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## DEMOTIKE ARETE IN THE REPUBLIC†

George Klosko

To the consternation of generations of scholars, Plato left many aspects of his moral and political theories undiscussed. The particular omission examined in this paper concerns the virtue of the lowest class, the producers, in the *Republic*. The argument of the *Republic*, of course, revolves around a discussion of the nature of justice and how it 'pays', but by the time Plato draws the argument to a conclusion in Book IX, the justice that is seen to benefit its possessors is that found in the extraordinary souls of the philosophers, while Plato is virtually silent about the nature and effects of justice in the lowest class in the state. Plato's discussion of the producing class in general is so patchy and indefinite that Aristotle, his pupil for seventeen years, was apparently able to misunderstand its most central elements.<sup>1</sup> But drawing from various aspects of the moral psychology discussed in the *Republic*, I think it is possible to come to some reasonably secure conclusions about the moral qualities they embody.

The problem of identifying the virtue of the producers (to which we will refer as 'demotic' virtue)<sup>2</sup> is prompted by the fact that it must differ in important respects from the virtue of the rulers (to which we will refer as

† Note on text and translations used: Plato is quoted from the edition of J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1900–07). For translations I use Loeb Classics Library editions, occasionally modified slightly. Thus, the translation of the *Republic* I use is that of P. Shorey, *The Republic of Plato*, 2 vols. (London, 1930–35).

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1264a13–18, 36–8, 40–b4.

<sup>2</sup> The courage of the auxiliaries is referred to as *politikē* at 430c2; at 500d8 the philosopher rulers are described as moulders of *dēmotikē aretē*; cf. *Phaedo* 82a–b (discussed below, p. 380). I agree with the majority of scholars in holding that by calling virtue *dēmotikē* and *politikē* in this way, Plato means to qualify it in some important respect; see e.g. J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1902), on 430c and 500d; W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1962–81), Vol. IV, p. 472, note 4; *Plato's Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, 1974), note on 430c. cf. Aristotle, *Nich. Ethics* 1116a16 ff.; on this see H.H. Joachim, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1951), *ad loc.*

'perfect' virtue). The characteristic Platonic account of justice<sup>3</sup> is that it consists of a harmony in the individual's soul, with the three elements, reason (*logistikón*), spirit (*thumoeides*) and appetite (*epithumētikon*) staying in place and doing their own jobs. This means basically that reason is to rule, and to keep appetite down through the aid of its ally, spirit, as in the just state the guardians rule with the help of the auxiliaries, while the producers fulfil their proper function and are kept in place. Demotic virtue is problematic, because of differences between the reasoning elements of the producers and the philosophers, especially the deficiencies of the former.<sup>4</sup> These deficiencies are central to this paper and will be discussed at length. For now it is enough to indicate, as many scholars argue, that demotic virtue is based on correct opinion rather than knowledge.<sup>5</sup> As Plato says in an important passage in Book IX, for those in whom reason is naturally weak, virtue must be imposed from without and this is the main purpose of the state (590c–d).

It seems to me that a suitable account of the virtue of the lowest class must satisfy a number of conditions, which I will list. It must demonstrate:

1. How this virtue is deficient in comparison to that of members of the ruling class.
2. Why it still merits the designation 'virtue', and is superior to any qualities of the degenerate men discussed in Books VIII–IX.
3. How souls manifesting this virtue are 'ruled by a principle similar to that which rules the best-man', as Plato explicitly says they are (590c).
4. How this virtue benefits its possessors.

These questions, and others like them, are obviously important to Plato's political theory. Though to some extent answers to them are apparent, and perhaps commonly agreed upon by scholars, I do not believe an adequate, fully developed account has yet been produced.<sup>6</sup> In recent years considerable

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this paper I use 'justice' and 'virtue' interchangeably in certain contexts. This is justified in light of Plato's account of justice as that which makes the other virtues possible (433b; also 443e–44a, 444c–e). Plato himself uses the terms virtually interchangeably at times, e.g. at 444d–e.

<sup>4</sup> I believe that much of what is said about the producers in this essay pertains to the auxiliaries as well. But nothing hinges on this, and since a detailed treatment of this question is not possible here, I will set the problem aside.

<sup>5</sup> For references to three such scholars, see note 2 above.

<sup>6</sup> How little has been produced is indicated by the fact that J. Annas treats *dēmotikē aretē* tentatively and cursorily on two pages (*An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 136–7); it is discussed by Guthrie in only a single footnote (*History*, Vol. IV, p. 472, note 4), and equally briefly by White (N. White, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis, 1979), p. 116); T. Irwin argues, against the commonly accepted view, that in the *Republic* knowledge is a necessary condition for virtue: T. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), Ch. VII, note 26.

progress has been made towards such an account,<sup>7</sup> and it no longer seems possible to argue, as Foster did some years ago, that the souls of the producers consist entirely of appetite, as those of the auxiliaries are solely *thumoeides* and those of the rulers reason.<sup>8</sup> Among more adequate attempts to explain demotic virtue, the most notable is an article by Kraut.<sup>9</sup> Kraut's main findings are undoubtedly provocative and highly intelligent, but they seem to me to be vulnerable to criticism in crucial respects. In this paper I will present a somewhat different account, which I believe adheres more closely to the evidence.

