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Plato's *Phaedo*:  
An Interpretation

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Reflections on Plato's Conception of Soul

I have saved this chapter for last because of its speculative character. The preceding discussion is independent of any particular theory about the ultimate nature of soul for Plato (apart from the general associations of that concept for the Greeks), and while what is said here may be applied to what has been said above, there is nothing in the earlier chapters that presupposes what is discussed in this one. What I said in chapter 8 about the overview of the theory of forms applies here as well: first, that in presenting a unified overview I do not intend to suggest that Plato's undogmatic and unsystematic approach to philosophy can be reduced to a systematic dogma. The model I develop is meant to be taken not dogmatically but instrumentally, as a basis for relating to one another the various things that Plato says about the soul. Second, this interpretation is based on a conviction that the progressive development of Plato's conception of soul in the course of the dialogues was a matter of extension and refinement, rather than recantation, so that the conception of soul does not change *in principle*, at least after the *Phaedo*. I will argue later that this is true even of the considerable difference between the way that the soul is spoken of in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*.

I  
MIND AND ENERGY

Both traditionally and in contemporary discussion of the mind-body relationship, the Platonic position is taken to be an instance of interactionism, the view that mind and body interact as two entirely separate substances. This interpretation is certainly the most obvious one and is sanctioned by many passages in the dialogues but there are also some passages that lead in a different direction. Soul

is frequently defined as the principle of motion that imparts motion to bodies (*Phaedrus* 245c, *Timaeus* 89e, *Laws* 894b), for example, and it is difficult to conceive on the one hand how the principle of motion can ever exist in absolute separation from body, since motion entails body, or on the other hand how bodies can go through the motions of decomposition when soul is no longer present to them. As J.R. Skemp observes with regard to the distinction in the *Phaedrus* (implicit in the *Phaedo* as well, as we saw in the first and fourth arguments, and as Skemp too shows subsequently) between the self-moving (soul) and that which is moved by it (body): 'In spite of what seems a sheer dichotomy between that which can move itself and that which receives and transmits motion, it is clear that Plato thinks of the two as conjoined in reality and implying one another' (p 6). In the *Phaedo*'s third argument also there is the suggestion that apart from body the soul cannot be conceived in terms of motion: we are told that soul when absolutely distinguished from body must be conceived as resembling what is unchangeable (79c2-e5, 80a10-b5). We shall see in what follows that there is good reason to regard Plato as conceiving the soul and body to be not entirely separable (although distinct in nature), in which case the interpretation of Plato as an interactionist can no longer be as straightforwardly maintained.

As I have argued above, especially in chapter 6, I would regard Plato's interactionistic way of putting things as an example of his frequent use of metaphors taken from popular religion, which he may not have taken seriously except as metaphors. Those who have not been persuaded by the arguments that Plato did not take seriously the doctrine of personal immortality may prefer to regard him as an interactionist whose position simply runs into difficulties (as interactionism generally does), rather than to regard him as being deliberately misleading at times. Indeed, many people consider it far more insulting to charge someone with insincerity, regardless of the circumstances, than with inconsistency. The doctrine of the noble lie, however, and related passages show that Plato believed otherwise.

Either way, a conception of the mind-body relationship is implicit in Plato that is quite different from the interactionistic one. This implicit theory deserves attention not only because of the disrepute into which interactionism has fallen but also because it proves to be interesting in its own right. Moreover, it provides a basis for reconciling several of Plato's conceptions of the soul that are often held to be incompatible: e.g. soul as energy, soul as life-force, soul as the seat of sensation, and soul as rationality. In the absence of any explicit development of this view by Plato, the most that one can claim for it is that on its basis the apparent disharmony of Plato's various ways of speaking about the soul can be shown to be harmonious. But from the point of view of the method of hypothesis this is enough to make it worth exploring.

