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Callicles as a Potential Tyrant in Plato's *Gorgias*

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This essay argues that Callicles is depicted by Plato in the *Gorgias* as a *potential* tyrant from a psychological standpoint. To this end I will contend that the Calliclean moral psychology sketched at 491e-492c points towards the analysis of the tyrannical individual pursued by Plato in books VIII and IX of the *Republic* based upon the tripartite theory of the soul. I will thereby attempt to show that (i) in the *Gorgias*, Callicles does not actually personify the ideal of the superior person advocated by himself insofar as he is still susceptible to shame, as evinced by Socrates' cross-examination (494c-495a); and that (ii) looking forward to the *Republic*, he can be understood for this same reason as being precisely on the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical soul.

1- *Introduction*[1]

In the *Gorgias*, Plato deals with the problematic relationship between rhetoric and justice in the Athenian democracy in respect of both political and ethical issues. One important issue that emerges throughout the dialogue is a common-place of Greek political thought, especially associated to the widespread anti-democratic criticism – namely, the rise of a tyrant within a democratic *polis*.[2] This *topos* appears obliquely in Polus' praise of Archelaus, tyrant of Macedonia from 413 to 399 a.C., as the most happy person, since Polus is portrayed as a teacher of rhetoric to people who aim at participating in the political affairs of a democratic city such as Athens; and straightforwardly in Callicles' conception of the better and superior individual and its close association with autocratic forms of political constitution, since he is depicted as an Athenian citizen actually involved in politics.

As the discussion proceeds, Callicles attempts to offer a psychological ground for his political theory (482e-484c) when Socrates asks him whether this better and superior person, identified now as the *phronimos*, should not only command the worse and inferior people, but

[1] For the purpose of this paper, I have used Tom Griffith's translation of the *Gorgias* (Cambridge, 2010) and G.M.A Grube's translation, revised by C.D.C Reeve, of the *Republic* (Indianapolis, 1997). I have made some slight modifications to their translations in order to better cohere with my text, but this is not to question the original translation (e.g. "temperance" instead of "moderation" for *sōphrosunē*, "appetites" instead of "desires" for *epithumiai*, and so on).
[2] Asheri *et al.* 2007, 475.

also herself – in other words, whether she should be *temperate* (*sōphrōn*) (491d-e). In response to Socrates (491e-492c), Callicles articulates a sort of moral psychology, as I will discuss in detail in Section 2.2, based on different psychic elements (*epithumiai*, *phronēsis*, *andreia,* and feelings like shame and fear) in order to argue that virtue and happiness consist in "luxury, intemperance and freedom" (τρυφὴ καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ ἐλευθερία, 492c4-5), rather than in temperance. If we combine the political and the psychological views advanced by Callicles throughout the dialogue, and assume that they articulate to some extent a kind of theory that intends to justify the exercise of the autocratic power by appealing to the notion of "the law of nature" (κατὰ νόμον γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως, 483e3) or "what is just in nature" (τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον, 484b1), we can fairly infer that by means of Callicles' character Plato offers also in the *Gorgias* a reflection on the rise of tyranny within democracy and the psychology of the tyrant. And, as I will try to show, this reflexion has a deep affinity with the analysis of tyranny and the tyrannical soul in books VIII and IX of the *Republic*.

The approach adopted in this essay will concentrate on the characterization of Callicles and aims to verify to what extent he is portrayed by Plato as a *potential* tyrant within a democratic polis from the *psychological* standpoint.[3] My main contention is that the Socratic cross-examination reveals that Callicles does not fulfil the conditions of a tyrannical individual – as Callicles himself conceives it – since he is still susceptible to shame (especially regarding erotic behaviour and patterns of manliness) that would prevent him to pursue an unrestricted hedonistic life. Cinzia Arruzza has recently addressed the same issue on her rich and insightful book *A Wolf in the City* (Oxford 2019), but my interpretation differs significantly from her on

[3] Ludwig 2007, 224-225 seems to suggest that Callicles would be an example of a *potential* tyrant in the *corpus Platonicum*, but he does not develop the argument nor justify his assumption. On the other hand, Parry 2007, 394-396 points out the similarities between the Calliclean superior person and the tyrant of book IX of the *Republic*, but does not discuss the characterization of Callicles as such, only the reflexion on tyranny Plato advances through him. In her book on the *Gorgias*, Tarnopolsky takes an approach similar to that adopted here and considers Callicles as a case of "the tyrannical democrat", and contends that "he doesn't fully identify with the tyrant because he can still be ashamed by some of the actions entailed by the tyrannical life of indiscriminate hedonism" (2010, 111). This is in a nutshell what I intend to show in Section 2 of this paper, but Tarnopolsky does not advance a thorough examination of books VIII and IX of the *Republic* in order to refine this contention, as I will attempt to do in Section 3, nor does she discuss the affinities between the Calliclean moral psychology (what I label here "the psychology of *pleonexia*") and the psychology of tyrant in Book IX, as I will argue in Section 2. Besides, I am not concerned with Socrates' supposed intention by shaming Callicles (what Tarnopolsky calls the *respectful shame* aimed at by him as a positive means to avoid tyranny and keep the democratic collective deliberations working well and healthy, in opposition to the negative *flattering shame* that is pernicious to democracy and harmonious citizenship by stigmatizing and excluding certain parties from the political debate), but only with the diagnosis of Callicles' current psychic condition we can grasp throughout the Socratic cross-examination, and with the gap between his actual condition and his own ideal of happiness.

the following point: whereas she understands Callicles as a case of a "would-be tyrannical wolf" in a positive sense – that is to say, that Callicles fulfils the conditions to become an actual tyrant if the historical and political circumstances allow it – my focus is conversely on the current limitations of his psychic condition that would prevent him to became a real tyrant even if the the historical and political circumstances would allow it. From this standpoint, Callicles' susceptibility to shame would be the main sign of his inner debility, such that his *erōs* for the demos mentioned by Socrates at 481c-2 and 513c-d cannot be equated to the tyrant's *erōs* as described in Book IX of the *Republic.*[4]

In order to justify this reading I will not ground my interpretation on "Socratic" moral psychology we find scattered throughout the dialogue; on the contrary, my intent is to analyse Callicles' character by means of his own alternative moral psychology sketched in 491e-492c. If we take seriously Callicles' ideas as an alternative position to the views supported by Socrates in this field of philosophical inquiry in the *Gorgias*, and try to explore its consequences in the best way possible, we find a richer ground to trace other affinities with the *Republic*, especially regarding the reflexion on tyranny and the psychology of the tyrannical person developed in books VIII and IX. As far as I know, the first scholar who has stressed the philosophical importance of Callicles' idiosyncratic view on moral psychology was John Cooper in his study 'Socrates and Plato in Plato's *Gorgias*' (Princeton, 1999). So, in this essay I will follow his track and argue for what I will call "the psychology of *pleonexia*" advanced by Plato through Callicles' speeches. Put briefly, I will argue for two main claims in Sections 2 and 3, respectively: that (i) when we analyse Callicles' *ēthos* from the point of view of his own alternative moral psychology sketched in 491e-492c (i.e. the psychology of *pleonexia*), he does not actually embody the ideal of the better and superior individual he himself advocates, insofar as he remains susceptible to shame, as evinced by Socrates' cross-examination (494c-495a);[5] and that (ii) when we look forward to books VIII and IX of the *Republic*, he can be understood, for this same reason, as being precisely on the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical person. In other words, Callicles is depicted by Plato as only a *potential* tyrant within

[4] This point of Arruzza's reading that I am disputing here appears clearly when she says that "Socrates himself suggests the connection between the two concepts when in the *Gorgias* he says of Callicles that he has two objects of love: the young Demos and the Athenian demos. As in the case of Callicles, the tyrannical man's eros is strongly related to an ideal of endless and unlimited appetitive jouissance" (2019, 181). I agree with Arruzza that Callicles falls short of his own ideal of superiority, but not because "he must flatter the very demos he simultaneously loves and despises" (2019, 181), but rather because he is still bounded to some values and patterns of behavior that his superior man would be able to surpass, as evinced by his susceptibility to shame. This is what I will try to show in the next section.
[5] See also Tarnopolsky 2010, 110-113.

a democratic polis from the *psychological* standpoint. This methodological move from the *Gorgias* to the *Republic,* as I will try to show in Section 3, is granted by the theoretical affinities between the psychology of *pleonexia* advanced by Callicles, and the psychology of the tyrannical soul developed by Plato in books VIII and IX.

2. *The characterisation of Callicles in the* Gorgias

2.1. *Callicles' inner disharmony*

In his article on the *Gorgias*, Raphael Woolf argues that the two parts of Callicles' main speech in the dialogue (482c-484c; 484c-486d) are so irreconcilable that it is preferable to consider them as expressions of two radically different political ideals. To illustrate his point Woolf uses the labels 'Callicles 1' and 'Callicles 2' to identify the contradictions in his speech: the verbal manifestation of his psychic disharmony gradually revealed beneath the gaze of Socratic cross-examination.[6] 'Callicles 1' represents the ideal of the better and superior person by nature, capable of overthrowing the laws and customs established by the majority in order to allow natural justice to prevail. 'Callicles 2', on the other hand, expresses the values of a person who is attached to the laws and customs of the city, who is an expert in what makes an individual become *kalos kagathos* and high reputed, who is skilled in the discourses that are required in public and private relationships, who is experienced in human pleasures and appetites. In the first case, therefore, Callicles disdains the *nomoi* of the majority, regarded by him as a congregation of the weak and inferior who are unable to prevail over others, and who therefore determine that "to have more" (τὸ πλεονεκτεῖν, 483c3-4) is unjust and shameful, and that "the equal" (τὸ ἴσον, 483c5) is just and fine. In the second case, conversely, a good reputation is esteemed as one of the conditions for being successful in political affairs, which the philosophical life can obstruct. Woolf suggests that the contradiction in Callicles' speech

[6] cf. Woolf 2000, 2-6. He contends that Callicles' psychic disharmony concerns only the inconsistency of his ethic and political opinions, as revealed by Socratic cross-examination (2010, 30-32). I believe, however, that his psychic disharmony is not only an intellectual problem, but also refers to the lack of control over his appetites, as the discussion on temperance and intemperance evinces – especially at 503d-505c. Although Woolf recognizes the importance of *erōs* in understanding the failure of Socratic elenchus when applied to an interlocutor such as Callicles, I will argue here that the disharmony of his opinions is ultimately *a verbal expression of the inner disharmony of his soul*, which follows from the predominance of the *epithumiai*. This reading also coheres with the representation of Callicles as an intemperate person, a point which will be especially important for my argument. For the inner contradiction of Callicles' ideas and desires, see also Tarnopolsky 2010, 31.

reflects the opposition between *nomos* and *phusis* advocated by him: 'Callicles 1' would therefore champion *phusis* while 'Callicles 2' champions *nomos.*[7]

Woolf's reading emphasizes the gulf between the two political ideals expressed within Callicles' speech, such that Callicles himself could be considered to be suffering from a classic case of 'split personality'.[8] Although I broadly agree with Woolf's interpretation of the contradiction in Callicles' main speech, I would like to take a further step and suggest a more comprehensive reading. I argue that Callicles is not suffering from a case of 'split personality' per se. Rather, Plato represents him as a character whose soul stands on the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical, as I will show in Section 3. In this sense, the contradictions of his moral and political ideas would consist in a verbal expression of a deeper psychological disharmony proper to an individual in a process of inner transformation. The justification for this reading concerns the meaning of Callicles' intemperance, as diagnosed by Socrates during the examination of his opinions. Let us therefore examine Socrates' diagnosis of Callicles' psychological disposition.