Discussion here will be conducted in three sections. In the first, I will examine—partially by way of background—important aspects of the perfect virtue of the ruling class, which Plato discusses extensively throughout the *Republic*. In Section II, I will lay out what I take to be the essence of demotic virtue and demonstrate how it satisfies the criteria mentioned above. Finally, in Section III, I will elaborate upon and defend my conception and criticize the view put forward by Kraut.

## I

The nature of virtue is discussed at great length in the *Republic*. The most important sections for our purposes are the extended comparison of the parts and virtues of state and soul in Book IV and two of the arguments in Book IX that prove the superiority of the life of justice to that of injustice. We will also look at portions of Plato's account of various unjust men in Books VIII and IX and some isolated passages elsewhere. What is of immediate concern is that the points Plato chooses to emphasize vary between contexts. The discussion in Book IV, centring on the analogy between state and soul, describes psychological relationships in political terms, in terms of different elements

<sup>7</sup> Excellent treatments of various aspects of Plato's moral psychology in the *Republic* are found in the following: H.W.B. Joseph, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (Oxford, 1935), esp. Ch. III; N.R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 1–97; J.C.B. Gosling, *Plato* (London, 1973), Chs. II–VI; J. Moline, 'Plato on the Complexity of the Psyche', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 60 (1978); T. Penner, 'Thought and Desire in Plato' in *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays, II*, ed. G. Vlastos (Garden City, N.Y., 1971). Many arguments of these scholars, and of others as well, are ably synthesized by Annas, *Introduction*, Ch. 5.

<sup>8</sup> M.B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford, 1935), pp. 59, 61, 76–7, etc.; criticized by Joseph, *Essays*, pp. 114–21.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kraut, 'Reason and Justice in Plato's Republic' in *Exegesis and Argument*, ed. E.N. Lee *et al.* (Assen, 1973); a notable earlier attempt is made by R. Demos, 'Paradoxes in Plato's Doctrine of the Ideal State', *Classical Quarterly*, n.s. 7 (1957).

'ruling' and being 'ruled'. The discussion here is avowedly tentative<sup>10</sup> and must be supplemented by the account of the soul in terms of streams of desire in Book IX. One problem we face in treating both perfect and demotic virtue is reconciling these different accounts.

The elements of the soul are distinguished in Book IV, through a long and tortuous argument based on the principle of conflict, that the same thing cannot feel contradictory impulses toward some other thing in the same respect, at the same time (436b; also 437a, 439b).<sup>11</sup> Put very briefly, since it is common for individuals to feel simultaneous urges, e.g. to drink and not to drink, there must be conflicting elements in the soul (437b–39d). This argument distinguishes appetite and reason. As described initially, appetite is quite primitive. It is desire for gratification, most typically of physiologically rooted urges. Though there is a large class of appetites, its most conspicuous members are said to be thirst and hunger (437b). It is made up of impulses that draw and drag the individual (439d), driving him like a beast to drink (439b). What is especially notable is that appetites do not look past their objects; they desire only satisfaction, with no regard for the individual's greater good.<sup>12</sup>

Reason is contrasted with appetite precisely in that it does look toward the individual's greater good. It is initially described as that with which the soul calculates or deliberates (λογίζεταί, 439d5; cf. 353d). More fully rendered, its function is to calculate what is better or worse (περὶ τοῦ βελτιονός τε καὶ χείρονος, 441c1–2), meaning for the good of the soul as a whole (442c6–8). In this sense it is analogous to the class of rulers in the city, who apply their wisdom to the betterment of the city as a whole (428b–d). Thus, by implication, the conflict between urges to drink and not to drink is between appetite, wishing for gratification, and reason, calculating that for some reason it would not be to the individual's overall advantage to drink.

Plato's initial account of these matters is made more complicated by what is said in Book IX. Here reason itself is described as a form of desire (580d); it is a love of learning and truth (581b). Similarly, the appetitive part is described differently. The class of appetites is said to be too varied to be given a single name, but as a whole it is the money or gain loving part, because money

<sup>10</sup> As Socrates says at 435c–d: '... in my opinion we shall never apprehend this matter accurately from such methods as we are now employing in discussion. For there is another longer and harder way that conducts to this.'

<sup>11</sup> On this, see esp. R.F. Stalley, 'Plato's Arguments for the Division of the Reasoning and Appetitive Elements within the Soul', *Phronesis*, 20 (1975).

<sup>12</sup> 437d–439b, esp. 438a1–5; on this see esp. Murphy, *Interpretation*, pp. 45–8; Adam, *Republic*, on 437d, 438a.

is the chief means through which it is able to achieve gratification (580d–81a; also 442a5–7).

The third element, spirit, is initially described in Book IV as that with which we feel anger (439e). It is distinguished from the other elements because it naturally sides with reason to resist appetites, as in the case of Leontius (439e–40a), and so cannot be appetite. Because it is found in animals and children, who are not or not yet reasonable, and must also sometimes be rebuked by reason, it cannot be part of the reasoning element (439e–41c). It is described more fully as anger motivated by an individual's conception of what is just, fierce when he feels he has been wronged, but docile when he believes himself to be in the wrong (440c–d). In Book IX it is characterized somewhat differently as a love of honour, victory and good reputation (580d ff.). The link between these different descriptions is, very briefly, that it covers a range of emotions concerned with someone's image of himself, and his desire that others share that image. Deriving its emotional force from the desire to live up to a certain ideal or standard, it is naturally allied with reason, presumably because reason supplies the standard (442c2; 440c8).<sup>13</sup>

Putting our various accounts together, the perfect virtue of the philosopher can be described in outline as follows. The philosopher is just because reason rules in his soul, informing the entire soul with a love of knowledge and learning. His appetites are kept in place by reason aided by spirit, and so he is also courageous and temperate. His wisdom stems from the role his reasoning element plays, ruling the soul, looking out for its overall good, and, an important point to which we will return, making sure that the other parts receive their proper satisfaction (586d–87a).

