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**Fighting Pleasure:**

**Plato and the Expansive View of Courage**

In making a judgment, they changed the values that words customarily gave to deeds. Rash daring [*tolma alogistos*] was considered manliness [*andreia*] for the sake of the party, cautious hesitation [*promēthēs*] was considered well-disguised cowardice [*deilia euprepēs*], temperance [*to sōphron*] was held to be a cloak of unmanliness [*tou anandrou proschēma*], and the ability to see all sides of a question was considered a complete inability to act.[[1]](#endnote-1)

-Thucydides

I have no sympathy with those rash, intemperate spirits who would provoke war simply for the sake of fighting, and yet I would rather follow them, and suffer all the miseries and misfortunes their heedlessness would bring than follow those other contemptible and mercenary creatures who are crying out for ‘peace at any price.’[[2]](#endnote-2)

-Joseph W. Bailey

In both the *Laches* and the *Laws*,Plato has his protagonist defend the claim that courage (*andreia*) is not simply a matter of resisting pain and fear, but about overcoming pleasure and desire as well.[[3]](#endnote-3) Few philosophers have found this view compelling. Plato’s student, Aristotle, certainly didn’t. He narrowed the scope of courage—taking it to be most clearly displayed on the battlefield, while placing pleasure and desire under the scope of temperance (*sōphrosunē*), where they reside today.[[4]](#endnote-4) In this paper, I will defend Plato’s expansive account of courage.[[5]](#endnote-5)

My argument unfolds in four steps, each identified with its own section. In Section 1, I explain the key passages where Plato develops the expansive view. I argue that it is an idea that Plato wants us to take seriously. In Section 2, I discuss three benefits of the expansive view: (a) the view coheres with plausible Platonic commitments with respect to moral psychology, death, and virtue; (b) the view broadens courage in important ways; and (c) the view is important rhetorically since it helps us overcome certain biases. In Section 3, I address the objection that the expansive view crowds out temperance since pleasure and desire are usually placed under the domain of temperance. I respond to this objection by arguing that rather than crowding out temperance, the expansive view of courage allows us to focus on important aspects of *sōphrosunē* that are usually ignored. In Section 4, I conclude the paper by exploring an alternative position. If one accepts the claims made in Section 2 but wishes to restrict pleasure and desire to temperance, then this demonstrates another way in which the virtues are connected. On such a view, as we make progress toward cultivating temperance, we necessarily make progress toward cultivating courage, and vice versa.

Before we begin, I need to make two things clear about my methodology. First, this paper aspires to contribute to scholarship in both ethical theory and the history of philosophy. However, because it spans across two different fields, some compromises must be made on both fronts. I will not, for example, be arguing that this is the best conception of courage nor will I have space to discuss Plato’s complete account of courage. My thesis is more modest. My main claim is that the expansive view of courage is something Plato took seriously and that there are good reasons for us to consider it an option today. Second, I will talk about the virtues as being distinct from one another. Some might find this problematic because Plato accepts some version of the unity of the virtues.[[6]](#endnote-6) While I agree that Plato accepts that the virtues are in some sense unified, my approach is justifiable for two reasons. First, not all contemporary ethicists accept the unity of the virtues and I would like to isolate the merits of the expansive view apart from any commitment to the unity of the virtues as far as possible.[[7]](#endnote-7) Second, Plato thinks that imperfect agents can have different virtues to a greater or lesser extent. If he didn’t think this, he wouldn’t rank virtues nor would he talk about imperfect forms of courage and temperance as being “opposed” to each other. Accordingly, even though Plato thinks that the virtues perfected are unified, it still makes sense to talk about the different virtues as separate entities since it is helpful when discussing imperfect agents.

**1. Resisting Pleasure**

a. The *Laches*

It will be helpful to survey the passages where Plato discusses this idea; let us start with the *Laches*. Laches is a tough-minded and decorated Athenian general who greatly admires Sparta’s culture of war. Laches identifies courage as the ability to stand one’s ground against danger.[[8]](#endnote-8) He thinks of courage as mostly a matter of fighting pain and fear, and recognizes courageous actions as those that involve this emotional experience. Socrates presses Laches to broaden his conception of courage. First, Socrates gets Laches to expand the activities that relate to courage. Socrates tells Laches that he wants to know what courage is, not just during military conflict, but at sea, in the face of illness or poverty, and in public life.[[9]](#endnote-9) Next, Socrates expands the range of emotions applicable to courage, moving beyond fears and pains, to desires (*epithumias*) and pleasures.[[10]](#endnote-10) The conversation continues with Socrates challenging Laches to identify the “power” (*dunami*s) that underlies these various activities and emotions that relate to courage. Laches responds that it “is a sort of endurance of the soul [*karteria tēs psuchēs*].”[[11]](#endnote-11) After some Socratic prodding, this definition soon becomes the “wise endurance [*phronēseōs karteria*]” of the soul.[[12]](#endnote-12) This account ultimately falls under the pressure of Socratic questioning, but we needn’t examine those issues here. For our purposes, what matters is that Plato broadens the set of actions and emotions that relate to courage. Instead of narrowly focusing on the actions that relate to war and the emotions of fear and pain, Plato wants us to see that courage relates to poverty and illness and the emotions of pleasure and desire. With this in mind, let us turn to the *Laws*, Plato’s last and longest work.

b. The *Laws*

The *Laws* is a conversation between three elderly men: an unnamed Athenian, a Spartan named Megillus, and a Cretan named Clinias. The dialogue begins by exploring what the focus of a government should be. Clinias and Megillus hold that the government should primarily focus on winning wars, and because of this, Sparta and Crete center all of their customs on this goal.[[13]](#endnote-13) Clinias explains that this is how their practice of the all-male social club, “common meals,” came about. In times of war, soldiers eat together so that they are better protected. For Clinias, these practices make good sense. According to him, peace is a fiction because “states are by nature fighting an undeclared war against every other state.”[[14]](#endnote-14) Indeed, Clinias believes that every individual is in a perpetual state of conflict with himself.