The discussion of political issues begun by Callicles' main speech (482c-486d) gradually shifts towards the psychological domain. When Socrates asks Callicles whether the better and superior people should rule not only their cities, but also themselves, the discussion turns into a consideration of the value of temperance and intemperance for happiness (491d-e). Callicles identifies the "better and superior people" with the intemperate ones, those who maximize their own appetites and do not restrain them, being able to serve their appetites by means of *bravery* (*andreia*) and *intelligence* (*phronēsis*), and to fulfil them whenever they arise (491e-492a). The temperate, conversely, are regarded as "foolish" (τοὺς ἠλιθίους, 491e2), likened to rocks and corpses (492e). On Callicles' moral view, the end of all actions consists in the fulfilment of one's appetites and the attainment of pleasure, and human happiness and virtue in "luxury, intemperance and freedom" (τρυφὴ καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ ἐλευθερία, 492c4-6). This hedonistic conception of happiness advanced by Callicles implies the conflation of goodness

[7] Shaw 2015, 134 offers a different approach to Callicles' position by arguing that even though he criticizes conventional justice, his conception of *pleonexia* is based on the same notion of what is *good* shared by the majority (ultimately, pleasure); in other words, "Callicles' criticism of conventional justice reveals his conventional views about good and bad. According to this reading, there would be no sharp distinction between 'Callicles 1' and 'Callicles 2' as claimed by Woolf. Nonetheless, even if Shaw is correct in this point, this does not undermine the contrast between the contempt to the democratic values represented by 'Callicles 1', and the attachment to the political and social life of Athens represented by 'Callicles 2'. For the purpose of this paper this conflict between the political ideas voiced by Callicles is enough.

[8] Woolf 2000, 4 n. 6.

and pleasure, as he admits later in the dialogue at 495a. Insofar as the discussion turns from the political to the psychological domain, Socrates begins to examine temperance and intemperance in order to contrast these two types of person and decide which mode of life ought to be pursued if one intends to live well and be happy. Socrates then appeals to a Sicilian or Italian myth to illustrate his point (492e-494a). The intemperate person has never succeeded in satisfying her appetites because she seeks continually to fulfil them without ever succeeding, experiencing the most extreme pains. The temperate person, on the other hand, since it is impossible to get rid of appetites, is able to satisfy them moderately and so to calm down. Socrates associates temperance with the idea of orderliness (κοσμίως, 493c6; τοὺς κοσμίους, d2; τὸν τοῦ κοσμίου [βίον], τὸν κόσμιον βίον, 494a3-4), while intemperance is compared, by contrast, to a psychological disorder (τῆς ἀκοσμήτου, 506e5; ἀκοσμίαν, 508a4).

The idea of *orderliness* is further clarified by the analogy between art and virtue advanced by Socrates later in the discussion. Just as the craftsman's works acquire form when each one of their parts adapts and harmonizes with the others, so the temperate soul is ordered when a certain arrangement and orderliness emerges in the relationship between its constitutive elements (503e-504e; 506e-507a). This implies that in such a disposition something ought to command (i.e. reason, although Plato does not indicate this explicitly) and another to be commanded (i.e. the appetites). In the intemperate soul, conversely, the appetites prevail over reason, such that the soul is deprived of this inner orderliness.

According to Socrates' diagnosis, the incoherence of the opinions advanced by Callicles, made apparent by his main speech (482c-486d), reflects this psychological disharmony of the intemperate soul, if he is actually an intemperate person in accordance with his own conception of virtue and happiness (491e-492c). Socrates' examination of Callicles will enable us to verify, as we will see in Section 2.3, in what condition his soul is regarding his own ideal of virtue. On this psychological reading of Callicles' case, *shame* will assume a central role in Socrates' dissection of Callicles' psychological disposition.

2.2. *The role of shame in Calliclean moral psychology*

At the beginning of the discussion, Socrates asserts that Callicles has three essential qualities that enable him to verify whether his own moral opinions are true or false: “knowledge, benevolence and frankness” (ἐπιστήμην τε καὶ εὔνοιαν καὶ παρρησίαν, 487a2-3). These qualities are precisely those that will be tested by the Socratic elenchus and, subsequently, by examination of the interlocutor's soul. If Callicles really possesses the

"frankness" (*parrhēsia*) which he considers Gorgias and Polus to lack (482c-e), then he would not be affected by shame as both have been. Rather, frankness would enable him to defend his ideas without restraint and fear of censure.[9] Indeed, shame plays a crucial role in Calliclean moral psychology outlined in 491e-492c, when the discussion shifts from the political to the psychological domain. As mentioned in Section 1, I will label it "the psychology of *pleonexia*". The relevant passage is the following:

> CALL: […] the person who is going to live in the right way should allow his own appetites [τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ] to be as great as possible, without restraining them [μὴ κολάζειν]. And when they are as great as can be, he should be capable of using his bravery and intelligence [δι' ἀνδρείαν καὶ φρόνησιν] in their service, and giving them full measure of whatever it is, on any particular occasion, his appetite [ἡ ἐπιθυμία] is for. This is impossible for most people, in my view, which is why they are ashamed of themselves [δι' αἰσχύνην], and condemn people like this as a cloak for their own powerlessness. They even go so far as to claim that lack of restraint is something disgraceful [καὶ αἰσχρὸν δή φασιν εἶναι τὴν ἀκολασίαν], as I was saying earlier, enslaving those people who are by nature better, and being themselves incapable of providing for the fulfilment of their pleasures [ταῖς ἡδοναῖς πλήρωσιν], they praise temperance and justice because of their own lack if manliness [ἐπαινοῦσιν τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀνανδρίαν]. (491e8-492b1)

This is the first formulation of a hedonist conception of happiness advocated by Callicles. I will label it *qualified hedonism* – the second one, *categorical hedonism*, will be asserted at 494c as we will see in this Section. He points out that it is not enough to simply maximise one's appetites without restraint. Instead, the agent must have sufficient bravery (*andreia*) and intelligence (*phronēsis*) in order to serve and fulfil them. This implies that, whereas intelligence allows one to identify the means to fulfil one's appetites and determine the right moment to do so, bravery is necessary to overcome the emotions that can impede their fulfilment, such as shame and fear. Shame is regarded as the psychological mark of the inferior people who, unable to satisfy their own appetites, claim that such intemperance is shameful. Since shame is a moral feeling instilled from childhood into the soul of the better and superior people by means of laws and customs established and enforced by the majority (483e-484a), the Calliclean virtuous person must be able to transcend this kind of shame and thus allow her natural superiority to prevail.

As mentioned in Section 1, John Cooper emphasizes in his study on the *Gorgias* the importance of the innovations on moral psychology introduced by this alternative view conveyed by Callicles' character. Since feelings like shame and fear might obstruct the process of fulfilling the appetites if the person does not have sufficient bravery to overcome them, it

[9] On the political meaning of *parrhēsia*, see Tarnopolsky 2010, 96-97.

implies the recognition of different sources of motivation – namely, the appetites themselves, feelings like shame or fear, and the strength provided by bravery whose function is to overcome those impulses that hinder the fulfilment of the appetites.[10] It can be considered also some strength afforded by intelligence (*phronēsis*) in keeping the agent on the right track – i.e. in pursuing the appropriate means conducive to the end – that leads ultimately to the satisfaction of the appetites.[11] According to such a view, the conflict between these different forces within the soul is perfectly reasonable, and we can figure out two *possible* scenarios for conflict within the soul, even though they are not explicitly explored by Plato in the *Gorgias*:

(a) when an appetite (*epithumia*) arises, the person decides to maximise it without restraint, but cannot identify through intelligence (*phronēsis*) the means and the right moment to fulfil it, despite having bravery (*andreia*) enough to overcome feelings like shame or fear. For example, a person has a very strong appetite for a very expensive dish she cannot pay for, and does not refrain from it but instead let it grow; she decides then to steal something else in order to get enough money to pay for it without fearing punishment or feeling ashamed of being regarded as a thief by other people if she is eventually caught in the act; but she is unable to discern the best way to steal it without being caught and/or the right moment to do it, and so decides to give up;

(b) when an appetite (*epithumia*) arises, the person decides to maximise it without restraint, but does not have bravery (*andreia*) enough to overcome feelings like shame or fear, despite being able to identify through intelligence (*phronēsis*) the means and the right moment to fulfil it. Take the same example above: one decides to steal something in order to get enough money to pay for an expensive dish, discerning the best way to steal it without being caught, and the right

[10] Cooper 1999a, 61.

[11] Cooper 1999a, 61 considers unclear the role of intelligence in this psychological process – specifically whether it constitutes an alternative source of motivation or serves only to provide information. The difficulty concerns, I think, how to understand the relation between *phronēsis* and *andreia* in the following sentence from the next passage I will quote below: […] καὶ μὴ μόνον φρόνιμοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι, ἱκανοὶ ὄντες ἃ ἂν νοήσωσιν ἐπιτελεῖν, καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνωσι διὰ μαλακίαν τῆς ψυχῆς ("and not just intelligent people, but brave as well, being capable of carrying through the things they plan – people who won't give up from softness of spirit", 491b2-3). If we take the adjective phrase ἱκανοὶ ὄντες ἃ ἂν νοήσωσιν ἐπιτελεῖν qualifying only ἀνδρεῖοι, then *phronēsis* could be reduced to the role of providing only information – in determining the things ἃ ἂν νοήσωσιν – whereas *andreia* would provide the necessary strength to put in action what is determined by *phronēsis*. However, if we take this adjective phrase as qualifying both καὶ μὴ μόνον φρόνιμοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι, then we could assume that *phronēsis* would provide not only the information required to accomplish what is decided the best thing to do in such or such circumstances, but also a complementary strength to the one coming from *andreia* when engaging in action. In other words, ἱκανοὶ ὄντες ἃ ἂν νοήσωσιν ἐπιτελεῖν would be a result of the cooperation between *phronēsis* and *andreia.*

moment to do so; however, she is prevented from doing it by fearing punishment and/or by feeling ashamed of being regarded as a thief by other people if she is eventually caught in the act.

In sum, the first case (a) would consist in a conflict between *epithumia* and *phronēsis*, whereas the second (b), between *epithumia* and *shame* or *fear* due to lack of bravery (*andreia*). If Callicles' position admits this kind of inner conflict, it implies therefore the disunity of virtue, since an agent might have one virtue without necessarily possessing the other. This seems to be assumed by Callicles when identifying the kind of person he deems as *phronimos*:

> CAL: […] In the first place, the more powerful, who they are – I don't mean leather cutters and cooks, but those who are people of understanding [φρόνιμοι] where the affairs of the city are concerned, and the way in which they might be well run. *And not just people of understanding, but brave as well* [καὶ μὴ μόνον φρόνιμοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι], and capable of carrying through the things they plan [ἱκανοὶ ὄντες ἃ ἂν νοήσωσιν ἐπιτελεῖν] – people who won't give up from softness of spirit [καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνωσι διὰ μαλακίαν τῆς ψυχῆς]. (491a7-b4; my italics)

As Cooper considers: "Like Protagoras, Callicles assumes that a person could have one of these virtues without the other. This is already clear from the way he describes the superior person as not only intelligent but also brave, 'without slackening off from softness of spirit' [καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνωσι διὰ μαλακίαν τῆς ψυχῆς, 491b3-4]: evidently, he considers that some people who have the requisite intelligence are disqualified from superiority by being soft-hearted and unmanly – by succumbing to the inducements of mass culture that can lead the naturally better type of person to be ashamed to make the demands that his intelligence would entitled him to, if only he throw off such inhibitions (483e-484a)" (1999, 54).[12] Put briefly, both intelligence and bravery are deemed necessary conditions for virtue in Callicles' view.