Plato argues that justice benefits its possessor because of the psychological harmony that is both produced by justice and is the essence of justice. Only someone with this harmony, analogous to the health of the body, satisfies all his legitimate desires. Thus justice unifies and harmonizes the three main groups of impulses in the soul. People who lack justice lead unbalanced lives; they surfeit parts of their nature at the cost of starving others. This is the thrust of the argument from the analogy of state and soul that is carried on throughout the bulk of the work. It is supplemented with the two additional arguments put forward in Book IX (580c–88a) to the effect that the pleasures and desires of reason are higher than those of the other elements, and so the just man, who is oriented towards reason, leads a superior life.

<sup>13</sup> *Thumoeides* is well discussed by Joseph, *Essays*, pp. 63–78; Gosling, *Plato*, Ch. III; and more briefly by J. Moreau, *La construction de l'idéalisme platonicien* (Paris, 1939), pp. 242–6.

So far as we have taken it, this outline of perfect virtue seems to me to be fairly straightforward and acceptable to most scholars, regardless of how one chooses to fill it in. But beyond this point there are problems and sources of confusion which must be sorted out. We can mention two with which we will be concerned. First, the just man is said to profit in two ways:

- a) Reason rules in his soul and looks out for the interests of all legitimate desires.
- b) Reason, which is a superior desire, rules in his soul and therefore leads him to pursue superior objects which afford superior pleasure.

Second, reason is said to 'rule' in two different ways:

- c) Reason, is seen to rule because it controls the other elements.
- d) Reason is seen to rule because it orients the soul as a whole to the pursuit of the objects of its desire.

Now, (a) and (b) are not incompatible with one another or with (c) and (d), nor are (c) and (d) with one another. But explaining exactly how they all fit together is complex. What is crucial for our purposes is that all of these are not encountered only in the soul exhibiting perfect virtue. In running through his description of perfect virtue, Plato does not distinguish aspects of his moral psychology that are peculiar to the philosopher from those that are found in other souls as well. It is important for us to make some of these distinctions. In particular, I think it will be seen that other individuals exemplify (a) and (c), but not (b) and (d). And as I will argue in the following section, this is the essence of demotic virtue.

## II

Having sketched an outline of Plato's account of perfect virtue, it is necessary to disentangle aspects that apply only to the philosophers from others that are found in a wider range of individuals, especially the lowest class in the state. As we have noted, Plato does not explicitly distinguish these in the text of the *Republic*, but much of what he says can be sorted out. A number of points must be established and distinctions made, which, when put to use, will allow us to see demotic virtue.

A word about substantiation is in order here. I will present two types of evidence to support my contentions. In presenting each point, I will cite passages in the *Republic* that seem to support it. Thus I will give evidence for each step of my argument as it is introduced, though perhaps some of this evidence is compatible with interpretations other than my own. Accordingly, in Section III, I will also defend my account as a whole. The standard of proof in questions of the sort dealt with in this paper is not absolute, but rather based on comparison with views put forth by others. Thus I will compare my

account to what I believe is the most interesting view yet developed, that of Kraut, in order to show that it fits more closely with the evidence, not only of the *Republic*, but of some other dialogues as well.

Our first point concerns the way parts 'rule' in the soul. As we have seen, reason is said to rule in quite different ways. Plato's account of psychical relationships in Book IV is modelled on the workings of the just state. In this context parts of the soul 'rule' and are 'ruled' in political terms; i.e. the stronger element 'rules' by forcing the weaker to go along with it. This kind of relationship is encountered in conflicts between different parts of the soul with different desires. We can refer to it as 'predominant rule'—predominant rule: with element X wishing to do A, and element Y wishing to do not-A, if the soul chooses to do A, X rules over Y. According to this conception of rule, then, when Leontius gives in to his desire to gaze at corpses though he believes he shouldn't, appetite temporarily exercises predominant rule over reason.

Psychical relationships are described rather differently elsewhere in the *Republic*, especially in Book IX, in terms of streams of desire. Plato's main concern here is explaining how the three elements in the soul give rise to the three basic kinds of lives, devoted respectively to the pursuit of wisdom, honour and gain.<sup>14</sup> The orientation of each life results from the psychical element that dominates, causing the entire soul to pursue its end and pleasure (esp. 580d–81c). Because the ruling part infuses the soul with its values or norms, we can call 'rule' in this sense 'normative rule'—normative rule: if a soul (regularly) gives precedence to values associated with element X, rather than those associated with element Y, X rules over Y.<sup>15</sup>

One important difference between these types of rule must be indicated. The case Plato generally discusses is perfect virtue, in which reason is the ruling principle in both senses. But only the normative rule of reason determines the soul's value orientation. An individual in whom reason rules in this sense is necessarily a lover of wisdom, a philosopher. The predominant rule of reason is more flexible. It implies merely that reason is able to subordinate the other two parts—dominating appetite with the aid of spirit—in the service of whatever values it chooses. If reason rules normatively as well, these will be the values of reason, in which case, again, the individual will be a philosopher. But the predominant rule of reason is encountered in other types of souls as well.

