

# SHAME, PLEASURE, AND THE DIVIDED SOUL

JESSICA MOSS

*Thumos*—spirit, the middle part of the soul in Plato’s *Republic*—has a bad reputation. In one of the most sustained attacks on its integrity, Terry Penner writes:

Plato’s true view [in the *Republic*] is . . . that there are only two parts of the soul, a rational part and an irrational part, and he allows himself *thumos* (spirit) for irrelevant political or moral reasons only . . . Plato had no logical or psychological arguments for going beyond two parts of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Many scholars share Penner’s suspicions. Spirit is at best poorly unified and ill-defined, and at worst an *ad hoc* addition to Plato’s underlying view of the soul as the battleground between reason and non-rational desire, an afterthought which he introduces in book 4 to preserve his dubious analogy between city and soul, and then soon forgets, reverting in book 10 to his original view.<sup>2</sup>

Some have defended spirit by arguing that in describing it Plato

© Jessica Moss 2005

For all their help and good advice I thank John Cooper, Helen Cullyer, Cian Dorr, Alexander Nehamas, David Sedley, and Allan Silverman.

<sup>1</sup> T. Penner, ‘Thought and Desire in Plato’, in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ii. *Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion* (New York, 1971), 96–118 at 96 and 113.

<sup>2</sup> Allegedly at *Rep.* 602 c ff., where he distinguishes between the rational part of the soul, the part that calculates and measures, and an irrational part that falls prey to illusions. Hardie shares Penner’s view: ‘No adequate reasons are given by the discussion in the *Republic* for thinking [that spirit is a distinct third part of the soul] . . . or for modifying the opinion, so strongly supported both by plain men and philosophers, that the fundamental division here is into two and not three’ (W. F. R. Hardie, *A Study in Plato* (Oxford, 1936), 142); cf. T. M. Robinson, *Plato’s Psychology*, 2nd edn. (Toronto, 1995), 44–6. A more moderate version of this view is expressed by those who think that Plato posited spirit only because he was interested in the spirited type of character, or the spirited (honour-loving, military) life. B. Williams, ‘The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato’s *Republic*’, in E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (eds.), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos* (*Phronesis* suppl. 1; Assen, 1973),

has captured a set of psychological phenomena that are importantly similar to one another, and importantly dissimilar from those he attributes to reason or appetite.<sup>3</sup> But such defences, even when compelling, leave us with the unfortunate impression that spirit is the result merely of some insightful psychological speculation on Plato's part, a flourish that does no vital philosophical work.

Against these charges I argue that spirit is central to Plato's ethical and psychological thought, because it is indispensable to his conception of *virtue*. Given that people have appetitive desires, and that these tend to lead us astray, without spirit there would be no systematic way to ensure that we overcome these desires and act in accord with reason instead. I identify the foundation for this view of spirit in the *Gorgias*' treatment of shame, arguing that Socrates uses shame in this dialogue as a tool for undermining the attraction of ethically harmful pleasures. I then show that the *Republic* develops this opposition between pleasure and shame in its characterization of spirit as the ally of reason against the appetitive part of the soul. Lastly, I argue that spirit is indispensable because it forms a crucial link between reason and the non-rational: unlike reason, it is a powerful motivational force in those who are not virtuous; unlike appetite, it can be shaped and guided to lead those who are not virtuous towards virtue. And therefore Plato's view of the soul in the *Republic* is *fundamentally* tripartite. It is crucial to his view that

196–206 at 205–6 is typical. Others countenance spirit but doubt that Plato has any clear view about what it is (see e.g. J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), 126–8; P. Shorey, *What Plato Said* (1933) (repr. Chicago, 1979), 224; and Reeve's comment (in defending spirit against such criticism) that spirit is 'the dark horse of the psychic parts' (C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic [Philosopher-Kings]* (Princeton, 1988), 136)). Underlying the charge that Plato had not worked out his conception of this part of the soul may be the view that it has no legitimate place in his psychological theory.

<sup>3</sup> '[T]he motivations that Plato classifies under the heading of spirit are to be understood as having their root in competitiveness and the desire for self-esteem and . . . esteem by others' (J. M. Cooper, 'Plato's Theory of Human Motivation' ['Motivation'], *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 1 (1984) 3–21, repr. in Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, 1999), 118–37 at 133–4); each spirited desire 'involves a conception . . . of the good, and a desire to keep us in line with that conception when our own behaviour, or that of others, disturbs the match between reality and ideals' (Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*, 138); 'the essence of the human *thumos* is the need to believe that one counts for something, and that central to that need will be a tendency to form an ideal image of oneself in accordance with one's conception of the fine and noble' (A. Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good [Hero]* (Cambridge, 2000), 30).

reason is opposed, not merely by non-rational desire generically understood, but in particular by desires for *pleasure* (and aversions to pain). It is also crucial to his view that the soul can be redeemed by the workings of a third force, spirit, one able to dispel the lure of pleasure where reason on its own will fail.

### 1. Polus

There are three objects of choice and three of avoidance: the *kalon*, the advantageous, and the pleasant, and their opposites, the *aischron*, the harmful, and the painful. (Arist. *NE* 1104<sup>b</sup>30–2)<sup>4</sup>

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates uses or is accused of using appeals to shame to refute each of his three interlocutors. Shame (it is said) makes Gorgias concede that he could and should teach his students about justice; it makes Polus concede that justice is better than injustice; and it makes Callicles concede that hedonism is false. Why does Socrates rely on shame in these refutations, instead of sticking to purely rational arguments? Recent literature offers us a compelling explanation. First, Socrates thinks that shame reveals what a person really believes, as opposed to what he says or even thinks he believes: '[Socrates' method is] not to argue [his interlocutors] into believing [what he thinks true] but to maneuver them into acknowledging that deep down they have believed it all along . . . His chief weapon in this psychological warfare is not logic but *shame*.'<sup>5</sup> Second, Socrates thinks that the deep beliefs revealed by shame are *true* beliefs about what is good and bad (although many of our surface beliefs are dangerously false): 'Shame reflects a Platonic conception corresponding to our own notion of an innate moral sense . . . Shame operates in this dialogue as an obscure intuition of the good on the part of Socrates' interlocutors.'<sup>6</sup>

I am in broad sympathy with these claims as interpretations

<sup>4</sup> All translations are mine except where otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> R. McKim, 'Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Shame'], in C. Griswold (ed.), *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings* (New York and London, 1988), 34–48 at 37.

<sup>6</sup> C. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form [Dialogue]* (Cambridge, 1996), 138. Cf. Kahn, 'Drama and Dialectic in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Drama'], *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 75–121.

of Socrates' implicit view of shame in the *Gorgias* (although they ignore the important criticisms of that view offered by Callicles, which I discuss in Section 4 below). But there is a crucial point that has been overlooked in the literature: Socrates uses shame in the *Gorgias* particularly as a force against the lure of *pleasure*. The *Gorgias* shows that appeals to a person's feelings of shame and admiration may be able to succeed, when rational arguments have failed, in bringing him to see that a harmful pleasure is to be avoided, or that a beneficial pain is to be pursued. For on the account I shall offer, Socrates' refutations of both Polus and Callicles show that feelings of shame can separate a person's judgements about what is pleasant from his judgements about what is good. And it is this feature of shame, I believe, that explains Plato's interest in it as a tool of persuasion.<sup>7</sup>

The relations between pleasure, goodness, and shame are first brought to the fore in the dialogue in Socrates' refutation of Polus' defence of injustice. Polus has been claiming that injustice in various forms is better than justice.<sup>8</sup> Socrates has insisted not only that justice is in fact better than injustice, but that *Polus himself* (along with 'all other people') really believes that justice is better than injustice (474 B 2–5; cf. 475 E 3–5). The argument he uses to make Polus concede these points begins with an appeal to Polus' sense of what is shameful: Socrates asks if injustice is not more shameful than justice, and Polus readily admits that it is so. Then Socrates offers an analysis of judgements about the *aischron* (shameful or ugly) and its opposite, the *kalon* (admirable, beautiful, noble, or fine).<sup>9</sup> When one judges something to be *kalon*, one does so either because it is pleasant or because it is good (beneficial) or both; when one judges something to be shameful, one does so because it is painful or bad (harmful) or both (474 D–475 B).<sup>10</sup> Polus accepts the analysis, and declares when questioned that being unjust is not

<sup>7</sup> There are other important aspects of Plato's treatment of shame in the *Gorgias* that I do not discuss here. My aim is to examine one very significant and hitherto unexplored aspect of shame in the dialogue.

<sup>8</sup> That it is worse to suffer injustice than to commit it (469 B), that unjust people are happy (470 D), and that the unjust person who escapes punishment is happiest, while the one who is punished is made miserable (472 D–E).

<sup>9</sup> I shall chiefly use the Greek *kalon*, because the meaning of the word as Plato uses it in the dialogue is too broad to be conveyed by any single translation. I shall translate *aischron* as 'shameful', for convenience, but the more aesthetic sense should be kept in mind.

<sup>10</sup> ἢ διὰ ἡδονῆν τινα ἢ διὰ ἀφελίαν (474 E 2–3; cf. 474 D 6–8, ἥτοι κατὰ τὴν χρεΐαν . . .

more painful than being just, but in fact more pleasant; thus he is forced to concede that it must be worse.

Socrates' argument is a strange one. Polus leaves the conversation feeling duped,<sup>11</sup> Callicles later charges Socrates with cheating and equivocation,<sup>12</sup> recent literature has found the argument fallacious,<sup>13</sup> and certainly it is hard to read the passage without feeling that Socrates argues in a less than straightforward way. But underlying Socrates' dubious logical argument we can detect an implicit psychological theory about the moral effects of shame—a theory that, if true, justifies the refutation.

On its surface, Socrates' argument is about the role that pleasure and benefit (goodness) play in our judgements about what is *kalon*. On the interpretation I shall offer, he is primarily interested in the role of pleasure and the *kalon* in our judgements about what is beneficial (good). He wants to show that these two criteria, pleasure and the *kalon*, yield conflicting judgements about what things are good: Polus, I shall argue, thinks injustice good because it is pleasant, but comes to see it as bad when he attends to the fact that it is shameful. Socrates also wants to show, more contentiously, that when these two criteria conflict, the second wins out: if we think something good because it is pleasant, but then come to see that it is shameful, we can no longer think it good.