[12] Carone objects to Cooper's reading as follows: "Now, it is true that at 491a-b Callicles explicates what he meant by wise (*phronimos*) as referring to the people who are 'wise in the affairs of the state *and also* brave, capable of fulfilling their conceptions'; thus, Cooper has interpreted this to mean that it is *courage* (only) that is needed to fulfil thoughts that one would have independently through wisdom. But it is not necessary to read the text this way; rather, the evidence analysed above seems instead to support the reading that one needs *both* wisdom *and* bravery to be able to carry out one's conception to the full" (2004, 74-75). However, Carone's counterargument does not invalidate at all the reading proposed by Cooper. What Carone remarks upon here is precisely the condition of the virtuous person according to Callicles – that is to say, the agent must have both *phronēsis* and *andreia* in order to fulfil the appetites whenever they arise (ταύταις δὲ ὡς μεγίσταις οὔσαις ἱκανὸν εἶναι ὑπηρετεῖν δι' ἀνδρείαν καὶ φρόνησιν, καὶ ἀποπιμπλάναι ὧν ἂν ἀεὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία γίγνηται, 492a1-3). It therefore seems undeniable that in Callicles' view *phronēsis* and *andreia* are necessary conditions for virtue, and that *phronēsis* alone is not sufficient condition for it (491b). And especially at 491b, it is plausible, from Callicles' standpoint, that a person who is not sufficiently brave due to softness of spirit might have correct reasonings concerning what is best to the city he governs. In any case, what Cooper is considering is the case of a non-virtuous person, who is unable to satisfy their appetites since he lacks sufficient

This psychological ground provided by Callicles in order to qualify the better and superior person considered by him as *phronimos* (and also *andreios*) gives support to his political ideas expounded in his main speech in the dialogue (482e-484c).[13] It is this close connection between the political and psychological dimensions of Callicles' view that allows us to turn now to explore in detail what I have called "the psychology of *pleonexia*" – and as we shall see in Section 3, this is what will enable us to connect it with the discussion on tyranny and the tyrannical soul in the *Republic*. The most important notion in Callicles' political view is that of "to have more" (*pleon ekhein*, *pleonektein*, 483c2, c3, c4, c7, d1-2, d6). According to him, there is a natural distinction between the better and superior people (the minority) and the worse and inferior (the majority). The first ones are naturally able to have more than the others, but they are prevented from doing so by the laws established by the majority determining that *pleonexia* is unjust and shameful, whereas *to ison* is just and praiseworthy (483b-d). The worse and inferior people succeed in refraining the better and superior from having more than them not only by means of conventional laws, but also through *frightening* them (ἐκφοβοῦντες, 483c1) – probably by the threat of punishment in case they violate the laws shared by the civil community – and *enchanting* and *bewitching* them since childhood in order to keep them as slaves (κατεπᾴδοντές τε καὶ γοητεύοντες, 483e6). For Callicles this political organization imposed by the majority is a subversion of what he calls "the nature of the just" (κατὰ φύσιν τὴν τοῦ δικαίου, 483e2), "the law of nature" (κατὰ νόμον γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως, 483e3) or "what is just in nature" (τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον, 484b1), according to which the better and superior must rule over the worse and inferior, and have more than them. So, in order to prevail over the majority and make the just by nature rise, the Calliclean virtuous person must be able to overcome moral feelings such as fear and shame, and to trample on the mechanisms of enchanting and bewitching afforded by laws, prescriptions, and customs established against nature by the worse and inferior people (484a).

Thus, what the psychological argument elucidates (491e-492c) is that the desire for "having more" than the others (*pleonexia*) is due to the unrestrained appetites the better and superior people have, since happiness and virtue are deemed by them as consisting in maximizing and fulfilling the appetites whenever they arise. In other words, it is because their appetites are unrestrained (μὴ κολάζειν, 491e9) that they seek to have more than the worse and

andreia to overcome feelings like shame or fear. If the reading advanced by Cooper is not *necessary*, as Carone suggests, it is at least *reasonable*, since it does not contradict the Platonic text.

[13] That part which represents 'Callicles 1' as proposed by Woolf (2000).

inferior people and to prevail over them; if they cannot succeed in doing so, they would be unable to provide satisfaction for their appetites and would live in a condition of suffering, pain, and misery. According to Calliclean moral psychology, therefore, *pleonexia* and intemperance are intrinsically intertwined; more precisely, intemperance is the psychological cause of *pleonexia*. The worse and inferior people, by contrast, praise temperance and justice precisely out of their incapacity to provide satisfaction for their pleasures due to lack of bravery or manliness (διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀνανδρίαν, 492b1). In this sense, Callicles clearly considers that *shame* and *fear* are moral feelings instilled into the soul of the better and superior people since childhood through the mechanisms alluded to above, and that they are not in accordance with, and not appropriate to, their nature. Hence, in order that "the just of nature shines forth" (484a6-b1), bravery (*andreia*) is a necessary condition that enables them to overcome these moral feelings that could prevent them from fulfilling their unrestrained appetites, and consequently, from seeking to have more than the others for the sake of happiness.

Another relevant aspect of the psychology of *pleonexia* is the intrinsic relationship established between intemperance and injustice – that is to say, injustice from the point of view of *conventional* justice instituted by the worse and inferior people against nature.[14] This connection is strongly emphasised by Plato throughout the *Gorgias*, particularly through Socrates' speeches, when justice and temperance are very closely associated (507d8-e1, 508a2, 508b1, 519a1).[15] An intemperate person tends to commit unjust acts in order to fulfil indiscriminately her appetites, if these acts are deemed by her the appropriate means to achieve this ultimate end. She might be prevented from doing so, nevertheless, by *fearing* the punishment the civil community is entitled to inflict on her in case of criminal acts, and/or by *being ashamed* to seek satisfaction for certain kinds of appetite the worse and inferior people consider shameful and instruct others about their shamefulness since childhood. Therefore, the conception of "what is just in nature" (τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον, 484b1) advocated by Callicles comes to challenge precisely this relationship between intemperance and *conventional* injustice, subverting it by establishing an intrinsic connection between intemperance and *natural* justice. This is why the better and superior person must be able to overcome these moral boundaries imposed by the majority in order to make justice according to nature prevail.

[14] Socrates points out this close connection between injustice and intemperance in the discussion with Polus about the function of punishment as a means by which justice attempts to "heal" the unjust and intemperate people of their vicious condition (τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀκολασταίνοντας, 478a4-5; ἀκολασίας καὶ ἀδικίας, b1).
[15] Callicles refers to this close association between *conventional* justice and temperance at 492a8-b1, b4-5 and c1.

To sum up, what I have called "the psychology of *pleonexia*" gives to Callicles' political ideas a psychological ground, illuminating and deepening the meaning of the natural superiority he advocated for the better and superior people over the worse and inferior. It seems obvious that Calliclean conception of "what is just in nature" is anti-democratic, especially emphasised in his contempt for the notion of "equality" (*to ison*) in opposition to the crucial notion of his own political view (*pleonexia*) (483b-d), and for the *nomos*, *logos* and *psogos* of the majority of people (492b), as we see in the following passage:

> CALL: […] But those who've had the chance, right from the beginning, either to be sons of kings or to have the natural ability to win some position of authority for themselves – as tyrant or part of a ruling élite – for those people, what could be more disgraceful or worse than temperance and justice? It's open to them to enjoy the good things in life – what is to stop them? – and yet they choose to bring in, as master over themselves, *the general population's law, reasoning and blame* [τὸν τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων νόμον τε καὶ λόγον καὶ ψόγον]? (492b1-8; my italics)

Callicles distinguishes two basic political *scenarios* in which "what is just in nature" could be brought forth: either (i) a hereditary kingship (*basileia*), insofar as the ruler has already got the political power that enables him to seek his own interests (supposedly against the interests of his subjects); or (ii) a non-hereditary power – that might be of a single individual (*turannis*) or of a group of individuals (*dunasteia*) – conquered at some point due to the natural capacity of these people to prevail over the rest of the civil community.[16] What matters here is that Callicles clearly envisages an autocratic power which would consist in the optimal means for the better and superior people – it is likely he considers himself as one of them – to seek the maximisation and satisfaction of their appetites for the sake of happiness. In the next section, I will discuss to what extent Callicles' character actually personifies the nature of the better and superior person praised by himself.

2.3. *Callicles' susceptibility to shame*

After providing a psychological ground for his political ideas, Callicles' view is confronted by Socrates' defence of the temperate as the best and happier way of life, and the intemperate as the worst and most wretched. As summed up in Section 2.1, Socrates resorts to

[16] For the distinction between *turannis* and *dunasteia*, see Dodds 1959, 295. It is worth noting that in his main speech Callicles mentions Darius and Xerxes as embodying the notion of "the just of nature" – i.e. "the stronger ruling over, and having more than, the weaker" (ὅτι δίκαιόν ἐστιν τὸν ἀμείνω τοῦ χείρονος πλέον ἔχειν καὶ τὸν δυνατώτερον τοῦ ἀδυνατωτέρου, 483d5-6); in Greek political thought, the Persian rulers were deemed as the paradigmatic examples of tyrannical power in opposition to democracy.

a foreign myth to show that the intemperate person is unable to satisfy her appetites because she seeks continually to fulfil them without ever succeeding so to experience the most extreme pains, whereas the temperate is able to satisfy them moderately and so to calm down (492e-494a). Callicles reacts with disbelief to Socrates' argument, and likens the temperate to a rock, "since she no longer rejoices or feels pain once satiated" (ἐπειδὰν πληρώσῃ, μήτε χαίροντα ἔτι μήτε λυπούμενον, 494a8-b1); for him, "living a pleasantly life simply consists in having as much flowing in as possible" (ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν τὸ ἡδέως ζῆν, ἐν τῷ ὡς πλεῖστον ἐπιρρεῖν, 494ab1-2). It is implied here that Callicles regards pleasure as an experience concurrent with the process of satisfying them, such that the more one enlarges her appetites, the more pleasure she will have in fulfilling them; when one is satiated, in turn, she no longer feels pain or pleasure.[17]

This move leads Callicles to abandon *qualified* hedonism (491e-492c) and to commit himself on a more radical hedonistic conception of happiness when pressed by Socratic elenchus – namely, the *categorical* hedonism described as "to have *all* the rest of the appetites and to be able to rejoice satisfying them, and so to lead a happy life" (καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας *ἁπάσας* ἔχοντα καὶ δυνάμενον πληροῦντα χαίροντα εὐδαιμόνως ζῆν, 494c2-3; my italics), and referred by Socrates later on as "to rejoice in all its forms" (τὸ πάντως χαίρειν, 495b4). Socrates understands that this radical formulation of hedonism entails that Callicles – or in general the intemperate person regarded by him as the virtuous – is committed to the satisfaction of *all sorts of appetite*, whatever they might be, in order to have a happy life. To verify to what extent Callicles is in fact attached to this extreme hedonistic conception of happiness, Socrates appeals to embarrassing examples such as the pleasures of scratching oneself and of the catamites (*kinaidoi*) to lead the argument to its utmost consequences.[18] Let us see how Callicles reacts to Socrates' inductive reasoning:

[17] It is worth noting that Socrates disagrees with Callicles regarding this sort of "physiology" of the appetites, and attempts to refute it arguing that the process of fulfilling the appetites consists rather in a blend of pleasure and pain, such that there is no experience of pure pleasure at all in repletive appetites such as hunger and thirst (cf. 496b-497a). I will not develop this point, however, since my focus is particularly on Calliclean moral psychology.