<sup>14</sup> On the connections between the tripartite soul and the three lives, see J.L. Stocks, 'Plato and the Tripartite Soul', *Mind*, 24 (1915).

<sup>15</sup> On the two senses of rule, I am indebted to Kraut, 'Reason and Justice', pp. 208–13.

As we have seen above, reason, like the other psychical elements, is described differently in different contexts. In Book IV it is mainly a capacity for deliberation, while in Book IX it is mainly a form of desire. Because of the importance of the deliberative role of reason for the argument of this paper, we will refer to it as 'instrumental' reason, in order to isolate it from reason's other roles and functions. Though much of Plato's account is far removed from the familiar conception of reason advanced by Hume, instrumental reason is similar.<sup>16</sup> It does not itself supply motivation but only ascertains means to the satisfaction of given desires. It is indeed 'the slave of the passions'—literally so in a context we will encounter in the following paragraphs—though other aspects of reason supply ends as well as means. Thus instrumental reason is ultimately subordinate to whatever passion rules normatively in the soul.

Instrumental reason is central to demotic virtue, because it is possessed by (virtually) all human souls.<sup>17</sup> I believe a rough correlation can be established between the two aspects of reason we have seen and the two kinds of rule; reason rules predominantly in its deliberative capacity, normatively as a desire. Accordingly, the crucial distinction between aspects of Plato's account of virtue that apply solely to philosophers and those that extend to other men as well is that, while the normative rule of reason as desire is found only in philosophers, the predominant rule of instrumental reason is encountered in all human souls, whatever desires dominate normatively.

There is strong evidence that Plato believes all individuals to possess instrumental reason, i.e. to be 'rational'. Thus in Book VII he talks of even evil men as possessing intelligence. Men who are 'bad but smart' have keen vision in their souls, though this faculty is forcibly enlisted in the service of evil (518c–19a). Similarly, in Book IV unjust action is said to be performed under the domination (ἐπιστατούσαν, 444a2) of an opinion which is actually ignorance, while the degenerate men described in Books VIII–IX possess reason, though directed at unworthy ends. In the soul of the oligarchic man, for example, appetite and avarice set themselves up as king, enslaving reason and forcing it to calculate and look to (ἐὰ λογίζεσθαι οὐδὲ σκοπεῖν) nothing but making money (553c–d).

<sup>16</sup> Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Bk. III, Pt. iii, Sec. i; for some qualifications here, see Annas, *Introduction*, pp. 134–5.

<sup>17</sup> It is not certain that Plato would extend reason to *all* men, e.g. *barbaroi*, deranged individuals, etc. In addition, people obviously are not reasonable before they reach a certain age. I will, however, slide over these exceptions and discuss Plato's view as pertaining to everyone.

Extrapolating from Plato's account, we can reconcile different aspects of his discussion by introducing a concept, the idea of a rational strategy or plan of life designed to maximize satisfaction of an individual's preferred desires.<sup>18</sup> Such a plan is formulated by instrumental reason, but again, this faculty supplies only means, the ends arising from desires that normatively rule. Though Plato does not discuss such plans directly in the *Republic*, it seems safe to attribute belief in them to him. Elsewhere he discusses the importance of the long-term maximization of pleasure,<sup>19</sup> while we have seen that the oligarchic man is described as applying his rational faculties to the task of increasing his wealth. Along similar lines, the democratic man is explicitly said to arrange a plan for his life in a way that pleases him.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to formulating a plan to satisfy the ruling passion, instrumental reason lends additional support by adopting suitable convictions. Though we seem to be in danger of endlessly multiplying entities and agencies in the soul, Plato clearly believes that individuals hold opinions that conform with their (normatively) ruling passions, and so pursue objects of desire in the belief that they are desirable. Thus each of the three types of men believes that his own way of life is the most pleasant (581c–d), while the democratic man fortifies his life of indiscriminate pleasure-seeking with the beliefs that all pleasures are equal (561b–c) and that such a life embodies true freedom and happiness (561d–e). As Plato says at the end of Book IX, when reason is weak and cannot control the appetites, it must serve them and learn ways to flatter them (591c)—which undoubtedly means telling them what they wish to hear.<sup>21</sup>

Opinions are not alone in being controlled by ruling appetites. The spirited part is controlled as well. We have noted that in addition to being a desire for honour, this part acts to reinforce the predominant rule of reason by feeling anger at affronts to its conception of self. We have also noted that in this 'instrumental' capacity, spirit's ideational content, its sense of self, derives from reason. Thus when some normatively ruling appetite is able to determine reason's opinions, it controls the opinions attached to *thumoeides* as

<sup>18</sup> I have in mind something similar to what is presided over by Butler's 'cool self-love': *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* (London, 1726), Sermon I, para. 14, II, para. 11; see also J. Mabbott, 'Reason and Desire', *Philosophy*, 28 (1953).

<sup>19</sup> This is the function of 'the measuring art' in the *Protagoras* (356e–57c).

<sup>20</sup> δηλον ὅτι ἰδίαν ἕκαστος ἂν κατασκευῆν του αὐτοῦ βίου κατασκευάζοιτο ἐν αὐτῇ, ἥτις ἕκαστον ἀρέσκοι (557b8–10).