To see that this is the underlying rationale of the argument, let us begin by investigating the psychological state Socrates attributes to Polus at the beginning of the argument. First, deep down Polus believes that justice is better than injustice, and this belief is true. In fact *everyone* is in this condition: 'I do believe that both I and you and all other people think committing injustice worse than suffering it, and not paying the penalty worse than paying it' (474 B 2–5; cf. 475 E 3–5). Socrates offers no explanation for why we all have true moral beliefs; let us treat this claim simply as an axiom of his psychological theory.<sup>14</sup> Second, this true belief is somehow

ἢ κατὰ ἡδονὴν τινα . . .). Socrates allows Polus' substitution of 'good' for 'benefit' at 475 A 3, and goes on to speak of good and bad in place of benefit and harm.

<sup>11</sup> See 480 E 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> 482 c ff. I discuss his specific charges in sect. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Beginning with G. Vlastos, 'Was Polus Refuted?' ['Polus'], *American Journal of Philology*, 88 (1967), 454–60, and G. Santas, *Socrates: Philosophy in Plato's Early Dialogues* (London, 1979), 230–46.

<sup>14</sup> Vlastos identifies this claim as a presupposition of the elenchus (G. Vlastos, 'The Socratic Elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 27–58; *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge and Ithaca, NY, 1991), 15).

hidden from Polus himself: so far as he is aware, he believes that injustice is better. Let us grant Socrates, for the sake of argument, this distinction between what I shall call ‘deep’ unconscious and ‘superficial’ conscious value beliefs. Socrates thus sees his task as that of clearing away Polus’ false, superficial belief that injustice is good, and revealing his underlying true belief that injustice is bad.

How should Socrates proceed? Consider an analogous case: I suspect that you believe deep down that capital punishment is wrong, despite your protestations that it is right. I believe, that is, that deep down your moral intuitions are reliable, but that your judgement has somehow been distorted. Perhaps you have been brought up in a religion or culture that supports capital punishment, or perhaps you have been swayed by your own emotional reaction to the description of some crime. If I want to dispel these distorting influences, I need first to identify them: I need to solicit your *reasons* for thinking capital punishment right—reasons that may well be obscure to you yourself. Next, I need to show you that these are bad reasons, ones you yourself on reflection do not endorse. On my reading, Socrates’ argument employs precisely this kind of strategy.

Polus’ preference for injustice is clearly bound up with his admiration for *power*. What he means by ‘power’, Socrates reveals, is the ability to take whatever one wants from others without repercussions—that is, the licence to be as unjust as possible without ever submitting to justice. But what are his reasons for thinking this kind of power *good*? If we look at how Polus has presented and defended his view, what we notice is that he sees little need to advance any reasons at all. He considers his positions to be utterly self-evident, truths of common sense that only a perverse debater like Socrates would deny.<sup>15</sup> When he wants to prove that many unjust people are happy, he simply describes the crimes of the tyrant Archelaus, not *arguing* that he is happy, but saying merely ‘You can picture [ὄρας] this man Archelaus’—as if Archelaus’ happiness were simply manifest, as things are visually manifest (470 D 5). When he wants to prove that it is bad to be punished for one’s crimes, he

<sup>15</sup> He refers to Socrates’ objections as shocking, monstrous, and bizarre (*σκέτλια*, *ὑπερφυῆ* (467 B 10), and *ἄτοπα* (473 A 1)), ‘the sort of thing which no human being would maintain’ (473 E 4–5), and asks, ‘Couldn’t even a child refute you, and show that what you say isn’t true?’ (470 C 4–5). He considers his position so manifestly true that he even refuses to believe that Socrates genuinely rejects it: when Socrates claims that he does not agree with him, Polus says ‘Because you don’t *want* to—since you really do think that it is as I say’ (471 E 1).

gives a graphic description of the punishments, not arguing that these are bad but assuming that anyone in his right mind will simply *see* that this is so (473 B 12–C 5). Polus' value beliefs are not based on theory or any other rational grounds; they take the form more of gut reactions or intuitions.

Are we to conclude that Polus has no reason at all for valuing the power to be unjust, that he thinks its desirability a brute, inexplicable fact? If we look carefully at what he has said, we see instead that there is an underlying explanation for his preference, one that he is not fully aware of and cannot clearly articulate. For Polus' praises of power and injustice, and denigrations of justice, are in fact unified by two main claims. First, power is desirable in so far as the powerful unjust person can do whatever he pleases.<sup>16</sup> Second, power is desirable in so far as the powerful unjust person avoids punishment for his wrongs.<sup>17</sup> When we recall that the monstrously unjust tyrant Polus admires becomes, in *Republic* 9, Plato's model of a person ruled by his *appetites*, Polus' implicit standard of value becomes clear. The power to act unjustly is desirable because it allows one to gratify all one's appetites, to enjoy pleasures of every kind without undergoing any painful punishment. Justice is undesirable because it requires one to forgo such pleasures or else accept the pains of punishment.

We have reason to suspect, then, that Polus says that injustice is better than justice because he finds it more *pleasant*. He confuses pleasure with benefit and goodness, and advocates injustice on simple hedonistic grounds. When he envies Archelaus' life, he is thinking of the pleasures Archelaus enjoys; when he says that it is better to commit injustice than to suffer it, he is thinking of the pains of being wronged and the pleasures one can secure by doing wrong; when he says that it is better to escape the penalty than to pay it, he is thinking of the pains of punishment. Socrates makes this last point nearly explicit when he says that the orators, tyrants, and potentates whom Polus envies avoid discipline because they

<sup>16</sup> What he sees fit, what seems best to him: ἃ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ βέλτιστα εἶναι (467 B 3–4 and throughout). Polus argues that the tyrant Archelaus, a paradigm of injustice, is enviable because he has the power to kill, banish, or rob whomever he wants, and more generally to do exactly as he likes (πάντα πράττειν κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ δόξαν, 469 C 7).

<sup>17</sup> He claims that injustice is bad only if one is caught and punished (470 A), and he reaches his peak of eloquence in describing the physical and psychological horrors of punishment in graphic detail (473 B 12–C 5).

‘see its painfulness but are blind to its benefit’ (479 B 6–7). It is the lure of pleasure and fear of pain that lead these people astray, and (Socrates implies) it is considerations of pain and pleasure that make Polus want to follow them.

The strongest argument, however, for thinking that Socrates interprets Polus in this way is that doing so explains his otherwise mysterious analysis of the *kalon* as what is either good and beneficial or pleasant. Elsewhere in the *Gorgias*, and in other dialogues, Socrates consistently associates the *kalon* with the good and beneficial, but frequently *opposes* all three to the pleasant. What is pleasant but not beneficial is downright shameful, *aischron*.<sup>18</sup> It should thus puzzle us to see him include pleasure here: he can only be referring to *aesthetic* pleasure,<sup>19</sup> and distinguishing an aesthetic sense of *kalon* (beautiful) from a more ethical or utilitarian sense; but it is hard to see how aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful is relevant to Polus’ preference for injustice over justice.<sup>20</sup> Including pleasure in the analysis, however, gives Socrates a pretext to question Polus as to whether justice, being more *kalon* than injustice, is also more pleasant, and Polus’ answers are very revealing.

Socrates begins by asking Polus if committing injustice is more painful than suffering it; the answer is an adamant no (*οὐδαμῶς*, 475 C 3). The same question is put, and the same answer given, about avoiding a penalty when one has done wrong: it is more shameful but more pleasant (less painful) than paying the penalty

<sup>18</sup> In the *Gorgias* this is most clear in Socrates’ contrast between different kinds of rhetoric at 503 A: while flattering rhetoric, concerned only with pleasure, is shameful, ‘true’ rhetoric would be *kalon* because it would benefit people, and would say ‘the best things, whether they are more pleasant or more unpleasant to the hearers’ (503 A 7–9). What is good and beneficial is *kalon* even when it is not pleasant; what is pleasant but not good and beneficial—like flattery—is shameful. Indeed, *whatever* is bad is shameful: ‘I call bad things shameful [*τὰ γὰρ κακὰ αἰσχρὰ καλῶ*]’ (463 D 4). This is consistent with Socrates’ association of the good or beneficial with the *kalon* throughout the dialogues, which is perhaps most evident in connection with his frequent assumption that virtue is *kalon*. (*La.* 192 C–D is typical: courage, being a virtue, must be *kalon*; furthermore, what is *kalon* must be good and beneficial.) *Meno* 77 B ff. and *Smp.* 204 E ff. treat the good and the *kalon* as interchangeable; at *Rep.* 452 E 1–2 Socrates says that it is ridiculous and foolish ‘to take seriously any standard of the *kalon* other than the good’; at 508 E he claims that the Form of the Good is very *kalon*, more so even than knowledge or truth, and at 517 C he claims that this Form is the cause of all that is *kalon* in the world.

<sup>19</sup> Compare *H. Ma.* 299 A: visual and auditory pleasures, but never sensual pleasures like eating or having sex, are called *kala*.

<sup>20</sup> *Pace* Vlastos, ‘Polus’. In fact, as I mention below, we can see Polus’ reactions to injustice as *analogous* to aesthetic reactions, but only analogous.



(477 A 1–4). Polus then agrees that injustice itself is more shameful, but not more painful, than sickness or poverty (477 C–E). Polus initially preferred committing injustice to suffering it, avoiding the penalty to paying it, and living unjustly to living in other ways. Now Socrates' questions show that, according to Polus' own, unhesitating judgements, each of these things is more *pleasant* than its alternative. It is an easy step from here to the conclusion that Polus preferred injustice just *because* it is more pleasant than justice—that he conflated pleasure with goodness, without being quite aware that he did so.<sup>21</sup>

Socrates thus thinks that he has identified Polus' reasons for superficially valuing injustice. But how can he challenge and unseat them? One might of course be a rational, theory-based hedonist: one might have reasons and arguments for the view that pleasure is good. If Polus' hedonistic preferences were of this form, rational arguments would be the proper tool for refuting them. But, I have argued, Polus' preference for injustice is paradigmatically *non-rational*: he does not reason that injustice is better, but seems to *see* that it is so; his belief that injustice is good is not a rational belief but something more akin to a perception or affective reaction. Moreover, he is not even clearly aware that pleasantness is the property of injustice to which he is responding in seeing it as good: Socrates has to reconstruct and make explicit that this is so.