[18] Cooper 1999a, 72-73 points out rightly that in the first formulation of hedonism (491e-492c) – *qualified* hedonism – Callicles does not affirm that the person who intends to live well must be able to satisfy *all* appetites, but that, when the appetites arise, she must allow them to be as great as possible and fulfil them. It could reasonably be the case that, pondering on the nature of some appetite, she prefers not to fulfil it by considering it unworthy or shameful. According to this *qualified* formulation of hedonism, it would not be incoherent if Callicles distinguished between the good and the bad appetites and, consequently, between the good and the bad pleasures. For the virtuous person would be that one who is able to enlarge and fulfil without restraint those appetites worthy of being fulfilled,

SOC: Bravo, Sir! Now, continue as you have begun, don't hold back out of *embarrassment* [ἀπαισχυνῇ]. And I mustn't be *embarrassed* either [ἀπαισχυνθῆναι], by the looks of it. So tell me this for a start: if you feel an itch and want to scratch, and are able to scratch to your heart's content, and spend your life scratching, is that living a happy life?
CALL: That's absurd, Socrates. You're just scoring points.
SOC: Yes, Callicles, that's how I unnerved Gorgias and Polus, and made them *embarrassed* [αἰσχύνεσθαι]. But you're a brave chap, you won't be unnerved or get *embarrassed* [αἰσχυνθῇς]. Just keep answering.
CALL: Very well. In that case I maintain that even the person scratching would be living pleasantly.
SOC: And if pleasantly, then also happy?
CALL: Absolutely.
SOC: And do you mean if he just scratches his head, or – well, how much further do I have to go with my questions? I mean, what will your answer be, Callicles, if someone asks you, step by step, about all the sort of thing, what about the life of a catamite. Isn't it horrible, *shameful* [αἰσχρός], wretched? Or will you bring yourself to say that these people are happy if they can get an unlimited amount of what they need?
CALL: Aren't you *ashamed* [αἰσχύνῃ] to drag the discussion down to such depths, Socrates? (494c4-e8; my italics)

To understand Callicles' embarrassment facing the examples Socrates picks out, firstly we must have in mind the status of the *kinaidos* in the Athenian society. Tarnopolsky summarises it as follows: "The catamite (*kinaidos*) was the passive partner in a male-to-male sexual relationship who, by virtue of his passive sexuality, was denied citizenship rights because he was deemed incapable of taking in the role of the active citizen, future soldier, and defender of Athens. He was also seen as a figure of shamelessness because he failed to put up the kinds of restraints or boundaries necessary to participate fully as a rational and active citizen, and instead passively gave in his shameful and excessive sexual desires" (2010, 22).[19] Some points are worth noting here: (i) the evaluation of the *kinaidos*' behaviour is cultural and historically determined by the moral values shared by Athenian citizens in the 5th and 4th centuries BC, belonging therefore to the domain of *nomos* according to the opposition between *nomos* vs. *phusis* vindicated by Callicles; on a relativistic approach, nothing prevents that in other societies the *kinaidos* could have a different status from that one held in Athens; (ii) due

whatever they are, and to avoid the unworthy ones, whatever they are. The end of all actions would still be the satisfaction of the appetites and the pursuit of pleasure – but not *all* appetites, maybe just the majority of them. However, in the second formulation (494c) – *categorical* hedonism – Callicles supports hedonism without restriction: one who intends to live well must be able to fulfil *all* appetites, including those base ones picked out by Socrates in the quotation below (494c-e). This position entails that pleasure and goodness are absolutely the same thing, such that the undesired consequences highlighted by Socrates are unavoidable. Plato seems to suggest nonetheless that Callicles accepts these awful conclusions reached by Socrates only for the sake of coherence since he has asserted that pleasure and goodness are the same, and not because they reflect his real opinions on the matter (495a5-6). Put briefly, the refutation of *categorical* hedonism does not imply the refutation of *qualified* hedonism supported initially by Callicles at 491e-492c.

[19] See also Arruzza 2019, 150 and 199.

to his passivity in a sexual relationship, the *kinaidos* betrays the ideal of manliness or bravery required to the Athenians citizens, and praised by Callicles;[20] (iii) the *kinaidos* induces in the other citizens disgust and shame precisely because his behaviour is deemed shameful; in other words, it is by their sense of shame that the Athenian citizens react with aversion and indignation when facing the *kinaidos*' behaviour; (iv) from the political point of view, the *kinaidos* is an *atimos*, that is to say, he is deprived of citizenship and excluded from the political life of the city, in opposition therefore to Callicles' intended career in Athenian politics.[21]

All these aspects make clear that Callicles' embarrassment is deeply associated with the values advocated by 'Callicles 2', according to Woolf's 'split personality' interpretation alluded to in Section 2.1 – i.e. that side of Callicles who is attached to the laws and customs of the city. Put briefly, his reaction towards the *kinaidos*' condition reveals clearly his deep attachment to the moral values that regulate the social and political life in Athens (especially regarding sexual behaviour and patterns of manliness), and in this sense Callicles is still liable to the domain of *nomos*. If Callicles had not felt shame, he would have assumed those outcomes highlighted by Socrates to be natural consequences of his hedonist conception of happiness without being ashamed by them; or he would have replied to Socrates without embarrassment that his hedonistic conception of happiness excludes this sort of base appetites like scratching oneself or the *kinaidos*' sexual desire by the simple fact that he is not affected by these kinds of appetites, such that they do not belong to the range of "all appetites" he must enlarge and fulfil in order to be happy. This shameless reaction would be proper to 'Callicles 1', who represents the ideal of the better and superior person by nature, capable of overthrowing the laws and customs established by the majority in order to allow natural justice to prevail, immune to moral feelings like shame instilled into her soul by laws, prescriptions, enchantments, and spells against nature – that side of Callicles aligned to *phusis*.

That Callicles has been actually ashamed is evinced by Socrates' insistence in stressing the shameful condition of the *kinaidos*, deemed as the utmost consequence of the *categorical* hedonism, in order to evoke this emotion in his interlocutor. And it is precisely by having felt shame that Callicles comes to realize for the first time in the dialogue that pleasure and goodness are different things, and tries to detach himself – at least while pressed by Socratic

[20] See also Tarnopolsky 2010, 39-40.
[21] Socrates does not pick out this example at random; on the contrary, it is a veiled reference to the passive aspect of Callicles' *erōs* remarked upon at 481c-482c: Callicles is a passive partner both in the private and the public realm, as his erotic relationship with Demos son of Pyrilampes and with the Athenian *demos* testifies. See also Moss 2005, 150 and 164; Arruzza 2019, 181.

elenchus – from this extreme hedonistic view of happiness. In other words, by identifying himself with the *kinaidos* as the Socratic inductive reasoning aims to imply, Callicles feels disgust and, consequently, shame when facing this identification, insofar as he is still attached to the moral values of Athenian society ('Callicles 2'); and by having felt disgust and shame he realizes that pleasure and goodness cannot be the same.[22] In fact, Socrates is successful in this move, for Callicles continues to assert the identity between goodness and pleasure only *to avoid a contradiction in his position* (Ἵνα δή μοι μὴ ἀνομολογούμενος ᾖ ὁ λόγος, 495a5), and at 499b he finally admits that there are in fact better and worse pleasures.[23] Ultimately, it is shame that makes Callicles recognize that pleasure and goodness are not the same, undermining at least the *categorical* formulation of his hedonist view of happiness.[24]

[22] I therefore disagree with Tarnopolsky who considers Callicles' feeling of shame as a consequence of – and not as a cause of – the recognition of the conflict between the *categorical* hedonism and the moral values praised by 'Callicles 2': "When Callicles is first ashamed at the image of the catamite (*kinaidos*), *his feeling of shame arises out of the gap that he now recognizes between his indiscriminate hedonism thesis, which entails such a way of life, and his admired and internalized other of the Athenian statesman and leader*. One part of himself (the part that honors courageous leaders) looks down upon the other part that believes in indiscriminate hedonism and that now comes to light as a catamite (*kinaidos*). Here the experience of shame involves the experience of being seen inappropriately by an other but this other is in fact internal to his self or psyche" (2010, 84; my italics)

[23] Cooper 1999a, 69-70 argues against C. Kahn (1983, 106; and 1996, 136-137) that Callicles does not feel embarrassed by the catamite's example pointed out by Socrates, and that his acknowledgement of the distinction between goodness and pleasure at 499b is due rather to the cogency of the two subsequent arguments advanced by Socrates (495e-497d; 497e-499b). Cooper's reading relies on Callicles' positive answer at 495b9 (Ἔγωγε), after Socrates having asked him again whether he would continue to embrace the shameful consequences of the *categorical* hedonism called by him as "to rejoice in all its forms" (τὸ πάντως χαίρειν, 495b4). The fact that Callicles does embrace them at this point of the discussion (495b-c) is understood by Cooper as a signal that he in fact deems good even this kind of appetite-pleasure of the catamites. Nonetheless, I think that Cooper's argument does not entail that Callicles has not felt ashamed when facing the disgusting example of the *kinaidos*; otherwise, why does Callicles declare that he will maintain the identity between goodness and pleasure only "to avoid a contradiction in his position" (495a5)? It is clear that Callicles is already willing to concede the distinction between goodness and pleasure just because he is embarrassed by the catamite's example, but does not do so at this point because being refuted by Socrates in the discussion, as Gorgias and Polus have been previously, is also a shameful situation for him. So, I think that Cooper is right when considering that the two subsequent arguments afforded by Socrates are decisive in making Callicles concede openly the distinction between goodness and pleasure (499b), but this does not preclude the possibility of Callicles having felt shame, and disgust, when acknowledging that the catamite's appetites must be included in his hedonist conception of happiness.