<sup>21</sup> How parts of the soul communicate with one another is discussed interestingly (if a bit fancifully) by Moline, 'Plato on the Complexity of the Psyche', pp. 13 ff.; see also Penner, 'Thought and Desire', esp. pp. 97–103.



well. Accordingly, in the case of the oligarchic man, enthroned avarice has instrumental reason kneeling on its right, while spirit kneels on its left, admiring and honouring nothing but wealth and wealthy individuals (553d). The values of the democratic man are similarly affected. Under the sway of his desires, he comes to despise such virtues as moderation and reverence, while holding qualities such as shamelessness and insolence in high regard (560d–61a).

It seems, then, that when a given desire comes to rule the soul normatively, it also rules predominantly through surrogates. By altering the opinions of instrumental reason and *thumoeides*, it organizes the individual as a whole around an orderly plan of life devoted to the maximization of its desired objects. In this way the predominant rule of reason is found in souls normatively ruled by appetite. This explains the apparent paradox that an appetitive man is able to suppress certain of his appetites. In cases of this sort, his reason and spirit unite to weed out appetites that conflict with his plan of life. Plato says that the oligarchic man subordinates his unnecessary appetites—and some of his better ones as well—regarding them as too expensive, and so liable to interfere with his overriding concern with wealth (554a–d, 558d). Even the democratic man suppresses some desires—the unspeakable ones, active only during sleep, which come to dominate the tyrant's soul. Plato says that all men have such desires, though they are normally controlled by an alliance of the better desires and reason (571b). But they awaken when the rest of the soul—'the rational, gentle, and dominant (ἀρχον) part' (571c)—sleeps.

It seems to me that the most reasonable conclusion to draw from the language used in the last example is, as we have said, that all men are rational. Even the democratic man, who is one step from the bottom of the ladder, possesses a psychic structure analogous to that of the best man. In his soul too (instrumental) reason rules, allied with *thumoeides*, suppressing hostile appetites, though these parts exercise predominant rule in the interests of the motley assortment of appetites that rules normatively. It follows, then, that when Plato speaks of the oligarchical and democratic men as ruled (ἀρχόμενον) by their necessary and unnecessary appetites respectively (559c–d), the sense referred to is normative rule. For in these souls, as in all human souls, instrumental reason exercises predominant rule in conjunction with its ally, spirit.

In order to make the points discussed above somewhat clearer, we can sort out the major functions and operations of reason and spirit in the soul of any given individual. These would be something along the following lines:

- 1 Reason rules predominantly. In this position it does such things as:
  - 1.1 It articulates the preferences of the normatively ruling desire; it translates these preferences into beliefs about the good, about the things that are worth having in life and which make one happy.
  - 1.2 It ascertains means to attain as much of these goods as possible.
  - 1.3 It decides which of the soul's desires are compatible with obtaining as much of its chosen goods as possible, and which are incompatible and so must be suppressed.
- 2 Spirit is the ally of reason. In this role its major operations are the following:
  - 2.1 It holds certain qualities of character or personality in high regard, and others in low regard.
  - 2.2 It gives aid in the form of emotional support to reason in its pursuit of the good.
  - 2.3 It helps reason suppress desires incompatible with maximizing the good.

It is worth repeating that reason and spirit perform these operations, regardless of the part that rules normatively in the soul. The normatively ruling element infuses the soul as a whole with its desire. In more concrete terms, this largely boils down to (i) determining the content of instrumental reason's beliefs about the good (in 1.1), and (ii) determining the content of the moral qualities admired by spirit (in 2.1). In the case of the normative rule of the spirited element, for example, this largely boils down to: (i) insuring that instrumental reason believes that the goods of honour are the highest and that happiness is best obtained through possession of these; and (ii) insuring that spirit attaches admiration to qualities such as courage and athletic prowess, while despising cowardice, weakness, etc.

Putting together the points we have established, it seems that the soul of the philosopher differs from other souls in its normative rule by reason, though all souls are similar in being ruled predominantly by instrumental reason. As Plato sees things, however, the difference in normative rule is of the utmost consequence, and decisively determines how individuals fare. It is clear that philosophers live well while other men live badly for the two reasons we have cited above ( (a) and (b) on page 368). (b) does not require discussion here and can be put aside. (a) however is important. Though the philosopher's soul is predominantly ruled by instrumental reason—in which sense it is no different from other souls—it is different in that its instrumental reason looks to the interests of all the soul's parts, thereby instilling balance and harmony. In souls normatively ruled by *thumoeides* or appetite, this is not the case; such souls are unbalanced and torn by internal strife. This contrast is central to the state-soul argument that dominates *Republic* II–IX. To formulate this dif-

ference clearly, we can say that a soul is ruled 'holistically' if the interests of all parts are attended to, and 'factiously' if the normatively ruling part looks only to itself. Applying these terms, then, Plato's central argument for the superiority of the philosopher's life amounts to the claim that in souls normatively ruled by reason, the plan of life formulated by instrumental reason will be 'holistic', while in other souls it will be 'factious'.

