

PLEASURE AND THE DIVIDED SOUL IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC* BOOK 9

INTRODUCTION

In Book 9 of Plato's *Republic* we find three proofs for the claim that the just person is happier than the unjust person. Curiously, Socrates does not seem to consider these arguments to be coequal when he announces the third and final proof as 'the greatest and most decisive of the overthrows' (μέγιστόν τε καὶ κυριότατον τῶν πτωμάτων) (583b7).¹ This remark raises a couple of related questions for the interpreter. Whatever precise sense we give to μέγιστον and κυριότατον in this passage, Socrates is clearly appealing to an argumentative standard of some kind, and claiming that his final argument alone meets (or comes closest to meeting) this standard. But what precise standard is Socrates invoking here? And given that the first two arguments of Book 9 fall short of this (as yet undetermined) standard, why does he not simply leap directly to the third, most decisive proof?

Perhaps we may answer both questions satisfactorily if we suppose some logical interdependence among the three arguments of Book 9, such that Socrates runs the earlier, inferior arguments to establish certain premises with the intention of setting up the third. This would at least supply the beginning of an answer to our first question. On this picture, Socrates could plausibly hold that the third argument is the most decisive of the three in the sense that it follows from commitments his interlocutors have already explicitly ratified. This same hypothesis would also furnish a straightforward reason for including the earlier, inferior arguments: Socrates needs the inferior arguments to secure these commitments.

Unfortunately, this solution finds little support in the text, for the three arguments appear to be quite independent. Socrates gives no sign that later arguments rely logically on their predecessors in any way. Moreover, his segues from one argument to the next give the distinct impression that we have left the last argument entirely behind and are beginning anew (580c7–d1, 583b1–7).

In any case, many commentators seem to second Socrates' assessment, in that they find his first two proofs to be unsatisfactory. For example, Cross and Woollsey dismiss the first argument of Book 9 as 'scarcely an argument at all', complaining that its loaded descriptions of the lives being compared render the whole exercise 'pointless and uninteresting'. Meanwhile, they claim, the second argument of Book 9 depends on an 'unwarranted step'.² Nettleship in a similar spirit complains that the second argument

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the *Republic* are to the translation by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis, 1992).

² R.C. Cross and A.D. Woollsey, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London, 1964), 264–5. Similarly, J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981) notes the absence of an argument in the first 'proof' of Book 9 (305). On the other hand, against this verdict one could argue for the *superiority* of Book 9's first argument on the ground that it alone of the three seems

relies hopelessly on personal experience.³ This is not to claim that commentators find no flaws in the third argument of Book 9 either—it is routinely condemned as obscure or confused.⁴ But even if the final argument of Book 9 were cleared of these problems, the question would remain: given the obvious defects in its predecessors, and given that Plato has Socrates acknowledge their inferiority by some measure, why then does he make the editorial decision to include the first two arguments *at all*—especially given that we have already eliminated logical interdependence as a possible motive?

To answer these questions, this paper will adopt a different strategy—one prompted by another curious feature of Book 9. In its second argument we find an important addition to Book 4's tripartite psychological theory, a theory that had appeared to be finished business well before Book 9. Socrates waits until this argument to make explicit that each of the soul's three parts pursues its own distinctive pleasures (580d3–581e4). This reminds the reader that there are three potential audiences for Book 9's arguments: appetite / the profit-lover; spirit / the honour-lover; and reason / the philosopher. And according to the view Socrates develops in Book 9, each of these listeners responds only to their own distinctive pleasures.⁵

This paper will argue that Socrates takes the first two arguments of Book 9 to be inferior to the third on the ground that each of these arguments appeals to the distinctive pleasures of the soul's sub-rational parts, and to the political classes ruled by these respective parts. That is to say, on the reading it will develop, the first two arguments of Book 9 set out to show that the just life is happiest by appeal to certain pleasures *that are singularly dear to the listener*. This reading supplies plausible answers to both of our questions. First, Socrates takes the first two arguments of Book 9 to fall short because their appeals to the distinctive pleasures of their respective sub-rational audiences render the arguments themselves sub-rational; they would not convince the philosopher himself. Second, Socrates nevertheless includes these inferior arguments so as to persuade the soul's sub-rational parts that the just life is supremely happy. When added to Book 9's third and most decisive proof, the dialectical result of Book 9 is agreement, both within the soul and within the body politic, that the just life is supremely happy. While the obvious complement to this reading takes the third argument of Book 9 to target reason and the philosopher, limitations of space do not allow me to make that case here. I will, however, conclude by considering some evidence for this reading.

This paper will defend the view that each of Book 9's first two arguments functions by appealing to the distinctive pleasures of a sub-rational psychic part and political class.

to commend the just life as conventionally understood, whereas both of its successors undertake explicitly to prove the superiority of the *philosophical* life. Of Book 9's arguments it is thus the most straightforward in answering the fundamental challenge in Book 2, in which Glaucon and Adeimantus seem clearly to be lobbying for a defence of the conventional conception of the just life. Cf., for example, D. Sachs, 'A fallacy in Plato's *Republic*', *Philosophical Review* 72 (1963), 141–58 and I.H. Jang, 'The problematic character of Socrates' defense of justice in Plato's *Republic*', *Interpretation* 24 (1996), 85–107.

³ R.L. Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London, 1955), 321.

⁴ Cf. Nettleship (n. 3), 328 n. 1; Cross and Woolsey (n. 2), 265; Annas (n. 2), 311; J.C.B. Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford, 1982), 104–27; G. Santas, *Understanding Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 2010), 216.

⁵ Here I sidestep some important puzzles concerning Plato's practice of treating a part of the soul as parallel with a *person* dominated by that part of the soul; on these, see J. Moline, 'Plato on the complexity of the psyche', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 60 (1978), 1–26; Annas (n. 2), 306; and H. Lorenz, *The Brute Within* (Oxford, 2006), part 1.

First, though, the view in question must be refined. For it may be objected at the outset that the claim that these arguments ‘appeal’ to pleasures belonging to a part of the soul is too vague. What does this ‘appeal’ consist in? Is this strictly a claim about the specific *premises* of the arguments—that, say, the argument targeting spirit includes premises expressing justice’s rewards in terms of the distinctive pleasures connected with victory, status and the like? While this is part of what I have in mind, the use of the word ‘appeal’ is meant to be broader, in that it refers as much to argumentative form as it does to the content of this or that premise. That is to say, an important part of this claim is that for each of Book 9’s first two arguments, the *form of reasoning* that the argument itself takes is meant to be pleasing to its intended listener.⁶ This formal feature of an argument is more conspicuous where the target listener is in some important sense sub-rational, as in the case of the appetitive and spirited parts.⁷ After all, what pleases the philosopher above all is surely an ironclad, deductively sound argument. In the case of the lower parts of city and soul, however, extra-logical considerations may play more of a role.

Section 1 begins by delimiting the three arguments of Book 9 and defending these proposed boundaries. Sections 2 and 3 develop and defend my interpretations of Book 9’s first two arguments, in order of their appearance in the text. The paper concludes by drawing some comparisons with Book 9’s third and final argument, so as to illustrate how the first two arguments fall short of an argumentative standard that only the third argument meets.

1: DELIMITING THE THREE ARGUMENTS OF BOOK 9

Let us first delimit the three arguments of Book 9 for the supreme happiness of the just life. On the standard reading, the first argument of Book 9 runs from 571a1–580c9; the second from 580d1–583b1; and the third begins at 583b1. These divisions find strong support in Socrates’ segues. Consider Socrates’ remark at 580c9–d1: ‘Good. That then is one of our proofs. And there’d be a second, if you happen to think that there is anything in this’ (εἶεν δὴ, εἶπον: αὐτὴ μὲν ἡμῖν ἢ ἀπόδειξις μία ἂν εἴη, δευτέραν δὲ ἰδὲ τήνδε, ἐάν τι δόξη εἶναι). Consider also 583b1–5, about which the next section will have more to say:

These, then, are two proofs in a row, and the just person has defeated the unjust one in both. The third is dedicated in Olympic fashion to Olympian Zeus the Saviour. Observe, then, that, apart from those of a knowledgeable person, the other pleasures are neither entirely true nor pure but are like a shadow-painting, as I’ve heard some wise person say. And yet, if this were true, it would be the greatest and most decisive of the overthrows.