[24] Renaut analyses the different kinds of shame at play in the dialogue and concludes that it is a shame related to admitting failure that prevents Callicles from accepting to be refuted and therefore persuaded by Socrates. From this viewpoint, Callicles would represent a *philotimotic* character (2014, 102-116). I agree with Renault that Callicles is concerned with his reputation at this point of the discussion and that his pride prevents him momentarily from admitting defeat to Socrates. Nonetheless, this feature does not entail that he embodies a *philotimotic* character without qualification, since his susceptibility to shame regarding the *kinaidos* evinces a much deeper trait of his personality which is intrinsically related to the formation of a tyrannical soul, as I am attempting to argue. According to my interpretation, Callicles' refusal to admitting failure here can be understood, *contra* Renault, as only another sign of

How may I contend it is the feeling of shame that makes Callicles acknowledge the contrast between the *categorical* hedonism and some moral values shared by 'Callicles 2', and not the other way around? I have in mind particularly one passage of book III of the *Republic* in which Plato describes the peculiar power of *rhythm* and *harmony* in penetrating the soul of the children so to instil in it *euskhēmosunē* ("gracefulness", "elegance") (III 401d-402a). The point is that music can mould the perceptive and affective capacity of the children's soul, such that when they *perceive* (ἂν αἰσθάνοιτο, 401e3) that a product of craft or nature lacks something and is deficient, they react appropriately with *disgust* (ὀρθῶς δὴ δυσχεραίνων, 401e4) and blame the shameful/ugly things (τὰ δ' αἰσχρὰ ψέγοι τ' ἂν ὀρθῶς, 402a1-2), and praise in turn the fine/beautiful ones (τὰ μὲν καλὰ ἐπαινοῖ, 401e4). And Plato affirms emphatically that this kind of perceptual and affective response is moulded by rhythm and harmony before the children acquire *logos* (πρὶν λόγον δυνατὸς εἶναι λαβεῖν, 402a2-3). This psychological description could be applied somehow to Callicles' susceptibility to shame: his feeling of shame when facing the *kinaidos*' condition constitutes this kind of perceptual and affective response that is to some extent independent of reason; this would consist in an intuitive moral reaction towards a shameful thing due to the sort of education he has had in Athens that prescribes *kinaidos*' behaviour is shameful. The rational recognition of the conflict between the *categorical* hedonism and some moral values of 'Callicles 2' – and therefore the acknowledgement of the distinction between goodness and pleasure – is an *effect* of having been affected by shame and disgust when facing the *kinaidos*' condition.[25]

If this reading is reasonable, Callicles' susceptibility to shame reveals a gulf between the ideal of virtue he advocates and his actual condition as an intemperate person. Callicles

'Callicles 2', that side of his personality who is still attached to the laws and customs of the city, including the concern with good reputation in the city (stressed especially at 484d1-2, τὸν μέλλοντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον ἔσεσθαι ἄνδρα).

[25] This close association between the feelings of *disgust* and *shame* appears in Leontius' episode in book IV of the *Republic*. The inner conflict experienced by Leontius is used by Socrates to distinguish the domain of the appetites (*to epithumētikon*) and of the spirit (*thumoeides*) within the soul. When he has an erotic appetite to look at the corpses lying at the executioner's feet, he reacts with *disgust* (δυσχεραίνοι, 439e8) and feels ashamed by the sort of desire that was affecting him – described by the action of "covering his face" (παρακαλύπτοιτο, 440a1). As he does not succeed in get rid of this appetite, "he pushes his eyes wide open and rushed towards the corpses, saying, 'Look for yourselves, you evil wretches, take your fill of *the beautiful sight* (τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος)!'" (440a2-4; my italics). This is clearly an ironic assertion because the decaying corpses are in fact something *shameful* to see, such that the *thumoeides* induces him to rebuke himself against the overwhelming strength of the *epithumia*. On shame as a manifestation of *thumoeides*, see Büttner (2006, 75 and 86-87), Cooper (1999b, 130-131), Lorenz (2006a, 152), Johnstone (2011, 157-158), Lopes (2017), McKim (1988, 36-37), Moss (2005, 138), Renault (2014, 18-19).

himself could not embody that "lion" that is able to transcend the laws and customs imposed by the majority (484a), represented by 'Callicles 1' according to Woolf's reading; indeed he is still bound by *conventional* morality instilled in his soul from childhood, as his susceptibility to shame reveals (that side represented by 'Callicles 2'). As expounded above, this kind of moral feeling is regarded by him as an impediment to the enlargement and fulfilment of the *epithumiai*, the reason why bravery (*andreia*) is a virtue required in order to overcome it. What Callicles' shame evinces, therefore, is that he is not actually endowed with the necessary conditions to realize in full his ideal of virtue and happiness identified with "luxury, intemperance and freedom" (492c4-5). Nonetheless, this diagnosis does not imply that he is not intemperate *to a certain degree*, that the prevalent element of his soul is not the *epithumiai*, and that the enlargement and fulfilment of the appetites are not the ultimate end of his actions. And it reveals also that the psychological inhibitions imposed by moral feelings like shame prevent him from accomplishing in maximum degree his ideal of an intemperate life. It is from this *psychological* standpoint, therefore, that I contend that Callicles is portrayed by Plato in the *Gorgias* as a *potential* tyrant within a democratic *polis*, and not an *actual* one.

In the next section, I will attempt to show that the *Gorgias* – particularly the psychology of *pleonexia* – presents sufficient evidence that points towards the discussion of tyranny and the tyrannical soul advanced by Plato in books VIII and IX of the *Republic*. If this move is methodologically feasible, I think that the *Republic* might offer us further arguments that not only corroborate the general idea of Callicles as a *potential* tyrant as examined in Section 2, but also specify the precise condition of an individual such as Callicles in the degenerative psychological process from the timocratic to tyrannical soul – namely, *the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical*.

3. *Revisiting Callicles' characterization in the* Gorgias *according to the moral psychology of the* Republic

If Callicles expresses an admiration for tyrannical power in his speech and aspires to political supremacy as tyrants often have, and if he is represented by Plato as a young politician in democratic Athens at the end of 5th century BC, it is reasonable to contend, broadly speaking, that the *Gorgias* presents *dramatically* what the *Republic* will develop *theoretically* in the investigation of the four degenerated forms of *politeiai* (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and

tyranny): the rise of the tyrant within democracy.[26] From the psychological point of view, on the other hand, if Callicles is depicted as an intemperate person whose soul is governed by *epithumiai*, he can be seen to represent the transitional stage from the democratic to the tyrannical individual, if we make use of the new material Plato presents in books VIII and IX of the *Republic*. This tenet is what I will attempt to argue for from now on.

When Socrates resumes in book VIII the discussion on the four types of degenerate *politeiai* – and, by analogy, on the four types of degenerate soul – announced at the beginning of book V (449a), some refinement in the tripartite theory is introduced in order to explain the process of degeneration both in the political and the psychological domains. When describing the transitional process from the oligarchic to the democratic individual in book VIII, and from the democratic to the tyrannical in book IX, Plato introduces the distinction between types of *epithumiai* that is absent from book IV. They are basically divided into two classes: the necessary and the unnecessary appetites (VIII 558d9).[27] The first class concerns those appetites which are indispensable to life and good health, whereas the second one comprises those appetites which can be avoided by repression and education from childhood, and are detrimental both to the body and to the soul concerning *intelligence* and *temperance* (VIII 558d-559c). In book IX, Plato discerns a subgroup of the unnecessary appetites – labelled as *paranomoi* (IX 571b3-4) – that concerns those which are likely to be present within everyone but are repressed and controlled by laws and the better appetites in alliance with reason (IX 571b).[28] These appetites are those which appear in dreams when the reason sleeps and the savage part of soul prevails, *free of all constraint by shame and intelligence* (ὡς ἀπὸ πάσης

[26] On the tyranny as the negation of the democratic values in the Athenian political thought of the 5th century BC, see Arruzza 2019, 23-32.

[27] They are, in fact, different species of *epithumiai* concerning *to epithumētikon.* In book IX, on the other hand, Plato introduces the notion of pleasure and appetite relatively to each of the three parts of the soul (τριῶν ὄντων τριτταὶ καὶ ἡδοναί μοι φαίνονται, ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μία ἰδία· ἐπιθυμίαι τε ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀρχαί, IX 580d6-7). This advancement leads the discussion to a more complex approach that does not matter here. On the importance of the semantical fluidity of the term *epithumia* in order to understand the inner conflict of the degenerate souls in books VIII and IX, see Lorenz 2006b, 45-47.

[28] Parry 2007, 386 and 395 considers the tyrannical erotic passion, "itself a particularly intense sort of *erōs*", as a fourth element alongside the necessary, unnecessary and *paranomoi* appetites. But I think that this erotic passion, identified as "an enormous winged drone" (IX 573a1) in the constitution of the tyrannical soul, consists rather in the culmination of the unnecessary appetites' regime in the psychological degenerative process, and as such *erōs* is not qualitatively distinct from the unnecessary class. When delimitating the domain of the *epithumiai* within the soul in book IV, erotic desire, alongside thirst and hunger, appears as a paradigmatic type of appetite that constitutes *to epithumētikon* (cf. IV 436 a-b, 439d; IX 580e). So, the increasing insatiability that characterizes the unnecessary appetites culminates in the rise of this overwhelming erotic passion, but within the proper domain of the unnecessary (including here the *paranomoi*).

λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως, IX 571c8-d1), appetites such as to attempt sexual intercourse with one's mother or with anyone or anything else, man or beast or god, to commit murder indiscriminately, or to gorge oneself on food (IX 571c-d).

3.1. *From the Oligarchic Individual to the Democratic*

According to such a degenerative genealogy[29], the oligarchic individual is the one who is commanded by the necessary appetites and pleasures (VIII 559c), whereas the democratic is that one who is full of pleasures and appetites and commanded by both the necessary and unnecessary ones indiscriminately (VIII 561a-b).[30] Plato uses a martial vocabulary in order to explain the psychological transition from the oligarchic to democratic person: when these two species of appetites clash within the soul of the young man, son of an oligarchic father, each one helped by an external alliance, a *dissension* (στάσις) is established as well as a *counter-dissension* (ἀντίστασις) resulting in an inner struggle against himself (VIII 560a1-2). When the democratic element yields temporarily to the oligarchic one in this inner conflict, some

[29] My approach to books VIII and IX is very akin to the "power struggle" interpretation held by Johnstone, according to whom "each stage in Socrates' catalogue of corrupt souls represents a further step in the breakdown of an effective means of controlling baser appetitive desires. In each case, there is a son who starts out resembling his father, has the baser appetites already present in him bolstered as a result of his contact with wider society, lacks the appropriate means of resisting this development, becomes internally divided and battles and struggles against himself, and finally transforms" (2011, 163). Hence, any interpretation of this degenerative process that reduces such a complex psychological phenomenon to a matter of a rational decision of the agent, as contended by Irwin, for instance (1995, 285-287), fails to give an appropriate account to the prominence of the appetites in the formation of the four different types of vicious person. As Irwin puts it: "People turn from Life 1 to Life 2 when it seems to them that Life 1 fails to achieve its own ends and that Life 2 offers a better prospect of setting reasonable ends that they can hope to achieve. The same pattern of rational choice and deliberation is repeated in the other deviant people" (1995, 286). Indeed, reason plays an important role in it, and the change in the set of moral beliefs throughout the transition from one type of person to another is a crucial factor in this degenerative process, as we shall seen soon; but this does not imply that each step of the psychological decline is explained *only* by the rational choice of the individual. For the degenerative process of books VIII and IX as an extended conflict between reason and appetite, see Z. Hitz 2010, 103-131; Lorenz 2006a, 2006b; Cooper 1999b.