The reasons for this difference are never clearly explained by Plato and must be surmised. Two considerations seem relevant. First, insofar as reason is a desire for knowledge and truth, it judges more accurately than other appetites do (esp. 582c-d)—regardless of how appetites 'judge'.<sup>22</sup> Thus in its instrumental capacity, reason is more likely to be concerned with the important truth that all parts of the soul must be harmonized. An individual normatively ruled by reason knows the illusory nature of the pleasures of the lower appetites. He knows that true happiness does not result from the next promotion or the next ice cream soda and so can chart a course from which true pleasures, including the pleasures of balance and harmony, can result.

Second, Plato holds that only an individual who is freed from the immediate press of appetite is capable of wider vision. We have seen that the appetitive part of the soul is most characteristically made up of physiological urges that demand nothing but their immediate satisfaction. Such urges are not capable of looking past their objects, and so until satiated fixate instrumental reason on means to their satisfaction. Add to this Plato's conviction that these urges are not capable of real or lasting satisfaction, and it follows that individuals dominated by them will be totally dominated. Unable to think of anything but means to their insatiable ends, such individuals cannot turn their thoughts to the needs and desires of other parts of the soul.

Reason, on the other hand, is capable of real satisfaction, and with satisfaction comes altruism. The role reason plays in the soul is analogous to that of the philosophers in the ideal state, who, knowing the true joys of philosophy, can be trusted to rule for the benefit of the state as a whole (520c-21b). Reason, thus, is able to lift its gaze from its own desire for satisfaction and to turn to the needs of the soul as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

Only souls ruled normatively by reason, then, follow life plans that benefit all aspects of the self. When lesser appetites dominate, they look solely to

<sup>22</sup> On this, see 602c-3b; and references in note 21. Plato's personification of the parts of the soul cannot be discussed in this essay; it is well discussed by Annas, *Introduction*, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>23</sup> cf. the argument of J. Cooper, 'The Psychology of Justice in Plato', *American Journal of Philosophy*, 14 (1977).

their own satisfaction. Other elements are forcibly suppressed,<sup>24</sup> and within such souls faction and discord reign. To make matters worse, as we have seen, Plato believes that attempts to satisfy the lesser appetites are futile. His view in the *Republic* recalls the myths of the water-carriers and of the leaky jars in the *Gorgias* (493b-94a). In the *Republic* too the lesser appetites are insatiable. Indulging them only makes them bigger, stronger and hungrier (442a-b, 588e-89a). In Book IX pursuers of the appetitive life are described as feeding like cattle, striking out murderously at those around them, as they try to fill what cannot be filled (586a-b). And their discords with others are reflected in the strife between the different elements in their own natures.

It is to rescue individuals from this type of existence that Plato believes they must be brought up and educated in the ideal state. But there is a limit to what can be done to help them. Plato is irrevocably committed to the existence of fundamental differences between types of individuals. That people naturally fall under the threefold classification of lives is one of his governing assumptions, reflected in the three-class system in the state. Thus the vast majority of people cannot be freed from the dominance of appetite to the extent of setting up reason to rule normatively in their souls. But instrumental reason can be tampered with.

Plato's precise opinions on this matter are nowhere explicitly stated, but I think it is reasonable to surmise his believing that insofar as men are rational they are subject to persuasion. Insofar as they have opinions, their opinions can be altered. We have seen that under the normative rule of appetites people's deliberative capacities are adversely affected in various ways. Accordingly, one essential aim of the educational programme in the state is to weaken individuals' appetites, and in doing so to strengthen their rational faculties. Provided one begins shaping the individual's soul while he is still very young, Plato believes that his appetites can be tamed and his reason strengthened to the point at which it is capable of resisting the false opinions lesser desires would force upon it. Such an individual can then be taught true opinions, and in this way the superior reasoning powers of the philosophers can predominate in his soul, and in the souls of the lower class as a whole. It seems to me that something along these lines is the main function of the educational system of the ideal state as it pertains to the producers.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See esp. 554b-e, 560d-e, 577c-80c, and 547b-c.

<sup>25</sup> Though Plato, of course, says little about educating the producers, it seems clear that they must receive at least some education. This is necessary to raise gifted members of this class to the highest class (415b-c), and as such would be seen to be necessary by the rulers (see 497c-d). An additional indication is found at 590c-91b (part of which is quoted below on page 379). Many scholars believe that Plato intends this; see e.g. F.M. Cornford, *The Republic of Plato* (Oxford,



If the instrumental reason of the producers can be controlled in this way, one crucial conviction they will be led to hold is the importance of balance and harmony in their lives. Taking, for example, the case of a man who loves wealth, such a man can be taught to moderate his desire. From his earliest years his unnecessary appetites will be tamed (see 559a), and while his preference for wealth and the pleasures it provides cannot be altered, his eventual ideal of a wealthy individual can be carefully shaped. Were such an individual to grow up in an oligarchic society, he would perhaps admire and emulate the ruthless tycoon who ruins his competitors, or the J.P. Morgan whose immense wealth is turned towards extravagance and gluttony. But by educating him properly, his ideal of a wealthy man can be turned in the direction of someone like Cephalus, wealthy but prudent and sober, and not adverse to intellectual discussion. In short, the holistic orientation of reason implies that people can be drawn away from exclusive preoccupation with a single part of their natures. They can be imbued with something of the traditional Greek virtue of *mēden agan*. Order and harmony can be incorporated into their lives, benefiting both themselves and their state.