The Athenian disagrees, however. He maintains that “the greatest good is neither war nor civil war…but is peace and good will.”[[15]](#endnote-15) Nevertheless, because the Athenian is talking to men who believe that peace is a fiction, more persuading is required. The crafty Athenian attempts to do this by discussing the poetry of Tyrtaeus, who was born an Athenian, but became a Spartan. His poems honor the courage expressed in war and dishonor cowardice. The Athenian asks which soldiers Tyrtaeus praises more: those who battle external enemies or those who battle internal enemies. The Athenian proposes that Tyrtaeus esteems the soldiers who battle external opponents more. According to the Athenian, this is a mistake; soldiers who fight external enemies are good, but those who battle internal enemies are better since this is “the greatest war”:

Such a man, in our view, who fights in a tougher war, is far superior to the other—to just about the same degree as the combination of justice, temperance, and wisdom [*phronēsis*], reinforced by courage, is superior to courage alone. In civil war a man will never prove sound and loyal unless he has every virtue; but in war Tyrtaeus mentions there are hordes of mercenaries who are ready to dig their heels in and die fighting, most of whom, apart from a very small minority, are reckless [*thraseis*], unjust [*adikoi*], insolent, and just about the dumbest people you could find.[[16]](#endnote-16)

The Athenian’s point is twofold. First, governments should aim at cultivating all of the virtues and not just courage. After all, wisdom, temperance, and justice, in that order, surpass courage in terms of importance.[[17]](#endnote-17) Second, overcoming inner psychological conflicts is more important and praiseworthy than overcoming external conflicts.

Inspired by this discovery into the true goal of government, the three elderly men examine how a government should educate its citizens properly so that they cultivate virtue in its entirety. They begin by analyzing courage. Megillus explains that Sparta exposes its citizens to pain and fear so that they can learn to endure pain and overcome fear.

The Athenian responds:

You’ve put it all very well, my Spartan friend. But what is to be our *definition* of courage? Are we to define it simply in terms of a fight against fears and pains only, or do we include desires [*pothous*] and pleasures, and certain terrible seductive flatteries that can melt the spiritedness [*thumous*] of those who consider themselves highly dignified [*semnōn*].[[18]](#endnote-18)

Megillus and Clinias accept the Athenian’s definition and further agree that the term “bad” not only applies to those who are victims of pains, but of pleasures as well. Indeed, Clinias says that the term “bad” applies to those who are victims of pleasure even more than those who are victims of pain. He draws this conclusion from two things: (1) earlier they agreed that it is worse to be conquered by oneself than an external opponent, call this the Degree Claim, and (2) it is more appropriate to describe the person conquered by pleasure as being defeated by himself than the person conquered by pain, call this the Self-Defeat Claim.[[19]](#endnote-19)

We should pause here for a moment to reflect on these claims. Why is it worse to be defeated by oneself than by another person? And why is it more appropriate to describe the person defeated by pleasure, as opposed to pain, as being defeated by oneself? Clinias freely accepts these claims and doesn’t explain why they are true. This is unfortunate since these claims are far from obvious. Nonetheless, with a little work, we can explain the motivation behind these commitments. Presumably, being defeated by pleasure and desire is more internal than being defeated by pain and fear. This is because if you take pleasure in and desire φ, then, on some level, you endorse φ. In contrast, if you are pained by and fear φ, then, on some level, you do not endorse φ. This is why in English it makes sense to say that someone “takes pleasure in” something, but it doesn’t make sense to say that someone “takes pain in” something—for pain, by definition, is not something we willingly accept.[[20]](#endnote-20)

This helps explain the self-defeat claim, but what explains the degree claim? It would seem that being defeated by yourself is worse than being defeated by another person because we have more control over how we deal with ourselves than with how others deal with others. Accordingly, losing to oneself is more shameful because it is more preventable. I can’t control whether or not thieves will rob my house when I’m on vacation, but I can control whether or not I overeat (assuming, of course, that I don’t have an eating disorder).

I think this is what Aristotle has in mind when he says:

Self-indulgence [*akolasia*] looks more like a voluntary thing than cowardice [*deilias*] does. For self-indulgence comes about because of pleasure, cowardice because of pain, and of these the one is something one chooses [*haireton*], the other something avoided [*pheukton*]; and while pain puts things out of joint and even destroys the natural state of the person who has it, pleasure does nothing of the sort. So self-indulgence is a more voluntary thing. Hence it is also more a matter for reproach [*eponeidistoteron*]; for it is easier to acquire the habit of resisting pleasures…[[21]](#endnote-21)

This leads the Athenian to ask what practices the Spartans and Cretans have to safeguard against cowardice in the face of pleasure and desire. Neither Clinias nor Megillus can think of any cultural exercise that achieves this end. The Athenian points out the oddity of their cultures: they spend so much time training their citizens to resist pain and fear by exposing their citizens to these things, but put no effort into resisting pleasure and desire—they merely have their citizens abstain from these practices. They seem to have two different theories of training, but no justification for the difference. On the one hand, they believe that a citizen can only learn to overcome pain and fear by being exposed to it; on the other hand, they believe that one simply learns to resist pleasure and desire by not being exposed to it. Nevertheless, this actually makes their citizens vulnerable to cowardice in the face of pleasure and desire. The Athenian, pretending to be a legislator, explains their predicament:

If our citizens grow up without experience of the greatest pleasures, and if they are not trained to stand firm when they encounter them, and to refuse to be pushed into any disgraceful [*aischrōn*] action, their softness of spirit [*glukuthumias*] in the face of pleasures will subject them to the same fate as those who are defeated by fears. Only their enslavement will be different and more shameful [*aischiō*]: they will become the slaves of those who are able to stand firm against the onslaughts of pleasure and who are past-masters in the art of temptation—people who sometimes can be wholly bad. Our citizen’s souls will be slave in one respect, and free in another, unworthy of being called courageous and free without qualification.[[22]](#endnote-22)

With respect to both dialogues, there are two key similarities. First, Laches, Clinias, and Megillus all share similar views with respect to war and courage. [[23]](#endnote-23) For example, these men all highly value courage, they see courage as mostly relating to physical combat, and they see it primarily relating to the emotions fear and pain. Second, in each dialogue, the protagonist attempts to get their interlocutors to see that courage includes actions that are outside the scope of war and involves the emotions pleasure and desire. Accordingly, the only way we can have complete courage is by mastering the emotions fear, pain, pleasure, and desire.

c. Reasons to Hesitate

The brief exegesis above demonstrates that Plato is, at the very least, toying with the idea that courage involves both a resistance to pain and fear, as well pleasure and desire. However, in the secondary literature, this view is often brushed to the side for two reasons. First, when it comes to the passage of the *Laws*, most scholars hold that this account is merely a rhetorical device to persuade war-loving men about other values. Dorothea Frede, for example, says that “the Athenian has internal reasons to avoid an assignment of pain to courage and of pleasure to moderation. The Spartan and Cretan would offhandedly reject wine-drinking as a test of virtue as such, on the ground that it has nothing to do with courage.”[[24]](#endnote-24) Susan Sauvé Meyer holds a similar position:

Eventually the discipline of resisting pleasure will be classified under moderation (*sōphrosunē*) rather than courage (1.635e-637b). The Athenian’s introduction of it here, under the rubric of courage, predisposes his interlocutors to endorse it as an excellence, since they readily see the importance of resisting pleasures that would distract one from the pursuit of military objectives.[[25]](#endnote-25)

This expression is not unique to Meyer and Frede, but is probably the main way of understanding the Athenian’s inclusions of pleasure and desire in his discussion of courage.[[26]](#endnote-26)  
 I fully agree that there is an element of rhetoric to what Socrates and the Athenian are doing (see section 2c). However, this is not sufficient grounds to dismiss the expansive view of courage because in the *Republic*,Socrates appears to endorse the same idea, but without a war-loving interlocutor. When Socrates discusses civic courage in Book 4 of the *Republic,* he describes it as a “preservation [*sōtērian*]” that keeps the “belief inculcated by the established education about what things and what kind of things are to be feared. And by retaining it *through everything*…that is, through pleasures, pains, desires [*epithumiais*] or fears.”[[27]](#endnote-27) Socrates explains that just as no amount of washing and wear can remove the dye from properly dyed wool, no amount of pleasure, pain, fear or desire [*epithumia*] can remove the “correct and lawful belief about things to be and not to be feared.”[[28]](#endnote-28) Socrates also includes this aspect of pleasure when discussing courage in the soul in Book 4. Socrates says that “we call each individual courageous…when the spirited part preserves through pains and pleasures the pronouncements of reason about what should inspire fear and what should not.”[[29]](#endnote-29) Given that we also find evidence of the expansive view of courage in the *Republic*, we can dismiss this first objection.

The second main reason philosophers do not take this account seriously is because it appears to make temperance a species of courage. Gerasimos Santas explains:

…when Socrates includes desires and pleasures in his list of feelings, he seems to overwiden the concept of courage. If a man endures pain or overcomes fear in certain situations we might praise him for his courage; but if he resists certain pleasures or controls certain desires, presumably because he thinks they are wrong or harmful, we are more likely to praise him for his moderation, self-control, or temperance rather than for his courage.[[30]](#endnote-30)

Accordingly, in order to defend this account of courage, one must show that it leaves room for a plausible account of temperance. I will do this in Section 3, but for now, it is more important to show the merits of the expansive view of courage; if this account of courage isn’t worth its salt, there is little point to showing how it is compatible with a plausible conception of temperance. In the next section, I will argue that the expansive view has three benefits. First, the expansive view fits within a set of plausible Platonic commitments to moral psychology, death, and virtue. Second, I will explain how the expansive view broadens courage to important domains of life. Third, I will explain the rhetorical importance of the expansive view.

**2. Motivating the View**

a. Fear and Pain

In this section, I will explain how the expansive view coheres with a set of plausible Platonic commitments to moral psychology, death, and virtue. I will proceed by first discussing Plato’s view of fear and daring, and then I will compare it to Aristotle’s account.

In both the *Laches* and *Laws*, Plato provides roughly the same account of fear. Fear is the anticipation of a bad state (usually pain), while confidence or boldness (*tharros*) is the anticipation of something good (usually pleasure).[[31]](#endnote-31) Hence, the emotion of confidence/boldness and the emotion of fear are opposites. We can have a pro or a con attitude towards the future state φ. When we have a pro-attitude (e.g. we desire φ), we are in a state of confidence, but when we have a con-attitude (e.g., we are averse to φ), we are in a state of fear. For Plato, these emotions exist on a continuum. If I fear φ, then I am not bold towards φ. Likewise, if I am bold towards φ, then I do not fear φ.[[32]](#endnote-32) In the *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger says that “each of us needs to become both fearless [*aphobon*] and afraid [*phoberon*].”[[33]](#endnote-33) I should be fearless with respect to objects and future states that are actually good, but I should be fearful of objects and future states that are actually bad—I should boldly pursue the former and avoid the latter.

What are the appropriate objects of daring and fear? For Plato, we should boldly pursue virtue and fear having a vicious soul. This is why in the *Gorgias* Socrates says that the worst thing to happen to one is to live forever while never receiving punishment for one’s unjust actions.[[34]](#endnote-34) Most people get this wrong. Most people think that death and poverty are the worst things that can happen to one, and because of this, they spend their time pursuing wealth, reputation, and honor.[[35]](#endnote-35) Likewise, most people do not identify virtue as the good we should seek but think “that pleasure is the good.”[[36]](#endnote-36) Hence, if we ought to fear having a vicious soul, then we ought to fear these base pleasures and desires. Likewise, if we ought to pursue virtue, then we must boldly pursue those things that will lead to it, even if this leads to pain and death.

In examining the viability of Plato’s general view of courage, it will be helpful to compare it to Aristotle’s view of courage. Unlike Plato, Aristotle takes pleasure and desire to relate primarily to temperance, while fear and pain primarily relate to courage.[[37]](#endnote-37) This point is put sharply in the *Rhetoric* when Aristotle says that “Courage is the virtue which moves men to perform noble actions in times of danger…Temperance is the virtue through which men hold themselves as the law instructs with respect to bodily pleasures.”[[38]](#endnote-38) This is consistent with the account of courage and temperance found in Book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. [[39]](#endnote-39) For Aristotle, courage primarily relates to noble death:

So what sorts of fearsome things is the courageous person courageous about? Or is it the greatest of them?...And the most fearsome thing is death... But neither would courage seem to have to do with death under any set of circumstances: e.g., death at sea, or from illness of some sort. Death under what circumstances, then? Or is it under the finest? Such deaths are deaths in war; for then the danger is greatest and finest.[[40]](#endnote-40)

Although it is controversial as to whether these passages restrict courage to the battlefield, they seem to show that Aristotle considers the noble solider as the paragon of courage.[[41]](#endnote-41) At the very least, it seems that even if Aristotelian courage extends beyond the battlefield, it is still restricted to painful and injurious experiences.[[42]](#endnote-42) In contrast, temperance, for Aristotle, mostly relates to bodily pleasure; namely, cultivating the appropriate disposition with respect to desiring food, sex, and drink.[[43]](#endnote-43)

Now that we have a general account of Aristotle’s view of courage, we should focus on two important respects in which it differs from Plato’s account. First, for Aristotle boldness and fear do not exist on the same spectrum; this is why he maintains that there are three different vicious states with respect to courage as opposed to two.[[44]](#endnote-44) For instance, the excess of fear is cowardice, but the deficiency is not a rashness, rather it is a nameless vice.[[45]](#endnote-45) With respect to boldness, the excess state is rashness while the state of deficiency is cowardice. Accordingly, on this view, one can have both excess fear and boldness with respect to the same object; this is why it is possible for Aristotle to maintain that “most rash people in fact combine rashness with cowardice.”[[46]](#endnote-46) It also explains why Aristotle thinks that courage has to do more with fear than boldness; this wouldn’t be possible if they were on the same continuum.[[47]](#endnote-47) Second, Aristotle, unlike Plato, maintains that the most fearsome thing is death.