⁶ Cf. M.M. Erginel, ‘Inconsistency and ambiguity in *Republic IX*’, *CQ* 61 (2011), 493–520, at 51, on whose view the pleasures of even the soul’s lower parts consist in *drawing conclusions* from certain arguments.

⁷ The cognitive abilities belonging to the lower parts of soul have been the subject of considerable controversy. Cf. Annas (n. 2), 129–30; J.M. Cooper, ‘Plato’s theory of human motivation’, *HPhQ* 1 (1984), 3–21; T. Irwin, *Plato’s Ethics* (Oxford, 1995), 214–20, 282; A.W. Price, *Mental Conflict* (New York, 1995); M.F. Burnyeat, ‘Culture and society in Plato’s *Republic*’, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 20 (1999), 217–324; C. Bobonich, *Plato’s Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics* (Oxford, 2002), especially 244–5.

Taken together, we seem to have strong evidence for a couple of interpretative claims. First, Socrates clearly takes himself to be presenting three *discrete* proofs. Our first passage announces not only the conclusion of a first proof but also the beginning of a second. Our second passage then counts *two* successful proofs completed, and sets out for the third and most decisive proof.

Despite this evidence for three discrete proofs, Socrates' count here may seem puzzling. After all, one may object that the *Republic* as a whole, or at any rate Books 2–10, represents a single argument on behalf of the just life. While this is no doubt true in a sense, it is perhaps helpful to distinguish between a *case*, on the one hand, and an *argument* or *proof*, on the other. In the fundamental challenge of Book 2, Glaucon and Adeimantus call on Socrates to make 'the case' for the just life, with the understanding that such a case may contain (and indeed is likely to contain) multiple arguments. Compare Socrates' case to a criminal defence. The defence attorney has a single case to make: that her client is not guilty beyond reasonable doubt. Making this case is likely to require several stretches of discrete argument: the first, say, establishing a reliable alibi, the second raising doubts about a witness's testimony placing her client at the scene, the third identifying another suspect for the crime in question, etc. It makes sense to treat each of these as discrete arguments, even though they jointly contribute to a single case on behalf of a single verdict. Similarly, that Socrates gives three discrete proofs in Book 9 is compatible with the view that each contributes to a unified case that the just person is happier than the unjust person. So on the reading developed here, the *Republic* as a whole represents a single case consisting of multiple 'proofs' or 'arguments' (henceforth I will use these terms interchangeably).

Nevertheless, there are further questions, both about where the first argument of Book 9 begins, and about where its third and final argument ends. Let us take each of these issues in turn. First, one might worry that the first argument of Book 9 begins not at 571a at the start of Book 9, as we proposed just now, but rather at the start of Book 8 (if not before). This is because this first argument clearly draws upon the previous book's discussion of constitutional decline, from aristocracy to timarchy, through to oligarchy, democracy and tyranny. Indeed, Socrates explicitly closes out what we are calling 'the first argument of Book 9' with an appeal to these intermediate types (580b2–3). However, while this supports the view that Book 8's account of constitutional decline *informs* Book 9's first argument, one need not go so far as to claim that it forms part of the argument itself. To begin with, while Book 8 traces democracy's degeneration into tyranny, Socrates clearly marks off Book 9's account of the tyrannical *man* as something new, in that it immediately requires a new discussion of desire that Book 8 had managed to avoid (571a1–b1).⁸ This need for further theorizing about the nature and number of human desires suggests that the discussion of the tyrannical soul to come is more than a mere continuation of Book 8's story. Moreover, whereas Book 9's telling of how the tyrannical man fares falls squarely within the scope of the fundamental challenge of Book 2, this is not so for Book 8's discussion. Neither Glaucon nor Adeimantus in Book 2 is primarily concerned with the nature of political constitutions. Rather, they want to know about unjust people, their souls and how well their lives go, none of which is directly answered by Book

⁸ Here and throughout I make no claim that the *Republic's* ten-book division is Plato's own. Any discussion of book divisions refers merely to the conventional ten-book division. Cf. D.N. Sedley, 'Socratic intellectualism in the *Republic's* central digression', in G. Boys-Stones, D. El Murr and C. Gill (edd.), *The Platonic Art of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2013), 70–89, at 70–4.

8's account of, say, timocratic and oligarchic constitutions. Indeed, both Glaucon and Adeimantus consistently frame their challenge with a view to the extremes of justice and injustice.⁹ On the terms of the debate, this means that what they want ultimately is a comparison of the philosopher with the tyrant. What happens to the timocrat or the oligarch is tangential to their challenge. This supports the view that Book 9 answers the fundamental challenge more directly than Book 8 does, which in turn renders defensible a reading of Book 9's first argument such that it begins at the start of Book 9.

But what about the question of the third argument's terminus? In fact, I think there is something to the worry that this argument has no clear stopping point. Unlike its predecessors, nowhere in the line of reasoning does Socrates declare unambiguously that his work is over and that his three arguments are now complete. This would certainly seem to be a deficiency in what is supposed to be the 'most decisive' of the trio! In any case, I wish to leave open the question of its precise end, in part because I find plausible the non-standard reading that Book 9's final argument pushes on even into Book 10.¹⁰ Fortunately, since the reading I will develop focusses on the previous two arguments, nothing in my interpretation hangs on the question of whether or not this argument ends in Book 9. Though I will conclude with some remarks about the final argument of Book 9, none of my claims will depend on any particular view about its precise terminus.

2: THE FIRST ARGUMENT OF *REPUBLIC* BOOK 9

To set up our reading of Book 9's first two arguments, let us first consider the significant addition the second of these arguments makes to the *Republic's* tripartite psychological theory. Until we reach this argument, the general impression had been that only the lowest part of the soul, namely the appetitive part, is to be characterized by its desire for pleasure. Part of the general unruliness, both of this psychic part and of its corresponding political class, was due to its gluttonous desires for the pleasures of the body: those of food, drink and sex, as well as for money in so far as it allows one to acquire these things (442a3–b1). But what spirit and the city's warriors love, we were led to believe, is not pleasure but honour, status and victory. Likewise, the rational part and the philosopher kings care too much about learning and understanding to go in for pleasure; or so it seemed.¹¹

But 'pleasure' turns out in Book 9 to be a broader category than it first appeared, so broad in fact that every part of the soul and political class may be said to pursue pleasure in its own way. In the second argument of Book 9 we find the novel claim that there are three distinct forms of pleasure, one belonging to each psychic part and to its

⁹ Glaucon's challenge insists that Socrates compare 'the most just [person] and the most unjust [person]' (τὸν τε δικαιοτάτον καὶ τὸν ἀδικοτάτον) in order to examine 'the extreme of injustice' (ἔσχότη [...] ἀδικία) (360e1–361a3). This would seem to exclude the intermediately unjust types of timocrat, oligarch and democrat described in Book 8, particularly when one remembers that Socrates' isomorphism between psychological types and political constitutions is yet to be made explicit.

¹⁰ An interpretation along these lines is developed and defended in J.C. Shaw, 'Poetry and hedonic error in Plato's *Republic*', *Phronesis* 61 (2016), 373–96.

¹¹ Socrates' criticism at 505c5–6 of the view that pleasure is identical with the good would seem to deny pleasure to the higher parts of the soul, and to reason in particular.

corresponding political character. To be sure, the appetitive part of the soul and the profit-lover care about the bodily pleasures and the money used to satisfy them. But we learn in Book 9 that spirit and the victory-lover pursue pleasures as well, albeit of a different kind: those associated with honour, victory and status. Likewise, the pleasures of learning and understanding are dearest to the rational part and to the philosopher (580d7–581c7).¹²

So Plato sees the need in Book 9 both to revisit his tripartite theory of the soul, and to expand dramatically his account of pleasure as a psychological motivation.¹³ One reason for this innovation is clear enough from the text, for the argument in which it appears relies on the claim that each of the three basic types of people—money-lover, honour-lover and philosopher—enjoys distinct pleasures. But another reason for this conspicuous bit of innovation may be that it informs the structure of Book 9 more generally. Perhaps Socrates pitches the first two arguments of Book 9 for the just life to the distinctive pleasures belonging to the lower parts of the soul and their corresponding political classes—pleasures he has seen no need to introduce until Book 9. In this section and the next, I will defend this reading.