A belief not based in reasoning is not easily challenged or corrected by means of reasoning: witness Polus' incredulous responses to Socrates. Polus can see that injustice is good; why should he listen to arguments that challenge what is so clear? Socrates' best hope is not to give him arguments that injustice is bad, but somehow to make him *see* it as bad—to counter one impression with another.<sup>22</sup> If Polus' preference is a response to one feature of injustice—its pleasantness—Socrates can try to unseat this preference by draw-

<sup>21</sup> Polus' hedonism must have been unwitting, for he happily consents to an analysis of *kalon* that distinguishes pleasure from benefit, and himself rephrases this as a distinction between pleasure and goodness (475 A 3). (If Polus is indeed thinking of aesthetic pleasure at this stage, this makes it easy for him to accept the contrast between pleasure and benefit. Had Socrates asked Polus to agree to a sharp distinction of benefit from pleasure of any kind, he might well have balked.)

<sup>22</sup> Compare Polus' own rhetorical strategy in trying to persuade Socrates that punishment is bad by detailing the horrors of punishment: Socrates accuses Polus of trying to 'spook' him (*μορμολύττη*, 473 D 3), rather than give him arguments. The strategy fails to work on Socrates, whose own bases for preferring justice to injustice are deeply rational.

ing his attention to another feature of injustice that will produce a countervailing response. It is in precisely this spirit, I maintain, that Socrates appeals to Polus' sense of *shame*.

Socrates asks which is more *aischron*, committing injustice or suffering it; committing injustice, Polus admits unhesitatingly. Why does he do so? Consider the following explanation: he simply *feels* or *sees* that it is so. His judgement is immediate and forceful, an emotional reaction based on his perception of a moral fact. Here the moral sense of *aischron* is closely analogous to the aesthetic sense, ugly: we might say that Polus reacts to the moral ugliness of wrongdoing with a feeling of shame, just as he might react to the ugliness of a human face with a feeling of distaste. This, I suggest, is Socrates' view of the matter. By drawing Polus' attention to considerations about what is shameful and what *kalon*, he believes that he has made him *see* justice and injustice in a new and unfavourable light. Plato is thus emphasizing the connection between the judgement that a thing is shameful (*aischron*) and the affective experience of shame (*αἰσχύνη*), and suggesting that the latter motivates the former.<sup>23</sup>

On the account I have offered, Polus initially thought injustice good because he was attracted by its pleasures. Now, Socrates hopes, he will realize that injustice is bad because he is repelled by its shamefulness. Responses to the pleasant and the painful on the one hand, and the *kalon* and the *aischron* on the other, are two bases for non-rational, quasi-perceptual value judgements. What one takes pleasure in strikes one as good; what one feels shame at strikes one as bad. In proceeding as he does with Polus, Socrates is emphasizing that these two types of response tend to conflict: many *kalon* things are painful, while many pleasant things are *aischron*, and thus we are pulled in different directions. Moreover, Socrates is making the point that pleasure pulls us in the wrong direction, towards false value judgements, while shame pulls us in the right direction, towards the truth.

Why does shame pull us towards the truth? Socrates' explanation is that shame judgements reflect our deep-down moral beliefs, which are on his view *true*. Prejudices and confusions may hide

<sup>23</sup> Compare my discussion of Callicles' reaction to the catamite (494 E) in sect. 2. It is worth noting that even on Callicles' cynical account of Polus' refutation (see sect. 4 below), Polus' judgement that committing injustice is *aischron* is motivated by a *feeling* of shame.

our deepest value beliefs from our own view, but in our feelings of shame they shine through. Deep down Polus truthfully believed all along that injustice was worse than justice (474 B 2–5, 475 E 3–5); finally his feelings of shame bring that belief to light.

That this is Socrates' understanding comes out in his analysis of judgements that a thing is shameful or *kalon*. He argues that we do not judge a thing shameful 'looking towards nothing', but rather in virtue of some badness (or harm), or of some pain; it becomes clear as he goes along that in the relevant cases it is always on the basis of badness.<sup>24</sup> Socrates is arguing that Polus' recognition that injustice is more shameful than justice must be based on a prior recognition that injustice is worse. He cannot be construing this prior recognition as an explicit thought, for Polus denies that he thinks injustice bad, and Socrates accuses him not of lying but rather of being unaware of his own deepest beliefs. Certainly there are cases of moral judgement in which we can analyse our immediate feeling of attraction or repulsion, admiration or disgust, as having rested on a 'deep-down' belief of which we were unaware. Someone thinks that she believes that all sex is fine so long as all parties consent; she contemplates a case of consensual sister–brother incest and reacts with outrage and disgust; she thereby realizes that deep down she did *not* believe that all consensual sex is fine but instead believed that incest, consensual or not, is wrong.<sup>25</sup>

If shame works to reveal our deep value beliefs in this way, then it clearly has potential as a tool of moral persuasion. In particular, appeals to shame can challenge false beliefs based on the appeal of pleasure more effectively than can rational argument. But as we read on, it becomes clear that Socrates thinks shame's power extends beyond merely *conflicting* with pleasure: when shame and

<sup>24</sup> These relevant cases are, roughly speaking, cases in which we call something *aischron* in the moral sense. We call things *aischron* 'looking towards pain' when we use *aischron* in the aesthetic sense, 'ugly'.

<sup>25</sup> Of course, there are many other ways to interpret the clash between an initial judgement and a gut reaction. In the paper from which I take the incest example, Jonathan Haidt argues that the non-rational, quasi-perceptual intuition that incest is wrong is the *basis* for the moral judgement (J. Haidt, 'The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment', *Psychological Review*, 108 (2001), 814–34). Callicles offers another type of explanation: the judgement that something is shameful sometimes amounts to no more than the recognition that society regards it as shameful. There is no shortage of ways in which one's affective responses can fail to line up with one's dispassionate judgements, but we can give Socrates the credit for having hit on one such way, and finding in it a positive use for feelings of shame.

pleasure conflict, shame will win. This is the view that underlies the refutation: Socrates wants to show Polus not merely that in finding injustice shameful he must recognize it as *prima facie* bad, but that he must reject it out of hand. But surely Polus might react by thinking, ‘In so far as injustice is shameful I do think it bad, but my attraction to it *qua* pleasant outweighs that consideration, and overall I still prefer it.’ In fact, this seems to be precisely Polus’ condition at the end of the conversation (although he does not articulate it clearly): he leaves the conversation obviously unpersuaded. Does Socrates none the less have some reason for thinking that shame should tend to trump pleasure, or is this mere wishful thinking?

Socrates’ confidence in the authority of shame may be stronger than warranted, but the structure of the argument indicates that he does have a particular reason for thinking that shame will trump pleasure. When Polus admits that injustice is more shameful than justice, he does not yet concede that it is worse; he is brought to this point only after Socrates first introduces the disjunctive analysis of the *kalon* and then uses it (as I have argued) as a pretext for questioning Polus about the relative pleasures and pains of justice and injustice. In answering these questions, Polus is faced with the fact that he takes pleasure in and thus pursues something *aischron*, and that he shirks the *kalon* through fear of pain. And this is a realization that would fill a man like him with *shame*, for two reasons. First, as many have recognized, shame is a self-regarding emotion: one feels shame about one’s own relation to things that are *aischra*, shame at doing or wanting them. Second, for men of Polus’ culture, taking *pleasure* in something *aischron* is particularly shameful—more than doing something *aischron* for other reasons; this is a fact that Plato will bring out in Socrates’ shaming of Callicles (see below). And these two facts give us reason to think that when shame and pleasure conflict, shame may win out. Ordinarily the fact that a particular pleasure is shameful does not enhance the pleasure one takes in it; for most men of Polus’ culture, however, it does enhance the shame.

Socrates’ refutation of Polus thus rests on a psychological theory about the role of shame and pleasure in our judgements about what is good. Feelings of shame and desires for pleasure both act as non-rational, affective, emotional, quasi-perceptual bases for judgements of value. They tend to conflict. Shame has a signifi-

cant *moral* advantage over pleasure: it taps into our deepest moral intuitions, which are, on this theory, true. Shame also has a *strategic* advantage over pleasure: when a person realizes that his feelings of shame conflict with his desires for pleasure, the conflict tends to enhance his feelings of shame and make them more likely to dominate. Shame, then, can in principle divorce a person's judgements about pleasure from his judgements about the good, and thereby show him that virtue is better than vice.

In Polus' case, the strategy fails. He leaves the conversation unpersuaded that justice is better than injustice, saying 'I think these things are absurd' when Socrates elaborates the consequences of that view (480E 1). His feelings of shame do conflict with his unwitting hedonism, but they fail in the end to undermine it. In the next episode of the dialogue, however, we see Socrates use an appeal to shame with more success, and we learn more about the relation between pleasure, reason, and shame.

## 2. Callicles

Callicles begins by defending a strong form of hedonism: the best life is the life devoted to strengthening and gratifying one's appetites without discrimination or restraint (491E–492A). Socrates advances several attacks against him: the myth and fable of the jars, meant to show that the temperate person is happier than the intemperate (493A–494A); the examples of the itch-scratcher and of the catamite<sup>26</sup> (494C–E); the argument that pleasure and pain are experienced simultaneously, unlike good and bad (495E–497D); and finally the argument that the coward and the foolish person experience as much pleasure as or more pleasure than the brave or intelligent person (497E–499B). Callicles ends by withdrawing his claim, and conceding that not all pleasures are good.