These two differences help explain why Aristotle identifies courage as being primarily about the battlefield and Plato doesn’t. For if Aristotle holds that (a) fear and boldness are not on the same continuum, then it opens the door for (b) courage being more about one of these emotions than the other. And because Aristotle maintains that (c) courage is more about fear than boldness, it follows that courage will be most recognizable when one overcomes the greatest object of fear in a noble way. Since Aristotle holds that (d) death is the greatest, or one of the greatest, objects of fear, then it makes sense that the primary way we display courage is overcoming the fear of death for noble reasons. The most, or one of the most, recognizable way of doing this is fighting on a battlefield.[[48]](#endnote-48)

However, because Plato isn’t committed to a-d, it shouldn’t be that surprising that he defends the expansive view of courage. If the greatest object of fear isn’t death, but having a vicious soul, then it would make sense to have courage be about a broader array of objects. Indeed, since pleasure is something that can destroy one’s soul, it is fitting that enduring and overcoming these pleasures would display courage, since these pleasures are proper objects of fear. Similarly, if fear and boldness exist on the same continuum, then it is natural to treat them as equally important emotions with respect to courage: since if I boldly pursue φ, I am not afraid of φ, and if I fear φ, I am not bold with respect to φ.

We see that the expansive view of courage is an outgrowth of Plato’s commitment to (1) boldness and fear being on the same continuum, and (2) the greatest object of fear being having a vicious soul, and not death. I don’t have room to give a full-fledged defense of these views, but I would like to point out that they each are reasonable. Many philosophers and theologians, across different cultures, have maintained that death is not something we should fear, or at least, that it isn’t the greatest object of fear. Thus, Plato is in good company with his commitment to this claim. Additionally, if one finds the notion of a rash-coward odd, then Plato’s view of these emotions is a way out of this confusion.

b. The Domain of Courage

In the previous subsection, I argued that the expansive view of courage fits within a broader Platonic framework—a framework which many find plausible. In this subsection, I will argue that another benefit of the expansive view of courage is that it broadens the domain of courage. We saw that for Aristotle, the paragon of courage is found fighting in war. Thus, on this view, only soldiers can truly be brave; every other seemingly courageous act is only derivatively courageous. This is especially problematic if there are gender, sex, or race restrictions on qualifying to be a soldier. Thus, by extending courage to other experiences, Plato broadens *who* in society can count as courageous.[[49]](#endnote-49)

Now one might respond that this doesn’t require the expansive view of courage, it simply requires that we be more accepting of who can be a soldier. However, Plato’s point is that courage shouldn’t just serve us well when we are in times of physical conflict, but it should serve us well in times of peace. External physical conflict is only one aspect of life. As the Athenian attempted to teach his Dorian friends—we fight in wars for the sake of peace; during times of peace, we become vulnerable to internal conflicts. It is during times of peace that we have the chance to flourish, but if we don’t resist certain pleasures and desires, then we risk losing everything that was fought for during war.

Once again, one might reply that this merely demonstrates that courage should extend to more activities than war but it doesn’t show that it should extend to issues concerning pleasure. For example, it might be the case that things like risking your career by standing up to a cruel boss should count as courageous but this doesn’t show that the resistance to pleasure and desire is tied to courage. This only shows that the class of experiences relating to fear and pain is broader than the Aristotelian position suggests. Nonetheless, I believe that courage, and not temperance, better captures the excellence someone displays in overcoming things like addiction. For many, the recovery process will involve resisting desire and overcoming fear. This leads to the further question, what is gained by calling this courage rather than simply saying that overcoming addiction requires courage and temperance? I have two responses: (1) calling these acts courageous rather than temperate is important rhetorically, and (2) isolating temperance to pleasure and desire results in an emaciated account of temperance—one that leaves important aspects out. The former point will be the topic of the next subsection, while the latter will be the focus of Section 3.

c. The Danger of Loving Honor

Plato makes it clear that Megillus, Clinias, and Laches run the risk of overvaluing the heroic version of courage, while undervaluing temperance—I contend that many people today run the same risk. The John Wayne machismo version of courage is tantalizing. Both Geoffrey Scarre and William I. Miller capture this point well. Geoffrey Scarre notes that “[c]ourage, more than any other moral quality, tends to evoke feelings of admiration and awe, and courageous deeds are stuff of legend and story (indeed, it has been calculated that bravery is the most prevalent theme in world fiction, surpassing even that of boy-meets-girl).”[[50]](#endnote-50) William I. Miller explains that courage is unique among the virtues in that it:

makes for better stories than its corresponding vice. By necessary implication and often by explicit presentation, cowardice figures in any story of courage as the temptation to be overcome, but cowardice takes a back seat to its opposing virtue in its ability to grab attention. Quite a contrast with other virtues; it is undeniable that most vices are better material for gripping attention than their corresponding virtues. Vices, after all, have their seductive side; that is why they are vices.[[51]](#endnote-51)

Miller is right. There are countless movies about heroic courage, but I can’t think of any movies about temperance—although there are plenty of movies about self-indulgence and recklessness. Temperance is boring, uptight, and not the kind of person you want at a party.

Our practice of praise reflects our lack of enthusiasm for temperance. We are more apt to praise those who appear to overcome what the majority of people find painful or threatening while we are less likely to praise those who resist what the majority of people find pleasing or desirable. As far as I know, there are no awards for not cheating on one’s spouse or eating a balanced diet, but there are plenty of awards, in both military and non-military settings, for courage. Perhaps this is because we view acts of courage as being more supererogatory, whereas we simply expect people to be temperate. But, as I’ll argue below, this might not be the best way to view things.

