

Description of the Tyrant

S has distinguished between necessary and unnecessary desires and pleasures.

Necessary desires: desires that cannot train ourselves to overcome. These are desires for objects that we need to survive, e.g., the desire for food.

Unnecessary desires: desires which we can train ourselves to overcome, e.g., desire for luxurious items and a decadent lifestyle.

S begins his description of the tyrant by saying that some of the unnecessary desires are particularly abhorrent. These are what he calls the lawless desires:

- Desires awakened in sleep when the rest of the soul slumbers. During sleep, it is free from the control of shame and reason.
- S lists 1) sexual desires for anyone and anything, e.g., family members, animals, etc. 2) Desires for violence, e.g., desires to commit murders. 3) Desires for all and every food. 4) Generally, these are the desires that we would normally be ashamed to admit having while awake.
- They are present in most of us, but they are held in check by the better desires in alliance with reason. In a few people, they have been eliminated entirely or only a few weak ones remain, while in others they are stronger and more numerous.

How the tyrant comes to be

Recall that the oligarch produces democratic children. These parents are driven by thrift and greed, and they hate those unnecessary desires that cause them to spend more than needed. Their children are rich, but they hate their parents for their thriftiness. They associate with people who desire the fine and unnecessary things. Pulled between two types of desires, greed and opulence, they indulge the latter more than their parents. But they do not become lawless since they don't completely abandon their parents' values.

The child of the democrat does not have the values of an oligarchic parent that can check their lawless desires. They satisfy them more and more, and so they develop an erotic love of these lawless desires. The tyrant arises when the lawless desires take hold.

And when the other desires-filled with incense, myrrh, wreaths, wine, and the other pleasures found in their company-buzz around the drone, nurturing it and making it grow as large as possible, they plant the sting of longing in it. Then this leader of the soul adopts madness as its bodyguard and becomes frenzied. If it finds any beliefs or desires in the man that are thought to be good or that still have some shame, it destroys them and throws them out, until it has purged him of moderation and filled him with imported madness.

How the tyrant lives

General point: the tyrant's waking life is like the nightmares in which lawless desires roam free.

- Since erotic love rules, the tyrant directs all their energies to feasts, revelries, luxuries, sex, etc. Unleashed, many desires demand satisfaction and the tyrant is singularly driven to acquire whatever is needed to satisfy them. They spend all their income, borrow wildly, sell all their goods.
- But desires need satisfaction, so when all this has gone, the tyrant will acquire whatever desire demands by any source. They take and spends their parent's wealth without shame. They rob, bribe, loot temples, etc. They do this without shame.
- Tyrant associates with flatterers, makes merely instrumental friends, etc. They are driven to power to ensure that they have the means to satisfy their lawless desires without rebuke.
- Beliefs and opinions about what is fine and noble have been replaced with various beliefs about what they deserve, and any other belief that lets these desires to be pursued without guilt and shame.

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. But, rather, erotic love lives like a tyrant within him, in complete anarchy and lawlessness as his sole ruler, and drives him, as if he were a city, to dare anything that will provide sustenance for itself.

An argument that the philosophical life is preferable to the tyrant's (580c-583b)

1. Each part of the soul has a distinct kind of pleasure.
2. Each part of the soul is motivated by a desire for the associated pleasure.
 - (a) Reason desires knowledge and truth.
 - (b) Spirit desires honor, power, and fame.
 - (c) Appetite desires (i) food, drink, sex, rest, and (ii) wealth and money as a means to these.
3. Different type of people are dominated by different parts.
 - (a) The philosopher has (i) fully experienced the pleasure of learning and understands the genuine value of wisdom, (ii) has fully experienced the pleasures of honor and rightly judges its limited value,

- (ii) has fully experienced the pleasures of wealth and rightly judges its very limited value.
 - (b) The honor lover (i) does not really understand the value of learning and says it is valueless since it does not bring distinction, (ii) has experienced pleasure from honor, victory, strife, but mistakenly thinks honor is the highest value, (iii) thinks that pleasure of money is simply vulgar and grasps that wealth is of limited value.
 - (c) The wealth lover (i) lacks experience with value of learning or wisdom and says it is valueless since it does not bring wealth, (ii) lacks experience with value of honor or position and says it is valueless since it does not bring wealth, (iii) has experienced pleasure from wealth and gain, and mistakenly thinks wealth is highest value
- 4. Each type of person believes their life is most pleasant.
 - 5. Only the philosopher, the one ruled by reason, has experience of all three types of pleasure.
- C1. Therefore, the philosopher is the most reliable judge of which life is most pleasant.
 - C2. Therefore, the philosopher's life is the most pleasant.