

IS APPETITE EVER “PERSUADED”?: AN ALTERNATIVE READING OF *REPUBLIC* 554C-D

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Abstract: Republic 554c-d—where the oligarchic individual is said to restrain his appetites “by compulsion and fear,” rather than by persuasion or by taming them with speech—is often cited as evidence that the appetitive part of the soul can be “persuaded.” I argue that the passage does not actually support that conclusion. I offer an alternative reading and suggest that appetite, on Plato’s view, is not open to persuasion.

One question that has been central in recent debates about Plato’s tripartite theory of psychology is whether, and to what extent, each of the three parts of the soul—the reasoning, the spirited, and the appetitive—is “agent-like.” According to more “homuncularist” interpretations, the soul-parts enjoy a relatively high degree of cognitive and psychological independence from one another: they have their own desires, hold their own beliefs, and all three parts—including the nonrational ones—have a share in quasi-rational capacities such as means-end reasoning and the ability to communicate with, and be *persuaded* by, one another.¹ Commentators who attribute this latter capacity to all three soul-parts often cite *Republic* 554c-d, where Socrates seems to imply, in his discussion of the oligarchic individual, that the appetitive part of the soul can be controlled not simply through brute psychic “force” but also through persuasion and reason-giving.² Indeed, this passage offers arguably the strongest support in the whole *Republic* for the view that the appetitive part of the soul is *persuadable*.

My aim in this paper is relatively narrow. I do not wish to challenge homuncularist interpretations on all accounts but will focus my discussion exclusively on the question whether appetite is capable of being persuaded. More specifically, I will attempt to show that 554c-d, the key passage taken to support the view that it *is* persuadable, does not

necessitate that conclusion. I will offer an alternative reading of the passage and will suggest that, for Plato, the appetitive part of the soul is simply not the kind of thing that is open to persuasion.

I take “persuasion” in this paper to mean something relatively specific: it is a rational form of interaction that characteristically involves reason-giving argument, expressed in the form of speech (or the intrapsychic equivalent of speech, propositional thought), that appeals to considerations about the addressee’s long-term or all-things-considered good. It should be noted, however, that the Greek verb *peithô* and its passive *peithomai* cover a much broader range of interaction. As Glen Morrow notes, the Greek term “means getting a person to do something you want him to do, by the use of almost any means short of physical compulsion” (1953, 235–36). My paper is not intended to deny that appetite can *peithesthai* (often best translated simply as “obey”) in this broader sense (see, for example, *Tim.* 70a7). Rather, I am denying that appetite can be persuaded through arguments that appeal to what is “best” for it. It is this latter, stronger sense of persuadability that homuncularist theories attribute to the appetitive part of the soul.³

1. *REPUBLIC* 554C-D: THE OLIGARCHIC INDIVIDUAL

In Book 8, during his discussion of the main types of vicious political and psychic constitutions, Socrates offers a characterization of the oligarchic individual: such a man is ruled by his appetite for wealth, but he also contains “dronish” appetites—some “beggarly” and some “evil”—that he normally holds in check by force. One could see that the oligarchic man has such desires, Socrates says, if one observed him when he has the opportunity to commit injustice with impunity. The crucial passage then reads:

And doesn’t this make it clear that, in those other contractual obligations, where he has a good reputation and is thought to be just, he’s forcibly holding his other evil appetites in check by means of some decent part of himself [ἐπιεικεῖ τινὶ ἑαυτοῦ βίᾳ κατέχει ἄλλας κακὰς ἐπιθυμίας]? He holds them in check, not by persuading them that it’s better not to act on them, nor by taming them with speech, but by compulsion and fear [οὐ πείθων ὅτι οὐκ ἄμεινον, οὐδ’ ἡμερῶν λόγῳ, ἀλλ’ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ φόβῳ], because he trembles for his other possessions (554c11-d3).⁴