[30] The "drone" (*kēphēn*) – "the disease of the beehive" (σμήνους νόσημα, VIII 552c3) – is metaphorically the element of dissolution of the "harmonic" hierarchy both in political and psychological domain. Within the soul, it is represented by the spendthrift and unnecessary appetites or pleasures (VIII 554a, 554d, 558d-559c) that in the oligarchic person are forcibly held in check by carefulness (κατεχομένας βίᾳ ὑπὸ τῆς ἄλλης ἐπιμελείας, VIII 554c1-2), but that in the process of transformation into the democratic are released so to prevail over the necessary and beneficial ones (VIII 559c-e). Finally, in the transformation into the tyrant "a great winged drone" (ὑπόπτερον καὶ μέγαν κηφῆνά τινα, IX 573a1) is identified with the tyrannical *erōs* that commands the soul with madness and frenzy, leading a life of complete anarchy and anomia (IX 573a-b, 574e-575a). The image of the drone as an element of corruption appears originally in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (302-306).

appetites – presumably, the unnecessary ones – are destroyed or banished, insofar as *a kind of modesty* arises in the soul of the young man (αἰδοῦς τινος ἐγγενομένης ἐν τῇ τοῦ νέου ψυχῇ, VIII 560a6-7). But due to the lack of an appropriate education offered by the oligarchic father, appetites akin to those once banished – i.e. the unnecessary ones that have been controlled by force (βίᾳ, VIII 558d4) – become increasingly numerous and stronger, such that they prevail over the oligarchic part and occupy "the acropolis of the young man's soul" putting an end to the *stasis* (VIII 560b6-7). This inner transformation of the soul is followed by *a change in the range of moral opinions* that regulate one's actions.[31] A regime governed by the unnecessary appetites is only possible because the flawed education offered by the oligarchic father leaves the young man's soul empty of fine knowledge and activities and of true discourses which could resist such an attack. So, in the absence of a reason appropriately strengthened to pursue what is good for the soul as a whole and for each part of it, they are replaced by false and deceitful opinions and discourses (VIII 560b-c). This change in the set of moral beliefs is described as follows:

(a) […] won't they call *modesty foolishness and temperance lack of manliness* [τὴν μὲν αἰδῶ ἠλιθιότητα ὀνομάζοντες [...] σωφροσύνην δὲ ἀνανδρίαν καλοῦντές], abusing them and casting them out beyond the frontiers like disenfranchised exiles? And won't they persuade the young person that measured and orderly expenditure is boorish and mean, and, joining with many useless desires, won't they expel it across the border? (VIII 560d3-7; my italics)

(b) They praise the returning exiles and give them fine names, calling *insolence good breeding* [ὕβριν μὲν εὐπαιδευσίαν], *anarchy freedom* [ἀναρχίαν δὲ ἐλευθερίαν], *extravagance magnificence* [ἀσωτίαν δὲ μεγαλοπρέπειαν], and *shamelessness bravery* [ἀναίδειαν δὲ ἀνδρείαν]. Isn't it in some such way as this that someone who is young changes, after being brought up with necessary appetites, to the liberation and release of useless and unnecessary pleasures? (VIII 560e4-561a4; my italics)

The first contention I would like to make regarding Callicles' *ēthos* as analysed in Section 2 is the following: (A) *in accordance with this degenerative psychological process described in the* Republic, *he would represent a young man whose soul is precisely in the condition in which the resolution of the* stasis *between necessary and unnecessary appetites is already resolved*. This is not only because Callicles is portrayed in the *Gorgias* as an

[31] I think that there is in fact a *mutual influence* between appetites and beliefs in this process of transformation from the oligarchic and democratic person. That is to say, it is by the fact that the unnecessary appetites increasingly grow within one's soul and conflict with the "oligarchic ones" that this shift in the range of her moral beliefs occurs (VIII 559e-560b); and it is by the support of these new moral beliefs, conversely, that she finds a rational justification for continuing to improve a life of unrestrained gratification (VIII 560b-561b). I therefore disagree with the "intellectualist" reading defended by Parry who contends that "the false and bold beliefs are *necessary and sufficient* for having the kind of character in which the unnecessary appetites rule" (2007, 391-392; my italics).

intemperate person whose *epithumiai* constitutes the prevalent element of his soul as in the case of the democratic individual in book VIII, but also due to the change in the set of moral beliefs that follow this transformation from oligarchic into democratic. These two passages of book VIII quoted above echo unmistakably the following passages of the *Gorgias* where Callicles intends to provide a psychological ground for his moral convictions, as we have analysed in Section 2:

(i) By "the temperate" you mean "the foolish". (τοὺς ἠλιθίους λέγεις τοὺς σώφρονας, 491e2)
(ii) […] being themselves incapable of providing for the fulfilment of their pleasures, [most people] *praise temperance and justice because of their lack of manliness* [...] (ἐπαινοῦσιν τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην διὰ τὴν αὑτῶν ἀνανδρίαν, 492a7-b1)
(iii) […] luxury, intemperance and freedom – given the resources, that is what virtue and happiness are […] (τρυφὴ καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ ἐλευθερία, ἐὰν ἐπικουρίαν ἔχῃ, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή τε καὶ εὐδαιμονία, 492c4-6)

Through the inversion of moral values advocated by Callicles in (i) and (ii), "temperance" (*sōphrosunē*) becomes "foolishness" (*ēlithiotēs*) and "lack of manliness" (*anandria*), since it is praised by those who are incapable of fulfilling their appetites and who therefore assert that intemperance (*akolasia*) is shameful. This is quite similar to the description of passage (a) of book VIII quoted above. Although "freedom" (*eleutheria*) is a basic value of democracy, meaning, generally speaking, both the condition of the free-born citizens in opposition to the slaves' and non-citizens', and the right of free speech in the public domain[32], in Callicles' view it appears closely related to "intemperance" (*akolasia*) and "luxury" (*truphē*), as we seen in (iii). As Callicles does not make clear how he understands "freedom" and its role according to his own conception of happiness (the discussion with Socrates concentrates rather on intemperance), it is likely that it might mean something like we find in passage (b) of book VIII quoted above: that is to say, a psychological meaning of "freedom" designating the absence of restraint in pursuing the satisfaction of any appetite and seeking pleasure – so "anarchy", "lawlessness" (*anarkhia*).[33] In Callicles' case, this appears above all in the *categorical* hedonism advocated by him (494c), according to which no qualitative discrimination is required in order to distinguish between better and worse appetites, since *all appetites* are equally worth being pursued and fulfilled. In the democratic individual of book VIII, in turn, this same feature appears in the indiscrimination between necessary and unnecessary appetites in seeking pleasure after the "liberation" of the unnecessary and

[32] In the analysis of democracy as a type of *politeia*, Plato characterizes it by three main key-notions: *eleutheria*, *parrhēsia* and *exousia* (VIII 557b8-10).
[33] For the psychological meaning of "freedom", see Lorenz 2006a, 164 n. 20.

spendthrift ones (εἰς τὴν τῶν μὴ ἀναγκαίων καὶ ἀνωφελῶν ἡδονῶν ἐλευθέρωσίν τε καὶ ἄνεσιν, VIII 561a4), such that "he puts his pleasures on an equal footing" (εἰς ἴσον δή τι καταστήσας τὰς ἡδονὰς, VIII 561b3-4). Put briefly, "freedom" in the psychological sense would mean no qualitative discrimination between the appetites to be pursued, and therefore lack of restraint in pursuing their fulfilment and seeking pleasure – an euphemism for "anarchy", as suggested by the semantical reversal of moral values in the constitution of the democratic individual in book VIII.[34]

Another aspect of the democratic individual in book VIII that points towards the psychology of *pleonexia* advocated by Callicles in the *Gorgias* is the re-signification of "bravery" (*andreia*) as "shamelessness" or "lack of modesty" (*anaideia*), as we see in quotation (b) above. In the inner *stasis* that culminates with the constitution of the democratic individual, what prevents the democratic side – i.e. the unnecessary and useless appetites – from prevailing definitively over the oligarchic one – i.e. the necessary and beneficial appetites – is *a kind of modesty* that eventually arises in the soul of the young man (αἰδοῦς τινος ἐγγενομένης ἐν τῇ τοῦ νέου ψυχῇ, VIII 560a6-7). It is only when this moral feeling (*aidōs*) is finally neutralized in his soul that the democratic individual is fully constituted. Thus, a certain remaining sense of shame designed by *aidōs* is what restrains, at least momentarily, a full prevalence of the unnecessary appetites within the soul. *Andreia* is therefore identified with the absence of *aidōs*, and is closely associated with the lack of restraint in pursuing and satisfying the appetites whatever they might be; in other words, from the standpoint of the democratic person one is brave if she is not affected by *aidōs* in going after whatever she wants, and ultimately what she wants is what her appetites indiscriminately strive for. As we analysed in Section 2, this intrinsic relationship between *andreia* and shamelessness (or lack of modesty) is precisely what the psychology of *pleonexia* contends: *andreia* is deemed as a necessary condition to overcome emotions such as shame and fear that can impede the fulfilment of the appetites; shame, in particular, is regarded as the psychological mark of the worse and inferior people who, unable to satisfy their own appetites due to their "lack of manliness" or "cowardice" (*anandria*), prescribe that intemperance is shameful, and that temperance is praiseworthy (491e-492c). Hence, a brave person is also shameless and intemperate according to Calliclean moral psychology.

[34] For the distinction between the *characteristic motive* (the unnecessary appetites) and the *dominant motive* (the necessary and unnecessary appetites) of the democratic person, see Hitz 2010, 111-112 and 117.

Therefore, intemperance and hedonism are ultimately what link straightforwardly Callicles in the *Gorgias* with the democratic individual in book VIII of the *Republic*. And it is likely that Plato reminds his readers of Callicles in the following passage by this sort of allusive literary device:

> And he doesn't admit any word of truth into the guardhouse, for if someone [τις] tells him that some pleasures belong to fine and good desires and others to evil ones [ὡς αἱ μέν εἰσι τῶν καλῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἡδοναί, αἱ δὲ τῶν πονηρῶν] and that he must pursue and value the former and restrain and enslave the latter, he denies all this and declares that all pleasures are equal and must be valued equally. (VIII 561b8-c4)

The attempt to dissuade the democratic man by *someone* unnamed (*tis*, VIII 561b9), showing him that there are both harmful and beneficial pleasures and that one ought to pursue only the good ones[35], fits exactly with what we see represented *dramatically* in the *Gorgias*. As we have discussed in Section 2, Socrates resorts to embarrassing examples such as scratching and the catamite (494c-e) in order to show Callicles the unavoidable consequences of equating happiness with the fulfilment of *all* appetites (494c). Socrates aims to persuade him that pleasure and goodness are different things (495a), and that one ought to do pleasant things for the sake of the good, and not the opposite, insofar as the end of all actions is the good (499e). Consequently, there are better pleasures – i.e. the beneficial ones – the fulfilment of which should be pursued, and worse pleasures – i.e. the harmful ones – that must be avoided (503c-d). Constrained by the embarrassing examples picked out by Socrates (494c-495a) and by the two subsequent arguments against hedonism (495e-497d; 497e-499b), Callicles finally agrees – but not without reluctance – with the distinction between pleasure and goodness (499b), although this agreement does not necessarily undermine a *qualified* hedonist conception of happiness, but only *categorical* hedonism, as we have examined in Section 2.3.[36]

[35] See especially Pl. *Grg*. 503c6-d3.