Let us begin with Book 9's first argument, which seems to be less free-standing than the others, in that it appears to finish some of the business of the previous book. Book 8's narrative of constitutional decline is incomplete, for it sketches the degenerate constitutions and characters of timocracy, oligarchy and democracy, but postpones much of its discussion of tyranny—the polar opposite of just rule and its corresponding character—to Book 9. So the first of Book 9's arguments does a certain double duty: it completes Book 8's narrative while it also constitutes Socrates' first argument that the just life is supremely happy.

Before proceeding to my own interpretation of this argument, let me address a couple of worries at the outset. The first concerns the specific audience for the first argument of Book 9. On the *Republic's* psychological theory leading up to Book 9, the higher psychic parts would seem to be relatively well defined and unified. This seems not to be the case with my proposed audience for Book 9's first argument, namely the appetitive and money-loving part. As Book 8 has already illustrated, rule by the lowest civic part results in several degenerate constitutions: oligarchy, democracy and tyranny. According to Plato's isomorphism between city and soul, these constitutional differences are grounded in equally pronounced psychological differences between the oligarch, the democrat and the tyrant. Why then does Book 9 seem to treat *all three* as a unified audience, as though their differences were insignificant for the moment? Pappas seems to be thinking along these lines when he objects: 'If rule by

¹² That pleasure is not restricted to the appetitive part is perhaps implied by Socrates' account of temperance at 430e–431d. On this picture, the temperate agent's better desires—those 'directed by calculation in accordance with understanding and correct belief' (αἱ δὲ μετὰ νοῦ τε καὶ δόξης ὀρθῆς λογισμῶ ἄγονται)—restrain his baser desires. The natural home for these better desires is presumably the rational part, in which case it follows that the rational part has desires. Moving on to civic temperance, Socrates links desire with pleasure when he describes the best city as one 'in control of itself and of its pleasures and desires' (κρείττω ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ αὐτῆν αὐτῆς). It is also clear earlier in Socrates' division of the soul that each psychic part has desires (435c4–441c6). However, it seems that we must wait until Book 9 for Socrates to make explicit the view that each psychic part has distinctive pleasures, and moreover that each part also spurns the pleasures associated with the other parts. My thanks to an anonymous reader for calling my attention to these passages.

¹³ Cf. D. Scott, 'Metaphysics and the defence of justice in the *Republic*', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 16 (2000), 1–20, at 18, who refers to Socrates' strategy in this argument (among others in Book 9) as a 'psychological revisitation' of Book 4's tripartition.

the appetites can equally produce oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny in the soul, the appetites must have even less to do with one another than we had thought.¹⁴

While this is a legitimate worry, it is first important to note that this raises a problem primarily for Plato rather than for his interpreter. That is to say, at various points in Book 9 Plato clearly *does* lump these distinct types together as though their differences do not matter, and so any interpretation must confront this problem. This points to no special disadvantage of the interpretation developed here.

Having said this, perhaps Plato can be defended on this score. While oligarchy, democracy and tyranny do indeed differ greatly, his view is that they differ less from each other than they do from the superior constitutions of timarchy and aristocracy. The difference between, say, the motivations of the timocrat and of the oligarch is a difference in kind: the former seeks honour, whereas the latter aims to satisfy his appetites, and these represent fundamentally distinct genres of value for Plato. On the other hand, Plato in Book 9 seems to regard the oligarch, the democrat and the tyrant as distinct types whose motivations nevertheless are all purely appetitive. As we learn in the previous book, the oligarch distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary appetites, and in his thrift he suppresses the latter for the sake of the former (554a2–7). The democrat rejects his father's distinction and becomes an egalitarian about the appetites (561b1–562a3). This in turn reveals a subdivision within the unnecessary appetites between the lawful and the unlawful, with the latter giving rise to the tyrant (571b3–7). But disagreements between these types are not about genres of value, as they are between the timocrat and the oligarch. All of the lower types take appetitive pleasure as their sole standard for happiness. Their disagreements are strictly about what patterns of action best satisfy this standard.¹⁵

A second worry about the first argument of Book 9 concerns its conclusion. While Socrates seems to take all three of Book 9's arguments to support the same conclusion, there is a detectable slide in the wording of that conclusion between the first argument and its successors. The second and third arguments conclude that the just life is *more pleasant* than the unjust life, whereas the first concludes with the claim that the just life is *happier*. This second problem may seem to derail our interpretation before it has even begun, for how (one might object) can the first argument of Book 9 take as its twin targets the profit-lover and appetite when it alone among Book 9's arguments *does not* word its conclusion in terms of pleasure? We have known since Book 4 that these types are motivated by a desire for pleasure, so should we not expect this argument above all others to express its conclusion in hedonic terms if indeed it takes appetite and the profit-lover as its audience?

This is a powerful objection, but it rests on a false picture of the first argument. For that argument is clearly *not* devoid of hedonic considerations. On the contrary, and as we will see, its case boils down to the claim that the supremely unjust person, the tyrant (along with the city he rules), is wretched, where this wretchedness is cashed out in a number of terms that unmistakably evoke pain and other forms of suffering.¹⁶ The

¹⁴ N. Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (New York, 1995), 161.

¹⁵ Cf. Nettleship (n. 3), 319–20.

¹⁶ Plato makes a point of telling us at 576b8 that Socrates' main interlocutor shifts from Adeimantus to Glaucon, just before Socrates begins the first argument of Book 9. This is perhaps because the tyrannical pain and suffering that is about to be on display is meant as a counterweight specifically to Glaucon's insistence way back in Book 2 at 361e2–362a2 that it is the truly *just* man who 'will be whipped, stretched on a rack, chained, blinded with fire, and, at the end, when he has

other side of this coin is less explicit—perhaps Socrates holds that the more pain and suffering he heaps onto the tyrant’s way of life, the less he has to say on the just life’s behalf.¹⁷ This is, after all, a *contest* between two lives, a contest Socrates can win just as well by heaping misery onto his opponent’s favoured way of life as he can by praising his own.

We will return to this feature of the argument later on. Suffice it to say for now that the troubling wording of its conclusion may be explained by the double duty we identified earlier. It is also the last instalment in the narrative begun in Book 8, and in carrying out that narrative it focusses on the wretchedness of the tyrannical life. The conclusion Plato wants us to draw from this damning picture for Book 9’s purposes is that therefore the opposing just life is exceedingly happy, and Socrates does indeed move quickly and cavalierly to this conclusion. But if we attend to the explicit disadvantages of the tyrannical life and, as it were, fill in the corresponding benefits of the just life, as it seems Socrates expects us to do for this argument, then the line of argument runs roughly as follows:

1. The tyrannical life is supremely painful.
2. Opposing lives fare in opposite ways when it comes to pleasure and pain.
3. The just life is opposed to the tyrannical life.¹⁸
 - C1. [From 1–3] The just life is supremely pleasant.
4. A supremely pleasant life is also supremely happy.
 - C2. [From C1 and 4] The just life is supremely happy.

How does Socrates establish the crucial first premise? He does so over several pages, and so a detailed reconstruction would require many more. Fortunately, he sums up the argument with a succinct tally of the tyrant’s miseries. When we see past the tyrant’s façade and look deeply into his character (576e4–577a5), we will see that he is plagued by a host of evils (579d8–580a5):

In truth, then, and whatever some people may think, a real tyrant is really a slave (δοῦλος), compelled to engage in the worst kind of fawning (θωπείας), slavery (δουλείας) and pandering (κόλαξι) to the worst kinds of people. He’s so far from satisfying his desires (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας) in any way that it is clear—if one happens to know that one must study his whole soul—that he’s in the greatest need of most things (πλείστων ἐπιδεέστατος) and truly poor (πέννης).

suffered every kind of evil, he’ll be impaled’. Cf. Scott (n. 13), 15, who similarly notes the significance of the shift from Adeimantus to Glaucon at this moment in the dialogue.