Here Socrates indicates that the oligarchic individual holds his evil appetites in check by means of force and fear, and *not* by persuading them or taming them with speech.⁵ According to the homuncularist interpretation, the contrast Socrates is drawing in this passage is between the methods of controlling appetite that corrupt individuals like the oligarch employ, on the one hand, and the methods of controlling appetite that

more virtuous individuals like the philosopher employ, on the other. On this reading, it is possible to persuade one’s appetites or to tame them with speech, but the oligarchic individual uses force and fear instead. This is the conclusion drawn, for example, by Christopher Bobonich, who writes, “For this criticism to have a point, Plato must think that the philosopher can persuade his appetitive part by communication, by means of *logoi*, that it is better for it to go along with reason. . . . This persuasion is a form of rational interaction” (2002, 43).⁶ Similarly, Rachel Singpurwalla comments, “[In] *Republic* VIII, Socrates criticizes an individual for controlling his appetitive desires through compulsion and fear, rather than persuading them that it is better not to act on them, or taming them with arguments. Socrates thinks, then, that it is possible to use reason and argument to quell the appetites” (2010, 885–86).

I would like to propose an alternative reading that consists of two main claims. First, Socrates’ remarks do not imply that appetite can be persuaded. On the contrary, I will suggest, appetitive desires—especially the sort that are involved at 554c-d—cannot be controlled through persuasion at all but only through force, fear, and other nonrational methods. Second, the contrast that Socrates is drawing in the passage is not between virtuous and vicious methods of controlling appetites but between methods of controlling better and worse kinds of desires and the parts of the soul responsible for them.

2. CONTROLLING THE APPETITES

An examination of the details of 554c-d and of the surrounding discussion supports the view that the appetites are not open to persuasion. To begin with, we should note that the appetitive desires that the oligarchic man restrains are considered “unnecessary” appetites. Socrates’ account of the distinction between “necessary” and “unnecessary” desires is, therefore, important in understanding them. “Necessary” appetites, he says, are those that meet two essential conditions: (a) because of our nature, they are ineradicable, and (b) their satisfaction is beneficial to us. “Unnecessary” appetites, on the other hand, are “those that someone could get rid of if he practiced from youth on [εἰ μελετῶ ἐκ νέου], those whose presence leads to no good or even to the opposite” (558d-559a). The desire to eat the amount necessary for bodily health, Socrates indicates, is an example of a beneficial, necessary appetite. But, he says, “What about the desire that goes beyond these and seeks other sorts of food, that most people can get rid of, if it’s restrained and educated from the time they’re young [δυνατὴ δὲ κολαζομένη ἐκ νέων καὶ παιδευομένη], and that’s harmful both to the body and to the prudence and moderation of the soul? Would it rightly be called unnecessary?” (559b-c).

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Notice that nothing in Socrates' comments suggests that an individual can control unnecessary appetites through persuasion. On the contrary, he emphasizes the importance of *eliminating* them altogether, so that there are no deviant appetites in need of controlling in the first place. The important question at this point, though, is whether someone who has allowed such appetites to arise can use anything other than force and fear to restrain them. My proposal is that such an individual cannot.

Several considerations support this interpretation. First, the method of eliminating our unnecessary appetites that Socrates describes above clearly does not involve anything like persuasion. Rather, it is a long process of habituation that must begin from the time we are young. The emphatic requirement that this process begin during youth (note the repetition of ἐκ νέου and ἐκ νέου at 559a3 and 559b9) and continue throughout our lives speaks to the recalcitrance and intractability of unnecessary desires. The capacity to be persuaded, in contrast, suggests something that is malleable and open to the influence of another. Furthermore, the fact that we eliminate unwanted appetites by *practicing* a certain kind of behavior indicates the noncognitive nature of the process. Nor should the reference to “educating” (παιδευομένη, 559b9) appetite mislead us into thinking that it can be “taught” by rational means. The word “education,” as it is used in Books 2 and 3, clearly encompasses the whole range of practices involved in both musical and gymnastic training.⁷ It includes, therefore, the kind of dietary and lifestyle training that Socrates outlines at 404b ff. (for example, avoiding sweet desserts and Corinthian girlfriends). Socrates tells us that we can eradicate unnecessary appetites from our psychology by practicing moderation and self-restraint from an early age. If unwanted appetites were open to persuasion, then we would expect persuasion to be part of the program by which we deal with them. The fact that it is not suggests that they are not persuadable.⁸