It is this holistic orientation of the individual's reason, in a soul ruled normatively by a lesser appetite, that strikes me as the essence of demotic virtue. And I think it can be seen to satisfy the four criteria listed at the beginning of this essay. In light of the discussion throughout this section, the criteria require only brief treatment.

First, it is clear how this kind of virtue is deficient to that of the philosophers, whose souls are also ruled normatively by reason. It will be seen in the next section that individuals who are virtuous in this fashion are deficient in regard to their motivation to be virtuous as well.

In regard to the second criterion, we see that demotic virtue, as we have described it, is superior to any qualities possessed by degenerate men, because of its holistic orientation. Virtue for Plato is intimately bound up with inner harmony; individuals with demotic virtue are internally balanced and harmonious in ways that other individuals are not, even though their lives too are organized around 'rational' life plans.

Turning to our third criterion, as we have seen, individuals possessing demotic virtue are ruled holistically in such a way as to produce inner harmony. This I believe is the 'principle similar to that which rules the best man', mentioned in Book IX (590d). And again, it is something absent from the psychic structure of other individuals.

1941), pp. 63–4, p. 154, note 1. The contrary view is argued by G. Hourani, 'The Education of the Third Class in Plato's *Republic*', *Classical Quarterly*, 43 (1949); I think Plato's language at 415b tells strongly against Hourani's case.

Finally, we have seen how this virtue benefits its possessors. Though they cannot lead lives devoted to the goals of reason, they can still achieve a measure of inner harmony and inner peace. Given the hellish condition Plato believes to prevail in souls dominated by the lower appetites, this is no mean accomplishment.

### III

Having run through my account of demotic virtue, I will defend it by comparing it with that of Kraut, which I believe is the most provocative alternative so far developed. To put Kraut's argument as briefly as possible, he holds that the virtue of the lowest class is a semblance of that of the philosophers, because it is based on a lower form of reason. What is striking about Kraut's view is his belief that the souls of the producers are normatively ruled by reason, though the reason that dominates each is rooted in his craft, which he follows for its own sake. Investing his psychic energy in his craft, then, the individual comes to care less for his baser appetites, and to mirror the psychic structure of the philosopher.<sup>26</sup>

I believe that Kraut's solution is interesting and attractive, though a bit out of touch with Plato's profound pessimism concerning the bulk of mankind. Its real shortcoming, however, is its lack of direct textual support, of which there is almost none.<sup>27</sup> The language Plato uses to indicate the relationship between rulers and producers frequently centres on the former's acting to curb the appetites of the latter (esp. at *Rep* 590c–d). As Kraut realizes, this suggests a different conception of the virtue of the lowest class, one which he is at pains to deny. He argues against the view that the producers' intellectual deficiency boils down to their being ruled normatively by appetite, and so requiring external guidance from the philosophers. He presents two grounds, which we will examine.

First, Kraut argues that the idea that the philosophers will forcibly restrain the producers' appetites is incompatible with the gratitude and affection with which the latter regard them: 'It is hard to see how a person who views wealth (for example) as his most important goal could regard a ruler who prevents him from acting on this value as a savior and helper.'<sup>28</sup> Second, Kraut has trouble seeing how, on this account, the producers benefit by being ruled: 'Plato would have to be saying that a person with incorrigible and incorrect

<sup>26</sup> Kraut, 'Reason and Justice', pp. 218–22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, see esp. p. 219.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

preferences benefits from being forced not to express them in action'.<sup>29</sup> Being forced to reject this account, then, Kraut searches for an alternative view, with the result we have noted.

As should be clear at this point, I believe that the view Kraut rejects is, if properly developed, preferable to the one he is led to accept. The reasons for my belief can be gathered from the account of demotic virtue developed in the last section. But in order to substantiate that account, I will defend it from Kraut's objections.

It seems to me that Kraut takes too monolithic a view of what it is to live under the normative rule of an inferior desire. Taking as our example the pursuit of physical pleasure, it is clear that this kind of existence can assume multitudinous forms, ranging from the heedless pursuit of all possible sources of gratification—as recommended by Callicles in the *Gorgias*<sup>30</sup>—to a careful maximization of long range pleasures, under the guidance of a sophisticated felicific calculus. It is clear—as Plato himself argues in the *Protagoras*<sup>31</sup>—that the successful realization of the latter course requires renunciation of many immediate pleasures. In addition, as we have said, Plato believes that appetites are insatiable and tend to grow as they are indulged. Accordingly, he holds that somehow to induce an individual to renounce immediate gratification can be helpful in enabling him to live what is on the whole a more pleasurable existence. Thus, though an individual might derive some pleasure from cigarette smoking, or, a more extreme example, from the use of highly addictive drugs, by helping him to break such habits, one enables him to maximize his long term pleasure. Even if, under the spell of his addiction, he would be inclined to resist—believing no doubt that he is not addicted, 'he can quit anytime he wants'—once the habit is broken, he will be grateful. He will benefit, and realizing this be thankful for the assistance received.

It is this sort of argument that I believe Plato has in mind. The examples of cigarette smoking and drug addiction express what Plato takes to be the essence of physical pleasure. This kind of argument can easily be seen to meet Kraut's objections. The reformed addict is grateful to his helper, and clearly benefits from being helped. And so, though the producers cannot be brought to prefer the goals of reason, they can be brought to lead moderate, sensible lives, which, Plato is not alone in arguing, actually give more pleasure over the long run. But only when individuals have been freed from the tyranny of

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>30</sup> *Gorgias*, 491e–92a, 494a–95a.