¹⁷ For the general observation that Plato in Book 9 is keener to condemn the bad condition than to argue concretely for the good condition, see G. Van Riel, *Pleasure and the Good Life: Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists* (Leiden, 2000), 16.

¹⁸ The second and third premises of this argument seem to be presuppositions of Book 9’s argumentative section generally. Socrates asserts something very much like the second premise in his debate with Callicles in the *Gorgias*: ‘Tell me: don’t you think that those who do well have the opposite experience of those who do badly?’ (εἰπέ γάρ μοι, τοὺς εὖ πράττοντας τοῖς κακῶς πράττουσιν οὐ τούναντίον ἡγῆ πάθος πεπονθέναι;) (495e1–2) (transl. W.D. Woodhead, in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns [edd.], *Plato: The Collected Dialogues* [Princeton, 1961], 229–307). And Thrasymachus’ remark way back in Book 1 seems to imply the third premise: ‘You’ll understand this most easily if you turn your thoughts to the most complete injustice, the one that makes the doer of injustice happiest and the sufferers of it, who are unwilling to do injustice, most wretched. This is tyranny’ (344a2–5). This is presumably written into the debate’s terms when Glaucon renews Thrasymachus’ case in Book 2; Glaucon declares tyranny and Socrates’ kingly city to be ‘total opposites’ (πᾶν τούναντίον) at 576d3. This opposition between tyranny and kingly rule is of course a theme running through Books 5–7.

And, if indeed his state is like that of the city he rules, then he's full of fear (φόβου), convulsions (σφραδασμών) and pains (όδυνών) throughout his life. [...]

And we'll also attribute to the man what we mentioned before, namely that he is inevitably envious (φθονερῶ), untrustworthy (ἀπίστω), unjust (όδίκω), friendless (όφίλω), impious (όνοσίω), host and nurse to every kind of vice (κακία), and that his ruling makes him even more so. And because of all these, he is extremely unfortunate and goes on to make those near him like himself.

Let us now unpack this fraught list of evils, starting with the first paragraph. Calling this a 'list', though, is perhaps misleading if it suggests a mere itemization. What we have here seems more along the lines of a nested set of explanations for the tyrant's misery, the root cause appearing at the centre of our paragraph in the form of the tyrant's insatiable appetites, with evils of lesser and lesser explanatory value the further we move in the paragraph either upwards or downwards from this centre.

First, we hear that the tyrant is a slave. Socrates leads with this evil perhaps for dramatic effect: what could illustrate the tragic contrast between the tyrant's bold public image and his true character more vividly than the insight that he is in fact a slave? In the next few lines we get, it seems, the explanation for this first claim. The tyrant is a slave in that he is compelled to fawn and pander. But next we get the root cause of the evils we have encountered so far: the tyrant's insatiable appetites. Here the thought seems roughly along the lines of Socrates' debate with Callicles in the *Gorgias* (491d4–495a5). The tyrant has nourished and enlarged his appetites to such a degree that they are now impossible to satisfy. This explains the need to fawn and pander, for these insatiable appetites force him to scare up resources from every source. The tyrant grovels for money when he must.

As we pass the first paragraph's centre and move toward its conclusion, we encounter other evils that are plausibly explained by the tyrant's insatiable appetites. Since the tyrant can never satisfy these appetites, he is always in need of more of whatever it is they crave. So no matter how much money he manages to raise, it is never enough; hence the evils of need and poverty. Finally, because it is never enough, the tyrant is tormented by certain affections: his poverty and constant need make him skittish and fearful. Owing to his perpetually insufficient funds he experiences convulsions and pains, the inner experiences of unsatisfied appetite. This focus on the pain of separation from what one craves is precisely what we should expect from an argument pitched to appetitive types, for whom deprivation and want represent a singular evil.

This reading invites a number of objections. First, let us return to Socrates' opening characterization of the tyrant as a slave. To the suggestion that this is meant to underscore the ironic contrast between the tyrant's public image and his inner state, one could object that an appeal to slavery is an appeal to considerations of status, which belong more naturally to spirit than to appetite. This in turn calls into question the hypothesis that Book 9's first argument takes specific aim at the profit-lover.¹⁹ However, the reference to slavery is ambiguous when it comes to deciding which of the sub-rational psychic parts is its target audience. Enslavement is naturally unappealing to anyone, but it presumably strikes distinct responses of aversion in honour- and

¹⁹ Throughout I will refer to the profit-lover and to his psychic counterpart, the appetitive part of soul, jointly as 'the profit-lover', and likewise to the honour-lover and to his psychic counterpart spirit jointly as 'the honour-lover'.

profit-lovers. An honour-lover is most plausibly repulsed by the social stigma attached to the slave. On the other hand, slavery may trigger a very different species of aversion in the profit-lover. For this character, what is repulsive about a life in bondage is presumably the poverty and consequent lack of access to sensual pleasure in such a life. The slave is without resources, and so the scant food, drink or other sensual pleasures he receives come only at the whim of his master.

So, which set of considerations seems more salient in the first argument of Book 9? If we read on to the remaining evils besetting the tyrant—unsatisfied desires, poverty, fear, convulsions, pains—then slavery’s lack of resources seems more consistent with these other evils. The relevant misfortunes of the slave seem to be his condition of destitution and material dependence. If a deficit in esteem were the salient feature of slavery in our passage, then we would expect Socrates to dwell immediately instead on the slave’s low social standing—stressing the abuse heaped upon the slave, his inability to seek redress when he is wronged, and so forth.

Having said this, one might object that Socrates also stresses that (i) the tyrant is a fawner (θωπείας) and panderer (κόλαξι); and (ii) that he behaves this way even to the worst sorts of people (τῶν πονηροτάτων). Does this not appeal to a concern for status naturally belonging to spirit rather than to appetite?

Let us take each of these points in turn. Concerning (i), Socrates’ remark that the tyrant is a panderer seems to be one way of underscoring this character’s *desperation*, a desperation rooted in unsatisfied appetite; the tyrant simply cannot afford to be discriminating about sources of momentary or partial relief. Indeed, Socrates makes precisely this point earlier in the argument: ‘Consequently, he [the tyrant] must acquire wealth from every source or live in great pain and suffering’ (ἀναγκάιον δὴ πανταχόθεν φέρειν, ἢ μεγάλας ὠδῖσι τε καὶ ὀδύνας συνέχεσθαι) (574a3).

Concerning (ii), that lovers of honour take no hedonic interest in the opinions of inferiors seems to be positively refuted at 475a7–b2, where Socrates observes that, while they of course prefer acclaim from a higher class of people, they also desire honours from the *riff-raff* (φαυλοτέρων), since ‘they desire the whole of honour’ (καὶ μὴν φιλοτίμους γε, ὡς ἐγώμαι, καθορᾶς ὅτι [...] κἂν μὴ ὑπὸ μειζόνων καὶ σεμνοτέρων τιμᾶσθαι, ὑπὸ μικροτέρων καὶ φαυλοτέρων τιμώμενοι ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς ὅλως τιμῆς ἐπιθυμητοὶ ὄντες). As a reason for the lover of honour to reject the tyrannical life, the insight that the tyrant succeeds in winning the favour of inferior types—enough for them to turn over their money to him voluntarily, no less!—seems to backfire, as it would positively recommend the tyrannical life to a spirited type. Moreover, for Socrates’ purposes in Book 9 the relevant feature of τῶν πονηροτάτων may not be that they are socially inferior but rather that they are the most impoverished or ‘worst off’. That is to say, another way to convey the tyrant’s extreme desperation is to stress that his appetites force him even to go after the poor, who have little to give in the first place. In other words, his fund-raising efforts are made all the more oppressive and urgent by the necessity to deal mainly in small donations. This reading renders considerably less abrupt the return in the very next line to the subject of the tyrant’s appetites, with Socrates’ observation that the tyrant is needy, poor and insatiable (καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας οὐδ’ ὅπωσιτοῦν ἀποπιμπλάς, ἀλλὰ πλείστων ἐπιδεέστατος καὶ πένης τῇ ἀληθείᾳ φαίνεται).