Plato was aware of the contrast between courage and temperance. Indeed, in the *Republic*, *Gorgias*, *Laws*, and *Statesman*, versions of courage and temperance conflict with each other. Consider Socrates’ description of the democratically-minded individual in the *Republic*:

Won’t he then return to these lotus-eaters and live with them openly? And if some help comes to the thrifty part of his soul from his relatives, won’t these boastful words close the gates of the royal wall within him to prevent these allies from entering and refuse even to receive the words of older private individuals as ambassadors? Doing battle and controlling things themselves, won’t they call reverence [*aidō*] foolishness and temperance [*sōphrosunēn*] cowardice [*anandrian*], abusing them and casting them out beyond the frontiers like disenfranchised exiles? And won’t they persuade the young man that measured [*metriotēta*] and orderly [*kosmian*] expenditure is boorish [*agroikian*] and narrow-minded [*aneleutheria*], and, joining with many useless desires, won’t they expel it across the border?[[52]](#endnote-52)

In the *Statesman*, the Visitor explains that temperance and courage are “extremely hostile to each other and occupy opposed positions in many things.”[[53]](#endnote-53) Courage is identified with speed, vigor, and sharpness in mind and body, while temperance is identified with slowness, softness (*malakos*), and smoothness. Indeed, the excessive form of courage resembles the characteristics of intemperance (*hubristika kai manika*), while the excessive form of temperance resembles the characteristics of cowardice (*deila kai blakika*).[[54]](#endnote-54)

However, this point is put most poignantly in the *Gorgias*. Callicles argues that temperance and justice, as they are normally understood, are for the stupid and weak (*malakia*), while courage and wisdom are for the intelligent and strong.[[55]](#endnote-55) Callicles maintains that the ethical principles of fairness and self-limitation do not exist by nature; rather, they are norms imposed on society by the masses (i.e., the weak and the dumb). If someone is smart and powerful enough, they will rise up among the masses and claim what is rightfully theirs by nature. This is how one achieves happiness (*eudaimonia*), “for how can a man be happy [*eudaimōn*] if he is slave to anybody at all?”[[56]](#endnote-56) Happiness, for Callicles, involves the unrestricted satisfaction of desires. Because temperance involves self-control, it is incompatible with happiness since it doesn’t allow one to be truly free. Thus, one should pursue the opposite of temperance—namely, self-indulgence (*akolasia*).[[57]](#endnote-57)

Courage and wisdom, according to Callicles, involve self-assertion. To assert oneself over others is to express freedom, which is the only way one can be happy. This self-assertion involves courage and it is an expression of masculinity. In contrast, temperance involves restricting yourself and allowing others to have resources that you could have had. To restrain oneself to others is to be passive, and thus, it is to be feminine.[[58]](#endnote-58) Hence, for Callicles, as well as many other people, the praise of courage and the distaste of temperance is rooted in a misogynistic world-view.[[59]](#endnote-59)

Readers familiar with the Greek epics and tragedies would not find the conflict between temperance and courage, and their respective gender identifications, very surprising.[[60]](#endnote-60) As Helen North explains, *sōphrosunē* “is not a ‘heroic’ virtue since the two greatest fighting men of Homeric epic, Achilles and Ajax, are the very ones who most notoriously lack this quality.”[[61]](#endnote-61) If the virtue of Homeric men is found in courage, the virtue of Homeric women is found in temperance. North explains:

By the end of the sixth century a link was established between sophrosyne [temperance] and the general idea of restraint or even abstinence, as is clear not only from its connection with sobriety…but also from the even earlier use of sophrosyne to designate feminine *aretē* [virtue]… [A]lthough Homer never uses the word sophrosyne in this connection, it is regularly so used in the classical period, when Penelope by reason of her faithfulness becomes the most prominent exemplar of the virtue.[[62]](#endnote-62)

If all of this is right, then Plato, as well as we, have good rhetorical reasons for adopting the expansive view of courage. In order to live well, we must cultivate the appropriate responses with respect to pleasure and desire. However, if we keep this aspect of virtue under the domain of temperance, then we are likely to undervalue its importance, since from the time of the Ancient Greeks until now, temperance has rarely (if ever) been a sensational virtue. Relatedly, we are likely to overvalue the heroic aspects of courage because courage is better able to capture our attention. Thus, the advantage of the expansive view of courage is that it takes aspects from the least popular virtue and builds them into the most popular virtue; thereby increasing the chances that people cultivate these dispositions.

One might object, however, that as philosophers we should be concerned with the truth and not with rhetoric. Indeed, one might even appeal to Plato’s works as evidence of this claim. In response to this objection, I’d like to start by clarifying what I take Plato’s position on this matter to be. Like most scholars, I believe that there is an element of rhetoric to the Athenian’s and Socrates’ endorsement of the expansive view. Each is trying to counter the commitments that the Dorians and Laches bring to the conversation. However, unlike most scholars, I think Plato is also sincere in his endorsement of the expansive views. Such a view is found in the *Republic* where the rhetorical force doesn’t carry the same weight, and such a view makes sense given Plato’s commitments towards moral psychology and death. I follow a similar position to Plato. The standards of truth should guide our theory development; nevertheless, rhetoric has its place—especially if there are already independent theoretical reasons for adopting the view. In section 2a, I explained how the expansive view coheres with a plausible set of commitments. This provides independent grounds for accepting the expansive view as a plausible account of courage. In this subsection, I have argued that throughout history, we have had biases with respect to courage and temperance and that adopting the expansive view of courage can help counteract these mistakes in reasoning.

Now one might have doubts about these rhetorical benefits. One might worry that promoting the “feminine” aspects of virtue by building them into courage will cause us to neglect the “feminine” aspects of virtue that are outside the scope of courage—aspects which should be appreciated on their own terms. The ultimate goal is to be completely virtuous; however, getting there requires certain developmental steps—some of which are imperfect. It would, of course, be better if everyone simply appreciated all the virtues as they should, but given that they don’t, we need to consider what initial steps should be taken so that they will. Provided that most people overvalue courage, or put differently, don’t see courage as it truly is, what I’m suggesting can help correct this error. However, it isn’t the final step toward cultivating complete virtue, but an initial one.

**3. Temperance, Moderation, and Sōphrosunē**

Thus far, I have argued that Plato considers the expansive view a plausible account of courage and that there are benefits to accepting the view. However, I still must address the objection raised in Section 1 that such a view of courage crowds out *sōphrosunē*. The objection assumes that temperance is fundamentally the virtue of having the right attitude towards pleasure and desire. Accordingly, if these attitudes are also under the domain of courage, temperance no longer picks out a unique excellence. I will respond to this objection by arguing that the virtue *sōphrosunē* is much broader than the resistance of pleasure and desire. Accordingly, rather than crowding out *sōphrosunē*, the expansive view allows for a richer and broader conception of this virtue.