These four conceptions of soul may be subsumed under two more general ones: 'energy' (which would include life as a special case) and mind (which would include both sensation and reason—although we shall see that reason is characteristic of both energy and mind). If we consider that energy is an external phenomenon located in the spatial world, while mind denotes a purely internal, subjective phenomenon, it would be possible to unify these two general conceptions of soul by showing that they might be regarded as inner and outward manifestations of the same thing. On this hypothesis, to every system of energy would correspond a certain inwardness at an analogous level of sophistication. Thus, to human physiology, with its sophisticated central nervous system, corresponds a highly developed self-consciousness. Other animals display progressively less sophisticated levels of consciousness corresponding to the development of their physiology, while in the case of plants whatever sort of inwardness corresponds to their much simpler organic systems would be too rudimentary to be usefully described by terms such as consciousness, the connotations of which come from our own experience. This would be true in other ways of the energy system of the world as a whole, which is known in Plato as the world-soul, and of systems of artificial intelligence. In all these examples it is not the body, but what I have called the system of energy, to which an inwardness corresponds. Although body may be inseparable from such an energy system, it is nevertheless different in nature, as will be seen in what follows. In other words, although the view that I am putting forward is not an interactionism, it is still a dualism.

The analogy between Plato's conception of soul and the modern conception of kinetic energy lies, as we have seen, in the soul's being the principle that imparts motion to matter, a principle that, as the first argument showed, Plato conceived as being continuous rather than only a first mover. With regard to soul as that which brings not only motion but life to body, as in the final argument, the 'entry' of soul into body might be conceived as the point at which a quantity of matter becomes organized in such a way as to be a self-sustaining system of energy with an intrinsic source of motion, ie as to be alive. Conversely death would mean a body's loss of its ability to initiate motion as an organism. The 'entry' and 'departure' of the soul would thus refer to the points at which the energy becomes or ceases to be intrinsic to the material quantum.

While the characterization of soul in terms of energy arises from observation of the external, physical world, its characterization as mind arises from observation of our internal experience, in which there is a distinction parallel to that between energy and matter. This distinction is usually characterized in terms of mind and body, although it has also been characterized by various philosophers in terms of such dichotomies as consciousness and its objects, perception and the perceived, thought and extension, apperception and intuition, time and space,

the I and the not-I, the for-itself and the in-itself, care and the world, appetite and perception, will and representation. In terms of the last two, especially, this inwardness is conceived as something motive, a principle of change, which already suggests a correspondence to the earlier energy-matter dichotomy. But we shall have to consider the two basic dichotomies—the physical dichotomy of energy and matter and the psychological dichotomy of mind and body—in greater detail before we can consider properly the question of their correspondence.

They are in fact not as straightforward as may seem. The ontological status of energy with respect to matter is far from clear, and the conception of mind or consciousness that one contrasts with body is equally so. When we feel hot or cold, sick or well, these feelings are manifestations of the body and yet are as intimately a part of consciousness as are our thoughts. The body is alive as much as the mind and is as much a part of our conscious experience as is our thinking. The distinction of consciousness from its objects thus reflects not the soul (*anima*) as opposed to the body but the animate body as opposed to what is other than it. From this it may seem that there are no psychological grounds to support a dualistic position after all and that even the non-interactionistic dualism that I am proposing cannot resist reduction to a neutral monism.

For Plato, however, there is a criterion for preserving the distinction between the soul and body, one that is not based on a supposed difference between our mental experience and our corporeal experience. The distinction is made instead in terms of rationality. As the *Phaedo* argues (78b-80b), soul exhibits the nature of the intelligible in a way that corporeality does not. Pure mind or soul is by nature rational whereas matter is the source of irrationality.<sup>2</sup> We discover within ourselves two irreconcilable and therefore discrete (cf *Republic* 436b ff) sources of motivation, which may be referred to as reason and passion and may be distinguished—although more easily in theory than in practice since they so thoroughly intertwine—in terms of interest. Reason in its purest form has its interest not in its subject, the person thinking, but in its object, that which is being thought about (cf *Republic* 341d ff), while passion expresses an egocentric motivation, a need or desire of the subject himself. Reason in its pure form concerns itself with what is true regardless of how it affects us, while passion concerns itself precisely with how we are affected—although because we so frequently use reason in the service of our passions, in calculation and rationalization, we cannot always identify the sources of our motivation and confidently distinguish our reasons from our excuses.