But what about the next paragraph in our passage? So far Socrates has cashed out the tyrant’s misery in non-moral terms—presumably no one, whatever their moral character, welcomes pain, fear and desperation. But our second paragraph seems to shift the focus to the tyrant’s moral shortcomings, with its charges that the tyrant is ‘envious (φθονερῶ),

untrustworthy (*ἀπίστω*), unjust (*ἀδίκω*), friendless (*ἀφίλω*), impious (*ἀνοσίω*) [and] host and nurse to every kind of vice'. These high-minded considerations would seem to be more likely to persuade the higher psychic parts, rather than base appetite.

This is plausible on the assumption that the second paragraph's function is simply to add moral vices to the list of the tyrant's miseries. However, this reading generates a couple of interpretative problems. First, by the time we reach Book 9 the charge that the tyrant is vicious, and in particular that he is *unjust*, is such a commonplace in the debate that it hardly seems to be worth mentioning. Way back in Book 1 Thrasymachus designated the tyrant as his representative for consummate injustice, a view that is written into the very terms of the debate in the fundamental challenge of Book 2, and which Socrates takes on board when he accepts that challenge.²⁰ Socrates focusses on the tyrant in Book 9 precisely to draw the sharpest contrast with the just life. It is hardly a revelation now to learn that the model of injustice turns out to be unjust! True, Book 4 established a grave psychic cost of extreme injustice, and so the insight that the tyrant is unjust does by this stage in the dialogue entail that the tyrant is psychically unhealthy. But this point seems to have already been sufficiently reprised in the preceding paragraph with its appeal to the tyrant's boundless appetites, and in any case it is difficult to see how our second paragraph either improves or expands upon a point that has been evident on all sides since Book 4.

A second problem with this reading is that, given the amoralist position Thrasymachus airs in Book 1 and which Glaucon and Adeimantus recapitulate in Book 2, moral condemnation of the tyrant would seem to miss the mark dialectically. One can imagine Glaucon's reply: 'Sure, the ancestor of Gyges the Lydian seized control of the kingdom unjustly. But so what? His injustice won him wealth and power!' Similarly, the charge of impiety is easily blocked by Adeimantus' point that the tyrant can simply spend some of the profits from his injustice to appease the gods.²¹

Given these problems, we should rethink the view that the vices mentioned in our second paragraph are additions to the list of the tyrant's hardships. While the paragraph's opening words 'And we'll also attribute to the man' (*οὐκοῦν καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι*) seem to support this reading, the words immediately following—'what we said before' (*ἃ τὸ πρότερον εἶπομεν*)—suggest a recapitulation of a point already made. Socrates' recap of the argument closes with a reminder that the tyrant is vicious. This leaves open the possibility that the point about vice plays an important dialectical role without representing an additional list of harms. On an alternative reading, Socrates is making a logical point. The conclusion he needs to generate is that the most unjust life is thoroughly miserable. But for some time now, Socrates' focus has been on the tyrannical life. As we have already noted, on the terms of the debate this is a distinction without a difference: the tyrant is taken on all sides as the representative for the supremely unjust life. But in his peroration Socrates sees fit to make this last step explicit by reminding his audience of the identity of the tyrant with the unjust, impious and generally vicious man.

²⁰ Thrasymachus identifies consummate injustice with tyranny at 344a4–5. Glaucon characterizes his challenge as a renewal of Thrasymachus' case at 358b1–d2, and he consistently frames the debate as a competition between the supremely (*ἔσχατον*) just and unjust lives.

²¹ The story of the ring of Gyges appears at 359c4–360b2, according to which a lowly shepherd uses his newfound power of invisibility to usurp the throne. The crux of Adeimantus' case that the unjust man outdoes the just man where the gods are concerned appears at 363e4–366b2.

This reading makes good sense of the role played by the list of vices while avoiding the two interpretative problems noted earlier, for on the view that Socrates is making this logical point the line of reasoning in this second paragraph turns out to be neither redundant nor irrelevant. Socrates then reaches his goal with the conclusion that the person in question, just now declared to be the supremely unjust person, is beyond all of these things most unfortunate (ἐξ ἀπάντων τούτων μάλιστα μὲν αὐτῷ δυστυχεῖ εἶναι).²²

Socrates adds for good measure that the tyrant makes others like himself—both a nod to his isomorphism concerning soul and city, and a further source of pain for the tyrant himself; not only are his resources scarce and diffuse, but also he must compete for them against other insatiable agents like himself.²³ At the same time, this observation preserves the image of the tyrant as a person having great (albeit perverse) power. For reasons that will soon become clear, the tragic tone of Book 9's first argument requires that the tyrant be viewed in this light.

Let us consider one last objection to our reading. A few lines into the first paragraph in our passage, Socrates insists that a true appreciation of the tyrant's misery requires that one be able to examine his 'whole soul' (ὅλην ψυχήν). This reference to the whole soul seems to suggest that the passage is not narrowly concerned with or directed to any particular part of the soul, and so it seems to undermine our claim that the argument is pitched specifically to the appetitive part. However, it is important to note that ὅλην can mean 'complete' as well, and indeed Socrates' next remark suggests that he has the temporal completeness of a soul in mind: he observes that the tyrant is fearful throughout his entire life (καὶ φόβου γέμων διὰ παντός τοῦ βίου). This appears to be another recapitulation, this time of 576c1–3, in which Socrates observes that the tyrant grows more miserable the longer he lives, popular opinion notwithstanding (καὶ ὅς ἂν πλεῖστον χρόνον καὶ μάλιστα τυραννεύσῃ, μάλιστα τε καὶ πλεῖστον χρόνον τοιοῦτος γεγωνῶς τῇ ἀληθείᾳ; τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς πολλὰ καὶ δοκεῖ). So his point seems to be that one must observe how a life dominated by appetite—a life whose pitfalls might not be fully evident to the casual observer in its early stages—plays out.

While these responses highlight the advantages of our reading of Book 9's first argument, it is important to note that this argument nevertheless falls short as a deductive proof: as my earlier attempt may have illustrated, it resists reconstruction into discrete premises entailing a conclusion. A way of illustrating its limitations is to ask what a compelling *objection* to it would look like. Since it resists analysis into discrete premises, the best one could do, it seems to me, would be to contest the general story Socrates tells,

- 1) either by identifying a real person whose status as a tyrant is uncontroversial, and who nevertheless avoided Socrates' list of evils;
- 2) or by denying that Socrates' list of evils makes the tyrant's life altogether unhappy, perhaps by insisting that the tyrant is compensated in other ways.

But in both cases, the debate appears to be basically empirical, a question of whether Socrates' general account of how life shakes out for the tyrant is accurate, as a rule.²⁴

²² Hence I reject the translation of ἐξ ἀπάντων τούτων in causal terms.

²³ Cf. 576c8: 'And will not the relations between the cities with respect to virtue and happiness be the same as those between the men?' (οὐκοῦν, ὅτι πόλις πρὸς πόλιν ἀρετῇ καὶ εὐδαιμονίᾳ, τοῦτο καὶ ἀνὴρ πρὸς ἄνδρα;).

²⁴ Such a debate would look suspiciously like the exchange between Socrates and Polus at *Gr.* 470c1–472d5, where Polus appeals to real tyrants Archelaus of Macedonia and the Great King of

The first argument of Book 9 is rather a narrative or image of the tyrannical life, a vivid uncovering of the tyrant's psychic condition and the evils flowing from that condition.