Is Callicles refuted by the cumulative weight of Socrates' arguments, or is one of the arguments decisive? Plato does not give us an explicit answer to this question, but he does take care to draw attention to the importance of *shame* in the conversation. Socrates

<sup>26</sup> The *κίναϊδος*: 'roughly speaking, one who enjoys being the passive partner in anal intercourse. Attic law apparently treats this as equivalent to male prostitution, and sufficient to deprive the guilty party of his citizenship rights' (Kahn, *Dialogue*, 136).

flatters Callicles by apparently conceding that shame led Gorgias and Polus astray, and adding that because Callicles himself has the important quality of frankness (*παρρησία*, 487 A 3) he will not say anything he does not believe through ‘a surplus of shame’ (487 E 4–5). Callicles is flattered: he clearly thinks that succumbing to shame is a sign of weakness and social conformity. Socrates returns to the point several times, in effect taunting Callicles by reminding him that his pride is staked on his immunity to shame: ‘take care not to be ashamed [*ἄπαισχυνῆ*]’ (494 C 5); ‘I shocked Polus and Gorgias and made them ashamed, but you won’t be shocked or ashamed, for you are *andreios* [manly or brave]’ (494 D 2–4).

Now, having aroused Callicles’ pride in his manly freedom from shame, Socrates sets out to show him that he *is* subject to shame. Callicles has claimed that the good and happy life is the life devoted to gratifying one’s appetites, whatever they may be. Socrates shows him first an embarrassing consequence of this view—that a man who spends his life scratching an itch will be happy—and then, following from this, a *shameful* one: ‘Isn’t the climax of such things, the life of the catamite, frightful and shameful and miserable?’ (494 E 3–5).<sup>27</sup> Callicles responds violently: ‘Aren’t you ashamed to lead the discussion to such things, Socrates?’ (494 E 7–8). Why does he think that Socrates should be ashamed to refer to the pleasures of the catamite? Clearly because, as Socrates intends him to, *he* finds such things shameful: the thought of taking pleasure in something so unmanly makes him recoil in disgust, so much so that he thinks that even mentioning such pleasures should fill a man with shame. Having been struck with the shamefulness of certain pleasures, Callicles now ceases to defend hedonism with his former conviction. When Socrates dares him to maintain ‘still even now’ that pleasure and goodness are the same (495 A 2), he rises to the challenge, but says that he does so merely ‘in order that my argument will not be inconsistent if I say that they are different’ (495 A 5–6). Hedonism no longer seems true to him; he defends it merely for the sake of argument.

Callicles sticks to his line through Socrates’ next argument (that pleasure and pain, unlike good and bad, can exist simultaneously). The last argument, however—that cowards enjoy as much or more pleasure than brave men (*andreioi*)—is his undoing. Socrates has

<sup>27</sup> Cf. 495 B 4–5: ‘both the many shameful things hinted at just now clearly follow, if [the good is pleasure] . . . and also many others’.

earlier flattered Callicles by calling him *andreios* (494 D 4); now he argues that Callicles' hedonism would lead him to embrace the life of the coward instead of the manly person he prides himself on being. It is now that Callicles reneges on his earlier position, claiming to have recognized a difference between pleasure and goodness all along, and to have maintained the identity only 'in jest [*παίζων*]' (499 B 5).

What has happened to Callicles? How was he persuaded to renounce the view he had defended so vigorously? Socrates' emphasis on shame in the discussion that leads up to the refutation, the explicit references to shamefulness in the case of the catamite and 'many other' consequences of hedonism (495 B 5), and the appeal to Callicles' pride in the example of the coward all point to the same answer. Callicles initially held that all pleasures were good, and (thus) that the life of unlimited gratification of the appetites was the best life, because he did not *notice* that some pleasures are bad and some appetites better left ungratified. Socrates showed him that some pleasures, and some aspects of the life of unlimited gratification of the appetites, are *shameful*. In order to make this manifest to Callicles, he had first to make him sensitive to considerations of shame and admiration; hence his emphasis on Callicles' *παρρησία*, his manly freedom from the social conventions that shackle the weak. Socrates was arousing Callicles' feelings of pride, shame, and admiration.<sup>28</sup> This done, he chose pleasures that would strike Callicles as manifestly shameful: those of the catamite and the coward, types whom Callicles in particular, with his pride in manliness, would find repugnant. Once Callicles is struck with the shamefulness of these pleasures, he simply *sees* that they are bad: for him, as for Polus, to recognize that something is shameful is to be repelled by it. Now he recognizes that all along, deep down, he thought certain pleasures bad ('As though you really think that I or any other man doesn't believe some pleasures better and others worse', 499 B 6–8).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> This is not the only point of the emphasis on Callicles' freedom from shame. The contrast between Callicles' vaunted frankness and his eventual surrender to shame serves to refute him on the level of attitude as well as on the level of explicit statement (see Socrates' claim that Callicles is 'out of harmony' with himself (482 B 5–6). As I discuss below, it also serves to undermine Callicles' own theory of shame.

<sup>29</sup> Note the similarity to Socrates' claim against Polus: Polus and *all other people* really believe that committing injustice is worse than suffering it (474 B 2–5, 475 E 3–5). Shame is able to uncover beliefs that are common to all. Cf. Kahn, *Dialogue*,

The strategy is more effective on Callicles than on Polus: Socrates really does bring him to renounce what he thought he believed good, and succeeds in using shame to reveal what Callicles believed deep down all along.<sup>30</sup> The strategy is more effective because Callicles is so driven by shame and related motivations—ambition, desire for honour, competitiveness, pride in manliness (all of which the *Republic* will assign to spirit, *thumos*). Because he cares so much about being *andreios*, he cannot countenance the thought of taking pleasure in the *aischron*. Where Polus would say ‘Injustice is shameful, but it is pleasant so I want it anyway’, Callicles thinks ‘The life of unlimited gratification of the appetites is shameful, so its pleasures are disgusting; therefore despite its pleasures I no longer want it.’

In the figures of Polus and Callicles, the *Gorgias* emphasizes the power of pleasure to lead people astray. (This is in fact emphasized throughout the dialogue, particularly in the characterization of rhetoric as appetite-gratifying flattery with enormous influence over ordinary people.) It also suggests that rational arguments, based on considerations of harm and benefit, will often fail to persuade someone that a bad pleasure is in fact bad, or a good pain in fact good: Socrates’ arguments for the superiority of justice over injustice leave Polus incredulous and Callicles indifferent. The dialogue shows, however, that shame can sometimes neutralize the appetites’ destructive force where reason on its own has failed: it can make the agent recoil from the pleasures of vice and aspire even to the pains of virtue. In the next sections I argue that the *Republic* develops this insight about the opposition between pleasure and shame into a full characterization of virtue and a full programme of moral education. It modifies the idea that shame taps into our ‘deep-down’, true value beliefs, while developing and making use of other ideas from the *Gorgias*: that shame can be a more effective tool of persuasion than reason, that shame is more effective against pleasure in a person who has a strong sense of honour, ambition, and pride in manliness, and that shame is connected to how an agent sees himself. It does all this by assigning feelings of shame

138: although Socrates’ appeals to shame are ‘highly personalized’, the conclusions they result in are universally true.

<sup>30</sup> Notice that the appeal to shame is sufficient to persuade Callicles to reject the strong form of hedonism he first defended, but not sufficient for Socrates’ ultimate goal: to persuade him that the temperate, just, philosophical life is best. One clear reason Callicles has for resisting this conclusion is that he finds the philosopher’s life *shameful*: see sect. 4 for discussion of this point.



and admiration to a part of the soul distinct from both appetite and reason, which has a crucial role in mediating between the two—in helping reason to overcome appetite and keep it under control.

### 3. Shame and pleasure in the *Republic*

Plato introduces spirit (*thumos*) in *Republic* 4, with the example of Leontius, who wants to look at corpses by the roadside but is angry with himself for having this desire. Plato presents this as a conflict between appetite (*τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν*) on the one hand, and spirit on the other. Why does spirit object to appetite's desire? Clearly because it feels disgust: looking at corpses for pleasure is something *shameful*. (As Leontius gives in to his appetites and rushes towards the corpses, he tells his eyes 'take your fill of the *kalon* sight' (440 A 3). This is straight irony: the sight is not *kalon*, but the very opposite—*aischron*, ugly and shameful.) Leontius' psychological conflict is thus of the kind that Socrates brings about in Polus and Callicles in the *Gorgias*: he is drawn towards something because it is pleasant, but shame motivates him to reject it.

In Leontius' case shame's promptings are too weak, and spirit is overpowered by appetite. In a virtuous, well-ordered soul, however, spirit is stronger than appetite, and its task is to aid reason in 'governing' appetite and keeping it under control.<sup>31</sup> Spirit is well suited to the task, because even in a soul that is *not* virtuous, it tends to side with reason against appetite:

Whenever the appetites force someone against rational calculation, he rails at himself and is angry at the forcing thing within him, and just as when two factions war, the spirit of such a man becomes an ally to his reason. (440 A 8–B 4)

Why does spirit tend to side with reason, when reason and appetite conflict? To answer this question, let us examine courage, the virtue distinctive of spirit.

'We call an individual brave in virtue of his spirited part, when through both pains and pleasures it preserves reason's commands about what is to be feared or not' (442 B 11–C 4). Reason decides

<sup>31</sup> When properly trained, spirit and reason together 'will govern the appetitive part . . . they will watch it lest, growing large and strong by filling itself with the body's so-called pleasures, it no longer sticks to its own affairs [*τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττει*], but tries to enslave and rule' the other parts of the soul (442 A 5–B 2).

what is to be feared; this is part of its general task of determining what is good and what is bad.<sup>32</sup> But, Plato says, strong pains and pleasures can ‘wash out’ reason’s dictates, as soap can wash out dye.<sup>33</sup> A person who rightly believes that bodily harm is not to be feared, because it is not truly bad, may waver in this belief when faced with imminent powerful pain. Reason, recognizing the courageous action as *best*, pulls the agent towards that action. Which part of the soul pulls the agent away, dreading the pains of the courageous action? It must be appetite, which Plato hereby presents as the part of the soul *motivated* by considerations of pleasure and pain.<sup>34</sup> The outcome of the battle is decided when the third party, spirit, joins its forces with reason in pulling the agent towards the courageous action.<sup>35</sup> Why does it do this? It is not motivated by considerations of pain and pleasure, like appetite, nor of benefit and harm, like reason. The most compelling explanation is that it finds this action *kalon*, and finds the cowardly, pleasurable alternative shameful.