S*ōphrosunē* has a variety of disparate, though related, meanings throughout history. The ancient Greek word *sōphrosunē*, which is usually translated in English as “temperance” or “moderation,” etymologically means sound/healthy/safe (Homeric *saos*; Ionian-Attic *sōos*, *sōs*) mind (*phrēn*).[[63]](#endnote-63) Since having a sound mind can be expressed in a variety of ways, it is no surprise that this word can mean self-knowledge, prudence, self-control, moderate (i.e., proportionate and harmonious), sobriety, quietness, and chastity, to give only some of the meanings. *Sōphrosunē* stands into strong contrast to *hubris*, which involves going beyond the appropriate limit. This contrast allows us to connect these various meanings. To exceed a limit is to fail to know something about yourself, to fail to understand proportionate harmony, to lack self-control, and this can be displayed in a variety of ways, including boisterous drunkenness. Different Greek philosophers, tragedians, comedians, and politicians emphasize different aspects of *sōphrosunē*. This is a result of the evolution of the word and them emphasizing different aspects of this virtue given their various ideological commitments.

In his *Tusculan Disputation*s, Cicero explains the difficulty of translating *sōphrosunē* into Latin:

It is also probable that the temperate [*temperans*] man—the Greeks call him *sōphrōn*, and they apply the term *sōphrosunē* to the virtue which I usually call, sometimes temperance [*temperantiam*], sometimes moderation [*moderationem*], and occasionally also modesty [*modestiam*]; but, it may be the virtue could rightly be called ‘frugality’ [*frugalitas*]…[[64]](#endnote-64)

Cicero goes on to explain that there is no adequate Greek word that captures *frugalitas*, since for the Romans it has a broader use, which includes the other virtues as well as a Roman sense of appropriateness.[[65]](#endnote-65)

With the influence of Christianity, many of the aspects of Greek *sōphrosunē* fell by the wayside, and the term primarily referred to purity and chastity. Helen North explains:

They [Christian moralists] adopted the connotation that was most popular throughout the Greek world in the first century of our era—sophrosyne interpreted as control of the appetites—and still further intensified this concept, claiming sophrosyne (chastity, purity) as a specifically Christian virtue, which distinguished the Christian from his pagan neighbor.[[66]](#endnote-66)

Another advancement in the concept occurs when Christian philosophers link the idea of self-knowledge to that of humility. To know oneself is to know that one has little worth since one is full of sin, and to make such an acknowledgment is to recognize the greatness of God.[[67]](#endnote-67) Although the Greeks thought one should respect one’s proper limits and not succumb to hubris, they typically did not praise humility, at least not in the way that Christian philosophers and theologians argue that we should.

This, of course, is a brief history of a complicated virtue description; however, my purpose here is not to give a complete account of the history of *sōphrosunē*, but, rather, my point is to emphasize that when we trace the origin of the word and concept, we find varied—though related—meanings. This is important for two reasons. First, we shouldn’t be too squeamish about adjusting our use of virtue descriptions, since this has already been done throughout history. As long as the virtue description latches on to something in the core use of the term, such a move is rather innocuous and natural. Second, we see that *sōphrosunē* has been used in a variety of ways throughout history. Thus, although today it is primarily associated with the control of bodily pleasure and appetite, this wasn’t always its primary meaning.[[68]](#endnote-68) Hence, if we adopt the expansive view of courage, there is still plenty of room left for *sōphrosunē*, since historically this term has a much richer meaning, referring to things like a state of self-knowledge and proportion. Indeed, what this discussion shows is that the modern account of *sōphrosunē* lacks the richness that the virtue used to have. If the expansive view crowds out an excessively narrow conception of *sōphrosunē*, so much the worse for that conception of *sōphrosunē*.

**4.** **The Unity of the Virtues**

I would like to conclude this paper with somewhat of a concession. I hope that I have made a convincing case for the merits of the expansive view of courage; however, I recognize that not everyone will get on board with loosening the connection between pleasure/desire and temperance. Accordingly, I want to finish the paper by proposing a moderate alternative. If one accepts the claims made in Section 2 4,but insists that temperance is tied to pleasure/desire and courage is tied to pain/fear, then this results is an account of courage that is broader than Aristotle’s but narrower than Plato’s. An interesting aspect of this moderate view is that it reveals the way in which the emotions connect the virtues. To make this point clear, consider three key aspects of this moderate view:

a. Fear and daring exist on a continuum such that if you fear φ, then you do not desire φ, and if you desire φ, then you do not fear φ.

b. Both particular pains and pleasures are the proper object of fear.

c. Courage mostly relates to having the appropriate attitude toward pain and fear, and temperance mostly relates to having the appropriate attitude toward pleasure and desire.

It follows from (a) and (b) that as one develops the appropriate attitudes toward fear and pain, one is simultaneously developing the appropriate attitude toward desire and pleasure, and vice versa. Once (c) is taken into account, it follows that as one develops courage, one develops temperance, and vice versa.

For example, suppose it is appropriate for Felipe to fear overindulging in wine (b). Because of the connection between fear/pain and desire/pleasure (a), it follows from this that as one cultivates the appropriate fear of wine, one develops the appropriate pain of excessive wine drinking. This is because if one fears overindulging in wine to the right amount, one will find the thought of overindulging painful; and given this, one will not desire the overindulgence of wine nor think of it as pleasurable. Given (c), this means that as Felipe cultivates courage with respect to wine drinking, he also develops temperance. Consider the opposite case, suppose it is appropriate for Sarah to desire standing up for her friends and that she should find this activity pleasurable. It follows from (a), that as Sarah cultivates the desire to stand up for her friends and finds the activity pleasurable, she will not fear this activity nor find it painful. In other words, as she develops temperance, she will develop courage (c). This demonstrates how the emotions (e.g., fear, pain, desire, and pleasure) can unify the virtues. This is an interesting perspective because usually knowledge and wisdom are thought to be the unifying factor of virtue.[[69]](#endnote-69)

I prefer the expansive view to this moderate view because I think restricting temperance to pleasure and desire neglects important aspects of *sōphrosunē*. However, even if one doesn’t go all the way to adopting the expansive view, I hope to have shown that the Aristotelian conception of courage and temperance is overly narrow and that the moderate view is a viable alternative to it. The unity of the virtues is usually thought to be strongly tied to intellectualism 4,but the moderate view illustrates the way in which emotions also unify the virtues.[[70]](#endnote-70)