Plato is clearly aware of these limitations. As we have already noted, he will soon have Socrates declare the third and final argument of Book 9 to be more decisive. Moreover, Socrates repeatedly couches this first argument in metaphors of sight and spectacle, addressing himself to his listeners as though they were a theatrical audience. He urges them to 'behold' (σκόπει) and 'gaze at' (ἄθρει) certain truths about the tyrannical soul (571b3, 572b6).²⁵ Socrates proposes that a healthy, moderate agent must 'entertain' (ἐστιάσας) his rational part not only with fine words but also with 'observations' (σκέψεων) (571d6), so that he may 'perceive' (αἰσθάνεσθαι) obscure things and control the visions (ὄψεις) in his dreams (572a2–6).²⁶ He then warns his audience not to be 'dazzled' (ἐκπληττώμεθα) by 'looking' (βλέποντες) only at the tyrant and his entourage. Rather, the audience must 'gaze at' (θεάσασθαι) every corner of a tyranny and 'see' (ιδόντες) it all before putting their verdict 'on display' (ἀποφαινόμεθα).

The first argument of Book 9 thus operates as a vivid spectacle of the unjust life's many miseries; Socrates is counting on his audience simply to *see* that what he is saying is true.²⁷ Why is it significant that he uses vision and related terms in setting up his argument, and in particular when characterizing the way in which his audience is to follow his reasoning? In the dialogue's middle books Socrates develops to great effect the contrast between sense perception and genuine intellection. In Book 5, the crucial distinction between a counterfeit philosopher and the genuine article is that the former is led around by his senses, sight in particular (476a8–b1). So it is unlikely that Socrates expects this particular argument to persuade the philosopher, who spurns the senses. As he is careful to point out, lovers of sights do indeed learn things, and take pleasure in doing so (οἱ τε γὰρ φιλοθεάμονες πάντες ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσι τῷ καταμανθάνειν χαίροντες τοιοῦτοι εἶναι) (475d2). So the hypothesis that the first argument of Book 9 targets non-philosophers is compatible with the view that those following along come to *learn* something about the tyrant as a result of being exposed to it. Socrates' visual metaphors underscore that he takes himself to be appealing to non-philosophers, who are disposed to judge matters mainly based on what they can see. That this argument is less philosophically rigorous than its successors is a feature rather than a bug.

Earlier we noted a peculiar feature of this first argument: that it focusses on the tyrant's misery, giving little attention to the philosopher's supreme happiness. As we have already noted, this strategy is legitimate in a competition of lives: one can win a contest as well by disparaging one's opponent as by promoting one's own case. But

Persia to refute Socrates' claim that tyrants are miserable. Socrates calls Polus' style of refutation 'worthless' (οὐδενὸς ἀξίως ἐστίν), contrasting it with his own.

²⁵ While it is true that σκοπέω is sometimes translated as 'contemplate', even in these uses it generally represents a contemplation of particulars rather than universals, for which θεωρέω is more common. The Grube and Reeve (n. 1) translation of σκοπέω as 'consider' obscures its connection with sight and the grasp of particulars. The word reappears at 572a1. They translate ἄθρει simply as 'see'.

²⁶ Grube and Reeve (n. 1) translate ἐστιάσας as 'feast', which renders the metaphor gustatory rather than visual, but none the less preserves the link with the sense faculties and their associated pleasures. They supply 'speculations' for σκέψεων, which is linked at least etymologically to vision.

²⁷ Cf. Cross and Woolzley (n. 2), who deny that the first argument of Book 9 'could count as philosophical argument' at all, but who claim that it nevertheless 'merits attention as a remarkably graphic and penetrating picture of morbid psychology' (264).

this on its own does not explain why Socrates chooses the former strategy. Perhaps a more satisfying explanation is that the first argument of Book 9 finishes off the previous book's line of argument, which is a narrative of psychological and political decline; praising the philosopher would upset this trajectory. But the reading of the argument we have defended so far suggests a couple of complementary explanations for its focus on the tyrant's misery. That is to say, on the assumption that the argument is meant for an appetitive audience, its focus on the tyrant's pain begins to make more sense.

First, this strategy is precisely what Socrates needs to overcome a rhetorical difficulty involved in defending the philosophical life to an audience of non-philosophers. Praise of the philosophical life itself would presumably require praising its distinctive activities and pleasures. As we learn in the second argument of Book 9, non-philosophers have no experience of these things. On the other hand, a thorough exposition of the tyrant's pains expresses itself in the familiar terms of unsatisfied desire.

Second, recall the sense-based vocabulary in the argument; Socrates addresses his audience as though they were spectators. In Book 10, he develops a critique of tragedy. Simply put, Socrates complains that tragedy deceives by inflating the spectator's enjoyment. It does so by juxtaposing the spectator's pleasure with the tragic hero's pain. Just as one can inflate the pleasantness of a meal by starving oneself beforehand, so too the misery depicted onstage boosts the spectator's enjoyment.²⁸ Most important for our purposes, on Socrates' view tragedy carries out this deception specifically on the appetitive part of soul.²⁹ The first argument of Book 9 appears to operate in much the same way. By heaping pain after pain onto the tyrant, it represents the opposite condition of the philosopher—its *freedom* from tyrannical pain—as an object of intense desire. Socrates gestures toward this dynamic by couching the argument in the language of spectacle. This in turn supplies part of the puzzle as to why he takes it to be inferior to the third argument: its appeal exploits a cheap theatrical device he will go on to condemn in Book 10. Given this unseemly connection with base appetites, we should expect Socrates to later distance himself from the argument, which is precisely what he does when he announces the superiority of the third.³⁰

²⁸ Here I sidestep an ambiguity in the precise hedonic mistake being made: Socrates' claim is either that i) what the spectator experiences is a genuine pleasure, but she overestimates its size; or that ii) the pleasure experienced is not really a pleasure at all, but is instead just the removal of a pain. My point seems to find support on either reading. Cf. 583b–588a, discussed in Shaw (n. 10), 376–7. See also Shaw (n. 10), 383: 'It is plausible to think that our experience of tragedy involves some non-pleasures. Watching another endure misfortune can make us aware that we are free from the pain they feel. By contrast with their pain, we then feel our own freedom from pain as if it were pleasure.'

²⁹ At 605a7–b4 Socrates claims that tragic imitation, like painting, gratifies an inferior part of the soul so as to win favour with the multitude, and moreover that it depicts a peevish and multifaceted character (*ἀγανακτικόν τε καὶ ποικίλον ἦθος*) because this type is easy to imitate. He then compares the effect of this imitation on the soul's better part to the effect of putting a scoundrel in charge of the city. Cf. 603c3–5, where Socrates characterizes imitative poetry generally as imitating 'human beings acting under compulsion or voluntarily, who, as a result of these actions, believe they are doing either well or badly, and so experience either pain or enjoyment in all these situations'. Moreover, at 603e6–604ab4 Socrates seems to propose that pity and grief, key emotions in our experience of tragedy, belong to appetite but are opposed by spirit and reason.

³⁰ On the view Socrates airs in Book 10, tragedy works its magic only on an audience who admires the tragic hero; otherwise, it is comedy. As our argument explains, the tyrant exploits the appetites let loose in a democracy by setting himself up as the people's champion. Socrates calls attention to the public's admiration for the tyrant at 576c1–3. That this characterizes the first argument's target audience explains its rhetoric of *overturning* a favourable opinion of the tyrant with a clearer vision of the tyrannical soul.

As we will see in greater detail in the next section, though spirit and those driven by it are also in a sense sub-rational, they display a respect for reason that renders Book 9's second argument a more plausible vehicle for that audience. Among non-philosophers, this leaves only lovers of profit. This supports the view that the first argument of Book 9 is directed to an appetitive audience.

To sum up, in both content and form the first argument of Book 9 seems to be pitched to the profit-lover. Its focus on the tyrant's convulsions and pains, his poverty and his general inability to satisfy his desires all seem to point to the profit-lover's sensibilities. To one devoted to money for the satisfaction of the bodily appetites, avoiding the evil of poverty is likely to be paramount in deciding what sort of life to live. So the narrative that a tyrannical life is painful and insatiable hits precisely the right note if one's target audience consists of people devoted to the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Moreover, that it falls short of certain standards of philosophical rigour and instead operates as a vivid image supports the view that its intended audience is more likely to be persuaded by spectacle than proof. As we have learned from the dialogue's middle books, the crucial distinction between philosophers and non-philosophers is that the latter are led around by their senses, sight in particular. If this analysis is along the right lines, then there are good reasons to conclude two related things about the first argument of Book 9. First, despite some appearances to the contrary, it seeks to establish that the just life is supremely happy on the ground that it is least painful and most pleasant. Second, the argument takes as its target the profit-lover, and aims to show that the just life exceeds the unjust life in precisely those pleasures (and deprivations of precisely those pains) that are most important to this particular audience.