My claim, then, is that, on Plato's view, we should aim to *prevent* and *eliminate* unnecessary appetites as much as possible; but, once they arise, they are an obstreperous influence in our souls that must be held down through force and fear. Indeed, the fact that the latter is true explains why we need to eradicate them from our psychology altogether. The most telling support for this reading can be found by examining the oligarchic city to which the oligarchic individual is supposed to be analogous. The oligarchic city, Socrates explains, is the first city to allow the “greatest of all evils” for a constitution, which is permitting individuals to sell all their possessions but to continue to remain in the city. The deleterious effect of this, he says, is that the impoverished individuals become “dronish” beggars and evildoers—for example, thieves, pickpockets, and temple robbers—“whom the rulers carefully keep in check by force” (ὄως

ἐπιμελεία βία κατέχουσιν αἱ ἀρχαί, 552e2–3). The presence of such people in the city, he says, is due to “lack of education, bad rearing, and a bad constitutional arrangement” (552e5–6).

The unnecessary desires that the oligarchic individual restrains within himself are explicitly parallel to the beggars and evildoers who live in the city. Socrates asks, “Won’t we say that, because of his lack of education, the dronish appetites—some beggarly and others evil—exist in him, but that they’re forcibly held in check by his carefulness [κατεχομένας βία ὑπὸ τῆς ἄλλης ἐπιμελείας]?” (554b7–c2). This is significant in light of Socrates’ characterization of the city. Notice that his criticism of the oligarchic city is *not* that it uses force to keep its evildoers in check; it is that *it has allowed evildoers to arise in the first place*.⁹ Indeed, once a city contains thieves, pickpockets, and temple robbers, the necessary and appropriate way to deal with them is to punish or threaten them—in other words, to use compulsion and fear.¹⁰ Likewise, Socrates’ criticism of the oligarchic man is not, *pace* Bobonich, that he uses compulsion and fear, rather than persuasion, to deal with his evil desires; it is that he has evil desires in the first place. *Given* that he has them, force and fear are precisely the right ways—in fact, the only ways—to restrain them, just as force and fear are the right ways to deal with criminals. It is true, then, that Socrates means to contrast the oligarchic man with more virtuous individuals like the philosopher. What distinguishes the latter, however, is not that he would use argument and persuasion to keep his unnecessary appetites in check but simply that he lacks such appetites to begin with.¹¹ This is exactly what Socrates indicates in the above quotation: the result of the oligarch’s “lack of education” is simply *that the dronish appetites exist in him*. The oligarchic individual, in other words, is someone who failed to practice the relevant kind of moderate behavior “from youth onwards,” and that is why his soul contains “evil,” unnecessary appetites that need to be controlled. The problem is not *how* he controls them, however, but that they are present in his soul at all.

Plato’s characterization of our relationship to our appetites throughout the text confirms this reading of 554c–d. He consistently depicts appetite as something in need of supervision and forceful restraint, and he nowhere suggests that we can overcome unruly appetites through rational discourse.¹² When Socrates introduces the appetitive part of the soul, he says that it drives us “like a beast” toward drink, while the reasoning part of the soul “masters” it (κρατοῦν, 439c7) and “drags it away” (ἀνθέλκει, 439b3) from drinking. Likewise, we are told that “whenever appetites are forcing someone contrary to reasoning,” the spirited and rational parts of the soul form an alliance to fight against them (440a8–b4), and, in Book 10, the part of the soul “that hungers for the satisfaction of weeping and wailing” must be “held in check by