**Notes**

1. . Thucydides *History* 3.82.4. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. . Joseph W. Bailey, Congressional Records. 32.3, March 8, 1898, 2616. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. . See *Laches* 191d-e and *Laws* 1.633c-635d. *Andreia* is the Greek word for courage but it also expresses masculinity (the Greek word for man is *anēr*). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. . See *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) Book 3. *Sōphrosunē*, roughly, refers to moderation or temperance, but these words do not quite capture its meaning. This will become clearer in Section 3. For the sake of simplicity, I will translate this word as “temperance.” [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. . Most philosophical questions about courage center around either (1) the difference between strength of will (*enkrateia*) and courage or (2) whether courage necessarily involves goodness. Although these questions are interesting and worth exploring, I will not focus on them in this paper. My focus is to discuss a neglected issue with respect to courage; namely, the role that pleasure and desire play in being courageous. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. . There are various versions of the unity of the virtues. Some scholars argue that the virtues are connected conditionally, see G. Vlastos, “The Unity of the Virtues in the *Protagoras*,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 25 (1972): 415-458. Other scholars argue that there is only Virtue and the context determines the descriptive name (e.g., courage, temperance, etc.), see T. Penner, “The Unity of the Virtue,” *Philosophical Review* 82 (1973): 35-68. Finally, some scholars adopt a middle position between these extremes, see T. Brickhouse and N. Smith, “Socrates and the Unity of the Virtues,” *The Journal of Ethics* 1 (1997): 311-324; S. Rickless, “Socrates’ Moral Intellectualism,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (1998): 355-367. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. . For an argument against the unity of the virtues based on social-psychological evidence, see J. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For a response, see R. Adams, *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being* for *the Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), ch. 8-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. . *Laches* 190e. Translations of Plato are my own, but are inspired by those found in J. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson, eds., *Plato’s Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997). The Greek follows J. Burnet, ed., *Platonis Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900-1907). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. . *Laches* 191d-e. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. . Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. . Ibid.,192b. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. . Ibid., 192c. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. . *Laws* 1.625c-626c, 1.628e, 1.638a. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. . Ibid., 1.626a. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. . Ibid., 1.628c. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. . Ibid., 1.630a-b. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. . Ibid.,1.630c-631d. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. . Ibid.,1.633c-d; see also 1.634a-635d. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. . For the degree claim, see ibid., 1.626d-627a, 1.628a-b, 1.629e-630c; for the self-defeat claim, see 1.633e. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. . This is similar (although different in important respects) to Aristotle’s point in *NE*, “One would think it strange to assert that things we should desire are counter-voluntary…The counter-voluntary also seems to be distressful, whereas what falls under appetite seems to be pleasant” (3.1.1111a29-33). Translations of *NE* are modified from C. Rowe in S. Broadie (Introduction and Commentary) and C. Rowe (Translation), *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). The Greek follows J. Bywater, ed., *Aristotle’s Ethica Nicomachea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1894). [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. . *NE* 3.12.1119a21-26. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. . 1.635c-d. The Athenian offers the provocative solution that drinking festivals and drunkenness are a way of training to build courage by exposing citizens to pleasure and desire so that they might learn to endure these feelings (1.649c-650b, 2.666b-c, and 2.671b-d; see N. Baima, “Playing with Intoxication: On the Cultivation of Shame and Virtue in Plato’s *Laws*,” *Apeiron* 51 (2018): 345-370; “On the Value of Drunkenness in the *Laws*,” *Logical Analysis and the History of Philosophy* 20 (2017): 65-81. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. . This shouldn’t come as much of surprise, however, since Laches clearly admires the Spartan’s approach to courage (see 182e-183b) [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. . D. Frede, “Puppets on Strings: Moral Psychology in *Laws* Books 1 and 2,” in C. Bobonich, ed., *Plato’s Laws: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 108-126, pp. 114-115. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. . S. S. Meyer, trans. and commentary, *Plato: Laws 1 and 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. . See T. Pangle, trans. and essay, *The Laws of Plato* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 389; S. Benardete, *Plato’s Laws: The Discovery of Being* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 28; E. Salem, “The Long and Winding Road: Impediments to Inquiry in Book 1 of the *Laws*,” in G. Recco and E. Sanday, eds., *Plato’s Laws: Force and Truth in Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 48-59, p. 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. . *Republic* 429c-d. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. . Ibid., 429d-430b. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. . Ibid., 442b-c; see also *Gorgias* 507b-c. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. . G. Santas. “Socrates at Work on Virtue and Knowledge in Plato’s *Laches*.” *Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1969), 433-460, p. 442; see also, W. T. Schmid, *On Manly Courage: A Study of Plato’s Laches* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), p. 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. . See *Laws* 1.644c-d; *Laches* 198b-c; *Timaeus* 69d; *Protagoras* 351a. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. . For a discussion of this in the *Laws*, see Baima 2018, op. cit., pp. 349-352. This principle follows Plato’s principle of non-opposition of the *Republic* (4.436b-c), which holds that the same thing cannot do or undergo the opposite thing, in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, at the same time. I’m leaving aside issues concerning parts of the soul for the sake of simplicity. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. . *Laws* 1.647b-c. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. . See *Gorgias* 480e-481b. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. . See *Apology* 28b, 29a-30c, 34c, 40c-41c; *Gorgias* 469b, 522e; *Crito* 46c; *Republic* 3.386a-388e; 10.603e-604d; cf. *Phaedo* 63b. For a useful discussion, see E. Austin, “Prudence and the Fear of Death in Plato’s *Apology*,” *Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2010): 39-55; cf. N. Baima, “Death and the Limits of Truth in the *Phaedo*,” *Apeiron* 48 (2015): 263-284. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. . *Republic* 6.505b. See also ibid., 9.588a; *Gorgias* 495d-e, 500d; *Philebus* 11b-c, 21a-d, 54a-d, 59e-67b; *Laws* 2.662a, 2.663a-b. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. . I say “primarily” because Aristotle does include pain in his discussion of temperance, namely the pain of missing pleasure (3.10.1117b24-27; 3.11.1119a3-5). Additionally, pleasure is a part of courage in that courage involves the emotion “daring” (*tharros*) and pleasure accompanies daring (1381b13-16); see, C. Young, “Courage,” in G. Anagnostopoulos, ed., *A Companion to Aristotle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 442-456. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. . 