3: THE SECOND ARGUMENT OF *REPUBLIC* BOOK 9

Let us now turn to the second argument of Book 9 for the supreme happiness of the just life. This argument figures prominently in our case, for on our proposed reading it furnishes the framework for determining the audiences for the first two arguments of Book 9. Specifically, this argument makes an important modification to the psychology of Book 4 in what appears to be its first premise, when Socrates begins the argument with the following claim (580d7–9): '[I]t seems to me that there are three pleasures corresponding to the three parts of the soul, one peculiar to each part, and similarly with desires and kinds of rule.' With our treatment of the first argument complete, our aim is now to show that this second argument takes the honour-lover as its intended audience.

In fleshing out the psychological picture on which this argument relies, Socrates claims more than that each psychic part/political character prizes certain pleasures. He also claims that a specific psychic part/political character *spurns* alien pleasures, that is, those belonging to the other types. On this picture, Socrates' claim is that an appetitive person regards the pleasures belonging to the other parts as 'worthless compared to that of making a profit, if he gets no money from them' (581d1–2). Similarly, the honour-lover dismisses the profit-lover's pleasures as 'vulgar', and considers the philosopher's pleasures of learning to be 'smoke and nonsense' unless these bring him honour (581d4–6). Reason and the philosopher prize the pleasures involved in 'knowing where the truth lies and always being in some pleasant condition while learning'. When it comes to the other pleasures, namely those belonging to the

profit- and honour-lovers, the philosopher dismisses these as undesirable in themselves but ‘really necessary, since he would have no need for them if they were not necessary for life’ (581d8–e3).

So Socrates presents us with a dispute as to which pleasures are in fact most pleasant. Each part is equally chauvinistic about its own pleasures, and hence equally dismissive of the others’ pleasures. But clearly all three parties cannot be right about this. At best, only one of the three parties in this dispute can be right. So, Socrates reasons, we must settle the dispute. Before moving on to his proposed method for settling the question, Socrates wants to stress that the three classes of pleasure are about to be compared in accordance with a single standard. The question before us, he claims, is ‘not about which way of living is finer or more shameful (κάλλιον καὶ αἴσχιον) or better or worse (χεῖρον καὶ ἄμεινον), but about which is more pleasant and less painful (ἥδιον καὶ ἀλγυπότερον)’ (581e6–582a1). In other words, Socrates wishes to bracket all other evaluative domains and to rank the lives strictly in terms of pleasure and pain.

Before moving on to the next step of the argument, we must address a worry. Socrates’ insistence on this hedonic metric may seem to undermine one of the central claims of the previous section, namely that the first argument of Book 9 focusses on the tyrant’s pleasure and pain. For clearly the implication of Socrates’ remark is that, unlike the argument to come, the previous argument was indeed concerned with the fine and the shameful, the better and the worse. However, Socrates’ remarks need not be taken to be contrastive with the previous argument in this way. He has, after all, just outlined a dispute between his three psychological types. Given that he has just made a significant and surprising addition to his psychological theory such that, despite appearances earlier in the *Republic*, all three psychological types are hedonically motivated, it is natural that Socrates should want to stress to his listeners the precise hedonic nature of the present dispute.³¹ Until just a few lines ago, it would have seemed unnatural to Socrates’ audience to envision spirited warriors and truth-obsessed philosophers as *pleasure-seekers*. After all, a singular concern for the fine and the shameful would be precisely what we would have expected from spirited types. And given the philosopher’s signature love of learning, his monopoly on the science of sound deliberation on behalf of the city, not to mention his distinctive grasp of the form of the good as we learn in the dialogue’s middle books, a singular concern for the better and the worse is likewise precisely what we have come to expect from this person. With its hedonic appeal to an appetitive audience, and with its position before any of Socrates’ new psychological theorizing becomes necessary, the first argument of Book 9 rolls along without ever having to call these expectations into question, and so making the present point in *that* argument would have seemed altogether out of place. Hence Socrates’ careful stipulation of the hedonic nature of the present dispute seems contrastive not with the previous argument but rather with his audience’s settled expectations, which have only just now been overturned by an important addition to his psychological theory.

With the character of the dispute established, Socrates proposes a set of criteria for judging, remarking that the best set of criteria for judging matters such as these consists of ‘experience, reason and argument’ (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ φρονήσει καὶ λόγῳ) (582a3–4). As becomes clear only later, Socrates views the last two criteria as essentially of a piece,

³¹ Cf. 505c5–6.

so that what we are getting are basically two criteria: experience, on the one hand, and reason and argument, on the other.³²

Socrates first sets his sights on the criterion of experience. ‘Experience of a pleasure’ in this context seems simply to refer to participating in or otherwise enjoying the pleasure in question. Socrates and Glaucon begin by comparing the profit-lover’s experience to that of the philosopher, and conclude that the philosopher’s experience is broader. Since they accept the philosopher’s claim that the profit-lover’s pleasures are *necessary* in a way his own are not, they reason that the philosopher must experience the bodily pleasures and those connected with profit if he is to live—a philosopher has to eat, after all. On the other hand, the profit-lover may well pass his whole life without ever even having to participate in any serious learning or the pleasures connected with it. And even if he suddenly got the urge to, say, do some advanced geometry, he could not easily do so (582b2–c1). The philosopher’s experience is thus broader than the profit-lover’s, and this means that, if we are to judge by experience, we ought to take the philosopher’s preference for his own pleasures to be authoritative. So the pleasures of learning are more pleasant than those of the body on the criterion of experience.

Could the honour-lover’s pleasures be more pleasant than those of the philosopher? Glaucon observes that all three types—rich man, courageous man and wise man—share in these pleasures to some degree, since honour comes to anyone who ‘accomplishes his aim’ (582c4–5). However, the pleasures of learning appear to be an exclusive perk of the philosophical life; only the philosopher gets to taste them. Since the philosopher’s experience has been shown to be broader than that of each of his rivals, he is the ‘finest judge’ (κάλλιστα τῶν ἀνδρῶν κρίνει οὗτος), and so the philosopher’s preference for his own pleasures has the best claim to be true in our dispute (582d1).

The second stage of the argument undertakes to show that the philosopher’s pleasures are most pleasant by the joint criterion of ‘reason and argument’ as well. I reconstruct the argument as follows:

1. If a person is the most reliable judge by the joint criteria of i) experience and ii) reason and argument, then that person’s judgement is most reliable (582a3–4).
2. The philosopher is the most reliable judge on the criterion of experience (582d1–2).
3. The philosopher is also the most reliable judge on the criterion of reason and argument (582d5–11).
C1. Therefore, the philosopher’s judgement is most reliable (1–3) (582e6–7).
4. The philosopher’s judgement is that his own pleasures of learning are most pleasant (583a1–3).
C2. Therefore, the judgement that the pleasures of learning are most pleasant is most reliable (C1, 4) (583a3).
5. If, on the most reliable judgement, a person’s distinctive pleasures are most pleasant, then that person’s way of life is happiest (implied by the setting of the criterion at 581e5–582a1).
C3. Therefore, the philosopher’s way of life is happiest (C2, 5) (583b1).

The joint conclusion of the first and the second stages of the argument, then, is that the philosopher’s judgement is most firmly backed by all of the criteria that were agreed to

³² Others who seem to read the argument this way are T. Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), 338 n. 62 and Annas (n. 2), 307–9.

be most reliable: experience, reason and argument, and so his position in the dispute outlined earlier is most authoritative.