The same principle holds for spirit’s role in another virtue: temperance (*sōphrosunē*). If courage is the disposition to pursue what is good even when it is painful, temperance is the disposition to avoid what is bad even when it is pleasant—even when the appetites might desire it.<sup>36</sup> Plato says that temperance involves all three parts of the

<sup>32</sup> Reason is the part that calculates about what is better and what worse (441 c 1–2).

<sup>33</sup> The guardians’ ‘belief about what they should fear and all the rest’ must become ‘so fast that even such extremely effective detergents as pleasure, pain, fear, and desire [*epithumia*—appetite] wouldn’t wash it out—and pleasure is much more potent than any powder, washing soda, or soap’ (430 a 3–b 2, trans. G. M. A. Grube/C. D. C. Reeve).

<sup>34</sup> We learn in *Republic* 9 that each part of the soul experiences its own pleasures, but as we see here and throughout the dialogue, appetite alone is *motivated* by the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain; it is the part that pursues pleasures *qua* pleasures (rather than *qua* beneficial or honourable). Plato even introduces the appetitive part of the soul in book 4 as the ‘companion of certain indulgences and pleasures’ (439 d 8), while pleasure plays no role in the definition of the other parts. We can thus take the *Republic* to be fundamentally in agreement with the *Charmides* in regarding appetite (*epithumia*) as the desire for pleasure (*Chrm.* 167 e 1–2; cf. Arist. *NE* 1111<sup>b</sup>17).

<sup>35</sup> *Republic* 4’s description of psychological conflict in terms of dragging (*ἔλκειν*), leading (*ἄγειν*), and hindering (*κωλύειν*) (439 c 6–d 1) encourages us to understand the situation in these dynamic terms.

<sup>36</sup> Compare Aristotle: ‘On account of pleasure we do base things [*τὰ φαύλα*], while on account of pain we abstain from *kala* things’ (*NE* 1104<sup>b</sup>9–11); temperance and courage work to counteract these tendencies. In Plato as in Aristotle temperance and courage are very closely connected: the *Republic*’s discussion of courage includes

soul, and although he does not spell out spirit's role in this virtue, we can easily infer it by analogy with courage. A person who rightly believes that over-indulgence is not to be pursued, because it is not truly good, may lose this belief when faced with imminent powerful pleasures. Just as in the case of courage, here too spirit can aid reason by 'preserving its commands', this time against the temptation of pleasures. Reason, calculating that it is best to abstain from some pleasant action, pulls the agent away from the action; appetite drags the agent towards it; spirit joins forces with reason against appetite because it finds the action shameful, and abstinence from it *kalon*. Spirit feels shame and anger at the thought of indulging base appetites, as well as at the thought of shirking painful duties; when these feelings are strong enough, they override the appetitive part's desire for pleasures and its fear of pain, and the person behaves with temperance and courage.<sup>37</sup>

Of course, Plato never explicitly tells us in the *Republic* that spirit is motivated to pursue the *kalon* and avoid the shameful. He introduces spirit as the seat of anger in book 4, and tells us in books 8 and 9 that it strives for honour and victory. But the desire for what is *kalon* can explain the desire for honour and victory, these being paradigmatically *kalon*, paradigmatic objects of admiration and praise. Anger can be understood as a natural reaction to the *aischron* in others or to the judgement that something *aischron* has been done to oneself; the natural reaction to the judgement that one has oneself done something *aischron* is of course shame. A detailed

reference to appetite and pleasure, as well as fear and pain; in the *Laches*, Socrates describes the courageous as 'not only those who are courageous against pains or fears, but also those who are clever at fighting against appetites and pleasures' (*La.* 191 D 6–E 1); in the *Laws*, the Athenian defines courage as 'a fight against fears and pains' but also 'desires [*πρόθοι*] and pleasures' (*Laws* 633 C 9–D 1, trans. Saunders in *Plato: Complete Works [Plato]*, ed. J. M. Cooper (Indianapolis, 1997)). This broad definition shows that 'courage' is in fact too narrow a translation of the Greek *andreia*; 'manliness' may better capture what Plato has in mind.

<sup>37</sup> Note the association of temperance with *aidōs* (shame, reverence, or modesty) at *Phdr.* 253 D 6 and *Chrm.* 160 E 4–5. Perhaps the object of appetite need not in itself be *aischron*: Hendrik Lorenz points out that in some cases reason may oppose an appetite that 'as such is indifferent to spirit' (as when considerations of health motivate the thirsty person not to drink), but adds that in such cases spirit may still ally with reason 'because it would be dishonourable or disgraceful for reason to be defeated by desire (440 A 8–B 4)'. The concern with *disgrace* shows that ultimately here too what motivates spirit are considerations about what is *kalon* and *aischron*. (H. Lorenz, 'Desire and Reason in Plato's *Republic*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 27 (2004), 83–116 at 100).

defence of these claims lies outside the scope of this paper, but I hope to lend the idea some intuitive appeal by showing the parallels between spirit in the *Republic* and judgements about the shameful and *kalon* in the *Gorgias*.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, this interpretation of spirit's role and motivations is bolstered by a comparison with the allegorical psychology of the *Phaedrus*. Here again we have a soul composed of three parts: a charioteer, corresponding to reason as described in the *Republic*, and his two horses. One horse is base and unruly, always dragging the soul towards low pleasures; it corresponds to the ἐπιθυμητικόν, the appetitive part of the soul. The other is *kalos*, fine and noble (246 B 2, cf. 253 D 4), and 'a lover of honour' (253 D 6), clearly corresponding to *thumos*. The *Phaedrus* describes a case of psychic conflict between reason and appetite: the base horse desires the pleasures of sex, but the charioteer wishes to refrain. When this happens, the noble horse sides with the charioteer against the base horse, and it does so because it is motivated by *shame*: 'controlled, then as always, by its sense of shame [αἰδοῖ] . . . [it] prevents itself from jumping on the boy'; in the thick of the struggle it 'drenches the whole soul with sweat out of shame [αἰσχύνῃς] and awe'.<sup>39</sup>

Returning now to the *Republic*, it is important to note that spirit's contribution to the agent's thought is not merely 'this pleasant action is shameful', but rather 'for me to do the pleasant action would be shameful' (or 'for me to shirk this *kalon* but painful action would be shameful'). Spirit is the part of the soul in virtue of which, as Plato says, a person 'rails at *himself* and is angry with the forcing thing *within him* [appetite]' (440 B 1–2): its anger and shame are directed not simply towards an action or object but rather towards a person (oneself or another) *qua* agent.<sup>40</sup> This is the basis for

<sup>38</sup> Gabriel Richardson Lear makes a compelling case for an interpretation of Plato on which spirit desires the *kalon*, partly by way of connection with Aristotle's characterization of spirited desire, in G. Richardson Lear, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good* [*Happy Lives*] (Princeton, 2004), 139–44.

<sup>39</sup> *Phdr.* 254 A 2–3 and 254 C 4–5, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff (in *Plato*, ed. Cooper). Cf. 256 A 6: when the boy is in bed with the lover, his base horse wants to capitulate to the lover's demands, but his noble horse holds back out of αἰδώς.

<sup>40</sup> Compare Cooper: spirit 'is different from appetite because appetites lack the self-reference which is essential to esteem and self-esteem' ('Motivation', 135). Hobbs describes spirit as having second-order attitudes (*Hero*, 58–9). I would say that spirit's attitudes are *in part* second-order, in part first-order: a person may find an act shameful or *kalon* in itself, and for that reason feel shame or pride in performing the action. The broad scope of the Greek terms *kalon* and *aischron* is important here: while it is trivial to say that performing a shameful action is shameful, it is

the reaction Socrates tried to bring about in Polus and Callicles: because one feels shame at one's own relation to shameful things, awareness of the fact that one desires or takes pleasure in something shameful enhances one's shame.

I argued that in the *Gorgias* Socrates uses appeals to shame to make his interlocutors recognize the distinction between the pleasant and the good. Polus—and by implication the conventional morality he represents—unconsciously equates pleasure with the good; Callicles does so explicitly. Shame makes them each see certain pleasures as bad, and thereby undermines their conscious or unconscious hedonism. Now we see that shame plays the same role in courage and temperance as the *Republic* describes them: it helps the agent keep firm the distinction between goodness and pleasure. Without spirit's aid, reason would be in danger of losing the battle to appetite. The pleasure that appetite craves would become the standard of value that determines the agent's actions. The person who believes that injury in battle is not to be feared, because it is not truly bad, but then loses that belief through fear when the moment comes, has confused pleasure with benefit, pain with harm. Because injury is painful, he has come to believe that it is bad. The effect of spirit, when it holds firm against fear or temptation, is to prevent the agent from lapsing into this confusion. In virtue of his spirited part, the agent continues to distinguish what is pleasant from what is good, 'preserving the commands of reason' and keeping appetite under control.

The question remains, of course, *why* reason needs spirit's help in this way. We have seen the beginnings of an answer in the Polus episode of the *Gorgias*. If someone is going for something *qua* pleasant not because he reasons that it is good, but rather because the thing simply *strikes* him as good (as I have argued that Polus goes for injustice), he will have no patience for reasoned arguments that it is in fact bad. He can see that it is good; why should he listen to arguments to the contrary?<sup>41</sup> But finding something shameful is

perhaps less so to say that performing an *aischron* action is *aischron*. Here is an attempt to disambiguate: if an action strikes one as *kalon* or *aischron* in what we might call a quasi-aesthetic sense (something close to beautiful or ugly, but with moral overtones), performing it will be *kalon* or *aischron* in the ethical sense (admirable or shameful).

