is irrational, and it might get too large and strong to mind its own business and try to subject and control the other elements, and so wreck the life of all of them (442a-b). Thus the irrational appetite seems to be ineducable. However if the inner harmony and unity can really be achieved, then there should be certain methods to train or educate the appetitive part. The passage at 588c-589b gives us the clue how the appetitive part can be trained. The tripartite soul is presented by the Beast image: the man represents reason, the lion represents spirit, and the many-headed beast represents appetite. Thus to have a balanced soul is not only for reason to make an ally of the lion, but also to nurse and cultivate the beast's tamer elements and prevent the wilder ones growing. A balanced soul is one in which the unnecessary desires have to be starved away and the necessary ones have to be nurtured. In other words, the method of educating the appetitive part is to direct the attention to those necessary desires, and at the same time allow the unnecessary desires to wither away through negligence. The idea that appetite is educated by directing attention to the necessary appetitive desires has already been mentioned at 485d, where Plato says,

But we know that if a man's desires set strongly in one direction, they are correspondingly less strong in other directions, like a stream whose water has been diverted into another channel.

Thus if a person's desires set in acquisition of knowledge, or the necessary desires,

32 I have discussed this issue in "A Virtuous Ruler," published in *Fu Jen Studies: Colleges of Liberal Arts & Fine Arts* 34 (2004): 322-328.

then his desires for physical pleasures, such as luxurious food, over-indulgent sex, etc., will wither. Consequently, the inner conflict among the three parts of the soul will never happen. It is worth noting here that Plato's emphasis on the withering away of the unnecessary desires shows that he does not assert a kind of asceticism. For Plato allows some healthy and necessary desires to be fulfilled to some extent. And if the soul as a whole follows the rule of reason, then each part of it "will enjoy its own particular pleasures, which are the best and truest available to it" (586e-587a).

In the soul, the appetitive part has to be controlled and directed by reason, for it is purely irrational. Similarly, in the ideal state the third class, the farmers and artisans, have to listen to the order or command of the philosopher-kings. In the ideal state everyone has to do one job for which he or she is suited. Thus both the Guardians and the Auxiliaries having received the proper education enables them to carry out their respective social functions properly. However what is the education for the third class? Is it possible for the farmers and artisans to perform their functions without giving them proper training? The answer to this is brought out by Socrates when he shows that the Guardians are the best citizens in the ideal state, Socrates says,

Then in our imaginary state which will produce the better men — the education which we have prescribed for the Guardians or the training our shoemakers get? (456d)

It is unclear whether the training for the shoemakers involves moral training. However, as Hourani, G. F. points out, this is "an example which shows that the craftsmen in general receive a technical education."³³ Therefore having received technical or professional training the craftsmen are able to perform their functions well. The aim of education for Plato is to consolidate the order of the state, and only when all the three classes have received proper education, which enables them to perform their distinct functions, can the happiness of the state as a whole and that of the individual be achieved. As Plato says,

If it is, our Guardians and Auxiliaries must be compelled to act accordingly and be persuaded, as indeed must everyone else, that it is their business to perfect themselves in their own particular job; then our state will be built on the right basis, and, as it grows, we can leave each class to enjoy the share of happiness its nature permits. (421c)

33 Hourani, G. F. "The Education of the Third Class in Plato's *Republic*." *The Classical Quarterly* XLIII (1949): 59.

This passage seems to be the answer, I think, to B. Williams' question. When he talks of the analogy of city and soul in the *Republic* he says, "[i]nner peace is what Plato must want, but that in the political case requires the allegiance of the epithymetic element, and we are back to the question of how we are to picture that being secured."³⁴ By education the three classes will stick to their stations for which they are naturally suited. Furthermore, to perform their functions well is to fulfill their natures, so they will have their share of happiness and preserve the happiness of the state as a whole. Therefore it is by setting up a proper educational programme that people's natural capacities can be brought about and they are able to recognize that doing one's own job and not being meddlesome will do both the state and themselves good.

IV. Conclusion

The aim of Plato's claim that there are three parts in the soul is to show the psychological foundation of one's virtuous or moral behaviour. If my account of Plato's tripartite soul is reasonable, then it would not be right to see their interactions either as a kind of internal communication or as a kind of exhibition of force. For both interpretations don't properly fit with what Plato says in the *Republic*. Rather, the orderly interactions among them are based on the fact that each of them has received proper education. Only by receiving proper education can the ideal of the harmonious and unified soul be realised.

34 Williams, B. "The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's *Republic*." *Exegesis and Argument*. Ed. Lee, Mourelatos, and Rorty. Leiden: Brill, 1973, 202.

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靈魂的和諧

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摘 要

學者們經常主張，柏拉圖提出靈魂三分的概念，使得他無法賦予統一的靈魂或人格一個合理的說明。這篇文章的目的是希望提出下列三個觀點來處理此一問題：首先，柏拉圖對靈魂三分的說明並不會讓他陷入靈魂的各個部分之中尚有次分的窘境。此外，靈魂的統一與和諧無法以暴力或對話的方式，只能以教育的方式達成。最後，藉由討論柏拉圖在《理想國篇》中所提出的二階段教育的內容，彰顯出教育是使這三部分和諧相處，並使它們是一而非多的有效手段。

關鍵字：柏拉圖 三分的靈魂 統一 和諧 教育

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