Since reason concerns itself with disinterested, transpersonal truth, it appears as grounded not in our finite nature, wherein we are distinguished from other individuals, but in some realm that is impersonal and timeless. Passions, however,

are rooted precisely in our individuality, embodying as they do our personal gratifications and frustrations. It is thus natural to identify our passions with our body, which being physically separate from other bodies is the outward sign of our individuality; and to regard reason by contrast as something transcending our body. This does not imply that they are physically separate, for reason is not physical. Rather, like form and matter in Aristotle, they are distinct in nature but not in location.

The psychological dichotomy, then, is not tantamount to a distinction between pure mind (consciousness) and pure body. The body we experience directly is not divorced from consciousness but is, on the contrary, an ensouled, animate, sensitive body. The distinction we experience is rather between two manifestations of consciousness: consciousness in its relation to the rational and in its relation to the corporeal.

Just as the psychological dichotomy is not between two separate entities but between two poles within consciousness, so too the physical dichotomy of matter and energy is not between separate entities but between poles of corporeal nature. Neither is conceivable without the other, for energy is the power to set matter in motion, while matter is conceived in terms of mass and motion, both of which imply energy. Plato too seems to have conceived of the world-soul (energy) and the world-body (matter) as inseparable,<sup>3</sup> so that the dichotomy between soul and corporeality is not between two separable beings but between motion in terms of its sensible manifestation (corporeality) and in terms of its inherent rationality of pattern and purpose (soul) in accordance with the forms. Here again Plato's position does not imply interactionism if soul and corporeality are inseparable, but neither does it imply monism, since the rationality of physical motion would be attributed to the psychic pole and its irrational qualities to the corporeal.

In both dichotomies, therefore, the distinction is not between soul and body simply but between soul in its relationship to reason (the intelligible) and in its relationship to corporeality: in the psychological dichotomy, a distinction between rational mind and animate body; in the physical dichotomy, a distinction between rational motivity and kinetic matter. In neither case is there an absolute separation between soul and corporeality. Rather, soul is identified with the rational tendency within the natural world or within consciousness, and corporeality with the irrational tendency.

Accordingly there is justification for our hypothesis that soul as mind and soul as energy may be related as inner and outward manifestations of the same thing, for both have appeared as manifestations of reason. What Plato means by reason is no simple question but it is hinted at to some extent in terms of teleology: according to the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*, for example, not only

does human reason, the mind, operate instrumentally with a view to what is best but the physical world as well is conceived as a rational system based upon principles in accordance with the maximum attainment of goodness. In the *Phaedo*, accordingly, Socrates is attracted by the Anaxagorean dictum that everything happens in accordance with *νοῦς* (reason, mind)—which he takes to mean that everything operates teleologically—evidently because he sees energy (motive soul) and mind (intelligent soul) as corresponding principles, a view most fully elaborated in the *Timaeus*.

## 2

## SOUL AND BODY

The conception that mind and energy (but not body) correspond to each other as inward and outward manifestations of what may be called soul bears a certain resemblance to neutral monism such as Spinoza's, and to idealism such as Leibniz's or Schopenhauer's. There are, however, fundamental differences. For Spinoza everything has a parallel existence on both the physical and ideal planes so that it is both a body and 'idea,' and the idea of a sufficiently sophisticated organism is a mind. But the counterpart of mind (thought) for Spinoza is not energy—which he does not discuss and presumably regarded merely as a property of bodies—but body (extension), and so mind and body are parallel aspects of entities; whereas for Plato it is mind and energy that are parallel while body is fundamentally opposed to them by nature. Plato's position, therefore, is a dualism rather than a monism, as was pointed out above. Accordingly, while for Spinoza there is an 'idea' for every body, for Plato such subjectivity would exist only for bodies that possess an internal principle of motion, i.e. that are alive. Moreover, since for Plato mind and body are distinct, he is not in Spinoza's position of having to deny that they can influence each other. To this extent Plato may still be considered an interactionist but not when interactionism is taken to imply the separability of its substances.

For Leibniz and Schopenhauer, however, energy is, as for Plato, the physical manifestation of the same principle that we experience inwardly as the self: 'appetition' for Leibniz and 'will' for Schopenhauer. But for them, as for Kant, the physical world, and therefore energy, has no reality in itself but is merely the mind's representation of the in-itself in the forms of time and space. Only appetite or will exists in-itself; the physical world exists only within our consciousness, as our way of representing the in-itself. For Plato, on the other hand, the corporeal world, and therefore energy (the world-soul), has intrinsic existence independent of a perceiving consciousness.