[36] In fact, there is a slight difference between Callicles' case and the hypothetical situation alluded to in this passage of the *Republic* (VIII 561b-c), although this does not invalidate my point. In this passage of book VIII, Socrates says that the democratic individual claims "all pleasures are equal and must be valued equally" (ὁμοίας φησὶν ἁπάσας εἶναι καὶ τιμητέας ἐξ ἴσου, 8, 561c3-4) and that she is not persuaded that there are good and bad pleasures and appetites. In the *Gorgias*, on the other hand, Callicles acquiesces to the distinction between pleasure and goodness at 499b, and consequently abandons the *categorical* hedonism (494c2-3). However, as Cooper 1999a 72-73 argues correctly, to concede this distinction does not necessarily undermine the *qualified* hedonistic conception of happiness (491e-492c), since Callicles could reasonably continue to assert that happiness consists in the maximization and fulfilment of the majority of the appetites, but not *all* of them, excluding, for instance, those base appetites. In any case, though he assents to the distinction between pleasure and goodness at 499b, Callicles does not concede to Socrates, at any time during the dialogue, that the life of the temperate person is better than the life of the intemperate. On the contrary, he continues to resist

Therefore, this hypothetical situation referred to in book VIII of the *Republic* can be interpreted as an *allusion* to Callicles' recalcitrance as depicted *dramatically* in the *Gorgias*. This seems to be confirmed when Socrates says that a person who lives in this way, being delighted day by day by whatever appetite comes along, "often engages in politics, leaping up from his seat and saying and doing whatever comes into his mind" (πολλάκις δὲ πολιτεύεται, καὶ ἀναπηδῶν ὅτι ἂν τύχῃ λέγει τε καὶ πράττει, VIII 561d3-4). This reference to a democratic politician and his peculiar *parrhēsia* fits precisely Callicles' case, represented by Plato in the *Gorgias* as an ambitious politician in the context of the Athenian democracy with tyrannical aspirations. Moreover, in this same passage in the *Republic*, it is said that the democratic person, driven by whatever appetite currently afflicts him, "sometimes occupies himself with what he takes to be philosophy" (τοτὲ δ' ὡς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίβων, VIII 561d3). In the *Gorgias*, Socrates refers to Callicles' association *in wisdom* with Teisandros, Andron and Nausicydes (τέτταρας ὄντας κοινωνοὺς γεγονότας σοφίας, 487c2), according to whom "people should not throw themselves into the philosophizing that sets store by extreme precision" (μὴ προθυμεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν φιλοσοφεῖν, 487c6-7), for an excess of wisdom could corrupt them (487d). This statement coheres with Callicles' speech, when he rebukes Socrates for indulging in philosophy more than he should, corrupting his noble nature (484c4-d2). Callicles considers philosophy worth pursuing only during one's youth "in view of education" (παιδείας χάριν, 485a3-5) and in a moderate manner (ἄν τις αὐτοῦ μετρίως ἅψηται ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ, 484c6). Thus, we can reasonably infer that Callicles himself has somehow taken part in philosophy, however he understands it, such that we can fairly infer that his political and psychological views are somehow related to this "association in wisdom" with his fellows. In sum, this further textual evidence reinforces the *allusion* to Callicle's case in book VIII of the *Republic*.

However, to what extent can we understand Callicles as a *potential* tyrant, and not only as a democratic person according to the degenerative psychological process described in book VIII and IX of the *Republic*? This is the next question I will attempt to answer in the following section by examining the transformation of the democratic individual into the tyrant.

3.2. *From the Democratic Individual to the Tyrannical*

As discerned above, there is a subgroup of the unnecessary appetites labelled by Plato as *paranomoi* which are likely to be present within everyone, but "are repressed by laws and

Socrates' attempts to persuade him to the point that Socrates is forced to resort to a monologue (506c-509c). For the two formulations of hedonism in the *Gorgias*, see above n. 18.

better appetites in alliance with reason" (κολαζόμεναι δὲ ὑπό τε τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν βελτιόνων ἐπιθυμιῶν μετὰ λόγου, IX 571b5-6). Such *paranomoi* appetites are those which appear in dreams when reason sleeps and the savage part of soul prevails, "free of all constraint by shame and intelligence" (ὡς ἀπὸ πάσης λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως, IX 571c8-d1), and that can affect even those who seem to be of a moderate disposition (IX 571e-572a). The genesis of the tyrant, son of a democratic father and educated in his customs, occurs precisely when he is dominated by those appetites that lead him to complete lawlessness: a condition he regards as "an absolute freedom" (ἐλευθερίαν ἅπασαν, IX 572e1-2). This causes to arise in his soul a kind of *erōs* that becomes the "leader" (*prostatēs*) of the appetites (IX 572d-e). That "drone" (*kēphēn*) that was born in the oligarchic person (VIII 552c, 554d) and transformed into the democratic when his soul comes finally to be commanded by the unnecessary appetites (VIII 559c), converts itself into "an enormous winged drone" (ὑπόπτερον καὶ μέγαν κηφῆνά τινα, IX 573a1), in which *erōs* leads the *epithumiai.* Under this psychological condition:

─ […] This leader of the soul adopts madness as its bodyguard and becomes frenzied. If it finds any beliefs or appetites in the man that are thought to be good or *that still have some shame* [ἔτι ἐπαισχυνομένας], it destroys them and throws them out, *until it's purged him of temperance* [ἕως ἂν καθήρῃ σωφροσύνης] and filled him with imported madness. (IX 573a8-b4)

As discussed in Section 3.1, in the transition from the oligarchic to democratic individual the necessary appetites prevail only temporarily over the unnecessary ones whilst a certain *modesty* (*aidōs*) arises at the soul of the young man (VIII 560a6-7). The outcome of the inner *stasis*, however, gives primacy to the unnecessary appetites. In the democratic person, on the other hand, the *paranomoi* appetites manifest only in dreams, since *shame* (*aiskhunē*) and *intelligence* (*phronēsis*) prevent him from acting on them in real life (IX 571c8-d1). Nevertheless, the tyrannical person under the control of *erōs* (IX 573d4-5) is no longer constrained at all by shame or by the laws or by the better appetites (IX 571b). Through this degenerative process that culminates in "complete anarchy and anomia" (ἐν πάσῃ ἀναρχίᾳ καὶ ἀνομίᾳ, IX 575a1-2), the unrestrained pursuit of satisfaction of all sorts of appetites, including now those labelled as *paranomoi,* is described by Plato in the following way:

─ And just as the pleasures that are latecomers *outdo* [πλέον εἶχον] the older ones and steal away their satisfactions, won't the man himself think that he deserves to *outdo* [πλέον ἔχειν] his father and mother, even though he is younger than they are – to take and spend his father's wealth when he's spent his own shares?
─ Of course. (IX 574a6-11; my italics)

The tyrannical soul is moved then by the desire of *outdoing* (*pleon ekhein*) others through the accumulation of goods and power, regarded as material conditions for the fulfilment of such appetites.[37] Inasmuch as these material conditions become difficult to provide, the dreadfulness of the agent's wrongdoings increases proportionally, resorting to, for instance, stealing from others, breaking into houses and looting temples (IX 574d). Under the control of the tyrannical *erōs*, there is no moral restriction on the choice of the means which are conducive to the supreme end – namely, the satisfaction of all appetites and the promotion of pleasure. The culmination of this degenerative process is described by Plato in the following manner:

> And in all this, the old traditional opinions that he had held from childhood about what is fine or shameful – opinions that are accounted just [ἃς πάλαι εἶχεν δόξας ἐκ παιδὸς περὶ καλῶν τε καὶ αἰσχρῶν, τὰς δικαίας ποιουμένας] – are overcome by the opinions, newly released from slavery, that are now the bodyguard of erotic love and hold sway along with it. When he himself was subject to the laws and his father and had a democratic constitution within him, these opinions used only to be freed in sleep. Now, however, under the tyranny of erotic love, he has permanently become while awake what he used to become occasionally while asleep, and he won't hold back from any terrible murder or from any kind of food or act. (IX 574d5-e4)

If the process described above is diachronic, then what occurs first is the replacement of the range of moral opinions about what is fine or shameful due to the overwhelming influence of the *epithumiai* within the soul of the democratic individual, since the unnecessary appetites have already consolidated their prevalence over the necessary ones, as examined in Section 3.1.[38] So, the opinions about what is just and unjust that prevented hitherto the agent from committing wrongdoings such as dreadful murders and gluttony, are now dominated by those ones which are not inhibited by the constraints of justice and become the bodyguard of *erōs*. Once the tyranny of *erōs* has been established, those kind of *paranomoi* appetites that hitherto manifested only in dreams (as referred to at IX 571c-d) motivate now actions without any moral or psychological constraint.

Thus, what is the connection between the psychology of *pleonexia* advanced by Callicles in the *Gorgias*, and this examination of the constitution of the tyrannical individual in book IX of the *Republic*? This is the second contention I would like to make regarding Callicles' *ēthos*: (B) *in accordance with this degenerative psychological described in the* Republic*, he would represent an individual whose soul is on the threshold between the*

[37] "Having more" and "outdoing" are the alternative translations used in this paper for the Greek expression *pleon ekhein.*
[38] For the causal relationship between beliefs and appetites, see above n. 31.

democratic and the tyrannical. It is in this sense that I contend that Callicles is portrayed by Plato in the *Gorgias* as a *potential* tyrant, and the reason why he does not constitute an *actual* tyrant from the psychological standpoint is precisely his susceptibility to *shame*, as we have examined in Section 2.3. Let us see the last part of my argument.

In book IX, Plato describes the formation of the tyrannical soul as a diachronic process, as highlighted above: (1) due to the strength of the unrestrained appetites within the democratic soul, the opinions that follow *erōs* as its bodyguard are released from slavery and dominate those concerned with what is fine and shameful which have been learnt in childhood; (2) in a second stage of degeneration, under the tyranny of *erōs*, those shameful impulses that were once confined only to dreams are now able to motivate actions in an attempt to satisfy the *paranomoi* appetites. Thus, by examining Callicles' case from the *Republic* standpoint, it is clear that he does not only disdain those moral beliefs that governed the oligarchic individual and have been increasingly challenged by the democratic (i.e. temperance, modesty, moderation and order: VIII 560d3-7), but even the very notion of *justice* that still regulated, at least to some extent, the democrat's behaviour. When Callicles argues for the opposition between *conventional* justice (established by laws and customs of the majority) and *natural* justice (482e-484c), he seeks to justify another kind of morality grounded on *phusis* that transcends the boundaries of the justice imposed on citizens by the civil community based on the notion of *equality* (*to ison*). By taking it as a means by which the worse and inferior people succeed in prevailing over the better and superior and in preventing them from "having more" (*pleon ekhein, pleonektein*), Callicles expresses contempt for the most important notion of democracy that underpins its constitution, and under which all are deemed equal with regard to the laws concerning private issues.[39] As Socrates says, democracy "distributes a sort of equality to both equals ans unequals alike" (ἰσότητά τινα ὁμοίως ἴσοις τε καὶ ἀνίσοις διανέμουσα, VIII 558c3-4).

The notion of equality is central also to the psychological analysis of the democratic individual pursued by Plato in book VIII of the *Republic*, as discussed in Section 3.1: the democrat pursues all pleasures *equally* and turns to each when they arise until they have been satisfied, without any qualitative discrimination (VIII 561b3: εἰς ἴσον δή τι; b6: ἐξ ἴσου; c4: ἐξ ἴσου). However, under the control of tyrannical *erōs*, the agent is guided by the insatiable desire for *pleon ekhein*, the accumulation of goods and power, in order to provide the material

[39] Th. 2.37.1: "the laws secures equal justice to all in their private disputes" (μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον) (Hornblower 1991, 299).

conditions for the fulfilment of her insatiable appetites. In such a psychological state, all means are deemed worth pursuing for the sake of this ultimate end, such that his actions are no longer constrained by *conventional* justice culminating therefore in several wrongdoings, such as breaking into someone's house or snatching someone's cloak late at night, or even trying to loot a temple (IX 574a-b).