<sup>41</sup> Compare the children who shout down the doctor, in the trial allegory at *Gorg.* 522 A. He argues that his treatments are beneficial, but the children, finding the

not like considering a rational argument that it is bad; it is instead *seeing* the thing as bad, being struck by its badness. Now the person must question, and perhaps reject, his conviction that the thing was good.

The *Republic* adds to this picture by assigning different desires, beliefs, and motivations to different parts of the soul. When we form value beliefs and desires on the basis of sophisticated reasoning, we are using the rational part of the soul; but this part of the soul develops only after childhood, and in many people (most, Plato implies) it remains weak or never really develops at all (441 A 9–B 1). For most people, the non-rational parts of the soul rule, and non-rational, affective, quasi-perceptual responses hold sway; in such people, reason simply is not developed enough or strong enough to combat appetite. Fortunately, spirit is present from the start (and, as we shall see in Section 4, can be strengthened and shaped by education well before reason develops). For people in whom reason is not ripe for arguments and rational persuasion—people who go on appearances, on how things strike them and feel to them—shame and other thumoeidic emotions are vital bulwarks against the destructive lure of appetitive pleasure. Thanks to shame, that is, even those people stuck at the non-rational level of quasi-perceptual or emotional reactions to the world can be guided by a moral sense.

We have seen that the *Republic* and *Phaedrus* expand and develop the role of shame as we saw it in the *Gorgias*. The power of shame and the other thumoeidic emotions helps to keep appetite from ruling in the soul—from usurping reason’s place and dictating what is good and bad, what the agent should pursue or avoid. Spirit systematically protects a person from the lure of pleasures, helps him to withstand the fear of pain, and preserves a system of values in which benefit is clearly distinguished from gratification of the appetites.

It is worth noting that this interpretation reveals something quite strange about book 4’s account of the virtues. An agent whose appetites constantly threaten to lead her astray may find ways to control them, and may thus always perform the virtuous action, but she will possess only what Aristotle calls *continence*, in contrast to genuine virtue. In a truly virtuous soul the parts are harmoniously

treatments painful, can simply *see* that they are bad; why should they listen to arguments here at all?

ordered, not pulling against one another like warring factions. The appetites desire only what reason countenances (see 586 D), and spirit has no need to fight against them.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the idea is that with the help of spirit, reason can eventually subdue the appetites so thoroughly that they become gentle and compliant. Perhaps, on the other hand, the hints of mere continence indicate that book 4 offers an account not of true virtue, but of a second-best state; perhaps true virtue is available only to genuine philosophers with knowledge of the Form of the Good.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. Shame, pleasure, and moral education

Appetite and spirit are both non-rational forces in the soul. Neither exercises sophisticated reasoning, and neither is motivated by concern for the overall good of the soul and its parts. If either grows too strong and takes control of the soul, the agent will be unjust and unhappy. Why, then, is spirit privileged over appetite as the ally of reason? Why do feelings like shame tend not only to conflict with desires for pleasure, but also when they do so to lead us in the direction that reason would recommend?

In the *Gorgias*, we saw that Socrates held an implicit theory of shame that would provide a straightforward explanation for its moral power. First, our feelings of shame are authoritative. Finding something shameful is not merely one factor among many in one's judgement about the thing: one simply cannot find something shameful without thereby recognizing that it is bad, and ceasing to desire it. Second, everyone is disposed to recognize as shameful what is truly bad, and as *kalon* what is truly good. Feelings of shame are therefore reliable guides to the moral truth (unlike experiences of pleasure, which are so often deceptive). This strong view of shame's power explains Socrates' willingness to rely on his interlocutors' shame judgements as revealing their sincere beliefs, and

<sup>42</sup> Note the claim, at *Soph.* 228 B 2–4, that in *disordered* souls we find conflict between, among other things, *thumos* and pleasures.

<sup>43</sup> Plato says that he has given an account only of *civic* (πολιτική) courage at 430 C 3–5; while this may simply refer to the fact that he has thus far described only the courage of the city, many think that Plato is indicating that all the virtues defined in book 4 are in some sense inferior. Plotinus calls these virtues 'civic', and argues that they belong only to those whose appetites stand in need of control (Plot. 1. 2. 1–2).

also his confidence that they will find injustice and intemperance shameful when asked.

But Socrates' view is only half the story about shame in the *Gorgias*: much of the dialogue's discussion tends in a very different direction. Polus charges that Gorgias contradicts himself because he is ashamed to say what he truly believes: that he does not and cannot teach his students to be just. Callicles charges that Polus in turn contradicts himself because he is ashamed to say what *he* truly believes: that committing injustice is more *kalon* than suffering it. Far from revealing deep beliefs, they claim, shame often disguises them.<sup>44</sup>

The dramatic action of the dialogue also tends to undermine Socrates' view of shame. The characters do not always feel shame at what they should, nor when they do is this always sufficient to determine their desires and judgements of value. Callicles has a strong but misguided sense of honour and shame: he wrongly scorns the life of philosophy and justice, calling this life shameful and unmanly.<sup>45</sup> Polus is ashamed of his desire for the pleasures of the unjust life, but desires them none the less. The dialogue thus points to a weaker theory than the one it attributes to Socrates. Being shameful is one way of appearing bad, and being admirable is one way of appearing good; these appearances can compete with but may not defeat rival appearances, in particular the appearances generated by pleasure. And the appearances of goodness or badness revealed to us through shame are not always true: sometimes our feelings of shame are misguided.

These very same shortcomings of shame surface in the *Republic* as weaknesses of spirit, traits that can make spirit impotent or even dangerous. First, spirit's tendency to oppose appetite—to find base pleasures shameful—is not enough to guarantee virtue, for spirit may be overpowered by appetite: Leontius, like Polus, desires and pursues a pleasure even though he recognizes it as *aischron*. Second,

<sup>44</sup> More precisely, Callicles thinks that shame felt at something shameful 'by nature' reflects our sincere judgements, but shame felt at something shameful merely by *nomos*, convention, does not; moreover, he thinks, both Gorgias and Polus were shamed by things shameful merely by convention. For more on this distinction, see below.

<sup>45</sup> Callicles says that the philosopher is not *καλὸς κἀγαθός* (484 D 1–2), that philosophy is shameful for adults (485 A 5, 489 B 8), that *pleonexia* and nurturing one's own appetites are most *kalon* 'by nature' (483 A–B, 491 E 6 ff.), and that the most shameful thing is to be unable to protect oneself from suffering injustice (483 A 7–B 4, 486 A 4 ff.; cf. 508 D 4, 522 C 4–6).



and worse still, spirit does *not* always feel shame at the bad and admiration for the good. Sometimes spirit opposes the dictates of reason: Plato uses Homer's Odysseus as a paradigm of such a case, perhaps implying that the Homeric code of honour and shame generally fails to track the truth about good and bad.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the censorship of poetry in books 2 and 3 is in part motivated by this complaint: these poems teach spirit to admire much that is bad and feel shame at much that is good.<sup>47</sup> *Republic* 8 offers examples of characters like Callicles in whom spirit's values are dangerously wrong: the timocratic man, who values honour (reputation and glory) and victory above all else (548 E ff.), and the oligarch, who will not allow his spirited part 'to esteem or honour anything other than wealth and wealthy people, or to aspire to anything other than the acquisition of money' (553 D 4–6).

If shame and the other thumoeidic emotions can go wrong in these ways—if Socrates' view of shame in the *Gorgias* was too simple and too optimistic—then we are left with the questions posed at the beginning of this section. Why is shame a promising tool of moral persuasion, while appetites for pleasure lead us astray? Why in the *Republic* is spirit reason's ally, and appetite the enemy?

This asymmetry between spirit and appetite is more puzzling than it may at first appear. The explanation cannot be simply that what spirit admires, the *kalon*, is coextensive with the good, while what appetite desires, the pleasant, is not. First, *Republic* 9 argues that in an important sense the pleasant (the most pleasant, or the truly pleasant) *is* coextensive with the good.<sup>48</sup> Second, even

<sup>46</sup> Socrates quotes *Od.* 20. 17–18, at 441 B.

<sup>47</sup> For citations, see n. 60 below. The censorship is also motivated by the complaint that such poems nurture and gratify unhealthy appetites.

<sup>48</sup> 580 D ff. I am here simplifying some complicated issues about pleasure. First, what is most truly pleasant, according to *Republic* 9, is not an object of desire for *appetite* at all, but rather for reason. None the less, Plato argues that the appetites are best satisfied—get 'the truest pleasures possible' for them, 'and the ones that are most their own' (586 D 8–E 1, trans. Grube/Reeve)—when they do as reason commands. Therefore the virtuous life is indeed the most *appetitively* pleasant, as well as offering loftier pleasures to reason. Second, perhaps it is not after all possible to be mistaken as to whether or not something is pleasant, although it is possible to be mistaken as to whether or not something is *kalon*. Although *Republic* 9 calls the base pleasures desired by vicious appetites 'mere images and shadow-paintings of true pleasures' (586 B 7–8, trans. Grube/Reeve), and the *Philebus* calls them 'false' (*Phileb.* 36 C ff.), it is arguably Plato's claim that even these pleasures *are* pleasures: ontologically inferior pleasures, but pleasures none the less. What

though what is truly *kalon* is good, one can be *mistaken* about what is *kalon*—witness again Callicles' derision of philosophy, and the corrupt souls of *Republic* 8; in such cases spirit will be no more reliable a guide to the good than appetite. The explanation for the asymmetry must lie, then, not in any facts about the objects that the different parts of the soul desire (the pleasant vs. the *kalon*), but rather in facts about the nature of the parts of the soul themselves.