The relationship between soul and body may best be seen in the *Timaeus*, where rational form, corporeality, and soul are all posited as primordial, prior in nature to time (cf. 52d with 37d). But although they are equally trans-temporal in nature, they are distinguishable in terms of logical priority. First is pure form, the forms being the objects apprehended by divine reason, one of which serves as the model for the created world (30e). It is ambiguous, however, which is to be taken as second in priority, for corporeality and soul are in fact inseparable. Both are implicit in the chaos described earlier (30a) since chaos is both material and in motion<sup>4</sup>; and later we are told, in a different context, that 'for there to be what is moved, without the mover, or the mover without what is moved, is difficult, or rather impossible' (57e). Accordingly one might consider body prior because we cannot conceive of motion until we conceive of what is moved, or one might consider soul prior because we cannot understand the changing corporeality until we understand its guiding principle, rational soul. This ambiguity is reflected in the treatment of the *Timaeus*, for body is discussed first (30c) but we are told later that although body comes first in the order of discussion, soul must be conceived as 'older' since it is to rule the other (34b-c). Soul and body are thus inseparable but neither is reducible to the other.

One can see from this why Hegel is so often compared with Plato. Hegel's position may be characterized similarly as beginning with pure form—the 'ideas' of his *Logic*—which then externalizes itself into material nature, which in turn gives rise to human consciousness, *Geist* (spirit, mind); while the ultimate principle of *Geist*—reason—was the guiding force implicit in nature from the beginning. Although in Hegel these stages are articulated in a way related to the form-body-soul triad in Plato, he too is distinguished from Plato by an idealistic position somewhat akin to that of Leibniz and Schopenhauer. The 'ideas' of his ontological logic are for him not objective as are Plato's, but are pure subjectivity, conceived ultimately on a model not unlike Kant's constitutive categories: they are within consciousness-as-absolute, which is analogous to Kant's transcendental unity of apperception and Fichte's absolute self. Thus although form, nature, and spirit are logically (dialectically) distinct, they are embraced within one absolute consciousness; at first only implicitly but eventually, as spirit articulates itself progressively in the course of history, explicitly. For Plato, however, although materiality and soul have their common source (logical not temporal) in rational form, they are not within that source, either implicitly or explicitly, and so there is an ontological distinction between the eternal and temporal, a dualism more fundamental than that of mind and body, which cannot obtain in the ultimately monistic idealism of Hegel.

## MATERIALISM AND REASON

This view of the complementarity of mind and energy has relevance beyond Plato's world. Anyone who sees the universe as organized in a fundamentally rational way must attribute some analogue of rationality to the motive force of the universe, energy (which may be conceived as autonomous rather than divinely controlled). While this way of putting it would be uncomfortably speculative for most scientists, the principle is nevertheless present in their implicit use of teleology as a heuristic principle. It is often taken for granted not only that natural phenomena will conform to rules commensurate with the principles of our understanding (logical, mathematical, and astroteological) and thus be intelligible to us as coherent experience, but also that the principles of teleological reason too can be applied to nature: we not only can discover *that* natural events occur in a certain way, but also can ask *why*. There is a tacit supposition that nature does everything as if for a reason and that there are not only patterns of regularity but also an essential relationship among the patterns so that the forms of reality and patterns of events can be reduced to ever fewer and more fundamental principles. This is to suppose that nature operates in accordance with principles similar to those by which reason measures value, such as 'economy.'

In attributing reason to nature one is not necessarily making an anthropomorphic claim, for one can impute reason to the natural order without conceiving this reason as a personality or consciousness. And if nature can be said to be rational, this is in effect to ascribe rationality to energy, for the systems of energy are what instantiate the rational laws. Science's conceptual minimalism, which goes back at least to Ockham's Razor, militates against ascribing to energy any but its most empirically observable characteristics: motivity and its products. This cautiousness is indispensable to scientific method, but for philosophy, which seeks to place what is experienced within a synoptic perspective, such minimalism would be self-defeating.