This description of the psychological disposition of the tyrannical individual in book IX of the *Republic* summarises clearly the main features of the psychology of *pleonexia* presented in the *Gorgias*, as we have examined in Section 2. Put briefly, I have argued that according to Callicles' view the desire of "having more" than others (*pleonexia*) is conditioned by the unrestrained appetites the better and superior people are affected by, insofar as happiness and virtue are considered by them as consisting in maximizing and fulfilling the appetites whenever they arise. In this sense, intemperance is considered as the psychological cause of *pleonexia*. The description of the constitution of the tyrannical individual advanced by Plato in book IX of the *Republic* shares precisely this main tenet of Calliclean moral psychology: it is due to the insatiability of the appetites and to the lack of restraint on them by means of good education and moral feelings like shame (*aiskhunē*) or modesty (*aidōs*) that the tyrannical individual is constrained to seek to "have more" than others in order to fulfil them.[40] By introducing the distinction in books VIII and IX between the necessary, unnecessary and *paranomoi* appetites, Plato refines the psychology of *pleonexia* described in the *Gorgias* and advances the degenerative process of the soul through the analogy between the types of corrupted *politeiai* and their corresponding types of soul. The element of inner dissolution, represented metaphorically by the "drone" (*kēphēn*), is precisely the ongoing lack of restraint of the unnecessary and harmful appetites, which are "detrimental both to the body and to the soul concerning intelligence and temperance" (βλαβερὰ μὲν σώματι, βλαβερὰ δὲ ψυχῇ πρός τε φρόνησιν καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν, VIII 559b10-11). This increasing degenerative process culminates in the madness of the regime of tyrannical *erōs*, in "the life of complete anarchy and anomia"

[40] Parry considers that the central role played by the tyrannical *erōs* in the *Republic* is a significant difference in relation to the psychological characterization of the tyrant offered by Callicles in the *Gorgias*: "This tyrant is different from Callicles' ideal. In the *Gorgias* he was a sensualist whose drive for tyrannical power appeared to be a means to an end. In the *Republic* the tyrant is the full realization of the tyrannical *erōs*. This powerful and insatiable appetite is grandiose" (2007, 402). Nonetheless, this noticeable difference does not undermine the other striking evidence for the affinity between both dialogues regarding the treatment of tyranny and psychology of the tyrant, as I have attempted to show, and this is enough to my purpose in this essay.

(ἐν πάσῃ ἀναρχίᾳ καὶ ἀνομίᾳ ζῶν, IX 575a1-2), in which all appetites, including the *paranomoi*, are worth pursuing in the search for "having more" than everyone.

Therefore, when we turn our attention to Callicles' contempt for the notions such as equality, temperance, conventional justice, we can assert that, at least in relation to the domain of moral beliefs, he satisfies the first condition for the characterization of the tyrannical individual (IX 574d-e) – namely, the complete reversal in the range of moral opinions about what is fine or shameful due to the overwhelming influence of the *epithumiai*, including the very notion of justice (ἃς πάλαι εἶχεν δόξας ἐκ παιδὸς περὶ καλῶν τε καὶ αἰσχρῶν, τὰς δικαίας ποιουμένας, IX 574d6-7).

Nevertheless, from the point of view of his affections, Callicles' susceptibility to *shame* as evinced by the Socratic cross-examination (494c-e) shows that at least in the dialogical dramatization of the *Gorgias* he is still constrained by this kind of non-rational force that the tyrannical person of the *Republic* has excised from his soul. In the democratic person, as mentioned above, those kind of *paranomoi* appetites manifests only in dreams and not in concrete actions as they are refrained by "shame and intelligence" (ὡς ἀπὸ πάσης λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως, IX 571c8-d1). However, in the process of formation of the tyrannical individual, when madness and frenzy replace the role of reason – i.e. the condition of tyrannical *erōs* –, the remaining beliefs and appetites that were still endowed with some trace of shame are finally extirpated from the soul, purging it of any trace of temperance and filling it with madness (IX 573b1-4). In this psychological disposition, there is nothing that could prevent the tyrannical person from seeking to satisfying her appetites whatever they might be, whenever they arise, in whatever circumstances they might occur; there is no moral inhibition like shame (*aiskhunē*) or modesty (*aidōs*) that could refrain her from the *paranomoi* appetites and actions.

Therefore, at least as far as the depiction of Callicles' characterization in the *Gorgias* allows us to make use of the moral psychology of the *Republic*, Callicles is represented by Plato as *a potential tyrant from the psychological point of view* insofar as he is still susceptible to shame – more precisely, he is on the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical soul. His embarrassing reaction towards the *kinaidos*' example provided by Socrates (494c-e) represents a signal of an affective attachment to some moral values shared by Athenian society regarding sexuality and manliness – therefore, regarding the proper domain of *sōphrosunē*.[41] In other words, there remains some vestige of shame (*aiskhunē*) or modesty (*aidōs*) within his

[41] Cf. Pl. *R*. IV 436 a-b, 439d; IX 580e.

soul inculcated by the vanishing education gotten from his oligarchic heritage – which praises the traditional values such as temperance, modesty, moderation and order (VIII 560d3-7)[42] – that the democratic side of Callicles' *ēthos* does still preserve, albeit in a very weak fashion. It is by these reasons that his *erōs* for the demos mentioned by Socrates at 481c-2 and 513c-d in the *Gorgias* cannot be equated to the tyrant's *erōs* as described in Book IX of the *Republic*; at best, it alludes to his erotic passion for power in a democratic city, which is only a step in a long and complex psychological process of constitution of a tyrannical soul, according to the *Republic.*[43]

4. *Conclusion*

To conclude, the inner disharmony of Callicles' soul would be described as follows from the standpoint of the moral psychology developed by Plato in the *Republic*:
(a) In the domain of *the moral beliefs* expressed by him throughout the Socratic elenchus, there is a conflict between those that seek to provide a justification for an exercise of an autocratic power by resorting to the notion of "what is just in nature", and that praise "luxury, intemperance and freedom" as constituents of happiness and virtue (492c4-5); and those that are still attached to the moral values shared by the Athenian society – such as the contempt for the *kinaidos*' sexual behaviour –, and that praise the traditional ideal of *kalokagathia* and high reputation in public life. According to Woolf's reading, this contradiction in Callicles' views reflects precisely the opposition between *phusis* and *nomos* advocated by him in his main speech in the *Gorgias*: 'Callicles 1' champions *phusis* while 'Callicles 2' champions *nomos*. From the standpoint of the *Republic*, in turn, 'Callicles 1' would represent a step in the transformation of the democratic individual into the tyrannical, since he does not only reject the moral values gotten from his oligarchic heritage that the democrat challenges – such as temperance, modesty, moderation and order (VIII 560d3-7) – but even the very notion of *justice* that still regulates, at least to some extent, the democrat's behaviour, albeit leading an intemperate life. 'Callicles 2', on the other hand, would represent the remaining influence on

[42] The fact that the oligarchic person, father of the democratic, praises traditional virtues such as temperance (*sōphrosunē*) does not imply that she is in fact temperate according to the description of temperance in the virtuous person in book IV (442c-d). As Hitz puts it, "The oligarch's *sōphrosunē* does not amount to all parts of the soul agreeing that reason ought to rule – the oligarch is a deeply conflicted person. At best, he is like Aristotle's continent person: someone who is good only by constraint and strength of will" (2010, 119).
[43] For a discussion about the flattering kind of *erōs* represented by Callicles, see Arruzza 2019, 161-163.

him of a weak education based on these oligarchic values from his oligarchic father. His disgust and contempt for the *kinaidos*' behaviour could be understood, therefore, as some vestige of temperance (*sōphrosunē*) that conflicts with his major inclination towards intemperance.

(b) In relation to the domain of *epithumiai*, Callicles' susceptibility to *shame* reveals that he does not yet embody an indiscriminate intemperate life, insofar as this sort of moral feeling might resist a certain kind of appetite deemed by him shameful to be pursued, like that of the *kinaidos*' (494c-e). So, the remaining appetites and beliefs that still have some trace of shame (IX 573b1-3) consist in the last impediment to the constitution of the tyrannical soul, whose extirpation is considered by Plato as a necessary condition for the unrestrained exercise of *pleonexia* (IX 573d-575a). Hence, Callicles actually manifests this kind of psychological inhibition represented by shame – like the democratic individual of book VIII – that shall prevent him from trying to have more than the others in an indiscriminate way, as the tyrannical individual will be able to do.

(c) Therefore, the distinction between the kinds of *epithumiai* presented in books VIII and IX – the necessary, the unnecessary, and the *paranomoi* appetites – allows us to understand Callicles' case in the *Gorgias* in a much more complex manner. For it shows that his inner disharmony, as considered by Woolf, is not confined to the range of political and moral beliefs expressed through his speeches in the dialogue, but extends to a wider conflict between appetites – the unrestrained appetites of an intemperate person vs. the beneficial ones that still bear some trace of shame due to the remaining influence of the education gotten from his oligarchic heritage.

(d) If shame is likely to be ascribed to the *thumoeides* domain, as some evidence in the *Republic* seems to suggest[44], so these appetites endowed with shame reveal that the perceptive and affective education of *thumos* afforded by the education of his oligarchic father remains effective to some extent, albeit its undeniable weakness in instilling into the soul of his democratic son the right disposition that would lead him to respect appropriately, and to live according to, the moral values such as temperance, modesty, moderation and order (VIII 560d3-7). As I have discussed at the end of Section 2, Plato ascribes to *rhythm* and *harmony* the power of moulding the perceptive and affective capacity of the children's soul instilling into it *euskhēmosunē*. This musical education enables the children, even before acquiring *logos*, to intuitively react with disgust when perceiving that a product of craft or nature lacks something and is deficient, so to blame the shameful/ugly things, and to praise, in turn, the fine/beautiful

[44] See above n. 25.

ones (IV 401e-402a). From this point of view, Callicles' feeling of shame when facing the *kinaidos*' condition may be understood as this kind of perceptual and affective response ascribed by Plato to the *thumoeides* in the *Republic* that is to some extent independent from reason, and that might offer resistance against some sort of appetites perceived as shameful to be pursued.

(e) Therefore, there are two opposed sides in Callicles' disharmony: (i) the first concerns his moral and political views akin to tyrannical aspirations (*pleonexia*) ('Callicles 1'), and his tendency to intemperate behaviour in pursuing indiscriminately the enlargement and fulfilment of appetites without the constraint from moral feelings like shame; (ii) the other regards his moral and political ideas of democratic origin ('Callicles 2'), and his remaining appetites that still bear trace of shame, contrasting with the unrestrained ones from his intemperate behaviour, and preventing him to some extent from leading fully an intemperate life.

For these reasons, it seems reasonable to understand that Callicles is portrayed by Plato in the *Gorgias* as an individual on the threshold between the democratic and the tyrannical disposition, according to the psychological and political theory developed in books VIII and IX of the *Republic* – hence, a *potential* tyrant, but not an *actual* one.

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