<sup>31</sup> *Protagoras*, 353c–55a; on this see C.C.W. Taylor, *Plato: Protagoras* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 174–9.

appetite can they realize this, and so their appetites must be tamed.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, individuals must be brought to realize the importance of catering to more than their appetites. Since the maximization of pleasure requires staying on course, people must learn to care for reason and spirit, while these are themselves necessary parts of a truly pleasurable life.

To sum up then, the lives of the producers will be lives of balance and moderation. Though they pursue the goals of appetite, they will pursue them 'holistically' rather than 'factiously'. It is a necessary condition of their virtue, as well as that of the rulers, that education in *mousikē* and *gumnastikē* impose order on their souls (cf. 441e–42a).<sup>33</sup> As Plato writes in an important passage:

And it is plain . . . that this is the purpose of the law, which is the ally of all classes in the state, and this is the aim of our control of children, our not leaving them free before we have established, so to speak, a constitutional government within them and by fostering the best element in them with the aid of the like in ourselves, have set up in its place a similar guardian and ruler in the child, and then, and then only, we leave it free. (590e–91a)

I think it can also be seen that there is a clear connection between Plato's view of demotic virtue, especially demotic justice, and more popular conceptions of virtue, which centre mainly on certain kinds of behaviour, especially refraining from wrongdoing.<sup>34</sup> Once individuals are made virtuous in the way we have described, they will refrain from wrongdoing in order to preserve their inner harmony (esp. 589c–90a, 443e–44d). Having received proper nurture, they will realize the importance of this; having had their appetites subordinated to the predominant rule of reason, they will be able to follow through. Those who possess demotic virtue will, accordingly, be virtuous in the conventional sense of the word as well. Of course this virtue is deficient in that it stems from self-interested, appetitive motives, but that cannot be avoided. Though not perfect, such virtue is far superior to any possible alternative.

<sup>32</sup> Taming the appetites of his subjects is one of the ruler's main functions in the *Gorgias*, esp. 505b.

<sup>33</sup> See note 25 above.

<sup>34</sup> Connecting Plato's account of virtue with popular conceptions is a difficult problem, raised by D. Sachs, 'A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*', reprinted in *Plato II*, ed. G. Vlastos; an excellent discussion of the problem is Annas, 'Plato and Common Morality', *Classical Quarterly*, n.s. 28 (1978). Kraut, 'Reason and Justice', is also addressed to it.

Plato criticizes lower forms of virtue because of their inferior motivation in the *Phaedo*. In closing, and as my final piece of evidence, I will briefly discuss these passages, for at one point in the *Phaedo* he refers to such virtue as *dēmōtikē* or *politikē aretē*. His overall attitude towards this in the *Phaedo* is negative. He calls it 'a painted imitation of true virtue', and says it is 'slavish and has nothing healthy or true in it', because it exists without wisdom and is motivated by considerations of appetite.<sup>35</sup> Thus the possessors of such virtue are temperate only for the sake of gaining greater pleasures; they purchase virtue by exchanging pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fears for fears, etc., as if they were coins.<sup>36</sup> What is important for our purposes is that scholars frequently connect Plato's reference to this as *dēmōtikē* or *politikē aretē*<sup>37</sup> with the *dēmōtikē aretē* discussed in the *Republic*.<sup>38</sup>

As we have seen, demotic virtue in the *Republic* is also exercised in the interests of lesser appetites, those that normatively rule. Plato's attitude towards such virtue is far less hostile in the *Republic*, as its inculcation is a central function of the ideal state, but he is less hostile to the body and its desires generally in the *Republic*.<sup>39</sup> And so whereas one unfavourable consequence of a view such as Kraut's is leaving us with two quite different accounts of what Plato calls *dēmōtikē aretē*,<sup>40</sup> the account given in this paper is able to reconcile them into one basically consistent doctrine.

In conclusion, then, Plato generally roots his account of virtue in the *Republic* in the need to meet the legitimate needs of all aspects of the personality. If the philosopher's virtue entails accommodation to the body and its necessary appetites,<sup>41</sup> the virtue of the producers entails accommodation to reason. Even if the members of this class can never slough off their appetitive orientation in favour of the goals of reason, under proper super-

<sup>35</sup> *Phaedo*, 69b.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 68e–69b.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 82a11–b1.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g. Adam, *Republic*, on 430c; Moreau, *Construction*, connects this with related contexts in a number of dialogues (pp. 97–100, 236).

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g. T.M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (Toronto, 1970), pp. 55–8; Murphy, *Interpretation*, pp. 26–8; see also note 41 below.

<sup>40</sup> Kraut does not (and I believe, cannot) connect his view with the *dēmōtikē aretē* of the *Phaedo* (Kraut, 'Reason and Justice', p. 222, note 20).

<sup>41</sup> Necessary and unnecessary appetites are distinguished at *Republic* 338d–59c, a distinction not made in the *Phaedo*

vision they will be able to subordinate their appetites to rational control. Under the predominant rule of reason, such individuals will be valuable members of society. They will stay in their places and do their jobs. They will enjoy their lives and look to their rulers as saviours and benefactors—which, in Plato's eyes, they would be. And so even if members of the lowest class cannot be philosophers, Plato believes that raising them to attainable heights is a goal well worth pursuing.

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