The suggestion of a correspondence between soul and energy is nothing unusual even in modern times, and the very term used until recently for kinetic energy, *vis viva* or 'living force,' reflects the resemblance between the soul, or life force, and physical energy. This correspondence, however, was interpreted quite differently by modern science than it had been by Plato. Instead of inferring that, in view of its resemblance to soul, energy might be a phenomenon with broader implications than physics took it to be, the opposite inference was drawn, that soul was perhaps as narrow a phenomenon as energy was taken to be.

Such a view could consider itself materialism only if it could construe energy merely as an attribute of matter. Since energy is a product of weight (later, mass)

and motion, it was a question of identifying weight and motion as attributes of matter. Weight was taken to be an essential attribute of matter, and since matter could be moved, motion was taken to be an accidental attribute of it. However, if motion is merely accidental, its origin must somehow be explained. It was to explain motion that Anaxagoras, for example, was impelled to introduce his principle of 'mind,' which as Plato pointed out is not easily reconciled with his otherwise mechanistic position. Similarly in Plato and Aristotle, who also took rest to be ontologically prior to motion, the attempt to explain the origin of motion leads respectively to such unmaterialistic, indeed spiritual conceptions as the world-soul and the unmoved mover. The difficulty of explaining the origin of motion could be avoided if one were to take motion as more primitive than rest, so that motion, as the natural state of things, is simply given: atoms happen by nature to be in motion. But in that case, atoms must be understood in a way that entails motion, which would mean, however, that motion is not an accidental but an essential attribute of matter, and matter can no longer be conceived as pure passivity, inert corporeality. In short, it is not possible to account for motion merely as an attribute—either essential or accidental—of passive matter.

More recently the relation has been reversed. Now it is matter that may be taken to be a kind of attribute or state of energy. Since this grew out of the earlier view, it is not surprising that it still refers to itself as materialism, especially when it denies the possibility of a separate immaterial substance; but it is questionable whether 'materialism' is any longer an accurate description of it. In modern terms, matter is conceived as what fills space to the exclusion of other matter, and materialism properly means the denial of any reality that does not fill space in this manner. To give this name equally to the view that the ultimate reality is energy, which in itself does not fill up space, is to obscure some of the implications of the revised position. If energy is intrinsically real without filling any particular space, then the reality of individual minds or of a rationality that governs nature can no longer be denied merely on the grounds that they are not encounterable as occupying particular spaces.

I have been arguing that this Platonic position can account for the full range of our experience of the physical world more readily than can a narrow materialism. It seems to me to accord more with the demands of morality as well. If the ultimate reality is matter, whether defined in modern terms by spatial discreteness and mutual exclusion or in ancient terms (whether as matter or body) as the principle of individuation, human nature tends to be conceived in the first instance in terms of discrete individuality: if my body is my primary reality and individual bodies are discrete and mutually exclusive, then we are fundamentally different from one another and naturally in a state of competition. Materialism, which implies a nominalist or conceptualist view of universals and a belief that

the individual is the only reality, most naturally leads to the view that the fundamental moral principle is self-interest. While altruism may arise from 'enlightened' self-interest, for that very reason it is ultimately not a value *in itself* but an instrument of selfishness. It may not be inevitable that materialism lead to egoism but that is the natural direction of its implications.

On the present view, however, reason is at least as essential and primordial as corporeality (more so, in fact, as Plato argues elsewhere) and accordingly provides its own criteria for conduct. Far from emphasizing the discreteness of individuals, reason sees them in terms of what is common to them rather than in terms of their differences: the corporeal senses perceive individuals rather than universals, while reason perceives universals rather than individuals. The Platonic position, oriented toward reason and universality, thus gives rise to a very different view of 'others' than that resulting from the materialistic position, one that *begins* from our community rather than our discreteness and in which, therefore, altruism becomes justified in itself, not merely for the sake of selfishness.

## 4

## THE TRIPARTITE SOUL

Reason is, as we have seen, one pole within our mental experience, the other being irrational passions. The relationship between them can best be clarified by turning our attention to the doctrine of the tripartite soul. Plato speaks of the soul both as reason and as the principle of motion. The unity of these two very different characterizations may be expressed in terms of the famous definition of time in the *Timaeus* (37d) as 'the moving image of eternity,' for eternity here refers to reason (29a), and the basis on which such motion is possible is soul (36e). As both the principle of motion and an instrument of eternal reason, soul may be described in general as rationality set into motion. But in its purest manifestation, as logically distinct from body, soul would be pure rationality since without reference to body its character as the principle of motion is merely abstract and implicit. This is the rational element of the tripartite soul.