The strongest evidence for the claim that the honour-lover is the second argument's target, it seems to me, concerns the general strategy of the argument itself. Note that Plato in Book 4 characterizes the honour-lover as a character who comes closer to the philosopher's argumentative standards than his profit-loving rival does, but who nevertheless falls short of these standards.³³ This as it stands is a nebulous claim, but the second argument of Book 9 perhaps furnishes it with some content. In both of its stages, the second argument relies on an appeal to authority.³⁴ In the first stage, the philosopher's authority is grounded in his use of experience as a criterion, while in the second his authority is grounded in his use of reason and argument as a criterion. But in their respective appeals to authority, both stages seek to establish the correctness of the philosopher's preference without, as it were, telling us anything about *why* the philosopher prefers the pleasures he does. The second argument of Book 9 tells us nothing about the relevant feature of the philosopher's pleasures that makes them most pleasant (nor, indeed, about *what it is* about experience, reason and argument that makes them such reliable criteria). It argues rather that we ought to trust the philosopher's judgement that his pleasures are in fact most pleasant.

This approach seems to strike precisely the right chord for a non-philosophical listener, someone for whom the workings of reason itself remain opaque, but who is nevertheless of such a character as to respect the philosopher's pronouncements. The argument's appeal to authority renders it a strange one to pitch to the philosopher himself. It would in effect be arguing: 'You should pick your own side in the dispute, since people like you prefer the pleasures you already enjoy, and people like you ought to be trusted.' Presumably, a true philosopher would be more interested in the specific *reasons* philosophers have for preferring the pleasures they do, and would be happy to dispense with blanket endorsements of the philosopher's method and authority. From the philosopher's perspective, real respect for reason and argument is presumably best expressed by one's own efforts to think things through and to follow the reasons *themselves*. The second argument of Book 9 is thus most appropriate for spirited types, for whom appeals to one's *merits* as a judge are plausibly more central than the *grounds* on which one judges.³⁵

CONCLUSION

We have examined the evidence that i) the first argument of Book 9 takes the profit-lover as its target; and ii) that the second argument of Book 9 takes the honour-lover as its target. The obvious complement to this reading is the hypothesis that the third and final argument of Book 9 is directed to reason and to the philosopher. However,

³³ Cf. 441a1–2 and 441e3–4.

³⁴ Cf. Gosling and Taylor (n. 4), who characterize the second argument of Book 9 straightforwardly as an 'argument from authority' (at 100). Similarly, D.C. Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life* (Oxford, 2005) argues that this argument takes an 'authoritative perspective on the sort of life that is most worth living' (at 126).

³⁵ While the first argument also refers to competent judges (*ἀξιῶν κρίνειν*) (577a1), this appears to be an allusion to the judging of *choruses*. Glaucon makes this connection explicit a little later at 580b4–5. Add this to the last section's evidence for the dramatic form of Book 9's first argument.

defending this claim would require a careful reconstruction of the labyrinthine final argument of Book 9, not to mention a thorough consideration of its precise terminus. All of this would take us too far afield.³⁶ But we may briefly note some evidence in support of this reading.

First, as we have already seen, Socrates heralds this final argument as ‘the greatest and most decisive of the overthrows’, and so he clearly takes it to surpass its predecessors by some standard of philosophical rigour. In making this pronouncement, Socrates likely has in mind the forthcoming calculation that the philosopher’s life is 729 times more pleasant than that of the tyrant. Our readings of Book 9’s first two arguments identified some concrete ways in which these arguments fall short of the third. In contrast with the first argument, which seeks to persuade an appetitive audience by means of a deceptive theatrical device, and with the second argument, which seeks to convince a spirited audience by appeal to authority, the final argument of Book 9 makes its case with mathematical precision. We may add to this that, unlike Book 9’s first argument, which dwells on the tyrant’s pains, and unlike the second argument, in which the actual appeal of the philosopher’s pleasures remains opaque, this final argument actually *explains* the philosopher’s preference for these pleasures by showing that they are truest, where this means that they rest on (or *just are*) correct opinions about reality (585b13–15).³⁷

Moreover, the final argument of Book 9 contains certain key claims that are categorically unappealing to the lower parts of the soul. Consider the claim that what participates less in truth and knowledge also participates less in being (585c6–12). We are told in the second argument that only the philosopher cares about where the truth lies—honour-lovers care more for control, victory and reputation, whereas profit-lovers care more for money and gratification. To be a member of one of the lower types is necessarily to care more about something other than discovering the truth of things. If this were one’s top concern, then one would just be a philosopher. So it is, as it were, psychologically impossible for the lower types to accept this premise, and indeed the argument in which it figures, without ceasing to be members of the lower types at all. The third argument also contains scathing critiques of the pleasures of the lower parts. Socrates denounces the appetitive part’s pleasures for creating an insatiable life, and moreover insists that their mixture with pain makes these pleasures ‘mere images and shadow-paintings of true pleasures’ (585e5–586c4). Spirit’s distinctive pleasures come under similar attack for promoting envy and violence, and for operating ‘without calculation or understanding’ (586c5–d2). Once again, to accept either of these critiques is, as it were, to forfeit one’s membership to the psychic part or political class defined by the patterns of pursuit being criticized.

A final point in support of the present hypothesis. Consider the following passage from Book 9’s final argument, in which Socrates stresses that even the lower parts turn out to enjoy superior pleasures under reason’s psychic rule (586d3–587a1):

³⁶ For a close reading of the argument, see N.R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato’s Republic* (Oxford, 1951), 207; Cross and Woodzley (n. 2), 266–9; Gosling and Taylor (n. 4), 97–128; D. Frede, ‘Rumpelstiltskin’s pleasures: true and false pleasures in Plato’s *Philebus*’, *Phronesis* 30 (1985), 151–80; D. Frede, ‘Disintegration and restoration: pleasure and pain in Plato’s *Philebus*’, in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge, 1992), 425–63, at 435–7 n. 6, 493–520; and Shaw (n. 10).

³⁷ For alternative explanations of Socrates’ ‘greatest and most decisive’ remark, see Gosling and Taylor (n. 4), 104 and Scott (n. 13), 16–20.

Then can't we confidently assert that those desires of even the money-loving and honour-loving parts that follow knowledge and argument and pursue with their help those pleasures that reason approves (οἱ μὲν ἂν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ λόγῳ ἐπόμενοι καὶ μετὰ τούτων τὰς ἡδονὰς διώκουσαι) will attain the truest pleasures possible for them, because they follow truth, and the ones that are most their own, if indeed what is best for each thing is most its own? [...] Therefore, when the entire soul follows (ἐπομένης) the philosophic part, and there is no civil war in it, each part does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and truest pleasures possible for it (καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστον καὶ τὰς βελτίστας καὶ εἰς τὸ δυνατόν τὰς ἀληθεστάτας καρποῦσθαι).

Socrates stresses that even the lower parts benefit when reason rules, in that they 'attain the truest pleasures possible for them'. This claim that they enjoy the truest pleasures may seem to be in tension with the claim made just now, that is, that a deep concern with truth is the sole province of the philosopher and of the rational part of the soul. If indeed the lower parts are indifferent to truth, then it would seem that this recommendation for the just life cannot speak to them. However, it is unlikely that ἀληθεστάτας in this context is meant to signal a philosophical concern for truth; rather, it is more natural to take it to mean 'most genuine' or 'most real'. That is to say, only when reason restrains the lowest part's appetites does it enjoy 'true' satisfaction. Similarly, the spirited part benefits hedonically by having reason restrict its scope to legitimate sources of status and esteem (591d4–592a6).

So this case for the just life, with its key claim that lower parts benefit from reason's restraint, would be an odd one to pitch to the lower parts themselves, or to those dominated by these parts. If the second argument is to be believed, then both of these types prize their own distinctive pleasures in such a way that resists compromise and limit. Hence Socrates seems to be directing this argument to the more capacious perspective of the philosopher, who, as we just learned in the preceding argument, prizes his own pleasures but nevertheless has at least some appreciation for the distinctive pleasures of the lower parts. This access to greater appetitive and spirited pleasures is relevant to the calculation that the philosopher lives 729 times more pleasantly than the tyrant.³⁸

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