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force (βία κατεχόμενον) in our private misfortunes” (606a3–5). Nothing in these descriptions suggests that anything like persuasion is available as a recourse against unwanted appetites. On the contrary, appetite is depicted as an irrational and unruly beast that must be kept in check through force. This is, moreover, how Socrates continues to characterize appetite in the image of the three-part soul that he offers in Book 9. He compares the appetitive part of the soul to a “multicolored beast with a ring of many heads that it can grow and change at will—some from tame, some from savage animals” (588c7–10)—and he enjoins us to “take care of the many-headed beast as a farmer does his animals, nourishing and domesticating the tame heads and preventing the savage ones from growing” (589b2–3). Socrates does not say that we should tame the savage heads with persuasion and speech; he says that we should prevent them from growing in the first place.¹³

Finally, the view that unwanted appetites cannot be controlled through persuasion, but only through force and fear, is consistent with Plato’s depictions of the tripartite soul in *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*. When “the part consisting of appetites” becomes disobedient, *Timaeus* says, the reasoning and spirited parts of the soul “restrain it by force” (βία κατέχοι, 70a5–6), just as the oligarchic individual of the *Republic* does. There is no suggestion in *Timaeus*’s account that appetite can be influenced through rational persuasion. On the contrary, *Timaeus* indicates just the opposite: he compares “the part of the soul that has appetites for food and drink” to a “wild beast” that needs to be tied down and that has “no share in reason or understanding [λόγου και φρονήσεως οὐ μετεῖχει]” (70d-e, 71d), and he says that the creator gods “knew that this part of the soul was not going to understand reasons, and that if it were in one way or another to have some awareness of them, it would not have any innate regard for them” (71a3–5).

Perhaps even more revealing is Socrates’ characterization of appetitive desire in the *Phaedrus*, where he likens the three-part soul to a charioteer and his team of two horses—a “good” horse representing the spirited part of the soul and a “bad” horse representing the appetitive. When this charioteer and his horses see a beautiful boy, Socrates says, the bad horse seeks “the pleasures of sex”¹⁴ and pulls the charioteer and the good horse toward the boy. The latter two resist, however:

[The charioteer] violently yanks the bit back out of the teeth of the insolent horse, only harder this time, so that he bloodies its foul-speaking mouth and jaws, sets its legs and haunches firmly on the ground, and “gives it over to pain.” When the bad horse has suffered this same thing time after time, it stops being so insolent; now it is humble enough to follow the foresight of the charioteer, and when it sees the beautiful boy it dies of fright [φόβῳ διόλλυται]. (254e2–8)

Here we have a vivid account of the process through which an unruly desire can be controlled; significantly, that process does not involve anything like persuasion. Instead, the charioteer employs aggressive tactics of violence and force against the bad horse, and, when the bad horse finally submits, it does so out of “fear.” Socrates’ comments even seem to rule out the possibility of persuasion: he says that the bad horse is “deaf” and cannot hear the charioteer (253e). It is also important to note that this is not a characterization of how vicious or inferior souls control their appetites. Rather, the person who successfully and consistently masters his “bad horse” in the way Socrates describes is none other than the philosopher himself (256a).

All this supports the view that the appetitive part of the soul is not open to persuasion and that the oligarchic individual, having allowed evil appetites to arise in him, has no way of controlling them except through compulsion and fear.

There is a worry one might raise about the strength of this conclusion, however: one might accept my proposed reading of the unnecessary appetites at 554c-d but, nonetheless, think that Plato allows for the appetitive part of the soul to be persuaded in other circumstances. In particular, one might wonder whether *necessary* appetites might be open to persuasion, on Plato’s view. Indeed, given that necessary appetites are superior to unnecessary ones, it is reasonable to ask whether their superiority might not consist in, or be manifested by, a persuadability that sets them apart from inferior kinds of appetitive desire.

