

Charmides' Second Definition
Temperance Is a Sense of Shame (160d5–161b4)

So, Charmides, I said, this time pay closer attention, turn away (from other things) to look into yourself,¹ think about what kind of person temperance by its presence makes you, and what sort of thing temperance would have to be in order to make you that kind of person, and taking all this into account tell me, well and bravely, what it appears to you to be. And he, after holding back a little and after thinking things through to himself very manfully, said: 'Well, it seems to me that temperance makes a person feel ashamed or bashful, and that temperance is the same as a sense of shame'. (160d5–e5)²

Socrates' exhortation to Charmides accords with the 'best method' (158e6–7).³ He asks the youth to attend more carefully to his own sense of himself in order to register the causal effect of temperance in him and hence determine the nature of the virtue (160d5–8). Again, all that Charmides is expected to do is articulate a belief based on direct awareness. As on the previous occasion, so on this one the belief will be submitted to dialectical examination. Now, however, Socrates raises the bar a little higher. He urges Charmides to look *more* carefully into himself (*mallon*: 160d5) and uses the term '*apemblemsas*' (160d6)⁴ – literally 'looking away from something and into something else' – to indicate that Charmides should try harder to switch his attention *away* (*apo-*) from external things and *inwards* (*en-*) towards himself.

¹ At 160d6, I keep the ms. reading ἀπεμβλέψας instead of Burnet's ἐμβλέψας.

² Most translators render αἰδώς by 'modesty': see, for instance, Lamb and Sprague. I prefer 'a sense of shame', because this rendering better conveys that αἰδώς is not merely a matter of modest behaviour but also an inner attitude underpinning modest behaviour. On this point, see Raymond 2018, 23 and n. 1.

³ Schmid 1998, 28, contends that the first definition merely expresses a common opinion whereas the second expresses Charmides' own perception of himself. However, there is no textual evidence supporting that claim. Charmides is supposed to have reached both definitions by attending to his αἰσθησις, awareness, of himself, as Socrates urged him to do.

⁴ ἀπεμβλέψας B sed λεψ in ras. See note 1 in this chapter.

What should Charmides look away from? Given the socio-political connotations of the conception of temperance as a sort of *hēsychiôtês*, doing things quietly or unobtrusively, it is probable that Socrates is inviting the youth to put such external considerations aside in order to concentrate solely on his own sense of the virtue. In addition, Socrates is encouraging the young man to try to assess and reflect on his own sense of himself: 'take all this into account [*sylogisamenos*: 160d8] and tell me again, well and bravely, what [temperance] appears to you to be' (160d). Although he does not explain what exactly '*sylogisamenos*', 'taking into account', entails in this context, his earlier outline of the 'best method' suggests that he is asking Charmides to consider together his own sense of temperance in himself, the kind of person that, according to his own belief, temperance turned him into, and, consequently, the kind of thing that temperance is. Hence, Socrates indicates to his young friend that the method that they are following does not merely rely on one's intuitive awareness of oneself, but also crucially involves reflection and reasoning. Whatever belief Charmides ends up expressing about the nature of *sôphrosynê* won't reflect his own awareness of the virtue in an unmediated manner, but will be the outcome of a rational process engaging different aspects of himself.

Socrates stresses this latter element when he tells Charmides that, after he has considered the matter, he should speak *eu*, well, and *andreiôs*, bravely (160d8–e1). Both adverbs are evaluative and require comment. Is Charmides supposed to speak well as opposed to badly, and what might this mean? Also, why is the virtue of *andreia*, courage, evoked at this point? According to Drew Hyland, what Socrates is really inviting Charmides to do is to enter a philosophical life of self-examination; this decision takes courage⁵ as well as clarity of thought; in fact, *sôphrosynê* is interconnected with courage, and also self-knowledge and the examined life.⁶ It is true, I think, that the passage can be read as containing a hint about the unity of virtue: if Charmides has one virtue, temperance, he can be assumed also to do things bravely (*andreiôs*) and, generally, *kat'aretên*, in accordance with virtue.⁷ But Socrates' exhortation can be best understood in a simpler way.⁸ Charmides was initially hesitant to answer the question of whether or not he had *sôphrosynê* and, when he finally brought himself to do so, the belief that he expressed about the nature of temperance was refuted. Therefore, Socrates suspects that his young

⁵ Hyland 1981, 68. ⁶ Hyland 1981, 69.

⁷ This is precisely the meaning of εὖ in Aristotle, *NE* 1.7 and elsewhere in that work.

⁸ The exact same expression, εὖ καὶ ἀνδρείως, occurs at *Gorg.* 480c6, *Leg.* 648c3, and *Thet.* 147d4, as well as *Charm.* 160d9–b1. Its use is virtually identical in the latter two dialogues and supports my own reading of the passage in the *Charmides* against Hyland's reading.

partner may now be even more reluctant to speak his mind for fear of defeat. For this reason he urges Charmides to speak 'well and bravely': in earnest, without beating around the bush and without dreading the possibility of being refuted again. Once again, the youth's reaction appears promising. According to the narrator, he withdrew for a moment to think things through⁹ and then responded *andrikôs*, manfully, to the question as it had most recently been put to him: temperance, he says, makes the person who has it feel ashamed (*aischynesthai*) or bashful (*aischyntêlon*), and it is this very thing, i.e. a sense of shame (*aidôs*) (160e4–5).¹⁰ Perhaps Charmides took the point: what requires courage is not only the process of introspective examination, but also the decision to make the result of this latter known to others and submit it to critical scrutiny.

I

To begin our discussion, we should note that, on this occasion, the interlocutors spell out an important assumption grounding the 'best method of enquiry': a causal relation holds between the presence of *sôphrosynê* in oneself and the corresponding disposition that one has or, in the end, the sort of person that one is. Specifically, this time Socrates asks Charmides not merely to register his sense of himself and state the belief that this feeling gives rise to, but rather to consider carefully what kind of man *sôphrosynê* causes him to be.¹¹ Then, in accordance with the principle fully developed in the *Phaedo*, i.e. that like causes like, he suggests that, by looking at the effect of temperance on himself, Charmides will be able to infer the nature of the cause. The young man meets this challenge in a very precise and unambiguous manner: temperance causes one to *aischynesthai*, feel ashamed, and be *aischyntêlos*, have the tendency of feeling ashamed, and, therefore, it seems reasonable to infer¹² that the cause responsible for the inclination to feel *aischynê*, 'shame', as well as the occurrence of actual feelings of *aischynê*, is *aidôs*, 'a sense of shame'. Presumably, given Plato's prevailing view of causation, the cause must be essentially akin to these latter. If so, Charmides' claim can be taken to imply that the *aidôs* present in oneself is a deeply set disposition responsible for the corresponding occurrent feelings and, to a greater or lesser extent, for a certain behavioural pattern as well. There is extensive secondary literature on *aidôs* and its close

⁹ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν διασκεψάμενος: 160e2–3.

¹⁰ δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ἔφη, αἰσχύνεσθαι ποιεῖν ἢ σωφροσύνη καὶ αἰσχυνητὸν τὸν ἀνθρώπου, καὶ εἶναι ὅπερ αἰδῶς ἢ σωφροσύνη: 160e4–5.

¹¹ ὁποῖόν τινά σε ποιεῖ ἢ σωφροσύνη παροῦσα: 160d6–7. ¹² Cf. δοκεῖ μοι at 160e3.

ties to *sôphrosynê*,¹³ but nonetheless it will be useful to say a few things about that notion.

Although ‘*aidôs*’ is conventionally rendered as ‘shame’ or ‘a sense of shame’, it also captures central aspects of what we call guilt.¹⁴ Primarily, ‘*aidôs*’ is about being exposed, vulnerable, or humiliated, in the eyes of others, especially in the eyes of people whose opinion matters to us.¹⁵ It involves fear not merely of what other people think, but of not living up to our own standards. The other’s ‘gaze’ can be personal or collective, real or imagined. The presence of *aidôs* involves the assumption that there is a set of ethical attitudes whose value one recognises and shares with others.¹⁶ When one violates such ethical values and norms, one experiences feelings of shame and tends to adopt avoidance-behaviour. One desires to hide away, disappear, even die. As for actual or fictional spectators who witness the shameful act, they too tend to avoid the agent or the scene of action, and experience derision and contempt. But also, *aidôs* has to do, so to speak, with an inner voice of judgement that one hears when one perceives oneself as having wronged another. While we feel shame because we have fallen short of a standard that we recognise as our own, typically we feel guilt because we have done something that has had a significantly adverse impact on someone else. In cases where this impact becomes known, the reactions triggered in other members of the community are overtly negative: deep resentment, indignation, rage.

Whether *aidôs* indicates both shame and guilt or shame alone, it was commonly taken to bear crucially on *sôphrosynê*. One’s desire to live up to the standard of the ‘imagined gaze’, which one recognises as one’s own, constitutes a strong motive for exercising self-control and refraining from certain sorts of actions, while engaging in others. Generally, temperate actions dictated by *aidôs* involve principles as well as precepts: agents follow what they perceive as requirements of morality, but are also attentive to social rules and matters of etiquette.¹⁷ The heady blend of *sôphrosynê*, *aidôs*, and manly courage that we find in our passage was also part of the value system of the philo-Laonian aristocracy of fifth-century Athens, to which Plato’s family belonged.¹⁸ Such qualities were objects of high praise, and

¹³ See, notably, Cairns 1993. ¹⁴ See the brilliant discussion by Williams 1993.

¹⁵ Compare Aristotle, *NE* V (4): we do not just desire to be honoured, but rather we want to be honoured by people who really value what we are doing.

¹⁶ Raymond 2018 interestingly suggests that Socrates finds Charmides’ blush beautiful precisely because they both share a common ethical ground.

¹⁷ Gottshalk 2001 argues that αἰδώς implies an acknowledgement of limits, of standards, of hierarchy.

¹⁸ All three qualities are attributed to the Spartans: Thucydides, *Hist.* I.84. On this passage, see Schmid 1998, 26.

many believed them to be related to a modest and self-controlled behaviour, respect for the opinions of others,¹⁹ deference to authority, and an unwillingness to expose oneself and risk ridicule. On the downside, these attitudes could be in tension with intellectual initiative, critical spirit, and the desire to determine one's own identity and mode of life. In general, prevailing conceptions of *sôphrosynê* and *aidôs* could act as impediments to the development of one's potential and cause one's character to be formed unreflectively, in accordance with dominant values and norms. In sum, even though Charmides' second definition of temperance in terms of *aidôs* points more deeply to one's inner world than his first definition does, there is continuity between them. Doing things quietly, unobtrusively, decorously is closely related to doing things modestly and in conformity to an internalised social and ethical code. *Aidôs* as well as *hêsychiotês* indicates a distinctive manner of acting, but the former more than the latter chiefly concerns the perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and other attitudes related to shame and, to some extent, guilt as well.

2

But, I retorted, did you not agree a little while ago that temperance is admirable [*kalon*]? – I certainly did, he answered. – Is it not also the case²⁰ that the temperate are good [*agathoi*] men? – Yes. – And could anything be good that does not make people good? – Of course not. – Hence, temperance is not only admirable [*kalon*] but also good [*agathon*]. – So at least it seems to me. – But then, I said, don't you believe that Homer speaks correctly, when he says that 'a sense of shame is no good [*agathê*] companion for a man in need'? – I do believe so, he replied. – So, as it seems, a sense of shame is both not good and good. – Apparently. – Temperance, however, is just good, if it makes good those in whom it is present and doesn't make them bad. – It certainly seems to me that things stand exactly as you say. – It follows, then, that temperance could not be a sense of shame, if it is in fact good, while a sense of shame is no more good than bad. – Well, Socrates, he said, I do think that this is correctly stated. (160e6–b4)

The refutation of Charmides' second definition has received remarkably mixed reactions. Regarding its logical structure, for instance, Lutoslawski claims that the argument marks a turning point in the development of Plato's logic and is a correct syllogism of the form Cesare. On the other

¹⁹ See Shorey 1933, 102.

²⁰ οὐκοῦν at 160e9 is not inferential, but indicates an addition to what has already received assent. This observation bears on the reconstruction of the argument (see the analysis below).

hand, John Beversluis describes it as ‘one of the lamest arguments in the early dialogues’²¹ and suggests ways in which the argument might have been saved. From an ethical point of view, some commentators praise its moral and pedagogical value for a number of reasons: e.g. it impresses upon Charmides the importance of the care of oneself,²² or extends the limits of the youth’s knowledge by exposing inconsistencies in the ethics of shame,²³ or brings Charmides to realise that his virtue is only partially developed.²⁴ Others, however, highlight the limitations of the young man’s conventional thinking,²⁵ or his dialectical inadequacy, or also the arbitrary character of the distinctions and inferences drawn by Socrates.²⁶ In particular, the main areas of controversy concern, first, the logic of the argument; second, the counterexample on account of which the definition is abandoned; and third, the lesson that we are to draw.²⁷

Let us start with the reconstruction of the argument on account of which Charmides abandons his claim that temperance is *aidôs*. According to Lutoslawski, the argument is the following: temperance is a good; *aidôs* is not a good; hence *aidôs* is not temperance.²⁸ Tuckey’s articulation is closer to the text: *sôphrosynê* is invariably good; *aidôs* is not invariably good; hence *sôphrosynê* is not *aidôs*.²⁹ In fact, however, this elenchus is considerably more complex and more problematic, and it is important to lay it out in detail in order to assess its faults or merits. I propose the following reconstruction:

- (1) Definition: temperance is *aidôs* (160e4–5).
- (2) Temperance is *kalon*, admirable (160e6–7; cf. 159c1–2).
- (3) In addition,³⁰ temperate men are *agathoi*, good (160e9).
- (4a) If something causes men to be good, it must itself be invariably good (causal assumption).
- (4b) Conversely, if something does not have the power to cause men to be *agathoi*, good, it cannot itself be invariably *agathon*, good (160e11).³¹

²¹ Beversluis 2000, 141. ²² So TuoZZo 2011, 165. ²³ Schmid 1998, 144.

²⁴ Gotshalk 2001, 75.

²⁵ Lampert 2010, 172: the argument reveals that Charmides ‘has not escaped the conventional and in all likelihood never will’.

²⁶ Beversluis 2000, 141.

²⁷ The fullest discussion of this argument to date is offered by Raymond 2018, and I engage later with certain aspects of Raymond’s analysis.

²⁸ See Lutoslawski 1897, 203. Tuckey 1951, 19–20 and Saunders 1987, 168 also take the argument to be valid.

²⁹ See Tuckey 1951, 19–20. ³⁰ See note 19 in this chapter and the discussion below.

³¹ I object to the transposition of μή before ἀγαθόν at 160e11 for the reasons given by Murphy 2014. On the other hand, Raymond 2018 seems willing to entertain that option.

- (5) Since temperance causes men to be good and doesn't cause them to be bad, it is invariably *agathon*, good (161a8–9).
- (6) Hence, temperance is something *kalon*, admirable, and invariably *agathon*, good (160e13).
- (7) If temperance is *aidôs*, *aidôs* must be *kalon*, admirable, and invariably *agathon*, good.
- (8) But Homer is right that, in at least one type of case, *aidôs* is not *agathon*, good: it is not good for a man in need (161a2–4).
- (9) Hence *aidôs* is no more good than not good: it is good in some contexts but not good in others.
- (10) So *aidôs* is not invariably good.
- (11) Therefore, temperance is not *aidôs*.

As the argument indicates, (1) involves the assumption that *sôphrosynê* and *aidôs* must share their essential characteristics in common, if the latter is to define the former. (2) has been established at 159c1–2 and is reiterated at 160e6–7. I take it that (3) is not an inference³² but is presented as an additional, self-evident fact.³³ Accordingly, the claim at 160e13 probably means: it has now been shown that temperance is not only *kalon*, admirable (as established at 160e6–7), but also, on new independent grounds, *agathon*, good ((5) below). Even if some might question that temperate people are good people, the tale of Zalmoxis strongly suggests that this is the case, and Charmides could hardly disagree given his values and upbringing. Premises (4a) and (4b) are grounded on a prominent causal assumption of Plato's Socrates: (4a) if something causes something else to be F, it must itself be F. Conversely, (4b), if something does not have the causal power to make another thing F, it cannot itself be F. This assumption is particularly prominent in (5), namely the claim that if temperance makes (*poiei*: 160a8) men good and does not make them bad, then temperance is invariably good (161a8–9).³⁴ Compare the last argument of the *Phaedo*, where the soul's being essentially alive is linked to the fact that whatever the soul is present in is thereby caused to be alive (*Phd.* 105b–107a). The claim in (6) is an interim conclusion: temperance is invariably good, as well as admirable. It paves the way to (7): if *aidôs* is the same thing as temperance, it must be

³² Contra Raymond 2018 and many others.

³³ Some interpreters take (3) to follow from (2) on the grounds that *kalon* here has a moral sense or that Socrates trades on the ambiguity of the term, taking it in a moral sense in order to infer (3). On this point, see Irwin 1995 *ad loc.* and Benson 2003 *ad loc.*

³⁴ According to Raymond 2018, 26–7, the refutation as a whole does not depend on what he takes to be a fallacious move from (2) to (4), for at 1618–19 Socrates reiterates the point of the first part of the argument.

assumed to have the same (essential) properties as this latter. Hence *aidôs* too must be invariably good as well as admirable.³⁵ However, (8) advances a counterexample intended to establish (9), namely that *aidôs* is no more good than not good and, therefore, (10): unlike *sôphrosynê*, *aidôs* is not invariably good. Most of the dialectical work is done not on the basis of the assumption that temperance and *aidôs* are both good, but on the basis of the contention that, while temperance is invariably good, *aidôs* can also be not good. Since the counterexample in (8) is absolutely pivotal for the refutation of Charmides' definition, and also extremely controversial in the literature, it should receive further attention.

Let us remind ourselves of the specific context in which Homer is brought into the argument. Having established that temperance is not only admirable but also good (160e13), Socrates asks Charmides: 'don't you believe that Homer speaks correctly when he says that "*aidôs* is no good companion for a man in need"?'³⁶ And the youth confirms, without hesitation, that he does believe this (161a5). The verse that Socrates cites is from the *Odyssey*: Telemachus sends advice to the beggar in the palace hall, who is Odysseus in disguise, to go around and beg the suitors for his meal, for '*aidôs* is no good companion for a man in need' (XVII, 347). Telemachus' message is ambiguous on many levels, since Odysseus is the king and not a beggar, and his real need is to reclaim what belongs to him and not to beg for food. Insofar as Telemachus' message concerns the beggar, it advises him to suppress his sense of shame and beg the suitors to give him something to eat. Insofar as Telemachus is addressing his father, he exhorts him to keep his counsel and not let *aidôs* and, presumably, his love of honour cancel his longer-term plans to retrieve his own. The same holds for Telemachus himself as well: he is reminding himself that he simply cannot afford to heed his sense of shame and honour, but must swallow his pride and allow the suitors to mistreat Odysseus in his own home.³⁷ Likewise, Socrates' use of the Homeric verse is susceptible to multiple interpretations regarding some hidden message that it is supposed to convey. For example, on one view, the Homeric citation aims to suggest

³⁵ Some commentators view as a problem the fact that Socrates does not defend the claim that *aidôs* is good. On my reading, however, this claim is based on the assumption implied by (1). Since Charmides has defined temperance as *aidôs* and since he has accepted that the former is good, he has also implicitly accepted that the latter is a good. Moreover, even if *aidôs* were considered independently of temperance, it would be commonplace to assume that it is good in so far as it was commonly valued as a positive moral characteristic.

³⁶ 161a2–4: Ὁμήρω οὐ πιστεύεις καλῶς λέγειν, λέγοντι ὅτι "αἰδῶς δ' οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κεχρημένῳ ἀνδρὶ παρῆναι".

³⁷ See Raymond 2018, 41–2 and nn. 33 and 34.

that, since Socrates is a man who is needy like the beggar, he must conduct himself like Odysseus, i.e. he must be shameless and stealthy and *polytropos* in order to fulfil his destiny.³⁸ On another view, as Telemachus, who is in the know regarding the beggar's identity, intends his message to mean that Odysseus should leave *aidôs* aside and take care of his own needs by recovering what is rightfully his own, so Charmides must take the advice to heart and become concerned, in a fundamental way, with the care of himself.³⁹ Another set of suggestions is that Socrates' return to Athens recalls Odysseus' return to Ithaca,⁴⁰ Charmides' character is modelled on the character of Telemachus,⁴¹ and the Homeric citation has the purpose of reminding Charmides that he should struggle to overcome his *aidôs* and achieve the virtues of manhood as Telemachus tells himself he must.⁴²

These parallels are interesting and useful. They embed Charmides' conception of temperance as *aidôs* in a rich and layered cultural background and draw connections between the perspectives formed by the latter and the perspective of Socratic philosophy and pedagogy. Nonetheless, worries still remain. First, does a single counterexample constitute adequate grounds for refuting the definition under examination? And, second, does the argument get compromised by Socrates' appeal to the authority of Homer and Charmides' unreflective acceptance of that authority?

Regarding the former of these issues, I believe that Socrates' move is logically justified and dialectically successful. Since Charmides claims that the relation between temperance and *aidôs* is a relation of identity,⁴³ even a single exception suffices to refute the definition. If *sôphrosynê* were the same as *aidôs*, every property possessed by one of them would also be possessed by the other. Homer's verse, however, suggests that there is at least one property that *sôphrosynê* essentially has but *aidôs* does not: temperance is invariably good, whereas *aidôs* can be not good as well as good. There isn't anything wrong or irregular about the brevity of this refutation.⁴⁴ Its point is clear and Charmides grasps it at once.⁴⁵

Regarding the latter charge, i.e. that Socrates appeals to authority or that Charmides relies on it, first of all, it is simply not true that Socrates does

³⁸ Lampert 2010, 173. ³⁹ Tuozzo 2011, 165. ⁴⁰ See Brouwer and Polansky 2004.

⁴¹ Raymond 2018, 40, draws a parallel between the beauty and *aidôs* adorning the adolescent Charmides and the same qualities in the adolescent Telemachus.

⁴² Raymond 2018, 40–2. ⁴³ καὶ εἶναι ὅπερ αἰδῶς ἢ σωφροσύνη: 160e4–5.

⁴⁴ E.g. contra Schmid 1998, 27–8.

⁴⁵ According to Saunders 1987, 167–8, Socrates 'telescopes the argumentation' on the grounds of the inductive reasoning by which Charmides' earlier definition has been refuted.

anything of the kind. He is not asking Charmides whether he *trusts*⁴⁶ Homer to be making an admirable point, nor does he intimate that the young man ought to accept Telemachus' claim on the basis of authority. Rather, he asks the youth whether or not he *believes*⁴⁷ that claim to be correct. Hence Socrates is not guilty of a dubious pedagogical strategy, but can be taken to encourage the young man to reconsider his belief.

What about Charmides, however? Does he do as badly as he is accused of doing, notably because he does not challenge Homer,⁴⁸ but also because he does not resist the premise that *sôphrosynê* is *kalon* by appealing to the priority of definition?⁴⁹ Taking these questions in reverse order, Plato's portrayal of Charmides makes it appear highly unlikely that he would question the claim that temperance is *kalon*. In addition to his noble upbringing and to Critias' description of him as the most temperate of youths, he has tacitly accepted the Zalmoxian contention that temperance is a supremely admirable thing, and has explicitly agreed on an earlier occasion (159c1–2) to the premise that temperance is *kalon*. Overall, it seems clear that the young man truly holds the belief that temperance is an admirable, good, and beneficial thing. If he had refused to concede the premise that temperance is *kalon*, he would have acted disingenuously and in bad faith. Moreover, there is no hint that Charmides is *au courant* with the issue of the priority of definition, and it would be strange if he were. For he is very young, has begun his dialectical training not long ago, and has not been around Socrates since he was a child (so he has not heard him talk about the priority of definition). It is not reasonable to criticise him for failing to object to Socrates that they cannot assert that *sôphrosynê* is *kalon* before they determine what *sôphrosynê* is.⁵⁰ An experienced debater could make this move, but not Charmides.

It is more difficult to address the charge that Charmides relies unreflectively on Homer's authority and accepts without proof that *aidôs* is not good for a man in need.⁵¹ On the one hand, we can safely assume that Charmides knows his Homer and finds quite credible the counterexample drawn from the *Odyssey*. His attitude is not unreflective. He can see for himself that, if the beggar/Odysseus had indulged his feelings of shame and honour and had attacked the suitors, he would have risked his own life and the lives of his wife and son, and he would have been morally blameworthy by virtue of doing so. Instead, he let the suitors humiliate him without

⁴⁶ See the translation by Moore and Raymond 2019, 14, *ad loc.* ⁴⁷ Cf. οὐ πιστεύεις; 161a2.

⁴⁸ Beversluis 2000, 141, citing also Chambry 1967, 267. On this point, see also the speculations of Schmid 1998, 28, Lampert 2010, 172, and others.

⁴⁹ Beversluis 2000, 141. ⁵⁰ See previous note. ⁵¹ See note 48 in this chapter.

reacting to the insults and, in doing so, he acted without *aidôs* but, presumably, with *sôphrosynê*. On the other hand, Charmides does not push this matter further. He does not appear to entertain the possibility that Homer may be wrong and *aidôs* may be an admirable thing even for beggars. And even if such a thought had crossed his mind, it seems unlikely that he would have pursued it to the point of openly contradicting Homer.⁵² The reason lies, precisely, in his *aidôs*, which gives beauty to his appearance (158c5–6) but, nonetheless, can prevent him from acquiring a beautiful soul. Neither the narrator nor the characters of the narrated episode are yet in a position to know whether Charmides will eventually be able to put aside his *aidôs* and ask the sort of 'shameless' questions that could improve his soul and make it temperate.

To take stock, Charmides' second attempt to define temperance is not implausible; the argument by which the definition is refuted is quite good. Charmides makes considerable progress by defining temperance in terms of *aidôs* – a dispositional characteristic commonly believed to accompany *sôphrosynê* and valued by many in its own right. Moreover, the youth follows the argument with ease and understands the ostensible point of Homer's citation. The fact that he does not try to deny the premise that temperance is *kalon* indicates both decency and a gentle and cooperative spirit regarding the investigation. To be sure, his prompt acceptance of Homer's claim may be due to excessive reverence for the great poet and possibly a tendency to accept authoritative claims. However, it need not be unreflective, and it probably is not. On balance, it seems unfair to conclude that Charmides 'has not escaped the conventional and in all likelihood never will'.⁵³ Rather, he shows some promise, and we might have had reason to be optimistic about the youth's future, were it not for Critias' imposing figure looming large in the background.

⁵² See Lampert 2010, 172; Raymond 2018, especially 36–45. Schmid 1998, 28, suggests that Charmides cannot violate his sense of shame because this would entail that he would violate his public identity. And he contends that traditional temperance precludes one from asking specifically moral questions, because of the fact that one's attitudes are determined by social conventions and rules. As my analysis suggests, I think that this view has merits but also oversimplifies the matter.

⁵³ Lampert 2010, 172 and note 25 above.