If we next conceive soul in its factual state, in relation to body, the phenomenon of life occurs when corporeal matter becomes ensouled, animate, as we discussed earlier. At this 'lowest' (i.e. most corporeal) level of soul occurs the simplest stage of consciousness: the body responds to stimuli in terms of its requirements for self-preservation. What is conducive to the body's maintenance becomes an object of desire and is experienced as pleasant, while what is threatening is feared and experienced as painful. This is the appetitive level of soul and it is at this level that the soul is liable to become 'an accomplice in its

own imprisonment' (*Phaedo* 82e5-83a1) by ministering to the body's needs and desires without sufficient regard for its own distinctive vocation. It is also the level at which the nature of the soul most closely corresponds to that required by Simmias' epiphenomenalism since consciousness here merely reflects what goes on in the body. Here reason, the primary level, is present only in the implicit forms of memory and calculation.

If the highest and lowest elements of the tripartite soul thus reflect the rational and corporeal poles of animate being, respectively, what of the middle element, spiritedness? Since the *Republic* presents us with 'the soul writ large' (368d-369a) in the form of a society, let us consider the genesis of the spirited class within it. The appetitive level of soul was reflected in the 'healthy' city (372e—note the corporeal adjective) and the rational level will be reflected in the wise guardians. The spirited level arises in the transitory state between these constitutions.

Glaucon is dissatisfied with the healthy city because, he says, its bare level of sustenance makes it no better than a city of pigs. Socrates acknowledges that in fact some people would be dissatisfied with such a life and so luxuries must be supplied in addition to the necessities, which will require an expansion of the state and therefore war. The warrior class is thus formed, corresponding to the spirited element of the soul, and thus seems to arise in response to the insatiability of our nature. Rather than being content with what we have when it is sufficient for our needs, we always want something new if only as a testimony to our accomplishment or superiority. Glaucon's remark suggests that it is an important objection for him that the healthy city fails to pay tribute to the superiority of humans to animals such as pigs. What is important is not the absence of the particular luxuries that he happens to think of (couches, tables, delicacies), for Socrates easily adds to this list (373a-c) and we could as easily extend Socrates' list. The important thing is rather the sense of attainment, of advancement, that such acquisitions provide. Any luxury soon palls, leaving us with the desire for something new; and it is the desire for increment—the desire for something more than what we had previously, and preferably more than what others have as well—that is the source of our love of luxury. This is a feature of our 'pride,' the ambitious, competitive side of our nature, the spirited element of our soul.

The spirited element is as fundamental as the rational and appetitive elements. The world as a whole is constituted between rational and corporeal poles, and soul, which mediates them (cf. *Timaeus* 30b), accordingly comprises something of the character of each. But it is not reducible to the sum of those two characteristics since neither of them by itself entails motion: reason is the eternal and unchanging while corporeality is, by itself, inert. It is only through the additional characteristic of motion that a 'moving image of eternity' can come

about and reason and corporeality be mediated. Soul is, therefore, as a third and more distinctive characteristic, a principle of change; and it is this characteristic of never being completely at rest, of always seeking a new state, that appears in consciousness positively as ambition and negatively as frustration and anger at obstacles—the spirited element. The exercise of power is therefore essential to it, making it eager for recognition of its prowess, a lover of honour.

In the soul, reason is our desire for truth, appetite our desire for physical gratification, and spiritedness their common denominator, desire in and by itself. Spiritedness may accordingly be considered the most general aspect of soul (as in the doctrine of eros) as reason is primary teleologically and appetite most immediately evident experientially.

There is a mutual dependence among the three, for not only are our reason and appetite permeated with spiritedness to the extent that they exhibit their specific motivation and ambition, but spiritedness in turn requires our rational and corporeal nature as the instruments of its assertiveness: our attainments must be in terms of intellectual or physical goals. Whereas for reason and appetite it is the goal that matters, for spiritedness the goal is important not for its own sake but as an occasion for striving. Our rational and corporeal natures, too, are not entirely independent of each other, for appetite must make use of learning and calculation to achieve its ends while reason in turn makes use of recollection and corporeal eros in order to discern the rational forms that the material world displays.