One immediate point to make is that necessary appetites clearly cannot be *eliminated* through persuasion. As noted earlier, Socrates defines “necessary” appetites precisely as those we cannot get rid of. *A fortiori*, we cannot get rid of them by persuading them away.¹⁵ Nonetheless, there are at least two possible ways persuasion might influence and affect necessary desires without eradicating them. First, one might think that—in addition to practices designed to eliminate unnecessary appetites—early moral education also involves *persuasion* that is designed to foster and direct necessary ones. Second, one might think that persuasion could be used to restrain a *necessary* desire on a given occasion when the agent has reason to resist immediate fulfillment of the appetite. Such persuasion would not *eliminate* the necessary desire, but it would convince the appetitive part of the soul to accept temporary postponement of that desire’s satisfaction.¹⁶

The text does not encourage us to think that Plato considers these genuine possibilities, however. Concerning the first possibility, Socrates’ characterization of the sort of education employed on the appetites emphasizes only the techniques of habituation outlined above. He offers no

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indication that anything like persuasion occurs alongside those practices, or that the cultivation of *necessary* appetites is a separate process from that of preventing and eliminating *unnecessary* ones.¹⁷ On the contrary, it makes good sense to think that both psychological developments will occur alongside one another through the sorts of dietary and lifestyle practices described in Book 3. Socrates tells us that we get rid of unnecessary desires largely by abstaining from excessive amounts of, and from the wrong kinds of, food and drink and by indulging only in moderate amounts of the *right* kinds of food and drink. Since moderate amounts of healthy nourishment are precisely what our *necessary* appetites seek, though, those same habits will presumably have the effect not just of eradicating the unnecessary appetites but also of cultivating and reinforcing the *necessary* ones.

Furthermore, recall that in Book 9's image of appetite as a multi-headed beast, Socrates enjoins us to "nourish and domesticate" (τρέφωv και τιθασειύωv) the "tame" heads, "as a farmer does his animals."¹⁸ His language hardly suggests the use of persuasive argument; rather, it explicitly invokes the sorts of methods used to subdue and control animals. This shows that Plato's consistent characterization of appetite as an animal-like "beast" within is not limited to its unnecessary or evil desires. Even when it comes to managing the best of our appetites, we evidently can employ only the sorts of tactics suitable for influencing nonrational animals.

Plato gives us no reason to doubt that this general point would apply equally to cases of "restraining" necessary desires in order to postpone their fulfillment. As far as I can tell, and as the passages discussed earlier reflect, Plato *never*—in the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, or *Phaedrus*—describes a case in which any appetite is restrained through persuasive argument. He depicts appetite being dragged, pulled, forced, or frightened away from an undesirable course of action, but never simply *persuaded*.¹⁹ If Plato *had* thought it possible to use persuasion against some appetitive desires, we would expect that view to have become apparent through at least one of his many depictions of appetite. In the absence of such evidence, we simply have no reason to think that he accepted that possibility and many reasons for thinking he did not.

3. BETTER AND WORSE DESIRES

I take the preceding evidence by itself to provide a decisive case for denying that Socrates' remarks at 554c-d are meant to imply appetite's persuadability. One question that remains, however, is why Socrates mentions "persuasion" and "taming with speech" at all in the passage if he does *not* mean to imply that those methods can be employed against

the appetites. My proposal is the following: Socrates wants to emphasize the *badness* of the kinds of appetites that the oligarchic man has allowed to arise within him—recall that their presence there corresponds to the “greatest of all evils” for a city—and he does so by distinguishing the forceful way that those bad appetites must be controlled from the more gentle approaches that might be available against better and more educable desires. In particular, Socrates seems to be alluding to the superior methods by which the reasoning and spirited parts of the soul are able to be influenced: reason is the part of the soul that is open to being “persuaded” that something is “better,” and spirit is the part of the soul that is able to be “tamed by speech.” The contrast that Socrates draws, then, is not between better and worse methods of controlling the appetites but between methods of controlling better and worse parts of the soul and their desires.²⁰

This reading is consistent with Plato’s characterization of the reasoning and spirited parts of the soul throughout the *Republic*, as well as in the *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*. In the *Republic*, the rational part of the soul is “the part that has reasoned about better and worse” (441c1–2); it is responsible for pursuing the good (518c); it is concerned with “what is beneficial for each part and for the whole” (442c6–7; cf. *Tim.* 71a1–2); and it is the part of the soul willing to follow “what argument determines is best” (604c-d). Meanwhile, Socrates twice characterizes the spirited part as “the ally of reason” (or “the ally of speech”: σύμμαχον τῷ λόγῳ, 440b3 and 441e5–6), and he emphasizes its ability to be calmed or tamed through speech. Socrates asks, for example, “Won’t [spirit] endure hunger, cold, and the like and keep on till it is victorious, not ceasing from noble actions until it either wins, dies, or calms down, called to heal by the speech within him, like a dog by a shepherd?” (440c8-d3). He distinguishes the spirited and reasoning part of the soul by appealing to the case of Odysseus, who calms his spirited anger “with word” (μῦθος, 441b6), and he says that musical education has the effect of “relaxing [the spirited part] with soothing words, taming it with harmony and rhythm” (ἀνιείσα παραμυθουμένη, ἡμεροῦσα ἄρμονία τε καὶ ῥυθμῶ, 442a1–2). Similarly, in the *Phaedrus*, we find that the “good” horse is “guided by command and speech alone” (κελεύσματι μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἠνιοχεῖται, 253d7-e1), and *Timaeus* describes the spirited part of the mortal soul as “listening to speech” (τοῦ λόγου κατήκοον, 70a4–5) and responding “when speech makes an announcement” (τοῦ λόγου παραγγείλαντος, 70b3–4).

Reason, then, is the sort of thing that is open to persuasive considerations about what is better, and spirit is the sort of thing that is open to being “tamed by speech.” If the appetites shared the concerns and nature of the reasoning part, then they would be open to being persuaded “that it is not better.” If they shared the concerns and nature of the spirited

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part, then they could be “tamed by speech.” Instead, unwanted appetites can be controlled only through force and fear.²¹ Note that this contrast makes sense in the context of Socrates’ larger discussion in Books 8 and 9, for his aim is to describe and evaluate various kinds of psychic constitutions, all of which are defined by the parts of the soul and the kinds of desires that are the most psychologically salient and influential in them. It is, from Socrates’ perspective, *better* to be someone in whom rational and spirited desires are prominent than someone in whom appetitive desires are prominent, and one reason that is true is that both rational and spirited desires are far more *educable* than appetitive ones. The appetites are not open to persuasion or gentle assuagement through speech, and that is precisely why unnecessary appetites must not be allowed to arise in the first place. The oligarchic individual is someone who has failed in that regard.

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1. For various versions of homuncularism, see Annas 1981, 125–46; Bobonich 1994, 3–4, and 2002, 216–57; Brickhouse and Smith 2010, 203; Carone 2001, 124–25; Lesses 1987, 149–54; Moline 1978; and Moss 2008, 37, 64–66. For arguments against homuncularism, see Price 2009; and Shields 2001 and 2007, 61, 78–83. Note that by employing the term “homuncularist” (borrowed from Shields), I do not mean to imply that those views commit a homunculus fallacy. I use the term simply to refer to views that take the three soul-parts to be robustly agent-like.

2. Commentators who cite this passage as evidence of appetite’s “persuadability” include Bobonich 1994, 12, and 2002, 242–43, 533n43, 555n40; Carone 2001, 126n40 and 2004, 84; Moline 1978, 22; Moss 2008, 37n5; and Singpurwalla 2010, 885–86.

3. Two further points of clarification: (1) I am not interested in denying that the appetitive part of the soul is capable of holding any form of *belief* in the *Republic*. Indeed, Plato attributes *doxa* to the two nonrational parts of the soul at both 442d1 and 602e-603a. It is a further question precisely what sense of “belief” he has in mind when he does so (after all, he also attributes “belief” to animals at 430b6–8). In any event, what I am denying is simply that, however we are to understand the “beliefs” that Plato permits to appetite, those beliefs do not result from, and cannot be changed by means of, persuasion in the sense specified above in the main text. (2) The account presented in this paper also does not rely on the view that appetite is incapable of conceptualizing anything as *good* (though my own view is that appetite cannot do so, in part for reasons

presented in Ganson 2009). My account denies only that appetite is capable of responding to *arguments and reasons* that appeal to what is good or best for it (for example, in the *long-term* or *all-things-considered*).

4. Translations of Plato are from Cooper 1997, with modifications.

5. I concur with most commentators—for example, Bobonich 2002, 243, and Lorenz 2006, 109—in taking “some decent part of himself” (ἐπιεικεῖ τινὶ ἑαυτοῦ) at 554c12-d1 to refer to the reasoning part of the oligarchic individual’s soul. When the oligarchic man restrains his appetites, then, it is the reasoning part of his soul (perhaps in alliance with the spirited) that is responsible for doing the restraining. See Cooper 1999, 123n7, and Kahn 1987, 87, for an alternative reading.

6. Kahn 2004, 355, criticizes Bobonich’s way of interpreting the passage: “It is only *if* the oligarchic man attempted such an argument, and if it succeeded, that something might follow about the appetitive part agreeing to a judgment of goodness. But since the first condition is not satisfied, nothing is asserted here about the appetites.”

7. See, for example, the use of παιδεία at 376e2, 376e6, and παιδεύειν at 410c1.

8. Cf. Gill 1985, 11, 15. Wilberding 2012 offers an excellent and detailed account of appetite’s educability that emphasizes the use of habituation.

9. Cf. Adam 1902, 2: 225.

10. Socrates adds further support this interpretation at 564b-c, where he refers back to the “stinged and stingless drones” of the city: “Now, these two groups cause problems in any constitution, just as phlegm and bile do in the body. And it’s against them that the good doctor and lawgiver of a city must take advance precautions, first, to prevent their presence and, second, to cut them out of the hive as quickly as possible, cells and all, if they should happen to be present.”

11. At 571b-c (cf. 572b), Socrates seems to suggest that even virtuous individuals may continue to have *some* unnecessary and even lawless appetites. He comments, “They are probably present in everyone, but they are held in check by the laws and by the better desires in alliance with reason. In a few people, they have been eliminated entirely or only a few weak ones remain, while in others they are stronger and more numerous.” (*Phaedrus* 254a ff may suggest something similar; see discussion below in the main text.) This makes no great difference to my account, however. Either the philosopher has no unnecessary appetites at all, or he has only a few of them that are too weak to have any significant impact either on his overall psychological harmony or on his behavior. Whichever of those alternatives is achievable for a human being, *that* is the condition that the virtuous individual achieves and that the vicious one fails to achieve.

12. Some commentators cite 442c10-d1, where the moderate individual is characterized as someone in whose soul “the ruler and the ruled agree

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[ὁμοδοξῶσι] that the reasoning part should rule and don't engage in civil war against it," as evidence that appetite can be "persuaded" to accept the rule of reason. In response, it should be noted, first of all, that the passage indicates only that the appetitive part of the soul is capable of *agreeing* to the rule of reason. The passage does *not* suggest that appetite's agreement—which evidently involves some sort of "belief"—is the result of persuasive argument. Appetite may hold beliefs supportive of reason's rule, in other words, without its being the case that it has been *persuaded* to hold them (rather than holding them as a result of, say, habituation, fear, or positive reinforcement). It is also worth noting the view of Stalley 2007, 85–88, who argues that we should not take the "agreement" at 442c-d to involve anything like reasoned beliefs or judgments at all. Rather, he suggests, "An agreement of this kind could be demonstrated simply by a habit of obedience to commands." Cf. Lorenz 2006, 109, who claims that the passage requires only the possibility of "acquiescence of the non-rational parts in the course of action that reason prescribes."

13. Socrates does speak of "taming" (ἡμεροῦται) the "bestial" part of the soul at 591b3. Crucially, however, he is speaking about the appetitive part of a criminal and the manner in which such a person's appetite is "tamed" is through *punishment*.

14. Note that appetites *περὶ ἀφροδισίων* are considered "unnecessary" at *Republic* 559c6.

15. Nor would we want to, of course, given that (also by definition) their satisfaction is beneficial to us. A further consequence of the ineradicability of necessary desires is that neither persuasion, nor any other form of education, could be required simply for *forming* necessary appetites in the first place: they unavoidably arise in us by nature, regardless of how we are nurtured or educated.

16. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to these interpretive possibilities.

17. One passage might be taken to suggest otherwise (see, for example, Gill 1985, 22n64): Socrates says that the citizens of the timocratic city will love to spend other people's money "because of their appetites" and will "enjoy their pleasures in secret." His explanation of this fact is that "they haven't been educated by persuasion but by force, since they've neglected the true Muse—that of argument and philosophy—and have valued physical training more than music and poetry" (548b5-c2). Given that Socrates attributes the timocrats' secret appetites to the lack of "persuasion" in their education, one might be tempted to conclude that proper education involves persuasion of the appetitive part of the soul. However, a more attractive interpretive option is available: that the lack of persuasion in their education refers to a failure to teach and persuade the *reasoning* part of their souls (and that in the absence of a strong and well-educated reasoning part, unwanted appetites have been allowed to arise). The fact that the timocrats' failure to be persuaded is attributed in the first instance to their neglect of argument and philosophy supports this conclusion.

18. Cf. *Statesman* 264a2, where the Eleatic Visitor distinguishes tame animals from savage ones by the former's ability to be "domesticated" (πιθασεύεσθαι).

19. Note that, even at 442a-b, in the individual who has received a proper rearing—whose reasoning and spirited parts have “learned their own roles and been educated in them”—management of the appetites consists not in any kind of persuasion but simply in “watching over it” to make sure that it does not become unduly big and strong.

20. Lorenz also denies that 554c-d implies appetite’s persuadability, but he adopts a different reading of the passage: “What is required by the contrast is rather some way in which reason can affect the appetitive part so as to make it gently and perhaps gladly acquiesce in the better course of action. That would be a clear case of taming appetite by reason, and it would contrast in a perfectly adequate way with holding desires down ‘by compulsion and fear’” (2006, 109). Two considerations suggest the inadequacy of this reading, however: (1) It does not take into account the unnecessary and “evil” nature of the oligarch’s desires, which (I have argued above) indicate their intractability. (2) It explains the contrast between the use of *ἀνάγκη* και φόβω on the one hand and *ἡμερῶν λόγῳ* on the other, but it evidently cannot explain Socrates’ mention of *πειθῶν ὅτι οὐκ ἄμεινον*.

21. One might wonder whether the oligarchic individual’s *necessary* appetites could be controlled through one of the “better” methods—that is, persuasion or “taming with speech.” I take it that the general considerations sketched in section 3 rule out the former, but a further point suggests that the oligarch’s necessary appetites could not be controlled by *either* method. The portrait of the oligarch’s psychology at 553b-d indicates that the rule of appetite consists precisely in bringing it about that the reasoning part of the soul concerns itself exclusively with profit maximization and that the spirited part honors only wealth. If that is the case, then it is unclear why either of those parts would ever *conflict* with the oligarch’s ruling desires for wealth in a way that would generate the occasion for controlling them. Clearly, they might conflict with his *unnecessary* appetites, as 554c-d makes clear; but, in doing so, reason and spirit would only be supporting the interests of his *necessary* desires.

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