Appetite desires what it finds pleasant; although what most people find pleasant is worthless or harmful, what is really pleasant is precisely what is good; therefore in principle it should be possible to train the appetites to recognize and pursue the truly pleasant.<sup>49</sup> The difficulty seems to be that there is no way to alter what the appetites desire without first altering the appetites themselves. The *Gorgias* and *Republic* characterize vicious people's appetites as different in nature from those of virtuous people: as the *Gorgias* puts it, vicious people's appetites are unruly, insatiable, and shifty.<sup>50</sup> This difference in constitution determines the respective pleasures of the vicious and the virtuous: it entails that harmful things please the vicious person, while the moderate, orderly pleasures of virtue do not. Thus there is simply no way to make a vicious person take pleasure in virtue. One must first devise a way to discipline and weaken her appetites; once they have been made temperate, they will come to take pleasure in things that are genuinely good. But this is to say that one must first make a person virtuous before she can take appetitive pleasure in virtue; and if this is so, then it is obvious that appeal to appetite cannot be a *means* of moral education.<sup>51</sup>

someone mistakenly thinks *kalon*, on the other hand, is in no way *kalon* at all, any more than what someone mistakenly thinks good is good.

<sup>49</sup> We may compare the *Protagoras*' art of measuring pleasures, which trains people to recognize what is most pleasant, and thereby makes them virtuous. Plato abandons any optimism about pleasure as a tool of moral education in the *Gorgias* and *Republic*.

<sup>50</sup> See *Gorg.* 493 A ff.; cf. 505 A–B.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle holds that pleasure is instrumental in moral education, and attributes the same view to Plato: 'One should be brought up right from childhood, as Plato says, to enjoy [*χαίρειν*] and be pained by [*λυπεῖσθαι*] the things one should; for this is what correct education is' (*NE* 2. 3, 1104<sup>b</sup>12–14). But enjoyment and pain here do not refer solely or even chiefly to appetitive pleasure: we might paraphrase Aristotle as saying that, according to Plato, one must be brought up not to take appetitive pleasure in what is bad, and to take another, loftier sort of pleasure (thumoeidic or rational) in what is good. Burnyeat argues that for Aristotle it is precisely the pleasures of spirit that are at issue (M. Burnyeat, 'Aristotle on Learning to Be Good', in A. O. Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley and London, 1980), 69–92 at 79).

Whether or not a thing appeals to the appetites depends on the constitution of the appetites, and therefore the appetites are not a promising target of moral education. In so far as moral education in the *Republic* is concerned with the appetites at all, its chief concern is to repress the dangerous ones.<sup>52</sup> What about spirit? When we look at the details of the elaborate childhood education described in books 2 and 3, we see that spirit is in fact its primary target.<sup>53</sup> Far from ignoring or suppressing spirit, moral education nurtures and trains it. Why is spirit educable where appetite is not? Precisely, I shall argue, because what appeals to spirit does *not* depend on facts about its brute constitution. Spirit, unlike appetite, is *malleable*.

The roots of this idea, moreover, are articulated in the *Gorgias*—not by Socrates, but by *Callicles*. For in criticizing Socrates' use of shame Callicles expresses his own view about it, and although this view is not put forth as one that Plato embraces, it does contain several crucial points that will surface in the *Republic*'s characterization of spirit.

Callicles barges into the discussion at 481 B with the accusation that Socrates' use of shame in his argument against Polus was deceitful and unfair. He distinguishes between what is shameful by nature and what is shameful merely by convention (*nomos*), and implies that most of the time when we call something shameful we are reporting on social convention rather than expressing our own deepest beliefs.<sup>54</sup> Shame is mostly a matter of not wanting to look

<sup>52</sup> Harmful, unnecessary appetite is something 'that most people can get rid of, if it is disciplined and educated from childhood' (559 B 9–10); in the well-ordered soul, the rational part 'should take care of the many-headed beast'—the appetites—'as a farmer does his animals, feeding and domesticating the gentle heads and *preventing the savage ones from growing*' (589 B 1–3, trans. Grube/Reeve, emphasis added). A proper education and upbringing will kill off the bad appetites, or even prevent them from arising. (As to the necessary appetites, the 'gentle heads', a virtuous person 'feeds and domesticates' them: presumably this entails giving the body enough to eat and drink, and providing body and soul with temperate pleasures. Plato does not say more on this topic, and it would be odd to consider the care of the appetites as a significant part of the positive programme of moral education he describes.)

<sup>53</sup> This is explicit at *Rep.* 410 B–412 A, where Plato describes the goal of the education in music and physical training as the harmonizing of spirit with reason. I believe that spirit is the implied target throughout much of books 2 and 3: it is spirit that is affected when stories or music present certain actions or characters as *kalon*, encouraging the audience to admire and imitate them, and others as *aischron*, encouraging the audience to disdain them. See n. 60 below for citations.

<sup>54</sup> Callicles says that Polus called committing injustice more shameful because he was 'ashamed to say what he thought' (482 E 2), and then says that Polus meant that committing injustice was more shameful by *nomos* only, not by nature (483 A 6). We

bad to others. In judging something shameful, we are responding to thoughts about what others think of us, rather than to our own thoughts about what is good and bad. Moreover, while what is by *nature* shameful is bad and what is by nature *kalon* good, conventions about the *kalon* and shameful often fail to track the truth about good and bad (483 A 7 ff.).

Certainly the dialogue does not present Callicles as having the final word on shame. He begins by bragging that he is above shame and ends by being caught in its snare himself: is it not likely that he underestimates the power of shame because he misunderstands its nature? Indeed, his distinction between the shameful by nature and the shameful by convention is too stark, and Plato indicates this by showing that Callicles' own feelings of shame turn out to accord closely with social convention. Callicles finds the catamite and the coward repugnant not *merely* because society condemns them, but neither is it a coincidence that he finds shameful what society condemns.<sup>55</sup> The most natural interpretation is that Callicles' own view of what is shameful has been shaped by society—that, like most people, he has internalized social norms about what is shameful and what admirable, despite his radical views.

As Bernard Williams argues, shame is a social emotion, not because we feel shame *only* when we consider what others think of us, but rather because through shame we internalize an external, societal viewpoint, and use it to guide our own judgements about ourselves.<sup>56</sup> Callicles is right to point out that we feel shame when we think of how others will react to us, and Plato dramatizes the

have to do a bit of work to see how the two charges are connected. Callicles means first, that one genuinely believes something shameful only if one thinks it shameful by nature; second, that if something is shameful by *nomos*, one will be ashamed to admit to others that one admires it. (According to Callicles, then, Polus does *feel* shame at the thought of injustice, as well as saying that he finds it shameful; the shame he feels, however, is not (as Socrates implies) a result of his finding injustice genuinely shameful.)

<sup>55</sup> Condemnation of the catamite was a social institution: a prostitute was not allowed to speak in the assembly or hold public office (K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard, 1978), 27). Aeschines refers to prostitution as the *shaming* of one's body for hire (ἐάν τις Ἀθηναίων ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος αἰσχύνῃ ἐκὼν μισθαρῆ . . ., *Against Timarchus* 87 and throughout).

<sup>56</sup> 'Whatever it is working on, [shame] . . . requires an internalised other . . . whose reactions the agent can respect . . . [T]his figure . . . embodies intimations of a genuine social reality—in particular, of how it will be for one's life with others if one acts in one way rather than another' (B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* [Necessity] (Berkeley and London, 1993), 102).

same point early in the dialogue when he shows that Gorgias feels shame about rhetoric's shortcomings in front of people who admire him.<sup>57</sup> But Callicles is wrong to think that this fact discredits shame—to think that the social nature of shame disqualifies it from being among the agent's genuine beliefs and motivations. Williams might (although he does not) have had Callicles' dismissive view of shame in mind when he argues that 'the Greeks' understanding of shame . . . was strong and complex enough to dispose of the familiar criticism that an ethical life shaped by it is unacceptably heteronomous, crudely dependent on public opinion' (97).

The *Gorgias*, then, presents two views of shame, Socrates' and Callicles', and suggests problems for both. When we look at the *Republic's* characterization of spirit, the shame-feeling part of the soul, we see that Plato accepts some of Callicles' criticisms of Socrates' view, but does not think that they undermine the moral force of shame. For here we find a picture that has significant points in common with Callicles' view, yet offers a more subtle understanding of the social nature of shame. On this refined view, the fact that shame judgements are socially inculcated turns out to increase, not detract from, shame's potential as a tool of moral education.

We can begin by noting a striking parallel between the speech in which Callicles denounces the social inculcation of shame, and the *Republic's* description of the childhood education of the guardians.

Callicles says that what is by nature *kalon* is to be powerful, strong, and 'able to have more than one's share [πλέον ἔχειν]' (483 C 2). Those who make the rules (οἱ τιθέμενοι τοὺς νόμους, 483 B 4–5), however, are the weak: unable to πλέον ἔχειν, they declare that it is just and *kalon* to have only an equal share. What is by nature

<sup>57</sup> Throughout the conversation, Socrates reminds Gorgias that he is on display, and that his reputation as a teacher of rhetoric is at stake. Gorgias boasts of his rhetorical skill (449 A), his ability to speak succinctly (449 C), and the power of rhetoric (455 D ff.); Socrates gets him to engage in dialectic and to remain in the conversation by flattering him, by reminding him of his boasts, and by reminding him of his reputation (449 C–D, 455 C–D). As the conversation continues, and Gorgias fails to give good answers to Socrates' questions, Gorgias' responses stop displaying vanity and start displaying shame. He is trying to save face in front of the audience; at one point he even tries to escape the conversation by suggesting that his listeners are tired (458 B–C). When Callicles urges him to continue, he says, 'It would be *shameful* after all this for me to be unwilling, having announced that I would answer whatever anyone wanted' (458 D 7–E 1). Now shame has reared its head, and it is not long before Gorgias makes the fatal admission which Polus diagnoses as the product of shame (460 A 3–4).