1.9.1366b.11-16. Translation is my own, the Greek follows W. D. Ross, ed., *Aristotelis Ars Rehetorica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959). [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. . I’m focusing on Aristotle’s account of courage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The account of courage presented in the *Eudemian Ethics* is different in important respects, see *EE* 3.1; J. Heil, “Why is Aristotle’s Brave Man So Frightened? The Paradox of Courage in *Eudemian Ethics*,” *Apeiron* 29 (1996): 47-74; Young, op. cit. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. . *NE* 3.6.1115a24-1115a31. Most philosophers maintain that, for Aristotle, the courageous person experiences some fear of death; see S. Leighton, “Aristotle’s Courageous Passions,” *Phronesis* 33 (1988): 76-99, p. 85; Young, op. cit., pp. 446-447). For a more qualified view, see M. Brady, “The Fearlessness of Courage,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 43 (2005): 198-201; for a counter, see H. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 56-57. I think Brady, op. cit., p. 199, is correct when she writes, “While we may want to be neutral concerning the ends courage can serve, however, Aristotle is not. Part of the context of his discussion of courage is Socrates’ account of this virtue in Plato’s *Laches*. Since Socrates includes precisely the circumstances that Aristotle excludes, we are entitled to assume Aristotle is deliberately limiting the scope of this virtue…”; see also, A. G. Zavaliy, “How Homeric is the Aristotelian Conception of Courage?” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 55 (2017): 350-377, pp. 350-351. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. . See Brady, op. cit.; A. Duff, “Aristotelian Courage,” *Ratio* 29 (1987): 2-15; W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (London: Methuen & Co., 1923), p. 207; S. Leighton, “Aristotle’s Courageous Passions,” *Phronesis* 33 (1988): 76-99, pp. 76-77; F. E. Sparshott, *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. . See Curzer, op. cit., pp. 24-25. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. . *NE* 3.10.1117b24-27, 3.11.1118b9-13. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. . Ibid., 3.6.1115a6-7. See Broadie op. cit., p. 24; Young, op cit., p. 443; D. Pears, “Courage as a Mean,” in A. O. Rorty, ed., *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 189-199. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. . *NE* 3.7.1115b25-29. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. . Ibid., 3.7.1115b32. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. . Ibid., 3.9.1117a29-31. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. . This, of course, doesn’t explain why combating disease or naval warfare isn’t noble for Aristotle. Brady, op. cit., pp. 198-200, argues that the key difference between facing death at sea and during battle is that the latter involves the preservation of the *polis* (for a response and alternative answer, see Curzer, op. cit., pp. 24-29. I suspect that, more than anything, it is a result of Aristotle’s Homeric conception of nobility; see Zavaliy op. cit. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. . Schmid, op. cit., pp.107-109, denies that Plato is broadening the concept of courage. I’d like to touch on two points Schmid makes. First, he argues that in the *Laches* Plato only discusses the form of courage in the context of battle. This is a rather weak piece of evidence and it is rather inconclusive. Socrates might start with the model of courage as something that is easily identifiable, such as solider, but this doesn’t mean that this, for him, is the exemplar of courage—it is there for the interlocutors to recognize. Second, he says “from the conventional ancient Greek point of view, there is nothing unusual about Laches’ emphatic agreement that manliness does involve physical discipline in regards to desires. The man who is effeminate, or pleasure-or money-loving, or self-indulgent or lazy, or the like simply cannot be a citizen-warrior…,” p. 109. Although it certainly is true that some Greeks emphasized the importance of manly temperance (e.g., Aeschylus, see H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), ch. 2), Plato’s target is not these individuals; for my discussion on this, see the next subsection. Additionally, I don’t think too much weight can be put on interlocutors agreeing with Socrates since most don’t seem to fully understand what they are saying. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. . G. Scarre, *On Courage* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1-2 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. . W. I. Miller, *The Mystery of Courage* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. *Republic* 8.560c-d. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. . *Statesman* 306b. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. . See ibid., 306e-307c; see also, *Laws* 3.696b. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. . *Gorgias* 491b-e. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. . Ibid., 491e; see also, 482e-484c. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. . Ibid., 492a. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. . Callicles uses the words *malakia* (softness) and *anandria* (literally, “without manliness”) to describe the person who follows the slave-morality of the masses. Despite not following the norms of the masses, philosophy is a feminine practice for adults (according to Callicles). This is because it lacks the action and assertion of politics (485b-e) and it leaves one defenseless like those who are dishonored (486a-c). [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. . It is important to remember that Callicles takes himself to be asserting what most people in the world think but are too afraid to express (492d). [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. . North, op. cit., p. 97. In Greek tragedy this conflict is, perhaps, most apparent in Sophocles’ *Ajax*. In this play, Ajax represents the traditional Homeric virtues of manliness and courage, while Odysseus represents the virtues needed for the flourishing of a polis, namely, temperance and wisdom. Thus, the tension between Ajax and Odysseus represents the tension between the heroic virtues and temperance; see ibid, p. 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. . Ibid; see also, A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 61 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. . North, op. cit., p. 21; see also Adkins op. cit., pp. 36-37; *Odyssey* 24.193, cf. 11.384. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. . North, op. cit., p. 3n10. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. . 3.8.16. Translation follows J. E. King, *Cicero: Tusculan Disputations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945); see North, op. cit., pp. 268-285. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. . North explains that of the four cardinal virtues, the Romans had the most

    difficulty assimilating *sōphrosunē*; see ibid., p. 258. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. . Ibid, p. 312. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. . See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2.2.q. 161; North, op. cit., pp. 375-8; J. Newman, “Humility and Self-Realization,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 16 (1982): 275-285. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. . Both Aristotle and Christians used the term to emphasize the control of pleasure, but both did so for different reasons. Aristotle seems to have done it because he defines virtues in a much narrower way than Plato, so as to avoid any overlap; see Curzer op. cit., p. 23. The motivation for the Christian followers was to separate themselves from the pagans by emphasizing their purity and chastity, thereby highlighting how the pagans lacked these qualities. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. . See Brickhouse and Smith, op. cit.; Rickless, op. cit.; *Meno* 87c-d, 88c-d; *Laches* 198c, 199b;

    *Protagoras* 350c. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. . I would like to thank the following people for their help with this paper: Hannah Paperno, Clerk Shaw, Sarah Malanowski, Eric Brown, Jason Gardner, Charlie Kurth, Tyler Paytas, Emily Austin, Ashley Kennedy, and an anonymous referee. I would also like to thank my students at FAU and Mizzou for their helpful discussions. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)