The three are thus interpenetrating and inseparable. This can be expressed by conceiving soul generally as the agency of reason in corporeality: the soul's tripartite structure appears as one focuses in turn on reason, corporeality, and agency per se. The three parts, as well, constitute a microcosm of the three interpenetrating levels of reality: form (reason), soul (spiritedness), and corporeality (appetite).

From all this it is clear that the lower levels of the tripartite soul (appetite and spiritedness) do not belong specifically either to the soul or to the body—for neither a pure disembodied soul (reason) nor an inanimate body could support them—but only to the conjunction of soul and body, i.e. to the living body. Perhaps it is for this reason that in the *Phaedo* Plato can refer to appetite and spiritedness as functions of the body and in the *Republic* as functions of the soul. In a dialogue devoted to proving the soul's immortality it would simplify matters to limit the notion of soul to the soul's 'eternal' part, reason, and refer the lower levels of the body-soul composite to body, by contrast; for if appetite and spiritedness belong only to the conjunction of soul and body they may with equal justice be treated as functions of either. Thus *Timaeus* links them in one place to the soul itself (42a-b) and in another to a secondary and corporeal

'mortal' soul (69e-d).<sup>5</sup> It is usually supposed that Plato changed his conception of the soul, from simple to tripartite, between the *Phaedo* and *Republic*; but even in the *Republic*, when the question of immortality is raised, it seems that the true soul is no longer conceived as tripartite but limited to a pure and simple nature (611a-612b), in which case the perspective of the *Phaedo* is retained. If it is not the whole tripartite soul that is taken to be immortal (however we interpret this) in the *Republic*, but only reason, and the other elements pertain only to the embodied soul, then there is no fundamental difference between the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* on this point, for the *Phaedo*'s characterization of material desire and spiritedness as motives competing with reason in the living person (eg 68c, 81b-82c, 94b, 94d) is clearly the tripartite soul doctrine in principle.

- 2 See especially Geddes pp 263–7. Geddes also suggests that the use of the term φάρμακον as the only reference to the poison may be deliberately ambiguous since it means ‘medicine’ or ‘cure’ as well (p 263).

CHAPTER 12

- 1 See, for example, F.M. Robinson p 32. The dual conception of soul in Greek philosophy generally, as both energy and mind, is noted by Aristotle in *de Anima*.
- 2 I use the term ‘energy,’ despite its being an anachronism, because it is appropriate to the conception of soul as the principle of motion.
- 3 There is an apparent exception to this in bk 10 of the *Laws* (896e). See below n. 5 and context.
- 4 In addition to the reference to Skemp at the beginning of this section, see *Timaeus* 30b, 34b, and 57e (provided one takes the temporality of the *Timaeus* as a metaphor for logical priority rather than as a literal succession of events).
- 5 It is sometimes argued that this motion is not due to soul since it is irrational (eg Vlastos DMT pp 393–6); but, while the motions of soul are rational per se, when combined with and influenced by the irrational nature of the body irrational motion would result. This distinction between pure and embodied soul is easily obscured in genetic myths such as the *Timaeus*, where body must be spoken of as if it were capable of self-sufficient existence. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that Plato regarded soul and body as ever physically separate from each other.
- 6 This may be the point as well of the *Laws*’ reference to two contrasting souls (896e). Also see Rist *EP* pp 105–9.

APPENDIX

- 1 For simplicity’s sake it was translated in the introduction as ‘art’ but this is too general for the purposes of the present more detailed discussion.
- 2 The presence of all three themes in the *Ion* shows it to be an important, though much neglected work for studying Plato’s aesthetic theory in general. My article on the *Ion* supplements much of the present discussion, as well as elaborating the brief references here to that dialogue.
- 3 Cf *Charmides* 155e, 158c, 176b; *Gorgias* 483e, 484a; *Phaedo* 77d–77a; *Republic* 608a.
- 4 In aleatory music where random or unplanned occurrences are substituted for any imposed order, the music succeeds in traditional terms when some such order is accidentally achieved and fails when it is not.
- 5 See Apel ‘church modes.’
- 6 The legendary inventor of music
- 7 See for example Assagioli.