*kalon* they call shameful, while what is by nature shameful they call *kalon*.<sup>58</sup> The rulers of society, then, wish to impose a morality upon their subjects—they wish to influence people’s judgements about what is shameful and what *kalon*. How do they do so, according to Callicles? By means of manipulative childhood education:

Moulding [πλάττοντες] the best and most powerful among us, taking them from childhood . . . we enslave them with charms and sorcery [κατεπαΐδοντες τε καὶ γοητεύοντες], telling them that one must have an equal share, and that this is the *kalon* and the just. (483 E 4–484 A 2)

Plato makes similar use of the word ‘moulding’ in his description of the childhood education of the guardians in *Republic 2*. Here nurses and mothers tell prescribed stories to children, ‘and mould [πλάττειν] their souls with these stories’ (377 C 3–4; cf. 377 B 2).<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the similarity goes far beyond this coincidence in vocabulary. For the educational programme of *Republic 2–3* is an explicit attempt to carry out a version of the programme Callicles decries. Here too we have lawgivers who wish to impose a morality on their citizens: they wish to keep them free of the false morality that sees no intrinsic value in justice. They do so precisely by means of manipulative childhood education. Taking the citizens when they are young, they ‘mould’ them by means of music, poetry, stories, and other forms of non-rational influence which one might cynically describe as ‘charms and sorcery’ (Callicles’ phrase at 483 E 6).

What is more, the *Republic*’s childhood education directly targets judgements about the shameful and the *kalon*.<sup>60</sup> Reason, the part of the soul that has thoughts about good and bad, is undeveloped in children; but spirit, the part of the soul that feels shame and admiration, is present from the start (441 A 7–B 1). ‘Musical’ education thus targets not reason but spirit: it aims not to instil beliefs about the good and bad directly, but rather to cultivate children’s sense of shame about the very things that they should, when they come to reason, think bad, and their admiration for what they should think

<sup>58</sup> ‘By nature what is worse is also wholly more shameful: suffering injustice; but by convention committing injustice is more shameful’ (Callicles at 483 A 7–8).

<sup>59</sup> *Laws* 671 C also implies that lawgivers educate children by moulding (πλάττειν) their souls.

<sup>60</sup> Shame, the shameful, and the *kalon* are explicitly mentioned at 378 C 2, 388 D 6, 401 E 4 ff., and 403 C 6. Implicit throughout the discussion of music and poetry is the question of what behaviour and characters should be presented as admirable and what should be presented as shameful, worthy of disdain.

good. Without trading in talk of good and bad, it trains spirit's reactions to track the truth about good and bad:

[A]nyone who has been properly educated in music and poetry . . . [will] praise fine things [τὰ καλά] . . . [and will] rightly object to what is shameful [τὰ αἰσχρά], hating it while he's still young and unable to grasp the reason, but, having been educated in this way, he will welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with himself. (401 E 4–402 A 4, trans. Grube/Reeve)<sup>61</sup>

How does the musical education succeed in educating spirit? A close investigation lies outside the scope of this paper.<sup>62</sup> Details aside, however, we can recognize that in explaining this process Plato is pointing out and relying upon an empirical fact: the stories, songs, and images that we are raised on embed societal values, and in turn they shape our values, determining to a large extent what we admire and approve, as well as what we find distasteful, shameful, and wrong.

Callicles' sinister description of moral indoctrination, and his observation that judgements of shame are socially conditioned, thus reappear in the *Republic* as crucial parts of a positive programme of moral education. Moreover, the *Republic's* characterization of spirit undermines Callicles' dismissal of the shame a person feels at what is shameful 'by convention'. Spirit is shaped and influenced by social forces: by the ways in which a person imitates others, admires others, competes with others, and sees herself as others see her. None the less, the judgements and desires of spirit are in no sense external to the agent; they reflect not merely what others think but also the agent's own values. Precisely in virtue of the

<sup>61</sup> Compare Richardson Lear: the aim of the musical education is 'to mold our perception of the *kalon*, which we naturally esteem, to fit the form of what is good . . . to teach children to take aesthetic pleasure in—to perceive as fine—images of what is truly good and only them' (*Happy Lives*, 142).

<sup>62</sup> Book 3 implies that spirit will admire the characters that poems and myths present as worthy of admiration, and will motivate the agent to imitate them: see e.g. 395 C–D and 401 B–C. Gosling has a good discussion of the effect of myths and poetry on spirit: 'The treatment of early education and the criticisms of poetry in the early books are concerned with the development of the spirited part. . . . gods and heroes are naturally to be taken as models . . . Children reading of their doings naturally aspire to do likewise, and take from them their standards of what is fine and what shabby behaviour . . . It is the normal function of legends of gods and heroes to arouse this capacity for admiration and fix, in youth, the general lines of an ideal which may stay with a man for life' (J. C. B. Gosling, *Plato* (London, 1973), 44–5). A full study of the education of spirit must also take account of book 3's discussion of music.

fact that there is a thumoeidic part of the soul, society's values can directly shape our own.<sup>63</sup>

Because they are open to social influence, shame judgements can be shaped and guided in the direction that society sees fit. In a society ruled by philosopher kings, what is shameful 'by nature', truly shameful, will also be shameful by convention, and therefore the citizens' shame judgements will be shaped and guided to conform to moral truth.<sup>64</sup>

Appetite is not subject to positive moral education, and thus can play no positive role in virtue, because it is not possible to 'redirect' appetitive desire towards the good. Both Callicles' speech and the *Republic's* programme for musical education show that unlike desires for pleasure, feelings of shame and admiration *are* subject to morally useful redirection. It is possible to shape a person's feelings of shame, in a way in which it is not possible to shape her appetites. If left to their own devices, or to the mores of a corrupt society, people may be mistaken about what is shameful and what *kalon*, just as they will be mistaken about what is truly pleasant.<sup>65</sup> The right education, however, can train spirit to track the truth about good and bad. Hence the power of spirit, when properly educated, to combat appetite, ally itself with reason, and ensure virtue in the soul.

The *Gorgias* raises a serious worry for moral education, by showing

<sup>63</sup> Curiously, Williams overlooks the importance of spirit in the *Republic*, accusing Plato of finding no place for shame in his ethics. 'The Guardians do not need [an internalised other] . . . because they have internalised something else, and carry in them a paradigm of justice gained from their intellectual formation' (*Necessity*, 99). By Williams's lights, this gives Plato an impoverished picture of morality similar to Kant's. It seems to me that the *Republic's* emphasis on the role of spirit in virtue and in moral education should protect Plato from this charge. (Although if there is indeed a distinction between civic and genuine courage (see n. 43), perhaps Williams's criticism does apply to the latter.)

<sup>64</sup> Plato does not reject Callicles' distinction between what is truly shameful and what is shameful according to false conventions any more than he rejects Callicles' claim that childhood education shapes our sense of shame. The *Republic* urges censorship of the poems that have so powerfully established false conventions in Plato's own society, and seeks to replace them with art that teaches people to admire what is truly *kalon* and feel shame at what is truly shameful instead.

<sup>65</sup> Outside of the ideal city a young person will be corrupted by the *de facto* moral education of the crowd, 'carried by the flood wherever it goes, so that he'll say that the same things are *kala* or *aischra* as the crowd does, follow the same way of life as they do, and be the same sort of person as they are' (492 c 6–8, trans. Grube/Reeve, with my revisions).



that the appetites tend to lead people to vice and to undermine *rational* efforts to bring them to virtue. It also begins to suggest a solution to this problem: shame and admiration have the power to succeed where reason fails, in revealing the value of virtue and silencing or overcoming the appeal of pleasure. The *Republic* develops this insight into an account of the soul on which spirit plays a crucial role alongside reason and appetite, showing us that spirit is no *ad hoc* afterthought but instead a crucial part of Plato's picture of virtue and moral education. In doing so, the *Republic* offers us a tempered version of Socrates' view of shame in the *Gorgias*: shame is a morally useful force in the soul not because it is authoritative and truth-tracking by *nature*, but because it can acquire those traits through careful education.

University of Pittsburgh

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Annas, J., *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981).
- Burnyeat, M., 'Aristotle on Learning to Be Good', in A. O. Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley and London, 1980), 69–92.
- Cooper J. M., 'Plato's Theory of Human Motivation' ['Motivation'], *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 1 (1984), 3–21, repr. in Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, 1999). 118–37.
- (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works [Plato]* (Indianapolis, 1997).
- Dodds, E. R., *Plato: Gorgias* (Oxford, 1959).
- Dover, K. J., *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard, 1978).
- Gosling, J. C. B., *Plato* (London, 1973).
- Grube, G. M. A. (trans.), *Plato: Republic*, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1992).
- Haidt, J., 'The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment', *Psychological Review*, 108 (2001), 814–34.
- Hardie, W. F. R., *A Study in Plato* (Oxford, 1936).
- Hobbs, A., *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good [Hero]* (Cambridge, 2000).
- Irwin, T., *Plato's Ethics* (New York and Oxford, 1995).
- Kahn, C., 'Drama and Dialectic in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Drama'], *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 75–121.

- *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form [Dialogue]* (Cambridge, 1996).
- Lorenz, H., 'Desire and Reason in Plato's *Republic*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 27 (2004), 83–116.
- McKim, R., 'Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*' ['Shame'], in C. Griswold (ed.), *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings* (New York and London, 1988), 34–48.
- Penner, T., 'Thought and Desire in Plato', in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ii. *Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion* (New York, 1971), 96–118.
- Reeve, C. D. C., *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic [Philosopher-Kings]* (Princeton, 1988).
- Richardson Lear, G., *Happy Lives and the Highest Good [Happy Lives]* (Princeton, 2004).
- Robinson, T. M., *Plato's Psychology*, 2nd edn. (Toronto, 1995).
- Santas, G., *Socrates: Philosophy in Plato's Early Dialogues* (London, 1979).
- Shorey, P., *What Plato Said* (1933) (repr. Chicago, 1979).
- Vlastos G., 'Was Polus Refuted?' ['Polus'], *American Journal of Philology*, 88 (1967), 454–60.
- 'The Socratic Elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 1 (1983), 27–58.
- *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge and Ithaca, NY, 1991).
- Williams, B., 'The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's *Republic*', in E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (eds.), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos (Phronesis suppl. 1; Assen, 1973)*, 196–206.
- *Shame and Necessity [Necessity]* (Berkeley and London, 1993).

OXFORD STUDIES  
IN ANCIENT  
PHILOSOPHY

EDITOR: DAVID SEDLEY

VOLUME XXIX

WINTER 2005

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS