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PLEASURES IN *REPUBLIC IX*

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PLEASURES IN *REPUBLIC IX*

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For my great-aunt, M nife Kaya

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PLEASURES IN *REPUBLIC IX*

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My dissertation is on Plato's view on pleasure. I focus on the *Republic*, where Plato offers his first systematic treatment of pleasure and pain. Plato's thought on pleasure, and in particular his view on the truth and falsity of pleasure, has received no small degree of attention in the secondary literature during the past few decades. Despite the amount of work that has been done, however, Plato's thought on pleasure and pain has not been adequately understood, as scholars have persistently underappreciated the treatment offered in *Republic IX*.

The account and evaluation of pleasures in *Republic IX* has often been criticized as fraught with serious problems and inadequacies. It has been argued that the account not only fails to describe the role of pleasure in our lives accurately, but is also inconsistent and full of ambiguity. The inconsistency attributed to the account in essays by Dorothea Frede is supposedly between two distinct criteria that the account employs for the evaluation of pleasures. Dorothea Frede also claims, with Gosling and Taylor,

that Plato's account contains fatal ambiguities. I argue that all of the above charges are false. I show that a careful examination of Plato's text reveals his account of pleasure to be consistent, coherent, and compelling. Since Plato offers his account of pleasure by way of proving that the pleasures of the rational part of the soul are most pleasant, dismissing the charges also requires a close reading of the passages in Book IV concerning the Platonic division of the soul into three parts. I show that Plato's view on pleasure and his division of the soul are mutually corroborative. The interpretation I develop allows us to see that Plato's view on the best life is much less austere and much more livable than critics have claimed.

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INTRODUCTION

The account of pleasure Plato offers in the *Republic* has often been criticized as fraught with serious problems and inadequacies. Indeed, it has been described as a largely unsuccessful account, one that is in need of being revised, or, rather, replaced. It has been suggested that Plato must have been aware of the account's insurmountable problems at some point, and, being dissatisfied with his treatment of pleasures, resolved to offer a new account that avoids these problems, the account which came to life in the *Philebus*. Accordingly, the account in the *Republic* often gets treated as an unfortunate incident along the way to Plato's mature views on pleasure.¹ I am convinced, however, that this received view of the *Republic's* account is false. In this dissertation, I will not concern myself with whether, or in what way, Plato's account of pleasure in the *Republic* falls short of what we find in the *Philebus*, but will rather focus on the merits of the former. It is the goal of this dissertation to show that the *Republic's* account of pleasure is not nearly as troubled as it is claimed to be, and that his account is, in fact, both interesting and persuasive at many points. I will show that, contrary to claims by its detractors, Plato's complicated treatment of pleasure in the *Republic* is a coherent theory that merits serious consideration.

In Book IX of the *Republic*, Plato sets out to give three proofs of the superiority of the philosopher's life. At the end of the first proof, it is announced that the philosopher is "the best, the most just, and the most happy", and that the tyrant is "the worst, the most unjust, and the most wretched" (580b9-c4). The whole discussion of

pleasure begins with the second proof (580c9-583b2), where the task of proving the just man to be happier is transformed into the task of showing that the pleasures of reason are more pleasant than the pleasures of the other two parts of the soul, the spirited and appetitive parts.² While the second proof introduces the idea that each part of the soul has its own pleasures, it is in the third proof (583b2-587c3) – “the greatest and most decisive of the overthrows” (583b6-7) – that we find Plato’s view on the nature of pleasure and pain.

In such a short passage, Plato manages to present his view on the physiology and phenomenology of pleasure (and pain), as well as developing two distinct criteria for the evaluation of pleasure. One of these criteria concerns the purity of pleasure and the other its truth. Plato employs these two criteria to show that “the pleasure of others, except for those of a rational (*phronimos*) man, is neither entirely true nor pure” (583b3-4). While Plato concludes the passage by declaring victory for this proof, scholars have expressed a much dimmer view of its merits.³

Plato’s first criterion for the evaluation of pleasure concerns the purity of pleasure, and it depends on a distinction between pure pleasures and impure pleasures that are merely liberations from pain. This distinction depends, in turn, on a view about the psychology of pleasure and pain, which emerges from Plato’s discussion of various mistakes people make about pleasure. The discussion is brief but it contains analogies that I consider instructive, though they have been unable to fend off a remarkable amount of confusion about the criterion. I will refer to this criterion as “PC” (the Purity Criterion).

The second criterion characterizes pleasure – through a metaphorical model – as processes of “filling” with what is appropriate to our nature, and evaluates them in terms of the “degrees of reality” theory from earlier books of the *Republic*. Accordingly, the truth of pleasure depends on the truth/reality/being of that which it is filling, and that which it is filling with (e.g., body with food). This criterion I will call “DR” (the Degrees of Reality criterion). Each criterion yields a class of pleasures as superior, and Plato’s claim is that these two classes of superior pleasures are coextensive. In other words, the same pleasures turn out to be pure and true, and these superior pleasures correspond to the pleasures of the philosopher.

Plato puts forward a complex psychological theory to justify his contention that pure pleasures are more pleasant than impure ones. In order to provide intuitive support for this contention, he makes an appeal to experience similar to the one he makes in his second proof: in the second proof he argues that the philosopher is a better judge of pleasure than the honor-lover and the money-lover, because he fares better with respect to all factors relevant for being a good judge of pleasure, including greater experience with all types of pleasure. In the third proof he argues that those who are experienced with pure pleasures, unlike those who lack this experience, can tell, from experience, that pure pleasures are unmistakably more pleasant than impure pleasures. Plato offers, through several metaphors, a phenomenological explanation for why it is that most people, i.e., people who lack the requisite experience, not only fail to see this truth about pure pleasure, but are also committed to its being false, spending their lives in the pursuit of impure pleasures, such as the appetitive pleasures of eating, drinking, and

having sex. In other words, Plato acknowledges and addresses the fact that most people strongly disagree with his claims about which pleasures are more pleasant.

This account of pleasure has been severely criticized on many fronts, and it has become something of a commonplace that Plato bungled his treatment of pleasure in the *Republic* (Frede 1985, 159-61; Frede 1992, 435-6; Gosling/Taylor, 127, 129; Guthrie 1975, 541-2). The most significant criticisms are the following:

- (i) Plato's treatment of liberation from pain in the context of PC is full of confusion and ambiguity. In particular, there are two questions: (a) It is unclear whether "liberation from pain" (*apallage lupes*) is different from, or the same thing as, "cessation of pain" (*pausa lupes*), both of which Plato refers to in the passage concerning PC (583c-585a). Thus Gosling and Taylor write "Unfortunately the passage shows confusion on the crucial question of how he is thinking of escapes from pain" (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 113). (b) It is unclear whether Plato considers liberation from pain to be an inferior kind of pleasure, or not a pleasure at all; a liberation from pain is excluded from the class of "pure pleasure" but the text is ambiguous about whether these liberations are nonetheless pleasures. Frede writes "on the one hand [liberation from pain] is treated like a pseudo-pleasure... on the other hand [Plato] also claims that they are not 'pure' (584c1) – which seems to suggest that he does regard them as pleasures albeit impure ones."⁴
- (ii) The account is inconsistent because the two classes of superior pleasures we get under PC and DR are not coextensive: a pleasure might qualify as

superior under one criterion but not the other (Frede 1985,159-60; Frede 1992, 436-7). This problem is serious because: (a) Plato gives clear indications in the text that the two classes should be coextensive; and (b) the account would fail to achieve its manifest purpose of proving the pleasures of reason to be superior. For the manifest purpose can be achieved only if the pleasures of reason are coextensive with the superior pleasures under both criteria: the disagreement between the two criteria would mean either that not all pleasures of reason are superior or that pleasures other than those of reason may be superior as well (i.e., under one of the two criteria), or both (one criterion being more permissive and the other more restrictive than the pleasures of reason).

- (iii) Plato's appeal to experience is in vain, because his claim that the philosopher has greater experience than anyone else is groundless. Cross and Woosley find Plato's appeal to experience so unconvincing that they consider taking Plato's second proof seriously to be a "doubtful compliment" (1964, 265). Gosling and Taylor argue that Plato is unable "to show that the philosopher has sufficient experience of the pleasures of the other types of life" (1982, 328). According to these scholars, then, Plato fails miserably in his attempt to provide intuitive support for his views on pleasure.⁵

I believe that Plato is guilty of none of the above errors, and that the account of pleasure found in *Republic* IX is, in fact, coherent, consistent, and compelling.

I follow the order in which Plato presents the various elements of his account. Thus I start with the passage concerning PC (583c-585a), and offer an interpretation of it in my Part I (Chapters 1 and 2). In Chapter 1, I develop an interpretation of Plato's view on the nature of pain, which turns out to be critical feature of how he thinks about impure pleasures, and why he thinks they are less pleasant than pure ones. I then explain, and defend, Plato's view that it is *possible* to make the mistake of thinking that we are experiencing pleasure when we are not at all. In Chapter 2, I address the charges of ambiguity ((a) and (b) in (i) above) directly, and I dismiss both charges. I then focus on the second mistake Plato thinks we make about pleasure, that of thinking that a liberation from pain is pure pleasure. Through my interpretation of various metaphors Plato employs, I explain his view that both this mistake and the first one are committed so frequently because people are deceived by the appearances in the absence of adequate experience. Plato turns out to have a far more sophisticated account of these mistakes than scholars have so far noticed.

In Part II (Chapter 3), I turn to Plato's claim that the philosopher, and only the philosopher, has sufficient experience of all kinds of pleasure in order to be a competent judge. I compare Plato's argument to a very similar one made in Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and defend this much-maligned type of argument against its critics, finding that Plato's version is actually superior to that of Mill at various points.⁶ I explain, however, that the plausibility of Plato's views on this matter depends largely on how broadly we construe the philosopher's pleasures. Due to the charge

of inconsistency (ii), it turns out that a final verdict on the plausibility of Plato's view must await a resolution of that charge.

In Part III, I turn to my interpretation of DR. In Chapter 4, I offer an interpretation of the key passage, showing how Plato uses the "degrees of reality" theory to determine the truth of a pleasure. After clarifying Plato's idea that pleasure is a kind of filling, I argue that DR needs to be understood as more sophisticated than Plato's text initially suggests. Having completed my account of DR, I take up the charge of inconsistency, and show that Frede's interpretation of DR is flawed, and that the charge of inconsistency, as she conceives it, can be dismissed with certainty. However, a particular type of pleasure, that of smells, remains as a threat, since it remains possible that these are pure although they are not true. Since whether they are true turns out to depend on whether they are fillings of the rational part of the soul, I discuss, in my Chapter 5, Plato's conception of the tripartite soul. After offering an interpretation of key passages on this matter, I address the question of what part of the soul the pleasures of smell might belong to. I conclude that the pleasures of smell do not pose a threat as far as the consistency of Plato's account of pleasure in *Republic IX* is concerned. Having dismissed the charge of inconsistency, I explain how Plato's account is unified, and how this unified understanding allows us to see the strength of the account's various elements. On my reading, Plato's view that the philosopher's life is the most pleasant life becomes much more plausible than critics suggest, as the philosopher's

life turns out to be much more inclusive of ordinary intellectual pleasures as we conceive them.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

¹ See, especially, Gosling/Taylor 1982, 129; and (Dorothea) Frede 1992, 435-7.

² In Part II, I will address a problem about this transformation and present the solution scholars have provided. I will use the terms “reason”, “spirit” and “appetite” interchangeably with the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts of the soul, respectively.

³ It should be noted here that Plato recognizes three kinds of pleasure, each belonging to one of the three parts of the soul – rational, spirited, and appetitive (580d). The pleasures of each part are then identified with the pleasures of the three primary kinds of people corresponding to those parts – philosophical, victory-loving, and profit-loving people (581b-c). Hence, the proof for the superiority of the philosopher’s pleasures is treated, interchangeably, as proof for the superiority of the rational part’s pleasures. When Plato declares his victory, it is in terms of both the parts of the soul and the kinds of people corresponding to those parts (586e-587c).

⁴ Frede considers this to be one of the main problems with the *Republic* IX account of pleasure (Frede 1985, 159).

⁵ Both Gosling and Taylor, and Cross and Woosley address the appeal to experience in the second proof, but their points are equally applicable to the third proof. They do not address the third proof because they fail to see that it contains a similar appeal to experience. As Annas reports, “[m]odern interpreters claim almost without exception that this argument does not get off the ground” (1981, 307).

⁶ Annas 1981 (307-9) and Reeve 1988 (145-6) offer some defense of Plato’s second proof. However, I will not only address how the appeal to experience functions in the

third proof, but also have different things to say about the appeal with respect to both proofs.

PART I

CHAPTER 1: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

In *Republic IX*'s third proof of the superiority of the philosopher's pleasures, Plato presents his view on the purity of pleasure in the context of discussing mistakes people make about pleasure. The psychology of pleasure and pain explains the possibility of these mistakes, as well as underlying the criterion for determining which pleasures are pure.¹

The passage begins with the examination of a particular type of mistake people make about pleasure, and Plato spends a whole page on this question. In the course of explaining this mistake, he tells us much that is crucial for understanding not only this mistake but the nature of pleasure and pain as well. At the very beginning, at 583c3-8, Socrates claims that pleasure and pain are opposites, with a neutral state, one in which we feel neither pleasure nor pain, intermediate between them. Setting up pleasure and pain as opposites gives us the first sign of a central theme in the *Republic IX* account of pleasure – the distinction between pleasures that are true and those that are not. Plato means to remind us of the *Gorgias*, where Socrates claims that pleasure and pain *are not opposites*, in the course of offering an argument against Callicles' identification of pleasure with good/doing well (and pain with bad/doing badly) (495e-497e).

Later on in *Republic IX*, we receive further confirmation that Plato is thinking of the *Gorgias*: (i) The filling metaphor for pleasure that Plato brings up at 585b is also prominent in the *Gorgias*, starting from 493a-d; (ii) Based on this metaphor, Plato criticizes at 586b3-4 those who pursue base pleasures – such as those of eating, drinking, and sex – by likening their pursuit to the vain attempt to fill a container full of holes. The very same metaphor is employed in the *Gorgias*, at 493b-c, where Socrates criticizes the Calliclean advice to cultivate desires by suggesting that the desires will be insatiable because that part of the soul where appetites (*epithumiai*) exist is like a leaky jar, unable to hold what goes in.

It is significant that Plato is drawing our attention to the *Gorgias* passage, because the more extended discussion in the *Gorgias* allows Plato to make some points more clearly than he can in the concise *Republic* account. Of course, we may rely on *Gorgias*' explication of these points only because they are confirmed in the *Republic*, albeit less transparently.² (We will see that, in turn, the *Republic* clarifies some aspects of the view in the *Gorgias* passage, in particular the filling metaphor that Plato employs in both works.) The points I have in mind concern Plato's view about the nature of appetite, pain and liberation from it. As I hope will become clearer later, a full grasp of Plato's view on this matter is an essential prerequisite to understanding his evaluation of pleasure.

A. PLEASURE AND PAIN IN THE *GORGIAS*

The pleasures Callicles has in mind are primarily the satisfactions of bodily desire/appetite (*epithumiai*), and the ideal he puts forward is a life in which one does not restrain one's appetites. Rather, enjoying the power to satisfy those desires, one allows them to grow as large as possible (492d, 494c). The Calliclean pleasures are, it turns out, precisely those pleasures that fail to qualify as true/pure pleasures according to *Republic IX*.³ So it is fitting that Plato should claim pleasure and pain to be opposites at the beginning of the *Republic IX* passage: in the *Gorgias* Calliclean pleasures were determined not to be opposites with pain. The *Republic IX* remark, then, is Plato's declaration that what he *really* calls "pleasure" are not those pleasures, that real pleasures do not admit of the same analysis Calliclean pleasures receive in the *Gorgias*. In other words, the things Callicles called "pleasure", Plato will not do so – not without qualification.⁴ Socrates' argument proceeds as follows:

1. Doing well and doing badly are opposites. (495e2-4)
2. Opposites do not exist in the same thing at the same time, nor does the same thing acquire or lose opposites at the same time.⁵ (495e6-9)
3. Appetites, such as hunger and thirst, are all painful lacks. (496d3-4)
4. Satisfaction of an appetite (fulfillment of a lack), such as drinking when thirsty, is pleasure. (496e1-4)
5. During the satisfaction of an appetite we experience pleasure and pain, in the same place and at the same time. (496e4-6)

6. But it is impossible to do well and do badly at the same time. (496e9-497a1)

7. Therefore, pleasure and pain are not the same things as doing well and doing badly. (497a3-5)

This is then supplemented with the following:

8. Moreover, the pain of an appetite and the pleasure of satisfying it cease at the same time. (497c6-8)

9. But it is impossible for goods and evils to cease together. (497d1-3)

10. Therefore, once again, pleasures and pains are not the same things as goods and evils.⁶ (497d4-5)

A variety of criticisms have been brought against this argument. I am not interested in the merits of this argument *qua* an argument against Calliclean hedonism⁷, but I am interested in some features of this argument because they turn on the aspects of the argument that I do wish to focus on.⁸

One concern that immediately comes to mind is the precise scope of the *epithumiai* in question. The *epithumiai* are claimed to be painful lacks, and the pleasure arising from their satisfaction therefore involves a coincidence of pleasure and pain. It would be a much stronger thesis – and a less plausible one – to apply this analysis to all desire, as opposed to the weaker thesis of applying it only to a subset of desires, such as “the good-independent subset of desires”⁹, or only bodily desire. As Gosling and Taylor point out, this question has no bearing on the success of the argument against Calliclean hedonism:

The latter, weaker thesis is all that Socrates needs so as to refute the identification of goodness with pleasantness, since that identification, entailing as it does the universal thesis ‘Whatever is immediately pleasant is good’ can be refuted by the production of a single instance of something which is pleasant but not good”. (1982, 72-3)¹⁰

Yet the scope of the desires that receive this analysis is an important question in its own right, and, as I discuss below, it makes a great deal of difference for his position in *Republic IX*.

Irwin and Gosling and Taylor rightly observe that the *Gorgias* provides no definitive answer to this question concerning the scope of *epithumiai*. The *Republic IX*’s account provides a relatively developed and sophisticated answer, but even in the *Gorgias*, we may note the following in favor of a restricted scope: on an unrestricted reading, even the desire to learn would be a painful lack, and even the pleasure of acquiring philosophical knowledge would be an object of mockery as the vain attempt to fill a leaky jar; these un-Platonic entailments should warn us against the unrestricted reading. And aside from questions of internal consistency, it would be extremely implausible for Plato to maintain that all desires are painful lacks, and the restricted reading would be the more charitable one. We should also keep in mind the dialectical role of this argument: it is designed to counter Callicles’ unrefined hedonism, and there is no reason to complicate the argument by introducing a class of desires that require a different analysis. Given that the question of scope is irrelevant to the argument’s success, and given that Callicles shows no awareness of, or interest in, desires that are not painful lacks, Plato may be simply arguing on Callicles’ terms, leaving aside (for this argument’s purposes) his own view that there are desires other than the base ones

Callicles is devoted to pursuing.¹¹ But let us set aside the question of scope for the time being.

Irwin (1979, 201-202) has criticized the above argument, arguing that pleasure and pain may be occurring in different parts when they occur simultaneously, just as we may do well in one part and badly in another; the argument, as he sees it, fails to show that pleasure and pain are not identical to doing well and doing badly. But this criticism misconstrues the psychology/physiology of pain that is at play here: as Frede (1985, 156-7) points out, “it is the *filling of a lack itself* that is called pleasure and not an accompanying or resulting *feeling* as one might have supposed.” In laying out his argument, Socrates puts forward, and gets Callicles to accept, the following view of pain: hunger, thirst, and all other *epithumiai* are painful; as long as there is hunger, there is pain, i.e., from the moment that we begin feeling hungry until we satisfy our hunger and are full again, there is pain. This view of pain is opposed to the view that some scholars have claimed to be Plato’s view in the *Philebus*: pain is the process of dissolution/disintegration of the harmonious state, while pleasure is the process of its restoration.¹² On this view, there would be pain while we are emptying, getting hungry, but not while we are satisfying the hunger, filling up again. I will refer to this view as the *process view* of pain, and will oppose this to the *state view*, which we find in the *Gorgias*. In what follows, I will argue that Plato retains the *state view* of pain not only in *Republic IX* but in the *Philebus* as well.¹³

B. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PAIN: PROCESS VS. STATE

It seems to me that, textual evidence aside, the view that we feel pain only while we deteriorate but not during the restoration process is untenable. For on this view, there is no pain left at all the moment restoration begins; if I am starving to death, pain will cease the moment I pop something into my mouth (or the moment a bit of food reaches the stomach). But this is obviously not the case: my pain may decrease as soon as I start eating, but it does not cease. Or if I am being stretched on a rack, it might alleviate my pain for my torturer to reduce the tension just a little bit, but my pain will certainly not cease. Think also of being in an extremely hot environment, and the temperature dropping gradually; clearly, pain does not simply cease once the slow process of restoration begins.¹⁴ I find it plausible that the *state view* is right with respect to all kinds of pain, but its truth is perhaps more obvious in cases where a deteriorated state with a considerable amount of pain is ameliorated through a slow process of restoration. It should be remembered that the two alternative views are meant to cover all cases of pain, and this reveals an asymmetry between the *process view* of pain and the *state view* of pain, in favor of the latter: the *process view* of pain rules out all pain during processes of restoration, whereas the *state view* allows pain to exist during both deterioration and restoration. The *process view* is therefore vulnerable to counterexamples, such as those I have offered, whereas the *state view* is not. Given a theory of pleasure and pain that accounts for these phenomena in terms of the processes of deterioration and restoration, the *state view* of pain is clearly the stronger and more compelling position.

And it is this view that Plato endorses consistently throughout his works: we have seen that, in the *Gorgias*, Plato endorses what I think is plain, that (a) hunger is painful, and (b) hunger is a lack (a depleted *state*) that lasts until fullness is achieved.¹⁵ At the only point in *Republic* IX where he mentions hunger and thirst explicitly (585b1-2), he confirms (b), identifying hunger and thirst as empty states (*kenoseis tines*) of the body, and not as (the process of) becoming empty. The text does not confirm (a) in such a direct way – possibly because it is too obvious to deserve space in this dense account – but there is nothing to cast doubt on it either. And for those who are skeptical of such inferences *e silentio*, it should be pointed out that, far from giving up this premise in the *Republic*, Plato continued to hold it in the *Philebus*: at 31e6 it is claimed that hunger is a kind of disruption and pain. The *Philebus* confirms (b) too, at 34e9-12, where Socrates has Protarchus agree that being thirsty amounts to being empty.¹⁶ This joint confirmation of (a) and (b) shows that, in the *Philebus*, Plato continues to hold the *state view* of pain.

In none of these works does Plato hold the untenable view Frede attributes to him, the *process view* of pain according to which hunger ceases as soon as we start eating. Plato knew too well that one is motivated to fill one's stomach only as long as one is hungry. In the *Gorgias* (496d-e), eating is claimed to be pleasant only when we are hungry, and drinking only when we are thirsty; this is echoed in the *Philebus*, where Socrates remarks that we wish to be filled with drink when we are thirsty (35a).¹⁷ In fact, thirst *just is* the desire to be filled with drink (34e12-35a2). Given this, if hunger and thirst referred to the process of getting empty, becoming deprived of food/water, it

would follow that the moment we begin to replenish, our desire to be replenished would disappear, and so we would cease to eat/drink as soon as we begin.¹⁸

These are the more fundamental and salient reasons for rejecting the *process view* of pain in favor of the *state view*. Further reasons will emerge as I discuss the *Republic IX* passages in detail: I will show that the *state view* can, whereas the *process view* cannot, make sense of the phenomena Plato describes in these passages.¹⁹

C. THE FIRST MISTAKE

Thus we return to where we began, the first type of mistake Plato claims we make about pleasure, the first sense in which something thought to be pleasure may not be real pleasure. This first kind of mistake is based on the existence of an intermediate state between the opposites of pleasure and pain. This intermediate state is said to be a sort of calm (*hesuchia*) of the soul, where there is neither pleasure nor pain (583c7).²⁰ This neutral state is sometimes mistaken to be pleasure when one arrives at it coming from a painful state. Socrates clarifies this by pointing out that sick people claim “that nothing is more pleasant than being healthy, but that they had not realized that it was most pleasant until they became ill” (583c13-d1). Likewise, those who are in great pain claim that nothing is more pleasant than the cessation of their suffering (583d3-4). They wrongly identify the neutral state as pleasure, not only while they are suffering but also once they have arrived at that neutral state. When someone reaches the neutral state from pleasure, i.e., when someone ceases to feel pleasure, on the other hand, the calm appears painful (583e1-2).²¹

Having established that pleasure, pain and the neutral state are three distinct conditions, it is a mistake by definition to take the neutral state to be either pleasure or pain. It is therefore absurd to think that the same state may be either pleasure or pain depending on the preceding condition; the cessation of pain itself clearly cannot be real pleasure, since the mere absence of pain is a condition distinct from pleasure. Plato further clarifies the impossibility of the cessation of pain being pleasure (and vice-versa) by adding the following point: both pleasure and pain, when they arise in the soul, are a kind of motion, whereas what is intermediate between them is a calm state (583e9-10). Plato is here giving a hint of a point pursued not here but in the *Philebus* (33c-34c), that all pleasures – even those that consist of satisfactions of bodily desires, such as eating – come to be in the soul. Pleasure (and pain) arises insofar as the soul perceives the relevant phenomenon (the “filling” (*plerosis*) in the *Republic*’s terminology, and “replenishment”/“restoration” (*anachoresis*) in that of the *Philebus*)²², and when it does so arise, it may be described as a sort of motion.²³ This motion in the soul tracks the filling in question, which is itself a motion. This idea that pleasure consists of a double motion is captured vividly in *Philebus* 33d2-6, where Plato introduces the perception requirement for pleasure:

You must realize that some of the various affections of the body are extinguished within the body before they reach the soul, leaving it unaffected. Others penetrate through both body and soul and provoke a kind of upheaval that is peculiar to each but also common to both of them.²⁴

All pleasures and pains, including bodily ones, then, involve a motion in the soul.

These are contrasted with the intermediate state, where there is no such motion, since it

is a condition of non-perception, and there is no phenomenon of the relevant sort reaching the soul. This contrast between pleasure and pain on the one hand, and the neutral state on the other, underscores the distinctness of the latter from both of the former. Believing that the absence of pain is pleasure, or that the absence of pleasure is pain, therefore, is a grave mistake: “When it is next to the painful, the calm (*hesuchia*) appears pleasant, and when it is next to the pleasant, painful; and there is nothing sound in these appearances as far as the truth about pleasure is concerned, only some kind of witchcraft” (584a7-10). Even though there is no filling taking place, and, *ipso facto*, no mental state that tracks a filling,²⁵ there is a second-order mental state with the false content that such a tracked filling is occurring.²⁶

Plato has told us that there are three distinct conditions, and that it would be a serious error to mistake the neutral state for pleasure.²⁷ But how is such a mistake possible? How can we suppose an experience of ours to be pleasure when it is not a pleasure at all? Here Plato is putting forward a controversial view, that pleasures and pains do not come with identifying marks or name-tags, that our judgments about whether we are experiencing pleasure and pain are not incorrigible. In fact, our judgments on these matters are so far from incorrigible that we are unable to distinguish not only between pure and impure pleasure but also between pleasure (or pain) and a calm state which is not a pleasure at all. The rejection of the common but naïve view that pleasure is a generic and unmistakable feeling underlies Plato’s account of pleasure and pain in both the *Republic* and the *Philebus*.²⁸

Another way of putting Plato's position is that he defends an objective, as opposed to subjective, account of what constitutes pleasure and pain. One is, as a matter of fact, experiencing pleasure if the criteria in question are satisfied, regardless of what one thinks one is experiencing. Of course, this is not to suggest that pleasure and pain can be divorced from our subjective experiences: the point is that we can be wrong in our classification of those experiences. Plato's account of pleasure and pain is objective insofar as whether we are experiencing pleasure or pain is a question of fact independent of our beliefs on the matter. The account does not lose sight of subjectivity insofar as pleasure and pain necessarily involve perception on the part of the agent, and they are experienced in particular, distinct ways, such that a competent judge can tell accurately – at least in the vast majority of cases – whether an experience is pure pleasure, impure pleasure, or not a pleasure at all, from how it *feels*. I will have more to say about this later.

D. MAKING MISTAKES ABOUT PLEASURE: IS IT POSSIBLE?

While many philosophers today are open to the idea that we can make mistakes about our pleasures and pains – such as being mistaken about the true object of our pleasure/pain – few will allow that we can be mistaken about whether or not we are in fact experiencing a pleasure.²⁹ Thus Urmson objects to the possibility of mistaking the neutral state for pleasure (or pain): “But does anyone ever confuse the absence of a pleasant feeling with the presence of an unpleasant feeling or the absence of pain with a pleasant feeling? I doubt it” (Urmson 1984, 213). Urmson argues that Plato's fault

here is in failing to distinguish between experiencing a pleasant sensation and finding a situation pleasant or enjoyable.³⁰ Accordingly, he maintains that, in the contexts that Plato is referring to, “[w]hat [people] find, and say, is that in the circumstances the absence of feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, is pleasant; the *hesuchia* is pleasant as being what it is” (1984, 213).

But it strikes me as quite obvious that many people either fail to make, or reject, the distinction Urmson is advocating. In other words, Plato is not battling phantom adversaries when he criticizes people for mistaking the neutral state for pleasure – people do (never mind how many people and how frequently) believe and say that the cessation of their pain is pleasant, without distinguishing this pleasantness from other kinds of pleasure. Of course, no one really holds before their mind the nonsensical conscious thought “the neutral state I am experiencing is pleasant”, given that the neutral state is defined as the state in which one experiences neither pain nor pleasure, but Plato’s claim is that they believe the cessation of their pain to be pleasant.³¹ People also speak of how wonderful it is for their pain to cease, without speaking in terms of pleasure. Such utterances and thoughts amount to the same thing for Plato: people overrate the cessation of pain, supposing it to be the experience most worthy of pursuit, when in fact there is a class of experiences – pure pleasures – that are wholly superior (hedonically) to the cessation of pain.

Urmson is also wrong to claim that Plato’s position on this matter illustrates his failure to make the distinction between experiencing a pleasant sensation and finding a situation pleasant. Plato’s project in *Republic IX* is to provide an account that captures

all pleasure, regardless of the possible distinctions within that class. Unless finding a situation pleasant is not a matter of pleasure at all, it has to be analyzed along the same lines as any other pleasure. If there is such a thing as finding satiety pleasant, as distinct from the pleasure of eating, this pleasantness has to be analyzed as some sort of psychic filling.³² Finding the neutral state pleasant is then understood as a second-order pleasure (which is *about* the neutral state), bringing into the picture the psychic motion lacking in the neutral state. The key here is to distinguish between being in the neutral state with respect to the satisfaction of a specific desire, and being in a neutral state unqualifiedly; we may be in the neutral state with respect to hunger while we experience pleasure due to some other filling process – in this case a psychic filling consisting of the belief that the pain is over. If we recognize this pleasure to be what it is, we are free from the mistake in question. If, on the other hand, we suppose this second-order pleasure to be just the pleasure of being at the neutral state, or if the second-order pleasure rests on the false belief that the cessation of our pain is itself pleasant, we are committing the mistake Plato is warning against. And I see no reason to deny the possibility of someone making such false judgments while experiencing the second-order pleasure.

To be sure, Plato's discussion of this mistake makes no reference to second-order pleasures, but my point is that his account is capable of accommodating Urmson's distinction. Plato's concern is that people overrate the neutral state, believing that X is a pleasure when in fact X is merely the cessation of their pain. Urmson's distinction does nothing to remove the possibility of this mistake, and Plato's position on the

matter has nothing to do with whether or not he makes the distinction. The distinction actually helps illustrate the strength of Plato's position. For denying the possibility of the mistake entails not only that (a) if A believes that she is experiencing pleasure, she is indeed experiencing (some) pleasure; but also that (b) if A is experiencing X and believes that X is a pleasure, X is indeed a pleasure; which entails (c) if A is pleased that she is experiencing X where X is not a pleasure, A does not believe that X is the pleasure that he/she is experiencing; and (d) if A is pleased that she is experiencing X where X is the cessation of her pain, A does not believe that X is a pleasure. We may be inclined to accept (a), but (b) is harder to swallow, since (c) and (d) are implausible.³³

The scenario to imagine is one where there are two conditions – a cessation of pain and a second-order pleasure about the cessation – and two judgments – one about each of those conditions. Take, for example, a man who has just eaten and satisfied his hunger. Item (c) above tells us that it is *impossible* for this man to judge that the satisfaction itself is a pleasure. When this man is gleefully digesting his food, that is, he is supposed to be quite clear that the satisfaction itself is merely a cessation of pain and not a pleasure. For, (d) tells us, he cannot fail to be clear that his glee consists of being pleased about his pain having ceased. But it seems obvious to me that people can fail to be clear about such things, and they can be confused about what exactly it is that their pleasure consists of. Imagine asking people who have just finished dinner what their pleasure consists of (if they agree that they are experiencing pleasure). Would every

one necessarily answer that they are pleased that the pain of hunger has ceased? Would no one claim that they are enjoying being full?

Urmson might respond that the false answers in such a case stem from the agents' failure to appreciate the question: if only they had a grasp of the theory and the distinctions behind the question, they could not fail to give the right answer; if only they understood that there may be a neutral condition which we experience upon the cessation of pain, and that there may be a second-order pleasure about being in this condition, they would always get the question right. But this response will not do, for it amounts to claiming that people would be clear about their pleasure if only it were clarified for them. (In this context, this is equivalent to claiming that they would give the right answer if only the answer were given to them.) Plato's claim is that people can be, and often are, mistaken in their diagnosis of their cessations of pain – not that everyone is so mistaken, or that those who are mistaken are afflicted with some incurable ignorance. That people may be enlightened on the subject and cease to make the mistake is perfectly consistent with Plato's view.

E. FALLIBILITY ABOUT OUR MENTAL STATES

Rejecting the possibility of mistaking the neutral state for pleasure – whether in Urmson's way or in any other way – is, I think, overly optimistic about the extent of our self-knowledge and the extent to which our pleasures and pains are transparent to us. This is tied to a more general question about whether it is possible for us to be mistaken about *any* of our mental states. If, as some philosophers have claimed, it is impossible

to be mistaken about our mental states, it follows that, contrary to Plato's view, it is impossible to be mistaken about our pleasures and pains. But I believe, and will argue in what follows, that the view that we are infallible with respect to our mental states is untenable. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will offer various reasons for rejecting that view, and will explain the ways in which these reasons may be invoked on Plato's behalf.

The view that we are infallible with respect to our mental states strikes me as utterly implausible. One could perhaps have gotten away with such Cartesian naïveté in a pre-Freudian world, but we have had to face our limitations and give up the dream of infallibility.³⁴ Hume was as guilty of this false confidence as any other philosopher, arguing that “all actions and sensations of the mind” are completely transparent; since they are known to us by consciousness, “they must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear”.³⁵ And though various prominent philosophers since Freud – sense-data theorists³⁶ as well as others³⁷ – have also endorsed the infallibility thesis, most philosophers of mind now believe, based on a variety of arguments, that Cartesian infallibility about our own mental states is an untenable view.³⁸ It is possible, then, to be wrong about our mental states, and this opens up the possibility of being wrong about our pleasures and pains. There are many reasons for rejecting the Cartesian view and making room for the possibility of being wrong about our pleasures and pains, but let me begin with those given by Freud.

Freud's contributions to our understanding of the mind have allowed us to make sense of how we can hold false beliefs about our own mental states, including our

pleasures and pains. His theory of the mind explains how we may experience some pleasure and sincerely deny having experienced it, as when we deny having experienced *Schadenfreude*. We may, for similar reasons, be pained by the success of a friend or colleague, and be utterly incapable of admitting this to ourselves. We are prone to make such false judgments when it is unpleasant to face the correct diagnosis, and a defense mechanism shields us from the unpleasantness. Clearly, mistaking the cessation of pain for pleasure is not a case of this sort: the mistake is not facilitated by a defense mechanism, and awareness of the truth is not repressed in the unconscious. What is more, the false judgment in the Freudian cases is the denial of a condition that does (or did) in fact exist, whereas the Platonic mistake is one of supposing that pleasure exists when in fact it does not.³⁹ Yet there is a valuable lesson to be learned from those cases, which is that it is *possible* to misidentify or misinterpret our own pleasures and pains to the extent that we mistake one for the other.⁴⁰ This is so because our judgments about our pleasures and pains are not incorrigible, and this makes it possible to mistake the neutral state for pleasure too.

The question here is not whether we have privileged access to our own mental states, since privileged access is not equivalent to perfect access. One may, and some philosophers do, maintain that we have privileged access to our own mental states but that our access is not perfect, and that our judgments about those states can be false.⁴¹ Siding with Plato on this point does not, therefore, commit one to Ryle's diametrically opposed and similarly extreme view that there is nothing special about our access to our own mental states.⁴² It is sufficient to give up the Cartesian, strong view on privileged

access, according to which we are omniscient with respect to our own occurrent mental states. Independently of Freud and psychoanalysis, Sellars has offered influential arguments against this strong view.

F. SELLARS AND MCDOWELL ON FALLIBILITY ABOUT OUR MENTAL STATES

In the course of attacking the “myth of the given”, Sellars argues that all knowledge from perception – including knowledge about our own mental states – requires sensory data to be placed under concepts” (Sellars 1956). He writes: “In characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says” (298-9). And sensory data can enter the logical space of reasons only by being placed under concepts. On this view, knowing that my tie is blue requires a capacity to follow the rules for “color-talk”, and to apply the concept “blue” correctly (which involves the correct application of other, related concepts, such as “green”). If, for example, I do not know what counts as normal conditions for making the report that something is blue, I can make a mistake when I am under nonstandard conditions, such as under nonstandard lighting. The capacity required for knowing that my tie is blue is also required for knowing, or simply being aware, that I am having a blue sense impression. Thus I am just as likely to be wrong in my report about my own experience as in my report about what color my tie is, if it happens that I lack this capacity.

Knowledge that one is in such-and-such a mental state requires a capacity to apply the relevant concepts correctly also when the experience is not a case of (external) sensory perception, and the concepts have no application in the external world, unlike the case of having a blue impression. In order to know that one is feeling queasy, for example, one must be capable of applying the concept correctly, or else one may judge falsely on the matter.

Sellars' point is very general in its scope: though he often speaks of knowledge in particular, his view is that mere awareness requires the use of concepts, since it cannot otherwise enter the logical space of reasons, and cannot enter into rational relations with knowledge or belief. It also applies to both sensory perception and awareness of our own mental states, since his view is that *all* awareness requires classification under concepts. It follows that it is possible to be wrong in our report about our own mental states, insofar as it is possible to be wrong about, or have an inadequate grasp of, the relevant concepts.⁴³ Indeed, there may be, on this view, falsity not only in our reports about our mental states but also in our awareness of those mental states, since this awareness may be operating with an erroneous understanding of the relevant concepts, and its content may therefore be plagued with that error. It is possible, therefore, that (i) my sincere report that my tie is blue is false; (ii) my sincere report that my tie seemed blue to me is false; and (iii) the content of my awareness of it seeming to me that my tie is blue is false.

A more recent defense of the Kantian thesis that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (*Critique of Pure Reason* B 75) is

McDowell's influential *Mind and World* (1994). He argues that awareness of the world as well as awareness of one's own mental states requires the possession and use of concepts, specifically those concepts that would figure in a proper description of the content of the awareness. According to McDowell,

...experience is already conceptual. A judgment of experience does not introduce a new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded. (1994, 48-9)

On his view too, clearly, it is possible to be mistaken about one's own mental states, since one may lack, or have an inadequate grasp of, the relevant concepts. However, Sellars' and McDowell's views also involve the much stronger thesis that all representational content is conceptual, denying the possibility of non-conceptual representational content. Accordingly, only conceptual content qualifies as "content", since "experience has its content by virtue of the drawing into operation" of capacities that

must also be able to be exercised in judgments, and that requires them to be rationally linked into a whole system of concepts and conceptions within which their possessor engages in a continuing activity of adjusting her thinking to experience. (1994, 46-7)

This thesis now has many worthy opponents, who contend, roughly, that an agent need not possess the concepts for the properties, objects, and relations that are included in the representational content of her experience.⁴⁴ It is important to point out that there is no need to foist upon Plato the full implications of the sort of thesis advocated by Sellars and McDowell. As I explain below, Plato need not be committed to the notion that non-conceptual content is altogether impossible. Nevertheless, I hope it will become clear

that my examination of the positions involved in the debate about non-conceptual content illuminates Plato's view on our fallibility with respect to whether we are experiencing pleasure.⁴⁵

G. PLATO AND THE POSSIBILITY OF NON-CONCEPTUAL CONTENT

Republic IX gives us no reason to think that Plato wishes to deny the possibility of non-conceptual content *as such*, since he is interested in our awareness of, and our beliefs about, pleasure and pain specifically. Thus, he may be perfectly happy with there being mental states with a non-conceptual representational content, so long as our awareness of pleasure and pain do not belong in that class. So long as our awareness of pleasure and pain employs the concepts of pleasure and pain, that is, Plato's purposes are served. But perhaps Plato does not need even this much.

First, if Plato needs the awareness of pleasure itself to have truth-value, he need not insist on this awareness being conceptual, since non-conceptual content too is understood as having truth-value, differing from conceptual content in this respect only in that the use or misuse of concepts does not play a role in determining the truth or falsity of the content. Both sides of the debate take the content of our experiences to be representational, and both sides maintain that this content carries information on which judgments can be based.⁴⁶ The information – whether already conceptualized or not – can be accurate or not, true or false.

Second, it is doubtful that Plato is particularly interested in the truth-value of the awareness of pleasure itself. In fact, Plato's primary interest is in our false

beliefs/judgments/reports about pleasure and pain, and not an error in our awareness of those mental states. In complaining that people mistake the cessation of pain for pleasure, Plato says it is wrong to “believe” (*hegeisthai*) that the absence of pain is pleasure (584a4-5), and, in the metaphor of up-down-middle too, the mistake is expressed in terms of believing (*hegeisthai, oiesthai*) falsely (584d6-9). This is unsurprising given that Plato is concerned about our mistakes about pleasure because of the role these mistakes play in how we choose to live our lives. Those choices are informed by our belief system, and by our experiences only insofar as they are absorbed into that belief system. From this perspective, it is irrelevant whether the content of our experiences themselves contain falsity, or whether they infect our beliefs while they themselves are immune.

However, Plato also says that the cessation of pain “appears” (*phainetai*) pleasant, which may be read as saying that the agent’s awareness of her experience is as if of something pleasant, which suggests that the experience itself has a false content. He writes:

When the calm (*hesuchia*) is next to the painful it appears pleasant, and when it is next to the pleasant it appears painful. There is nothing sound in these appearances (*phantasmata*) with respect to the truth concerning pleasure, but only some kind of magic. (584a7-10)

Plato’s use of “*phantasma*” suggests that he is referring to the experience itself, and not merely to the agent’s belief, as one might in speaking of “appearance”.⁴⁷ In denying that the appearances are sound, Plato could be either attributing falsity to their content, or merely pointing out that they cause false beliefs, without necessarily attributing

falsity to the content of the appearances. Given the above understanding of “appearance”, however, Plato’s claim that the cessation of pain appears pleasant needs to be understood not as “the cessation of pain causes one to believe that one is experiencing pleasure”, but rather as “the cessation of pain is experienced *as pleasant*”. This suggests not only that the content of our experiences themselves may contain falsity, but also that our awareness of pleasure employs the concept of pleasure. It seems, then, that Plato *does* understand our awareness of pleasure and pain as involving the possession and use of the relevant concepts (however wrong we may be about those concepts).⁴⁸ We do, after all, form beliefs about our experiences of pleasure and pain, and it is uncontroversial that concepts are necessarily involved in beliefs. Evans, a proponent of non-conceptual content, writes:

The informational states which a subject acquires through perception are *non-conceptual*, or *non-conceptualized*. Judgements based upon such states necessarily involve conceptualization: in moving from a perceptual experience to a judgement about the world (usually expressible in some verbal form), one will be exercising basic conceptual skills... (1982, 227)

Since, as possessors of beliefs about pleasure and pain, we have some access to the concepts of pleasure and pain, these concepts are available for use at the level of experience as well. Our understanding of Plato’s view on this matter would obviously be much better had he written more clearly about it, but this lack of clarity is perhaps a sign of his lack of interest in the distinctions, his real concern being our false beliefs, whether or not the falsity is contracted from the content of the appearance, and whether or not the content of the appearance is conceptual.

Focusing on the question of whether we may have *false beliefs about our mental states*, it is worth citing Austin's criticism of Cartesian infallibility – as defended by Ayer – in his *Sense and Sensibilia*. Taking up Ayer's view that sense-datum sentences are incorrigible, Austin explains that Ayer concedes the possibility of a speaker producing the wrong word, but that "Ayer tries, as it were, to laugh this off a quite trivial qualification" (1964, 112). Austin proceeds to show, however, that a speaker may produce the wrong word in much more significant ways than those of mere slips of the tongue:

I may say 'Magenta' wrongly either by a mere slip, having meant to say 'Vermilion'; or because I don't know quite what 'magenta' means, what shade of colour is called *magenta*; or again, because I was unable to, or perhaps just didn't, really notice or attend to or properly size up the colour before me. Thus, there is always the possibility, not only that I may be brought to admit that 'magenta' wasn't the right word to pick on for the colour before me, but *also* that I may be brought to see, or perhaps remember, that the colour before me just wasn't *magenta*. And this holds for the case in which I say, 'It seems, to me personally, here and now, as if I were seeing something magenta', just as much as for the case in which I say, 'That is magenta.' The first formula may be more cautious, but it isn't incorrigible. (Austin 1964, 113)

Austin's argument shows vividly how we can have false beliefs about our own mental states. Just as I can be wrong about whether it seems to me, here and now, as if I were seeing something magenta, I can be wrong about whether I am experiencing pleasure now. I may make this mistake because I am unable to, or just do not attend to or properly size up the experience before me, but the dominant cause or error in the case of pleasure must be that of not quite knowing what "pleasure" means. This is the deficiency that was described, in Sellars and McDowell's terminology, as the inability

to apply the relevant concept correctly. It is the cause of error that Plato himself treats as essential.

It should be noted that this cause of error and the corresponding cases of judging falsely about one's own mental states are very different from the Freudian ones. For the impediment to self-knowledge in the Freudian cases is not an inability to apply a concept correctly but rather a defense mechanism. This means that the agent who judges falsely need not lack the cognitive capacity to judge truly about the matter – the lack of self-knowledge is caused by the presence of an additional factor. These are two distinct types of reason for lacking self-knowledge: the absence of some capacity on the one hand, and the presence of a psychological phenomenon that prevents self-knowledge on the other. It seems to me that Plato's account of how we mistake the cessation of pain for pleasure involves both of those types of reason.

H. EXPLAINING THE FIRST MISTAKE

Plato believes that there are two independently necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for mistaking a neutral state for pleasure. First, the neutral state must follow an episode of pain, that is, it must be a cessation of pain. People mistake the cessation of pain for pleasure because they instinctively evaluate their present phenomenological condition in comparison to their most recent experiences, and anticipated conditions in comparison to their present condition. The sense of elation that we experience upon the cessation of pain carries that sense precisely because it was preceded by pain, not because of an independent evaluation of that condition.⁴⁹ This is obvious given that the

same condition, the neutral state, is perceived positively or negatively depending on what precedes it (584a7-8).⁵⁰ This psychological phenomenon – the comparative evaluation of our well-being – plays a role akin to Freudian defense mechanisms in that its presence plays a role in bringing about a lack of self-knowledge.

Plato's second condition, on the other hand, stipulates that there be an absence of a capacity. To be specific, the agent who mistakes the cessation of pain for pleasure lacks the capacity to apply the concept "pleasure" correctly, due to her inexperience with pure pleasure.⁵¹ The mistaken agent does not really know what "pleasure" is, and it is for this reason that he is fooled by the appearance arising from the phenomenon of comparative evaluation. This condition is not satisfied in the case of pain, since everyone has had plenty of experience with pain, and this is why Plato does not suggest that anyone ever mistakes the neutral state for pain, even though he claims it *appears* painful when it is next to pleasure (583e1-2).⁵² The "magic" that is responsible for this appearance, as it turns out, is the phenomenon I have called "the comparative evaluation of our well-being", and this passage indicates that this phenomenon occurs in both directions – responding to either an improvement or a deterioration – even though the agent holds a false belief only in the case of an improvement. Since no one is inexperienced with pain, we all possess the capacity to apply the concept correctly; even though the neutral state appears painful when it follows pleasure, we do not judge the cessation of pleasure to be pain because we know what pain is actually like. Unlike the cases brought up in discussing Sellars' and McDowell's views, then, in this case the

content of the experience contains falsity not because we do not grasp what “pain” is, but rather because comparative evaluation acts as a deceptive factor.⁵³

It may be useful at this point to recall McDowell’s point that we possess a whole system of concepts, which is exercised in having experiences as well as making judgments, and that we engage in a continuing activity of adjusting our thinking to experience. In the course of this continuing activity, factors such as comparative evaluation perhaps momentarily loosen our grasp of a concept relevant to the context, or cause inattentiveness to the whole system, thereby allowing an experience with false content. It may be possible that this falsity does not infect the judgment about the experience because the deceptive factor is not strong enough to have a lasting effect on our grasp of the concepts at play, given how firm (or flimsy) our grasp of those concepts is. In the case of mistaking the cessation of pain for pleasure, the falsity of the appearance carries over to our belief system unchallenged if we are inexperienced with pure pleasure, since in that case we have no reason to resist the false appearance, and furthermore, we form a false concept of “pleasure” out of the repeated and consistently false appearances throughout our lives.

What remains to be questioned is whether Plato is in fact right in claiming that one may be so wrong about what “pleasure” is. Defending this claim is particularly challenging because the claim is not merely that *some people* may *sometimes* be wrong about pleasure, but rather that *most people* are wrong about pleasure *most of the time*. The plausibility of this claim ultimately depends on whether Plato’s whole account of pleasure is plausible. If Plato’s hedonic classification of various pleasures is tenable,

and there is indeed a class of pleasures wholly superior, *qua* pleasure, to the class of pleasures non-philosophers foolishly spend their lives pursuing, it may then be plausible to claim that people who are unacquainted with the wholly superior pleasures have an inadequate grasp of the concept “pleasure”. My assessment of the merits of Plato’s hedonic framework has to be postponed until Chapter 3, since there is a significant amount of groundwork to be done before that assessment can be made.

The psychological phenomenon at play here – the comparative evaluation of our well-being – also underlies Plato’s explanation of the second kind of mistake people make about pleasure. And understanding how this psychological phenomenon operates in that second kind of mistake will also illuminate its role in the first kind of mistake. Before delving any deeper into the phenomenon, therefore, I turn, in Chapter 2, to the passages where the second kind of mistake is discussed.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

¹ Some sort of physiology of pleasure and pain comes only with the filling metaphor; putting PC and DR together, we find that both liberations from pain and pure pleasures have to be fillings, the neutral state is a state of fullness, and pain is emptiness.

² That is, I do not simply assume that Plato did not change his mind.

³ Callicles concedes, at 496d, that all appetites, the satisfactions of which are the pleasures he’s speaking of, are painful. As I explain below, we find in *Republic IX* that

the pleasures that are satisfactions of painful desires are merely liberations from pain, and not pure pleasures.

⁴ Alternatively, Plato's claim that pleasure and pain are opposites could mean that he agrees with Callicles on what pleasure is but not on what pain is. But as we see in what follows in the *Republic*, this is not what Plato has in mind.

⁵ The premise is a general one about opposites. Dodds is therefore wrong to deny that Plato's argument proceeds by showing that pleasure and pain cannot be opposites. Dodds writes "I suspect that he had not at this point thought out the logic of contraries, and did not choose to commit himself. All he seems to do in the *Gorgias* is to establish the non-identity of two concepts (Pleasure and Good) by the non-identity of their marks (capacity in the one case, incapacity in the other, for coexistence with its contrary)." (Dodds 1959, 310) This less ambitious route is indeed of equal strength as an argument against Callicles, but it just so happens that Plato generalizes his claim to all opposites. Dodds claims that "Plato does not in fact assert in the present passage that no pair of contraries can belong to a thing simultaneously (though he may be thought to imply it at 495e6-7)". But in the passage, Socrates argues that *since* doing well and doing badly are opposites, it must, like health and disease (i.e., any other set of opposites), be impossible for the same thing to have both of them at the same time, or to acquire or lose them at the same time. That is to say, the conclusion about doing well and doing badly is drawn on the basis of a general claim about opposites.

⁶ The theses that pleasure is the same thing as the good and that pleasure is the same thing as doing well are apparently treated as equivalents.

⁷ According to Callicles, it is never justified to curb any desire. This kind of hedonism contrasts with the refined hedonism of the *Protagoras*, according to which it may be justified to curb certain desires, forego certain pleasures, for the sake of long-term overall pleasantness.

⁸ One way of putting what I am interested in is to say that I am interested in the argument *qua* an argument against the lifestyle Callicles advocates, as opposed to a theory that may justify it. Clearly, my perspective is determined by that of *Republic IX*, where different sorts of lives are being weighed with respect to their pleasantness, and Plato is not, I think, concerned about tackling hedonism or any other philosophical position. In fact, quite to the contrary of battling hedonism, Plato is appealing to the hedonist on her own grounds, trying to lure her into the philosophical life by showing that it is more pleasant. (Cf. Carone 2000, 271ff. against Irwin 1995 on whether or not this is Plato's approach in the *Philebus*.) In the *Gorgias*, Callicles' main concern seems to be to advocate a particular way of life, not to defend hedonism as such (491e-492c).

⁹ Irwin 1979, 202. Irwin questions whether the *epithumiai* in question correspond to all desire or only this subset. As he notes, "*epithumiai*" can be used for desire in general, or for "cravings, lusts and especially insistent or irrational desires". But he also worries that recognizing good-independent desires would be inconsistent with 467c ff (Irwin 1979, 191). This strikes me as a pseudo-problem: the question here is whether "*epithumiai*" refers to desire in general or to some restricted subset; if the *Gorgias* is indeed unfriendly towards the notion of good-independent desires, the subset in question need not be construed as good-independent; we may ask, for example, whether the *epithumiai* are bodily desires. (We shall see, however, that the notion of "bodily desire" is not itself unproblematic.)

¹⁰ Gosling and Taylor seem to assume that the *epithumiai* correspond to all desires. They then wonder whether the analysis applies to all *epithumiai* or only a subset, such as hunger and thirst. As they note, however, the text contains evidence that the analysis applies to all *epithumiai*. In *Republic IX*, on the other hand, Plato refers to all desires as *epithumai*. The substantive question is whether all desires receive the same analysis or only a subset does. In the context of Socrates' argument against Callicles, all

epithumiai receive the same analysis so the question is whether Plato thought these *epithumiai* actually exhaust the realm of desire.

¹¹ In defending a restricted reading of the *epithumiai*, I do not mean to suggest that only bodily desires are *epithumiai*. As Rudebusch has argued, many passages in the *Gorgias* indicate that Callicles' notion of *epithumia* is not limited to "short-term, bodily appetites", and that his notion of pleasure is not limited to bodily pleasure (1999, 36-8). In other words, Callicles recognizes pleasures other than those of eating, drinking, and sex, even though those are the most prominent ones. While hunger and thirst are the desires mentioned explicitly (and taken up as paradigm cases of *epithumia*) in the argument at 495e-497d, Callicles accepts, at 501b-c, Socrates' assertion that the pleasures of both the body and the mind are at issue. Furthermore, Socrates mentions, with no objection from Callicles, the desire for such things as "harbors and dockyards and walls and tribute" (519a2-3). As Rudebusch points out, these cannot be bodily desires (1999, 37). Yet the analysis of desire as a painful lack is applied to *all* the desires at issue, and, appropriately, the desires that are identified in the *Republic* as not admitting of this analysis – rational desires – are not mentioned at all. Whether or not Callicles would have falsely (on Plato's view) judged that rational desires too admit of the same analysis, their absence from the whole discussion shows that they, and their corresponding pleasures, are not of interest to Callicles.

¹² Most notably by Frede. This view is implied but not made very clear in the two papers I cite; it is stated more clearly in the introduction to her translation: "[pleasure and pain] are rather identified with *processes of dissolution and restoration*" (Frede 1993, xlii). She defends this view also in the commentary accompanying her later translation of the *Philebus* to German: pain and pleasure are understood as "Auflösungs- und Wiederherstellungsprozessen" (1997, 229).

¹³ I should emphasize that I am rejecting only the view that pain is a process, and not the view that pleasure is a process. As I discuss below, I believe that pleasures are in fact processes according to Plato.

¹⁴ Of course, a sudden and large restoration may be so pleasant that one may describe the experience as wholly pleasant and not at all painful; Plato is neither unaware of such cases nor unequipped to explain them, as I show in the following chapter.

¹⁵ There may be a point at which we are neither really hungry nor really full, but this is just a problem about the line between the two conditions being blurry, and does not constitute a problem for the *state view*. And if there is a point at which we are not completely full yet apparently without pain, Plato can explain this, as he does in the *Philebus*, as the remaining lack/deterioration being too small to reach consciousness (43c).

¹⁶ The key verb here is “*kenoutai*” which is translated by Gosling as “he is deprived” (1975, 29) and by Fowler as “[he is] empty” (1925, 283), both of which confirm (b), whereas Frede translates it as “getting empty” (1993, 36), which rejects it. (There is a similar discrepancy among German translations of the *Philebus*: Georgii 1982 translates the phrase as “es ist leer” (41), confirming (b). Frede 1997, however, consistently with her earlier English translation, uses “daß dasjenige leer wird” (44).) The LSJ indicates that the verb *kenoo* in passive form, as we have it here, has the meanings of “to be emptied, made or left empty” and there is no mention of the possibility that it may refer to a process of emptying; the verb refers exclusively to states of emptiness. Thus Frede’s translation (in both English and German) appears unwarranted, colored by her interpretation of the *Philebus* as propounding the *process view* of pain. One might be inclined towards the *process view* of pain because Plato considers thirst and hunger as a *kenosis* (*Republic* 585a8-b1, *Philebus* 35b3-4), and the suffix *-sis* is sometimes used to refer to processes. But it can also be used for

states/results, and the word *kenosis* need not refer to a process. (Cf. Carone 2000, 267 n. 19) In fact, *kenosis* often refers to the state of emptiness, especially in the ancient medical tradition, the terminology of which Plato seems to be borrowing in his analysis of pleasure and pain. (Cf. *H VM* 9, 11-13; *Art.* 49, 17-20)

¹⁷ The general conclusions Socrates draws at 35c indicate that what is said about emptying/filling is meant to apply to (at least) all bodily pleasures and pains. The general claim, then, is that at least in the case of bodily desire, one desires the opposite of what one suffers.

¹⁸ That is, until we start getting empty again. The result would be that all such replenishments would involve a bizarre process where our desire to be replenished would continuously turn on and off, perhaps making it impossible to reach satiety. And then there would have to be a third, mysterious, condition other than being hungry or full. Alternatively, we would have to be considered as full whenever the process of emptying was reversed by ingesting something. Of course, none of this makes any sense of our experiences, and there is nothing in the text to support such views.

¹⁹ Reeve (1988, 306-307) too maintains that both the process of emptying and the state of being empty are painful, but he does not give an adequate explanation of this. He also argues, I believe wrongly, that pleasure can be a state (i.e. need not be a process).

²⁰ The existence of such a condition is also acknowledged in the *Gorgias*, where it is said that the pain of hunger and the pleasure of eating cease jointly when we are full, resulting in a condition with neither of them. Nothing else is made of this condition in the *Gorgias*, but in both the *Republic* and the *Philebus* we find that it plays an important role in the evaluation of pleasures.

²¹ To distinguish between judgments made about a condition while in anticipation of it and judgments about it when one is actually in that condition, let us call the former

“anticipatory” judgments and the latter “concurrent” judgments. Plato acknowledges the possibility of concurrent mistakes (i.e., concurrent judgments that are false) at 583e1-2, with respect to arriving at the neutral state from pleasure. The contrary concurrent mistake, i.e., arriving at the neutral state from pain, is confirmed slightly later with the metaphor of up-down-middle (584d-585b). In what follows, I will point out and explain an asymmetry between the cases from the perspective of pain and those from the perspective of pleasure.

²² It is often not recognized that *Republic IX*’s account of pleasure and pain involves this perception requirement. (See, for example, Gosling/Taylor 1982, ch. 6) Indeed, it has been argued explicitly that this is a point on which the *Philebus* advances beyond *Republic IX*, which supposedly identifies pleasure simply with replenishments/restorations, whether or not they are perceived: Bobonich 2002, for instance, argues that in *Republic IX*, “Plato seems to understand pleasure as being the replenishment of a lack”, and that it is not until the *Philebus* and *Timaeus* – where “Plato’s views about pleasure grow more complex” – that the perception of replenishments comes into play. (351-4) See *Timaeus* 64a-65b for an account of how bodily pleasure and pain involve the perception of bodily changes by the soul:

When even a minor disturbance affects that which is easily moved by nature, the disturbance is passed on in a chain reaction with some parts affecting others in the same way as they were affected, until it reaches the center of consciousness [*to phronimon*] and reports the property that produced the reaction. (64b3-6)

(Translation by D.J. Zeyl 2000)

²³ Pleasure and pain are not, however, just the motion in the soul. In the case of bodily pleasures, we experience pleasure when the bodily change reaches the soul; bodily pleasure is a perceived process of bodily change, not merely the perception of that change. Since perception is a necessary ingredient of pleasure (and pain), there is a motion in the soul whenever there is pleasure (and pain). This understanding of 583e9-

10 receives confirmation at 584c4-5, where Plato refers to bodily pleasures as the pleasures that reach the soul through the body; the pleasure is not just in the soul or the body, it is in both. A question that emerges here is whether pleasure and pain are motions only because they involve perception by the soul, or also because the body must be undergoing change. The filling metaphor, which I will later turn to, suggests that all pleasure involves a process – some kind of filling – but pain receives no such quasi-definition. Given the *state view* of pain that I have been defending, the case of pain is not analogous to that of pleasure in that it does not necessarily correspond to a goal-directed change along a continuum (since pain does not exist only during the process of emptying). But does pain nevertheless exist only during processes – of either emptying or filling? There is no suggestion in the text that there would be no pain if the body could stop at a certain point of emptiness, but then there is no evidence either that the body is capable of that. It is unclear whether Plato thought that once the body starts emptying, it must continue to do so, at some speed or other, until its filling begins (whether or not any of this perceived). At 43a in the *Philebus*, Socrates mentions the view of some wise men (*hoi sophoi*), that everything is in an eternal flux (presumably alluding to the Heraclitean Flux theory), from which it follows that the human body too is always moving in one direction or other. Plato develops his view by way of resolving a difficulty the Flux theory might pose, and he never challenges its entailment that the body is always in flux. Thus it seems reasonable to suppose that he endorses at least this entailment, but we should be careful not to hang too much on this supposition. A closely related question is whether there may be unperceived bodily changes: such a possibility would confirm that the contrast between pleasure and pain on the one hand, and the neutral state on the other, depends solely on whether or not there is perception of the body's status. The *Philebus* is unambiguous that this is possible (43b-c), while the *Republic* does not address the matter. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am tempted to think that Plato held the same view in the *Republic*, and that this is what explains the contrast at hand.

²⁴ Frede's translation (1993).

²⁵ Plato's treatment of the tracking as the bodily motion reaching the soul indicates that the soul may fail to track the bodily change, but there can be no false tracking, i.e., only the mental side of the double motion taking place in a motionless body.

²⁶ The second-order mental state here is the awareness of the first-order mental state, and not a belief about the first-order mental state – the belief is yet a third level mental state. I will shortly offer a defense of this reading and will have more to say about this three-tier mental picture.

²⁷ And likewise with pain, though this mistake is not as important for Plato; his argument in *Republic IX* is focused on a classification and evaluation of pleasures, not pains.

²⁸ Thus Guthrie misses the point when he criticizes *Republic IX*'s account of pleasure, arguing that "The philosopher may say that he enjoys a higher quality of life than the sensualist, but he cannot say that he enjoys it more, enjoyment being solely a matter of individual preference" (Vol. IV, 541). This is merely reasserting the view Plato means to discard.

²⁹ Cf. Penelhum (1964, 86): "If I am in no doubt that I am pleased, I am".

³⁰ I will shortly have more to say on what Urmson might mean by "finding a situation pleasant or enjoyable".

³¹ Since the context is intensional, we cannot simply substitute "neutral state" for "cessation of pain". The consciously held belief in question – that the cessation of pain is pleasant – would be transparently self-contradictory if the substitution were made.

³² Though the *Republic* does not develop the idea of non-rational psychic fillings/restorations to the extent that the *Philebus* does, I believe Plato is aware of the need for such fillings and makes room for them.

³³ Perhaps Urmson wishes to argue that Plato is wrong about what constitutes pleasure, or that he is wrong to apply the same analysis to all pleasure, but those would be altogether different arguments than the one he has offered. On a non-Urmsonian line against Plato, it could be argued that the first mistake cannot take place because pleasure is, by definition, whatever we experience when we think we are experiencing pleasure.

³⁴ See Descartes' *Meditations* II and III, where Descartes denies the possibility that we may be wrong about our mental states themselves (as opposed to whether those mental states correspond to anything external to the mind), which include such things as emotions and desires:

Now the principal error that can be found in judgments consists in the fact that I judge that the ideas, which are in me, are similar to, or in conformity with, certain things outside me. Indeed, if I consider these ideas only as certain modes of my thought, and do not refer them to something else, they can hardly give me any cause for error. (III, 37)

Although Descartes does not mention pleasure and pain explicitly in this passage, he seems to make no exception to the rule that we have perfect access to our mental states themselves, and that our judgments about those states are infallible. Even if there are alternative ways of interpreting Descartes, this is how he has been traditionally understood, and it is this view that philosophers have in mind when they refer to the Cartesian view. Cf. Alston 1971; Armstrong 1968, 100-13; Audi 1995, 648-9 (*The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, entry on "privileged access"). Moran 2001 discusses the history of the "Cartesian doctrine of introspective infallibility", but notes that Descartes himself may not have been a Cartesian in this sense (12n9).

As Alston explains, there are different versions of the view that we need not be skeptical with respect to our judgments about our own mental states. It may be that (a) these judgments cannot be false (they are incorrigible), or we cannot be mistaken about them (we are infallible with respect to them); (b) that it is psychologically impossible to doubt them; (c) or, as Alston himself contends:

Each person is so related to propositions ascribing current mental states to himself that it is logically impossible for him to believe that such a proposition is true and not be justified in holding the belief. (235)

There are, of course, further distinctions to be made. However, I will not be concerned with the significance of the distinctions between the various versions, since Plato's view is opposed to all of them. I will refer primarily to the strongest version (a), which is how the Cartesian view is understood, for the sake of simplicity, though my defense of Plato's view is meant to defeat all versions.

In my discussion of Cartesian infallibility I will refer to the "first mistake", that of mistaking the cessation of pain for pleasure, for the sake of simplicity, though the question of infallibility clearly applies just as well to Plato's "second mistake", that of mistaking the liberation from pain for pure pleasure, which I take up next.

³⁵ *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd edition, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1978), 190. Moran 2001 points out that, between Descartes and the twentieth century,

major figures within both empiricist and rationalist traditions could take for granted that there is nothing in the mind of which the person is not conscious, and that a person's knowledge of his own current mental states is both certain and infallible; in short, that the mind is 'transparent' to itself. (4)

³⁶ See, for example, Ayer 1940.

³⁷ For example, Malcolm 1967, and Shoemaker 1963. See Alston 1971, where he reviews much of the literature on the subject up to that point.

³⁸ See, for example, *Knowing Our Own Minds*, a collection of essays edited by Wright, Smith and Macdonald (1998), where most authors reject the Cartesian conception of self-knowledge. See also Davidson 1987, where he rejects Cartesian infallibility, and argues that we may be wrong about what we believe, though we do have a “first-person authority” with respect to beliefs and other propositional attitudes.

³⁹ It is unclear to me whether, on Freud’s view, defense mechanisms could compel us to believe that we are experiencing something when in fact we are not. Suppose I have been convinced that I ought to enjoy medieval music, and I am forcing myself to enjoy it against my nature. I attend a performance, and I fail to enjoy it, but so detrimental is this for my self-image that I cannot bear to admit it, and I deny this absence of pleasure. As I sit there, I keep telling myself that I am finally capable of enjoying this sort of music, this soothing thought barely concealing my discomfort and urge to flee from the concert hall. Is this a plausible scenario? I do not think we can actually convince ourselves that we are enjoying something if we are not enjoying it *at all*. The scenario gains plausibility if we suppose that my experience involves a mixture of pleasure and pain, and that the defensive self-deception consists of denying the painful part of my experience.

⁴⁰ Freud and psychoanalysis have received significant scrutiny and criticism in the last few decades, and their reputation among philosophers is at best mixed. (See, for example, Grünbaum 1984, Clark and Wright (eds.) 1988, and Roth (ed.) 1998.) It would therefore be irresponsible to simply defer to Freud as an authority. Leaving aside those ideas of Freud now considered obsolete by psychoanalysts themselves, however, we find that there is strong scientific evidence for the central theses of contemporary psychoanalytic/psychodynamic theory, including the thesis that we have unconscious feelings. One of the most serious charges against psychoanalysis has been that the evidence gathered by analysts from therapeutic sessions is completely unreliable, since such evidence is open to contamination by the analysts. It is therefore essential for

psychoanalytic theses to be supported by extraclinical evidence, which would avoid the worry about contamination. Drew Westen, the Harvard psychiatrist, argues that “[a]n enormous body of research in cognitive, social, developmental, and personality psychology now supports” many of these theses (Westen 1998, 333). Of particular relevance to the issue at hand is that many studies support the thesis that people “can feel things without knowing they feel them” (340). Significantly, Westen cites many studies that provide evidence for the existence of a wide variety of “unconscious affective processes”, including not only unconscious desires and motivations but also unconscious attitudes and emotional responses. An example that has received attention is the study confirming the psychoanalytic theory of homophobia as a defense against threatening homosexual feelings. This is an example of an unconscious desire, which the agent denies having, though presumably the same person would deny experiencing any pleasure whatsoever if the desire were satisfied. (That is, the pleasure itself may be conscious, but awareness of the pleasure would be repressed, such that the agent would have a false belief about having had the pleasure.) Likewise, aversions that are kept unconscious by defense mechanisms cause pain when the agent faces the object of aversion, pain which the agent would presumably deny experiencing. Westen explains, for instance, that some of the most convincing research on unconscious affect comes from studies of prejudice, which demonstrate that people in the United States who consider themselves non-racist often have unconscious negative attitudes towards black people (338). It only makes sense that someone who cannot admit their racist attitudes would also be unable to admit experiencing any discomfort (i.e., pain) in the presence of a black man.

⁴¹ According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*,

Proponents of the weaker view [on privileged access] hold that, while persons are currently the best authorities as to the occurrent contents of their own minds, evidence such as conflicting readings of brain states could eventually override such

authority, despite the dependence of the evidence on earlier first-person reports. (Audi 1995, 648-9 – entry on “privileged access”)

Davidson 1987 holds a version of the weaker view on privileged access, as I have pointed out.

⁴² Ryle held that we come to know about our own mental states in just the same way as we come to know about other people’s mental states:

The sorts of things that I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out about other people, and the methods of finding them out are much the same. (Ryle 1949, chapter VI, 155)

There is now very little support for this view.

⁴³ It remains possible, of course, that with respect to any given mental state, it is psychologically impossible to lack the relevant concepts, except under nonstandard circumstances. The most obvious example would be pain, which is often said to be impossible to attribute to oneself falsely: if I believe that I am in pain, then I necessarily am in pain. See, for example, Shoemaker 1994 (273-5), who denies the possibility of being unaware that we are experiencing pain. While I am not myself convinced that this is right, I see no evidence that Plato denies it; here too we see the asymmetry between the Platonic conceptions of pleasure and pain. I will shortly explain why Plato thinks that false attribution is possible in the case of pleasure, which will also shed light on why it is not in the case of pain.

⁴⁴ Some of the most prominent advocates of non-conceptual representational content are Evans 1982, Dretske 1995, Peacocke 1992, and Tye 2000.

⁴⁵ It is possible, of course, that Plato would reject non-conceptual content, given his views on perception and epistemology. His attack on empiricism in *Theaetetus* 184a-186e may be read as hostile to the notion that non-conceptual content can enter the

“logical space of reasons” and justify beliefs. (See Burnyeat 1990, 52-65, for the interpretive options and difficulties concerning those passages.) Whether or not this is so, my claim is that his view on our fallibility with respect to whether we are experiencing pleasure can be detached and defended without denying the possibility of non-conceptual content.

⁴⁶ It is the representational theory of awareness that introduces the possibility of falsity in one’s awareness of a mental state, not the particular account of the representation relation (i.e., not whether the representation makes use of concepts). The critical premise held in common by both McDowell and Sellars on the one hand, and proponents of non-conceptual content on the other, is the denial of the Cartesian view that “it is of the essence of mental entities, of whatever kind, to be conscious, where a mental entity’s being conscious involves its revealing its existence and nature to its possessor in an immediate way” (Shoemaker 1994, 271). (In this paper, Shoemaker rejects both the Cartesian view and the representational theory of awareness, where he understands the latter view as precluding the right sort of privileged access, which, for Shoemaker, secures the reliability of our awareness in a non-contingent way. I disagree with Shoemaker about what sort of privileged access we actually have, but this is not the place for that discussion.)

⁴⁷ Consider, for example: “it appears to me that the president is lying.” It is clear, in this case, that the “appearance” is a belief, since there is no perception involved directly, but the meaning of “appearance” is more ambiguous in “it appears to me that my tie is blue” – the “appearance” here could be either a perceptual experience or a belief. “*Phantasma*”, however, carries a very strong sense of being a presentation to consciousness, such as a vision or dream, and it would be difficult to argue that it refers to belief. “*Phainomai*” by itself might be somewhat less inhospitable to being read as “I believe”, but since what *phainetai* is a *phantasma*, this verb too must be taken as referring to the experience itself in this context.

⁴⁸ It seems to me that McDowell would welcome my reading of Plato as in agreement with him, at least about our awareness of pleasures and pains: McDowell argues that his rejection of non-conceptual content rests on a tradition that can be traced back at least as far as Plato. He writes that “in the reflective tradition we belong to, there is a time-honoured connection between reason and discourse”, complaining that Peacocke, a proponent of non-conceptual content, “cannot respect this connection” (1994, 165).

⁴⁹ As I will clarify shortly, this sense deceives people and leads them to have false beliefs about their (present or anticipated) condition when they are inexperienced in pleasures and pains (584e4-5). Being experienced with pure pleasure, on the other hand, allows go beyond the comparative evaluation and correctly identify the place of an experience on an absolute scale.

⁵⁰ This depends, of course, on Plato’s objectivist approach to pleasure, and his view that our phenomenological condition is determined by our objective bodily and/or psychic condition being perceived. There is, accordingly a fact of the matter about our condition, and this condition is either perceived or not. The fact about our condition and the fact about whether we perceive it are jointly sufficient to determine our phenomenology with respect to that pleasure/pain. Our own interpretation of that phenomenology is a separate phenomenon, which may or may not get things right. A subjectivist about pleasure would claim that, since we experience pleasure whenever we think we do, the neutral state exists only when we think it does. That a certain bodily/psychic condition may appear pleasant or painful depending on the preceding hedonic condition (i.e., condition with respect to pleasure and pain) shows, on such a view, that the sequencing of our experiences is a factor in determining the hedonic condition a particular perceived bodily/psychic condition will correspond to.

⁵¹ This condition is put forward in Plato’s metaphor of up-down-middle (584d-585a), which I will discuss in detail shortly.

⁵² Unfortunately, Plato also suggests, at 584e4-5, in explaining the up-down-middle metaphor, that the person inexperienced with pleasure is also inexperienced with the neutral state and pain. This must be careless writing, since the claim does not hold on the metaphor itself: the person who has been brought from the lower region to the middle has, by stipulation, experienced these conditions, and Plato's claim at 584e4-5 is that this person is inexperienced with the lower region and the middle as well as the upper region. It does not make sense for Plato to be employing here the distinction between having experienced something and *being experienced* with that thing, since Plato's view in *Republic IX* is that non-philosophers (i.e., most people) spend their lives with pain and only those pleasures that are mixed with pain. Plato cannot, therefore, maintain that the person in question may not have had sufficient experience with pain. The badly expressed thought might be, instead, that this person has a skewed view of even pain, due to their inexperience with pure pleasure: on account of this inexperience, they are under a false impression about the range of possible experiences. They judge falsely about the status of painful experiences since they do not understand the status of any given experience on the true range of possible experiences. This should become clearer when I discuss the metaphor in greater detail, in Chapter 2. (Griffith's translation of the sentence in question captures the sense I am attributing to it, though this translation clearly rests on an interpretive choice, and is not a literal rendering of the Greek: "Would the cause of all this be his not having experienced the true range of top, middle and bottom?" Plato's text makes no mention of "range", and states that this kind of person "is not experienced with what is truly above, in the middle, and below" (*me empeiros einai tou alethinou ano te ontos kai en mesoi kai kato*))

⁵³ This is like the Freudian defense mechanisms concealing the truth from the agent's consciousness, even though the agent possesses the cognitive and conceptual apparatus to judge truly.

CHAPTER 2: LIBERATION FROM PAIN

Having established that the cessation of pain, i.e., the neutral state, cannot be a pleasure in any way, Socrates proceeds to discuss “*pleasures that do not come out of pains*, so that you will not suppose in the present circumstances that it is naturally the case that the cessation of pain is pleasure, and the cessation of pleasure pain” (584b1-3, my emphasis). He gives the pleasures of smell as an example, and as proof that they exemplify pleasures that do not come out of pains, he indicates that they “without being preceded by pain, become extraordinarily great and when they cease, they leave no pain behind” (584b6-8). He concludes from this that liberation (*apallage*) from pain is not *pure* pleasure (and vice-versa) (584c1-2).

A. CESSATION OF PAIN VS. LIBERATION FROM PAIN

Given that pleasures that do not come out of pains were just contrasted with the cessation of pain (*pausa lupes*), one might suppose that this last is repeating that point in a slightly different way. But Socrates’ next claim makes it clear that “cessation of pain” and “liberation from pain” refer to different things. For liberations from pain, which Socrates finds it crucial to distinguish from pure pleasures, include “the most and the greatest of the so-called pleasures that reach the soul through the body” (584c4-7), which are not cases of cessation of pain. This is evident from: (a) Plato’s prime examples of bodily pleasure in *Republic IX* as well as elsewhere are eating and drinking, which are clearly not neutral states; and (b) that these “pleasures” reach the

soul (through the body) rules out their being neutral states, since Plato has told us that pleasure and pain are a sort of motion when they reach the soul, whereas there is no such motion in the case of the neutral state (583e9-584a2). It seems that in the case of bodily pleasures, such motion exists because the soul is being reached (through body), whereas nothing reaches the soul in the case of the neutral state.¹

Gosling and Taylor are therefore mistaken in their view that the text is ambiguous about whether liberations from pain are neutral states or “processes of fulfillment” (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 113). Plato does not use the terms “cessation” and “liberation” interchangeably, nor does he switch between them out of carelessness or in order to confuse us.² The deliberate shift and the consistent use of the terms reflect a critical distinction in Plato’s account of pleasure.³ However, even those who have recognized the distinction have often not understood what exactly “liberation from pain” means. Frede sees that it is a process, and rightly identifies it on the metaphor of up-down-middle as the motion from below to the middle. She is, however, silent about what these represent in terms of our experiences, which is necessary for understanding Plato’s view on the phenomenology of pain and liberation from it (Frede 1985, 158-9; 1992, 436).

Gosling and Taylor apparently think that if “liberation from pain” means a process of fulfillment (as it does on my view), the sense in which such a pleasure may lack in truth/purity must be that someone in pain makes a false judgment that the anticipated liberation from pain is true/pure pleasure (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 110, 113).⁴ This reveals a misunderstanding of not only what liberation from pain is but also the

mistakes Plato thinks people make. For, as I have pointed out, he thinks that people make mistakes about whether an experience is a pure pleasure during the experience (concurrently) as well as in anticipation.

What is more, I see no evidence whatsoever in *Republic IX* that lack of purity is related to any sort of false judgment, nor do I see how this is supposed to make sense of the text. It is clear that the metaphor of up-down-middle represents two kinds of experience (the exact status of which I will discuss shortly, when I focus on the metaphor), only one of which is pure pleasure, determined according to the psychological/phenomenological nature of the experience; it is only because a pleasure is not pure in the first place that judging it to be pure is a false judgment.⁵ Gosling and Taylor's view is untenable also because it would follow that for a philosopher – who does not make mistakes about pleasures – eating would be a purer pleasure than it is for the ignorant man. It is absolutely groundless to claim that, in *Republic IX*, the same kind of pleasure – with respect to both its physiological basis and its phenomenology – has a different degree of purity depending on who is having it.⁶ A careful examination of the metaphor of up-down-middle should shed light on these matters.

B. UP-DOWN-MIDDLE

We are asked to think about pleasure, pain and the neutral state in terms of the up, down, and middle found in nature. That these three kinds of experience are what the three locations represent is made clear at 584e7-585a5. Thinking of these experiences in spatial terms should not be too bizarre, since we have already been told that pleasure

and pain are opposites, with the neutral state in between the two. I have already pointed out that designating pleasure and pain as opposites gives an indication that what Plato considers to be real pleasure differs from the pleasures Callicles has in mind in that the former is incapable of coexisting with, or being acquired/lost at the same time as, pain. The Calliclean pleasures – eating, drinking, sex, etc. – are not, however, dropped out of the picture in *Republic IX*'s account of pleasure. Quite to the contrary, it is the purpose of the account to establish their inferiority vis-à-vis the pleasures of the philosopher. As I hope to make clear in what follows, the liberations from pain just *are* the Calliclean pleasures, the pleasures which fail to qualify as the opposite of pain. They do so fail because, in both the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, they are satisfactions of painful desires, and hence, intimately bound up with pain.

At this point we face the possibility of a divergence between the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*: in the *Gorgias*, it was agreed between Socrates and Callicles, and the principal argument assumed, that the pleasure of eating and the pain of hunger coexist, both ceasing when we reach satiety (and similarly for all the pleasures in question). This seems to assume that in such cases there are two separate phenomena – the pain of the lack (e.g., hunger) and the pleasure of its filling (e.g., eating). Now it is not obvious to me whether Plato himself held this view in the *Gorgias*, i.e., whether he thought that the Calliclean pleasures – the satisfactions of painful lacks/desires – were distinct from the pain with which they coexisted, or whether this view was entertained for dialectical purposes.⁷ Regardless, however, the important question for the present purposes is

whether he endorses this view in *Republic IX*, where he reveals his own considered judgment on the matter.

Plato writes that the “so-called pleasures” that come out of pains *are* some kind of liberation from pain (*lupon tines apallagai*) – not that they are mixed with those liberations (584c4-7). This suggests that these pleasures are not distinct from the process of liberation from pain, but are rather identical to it. Supposing that a liberation from pain is a process of reduction of pain, one may still speak of pleasure and pain as distinct things that coexist: a condition and the process of its decline/regression are distinct and may coexist, just as sickness and recovering (from sickness) coexist, even though recovering is nothing but the liberation from the sickness. But this is a very superficial sense in which the pleasure is distinct from the pain; if such a pleasure is *merely* a liberation from pain, if it is *nothing but* a process of reduction of pain, then it seems to be entirely parasitic upon the pain, with no independent status, as with recovering and sickness. Yet it is clear from *Republic IX* that Plato considers pleasure to be just as real as pain, and not of inferior ontological status; the most obvious proof of this is that pure pleasures exist entirely independently of pain. If, however, these pleasures coming out of pains are as dependent on pain as recovering is on sickness, we must seriously question whether they actually are “pleasures”. This brings us to the charge against *Republic IX* that the status of liberations from pain is left ambiguous, that it is ambiguous whether these liberations are inferior pleasures or not pleasures at all.

C. THE STATUS OF LIBERATIONS FROM PAIN

So far I have been silent about what sort of criterion PC is, in the following sense: I have explained that PC is a straightforward criterion for determining which pleasures are the unqualifiedly pure ones, but I have not said anything about the status of “so-called pleasures” (*legomenai hedonai*) that do not make the cut – whether they are less pure pleasures, impure pleasures, or not pleasures at all. And it was for good reason: Plato does not say a whole lot about this himself. This lack of an explicit answer has led Frede to complain that the status of liberations from pain is ambiguous.

What we find between 583c3 and 585a7 is an account of pleasure that allows us to draw a sharp line between what is unqualifiedly pure and what is not. This line, facilitated by the criterion I have called PC, creates two classes of “pleasures”, pure pleasures and so-called pleasures, with no possibility of distinguishing between things within the classes. However, it does not determine whether the so-called pleasures are really no pleasures at all, or just a lower grade of pleasures. Designating one class as “pure pleasure” does not determine the status of what it is contrasted with; Plato’s view could be that only pure pleasures qualify as pleasures.

Frede argues that “the motion from below (liberation from pain) is treated like a pseudo-pleasure... (584d/e)” (1985, 159), but that is not at all clear from those passages, where the metaphor of “up-down-middle” is presented.⁸ Motion from below to the middle can be considered as a pseudo-pleasure only under the assumption that only the upper region is, or contains, pleasure (in any real sense), and this is exactly

what is in question.⁹ Stronger reasons can be given, however, for the view that liberations from pain *are* some kind of pleasure:

(a) While distinguishing liberations from pure pleasures, Plato does not shrink from calling them “pleasures”¹⁰, whereas he very carefully avoids calling neutral states “pleasures”, always making clear that those who think that they are pleasures are wrong. He also refers to the liberations from pain as “pleasures”¹¹ later at 586b7; it is liberations from pain that he is talking about, because the issue there is the pleasures of people who are “brought down and then back again to the middle and throughout life wander in this way” and who never reach the upper region (586a1-6). If Plato considered liberations from pain and cessation of pain in the same class, as non-pleasures, this consistent difference in their treatment would be meaningless.¹²

(b) Plato characterizes the pleasures that are not pure, i.e., the liberations, as shadowlike (*eskiagraphemene*), at 583b5 and 586b8. This must be meant to remind us not only of the *skiagraphia* technique – which I discuss in some detail below – but also of the Cave analogy, where we find shadows that resemble what they are shadows of. Though Frede recognizes the reference to the Cave analogy (but not the one to *skiagraphia*), she does not seem to fully appreciate the significance of this point (1985, 159). For the sense in which shadows resemble what they are shadows of in the Cave analogy is different and stronger than that in our belief that the shadow of a dog has a dog-like shape. If that were all there is to the shadows, it would be irrelevant for our purposes, since the shadow of a dog is no dog at all. The analogies of the Sun, Line and Cave, which have to be understood together, establish the “degrees of reality” theory,

according to which an item at the bottom of the Line or the Cave (shadows) has a low degree of being as determined by its participation in the appropriate Form(s).¹³ It nevertheless does have a degree of reality/being, so that a circle drawn on paper deserves to be called a “circle”, despite its weak resemblance to the Form Circle.¹⁴ If liberations from pain are shadows of pure pleasures in this sense, then they must be a sort of pleasure albeit less real/true than pure pleasures.

These reasons compel us to consider liberations as a lower form of pleasures rather than disqualifying them from the whole genus of pleasure. If this is right, the problem of ambiguity Frede saw as such a detriment to the *Republic* IX is not a real problem. The question becomes, rather, why liberations can be pleasure even though they are not pure, and what it means to say that some pleasures are less true, yet not altogether devoid of truth. It should be unsurprising that the full answer will come from DR – unsurprising not only because DR assigns varying degrees of truth and reality to pleasures, but also because one of the very reasons for considering liberations to be pleasures points us in that direction. By likening liberations to shadows, and reminding us of the Sun, Line and Cave, Plato hints that he will tie his account of pleasures to the “degrees of reality” theory even before he introduces DR at 585a8-586a.¹⁵

D. THE COEXISTENCE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

What exactly DR has to offer on these matters will be discussed in Part III, but we must now return to PC and try to square with it the notion that the “so-called pleasures” do indeed qualify as pleasures, and that they cannot be completely dependent on pain.

Given this understanding, it cannot be the case that a liberation from pain is nothing but a process of recession of pain, and it has to be the case that these pleasures coexist with pain, as on the *Gorgias* model. This means that the so-called pleasures are *impure pleasures*, consisting of pleasure mixed with pain.

This reading of the inferior pleasures is corroborated by Plato's claim that the people who are not capable of enjoying pure pleasure necessarily live with *pleasures that are mixed with pains* (586b7-8). Unless Plato is being very misleading here, we can infer that all impure pleasures are mixed with pains, as two distinct things can be mixed. The next few lines support this reading too, as Plato points out that pleasure and pain appear intense because of this juxtaposition (*hupo tes par'allelas theseos*), which is clear evidence that he thinks of impure pleasures as involving two distinct experiences blended together in a mutually intensifying way. Not only is it explicit here that pleasure and pain are two distinct things that are juxtaposed, but the distinctness is also required by the claim that the juxtaposition has an effect:

If pleasure and pain were to "coexist" in impure pleasures only in the sense that pain exists alongside the process of its being reduced, it would be implausible to claim that the pain and this process form a mutually intensifying mixture. Mutual intensification occurs only where there is contrast between the juxtaposed items, which is why such an effect is not found in the juxtaposition of pleasure and pleasure, or pain and pain. In particular, the juxtaposition of a condition and the process of the condition's recession provide no contrast whatsoever and there can be no experiential effect resulting from such juxtaposition. For even if pain and its recession are

experienced distinctly, the latter is a second-order experience *about* the receding levels of the former through time, and not the sort of experience that can provide contrast with pain. It may be said that my perception of the level of sunlight outside and my perception of it getting darker as the sun sets are distinct, but one cannot provide contrast with the other, because they are not only different experiences but also different *kinds* of experience altogether. Mutual intensification – or its opposite, mutual de-intensification, which we find when two patches of similar color are juxtaposed (e.g., a picture and its frame) – occurs only between experiences of the same kind, and a second-order experience is not of the same kind as the first-order experience on which it is based.¹⁶

So much for establishing that the impure pleasures are genuine mixtures of pleasure and pain as two distinct elements.¹⁷ The troubling question that remains is why Plato told us that these so-called pleasures *are* “some kind of liberation from pain”. One possible answer is that Plato simply wrote carelessly, and that he meant to write that the so-called pleasures are *mixed with* some kind of liberation from pain. This is not entirely implausible, given that other passages preclude a literal reading of Plato’s text here, but it is not an attractive interpretive option either. I believe we can do better by turning to the metaphor of up-down-middle, which Plato offers to explain what sort of things the impure pleasures are, and what they most resemble (584d1).

Though pleasure and pain have been introduced as opposites, it is clear that the metaphor of up-down-middle does not construe them as the opposite end-points on a linear scale, as one might suppose from the common examples of opposites,¹⁸ such as

black and white (an example that Plato himself uses as an analogy at 585a3-5). At

584d6-9 Socrates says:

Do you think that someone being brought from the lower region towards the middle would suppose anything other than that he was being brought up? And standing in the middle and looking at the place from which he was brought, would he think he was anywhere other than the upper region, as he hasn't seen what is truly up?

Plato is pointing out two kinds of mistake, and they are both false judgments about what the person is experiencing. The two mistakes are these: (i) standing in the middle and thinking that one is in the upper region; and (ii) moving from below towards the middle and thinking that one is moving to the upper region. The first mistake is the one that Plato has already introduced (prior to this passage); the only difference is that Plato presents both types of false judgment as concurrent with the experience at issue, i.e., he does not mention the possibility of anticipatory false judgment about the neutral state.¹⁹ I have already offered some explanation of the first mistake. But understanding the first mistake adequately requires understanding the second mistake, because the object of the second mistake precedes the object of the first mistake: the second mistake is about the movement from the lower region to the middle, and the first mistake is about having arrived at the middle from the lower region. The mistakes are to be explained phenomenologically, and understanding the phenomenology of the cessation of pain requires an understanding of the phenomenology of the liberation from pain. For this we must examine the metaphor carefully.

It is plain that the middle here represents the neutral state, while pain is represented by the whole lower region. The neutral state is represented as the middle, as it is neither

up nor down, but rather in between, just as the neutral state is neither pleasant nor painful. But what the middle represents has to be the experience of being at the neutral state, and not the cause (e.g., physical condition) that underlies this experience. For otherwise the metaphor is a failure, since it stipulates that there are three basic positions on a single scale, and that these three positions relate to one another in a transitive superiority relation. The same sort of superiority relation holds between the first and second items in all of the following three pairs: (i) the up and the middle; (ii) the up and the below; (iii) the middle and the below. But this condition cannot be met if the middle is, for example, the fullness of a stomach, since the lower region would then be the emptiness of the stomach, but there would be nothing that corresponds to the upper region.²⁰

More importantly, however, the text itself makes it clear that the three positions represent three kinds of hedonic value, and not the causes of the experiences that have these hedonic values. (By “hedonic value” I mean values such as pleasure, pain, or neutrality with respect to pleasure and pain. As will be seen below, the scale representing the range of possible hedonic values can be richer than one that consists solely of these three values.) Having pointed out that the person who has moved upwards in the lower region and arrived at the middle makes the mistakes in question due to inexperience (584e4-5), Plato makes explicit what the metaphor represents:

Would you be surprised, then, if those who are inexperienced in truth, just as they have unsound beliefs about many other things, they are so disposed toward pleasure and pain and what’s in between them that, when they are brought to the painful, they believe truly and are really in pain, but, when brought from the painful to what’s in between, they strongly believe that they have reached fulfillment and

pleasure; as in the case of comparing black and gray without having experienced white, are they not deceived when they compare pain to painlessness, without having experienced pleasure? (584e7-585a5)

The only way to make sense of the metaphor is to take it as representing a scale of hedonic value, the middle representing a neutral state, while the lower region and the upper region represent negative and positive hedonic values, respectively. But the model needs to be, and is, richer than this suggests: it is not simply the case that being in the lower region is being in pain and being in the upper region is having pleasure. For the model is meant to capture the impure pleasures (and them in particular), and the only candidate for representing them is the movement from the lower region towards the middle. Having arrived at the middle from the lower region, on the other hand, represents the cessation of pain. What we have in the upper region, then, is not just any pleasure, but pure pleasure.²¹ The two mistakes, therefore, are the following: (i) mistaking the cessation of pain (the neutral state) for pure pleasure; and (ii) mistaking the liberation from pain (impure pleasure) for pure pleasure. There is an asymmetry here, since there is pain only in the lower region and none at all in the upper region, whereas there must be some pleasure in the lower region as well, given that impure pleasure represents a movement within the lower region up to the middle. But if there is pleasure in the lower region as well as the upper, how should we understand the hedonic scale that the metaphor is meant to capture?

Answering this question involves answering two other, related, questions: (a) what does it mean to designate the whole lower region as pain/painful (and the upper region as pleasure)? (b) what does a movement within that region represent? It is

important at this point to keep in mind that Plato is working with the *state view* of pain and how this applies to processes of fulfillment, such as eating.²² On this view, pain continues during the eating, but it need not remain constant during that process. This might suggest that the upward movement in the lower region represents simply a recession of pain, a movement from more pain to less, up until the neutral state. But we have also seen that an impure pleasure is represented by an upward movement in the lower region, and that an impure pleasure is a mixture of pleasure and pain. It does not follow from this that every upward movement in the lower region necessarily involves pleasure as well as pain, but it does follow that our account of an upward movement within the lower region must be capable of accommodating the coexistence of pleasure and pain.

E. LIFE IN THE LOWER REGION

I think the following account meets this requirement while providing answers to the above questions, (a) and (b). I start getting hungry several hours after eating, and the longer I go without food the more hungry I become, and thus the more pain I will be suffering. When I start eating again, not only does the pain of my hunger start to lessen but I also feel the pleasure of eating, up until the point when I am full, at which point both the pain of hunger and the pleasure of eating cease.²³ I often welcome this state of satiety,²⁴ despite the fact that my pleasure of eating has ceased too, because the pain involved always outweighs the pleasure, and the neutral state is an improvement over the combination of pleasure and pain. Considering the experience of eating-when-

hungry as a whole, that is, I am able to weigh the pleasure against the pain, and find that the pain is greater than the pleasure throughout this process. This is the sense in which, throughout the process, the net hedonic value of the experience is negative, up until satiety is reached and the process ends, at a net value of zero.

So the answers to the questions (a) and (b) are these: the lower region represents negative hedonic value ranging from immediately below the neutral state, i.e., the smallest amount of negative net hedonic value, downwards to the most painful experience.²⁵ The pain and pleasure involved in any impure pleasure are quantifiable in the sense that each has a specific magnitude that can be weighed against the other, and the negative value of (the magnitude of) pain can be subtracted from the positive value of (the magnitude of) pleasure. The net result of such a hedonic calculation can be represented as a point somewhere on this linear scale, the particular position depending on the extent to which the pain outweighs the pleasure. Given this, moving downwards from the middle represents an increase in the negative hedonic value, while moving upwards from somewhere in the lower region towards the middle represents a decrease in this value.

The downward movement could, in principle, represent an increase in the preponderance of pain over pleasure, but Plato's account of the impure pleasures seems to rule this out, as he seems to believe that the downward movement is reversed once the deteriorating underlying condition is reversed. As soon as you start eating, that is, you start moving upwards, experiencing a decrease in the preponderance of pain over pleasure. If I am eating so slowly that this does not reverse my process of emptying

(but rather merely slows it down), then this eating does not constitute a genuine filling of the stomach, and hence does not qualify as a pleasure of eating. This is why the downward movement represents an increase in the magnitude of pain by itself, as we experience when a painful condition worsens.

Plato gives us no indication as to whether an upward movement is brought about mostly by a decrease in pain or by an increase in pleasure. It is clear that the pain does decrease, as it eventually ceases, and our experience suggests that it is a gradual decrease, as opposed to a sudden disappearance. Yet it is unclear whether the pleasure increases throughout this process, remains constant, or starts out strong and decreases as the pain decreases. It is possible that Plato left this point undecided to leave room for some variety in the way the process can take place. What he does tell us is that every impure pleasure involves a mixture of pleasure and pain such that it is a process whereby the agent experiences a decreasing preponderance of pain over pleasure, i.e., a negative but increasing net hedonic value.

F. LIFE IN THE UPPER REGION

What, then, can we make of the upper region? It can be seen that the upper region must represent positive hedonic value, ranging from the smallest amount of positive net hedonic value to the most pleasant experience. This region is the positive segment of the very same scale of hedonic value, the negative segment of which is represented by the lower region. And an upward movement in the upper region represents a movement from less pleasure (or no pleasure) to more pleasure. It is important to clarify what the

hedonic scale in question is a measure of: since Plato believes that impure pleasures are the most intense/greatest pleasures and that impure pleasures belong in the lower region, the scale cannot be a measure of the intensity/size of a pleasure. (584c4-7) Instead, it is a measure of pleasantness as Plato construes it. This explains why the more pleasant pure pleasures are of greater hedonic value than the more intense impure pleasures.²⁶ The reason for the greater intensity of impure pleasures, on the other hand, is to be understood in terms of the deceptive comparative evaluations, as I will explain shortly.

My account of the upper region allows, in principle, for an impure pleasure to be represented in the upper region by virtue of its pleasure-component outweighing its pain-component. This would result in a positive net hedonic value and place the experience above the neutral state, on the positive side of the scale. But it is clear that Plato considers the upper region to be occupied solely by pure pleasures. The reason for this must be that the nature of impure pleasure is such that their pleasure-component can never outweigh their pain-component. The pleasure at issue is so fundamentally parasitic on the painful condition that it tracks the removal of pain, diminishing as it diminishes, and not ever surpassing it.²⁷

We have seen that there can be upward movements within both the lower and the upper regions. But we should be aware that upward movements take place either in the lower region or the upper exclusively – there is no such thing as starting from below and crossing through the middle into the upper region. Once I have reached the neutral state by satisfying my hunger, I can only go down again, experiencing the pain of

hunger as my stomach empties. The processes of liberations from pain (impure pleasures) are complete once the neutral state is achieved, and the movement from the neutral state upwards (i.e., pure pleasure) is an altogether different kind of process. I will have more to say about what kind of process it is later (in Part III), when I turn to DR and the filling metaphor. Let me remark at this point that the conditions underlying upward movements in the lower region are entirely different from those underlying upward movements in the upper region. As I point out above, the pleasure-component of an impure pleasure is parasitic on the painful condition, and cannot persist once the pain has ceased. (We have seen that Socrates and Callicles agree on this in the *Gorgias*.) Pure pleasures, on the other hand, “do not come out of pains”, the pleasure being the satisfaction of a painless desire, which means that the agent starts out from the neutral state and moves upwards from there.

Since, however, any position in the upper region represents a positive hedonic value, it does not matter much how far into the upper region any given pure pleasure takes us. Whereas the distance covered by an upward movement in the lower region is of great significance – since whether or not the neutral state is reached is essential – the distance covered by an upward movement in the upper region is not important, as there is no particular point (on the hedonic scale) that needs to be reached. Nevertheless, it is true that one’s pure pleasure will be the more pleasant the higher it goes in the upper region, but Plato shows no interest in distinguishing between the pleasantness of different kinds of pure pleasure by means of his hedonic scale.²⁸

The distinction Plato draws explicitly is only between the impure pleasures, which are upward movements in the lower region, and pure pleasures, which are upward movements starting from the middle. In fact, Plato is so unconcerned about how pleasant a pure pleasure becomes, that he actually does not speak of any upward movement in the upper region, and the contrast with the upward movement in the lower region is given as *being in* the upper region. Neither the gradual progression from the neutral state to some point in the positive segment of the hedonic scale, nor the particular point that the pleasure in question reaches, are addressed in these passages. One may read them, therefore, as suggesting that all pure pleasures are pleasant to the very same extent, and even that pure pleasures arise suddenly, the agent experiencing a neutral state one moment and a generic level of pleasantness the next moment. Yet denying that there may be any difference whatsoever between the pleasantness of different pure pleasures, and between the different stages of any given pure pleasure, renders Plato's account of pure pleasure counterintuitive.

The alternative, and more charitable, reading of these passages is that Plato does not deny the possibility of the differences in question, and fails to make the possibility explicit only because doing so is unnecessary for the overarching purpose of his whole account of pleasure in *Republic IX*. He wishes to prove that the philosopher's pleasures constitute a superior class of pleasures, according to both PC and DR, and differences within the superior class are of no importance as far as this goal is concerned. Given also the density of these passages, it is understandable that Plato wasted no space to make explicit or clarify points that are not of urgent need for his

purposes, points that he nevertheless endorses. I therefore maintain my thesis that the upper region represents a range of positive hedonic value, and that different pure pleasures may differ in both how far up they go, and in the particular course they follow throughout the whole experience: an activity that yields pure pleasure may reach its most pleasant moment fast or slowly, and may stay at the peak throughout the activity or fluctuate.²⁹

G. BEING DECEIVED BY THE UPWARD MOVEMENT

The above reading rests on the *state view* of pain, and provides, I believe, the best way to make sense of the second mistake, as well as the first one: it is because the movement in the lower region towards the middle (e.g., satisfying hunger) constitutes a process of increasing net hedonic value that such a process gives rise to a sense of improvement and elation; throughout the process, one is being liberated from pain, moving from bad to less bad. And this sense of elation, when coupled with a lack of experience with pure pleasures, leads to the mistake of believing that the liberation from pain constitutes genuine, pure pleasure (584e4-5).³⁰

Familiarity with pure pleasures allows one to appreciate how different pure pleasure is from the liberation from pain. Someone who lacks such familiarity, on the other hand, will be prone to mistaking the sense of elation produced by that liberation for pure pleasure. The explanation of the first mistake is simply an extension of this account: just as the liberation from pain produces a sense of improvement, so the cessation of pain (arriving at the middle from below) marks the arrival of a relatively

superior condition. The person ignorant of the good condition, of course, will be unaware that the neutral state is superior only with respect to the bad condition. The limited experience of the person who spends a life pursuing the pleasures of the appetite – the life Plato wishes to prove less pleasant than the philosophical life – makes him a poor judge of pleasures, leading him to fall prey to the appearances.³¹

Evaluations of a condition based on an instinctive comparison with what precedes it yield only an appearance, which may or may not correspond to the reality of that condition.³² The experienced person, in contrast with the inexperienced, will recognize liberations from pain to be what they are, though he will not deny that these are processes of improvement along the hedonic scale. (Even the philosopher prefers satiety to hunger!) And likewise, he will not be deceived into thinking that the cessation of pain is pleasure – just like someone who knows white will not think gray to be white, even when it is compared to black (585a3-5).

We can now see why Plato's account of the mistakes does not make sense under the *process view* of pain: if there is no pain but only pleasure during the process of eating while hungry (as this view maintains), mistaking the neutral state to be pleasure becomes incomprehensible. For, on this view, becoming full after eating means moving from a pleasant condition to a non-pleasant one, and this creates the appearance not of pleasure but of pain. It is only because the neutral state is higher on the hedonic scale than the whole process towards it that it can appear to be pleasant. The *process view* of pain cannot make sense of the neutral state being preferable to the process of fulfillment leading up to it, whereas the *state view* of pain allows us to explain not only that

phenomenon but also why people may, in some cases, find that process to be preferable to the neutral state. The explanation for the latter phenomenon, however, rests on another metaphor Plato employs, which I will turn to shortly.

It should also be emphasized that the *process view* of pain undermines Plato's claim that pure pleasures are incomparably more pleasant than liberations from pain. Since the *process view* construes the lack of purity of these processes as pleasure being mixed with pain only sequentially – being preceded and followed by pain – the question arises whether the pleasant part of the mixture may so far outweigh the painful part that the mixture as a whole is more pleasant than pure pleasure. Reeve, for instance, maintains that the purity criterion (PC) is unable to establish the greater pleasantness of the philosopher's pleasures:

But for all that has been shown so far the philosopher's pleasures might be no more pleasant than those of making money or being honoured. For the latter, though impure, might yet contain enough pure pleasure to make them more pleasant overall than learning the truth, even when the pure pain they contain is taken into consideration. (1988, 148)

Reeve concludes that the proof of the greater pleasantness of the philosopher's pleasures must come in what follows, by showing that the philosopher's pleasure is not only pure but also true (DR). But this conclusion robs Plato's account of the greater intuitive appeal PC has.

If the philosopher's pleasures are more pleasant *only* in the sense that they are truer on the basis of some metaphysical theory, and not for any psychological/phenomenological reason, they will do very little to entice anybody to the philosophical life. The *state view* of pain, on the other hand, avoids this difficulty: pain

continues throughout an impure pleasure, in addition to the pain that precedes and follows it. And, critically, the nature of the pleasure involved in an impure pleasure is such that it can never outweigh the pain with which coexists. Consequently it is impossible that the pleasure involved in an impure pleasure may contain a large enough portion of pleasure for the impure pleasure to be more pleasant than the philosopher's pleasures. Thus the impure pleasures always remain below the neutral state – there is no moment at which the impure pleasure contains more pleasure than pain. Given also that every impure pleasure is preceded and followed by pure pain (e.g., whenever we are hungry and not eating), it turns out that an impure pleasure is part of a cycle that contains far more pain than pleasure.

Critics may point out, however, that this account fails to do justice to the phenomena, since it cannot explain why, on some occasions, people actually prefer the impure pleasure to the neutral state. We can find people who wish to get hungry so that they can enjoy eating again, and even more people who prefer the pleasure of having sex to the contentment of having had sex. The above model has no way of explaining this, and it would be a significant blow to Plato's account of pleasure if he could not address this worry. Thankfully, Plato *does* provide us with the resources to tackle this problem.

H. MUTUAL INTENSIFICATION

The solution is obtained through Plato's claim, which we have already seen, that the juxtaposition of pleasures and pains makes them appear intense. Plato claims at 586b7-

c2 that in the case of mixed (impure) pleasures “pleasure and pain are colored (*apochrainomenais*) by their juxtaposition, so that each appears intense (*hoste sphodrous hekateras phainesthai*)”. Plato must have been impressed by the similarities between color perception and our perception of pleasure and pain, as *Republic IX* contains another metaphor based on color perception, which sheds light on how Plato thinks this mutual intensification occurs. Plato refers to the inferior variety of “pleasures” as shadow-paintings (*eskiagraphemene*) and shadow-paintings of true pleasures, at 583b5 and 586b8, respectively.³³ This reference to shadow-paintings naturally reminds the reader of the shadows in the Cave analogy in Book VII, and it has been pointed out that this is probably intentional on Plato’s part.³⁴ The second reference in particular, where the image of the shadow-paintings of true pleasures appears after Plato has already linked the truth of pleasures to the “degrees of reality” theory, is almost certainly meant to remind us of the shadows in the cave analogy – the less real copies of the genuine things.

I believe, however, that Plato’s metaphor is twofold: these are also references to the painting technique *skiagraphia*, a technique that Plato is not only familiar with, but also fond of employing as a metaphor.³⁵ On this matter we must turn to Keuls’ valuable work, *Plato and Greek Painting* (Keuls 1978). Keuls tells us that *skiagraphia* “was developed by the Athenian painter Apollodorus, who lived in the latter half of the fifth century and derived from it the nickname [*ho skiagraphos*]” and that this technique was remembered in Roman times as the key device which set painting apart from drawing (72-3). She explains the difficulties involved in figuring out what exactly *skiagraphia*

was, and argues that Plato's references to this technique provide the best evidence. However, "[h]e has recourse to the term for the purposes of metaphor, [...], and its literal meaning is sometimes concealed in the imagery." (73) From her study of all the references – two in Aristotle and ten in Plato – Keuls identifies the following characteristics of the technique: (i) it is a device meant for viewing from a distance; (ii) color surfaces are broken up into distinct patches or dots; (iii) it features the mutual intensification of colors; (iv) it is (in Socrates' view) suitable for the painting of landscapes but not for the representation of living creatures, and (v) it is a metaphor for deception or for the blurring of issues vs. distinct outlining. The items (ii), (iii), and (v) are, as Keuls notes, relevant for the two references to *skiagraphia* in *Republic IX*, but (ii) and (iii) are the more interesting ones: our condition appearing one way or another depending on what is next to it, finds the perfect metaphor in this painting technique that uses patches of contiguous colors obeying the law of mutual intensification.³⁶

The critical point is that the contrasting patches of color in *skiagraphia* create an effect by being viewed simultaneously. We saw, in the metaphor of up-down-middle, the effect of *diachronic comparative evaluations*, which explains why the cessation of pain may appear pleasant when it follows pain temporally. The metaphor of *skiagraphia*, on the other hand, highlights another feature of our phenomenology, that is, the effect of *synchronic comparative evaluations*.³⁷ This effect explains why the pleasure involved in a mixture with pain may appear intense. Just as the appearance of a color patch may be intensified by its juxtaposition to a contrasting color patch, the appearance of a pleasure may be intensified by its juxtaposition to pain.³⁸

During an impure pleasure, we have a mixture of pleasure and pain with a negative net hedonic value. This is because the negative value of the pain is subtracted from the positive value of the pleasure. Yet the presence of the pain can also have the effect of making the pleasure appear more intense and this is what explains the cases where people prefer the impure pleasure to satiety. In fact, this effect can make the pleasure (and pain) appear so intense that

they cause frenzied loves of themselves in the foolish and are fought over, just like the phantom of Helen that Stesichorus says the men at Troy fought over out of ignorance of the truth.³⁹ (586c2-5)

This passage makes it clear that Plato is well aware of the appeal that impure pleasures have for many people. He acknowledges the appeal and offers a diagnosis, according to which the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain makes the pleasure appear to be something that it is not, thereby causing a frenzied love of itself. The warriors at Troy fought over the phantom of Helen, falsely believing that it was Helen – they fought for an object (phantom of Helen) under a false description (as the real Helen). Similarly, Plato tells us, people who pursue mixed pleasures do so under a false description of those experiences.

Now the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain makes them *appear* intense, but this appearance cannot be the false one that infects the description under which people pursue impure pleasures: Plato agrees that impure pleasures can be very intense, in fact claiming that the greatest (*megistai*) pleasures are impure pleasures (584c4-7). I take this claim to be equivalent to claiming that the most intense pleasures are impure pleasures, since it is clear that the greatness here cannot be a measure of pleasantness,

and there does not seem to be any other feature of a pleasure that this greatness could be the measure of. What Plato has in mind must be that the intensity of the pleasure leads “the foolish” to overvalue the combined experience with respect to its pleasantness. The foolish – those who are inexperienced with pure pleasures – end up pursuing impure pleasures under a false description, as having great positive hedonic value, when in fact the net hedonic value of the mixture is negative. Though Plato does not make this explicit, it seems reasonable to suppose, given his analysis of diachronic comparative evaluations, that it is not only at the level of belief that falsity occurs – the foolish presumably experience the impure pleasures as positively pleasant (i.e., as having a positive hedonic value), falsity coming into play at the level of awareness (of the impure pleasure). The philosopher, on the other hand, will not be deceived by such appearances. He will either not experience the mixed pleasure as positively pleasant (but only as intense), or else he will prevent this falsity from infecting his beliefs, and will judge the hedonic value of the experience correctly, acting on the basis of this correct judgment.

We have seen that there are two features of how we experience pleasure and pain – synchronic and diachronic comparative evaluations – that explain a variety of false appearances, which in turn explain how people come to make false judgments about their pleasures and pains. Plato does not go into the detail of how these two deceptive mechanisms interact in different sorts of impure pleasure, but it is clear that different cases are to be explained differently. The synchronic comparative evaluation (mutual intensification) feature may lead one to prefer walking into a warm room from

freezing temperatures outside, to being at the optimal temperature all the time. But this feature is clearly not the dominant one in the case of health appearing pleasant after sickness, where the diachronic comparative evaluation plays the primary role. Together, the two features explain the different ways in which people are deceived about the true status of their pleasures and pains.

It seems to me that Plato's account of how we evaluate our experiences comparatively – and how our experiences are colored by their comparative status – has intuitive appeal, and is fairly uncontroversial. The controversial part comes in with his verdict that the appearances resulting from the comparative evaluations are illusory. The commonplace view is that, when it comes to pleasure, the appearance is identical to reality – “whatever complex of experience may produce pleasure, its intensity and reality is the intensity and reality the subject feels it to have.” (Penelhum 1964, 90) On this view, the fact that an experience appears to be a more intense pleasure due to the preceding pain is not a reason to doubt the intensity of that pleasure. Thus Penelhum protests against Plato: “Even if the magnitude of the pleasure is due to the magnitude of the distress, the magnitude of the pleasure is as great as the magnitude of the distress makes it seem to be.” (1964, 90) But we have seen that Plato's equipped to rebut such criticisms.

With respect to the liberations from pain, Plato grants that our experiences are intensified by their comparative status and that there is no falsity in this aspect of the appearance resulting from our natural comparative evaluations. In other words, Plato is not interested in denying the felt intensity of the pleasure of quenching our thirst under

the scorching sun. Nor is he interested in claiming that that pleasure is not *really* intense. In this sense, the reality of the experience is not denied at all. Criticisms of Plato's view are therefore misguided to the extent that they turn on the intensity/magnitude of pleasure.⁴⁰ Plato's quarrel is with our evaluations of those experiences *qua* pleasures, and more specifically, our judgments about how pleasant they are. His contention is that the intensity of a pleasure is a wholly separate matter from how pleasant it is, and that people are deluded into conflating intensity and pleasantness only because they do not really understand what pleasure is. In the absence of experience with pure pleasures, the appearance created by the comparative status of our experience leads to false judgments about the pleasantness of those experiences, whereas this judgment would not be made by someone who understands what pleasure really is.

But what is the basis for Plato's claims about how pleasant our experiences really are? What grounds his claims about how impure pleasures fare on the scale of hedonic value? Plato ties degrees of pleasantness to the truth/reality/being of a pleasure with his filling metaphor and DR, but relying solely on those relatively abstruse arguments without a phenomenological anchor would rid his position of any appeal. His anchor is the claim that those who are experienced in the required sense are qualified to judge the relative pleasantness of different experiences. This claim brings in at least the appearance of common sense, since it identifies experience – and not theory – as the standard in disputes concerning pleasantness. Plato's views on the relative pleasantness of pleasures, then, are brought before the tribunal of experience,

and we must now see whether the verdict is as favorable to those views as he claims it is.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

¹ Of course, one *may* be conscious of being in the neutral state, but such consciousness is not the same sort of perception, but rather the mind's recognition of the absence of either pleasure or pain. On Plato's model, there is no way to differentiate between the neutral state corresponding to a bodily pleasure and the neutral state corresponding to a psychic pleasure, making it absurd to claim that the cessation of hunger (i.e., satiety) reaches the soul through the body.

² It should be pointed out that Gosling and Taylor are not alone in being confused about the cessation of pain and liberation from pain: Waterfield 1993 (in the introductory note before his translation of the third proof) fails to recognize the distinction, and writes "[t]he vast majority of so-called pleasures are actually only relief from pain – a state intermediate between pleasure and pain" (330). We have seen, of course, that those so-called pleasures, which are only "relief" (which must be his translation for *apallage*) from pain, are clearly not the intermediate, neutral state.

³ The existence of this distinction is also evidence against the *process view* of pain and in favor of the *state view* of pain: on the *process view* of pain, pain ceases the very moment the process of emptying is reversed, so there can be no gradual liberation from pain, leaving no room for the distinction between liberation from pain and cessation of pain. (There would only be cessation of pain, and therefore only the neutral state could follow a process of emptying.)

⁴ I believe it is a mistake to equate the truth and purity of pleasure. I will return to this point below.

⁵ Clearly, it makes no sense to say that a pleasure lacks in truth/purity just because the agent's judgment about its being true/pure is false, i.e., without there being independent grounds that render the pleasure in question lacking in truth/ purity. In the *Republic*, truth of pleasures is contrasted only with the lack of truth, and the term "false" is never used. Unlike the *Philebus*, *Republic IX* contains no "false pleasures" and, in particular, no propositional false pleasures, pleasures that lack truth because of the falsehood of the judgment on which they are based (in some way or other).

⁶ And likewise in the case of the same person judging about the pleasure of eating falsely one day and truly the next. As I have explained, the existence and status of a pleasure (or pain) is fully determined by the underlying physiological or psychic condition and whether or not this is perceived. These two factors leave no gap for our beliefs – true or false – about our condition to influence the status of that condition.

⁷ The argument (495e-497e) is a refutation of Callicles' position on the basis of premises he endorses, regardless of whether Socrates (or Plato) endorses those premises as well. On the other hand, one has to be careful in distancing Plato from assumptions employed in arguments he seems to be satisfied with. In this case, we may safely read the view as Plato's own, since it is confirmed in *Republic IX*, as I explain below.

⁸ I will discuss this passage in some detail shortly.

⁹ What Frede presents as evidence for the opposite view (to establish that conflicting messages are given in the text) is not too strong either: She writes "[Plato] claims that they are not 'pure' (584c1) – which seems to suggest that he does regard them as pleasures albeit impure ones" (1985, 159), but this is, as she recognizes, no more than a faint appearance – that liberations are 'not pure' does not rule out the possibility that pure pleasures are being contrasted with pseudo-pleasures without any purity whatsoever.

¹⁰ The translation “so-called pleasures” may be misleading, because all that is said (at 584c5) is that they are called pleasures (*legomenai hedonai*), which does not necessarily mean they are wrongly so called, though this translation, used by almost all translators, is more suggestive of that. This “*legomenai*” might be indicating the falsehood of believing that such “pleasures” are pleasures in the full sense, or that they are unqualifiedly pleasures, which they turn out not to be.

¹¹ This time without the “*legomenai*”.

¹² Here we benefit from the earlier observation that Plato is very clear about the distinction between liberations from pain and cessations of pain (contrary to Gosling and Taylor’s opinion).

¹³ This Frede does realize, but notes only when discussing DR, not in relation to the shadows.

¹⁴ For an excellent discussion of the questions concerning the degrees of reality and participation in the attributes of Forms, see Vlastos 1965 and Santas 1983.

¹⁵ PC started with, and developed, the basic but uninformative idea that pleasure and pain are opposites, but now the PC has reached its limits, and something else has to be supplied to be able to complete the account of pleasures. (By this point we realize that it is only pure pleasure that is the opposite of pain in the given sense.)

¹⁶ Being of the same kind is one of the necessary conditions for two experiences to be mutually intensifying. The other condition is that they have sufficiently different content. Of course, it needs to be specified how to determine whether two experiences are of the same kind, but I think this can be done fairly easily on a case-by-case basis. Doing this is easy for sensory perception: occurrent perceptions of each sense-organ are of the same kind.

¹⁷ Thus it is wrong to suppose, with Cross and Woozley, that an upward movement from the lower region to the middle is “not real pleasure, for it is only negative removal from pain” (1964, 267).

¹⁸ The false conclusion to be drawn would be that pleasure is the uppermost point while pain is the lowermost.

¹⁹ My guess is that Plato does not mention this possibility because the critical point is mistaking the cessation of pain to be pure pleasure, and it is of secondary importance that one can make this mistake while still in pain. In any case, the concurrent false judgment is the more striking one – it is not only from a distance that the neutral state looks better than it actually is.

²⁰ In other words, if the three positions of the metaphor were to represent not the hedonic value of experiences but rather the causes underlying those experiences, the metaphor’s stipulation that there is a position superior to the middle would be violated in such a case as eating, since the middle and the lower region exhaustively account for the causes that underlie the relevant experiences. Considering fullness of the stomach as the middle and hunger as the lower region requires for the upper region to represent something superior to these two, in exactly the same way a full stomach is superior to an empty stomach, but no such thing exists.

²¹ This shows that pleasure and pain are not opposites in the way black and white are, since they are not opposite end-points on some scale or spectrum. I think Plato uses black and white as a loose analogy because I find it unreasonable to think that he was unaware of this significant difference; he uses the analogy for a purpose, and it works as far as that task is concerned.

²² It should soon become clear that neither of the two mistakes make sense under the *process view* of pain.

²³ That is, unless I eat more slowly than I get empty, in which case the speed at which my pain of hunger increases would decrease.

²⁴ I will shortly say something about why this is often but not necessarily always how I respond to becoming full.

²⁵ It is unclear whether there is an end-point of this scale, i.e., whether there is a maximum level of pain.

²⁶ This point will be significant in our assessment of Plato's view, as comparing the intensity of two different kinds of pleasure on the one hand, and comparing their pleasantness on the other, may yield different results.

²⁷ It is possible for some combination of pleasure and pain to have a positive hedonic sum, placing it in the upper region. We may consider, for example, an impure pleasure together with various pure pleasures, such that the positive value of the pure pleasures outweighs the negative value of the impure pleasure, yielding a positive net sum. But Plato is interested in evaluating particular pleasures, not combinations of distinct pleasures. There is no point, as far as Plato's purposes are concerned, in evaluating the total pleasantness of a group of distinct pleasures (and/or pains), even if these could possibly be experienced all at the same time.

²⁸ We will see that Plato later brings in, with DR, the machinery to draw distinctions between the pleasantness of different pleasures that qualify as superior pleasures.

²⁹ It should be noted that every pure pleasure must end with a downward movement, back to the neutral state. Whereas the downward movement in the lower region represents an increase of pain, the downward movement in the upper region represents only a decrease of pure pleasure.

³⁰ Of course, people do not ordinarily think of their experiences in terms of purity.

What they do sometimes think is shown in the examples of sick people – they believe that something is most pleasant, or extremely pleasant etc. And in those terms, Plato’s claim is that many of those things are either not pleasant at all, or much less pleasant than the pleasures he advocates as pure.

³¹ There is a noteworthy difference between the sort of false awareness we have in the two mistakes: in the first mistake, the agent has the false awareness that a pleasure is occurring when in fact no such process is taking place; in the second mistake, on the other hand, two phenomena are perceived – pleasure and pain – and the false awareness consists of taking this complex experience to have a positive hedonic value when in fact this value is negative. Plato gives us no evidence as to whether this false awareness is a direct awareness of the pleasure and pain coming to be in the soul (the soul’s tracking of the bodily condition), or whether it is a third-order mental state that takes as its object two distinct awarenesses, i.e., of the pleasure and of the pain. I believe, however, that the more charitable interpretation is to take the false awareness as direct, since it would be harder to explain the false awareness if the awarenesses of the pleasure and pain are themselves true. This is also the intuitively more appealing option, since we seem to have a single awareness of the pleasantness of such experiences.

³² It does so correspond, for example, when there is an onset of pain after a period of painlessness; even the least experienced person will rightly identify it as pain.

³³ The inferior “pleasures” are, it turns out, the liberations from pain. This, and the precise status of these phenomena will become clearer when PC and DR come together.

³⁴ Cf. Frede 1985, 159.

³⁵ The *Republic* itself contains two more references to *skiagraphia* – at 365c and 523b. (Plato often uses the cognates of *skiagraphia* – *skiagraphema* and *skiagrapheo*.)

³⁶ Keuls maintains that Plato's object of criticism is not merely falling prey to the appearances resulting from the way we naturally experience pleasure and pain: she argues that Plato is attacking a formulated view that pleasure and pain are interdependent, and that they "follow each other in an inexorable chain"; she speculates that this was Democritus' view (129-131). I am not convinced that Plato is attacking such a view, and in any case remain convinced that the critical point here is Plato's observation about our phenomenology, and his warning against being deceived due to inexperience.

³⁷ Synchronic evaluations assume that there are simultaneous mixtures of pleasure and pain (in impure pleasures), while diachronic evaluations could occur even without them (i.e., with only sequential mixtures, comparing pure pleasure to pure pain), though my account of impure pleasures involves diachronic evaluations applied to a simultaneous mixture as well. In the context of impure pleasures, synchronic evaluations are of coexisting items in comparison to one another, whereas diachronic evaluations are of the net hedonic sum of the two items at some time in comparison to the net hedonic sum at a prior time.

³⁸ The black-gray-white analogy at 585a3-5 also relies on different colors as the analogues to our different experiences. There Plato argues that people who are inexperienced in pure pleasure are deceived when they compare painlessness to pain, "just like comparing gray to black without experience of white". Even though color perception is used elsewhere as the metaphor for mutual intensification, it seems that this metaphor is about diachronic comparisons: Since the black-gray-white analogy appears as an addendum to the metaphor of up-down-middle, one metaphor coming to the aid of another, it is more likely that Plato thought of the comparison involved in the latter metaphor following up on the diachronic comparison in the former metaphor. The key idea is that being experienced prevents one from being deceived by the appearances.

³⁹ See *Phaedrus* 243a. According to the story Plato recounts, Stesichorus – a poet of the early sixth century B.C. – spoke ill of Helen, and his sight was taken away as punishment. He regained his sight as soon as he composed a Palinode (a “taking-it-back” poem), where he claimed that it was not Helen herself but a phantom of Helen who was at Troy.

⁴⁰ A distinction that Plato does not make explicit throughout the string of metaphors that he employs is that between the felt intensity of an experience, and our judgments about the intensity of an experience. Using this distinction on his behalf, we could point out that on his view, neither the felt intensity of a liberation from pain nor our judgment about how intense it is involves deception. As for the cessation of pain, Plato holds that no pleasure is experienced and hence no pleasure of any intensity is experienced; any judgment to the effect that a pleasure of some intensity is experienced is therefore false.

PART II

CHAPTER 3: THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

Readers of *Republic IX* have already seen, prior to the third proof, experience being invoked in defense of the superiority of the philosopher's pleasures: the previous (second) proof of that superiority was that the philosopher is the best judge of pleasure (partly) because he has had the widest experience of different kinds of pleasures, having tasted the pleasures of appetite and honor as well as those of learning (582a-e). Neither the honor-lover, nor the profit-lover have experienced all three kinds of pleasure, and are therefore not as good judges of pleasure. In fact, the philosopher has the superior vantage point with respect to every criterion for judging pleasure: experience (*empeiria*), prudence (*phronesis*), and reason (*logos*) (582a5). This points towards the difference between the second proof and the appeal to experience in the third proof. Why are prudence and reason relevant for the second proof and apparently not for the argument in the third proof? The reason is that the second proof aims to show that the philosopher's pleasures are more pleasant than the honor-lover and the profit lover's pleasures in a general way, whereas the argument in the third proof must show that the immediate experience of any particular "pure pleasure" is more pleasant than any impure pleasure. The latter is the more ambitious task, which is why it is also the more difficult – it sets out to show not merely that the philosopher's life involves a greater preponderance of pleasure over pain, but rather that each individual instance of pure

pleasure is more pleasant (and preferable) than any individual instance of impure pleasure, without taking into consideration any pain that precedes or follows the impure pleasure.¹ The latter task has no use for the notion that the philosopher's life is, in the long run, more pleasant and less painful (*hedion kai alupoteron*) (582a1), and that the philosopher knows this by means of his experience, prudence, and reason.² But is it plausible to say that anyone who has had experience with pure pleasures, such as the pleasure of learning, will know that those pleasures are more pleasant than the pleasures of eating, drinking, and sex?

A. THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE

What Plato says is that inexperience prevents one from seeing this to be the case, which suggests that experience is *necessary* for seeing the truth, not that it is *sufficient*. One might expect him, therefore, to simply claim that experience is necessary but insufficient, and that there are further necessary requirements for seeing the truth about pleasure. However, he does not stipulate any other requirement, and I think his strategy for dealing with the obvious counterexamples is different. It seems, on the face of it, that enjoying learning is a fairly common experience, whereas finding that experience to be more pleasant than bodily pleasure is relatively uncommon. The second proof and the argument from experience in the third proof face the same difficulty here – since Plato maintains that the philosopher's pleasures, and the pure pleasures are coextensive classes, those who have experienced pure pleasures are those who have experienced the philosopher's pleasures (which are the pleasures of the rational part of the soul, of

which the primary examples are the pleasures of learning, as Plato tells us in the second proof). Plato reveals his line against the counterexamples at 582b2-6, where he argues that it would be difficult for a profit-lover to experience the pleasure of learning the nature of the things that *are*, even if he wanted to. Plato's strategy, then, is to raise the bar for *really* experiencing some pleasure. Of course the majority of people have enjoyed learning something or other at some point in their lives, but it takes a certain kind of character to *really* experience the pleasure of learning, without being pained by the mental exertion, and not for the sake of anything else (e.g., impressing one's peers), in which case it would no longer be a pleasure of learning.³ We might worry, however, that it is only difficult but not impossible for someone to experience the pleasure of learning and yet go about living a life other than the philosophical one.⁴

It seems to me that Plato would not be caught off-guard by this worry. After all, he identifies the pleasures of smell as cases of pure pleasure, and it would be surprising if he thought that these pleasures too are *altogether* inaccessible to non-philosophers.⁵ That is to say, it does not seem that non-philosophers have no access whatsoever to any pure pleasure. A careful look at the text shows that Plato does not say that people are deceived about pleasure because they have never experienced any pure pleasure – it is because they are “not experienced” (*me empeiros*) (584e4) with pure pleasure, because of their inexperience (*apeiria*) (585a5) with it.⁶ The distinction between being experienced with something and having experienced that thing is obvious. There are instances in which being experienced requires much more than a few experiences, and even experiences with a variety of specimens: an experienced heart-surgeon is expected

to have performed a large number of operations on a wide variety of cases. It seems to me that this distinction is at play here, and that Plato requires a high degree of familiarity with pure pleasures in order to consider one “experienced” with them. Having raised the bar for really experiencing a pleasure, Plato now also raises the bar for being really experienced with pure pleasures, twice distancing the layman from the elite class of hedonic experts. The profit-lover would not only have great difficulty enjoying the pleasures of learning, but also his occasional enjoyment of smelling flowers is far from qualifying him as someone experienced with pure pleasures.⁷

B. MILL’S APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

This line of argument for dealing with apparent counterexamples has a familiar parallel in Mill’s *Utilitarianism* – unsurprising given the well-known influence of Plato on Mill.⁸ In the second chapter of *Utilitarianism*, Mill explains the qualitative difference between pleasures:

Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, *by those who are competently acquainted with both*, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which *their nature is capable of*, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (8-9) (my emphasis)

Mill believes that those who are competently acquainted with both higher (intellectual) pleasures and lower (bodily) pleasures give their decided preference to the higher ones.⁹

The proviso “irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it” is critical for

Mill as well as for Plato. The decided preference of the competent judges would not amount to anything if their preferences were based on moral considerations, i.e., they were choosing the higher pleasures because they believed those to be morally superior (or somehow more noble). This would render the judgment of the competent judges irrelevant to the question of whether the higher pleasures are more pleasant, or, in other words, superior *qua* pleasures.

This superiority, however, is just what both men need to demonstrate: Mill's project in *Utilitarianism* is to show that pleasure and absence of pain constitute the *summum bonum*, and he rejects Benthamite utilitarianism by including quality – in addition to quantity – in the evaluation of pleasurable experiences. Plato, on the other hand, aims to show in *Republic IX* that the pleasures of the good/just/philosophical life are more pleasant. Both philosophers, therefore, need to avoid smuggling value into their account of pleasantness, for otherwise they will be begging the question (albeit in different ways, according to their different purposes). If the higher pleasures are preferable because the competent judges prefer them on account of their being morally superior (or more valuable on any non-hedonic grounds), the appeal to the preference of these judges can neither justify the claim that some pleasures are qualitatively superior to others *qua* pleasure, nor entice people into the good/just/philosophical life on the grounds of its greater pleasantness.

Perhaps the more serious charge is that it is *impossible* for one pleasure to be qualitatively superior to another *qua* pleasure, that, as Bradley puts it in his criticism of Mill's qualitative hedonism, we must “go *outside* pleasure” to account for qualitative

differences among pleasures (1927, 119).¹⁰ Even if qualitative differences among pleasures can be found without going outside (like the qualitative differences among colors) – as many now believe they can – Moore has argued that attributing greater value to pleasures of some quality is inconsistent with the utilitarian creed that pleasure is the only end (1903, 131).¹¹ If color were the only end, the qualitative difference between blue and green could not yield superiority in value to either of them, since both are equally colors. Likewise, Moore argues, the qualitative distinctions among pleasures cannot yield superiority in value as long as pleasure is the only end. I will not engage in the vast debate on this point, but will only point out the relevance to Plato’s argument.¹²

C. PLATO ON HEDONISM AND THE HEDONIC CALCULUS

Plato does not have Mill’s problem, since he is not a hedonist: he does not identify pleasure as the only end, and there is no question of him illegitimately smuggling value into his account of pleasure. It is clear that hedonism is inconsistent with the central books of the *Republic*: hedonism is put down as blasphemy in Book VI (508e-509a), where Plato tells us that not even knowledge and truth deserve to be called good, but only good-like – these are beautiful only because of their relation to the Good, which is more beautiful and prized than everything else. Yet the way Plato sets up the three proofs in *Republic* IX seems to present a difficulty for the non-hedonistic interpretation: at the end of the first proof, Plato concludes that the philosopher-king is not only the most just but also the best and happiest (*eudaimonestatos*) (580b1-c4). He then claims

that he will give a second proof (580c9-d1), and then a third (583b1-3), which he claims will be the “greatest and supreme of the overthrows” (583b6-7). The text suggests, therefore, that the three proofs are proofs of the same conclusion, even though only the second and third are concerned with the greater pleasantness of the philosopher’s life. But then Plato appears to think that by showing that the philosopher’s life is most pleasant, he is showing that it is the happiest and best. If this is right, the just life is claimed to be happiest and best *because* it is most pleasant, and this is a patently hedonistic view, contradicting the anti-hedonistic passages of the central books. I believe, however, that this problem has been successfully dealt with by Gosling and Taylor (1982, 98-103):

The solution seems to be that when Socrates “proves” that the just life is the best in Book IX he is answering the challenge posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus. Now when they asked to be shown that the just life was best, and distinguished between things good in themselves, things good for their consequences, and things good both in themselves and for their consequences, the question of goodness was treated as one about what answers to human desires. It is showing the good life to be best in these terms that Socrates purports to be doing in Book IX... Consequently, we must see the “proof” of Book IX not as showing that the good life is best *tout court*, but as showing it to be best by the criteria set. (103)

I believe Gosling and Taylor are right in reading the proofs as addressing the challenge by Glaucon and Adeimantus, and I believe Plato means for the proofs to be effective against challenges of this sort, by those who need to ask “why should I be just?”. Plato wishes to prove, to the satisfaction of Glaucon and Adeimantus, that the just life is best, and the reason why he does not stop with the first proof but proceeds to give the proofs based on greater pleasantness is probably that “he wanted a proof that would bite with explicit and implicit hedonists” (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 101). This is

why Plato is at pains to give intuitive grounding to his claim that the philosopher's pleasures are more pleasant, through a variety of powerful metaphors.¹³

We can rest assured, therefore, that Plato is not a hedonist and does not face the criticism that has been launched against Mill. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that Plato's distinction between the higher and lower classes of pleasure *would* avoid this sort of criticism (i.e., if it were offered as part of a hedonistic view), because his distinction between the higher and the lower classes of pleasure depends on the purity of pleasure, which, in turn, depends on whether or not a pleasure is mixed with pain. The distinction Plato employs, then, is qualitative in a different sense from that which Mill employs: we may view the Platonic distinction as a quantitative one, since purity can be regarded as a quantifiable measure.¹⁴ Indeed, Bentham – the quantitative hedonist in reaction to whom Mill developed his own view – identifies purity as one of the seven “circumstances” for evaluating pleasure (or pain).¹⁵ The quantitative hedonic calculus is applied, and a distinction emerges between the impure pleasures from which the concomitant pain is subtracted, and the pure pleasures which do not involve such pains to be subtracted. This distinction leads to two wholly separate classes of pleasure, as opposed to being one of many quantitative factors that enter into the calculation, because Plato believes that the pain involved in an impure pleasure outweighs the pleasure. This means that impure pleasures are bound to yield a hedonic sum that is below zero, whereas only pure pleasure – however small – will be on the positive side. On purely quantitative grounds, then, Plato succeeds in creating the higher and lower classes of pleasure.

It should be emphasized, however, that Plato's assessment of pleasure is not restricted to a strictly quantitative calculus. And most importantly, Plato does not endorse the view that seems to be held by quantitative hedonists such as Bentham and Sidgwick, that pleasure is a feeling of the same quality, regardless of its source. Plato's contention that each part of the soul has its own distinctive pleasures

shows that for Plato, unlike Bentham, pleasure is not a single kind of experience or mental state logically distinct from the activities that give rise to it: the pleasure of learning the truth is no mere [consequence] of learning it; rather learning the truth is an essential component of that pleasure... In the same way, eating, drinking, and having sex are essential components of the appetitive person's pleasures, and being honoured is an essential component of the honour-lover's pleasure. This is why there are three primary pleasures (580d7-8), not one pleasure and three ways to get it. (Reeve 1988, 151)

Furthermore, Plato ranks pleasures (according to DR) on the basis of what kind of desire-satisfaction they constitute, or, more specifically, the nature of the desire, as well as the nature of what satisfies that desire. That it consists of satisfying a bodily lack with food is an essential component of the pleasure of eating, just as it is an essential component of the pleasure of learning that it consists of satisfying a psychic lack with knowledge (or belief). Since the truth of a pleasure is given as the criterion for how pleasant it is, Plato is here explicitly tying the pleasantness of a pleasure to the nature of its constituents. This leaves no room for the Benthamite notion that pleasure is pleasure, wherever it comes from.¹⁶ My point above is just that Plato's PC can distinguish between superior and inferior pleasures without reference to differences in quality, and this method should be attractive to any hedonist who despairs of refuting Moore's criticism. Mill's qualitative distinction, however, does not depend on purity of

pleasure, and must somehow be drawn from within pleasure without introducing a plurality of ends.¹⁷ And to determine which pleasures are superior qualitatively, Mill turns to the verdict of the competent judges.

D. MILL'S COMPETENT JUDGES

Now the person to judge must both have a nature that is capable of enjoying both kinds of pleasure, and be competently acquainted with them. As in Plato's case, these qualifications allow Mill to explain away how an incurious person may not enjoy a fascinating lecture in the least bit. These qualifications are also what we must turn to when critics point out apparent counterexamples such as people who have clearly been capable of intellectual pleasures but favor the lower pleasures, either temporarily or as a shift in lifestyle:

It may be objected that many who are capable of the higher pleasures occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures than when it is between bodily and mental. (*Utilitarianism*, 10)

As for those who abandon the life of higher pleasures altogether, they do not “voluntarily choose the lower description of pleasures in preference for the higher. I believe that, before they devote themselves exclusively to the one, they have already become incapable of the other” (*Utilitarianism*, 10). Mill's explanation of these cases seems reasonable to me: temporary lapses indeed fail to constitute genuine counterexamples, and it seems fair to say that those who abandon an intellectual

lifestyle they once enjoyed are no longer *really* capable of enjoying that lifestyle. But does such a person now claim that their current lifestyle is more pleasant than their former intellectual lifestyle? A regretful, failed intellectual fits Mill's argument well, but what of someone who insists that their current life of beastly pleasures is superior with respect to pleasure? Unless we dismiss this as an impossible scenario, Mill has to say that our memory is not sufficiently reliable to judge between the pleasantness of our current lifestyle and a lifestyle we were once capable of but no longer are. For Mill needs to block the response that competence as a judge does not require being capable of both lifestyles simultaneously, but only having at some point been capable of the lifestyle other than our current one, having enjoyed its pleasures, and remembering what those pleasures were like. Mill must insist, in other words, that *current* capability to enjoy a lifestyle is necessary to be a competent judge of that lifestyle's pleasures. This seems reasonable, given the well-known defectiveness of memory, especially when there is a strong motivation for remembering things in one way rather than another.¹⁸

The person will naturally be inclined to justify their current lifestyle, so there may be an element of deception (perhaps self-deception) behind their claims, coloring how they remember the past. I also find reasonable Mill's claim that the person who has abandoned the intellectual lifestyle is no longer capable of enjoying that lifestyle. It is hard to imagine an ex-intellectual comfortably settled in a non-intellectual lifestyle as retaining the full capacity to enjoy intellectual pleasures, which they do not *only* because they prefer their current life.

Perhaps, however, Mill's selection of possible counterexamples is too favorable to his view: the more problematic case to be considered may be that of someone who leads an intellectual life but nonetheless judges that, among the pleasures in his/her life, the lower pleasures are the more pleasant ones. Scarre argues that "...not all football – playing philosophers, for instance, would estimate philosophy superior to soccer in point of pleasure" (1997, 56), but how likely is it, really, that a football-playing philosopher will estimate philosophy inferior in point of pleasure? Surely one of the ex-intellectuals I mention above may estimate philosophy less pleasant than many other, lower pleasures, but once again, the question is whether such people are still capable of enjoying philosophy. Scarre rightly points out that if "Mill's reference to competence is really intended to restrict the pool of judges to persons who are going to give the 'right' verdicts, then it is patently question-begging" (1997, 56). But Scarre's empirical claim –that there must be football-playing philosophers who consider the pleasures of football superior to those of philosophy – does not strike me as obviously true, nor does Scarre offer any evidence for his claim. In the absence of such evidence, it remains plausible to claim that those who would judge playing football more pleasant than doing philosophy would not be very enthusiastic about philosophy. The seriously troubling case would be someone who claims (sincerely) to enjoy both playing football and doing philosophy very much, and judges that playing football is more pleasant – yet we do not know that many such people could be found. As long as they remain an exceptional few, Mill can remind us that what he claims about the preference of competent judges holds true in "almost all" cases, notwithstanding occasional aberrations.

E. PLATO'S COMPETENT JUDGES

To what extent are these considerations applicable to Plato's argument? It must be kept in mind that the two proofs at issue are proofs of the greater pleasantness of the philosopher's life. But as far as the full-fledged Platonic philosophers are concerned, the problem above does not arise, since Plato would deny that such people could either lapse temporarily (i.e., exhibit *akrasia*) or abandon the philosophical life. The philosophers are quasi-saints whose souls are beyond temptation and corruption – nothing could turn them away from the good life. But if this is the line Plato must resort to, he has lost the common sense appeal that these arguments from experience seemed to promise: why should we take seriously the claim that a life we could not expect to achieve (and the particular pleasures belonging to that life) would be considered most pleasant by those who might theoretically achieve it? For the arguments from experience to have any purchase, they must be at least partially applicable to lives that we may hope to achieve and lives that we may be able to observe. To be sure, the preference of full-fledged philosophers is the best evidence for the superiority of a pleasure, but I think the argument from experience has a broader scope.¹⁹ To the extent that Plato's argument from experience is to have intuitive appeal, then, we need to consider cases of somewhat watered-down versions of Platonic philosophers. And to the extent that those are the cases we are working with, the considerations brought up in Mill's case may be applicable.

As far as the second proof is concerned, Plato may point out, in addition, that prudence (*phronesis*) and argument (*logos*) are also required for being a competent judge of lifestyles, and whoever slides away from an intellectual life may have done so because their prudence and ability to use argument have been impaired. It seems to me that we would indeed suspect that something has gone wrong if someone who used to enjoy an intellectual life decides to abandon it in favor of a life devoted exclusively to non-intellectual pleasures.

The argument from experience in the third proof may be a tougher case. Is it obvious that whoever is *really* experienced with pure pleasures would find all liberations from pain to be less pleasant? Should we agree that a proper enjoyment of intellectual pleasures is incomparably more pleasant than the enjoyment of eating, drinking and sex? The first step in trying to answer this question should be to clarify the question. Plato believes that the pleasantness of pleasures is to be assessed in terms of their truth and purity. However, the truth of pleasures as determined by DR has not yet been introduced, and to accept the pleasures that are truer under DR as more pleasant *by definition* is to rob what I have called the “argument from experience” of any intuitive appeal.²⁰ The notion of purity, on the other hand, has been introduced, but it would likewise render the argument ineffectual if it were simply assumed that purer pleasures are more pleasant. In effect, there would be no argument here at all, but rather an assertion of the thesis that PC and DR are the right criteria to judge pleasures. The question from the critic’s point of view is precisely whether the superior pleasures

according to PC and DR are indeed more pleasant in a meaningful sense (such that a life containing those pleasures is more desirable on the basis of pleasantness).

I believe that this passage (584d1-585a5) is meant to provide intuitive appeal to the Platonic thesis that pure pleasures are more pleasant than liberations from pain (as well as the cessation of pain). It is meant to help convince us that this thesis rests on sound phenomenological ground, that it represents the psychological reality of pleasure accurately.²¹ This is why Plato uses the metaphors of up-down-middle and of black-white-grey: he wants us to notice the similarity between what happens in these two metaphors and how those who are experienced with the different kinds of “pleasure” compare pure pleasures with the rest.²² (According to Plato, they will be able to tell that, just as you are below ground level as long as you are climbing out of a ditch, the net hedonic value of a liberation from pain is bound to be negative.) If this is right, the question we should imagine asking these competent judges is whether they find pure pleasures to be more pleasant in a non-technical sense. However, this non-technical sense itself needs to be clarified to some extent.

First, the question is not about which pleasures are most intense, since Plato rightly distinguishes between the pleasantness and the intensity of a pleasure. The distinction is one that we can be comfortable with – it makes good sense to claim that one pleasure is more pleasant than another even though less intense. Second, the question is not about which pleasures we want our lives to be dominated by, or which pleasures we would like to spend most time on: it is possible that the pleasures we consider to be most pleasant are pleasures that we can, and choose to, enjoy only rarely,

for instance learning about a foreign country while on vacation. But perhaps this is only because of the constraints on our lives, and the choices we need to make to balance our many interests. There is a sense in which if pleasure X is more pleasant than pleasure Y, we wish to experience more of X. I may choose to spend more time experiencing Y only because I can experience Y more easily or at a lower cost, because I have to give up too much of my other pleasures to experience X. It makes perfect sense on a hedonistic calculus to choose to spend more time experiencing the less pleasant pleasure, while it remains true that *all other things being equal*, one *would* prefer to spend more time on a more pleasant pleasure. If this is right, the question to be asked is whether the competent judges prefer to spend more time on pure pleasures or on liberations from pain, all other things being equal.²³

Directing this question to the intellectuals at issue will, I believe, yield results that confirm Plato's view. I would find it very surprising if an intellectual were to reply that she would prefer to spend more time enjoying eating than enjoying intellectual pleasure. Even sex, which is often touted as the greatest pleasure of all, is unlikely to dethrone intellectual pleasures, since the above qualifications allow the intellectual to maintain that sex affords more intense pleasures than intellectual ones, and that it is extremely important in one's life, but that they nevertheless prefer to spend more time enjoying intellectual pleasures, all other things being equal. It seems, then, that Plato's appeal to the experience of competent judges works well for the third proof as well as the second. Those who are experienced with pure pleasures know that pure pleasures are, as a class, more pleasant than bodily pleasures, however intense or indispensable

the latter may be. Just as those who are familiar with white do not mistake grey for white, even when grey is compared to black, intellectuals who are familiar with pure pleasures do not mistake bodily pleasures for the most pleasant pleasures, even when the bodily pleasures become very intense due to their juxtaposition to pain.

The key to this argument's success is, of course, to rule out those who have had limited experience with the pure/intellectual pleasures as not *really* experienced with those pleasures, for otherwise there would be an abundance of legitimate counterexamples. Such qualifications concerning who qualifies as a competent judge make both Plato and Mill vulnerable to the criticism that the same high standards should be applied to being a competent judge of, or being experienced with, the inferior pleasures in question. It could be claimed that, just as the ignorant brute is incapable of enjoying philosophy, the philosopher is incapable of enjoying the bodily pleasures in the full sense. Mill's critics have noticed this vulnerability and taken him to task:

No-one has ever cared much for Mill's first argument that our belief in the superiority of Socrates' pleasures to the fool's rests on the fact that Socrates knows both sorts of happiness and the fool only one. The philosopher who is a half-hearted sensualist cannot estimate the attractions of a debauched existence, any more than the sensualist flicking through the pages of Hume can estimate the pleasures of philosophy. (Ryan 1974, 111)

This would contradict both Mill's belief that those who prefer the intellectual pleasures are competently acquainted with the lower pleasures, and Plato's claim that the philosopher is necessarily experienced with the pleasures of the honor-lover and the profit-lover (i.e., the pleasures of the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul). It would not constitute a problem for the manifest purpose of the argument in the third proof,

since the claim is that someone who is experienced with pure pleasures would not mistake liberations from pain (or the cessation of pain) to be pure pleasure, regardless of the extent to which he has experienced liberations from pain. Even if the person has had no experience whatsoever with liberations from pain, she would be immune to the mistakes in question, consistently with the argument's conclusion. Though this may relieve the argument formally, there would remain a problem for the underlying substantive claim that pure pleasures are categorically more pleasant than liberations from pain, and that those who are experienced with both know this. If those who are experienced with pure pleasures have not sufficiently experienced liberations from pain, they would have no basis for comparing the pleasantness of the two kinds of phenomena, and could not judge whether pure pleasures actually correspond to an upper or lower region with respect to liberations from pain.

F. PLATO'S DEFENSE OF THE SECOND PROOF

Gosling and Taylor have pursued this line of criticism against Plato's second proof. Having concluded that "the appeal to the philosopher's judgment must stand or fall with the claim that he excels the other types of men in experience of pleasures" (1982, 327), they proceed to argue that this claim cannot be sustained, because Plato fails to show that the philosopher has *sufficient* experience of the pleasures of the other two kinds of life:

It is obviously open to the partisan of appetite or ambition to reply that, in order to have experience of a type of pleasure sufficient for the purposes of this argument, it

is necessary to experience those pleasures in their most developed form, and to pursue them with the degree of enthusiasm that the devotee gives them. (1982, 328)

Gosling and Taylor appeal to the extreme cases – as do Mill’s critics – and point out the philosopher’s inability to enjoy an orgy, from which it supposedly follows that the philosopher cannot really enjoy the pleasures of appetite. This argument from extreme cases is flawed, since Plato makes it clear that the paradigm examples of the pleasures of appetite are the satisfactions of the basic bodily needs – eating, drinking, and sex, in the most straightforward sense. And the philosopher, like everyone else, has necessarily had plenty of experience with these pleasures.²⁴ Enjoying an orgy or a feast may be more striking variations on these basic pleasures, and the philosopher may indeed be incapable of enjoying them, but it does not follow that he is incapable of having sufficient experience of the pleasures of the appetite.²⁵

If the philosopher is capable of enjoying the paradigm cases of a type of pleasure, in this case the basic satisfaction of hunger, thirst, and sexual desire, his inability to enjoy more complex or extreme variations on those does not establish his inexperience with the pleasures of appetite. (Likewise, the paradigm example of the pleasures of spirit, the pleasure of being honored, is accessible to the philosopher, though he may be unable to experience the pleasure that triumph in battle brings to Ajax.²⁶) If the philosopher can be regarded as being *experienced* on account of his familiarity with enjoying the basic versions of each type of pleasure, the asymmetry between the philosopher and the other two characters can be sustained. Even if the philosopher has not tasted some of the best pleasures available to the profit-lover and

the honor-lover, he has experienced the pleasures most representative of their lives, whereas they are incapable of acquiring sufficient experience of his pleasures.²⁷

This line of defense is available to Plato and not to Mill, since Plato, and not Mill, is focused on the comparison between the pleasures of the three parts of the soul. There are pleasures, such as those of playing games, that cannot be classified as belonging to one of the parts of the soul (at least not clearly), and they are of little significance for Plato. This is presumably because he believes that the tripartite model captures the fundamental drives in the human psyche, and therefore also the forces that may lead one astray; the lives that compete against the philosophical life are not the lives of pushpin-players and soap-opera fans. Mill, on the other hand, must tackle all such pleasures as the lower pleasures, and must show that people who lead the intellectual life can also be competently acquainted with these pleasures. What Mill needs to show (in order for his justification of qualitative distinctions among pleasures to succeed), therefore, is much more difficult than showing that the philosopher is sufficiently acquainted with the basic versions of the pleasures of appetite and spirit; it is much less plausible to claim that Mill's intellectual can be sufficiently acquainted with the joy of playing pushpin, or some basic version of it.

But here lies another difference between Plato's and Mill's positions that gives the advantage to Mill: Plato argues that *every* philosopher is necessarily experienced with the pleasures of appetite and spirit, whereas Mill maintains only that *some* people are competently acquainted with both the higher and the lower pleasures. It is less unreasonable to claim that there are some people who are competently acquainted with

both the higher pleasures and the joy of playing pushpin, and who give a decided preference for the former. Mill's intellectuals do not need to be competently acquainted with every kind of lower pleasure; what Mill needs to show is that, for every kind of lower pleasure L, there is at least someone who is competently acquainted with both the higher pleasures and L. Thus Berger writes:

Mill was surely right in claiming that there *have* been persons who have tried living alternative life-styles. Most of us in fact at various times of our lives have experimented in one direction or another. In other words, most people in fact have a fair diversity of propensities which make us capable of appreciating a diversity of life-modes. Mill's claim was that history shows that whatever life-modes we tend to choose, we tend to prefer ones which incorporate certain elements, if given a chance to develop and try these.²⁸

If this is right, then the charge brought against Mill by his critics can be dismissed: if most people are in fact capable of appreciating diverse kinds of pleasures, then it is possible to make the comparison that the distinction between higher and lower pleasures relies on. Of course, this line has to be maintained also against the argument from extreme cases – Mill's defenders must insist that at least some people are competently acquainted with both the higher pleasures and “the life of complete sensual debauchery”.²⁹

G. PLATO'S DEFENSE OF THE THIRD PROOF

As I explained above, Plato's focus on the pleasures of the three parts of the soul releases him from the burden of tackling the argument from extreme cases. The above is a solution to a problem raised against the second proof in *Republic IX*, but how does it fare with respect to the third proof's difficulty on the same point? How can we rely

on experience to establish that the pleasures of the rational part of the soul are more pleasant than any of the pleasures of the other two parts, when there are pleasures of the other two parts that are inaccessible to those who are experienced with the pleasures of the rational part? How can the philosopher know, from experience, that his particular pleasures are more pleasant than those of Don Giovanni or Ajax? The answer has to be that the philosopher is sufficiently experienced with the pleasures of the other parts to know that the pleasures he has not yet experienced can only be superior to those he has with respect to intensity, and he knows that greater intensity is not equivalent to greater pleasantness. This last is, in fact, the key lesson the philosopher draws from comparing his experiences of pure pleasures and liberations from pain – regardless of how intense a bodily pleasure may be, its pleasantness cannot rival that of the pleasures of learning. This knowledge of the greater pleasantness of pure pleasures is, after all, necessary for knowing that the philosopher’s life is most pleasant, since the pleasantness of different forms of life could not be evaluated without the knowledge of how pleasant their constituents are.

Of course, what the philosopher knows could be that his pure pleasures are more pleasant *in general, other things being equal*, etc., and this would be sufficient for his knowledge that his form of life is more pleasant than any other form of life. Yet on Plato’s view, any pure pleasure is more pleasant than any impure pleasure, no matter what the circumstances. Gibbs rightly observes that Mill’s text is ambiguous between those two conceptions of the greater pleasantness of the “higher pleasures” – since it is

ambiguous what question the competent judges are being asked – and he criticizes not so much the ambiguity itself as the text being open to the latter, Platonic reading:³⁰

[Mill] moves from one formulation to another, apparently confident that however the terms of the contest are defined, the outcome is not in doubt. This carelessness leads him to claim – or seem to claim – more than is plausible. He appears to think it impossible to nominate a pleasure which is better in itself than some other but not better always and for anyone. (1986, 49)

According to Gibbs, the former conception (and the corresponding formulation of the question to address the competent judges with) is the more plausible one, because “[i]n complete abstraction from circumstances, nothing is more or less pleasant and desirable than anything else” (1986, 51).

This weaker thesis, with its built-in *ceteris paribus* condition, has the apparent advantage of being able to explain cases where an agent may prefer to enjoy one of the lower pleasures to a higher one. Interpreting Mill’s claim that “the pleasures derived from the higher faculties [are] preferable *in kind*” (*Utilitarianism*, 11) along the lines of the weaker thesis, Gibbs writes:

To be preferable in kind is to be better intrinsically but not necessarily better, full stop. A thing is preferable in kind to something else if things of the first kind are preferable to things of the second kind, other things being equal. The function of the *ceteris paribus* condition is to stipulate the absence of standard causes of variation in preference. (1986, 51)

The presence of such causes, on the other hand, explains why even a philosopher may prefer to eat rather than read Hume under particular circumstances, despite the fact that reading Hume is preferable *in kind*. Likewise, an avid opera fan may prefer to stay at home and lie in bed rather than watch a superb performance of a favorite opera if she is stricken with unbearable back pain, despite the fact that watching the opera is preferable

in kind. It is beyond question that such events can take place – the question is how to describe such phenomena. On Gibbs’ reading, preference determines (or is proof of) relative pleasantness, so the preference of the lower pleasure in such cases shows that, in those cases, the lower pleasure is more pleasant.³¹

Yet it is not clear that the stronger thesis – that is, Plato’s view – cannot do justice to the phenomena. Indeed, I think it can do better: the starving philosopher prefers to eat stale bread rather than read Hume, not because eating stale bread is more pleasant, but rather because not eating is painful under those circumstances.³² If I am sick and bedridden, I am not inclined to think that lying in bed is more pleasant than going out to meet my friends; the more compelling explanation is that getting out of bed would be too painful, and I would, for that reason, be unable to enjoy being out with my friends. Plato’s account allows us to explain all such cases by reference to pain and being liberated from it. The pleasures of the rational part of the soul are *always* more pleasant than the pleasures of the other two parts, even though pain may interfere with the enjoyment of the rational part’s activity, and tending to that pain may take precedence under such circumstances. The *ceteris paribus* condition operates differently on this view: those who are really capable of enjoying the pleasures of the rational part of the soul prefer experiencing those pleasures to experiencing the other pleasures, *other things being equal*. The “other things being equal” here can be elucidated as “so long as some pain is not so great as to require tending to”. Being sufficiently experienced with the pleasures of all three parts of the soul, the philosopher knows that, so long as he does not need to be liberated from some pain, he will prefer

the pleasures of the rational part, as those pleasures are necessarily and always more pleasant.

H. THE MOST PLEASANT LIFE

How plausible is all this? Are the philosopher's life and its pleasures indeed incomparably more pleasant than all the other lives and their pleasures? It may be obvious from my sympathetic treatment so far that I do not take Plato's view to be devoid of plausibility. The answer to these questions, I believe, very much depends on the scope of the philosopher's pleasures, that is, the pleasures of the rational part of the soul. I am convinced that Plato's case is strong if the scope of those pleasures is understood to be fairly broad, such that a wide variety of pleasures belong to the rational part. On a narrow reading of the scope, however, the plausibility of the Platonic thesis diminishes. It diminishes because a greater variety of pleasures will then be classified as belonging to the other two parts and therefore impure. On the narrowest possible reading, for example, only the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Forms belongs to the superior class of pleasures.³³ But if that is the case, then most ordinary intellectual activities will be classified as impure, and hence liberations from pain. This means that enjoying a good novel or an opera is essentially in the same class as scratching an itch, whereby the best that can be achieved is a return to the painless neutral state. What is more, the most pleasant kind of life will then lack such pleasures, since these intellectual impure pleasures are entirely unnecessary for the philosopher's life.

To see this we have to consider carefully which pleasures Plato allows into the philosopher's good life. Clearly, he does not make the untenable claim that one should enjoy only pure pleasures, for the satisfaction of the basic bodily desires is necessary for life. As I indicate in the above discussion, the philosopher is supposed to be experienced with the pleasure of both the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul. And this is not a matter of once having sinned, as the philosopher continues to enjoy pleasures of those lesser two parts of the soul:

When the whole soul follows the philosophical part, and is not in a state of discord, each part does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and, to the extent that is possible, the truest pleasures. (586e4-587a1)

Plato has already made it clear, in Book VIII's discussion of necessary and unnecessary desires, that certain non-rational desires are necessary. Accordingly, those desires are necessary: (a) that we cannot desist from; and (b) whose satisfaction benefits us. Yet a desire need not belong to both (a) and (b) in order to qualify as necessary:

Is not the desire for eating, to the extent that it is for health and well-being, the desire for bread and delicacies, necessary?... The desire for bread, at least, is necessary on both counts, in that it is beneficial and in that we die if it is not satisfied... The desire for delicacies is necessary too, if it is in any way beneficial to well-being. (559a11-b7)

The desire for bread, then, is necessary both because we cannot live without it and because it benefits us. The desire for delicacies, on the other hand, is necessary only because it benefits us, as we could live without them. This distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires cuts across the desires of all three parts of the soul, generating six classes of desires: necessary and unnecessary appetitive desires,

necessary and unnecessary spirited desires, and necessary and unnecessary rational desires. As Reeve notes, however, the last item on this list is a set without members – all rational desires are necessary, as no rational desire fails to be for something that is beneficial to us (1988, 49). This is unsurprising given what we have seen in Book IX, that all pleasures of the rational part of the soul – that is, all satisfactions of rational desires – are pure and true.³⁴

Given that the satisfaction of unnecessary desires is neither indispensable for life nor beneficial to us, we would be better off without satisfying them. This means that in the ideal case, which is the philosopher's life, there is no room for satisfying unnecessary desires. Thus Plato writes that the philosopher would not want any of the non-rational pleasure if they were not necessary for life (581e2-4). Now the critical question is how exactly to determine which among the non-rational desires are necessary and which unnecessary. The case of desires that we cannot live without is relatively clear. We need to eat certain basic types of food (though I'm not sure bread is something we could not survive without), drink water, sleep, keep our bodies around a certain temperature etc. Things get more complicated when we turn to those non-rational desires that are merely beneficial to us. As Reeve explains, the boundary between necessary and unnecessary desires can be drawn in different places for different people:

Money is harmful to guardians (416d3-417b8). Therefore, the desire for it is harmful to them too. But they can avoid the desire through training and education. Hence it is an unnecessary desire of theirs. However, money is necessary to producers. For their ruling necessary appetites are "best satisfied with money" (580e5-581a1; 4.4), and they need money in order to practice their crafts as well as

possible... This suggests that whether a desire is necessary to a person depends on his psychological type: philosopher-kings (wisdom-lovers), guardians (honor-lovers), and producers (money-lovers) draw the boundaries between necessary and unnecessary desires in different places. (1988, 45-6)

The psychological type of a person and the sort of life that goes along with that psychological type determine whether a desire is beneficial and hence necessary for the person. Reeve argues that this relativity of the division of desires to character-type is to be explained as follows:

Each of the three psychological types believes that his own life, and his own distinctive pleasure, is the most pleasant (581c8-e4; 3.7). As a result, each has a different conception of the good, and of what is beneficial or harmful (2.12, 3.7-8). Given the definitions of necessary and unnecessary desires, it follows that each will have a different view of which desires, beyond those “we are unable to deny,” are necessary, which unnecessary. (1988, 46)

Each character-type seeks to experience as much of his distinctive pleasure as possible, and considers other desires in view of whether they contribute to this goal. Thus the money-lover considers a desire necessary only if it “helps him acquire the pleasure of making money reliably throughout life” (1988, 46), and likewise for the honor-lover and the pleasure of being honored.³⁵

The important point here is about the desires that qualify as necessary for the philosopher’s life. The desires – beyond those we are unable to deny – that qualify as necessary are, on this account, those that help him acquire the pleasures of the rational part reliably throughout life. If, then, a good cup of coffee in the morning helps the philosopher enjoy his philosophical pleasures, then the desire for coffee qualifies as necessary and the philosopher enjoys the satisfaction of that desire. If, on the other hand, it makes no contribution to the acquisition of rational pleasures, coffee is out.

Having established the criterion for determining which desires (and the pleasures which are the satisfactions of those desires) are permissible in the philosopher's life, let us return to the question that motivated this discussion: on the narrow conception of pure pleasures, whereby only the acquisition of the knowledge of the Forms qualifies as pure pleasure, is there any room in the philosopher's life for other intellectual activities? It seems not, except insofar as the philosopher may wish to sharpen, or keep sharp, his mental faculties by solving philosophical or mathematical puzzles. It is unclear that the enjoyment of a novel or an opera would help the philosopher acquire knowledge of any of the Forms. If this is right, it follows that the philosopher's life is devoid of all such pleasures, which means that the life without such pleasures is more pleasant than one with them. And even if the case could be made that such pleasures contribute to the philosopher's pursuits, Plato has made it clear that the philosopher wants non-rational pleasures only as a means to his ends, and would not want them if it were not for their instrumental function.³⁶

The final verdict on all lesser intellectual pleasures, then, is that they are merely liberations from pain, and that they are on a par either with eating broccoli because it contributes to bodily health and thereby to philosophical activity, or with scratching an itch that had better be left alone. This is plainly unacceptable. It is far too counterintuitive, even from the point of view of people devoted to intellectual activity, to disparage to such an extent all the intellectual activity we lesser human beings are familiar with and capable of.

If, on the other hand, we work with a wide conception of pure pleasures, one that incorporates many of the intellectual activities ruled out by the narrow conception, we end up with a very different picture. If the enjoyment of reading novels and history books, the opera and the other fine arts can be parts of a philosopher's life, then it becomes quite plausible that this is the most pleasant life, and its distinctive pleasures the most pleasant ones. I believe that this wide conception of pure pleasures also makes relatively plausible the thesis that all other pleasures necessarily come out of pains. For on such a reading, liberations from pain are bodily pleasures and those non-bodily pleasures which are non-intellectual. Clearly, an adequate defense of this thesis requires an engagement with many psychological questions that cannot be addressed here, but I think it is safe to claim that the narrower the scope of the impure pleasures, the more plausible it is to classify them as liberations from pain.

The evaluation of Plato's view about the most pleasant life and the most pleasant pleasures, then, must await an examination of the text, and the resolution of the question about where, in the range between the most mundane intellectual activities and acquiring knowledge of the Forms, the line between pure (rational) and impure (non-rational) pleasures is drawn. This question is tied to the following problem: I have been assuming that the line between pure and impure pleasures is drawn at the same place as the line between rational and non-rational pleasures, since it is Plato's contention that the class of pure pleasures is coextensive with the class of the rational pleasures, as well as with the class of true pleasures on DR. But, as I have pointed out in my Introduction, Frede has argued that the classes of true pleasure and pure pleasure

are not coextensive (1985, 159-60; 1992, 436-7). If Frede is right to claim that there is a significant discrepancy between these two classes, we are left in the dark about how Plato construes the scope of the pure pleasures, since we now cannot rely on our understanding of rational pleasures: are the rational pleasures coextensive with the pure pleasures but not the true pleasures, vice-versa, or neither? Tackling the charge of inconsistency is, therefore, critical not only in itself but also for the purpose of determining the precise scope of pure pleasures. The final verdict on Plato's claim that the philosopher's life is most pleasant must, then, be postponed until the charge of inconsistency can be dismissed, which I will do in my Chapter 5. Importantly for the present purposes, it will emerge that the inconsistency can be dismissed because the class of true pleasures is wider than Frede suggests. In other words, we will find a confirmation of the wide conception of pure pleasures.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

¹ We saw the explanation for this immediate superiority in the previous chapter.

² One may argue that *phronesis* and *logos* play a role also in one's judgment about the immediate pleasantness of particular pleasures, but this would, in any case, be a limited role relative to the case of evaluating lifestyles and weighing their costs and benefits. The extent to which *phronesis* and *logos* may mediate one's evaluation is much smaller in the case of a particular experience by itself than in the case of a whole life, since the complexity of a whole life requires a comparative examination of its various elements, including the long-term consequences of those elements, which is not required in the case of a particular experience.

³ One's ability to *really* experience a pure pleasure is also compromised by co-occurring pains: I am unlikely to appreciate the pleasure of viewing an exquisite painting if I have a terrible headache. Likewise, a money-lover is unlikely to ever appreciate any pure pleasure if he is constantly disturbed by his desire for food, drink, and sex. I will discuss this point in more detail in my final chapter.

⁴ Plato's remark at 582c7-9 is relevant on this matter: whereas the philosopher has tasted the pleasures of both the profit-lover and the honor-lover, "the pleasure of the vision of what *is* cannot be tasted by anyone except a philosopher." This claim can be interpreted in two different ways, depending on how we understand the pleasures of the vision of what *is*. If these are *all* the pleasures of learning – as we might think since Plato believes that the rational part of the soul is always directed at knowing the truth (581b5-7) – the claim loses plausibility, since it denies that anyone other than a philosopher can ever experience any pleasure of learning, not to mention that it

becomes inconsistent with the earlier suggestion that it is difficult but not impossible for others to taste these pleasures. It seems more likely, therefore, that the pleasures referred to are a more restricted class, such as those of gaining knowledge of the Forms; this reading is supported by the reference to the “vision” of what *is*, language Plato uses for knowledge of the Forms. The claim, then, is not that it is impossible for any non-philosopher to enjoy any pleasure of the rational part of the soul, but rather that it is impossible for them to enjoy the ultimate philosophical pleasures.

⁵ I explain in Chapter 5, however, that non-philosophers’ access to even the pure pleasures of smell is restricted in a significant way, and they are not as experienced with those pleasures as philosophers are.

⁶ However, Plato does say, at 586a1-6, that “those who are inexperienced with reason or virtue... never taste any stable or pure pleasure”. One might be inclined to explain away this remark by saying that the class of people who are inexperienced with reason or virtue is a small subset of the class of non-philosophers, and that some non-philosophers are capable of experiencing pure pleasure. But there is no evidence that Plato is addressing such a sub-class, and, furthermore, Glaucon remarks that the description in the passage applies to the majority of people (586b5-6). The better explanation seems to be that, Plato thinks of non-philosophers as not *really* experiencing any pure pleasure, though of course they do occasionally get some enjoyment out of things like reading a book. I will return to this matter in my final chapter, and will offer reasons Plato seems to have for thinking this way.

⁷ The precise scope of pure pleasures is, of course, an important factor in evaluating the plausibility of Plato’s claim that non-philosophers are not experienced with them in the required sense. I will discuss the significance of the question of scope later in this chapter, and will address the question itself and provide an answer in Part III. It should

be kept in mind that *all* the pleasures of the rational part of the soul are meant to be pure.

⁸ Cf. Irwin 1998 ('Mill and the Classical World'). The similarity between Plato and Mill's arguments has been observed by others, including Shorey (1938, 231), Cross and Woosley (1964, 265), and Annas (1981, 309). Scarre (1996, 56) points out that a very similar argument can be found in an earlier work in the utilitarian tradition, Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755), suggesting that this is the source of inspiration for Mill's argument. Hutcheson argues that "The superior orders of this world probably experience all the sensations of the lower orders, and can judge them. But the inferior do not experience the enjoyments of the superior... we are more immediately conscious of one gratification is more excellent than another, when we have experienced both" (120). The argument is essentially identical to Mill's, except that he identifies the superior people with people of higher social status. Edwards (1979, 70) suggests that Hutcheson's "interpretation of qualitative hedonism probably had a great influence on John Stuart Mill." Gibbs (1986, 32-41), on the other hand, argues that there is stronger evidence to take Plato and Aristotle as the influence behind Mill's qualitative hedonism – not only do their thoughts on pleasure resemble those of Mill on many points, but there is also the striking similarity between Mill's argument from experience and that of Plato in *Republic* IX. Given also Mill's well-documented familiarity with Plato's works, I am inclined to believe that Mill's argument is likely to have been inspired by Plato rather than Hutcheson, but this makes no difference as far as my purposes are concerned – I am interested only in the merits of this kind of argument, not in tracing the historical link between Plato and Mill.

⁹ It should be pointed out that Plato's treatment of this subject is clearer than Mill's, since Plato distinguishes between finding the pleasures of a lifestyle more pleasant in a general sense, and finding a particular pleasure more pleasant than another simply by itself – the second proof is concerned with the former and the third proof with the latter.

Mill, on the other hand, wavers: in the critical passage I quote above, Mill writes as if it is particular pleasures that are being compared, but only a few lines below he argues that “those who are equally acquainted with and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties”, suggesting that it is lifestyles as a whole (manners of existence) that are being compared. In the following discussion, Mill continues to waver between the two kinds of comparison, making it unclear whether the competent judges are comparing particular higher pleasures vs. particular lower pleasures or the lifestyles in which the higher and lower pleasures dominate. In the original formulation of the question, in the passage I quote, Mill refers to the preference of the judges between particular pleasures, but in fact this too is unclear: do the judges prefer one over the other because one of the particular pleasures is more pleasant, or because the life to which it corresponds is more pleasant? What exactly is the question that the competent judges are being asked?

What Mill says on this point has to be fleshed out, and different interpreters have done so differently. On Riley’s (1999) view, “the Mill/Riley line”, for example, “two pleasures differ in quality (as opposed to quantity) if a unit of the one pleasure cannot be reduced to any finite number of units to the other.” Accordingly, “the first pleasure is higher (lower) in quality than the second if a unit of the first is deemed to be equivalent to an infinite (infinitesimal) number of units of the second. In effect, the superior quality of pleasure is felt to be of a different kind or class altogether, so far above the inferior one in degree of intensity as to be incomparably or intrinsically more valuable” (1999, 347). I will not attempt to evaluate this line either as an interpretation of Mill or as a philosophical position. For a criticism of the position, see Scarre (1997).

¹⁰ Scarre captures the point thus: “Pleasures can be meaningfully distinguished as ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ only by a criterion which makes reference to values other than pleasure alone” (1996, 56).

¹¹ Put differently, the question is whether qualitative hedonism is consistent with monism about value.

¹² For recent defenses of qualitative hedonism against this charge as well as others, see Donner 1991 and Riley 1999. It has also been argued that quantitative hedonism is an untenable view and that qualitative distinctions among pleasures are necessary to do justice to the variety of qualities among the “agreeable feelings” in our lives. See, for example, Edwards 1979, ch. 3; and Donner 1991, 57-65. Edwards explains that the quantitative hedonist

presupposes the linguistic thesis that the word “pleasure” always refers to one and the same inner quality of feeling, as does the word “pain.” He presupposes also the psychological thesis that the agreeable feeling that we get from one source is the same in quality, though not necessarily in intensity or duration, as the agreeable feeling we get from any other source. (49)

The plausibility of quantitative hedonism, then, depends on the plausibility of these two theses, and Edwards argues, through the third chapter of his book, that their failure to recognize the variety of our agreeable feelings makes them unacceptable.

¹³ Some scholars deny that these two proofs concerning pleasure actually address the question of whether the just man is happiest, and claim instead that they are proofs of a different conclusion than that of the first proof. See, for example, Murphy 1951, 207-23; Cross and Woosley 1964, 262-9; White 1979, 255ff; and Kraut 1992, 312-4. This position too removes the appearance of hedonism, though I think it puts greater strain on the text. Reeve 1988 sides with Gosling and Taylor, on the basis of both this textual point and the more general worry that “if we do not preserve the connection between goodness, pleasure, and happiness... Plato’s entire argument begins to totter” (307 n.33).

¹⁴ Plato may face the following, related problem: it is suggested in *Republic* IX, and stated explicitly in the *Philebus* that no amount of impure pleasure can outweigh any

amount of pure pleasure, that pure pleasure is incomparably greater than pleasure that is mixed with pain: "...any pleasure that is unadulterated by pain, however small and inconsiderable it may be, is more pleasant, truer and finer than any impure pleasure" (53b9-c2). But how can this be the case, unless Plato too relies on a qualitative distinction of the sort Mill uses? Plato's answer to this is that pure pleasure is incomparably superior because, in a mixture of pleasure and pain, the pleasure can never outweigh the pain. This is why impure pleasures can go no higher than the neutral state, as I explained earlier.

Sosa 1969 and Riley 1999 defend Mill's qualitative hedonism on the basis of a similar strategy, reducing qualitative differences to quantitative ones. Key to these interpretations of Mill's hedonism is his claim that it is "often the case in psychology" that a "difference in degree... becomes a real difference in kind." (ch. V, 53) Donner 1991 rejects such reductionist interpretations of Mill as untenable (46-9), offering a nonreductionist interpretation, which she defends both as an interpretation of Mill and a philosophical position.

¹⁵ Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chapter iv. It should be pointed out that Bentham's conception of "purity" does not exactly correspond to that of Plato. Bentham takes purity to be "the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *opposite* kind", where "it" refers to the act that produces the pleasure. The difference between Plato's and Bentham's conceptions of purity, then, is twofold: First, Bentham considers purity to be a property of the act by which the pleasure or pain in question has been produced, and not a property of the pleasure or pain itself, whereas Plato does treat purity as a property of pleasure itself. This may be due, at least in part, to the second point of divergence: Bentham's purity is contrasted with sequential mixtures of pleasure and pain, whereas the primary contrast of Platonic purity is simultaneous mixtures. I say this may explain the first point, because in the case of merely sequential mixtures, pleasure-by-itself is experienced before and/or after

pain-by-itself, such that the pleasure and pain themselves are pure, and only the act producing them is impure, as a source of pleasure. On the simultaneous mixture case, however, there is no moment when pleasure-by-itself is experienced, therefore making it more appropriate to consider the pleasure itself as impure.

¹⁶ This does not mean that Plato takes the different pleasures to be incommensurable: with both PC and DR he establishes standards by which all pleasures are to be evaluated.

¹⁷ Mill's treatment of pain is remarkably inadequate. Not only does he fail, in my opinion, to incorporate pain into his account of lower pleasures, but he also "does not tell us how the grading of *pains* relates to their quality, quantity, etc. Pleasure and pain are supposed to be contraries, and calculations of utility are supposed to be concerned as much with prevention of pain as with promotion of pleasure" (Gibbs 1986, 46).

¹⁸ This is even more so when the memory in question concerns our mental states in the not-so-recent past (since it takes time to lose the capability for a lifestyle). Our memory of events we have observed in the past seems relatively more reliable, but studies on eyewitness testimony reveal that even these are highly liable to error. (Cf. Ebbesen and Rienick 1998)

¹⁹ After all, the underlying principle is a quite general one: the more familiar someone is with the various items to be compared, the better he/she will be able to judge the matter.

²⁰ As I explain in Chapter 4, Plato does not merely stipulate that truer pleasures are more pleasant – he offers reasons as to why they are more pleasant, based on his view that pleasure is a goal-directed process, and those reasons may have some intuitive appeal. Nonetheless, one can always raise the question "but is it *really* more pleasant?", which is the question addressed by the argument from experience. The important point

here is that, whatever the intuitive appeal of Plato's identification of greater truth in pleasures with greater pleasantness, that identification could not be what the argument from experience rests on. In other words, it cannot be the case that Plato's competent judges are being asked whether intellectual pleasures are truer pleasures, and not whether they are, simply, more pleasant. For an affirmative answer to the former question does not contribute to Plato's case at all.

²¹ The appeal to experience concerns PC and not DR because the idea at play is that the difference between pure and impure pleasure (and the neutral state) becomes evident through experience – they feel differently – *because* one is pure whereas the other is mixed with pain (and the neutral state contains no pleasure at all). As I explain in the next chapter, DR allows for varying degrees of truth among the superior pleasures, but we are not given any reason to think that the truer among those pleasures feel differently. (That is, we are not given any reason to think that acquiring knowledge of the Forms is *experienced as more pleasant in the ordinary sense* than a relatively modest case of learning, even though the former *is more pleasant* according to DR, since it is a more true pleasure.) It is with PC and not DR that Plato relates his view on pleasure to our ordinary notions about the feeling of greater pleasantness.

²² It should be clear at this point that, despite the striking superficial similarity, the appeal to experience plays very different roles for Plato and Mill: Plato's view is that pleasures (and pleasantness) are to be evaluated (and compared) in terms of purity and truth, and he appeals to the judgment of competent judges only to provide intuitive grounding for a key part of this view, that pure pleasure is more pleasant than the liberation from pain (and the cessation of pain). Mill, on the other hand, seems to ground the superior pleasantness of the "higher pleasures" entirely on the claim that competent judges prefer them. Recent scholarship on Mill's moral philosophy has emphasized the role these "higher pleasures" play in the development of certain human capacities and faculties. (See, for example, Berger 1984 and Donner 1991) While it is

argued that “human happiness requires development of certain capacities” and that “[Mill] bases this requirement on the claim that these faculties are essential elements of human nature”, it is granted that “the test for this claim, as for other values choices, consists in eliciting the preferences of competent agents” (Donner 1991, 123; cf. Berger 1984, 38-9).

Donner views the preferences of the competent judges as merely the *test* for value-claims, but it seems that the superiority of Mill’s higher pleasures may in fact *consist in* those preferences. Mill writes that the preference of all or almost all the competent judges is “what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures” (8), suggesting that the consensus of the competent judges is what the superiority of the higher pleasures consists in. As Gibbs points out, however, this would be a mistake: “If this were so, then the only way any individual judge could discover the quality of his own pleasures would be to ascertain the agreed verdict of all the judges” (Gibbs 1986, 47). It must be added that it would be also problematic to identify the judgment of each individual competent judge as constitutive of qualitative superiority. Not only would there be a problem with the exceptional dissenting competent judge Mill makes room for, but we would also have to ask whether it is a mere coincidence that there is an agreement between almost all of the competent judges. The appeal to the preference of competent judges would be far more reasonable if this preference were understood as a test or evidence for qualitative superiority, which consists in something else. However, Mill does not tell us what this “something else” is. According to Donner, Mill “grounds his views on value in his conception of and facts about human nature” (1991, 123). But given qualitative hedonism, the facts in question can only be facts about pleasure and pain, and facts about human capacities and development cannot do the required work without value-smuggling. The only legitimate way to ground the superiority of the higher pleasures, it seems to me, is to bring pain into the equation and identify the higher pleasures as those unmixed with pain, as on Plato’s account.

²³ In order not to put bodily pleasures at an unfair disadvantage, we would have to suppose that there are no bodily constraints on the duration of bodily pleasures, such that we could spend as much time on the pleasure of eating or of sex as on the pleasure of reading a book.

²⁴ Plato argues, at 582b2-3, that the philosopher has necessarily tasted the pleasures of the other two characters since childhood, but this must be taken in a limited way, since Plato presumably does not mean to suggest that the philosopher must have tasted sexual pleasures since childhood.

²⁵ As Gosling and Taylor themselves point out, it would be “highly embarrassing” for Plato if the philosopher were to judge, on the basis of his experience, that his own pleasures are more pleasant than “perverted or sadistic” pleasures: “As a good man, the philosopher must surely be without experience of those activities at all, not to speak of experience of *the pleasures* of those activities” (1982, 329-30). If I am right, the philosopher’s superiority with respect to all kinds of pleasure can be sustained without attributing such unacceptable pleasures to him.

²⁶ Cf. Reeve 1988, 146.

²⁷ Reeve too defends Plato’s second proof against the sort of charge Gosling and Taylor bring against it, but his approach is to downplay the role of experience rather than to show the philosopher’s superiority with respect to it:

To decide whether experience of a particular sort brings authority, rather than the special and suspect, insights of faith, addiction, or delusion, we need a general theory of how the psyche works. Our procedure must be modeled on *The Future of an Illusion*, rather than on opinion polls. Without such a theory to back it up, as Plato’s theory underwrites the authority of the philosopher, the present objection cannot be more than inconclusive. (1988, 146)

In effect, Reeve shifts the burden to the other two factors relevant for being a good judge of pleasure – prudence and reason. Reeve’s point is an important one, though I think the problem cannot be dismissed so easily. The philosopher’s inexperience with specific sorts of pleasure, such as those of the drug addict, may be explained away convincingly. But the philosopher’s overall superiority with respect to experience needs defense, since this is the superiority that Plato is most emphatic about in the second proof, and the only one he bothers to argue for.

Irwin 1995 offers a similar defense of Plato’s claim that the philosopher is the best judge of pleasure, by focusing on the asymmetrical role played by the rational part of the soul. Against the charge that the philosopher “has not had the experience of being a mature adult dominated by the appetitive or spirited part”, he argues that the philosopher does not need that sort of experience to make the comparison:

The objection fails, once we recognize that the attitude of the rational part to the other parts is not the same as their attitude to it. They have no capacity to represent the interests of the rational part within their conception of their own ends. Hence the rational person ought not to be confined to their conception of his ends; for once we are confined to that outlook, we have no easy way out of it... Insofar as we are dominated by the non-rational parts, we suffer from a distorted view of the value of satisfying these parts, because we have no basis for attributing value to the desires and pleasures of other parts of the soul. Since the rational part has grounds for valuing the satisfactions of spirited desires and appetites, it evaluates its experience of the pleasures of the other parts from the appropriately comprehensive point of view. (292)

Irwin is surely right to argue that the philosopher is better equipped to evaluate the pleasures of all three parts of the soul, on account of the superiority of his prudence and reason, but an evaluation can take place only if the philosopher *also* has had *sufficient* experience with the pleasures of the other two parts of the soul. It will not suffice, therefore, to focus solely on the superiority of the philosopher with respect to prudence and reason, and to simply assume that the kind of experience the philosopher has with the other pleasures is sufficient. My argument performs the required task of making the

case that, given Plato's view of the human soul, the kind of experience the philosopher has is indeed sufficient for the purpose.

²⁸ Berger 1984, 285. Donner approvingly cites Berger's defense of Mill (Donner 1991, 124-5).

²⁹ Gibbs argues that personal and direct familiarity with an experience is not necessary for being able to tell how pleasant it is:

But surely one can assess the merits of a way of life without first-hand experience of it, so long as one has adequate knowledge of its constituent parts and of the experience of other persons who have followed it. I have not lived as a coolie in Calcutta, and may not comprehend fully how dreadful such a mode of existence can be; but I have undergone some, albeit lesser, forms and degrees of distress, humiliation and hunger, and I am sufficiently informed about the conditions under which coolies in Calcutta have to live to be confident that my mode of existence is more agreeable than theirs. (1986, 58)

There is clearly some truth in this. It would be unreasonable to claim that first-hand experience is necessary for being able to evaluate the pleasantness or otherwise of any experience. But the question is how broadly we can apply the method described. Can we be confident about how pleasant the sensualist's life is? It seems to me that an account such as Plato's tripartite psyche is required in order to maintain that an intellectual has sufficient experience to judge all other forms of life.

³⁰ Indeed, this is the reading of *Utilitarianism* defended by Riley 1999.

³¹ Thus: "In general, when physical and mental pleasures are compared, there are circumstances in which the former are pleasanter and more desirable, as well as circumstances in which the reverse is true" (1986, 51).

³² I will shortly say more about Plato's view on the place of impure pleasures – such as eating – in the philosopher's life.

³³ As I explain in chapter 4, Frede 1985 argues that certain passages in *Republic IX* support this extremely narrow view of the superior category of pleasures.

³⁴ Reeve cites 571b4-d4 and points out that further distinctions are to be made between desires, namely by distinguishing between lawless and nonlawless unnecessary desires (1988, 44-5).

³⁵ I agree with Reeve so far, but I am doubtful about his suggestion that the judgment of the money-lover and the honor-lover is final on the question of which desires are necessary for them. I am doubtful, that is, that the money-lover and the honor-lover are always right about which desires help them acquire their distinctive pleasure reliably throughout life. Unlike the wise philosopher, the other two character-types may make mistakes, if only rarely, about which desires are most conducive to the acquisition of their own distinctive pleasures. (Hence the criminally-inclined money-lover's judgment that the desire for other people's money in the bank is a necessary one.) But this is not a significant disagreement as far as the present purposes are concerned.

³⁶ It is well known that Plato's extremely rigorous educational program for the city's philosopher-kings involves ten years of education in mathematics, after which they receive five years of training in dialectical argument (537c-540a). It has been argued, most notably by Burnyeat 2000, that the education in mathematics is not merely instrumental for higher forms of understanding, as useful mental discipline, but that mathematics is a constitutive part of ethical understanding. Even if this is correct about mathematics (and/or dialectic), all other intellectual pleasures would be left out. In fact, Burnyeat's argument undermines the very notion that we may place acquiring knowledge of the Forms into a wholly different category than where doing mathematics belongs. In other words, the status of mathematics as a constitutive part of understanding the Good suggests that dismissing its practice as non-rational is untenable.

PART III

CHAPTER 4: PLEASURE AND METAPHYSICS

The criterion Plato develops in the first part of *Republic IX*, PC, is meant to prove that the pleasures of reason are superior by establishing that only they are pure and that all the other pleasures are merely liberations from pain. PC is a simplistic criterion, because it creates only two classes for all that may be called “pleasure”, with no regard for making distinctions within the classes.¹ It identifies such pleasures as those of smell as pure, since their being neither preceded nor followed by pain shows that they cannot be liberations from pain. We have seen, as a matter of fact, that PC is not only simplistic but also incomplete as a method for evaluating pleasure, since it cannot by itself explain why a liberation from pain is a lesser sort of pleasure. The reason for this incompleteness is that PC does not involve a definition of pleasure – which means that we do not even know why pure pleasures are pleasures until some such definition is provided. That task is performed by DR, a criterion that works very differently.

Starting from 585a8, Plato constructs a metaphorical model according to which every pleasure is some kind of process of filling, and the truth of that pleasure is determined by the truth (or reality, or being) of that which is being filled (e.g., body, soul) and that which it is being filled with (e.g., food, knowledge). But this model does not simply place pleasures into two classes (such as “true pleasures” and “false pleasures”). Rather, it functions as a scale that yields a ranking of pleasures in terms of

their truth, there being many levels along the scale. We shall see, however, that some segment at the top of the scale is identified as completely or unqualifiedly true. For Plato's purposes to be served, this class of unqualifiedly true pleasures should turn out to be the pleasures of reason (i.e., the philosopher's pleasures). Of course, the pure pleasures of PC must turn out to be the pleasures of reason as well. Only then will Plato have achieved the goal he sets for himself at the beginning: proving that all pleasures other than those of reason are "neither completely true nor pure but like a shadow-painting" (583b3-4).² The account of pleasure in *Republic IX*, then, will have achieved its goal only if Plato's contention can be substantiated, that PC and DR yield the same class of pleasures as superior, and that the pleasures in this class are the pleasures of reason. The charge that this condition is not satisfied will be my primary concern in this chapter and the next.

A. THE CHARGE OF INCONSISTENCY

Frede writes: "So we are now told that 'the more being (ousia) obtains, the more truth there is and the more filling with what is more truly' – and that only knowledge can bring that about" (1985, 160). According to Frede, DR places only the pleasure of filling with knowledge (of the Forms) in the class of "fully true" pleasures, excluding all pleasures that involve sense-perception, such as the pleasure of smell. Thus, Frede concludes, the pleasures that are true on PC are not so on DR, the two criteria yielding conflicting answers to the question "is X a true pleasure?". In this form, the charge can be dismissed quickly, because PC is actually not a criterion of the truth of pleasures, but

only of their purity. While Frede uses the terms “true” and “pure” interchangeably in her discussion of *Republic IX*, the text does not support this interchangeability. The superior pleasures on PC are only called “pure” (*kathara*), and PC is never discussed in terms of truth.³ DR, on the other hand, never identifies its own superior class of pleasures as “pure”, but only as “true”; DR is expounded in terms of truth, being, and reality, and purity is not an attribute it applies to pleasure.⁴ So there can be no inconsistency between PC and DR with respect to either the truth or the purity of pleasures: the two criteria cannot yield conflicting answers to either of the questions “is X a true pleasure?” and “is X a pure pleasure?”; PC has no answer for the first question and DR has no answer for the second one.

The problem does remain, however, in a modified way. Both criteria yield a class of superior pleasures, and, as I have argued, Plato gives clear indications that true pleasures and pure pleasures are coextensive. Even though the two criteria are logically distinct, the text suggests that the nature of pleasure is such that the classes of things that satisfy the two criteria are identical. There would therefore be a problematic inconsistency between the two criteria if indeed DR designated only gaining knowledge of the Forms as “true pleasure”, while PC attributed purity to many other pleasures, such as those of smell.

A closely related problem is what Gosling and Taylor have called “the problem of pure bodily pleasures” (Gosling/Taylor 1985, 160). They claim that pleasures other than the pleasure of smell, which qualifies under PC as pure, is a bodily pleasure, and that pleasures other than those of reason can therefore qualify as pure, contradicting

Plato's claim and severely weakening the conclusion that he may draw from this account. (He may still be able to claim, for example, that other than the pleasures of reason, only the pleasure of smell is pure, leaving out eating, drinking, and sex.) But Frede's charge of inconsistency is a deeper strike: regardless of the status of the pleasure of smell, PC will presumably identify as pure such pleasures as those of learning, even at a very basic level – a child's pleasure in learning math is neither preceded nor followed by pain. So if Frede is right that only gaining knowledge of the Forms makes the cut under DR, an inconsistency with PC seems unavoidable. Both Frede's charge of inconsistency and the problem of pure bodily pleasures turn on the scope of three classes, and on whether they are coextensive with each other: pure pleasures, true pleasures, and the pleasures of reason. I begin with a closer look at DR with a view to determining the scope of true pleasures.

B. PLEASURE AS FILLING

DR is built on the filling metaphor, according to which pleasure is filling with what is appropriate by nature (585d11). And the sense in which pleasures are fillings is this: hunger, thirst, and the like are some sort of empty states of the body, while ignorance, imprudence, etc. are empty states of the soul. Partaking of nourishment and strengthening one's understanding are fillings which correspond to such empty states which human beings have either in their body or in their soul (585a8-b8). All of our pleasures are to be understood in such a way as to allow for three elements: (i) that which is filled, the container (e.g., body); (ii) that with which the emptiness is filled, the

filler (e.g., food); (iii) the filling process, i.e., the pleasure.⁵ Now Plato wishes to show that some kinds of pleasure are more pleasant than others. Doing so on the basis of DR means showing that some pleasures are truer or more real than others. But how can one kind of “filling” be truer than another? What does it mean to compare the truth of two such different things as eating and learning, filling my empty stomach and filling some lack in my soul?

The answer to these questions is complicated, and takes a number of steps. I will reconstruct Plato’s answer (as a series of statements rather than the original form of question and answer) in whole, both because it is important to see how DR is developed, and because I translate differently from some commonly used versions, on points that are not insignificant.⁶

- (1) The truer filling up is with that which is more. (585b9-11)
- (2) The kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence, and further, collectively, all virtue participate more in pure being than do the classes of food, drink, delicacies and nourishment in general. (Because) (585b12-c1)
- (3) That which “is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind” is more than that which “is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind”. (And) (585c1-6)
- (4) The being of what is always changing (/never the same) participates less in being than does the being of knowledge. (585c7-9)
- (5) The being of what is always changing participates less in truth than does the being of knowledge. (585c10-11)
- (6) If it participates less in truth, it participates less in being also. (585c12-13)

(7) And, on the whole, the classes of things concerned with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul. (585d1-4)

(8) The body participates less in being and truth than does the soul. (585d5-6)

(9) That which is more and is filled with things that are more, is really more filled than that which is less, and is filled with things that are less. (585d7-10)

(10) If being filled with what is appropriate by nature is pleasure, that which is more filled with that which is more enjoys more really and more truly a more true pleasure, while that which partakes of things that are less is less truly and securely filled and partakes of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure. (585d11-e5)

The first order of business in explicating the filling metaphor is to make it clear that pleasure is represented by the process of filling. The same definition, given at (10), is applied to *all* pleasure: pleasure is being filled with what is appropriate by nature. But the definition is ambiguous – in Greek as in this translation – about whether pleasure is the process of being filled or the state of having been filled completely, i.e., being full. Yet the introduction of the filling metaphor, at 585a8-b8 removes the ambiguity: the metaphor is constructed by extending the analysis of the pleasure of eating and drinking to all other pleasures. Just as satisfying hunger and thirst are filling empty states of the body, learning is said to be filling empty states of the soul. Since it is undoubtedly eating and drinking, the filling process and not fullness, that is the pleasure in the original cases, it must be the case that pleasure is the filling process in all other cases as well.

Gosling and Taylor have disputed this conclusion, charging that the text contains “a fatal ambiguity” about whether pleasure is the process of replenishment or the state of possessing what one’s nature needs (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 122-6).⁷ Though they put

this forward as a severe criticism of *Republic IX*, the grounds they provide for it are extremely weak. A cornerstone of their case is the claim that Plato was confused about the distinction between the liberation from pain and the cessation of pain (the claim I discussed in my Chapter 2). But as I explained earlier, the text reveals full awareness of this distinction, and there are no signs of confusion about it whatsoever.⁸

The other argument underlying the charge by Gosling and Taylor is the following: on the view that all pleasure is replenishment, pleasure ceases when the process of replenishment is complete. If the philosopher's desires can be genuinely satisfied, however, they will be replenished genuinely and once for all. But then if the philosopher succeeds in acquiring full understanding and becoming wise, he will no longer desire wisdom, as expressed in the *Symposium* (204a): we desire only what we think we lack. This is why "none of the gods loves wisdom or wants to become wise – for they are wise – and no one else who is wise already loves wisdom"⁹. It follows from this that, the desires of the philosopher who has become wise have already been satisfied, and there can be no further replenishing of them. Thus, Gosling and Taylor conclude, "the more successful a philosopher is, the sooner his life will cease to be pleasant" (1982, 122-3).

Needless to say, such a consequence would be devastating for Plato's whole argument in *Republic IX*, and, as Gosling and Taylor argue, it raises the question about whether pleasure is not in fact the process of replenishment, but rather "being in possession". Now acquiring wisdom in the fullest possible sense is, in the context of the *Republic*, acquiring knowledge of the Forms. It has to be remembered that this is an

extremely difficult point to reach, and perhaps impossible outside of Plato's city, without the extremely rigorous educational program it provides. That is to say, there is a long way to go and a philosophical life to live before the prospect of acquiring knowledge of the Forms is near.

Furthermore, Plato does not seem to think that the philosopher acquires knowledge of all the Forms all at once: at the end of the Divided Line passage in Book VI, Plato describes the ideal mode of intellectual investigation – dialectic – as “using only Forms themselves, going through Forms to Forms, and ending in Forms” (511c1-2). This suggests that one does not acquire knowledge of the Forms all at once, but rather engages in an intellectual activity, moving from one Form to others, and building one's knowledge of the various Forms gradually.¹⁰ This makes the complete satisfaction of all philosophical desires an even more distant goal, since there may be a long time between coming to know a Form and coming to know all Forms. The cave analogy in Book VII gives further support to this view, since the person who has escaped from the cave cannot at first look at the sun – which represents the Form of the Good – directly, being blinded by the light after the darkness of the cave. He needs time to get accustomed, and proceeds by first looking at the shadows and reflections of the objects in the natural world, then looking at the objects themselves, then at the things in heaven at night. Only finally would he be able to look at the sun itself (516a5-b6). It is understood that “the hierarchy of Forms [is] represented in the image by the entire natural world above the ground”¹¹. This suggests that one has to go through various other Forms before coming to grasp the Form of the Good itself, confirming the

view that acquiring knowledge of the Forms is a gradual process.¹² If we take the analogy seriously, we might also think that coming to know the Form of the Good does not end the learning process, since one may go on to look at other objects in the natural world, which is vast. On this reading, it is actually unclear whether any philosopher can come to know *all* the Forms.

If, on the other hand, it is possible for the philosopher to acquire knowledge of all the Forms eventually, we may face the unhappy conclusion that the philosophical life in its most complete, most fully realized form “ceases to be pleasant”. Of course, the (fully) wise philosopher’s life would cease to be pleasant only in the sense that he would no longer have philosophical pleasures; he would not cease to enjoy eating, but being left with non-philosophical pleasures is the paradoxical conclusion hostile to Plato’s thesis. Yet the wise philosopher’s life will cease to be pleasant only if he has learned everything there is to learn, and there are no lacks whatsoever in the rational part of his soul. I see no evidence, however, that Plato envisioned the wise philosopher as having reached a godlike state to this extent, as having become omniscient. We must be careful not to confuse the wisdom of a philosopher with the wisdom of a god. For, as *Symposium* 204a reveals, a philosopher would no longer be a lover of wisdom, i.e., a philosopher, if he were to become *completely* wise, as a god is. And nowhere in the *Republic* is it suggested that the philosopher may become so wise as to be a “philosopher” only in name.¹³

At this point, the scope of the philosopher’s pleasures is of the essence: if they are restricted to acquiring knowledge of the Forms, then it does follow that the wise

philosopher – one who knows all the Forms, supposing that this is possible – has run out of philosophical pleasures, assuming that knowledge of the Forms is not the sort of thing one forgets and can relearn.¹⁴ If, on the other hand, the philosopher’s pleasures involve lesser varieties of learning, having acquired knowledge of the Forms need not deprive him of these lesser pleasures. If, as I will argue, the pleasures of reason involve learning lesser things than the Forms, including empirical facts, it would be wildly implausible to suggest that the wise philosopher has run out of all pleasures of reason, since that would amount to equating wisdom with omniscience.¹⁵

The view I have laid out does not confer greater pleasantness to the wise philosopher’s life over the life of an aspiring philosopher who has not yet acquired wisdom. In fact, it turns out that a philosopher who is in the process of acquiring wisdom will have more pleasant experiences than the wise philosopher: as I will show below, Plato’s DR designates a diverse range of pleasures as belonging to the class of unqualifiedly “true” pleasures, while also allowing a ranking of these pleasures with respect to their truth. In other words, some true pleasures can be truer than others, and hence, more pleasant. Accordingly, the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Forms will be the truest and most pleasant, whereas the pleasure of acquiring true belief is a relatively modest and less true (i.e., less pleasant) true pleasure. It follows that a philosopher who has already acquired knowledge of the Forms has already had the most pleasant pleasures, and whatever true pleasures are left for him will not be as pleasant.

This may not be a position we expected Plato to endorse in the *Republic*, where the pleasures of the philosophical life are promoted, but I see nothing in the text that is

strained by this conclusion. Plato's purpose is to prove that the philosopher's life is more pleasant than the other kinds of lives, not to prove that there is a strict correlation between one's degree of wisdom and how pleasant one's life is. As long as the philosophers' lives are more pleasant than the lives of the other kinds of people, it does not matter that those philosophers who are in the process of acquiring knowledge of the Forms are at a more pleasant stage of the philosophical life than that of the fully wise philosophers. Both PC and DR show, in this general way, that the distinctive pleasures of a philosophical life are more pleasant than all other pleasures, and that the philosophical life is therefore more pleasant than all other lives. This allows us to reject the premise Gosling and Taylor rely on for their charge of a "fatal ambiguity", that we must view pleasure not as replenishment but rather as being in possession of what one needs, for otherwise we cannot maintain the "greater pleasantness of the philosophic life" (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 123).

Even though Plato has lavish praises for knowledge of the Forms, nowhere in the *Republic* does he claim that this *state of knowing* – as opposed to acquiring the knowledge – is pleasant. And even in other works where wisdom is brought up in relation to the ideal of godlikeness, Plato does not claim that the state of being like god (as far as possible) is pleasant.¹⁶ I see no reason, therefore, to resist the above reading of the pleasures involved in the different stages of the philosophical life. I have shown, I believe, that Gosling and Taylor's charge rests on an unsupported premise, and it may be dismissed.

C. PLEASURE AS A GOAL-DIRECTED PROCESS

Plato apparently saw pleasures as goal-directed processes; the filling is for the sake of the fullness.¹⁷ And the way in which the truth/reality/being of such a process is determined is by determining the truth/reality/being of that which makes a process what it is, which distinguishes it from other processes. What makes eating a particular kind of filling is that it is a filling with food, and it takes place in the stomach; in other words, the goal of eating is a stomach full of food. The goal of gaining knowledge, on the other hand, is a condition of fullness with knowledge in the soul. That the degree of truth of a filling (a pleasure) is derivative from that of the filler and the container is evident from (7)-(10); a filling has truth to the extent that these two elements do.

The justification of (2) is not completed by the end of (3), since (2) was in terms of participation in being, whereas (3) established a less specific superiority, “being more”, of something like knowledge over something like food. It is in (4) that the explication begun with (3) is tied to the terms of (2): to “be more than” just means “having more being than”/ “participating more in being than”.¹⁸ Propositions (5) and (6) then bring in the element crucial for being able to relate DR to PC, that having more being is equivalent to having more truth. At (7), Plato generalizes what was said about knowledge and what is always changing, between (4) and (6), thereby giving a complete justification of (2).¹⁹ It is not just knowledge that participates more in truth and being than food, etc., but also the kind of true belief, intelligence, and, collectively, all virtue. Given that the soul participates more in truth and being than does the body, matching the truth and being of the objects of which they are the containers (8), and

given the rule to derive the truth/being of fillings (9), we are ready to declare at (10), on what basis a pleasure should be considered truer than another – in other words, DR.²⁰ That pleasure is truer which consists of a filling with an object that is more in a container that is more, i.e., if the filler and container have a greater being on the “degrees of reality” theory.²¹

At this point, we should also clarify the way in which any item’s being (or participation in being) is tied to whether the item is “always the same” or “never the same”. Being always the same could be interpreted as being changeless, but, as Reeve points out, “then it is impossible to understand how something always the same could *come to be* filled with something else that is always the same” (1988, 111).²² An alternative interpretation is as follows: in keeping with the account of being we find in the central books of the *Republic*²³, something that is, is F, by virtue of its resemblance to the Form of F. And something that is more, is more F, by virtue of its greater resemblance to the Form of F. Being always the same, Reeve suggests, means always resembling some Form F completely, and being never the same means never resembling some Form F completely. (Being “immortal and true” or “mortal” are to be explicated on this basis as well.) On this account, then, there is no difficulty about something that is always the same filling up something else that is always the same. This simply means that “something that always resembles a form completely (a psyche) comes to be filled with something else that always resembles a form completely (knowledge)” (Ibid.). The soul (psyche) is always the same because it always resembles the Form of a soul completely, and similarly for knowledge. This is what determines the superior

status of the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Forms. On the other hand, in the case of a pleasure such as eating, the food (the filler) never resembles the Form of food completely – since it is constantly decaying – and similarly for body (the container). Plato has told us, therefore, that the being of the filler and the container are determined by the extent to which these two items unalterably and completely resemble their respective Forms, and that the truth of a filling is determined by the being of these two items. This, then, is how the truth of a pleasure is determined according to DR.²⁴

D. THE RELEVANCE OF VENDLER'S TYPOLOGY

If this derivative way of determining the truth of a pleasure seems odd and too removed from the experience itself, as it did to Guthrie, who claimed DR to be “so alien to our ways of thought as to be barely comprehensible” (Guthrie 1975, 541), it should seem less so upon giving some careful thought to Plato's view of pleasure as goal-directed. We may get a better grasp of this notion of a goal-directed process by considering a distinction drawn in Vendler's excellent discussion of verb types. He offers a fourfold distinction of verb types – activities, accomplishments, achievements, and states – but the critical distinction for our purposes here is the one between activities and accomplishments:

If I say that someone is running or pushing a cart, my statement does not imply any assumption as to how long that running or pushing will go on; he might stop the next moment or he might keep running or pushing for half an hour. On the other hand, if I say of a person that he is running a mile or of someone else that he is drawing a circle, then I do claim that the first one will keep running till he has covered the mile and that the second will keep drawing till he has drawn the circle. If they do not complete their activities, my statement will turn out to be false. Thus

we see that while running or pushing a cart has no set terminal point, running a mile and drawing a circle do have a “climax,” which has to be reached if the action is to be what it is claimed to be... It appears, then, that running and its kind go on in time in a homogeneous way; any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole. Not so with running a mile or writing a letter; they also go on in time, but they proceed toward a terminus which is logically necessary to their being what they are. Somehow this climax casts its shadow backward, giving a new color to all that went before... Let us call the first type, that of “running,” “pushing a cart,” and so forth *activity terms*, and the second type, that of “running a mile,” “drawing a circle,” and so forth *accomplishment terms*. (Vendler 1957,145-6)

I find Vendler’s accomplishment terms strikingly similar to Platonic fillings. Clearly, my interest is not in linguistics but rather ontology – what matters here is not whether it is appropriate to use the gerund “filling” (or the Greek noun *plerosis*) in some way or other, but rather whether the ontological counterpart, the referent, of this term (as Plato uses it here) behaves like those of accomplishment terms (i.e., accomplishments).

While the difference between accomplishments and activities is important for understanding Platonic fillings, it is clear that achievements or states cannot capture what these fillings are: achievement verbs such as “recognize” and “find” mark the beginning or end of an act, and do not occur throughout a stretch of time, whereas fillings necessarily occur in this way. State verbs such as “know” and “love”, on the other hand, do last for a period of time, but, Vendler explains, “the lack of continuous tenses (‘e.g., I am knowing, loving, and so forth’) is enough to distinguish them from activities and accomplishments” (148). From a philosophical (as opposed to linguistic) point of view, it is more to the point that states involve no change (as long as they last), whereas fillings, like accomplishments and activities, necessarily involve change or motion of some sort. Of course, I can be in some state and undergo changes with

respect to other things, but I would not be undergoing any of these changes with respect to, or by virtue of, being in that state. (Thus I can whistle while I am in love, undergoing change with respect to the former but not the latter.) There can also be states which necessarily involve change, such as a state of anarchy, but here too the change is unlike the sort of change involved in accomplishments and activities: the changes involved in a state of anarchy are internal to that state, and do not constitute any sort of progression within the state. In fillings (and accomplishments and activities), on the other hand, the change that is necessarily involved constitutes phases of the process. The first half of a filling process cannot be identical to the second half – since going from empty to half-empty is unlike going from half-empty to full – whereas this is not the case with states that involve change.

States figure in the explanation of some pleasure, but on Plato's account, they do so only as the end (the climax) of a filling, i.e., the neutral state, at which point pleasure ceases. Likewise, an achievement is involved in all completed fillings, since arriving at fullness is an achievement, but this is not where pleasure is.

Pleasure occurs, for Plato, on the way to achieving the state of fullness, and this shows why fillings are accomplishments rather than activities: Platonic fillings have a terminal point, a climax that has to be reached, namely fullness of something (in the present context, of some container); otherwise the filling will not be what it is claimed to be. This is not the case with activities, such as running, since there is no assumption about how long this will go on, and it is what it is claimed to be, regardless of how long it lasts. This is because activities are – as Aristotle says about *energeia* – complete at

any time.²⁵ Of course, the filling may be prevented from reaching its climax (as when there is too little food to satisfy our hunger), but, as Vendler points out in a footnote (n. 5, 145), we can say in those instances that they tried to fill (e.g., their stomach). If it takes someone ten minutes to fill up their empty stomach, then it is not true that they have filled their stomach in any substretch of that time, though it is true that they were engaged in filling their stomach during that substretch.²⁶ Vendler explains that this is one of the distinctive features of accomplishments, as opposed to activities, which go on in time in a homogeneous way – “any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole” (1957, 146). This is why, if I have been running for ten minutes, it is true that I have been running for every period within those ten minutes.

I will not go through all of the points of divergence between accomplishment terms and activity terms Vendler brings up, but the presence of a climax guarantees that on all of them, Platonic fillings behave like accomplishments. Vendler’s diagnosis of accomplishments, however, is noteworthy: in Platonic fillings too, the climax is “logically necessary to their being what they are”, and “this climax casts its shadow backward, giving a new color to all that went before”. The climax, the state achieved at the end of the process, must be taken into account for any understanding and assessment of all that went before.

E. VALUE AND THE CLIMAX

It is, perhaps, not a big step from here to add that the value of all that went before is determined by the value of the climax – the worth of drawing of a circle is limited by

the worth of the circle drawn. Taking pleasures to be fillings of particular containers, then, it is understandable that Plato determines the truth of a pleasure in terms of the filler and container involved, since these, in turn, determine the status of the climax. To be more precise, what they determine is not the status of the climax, but rather the status of having reached the climax. This they do determine, since they determine how stable the state of being at this climax is.²⁷

The stability, or duration, of the state achieved at the end of a filling comes into play in *evaluating* the filling because of the Platonic thesis that all becoming (*genesis*) is for the sake of, or directed at (*heneka*) some being, and that for the sake of which something comes to be is classified as good, whereas that which comes to be for the sake of something else is placed in another, inferior (*ellipes ekeinou*) class (*Philebus* 53d-54e). Since pleasure is a kind of becoming, Plato reasons in the *Philebus*, it must belong to the inferior class of things that come to be for the sake of some being (54c). Though Plato does not make this clear in the *Philebus*, the being for the sake of which pleasure comes to be (which pleasure is directed at) must be the state of fulfillment corresponding to a particular pleasure. Given all this, it makes sense that the stability with which the fulfillment is achieved determines the worth of the filling. To use Plato's own example, since shipbuilding is for the sake of ships (54b), it is only reasonable that we evaluate any particular case of shipbuilding in terms of the ship produced. If the ship is sturdy and long-lasting, the process that produced it is good, if not, then not.²⁸

Already in (10) it is hinted that the less true pleasures are less sure and less trustworthy fillings. This is explained in the following paragraph (586a1-b4), where the pleasures of the soul and those of the body are contrasted: eating, drinking, and sex are vain attempts to fill something that can never be filled securely, because what these processes are meant to fill is like a leaky jar (586b3-4). (Cf. *Gorgias* 493aff.) As soon as you bring your body to the full condition with respect to any one of these things, it begins emptying again – the bodily desires are insatiable. Thus, the filling process is successful only for an instant at best. In contrast, the pleasures of the soul in question are more successful processes; when your soul is filled with the “knowledge” of mathematics, this fullness is lost in a very long time if ever at all. In this sense these pleasures of reason are the only secure/stable (*bebaios*) ones. The reality of the filler and the container determine the degree of security/stability of the filling. The greater the degree of reality of a filler, the better it is at remaining in the container that it enters, and the greater the degree of reality of a container, the better it is at keeping the filler entering it. The reality of the filler and the container determining the reality of a pleasure is tied to experience in this way, and is not merely the metaphysical thesis many have rightly found irrelevant to the pleasantness of an experience.

Of course, Plato’s opponent may reject the view of pleasures as goal-directed, and respond that this argument from the security of a filling is irrelevant to the pleasantness of an experience as well. The notion that a pleasure is for the sake of satiety is by no means self-evident, and the sort of opponent Plato is addressing – one who may advocate the pleasures of the appetite or spirit over those of reason – is likely

to insist that the process itself is the reward, regardless of how long the condition at the end of the process lasts. In fact, it may be said that the sooner you start emptying again the better, since that will give the opportunity to enjoy the filling once again. Indeed, this is exactly the sort of view that Callicles defends in the *Gorgias* (494a-b), mocking the life of fullness (with full jars as opposed to the leaky ones Socrates has criticized) as the life of a stone.

We may think that many pleasant *activities* we engage in, such as playing and listening to music, are not directed at any goal, and that these are counterexamples to Plato's analysis of pleasure as a goal-directed process. But Plato will not be cornered so easily: he can admit that such things are pleasant but insist that this is so because they are in fact fillings, re-describing whatever activity we throw at him as a filling of some sort, either of the body or of some part of the soul. It is of course true that a music lover does not listen to music so as to get to the end of a piece, nor does a football-fan watch a game so as to have watched it, but Plato can grant all this. We can do all sorts of pleasant things without consciously aiming at some end, but Plato's point is that these things are pleasant only because they constitute goal-directed processes, fillings of some lack in us. The fillings are aimed at fullness, whether or not we are aware of this. Thus, for example, it is the fullness corresponding to some psychic lack that the pleasure of listening to music aims at – not the end of the piece or anything of the sort. Likewise, any *state* that we may claim to be pleasant, such as having solved a problem, will be re-described as a filling, probably as being filled with the belief that one has solved a problem.

We can now see the more serious challenge to Plato's view. Plato's critic can grant that all pleasure occurs in the context of a filling, but insist that pleasure is not identical to this filling, and is rather *caused by* the filling. (It could be taken, for example, as the perception of a filling.) The critic can also grant Plato his thesis that all becoming is for the sake of being – since pleasure is not itself a goal-directed process, this thesis is inert as far as pleasure is concerned. At this point, Plato has to appeal to his account of pleasure as a process of satisfying desire, and his account of desire as aiming at its own removal (as opposed to pleasant sensations, for instance). This is fairly easy to see in the case of basic bodily desires such as thirst: when I am thirsty, my body is in a depleted (and imbalanced) condition that is painful, and I want to remove this condition by drinking; the pleasure of drinking ceases along with the pain of thirst when this desire is satisfied. What Plato does is to take this model and apply it to all pleasure and all desire, except that in the case of pure pleasure, the corresponding desire is not painful. Whether this global application of his “physiologically inspired model” is valid is debatable, but, as Gosling and Taylor put it, “it is remarkably difficult, once one is attracted by a theory, to think up possible counter-examples or take them seriously”²⁹ (1982, 117). To put it differently, it is fairly easy to develop a Platonic analysis of any pleasure that we may be challenged with. The question is how plausible such analyses will be. One sort of challenge has already been addressed in Chapter 2: Plato will not be frustrated by cases where people prefer the process of removing a painful desire to the state of fullness – cases which might be taken as evidence that the stability of the fullness achieved is irrelevant to the pleasantness of the

experience. As we have seen, Plato explains away such cases as being fooled by the appearances.

However, this strategy applies only to impure pleasures, and Plato could not appeal to it in explaining the case of someone who prefers the pure pleasure of learning to the state of knowing. Plato would have to argue that those who enjoy pure pleasures, i.e., philosophers, would never behave this way, and that they would never choose to be emptied of what they know so as to enjoy the pure pleasure of learning the same things again. This does not strike me as an implausible position³⁰, but it is certainly not invulnerable to criticism. Be that as it may, it seems safe to conclude that Plato's view of pleasure as a goal-directed process merits serious consideration, and cannot be dismissed with a few alleged counterexamples.

F. DETERMINING THE TRUTH OF A PLEASURE

Returning to how we derive the truth of a pleasure from the statuses of the filler and container involved, the question needs to be raised whether the filler and the container might point in different directions. In other words, the question is whether it is possible for a filler belonging to the truer class to come to be in the less true container, and/or vice-versa. Now it is uncontroversial that this cannot happen at least in most of the cases: knowledge cannot come to be in the body, nor bread in the soul. It makes sense that this should be so, since the truer class of fillers are those concerned with the care of the soul, and the less true class with that of the body. And this can be translated into the

terms of proposition (3): a filler which is always the same cannot come to be in something that is never the same, and vice-versa.

The shared status of the filler and the container, however, comes into question in the following way: the subject of (3) is a filler which is always the same, immortal, and true, is related to something of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind. And this is said to be more than the other kind described. Yet this does not necessarily mean that any filler which comes to be in something that is always the same (and immortal, and true) must itself be of that kind, unless all things are either always the same or never the same. Nor does it mean that a filler may only be more than that other kind if this condition holds. For it is conceivable that there are fillers which, though they come to be in what is always the same, are themselves not really always the same (nor “never the same”; those are presumably material things, which cannot possibly come to be in the soul). Assuming that such a filler would be concerned with the care of the soul, filling with it would qualify, on (9), as belonging to the truer class of fillings. This is not merely a hypothetical scenario, but a real possibility, depending on our understanding on what (3) is about.

Knowledge of the Forms is related to the Forms, and it comes to be in the soul; this trio seems to fit the description in (3), all three being always the same, immortal and true.³¹ However, it is not just knowledge that comes to be in the immortal soul – intelligence, the kind of true belief, and all virtue do so too. But are these also themselves of that kind? The way in which Socrates moves from (2) to (3), just continuing his speech by adding a “judge it this way” (*hode de krine*) may indicate that

the subject of (3) is the same as the subject of (2), and that in (3) Plato does not distinguish knowledge from these other items. It would follow from this that these items too come into being in that which is always the same, immortal, and true, are themselves of that kind, and are related to something of that kind.³² Yet taking (2) and (3) this way and claiming that true belief is always the same and is related to what is always the same seems to contradict some of the fundamental tenets of Platonic metaphysics.

Ultimately, Plato does not provide enough information to clarify this issue, but I think the best guess is the following. The subject of (3) is only a subset of the subject of (2), avoiding the problematic consequence I just mentioned. This still serves Plato's purposes, and (3) is still tightly connected to (2) because what Plato wants to establish in (3) is that the reality of a filler correlates with how it, its container, and that to which it is related stand with respect to two opposite sets of attributes – “always the same, immortal and true” on the one hand, and “never the same and mortal” on the other. Consistently with the notion that there are *degrees* of reality, there are intermediate sets of attributes between these two, and the point of (3) is to correlate the degree of reality of the filler to its status on the scale ranging between these two opposite sets.³³ Thus, even if intelligence is not always the same, it is more real than bread and butter, because it is nevertheless not always changing (it does not never resemble the Form of intelligence), and it comes to be in something that is always the same, and is perhaps related (in some sense) to something of that kind. This approach presumably allows us to compare intelligence and knowledge as well: even though they both come to be in

the same thing, knowledge is more real than intelligence because intelligence itself is not as unchanging as knowledge (it does not as unalterably and completely resemble the Form of intelligence as knowledge does the Form of knowledge), and intelligence is possibly related to something that does not rank quite as highly on that scale as do the Forms.³⁴

But evidently, Plato is not interested in developing this line of comparing the soul's various fillers. In fact, we can see in this whole passage that Plato is not concerned about using DR to distinguish between the soul's various fillers or fillings with respect to their truth/reality/being. He appears concerned, rather, about the distinction between the fillers and fillings of the soul on the one hand, and those of the body on the other. Proposition (7) places the whole class of fillers concerned with the care of the soul above those concerned with the care of the body, in terms of truth and being. And (8) points out that the corresponding containers of the two classes of fillers in (7), the soul and the body, stand in the same relation to one another: the former participates more in truth and being than the latter. Then (9) builds on the points made in (7) and (8), and puts forward a rule to determine which fillings are more (real), or, more precisely, which of the two kinds of fillings: fillings of the soul with things concerned with the care of the soul, or fillings of the body with things concerned with the care of the body.

As (9) is based on (7) and (8), which compare two classes with no regard for distinctions within the classes, the rule for determining the truth of fillings itself appears unconcerned about differences within the two classes of fillings. The precise

formulation of the rule (in (9)) also underscores this understanding: the rule is structured on the status of the container, determining which kind of container is more filled. And there are only two kinds of containers here. Reaching the conclusion that, of these two containers, the soul is more filled when it is filled leaves no room to distinguish between the various fillings of the soul. Now it does not preclude making such distinctions either, but this rule itself is not saying how that would work, and neither is the rule explained anywhere else, which indicates that it is not a matter of concern for Plato here. If he really were concerned about such distinctions, he could have formulated the rule differently, placing more emphasis on the truth of fillers (and suggesting that the different fillers of a container may vary in their truth and being³⁵) but he does not do this. Finally, the climax of the whole passage, (10), is based on this rule, also focusing on the container and determining which container enjoys a truer pleasure.

From what has been said, it might seem that DR holds all the fillings of a given container to be equal in truth and being. But that is highly unlikely, given DR's reliance on the "degrees of reality" theory, because then gaining knowledge of the Forms would have the same status as gaining intelligence or even true belief³⁶, and that is inconsistent with that theory as we find it in the allegory of the Sun, Line, and Cave. Moreover, we are warned against such a conclusion at 586e4-587a1, where Plato claims that each part of the soul will enjoy the best and truest pleasures possible for it if the rational part is ruling a harmonious just soul. Aside from that claim, it would be inexplicable if not inconsistent for DR to place all fillings of a container in the same status. For DR has

the means to distinguish between them – by recognizing different degrees of truth/reality/being in the various fillers of a container and then drawing on that difference toward determining the truth of the corresponding fillings.³⁷ The conclusion here is that the focus of DR is on the relative status of the fillings of the two containers in question. This reflects Plato’s desire to show one class of pleasures to be truer than the other (i.e., those which are fillings of the soul over those which are fillings of the body), with little concern for distinctions within the classes. This should not be surprising at all, since DR aims to demonstrate that the pleasures of reason are more pleasant than the pleasures of the other two parts of the soul (and that only those of reason are entirely true). This is just what is declared to have been proven at the end of the account, at 587b-c.

G. COMPLICATION AND MODIFICATION

Unfortunately, the neat picture I sketched above does not survive close scrutiny. I argued that the primary contrast DR is concerned about – that between the pleasures of reason and the pleasures of the other two parts of the soul – is captured by focusing on the status of the containers in question. The text leads us to believe that these contrasting containers are body and soul, but this cannot be right, or else DR fails to serve its purpose. Since DR is meant to capture the contrast between the pleasures of reason and the pleasures of spirit and appetite, reading DR as contrasting fillings of the soul with fillings of the body suggests that fillings of the soul and fillings of the body

are coextensive with the pleasures of reason and the pleasures of the other two parts, respectively. It can be seen, however, that this does not square with the text.

First, the fillings of the body Plato mentions – eating and drinking – correspond to pleasures of the appetite, and there seems to be no bodily filling that corresponds to the pleasures of spirit – Plato does not offer any and it would be untenable if he did. The pleasures of spirit, therefore, constitute counterexamples to the notion that all pleasures other than those of reason are bodily fillings. Second, not all the pleasures of appetite can be characterized as fillings of the body: at 584c9-11 Plato claims that the pleasures of anticipation are liberations from pain, i.e., that they are not pure pleasures. So they cannot be pleasures of reason. The pleasure of anticipating a feast fills no emptiness in my body, and regardless of Plato's claim that pleasures of anticipation are not pure pleasures, it would be difficult to characterize it as one of reason. The filler in this case seems to be a belief, and, accordingly, must be assumed to have cognitive content, but not everything that has cognitive content is a filler of the rational part.³⁸ Consider also the famous case of Leontius, which Plato uses to illustrate the distinction between the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul: Leontius has a morbid desire to view corpses, and his enjoyment of the view is a pleasure of the appetitive part (since the desire belongs to that part), even though the viewing does not constitute a bodily filling (439e6-440a3). Third, there is evidence in the *Republic* that beliefs, even true beliefs, can come to be in the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul. That is, they are not composed solely of drives and urges, which would preempt any cognitive content, nor do they contain only false beliefs. In Book IV's discussion of the virtues in the city

and the soul, Plato argues that the virtuous man is temperate (*sophron*) because all three parts of his soul believe in common (*homodoxosi*) that the rational part should rule (442c10-d1), just as the good city is temperate because citizens of all three classes agree about who should rule (431d9-e2).³⁹ Furthermore, the oligarchic man is criticized in Book VIII for falling short of the “true virtue of a soul that is of one mind [*homonoetikes*] and harmonious” (554e4-5), and for holding his evil appetites in check “not by persuading them that it is not better [to satisfy them]... but by compulsion and fear [*anankei kai phoboi*]” (554c11-d3). As Bobonich points out,

For this criticism to have a point, Plato must think that the philosopher can persuade his Appetitive part by communication, by means of *logoi*, that it is better for it to go along with reason. The Reasoning part does not merely suppress the worse desires or somehow block them from bringing about an action; the effect of the Reasoning part’s communication on the Appetitive part is not simply causal. This persuasion is a form of rational interaction... (2002, 243)

It appears, therefore, that the non-rational parts of the soul are so capable of having cognitive content that they can communicate with the rational part through a form of rational interaction, as well as agreeing or disagreeing with it.

These three observations suggest that the contrast between the fillings of the soul and those of the body does not adequately cover the whole range of pleasures on which DR must pass judgment. The pleasures of appetite and spirit cannot all be classified as fillings of the body; and the pleasures of reason, which have been characterized as fillings of the soul, are in fact fillings of the rational part of the soul. The pleasures of spirit must then correspond to fillings of the spirited part of the soul, and the pleasures of appetite must be the fillings of the appetitive part of the soul, along with fillings of

the body.⁴⁰ Achilles enjoys a pleasure of the spirited part of his soul, gazing at the sight of mutilated enemies lying under his feet, and so does Euthyphro, hearing public praises of his wisdom at the marketplace. Don Giovanni enjoys appetitive pleasures on yet another day of conquest, while Leporello has to content with the appetitive pleasure of believing that he will one day experience what his master does in abundance.⁴¹ The philosopher, on the other hand, enjoys his pleasures of reason by filling not the whole of his soul (or just any part of it), but its rational part specifically, with true belief, intelligence and knowledge. This is the picture Plato should have developed, or perhaps would have developed if he had the space for it. Given his constraints, he must have chosen to simplify DR's comparison of the status of containers by treating the contrast as one between body and soul, the indisputably different natures of which make the contrast more striking.

H. DEFENDING THE MODIFICATION

My modification to the simple (and simplistic) contrast made explicitly in DR may appear contrived, and apologetic for what is in fact Plato's blunder. Aside from the fact that the blunder would be an extraordinary one – Plato would have inexplicably left out or forgotten about the pleasures of spirit and anticipatory pleasures – there is evidence that Plato must have been aware that his simple account had to be developed in the way I suggest. It is the solution to another apparent problem with the modified DR that provides this evidence:

(9) That which is more and is filled with things that are more, is really more filled than that which is less, and is filled with things that are less

and

(10) If being filled with what is appropriate by nature is pleasure, that which is more filled with that which is more enjoys more really and more truly a more true pleasure, while that which partakes of things that are less is less truly and securely filled and partakes of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure

turn on the contrast between the truth/being/reality of different containers, and

(8) The body participates less in being and truth than does the soul

is specifically about the contrast between the statuses of body and soul. The key to the truth/being/reality of a container came at

(3) That which “is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind” is more than that which “is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind”

where the truth of a filler is tied to the extent to which its container is always the same and immortal, as opposed to never the same and mortal: the truth of a container depends on its status with respect to these two sets of attributes. But if the pleasures of spirit and appetite can be fillings of the soul just as well as the pleasures of reason, how can the contrast between their truths be sustained? It appears that the pleasures of the three parts can share their container, which destroys DR’s whole mechanism for determining the truth of a pleasure. The key assumption here is that the soul has a status as a whole, and that its different parts cannot be distinguished with respect to their truth. But there is evidence that the spirited and appetitive parts do not in fact have as lofty a status as the rational part. Guthrie writes:

From the moment when they first incur the doom of pilgrimage through the cycle of *palingenesis*, souls are compounded of three main elements; or, if you like, three streams of energy directed to objects of different sorts. Of these, the lower two can only exist – they can only have meaning – in connexion with the possibility of contact with a body, that is, of existence within a cycle. The highest part, and that alone, is perfect and divine, and this at the same time is the soul in its true, or pure, nature. (Guthrie 1971, 242)

It is this highest part, the rational part, that existed before the soul sinned and got caught in the cycle of reincarnation (*kuklos barupenthēs*), and it is only that part that will remain when the soul manages to escape from the cycle and return to where it came from (*eis to auto hothēn hekei*) (*Phaedrus* 248e). If this is right, then the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul are not always the same and immortal in the sense that the rational part is, leaving intact the contrast between their truths as containers. That Plato's formulation of the truth of a container allows this contrast between the parts of the soul is indication, I believe, that he was aware of the need to develop DR and apply the principles it establishes to the parts of the soul. While

(2) The kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence, and further, collectively, all virtue participate more in pure being than do the classes of food, drink, delicacies and nourishment in general

and (8) focus specifically on bodily fillings vs. psychic fillings, and body vs. soul, respectively, the rest of the propositions provide general principles that can be applied to the modified DR without difficulty.

Having settled the question about containers, we must turn to the complications caused by the modified DR for the status of fillers. Proposition (3) ties their status to their own nature, the status of what the container in which they come to be, and the status of what they are related to. But the possibility of true beliefs coming to be in the

spirited and appetitive parts as well as in the rational part raises a difficulty about their status. If the status of a true belief cannot be distinguished from that of another on the basis of its own nature or of the status of what it is related to, all that remains is the status of its container. Proposition (3) suggests that a particular kind of filler can come to be only in a particular kind of container, that a particular filler cannot come to be in more than one container, but this is not as obvious with the modified DR as it was with only body and soul at play. In fact, my earlier point that the different parts share a belief seems to contradict just that suggestion. What needs to be done here is to reconsider how the filling analogy operates.

We have so far had the luxury of speaking as if whatever goes into a container is a filler and fills that container. Yet (10) warns us that it is only being filled *with what is appropriate by nature* that constitutes pleasure. Since DR works by substituting “filling” for pleasure, it can be said that a real filling is being filled with what is appropriate by nature. We may stuff our bodies with dirt but this would not constitute a filling in the appropriate sense. So dirt would not qualify as a filler of the body. Likewise, a belief may enter a part of the soul, but this does not mean that this belief is what is appropriate to the nature of that part, that the belief fills some lack in that part of the soul. A stranger may tell me what she had for breakfast, but even though this item would enter the rational part of my soul, it need not, and I believe would not, constitute a filling of the rational part of my soul. I may irritate another driver while in a traffic jam, and be the recipient of an insult that the rational part of my soul processes, but this

is not something that the rational part of my soul was lacking, and its entry into that part does not constitute a filling, which is why I do not enjoy the experience.

The question remains, however, whether there can be anything that is indeed a filler of more than one container; reasons must be given as to why this cannot ever happen. A hint is provided by

(7) And, on the whole, the classes of things concerned with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul

The truer fillers are concerned with the care of the soul, whereas the less true ones are concerned with the care of the body. This worked straightforwardly on the simple understanding of DR, but it holds up on the modified version as well. The fillers that are concerned with the care of the soul are fillers of the rational part, whereas those which are concerned with the care of the body are fillers of the appetitive part. A true belief about mathematics can be a filler of the rational part and not the appetitive part, because it is concerned with the care of the soul and not the body.⁴² This criterion is, of course, inadequate because it says nothing about the fillers of the spirited part.

I. FILLINGS OF THE THREE PARTS

What we need at this point is an independent understanding of the natures of the three parts of the soul, brought in from the rest of the *Republic* (i.e., outside of the third proof in *Republic IX*). I cannot embark on a full-fledged discussion of the tripartite soul here, so I will be brief. Points of detail and disagreement notwithstanding, it is clear that the three parts of the soul desire different sorts of things – this can be garnered from the

passages earlier on in Book IX as well as in other books. We are told, at 580d3-5, that “there are three pleasures corresponding to the three parts of the soul, one for each part, and similarly for desires and kinds of rule”. This establishes that each part has a distinct set of objects of desire, which explains why each part also has distinct pleasures, since the pleasures of each part are the processes of satisfying these distinct desires. Plato goes on to tell us what each part desires: the rational part desires knowledge of the truth (581b5-6); the spirited part desires mastery, victory and high esteem (581a9-10); and the appetitive part desires food, drink, sex, and everything else that follows them (580e3-4). Plato adds that we can call the appetitive part the “money-loving” (*philochrematon*) part “because such desires are most satisfied by means of money” (580e5-581a1). The desire for money, then, is an appetitive desire because it is instrumental for the satisfaction of the basic appetitive desires.

The point that is critical for the present purposes is that the objects desired by each part of the soul are different. Even if a particular true belief enters both the rational part of the soul and another part, and even if this constitutes a filling of both containers, it must be the case that the true belief qualifies as fillers of the different parts in slightly different forms, in a way that addresses the desires of the particular part. Acquiring the true belief that someone whose expertise I respect accepts my view may cause a pleasure in both the rational and spirited parts of my soul, but the filler of the rational part will be that belief *qua* evidence of the truth of my view, whereas the filler of the spirited part will be the belief *qua* evidence of my wisdom.

In fact, it seems to me that the fillers can be distinguished without resorting to *qua*-talk, by filling out the details at play; the filler is not just the belief in question, but rather the conclusion of an argument in which the belief is a premise. The rational part is motivated by an argument along these lines: (i) Dr. X accepts my view; (ii) Dr. X is an authority in the subject; (iii) Acceptance by an authority is good evidence of the truth of a view; and hence (iv) My view is likely to be true. The corresponding argument that moves the spirited part would be this: (a) Dr. X accepts my view; (b) Dr. X is an authority in the subject; (c) Acceptance of one's view by an authority leads one to be held in high esteem; and hence (d) I will be held in high esteem. Even though premises (i) and (a) are identical, the conclusions (iv) and (d) are distinct, and these are the fillers of the rational part and the spirited part of the soul, respectively.

The spirited part of the soul does not care about the truth of the view, and the rational part of the soul does not care about esteem. Thus a particular belief can enter both parts and be involved in a pleasure of both, but the filler is not, strictly speaking, that particular belief. And because the particular belief that is really the filler of a rational part ranks higher on the scale between "always the same and immortal" and "never the same and mortal", it turns out to be a truer/more real filler than any filler of the other two parts. It does so rank because its content is some truth beyond one's immediate experiences, as compared to the beliefs which fill the other two parts, which concern only the agent's gratification.

The following sort of objection may be raised against this analysis: suppose that the view at issue is about my gratification, that it is the view that I will be held in high

esteem. To make the example work, suppose also that Dr. X is some sort of expert on what kinds of people get to be held in high esteem. The filler of the rational part, (iv), then seems to be about my gratification just as much as the filler of the spirited part, in which case the filler of the rational part cannot rank more highly. It seems to me, however, that this difficulty can be resolved simply by keeping in mind the distinction between what the spirited part and the rational part care about. To resort to *qua*-talk again, the spirited part is interested in the likelihood of being held in high esteem for its own sake, whereas the rational part may only be interested in it *qua* evidence concerning sociological truths. To be more precise, the filler of the rational part of the soul would have to be a conclusion drawn from (iv), such as (v) It is likely that people similar to me in the relevant respects will, in contexts similar in the relevant respects, be held in high esteem. Since the things desired by the spirited part, such as being held in high esteem, are not desired by the rational part of the soul, a sufficiently nuanced examination of any case will reveal that the particular filler of the rational part is the sort of thing that ranks more highly on Plato's scale.⁴³

The above discussion shows that the modified version of DR can overcome the various difficulties DR faces, and that Plato must have meant for DR to be understood in this way. This more sophisticated reading of DR more successfully contrasts the pleasures of reason against the pleasures of spirit and appetite. We are now in a position to tackle Frede's charge of inconsistency. It was her understanding of DR that (a) gaining knowledge of the Forms alone constitutes a fully true pleasure; and that (b) it alone can bring about "the more filling with what is more truly". These two theses,

then, are said to establish an inconsistency with PC. They do indeed, but neither of them belongs to DR.

We have seen that DR aims to contrast the pleasures of reason – which include filling with the form of true belief, intelligence etc. – with the pleasures of the other two parts, focusing on the most basic pleasures of appetite. I have shown that Plato’s argument about the truth of various kinds of pleasure is based on premises that show no regard for distinguishing between the various fillers and fillings of reason. It is unequivocal in (2) and then in (7) that the various fillers of these fillings are treated as a whole, as the class that is above the class of the body’s fillers: “the kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence, and further, collectively, all virtue” are identified by (2) as superior to “the classes of food, drink, delicacies and nourishment in general”, just as, in (7), “the classes of things concerned with the care of the soul” are said to be superior to “the classes of things concerned with the care of the body”.

These two comparative statements are, of course, equivalent – the same two classes of fillers are contrasted, under different descriptions, and one class is claimed to be superior to the other, as a whole class, with no regard for any distinction within that class. On the modified version of DR, the superior and inferior classes consist of the fillers of the rational part of the soul, and the fillers of the appetitive part of the soul, respectively. (7) leads to (9), which ties the being and truth of a filling to the being and truth of the filler and the container involved, and (9) is, in turn, assumed in the climactic proposition (10), where the “filling” metaphor is finally tied to pleasure and its truth. Plato’s critical statement about what constitutes a truer pleasure, therefore, is built on

premises that focus on the superiority of the fillers and fillings of the rational part of the soul, as a whole. This constitutes, I believe, conclusive evidence that Plato considers *all* pleasures of reason, and not only the pleasure of acquiring knowledge, as belonging to the superior class of unqualifiedly true pleasures.⁴⁴

Also, immediately afterwards, at 586a1-2 (which is a portion Frede takes to be part of the DR account), those who are occupied with the pleasures of the body are described as inexperienced in prudence and virtue, and not just knowledge; this confirms that no special status is given to knowledge, and that the point of DR is bringing out the contrast between the two classes of pleasures – those of reason and those of the appetite.

Bearing these in mind, we can see why Frede's interpretation of DR is untenable, and that gaining knowledge is not at all the only pleasure which is fully true. Yet what has been said so far does not bring to full relief the charge of inconsistency. For the alleged problem was that the special status given to knowledge by DR constitutes an inconsistency with PC. And the problem will be fully resolved only when it is shown that the alternative interpretation of DR here defended avoids such an inconsistency. To do this, I now proceed to my final chapter, where I will try to put together the two criteria.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

¹ I have argued that the hedonic scale Plato uses to explain the phenomenology of pure and impure pleasures can accommodate distinctions within those categories, but, as I have pointed out, Plato shows no interest in doing so, and the scale is used solely to draw the distinction between pure and impure pleasures. Even if Plato had shown interest in distinguishing between the pleasantness of various pleasures within those categories, this would be a separate matter from PC: PC is only about whether a pleasure occurs in the upper or lower segment of the scale (whether it affords positive or negative net hedonic value), and it does not matter, as far as this distinction is concerned, where exactly, within a segment, a pleasure occurs.

² The passage at 586a1-b4 also makes it clear that the categories of pure pleasures and unqualifiedly true pleasures are coextensive, both of them corresponding to the pleasures of reason. My discussion of this passage below will hopefully make this clear.

³ The word “pure” is used in referring to the superior category of pleasures of PC at 584c1 and 586a6, and it is used in an unspecified way at the very beginning of the third proof (583b4), where neither PC nor DR have been introduced yet.

⁴ The word “pure” within the discussion of DR only in the question “which classes do you consider to participate more in *pure* being” (585d12), which is irrelevant to whether the pleasures themselves are ever called “pure”.

⁵ The *Philebus*' description of pleasure as replenishment or restoration of a harmonious state is better to think with, but the meaning of the filling metaphor is clear enough.

⁶ See the Appendix for my reasons for translating as I do.

⁷ The fillings are explicated as processes of replenishment/restoration, as made explicit in the *Philebus*.

⁸ I have also explained that the distinction is critical for the views Plato puts forward, such that a confusion or lack of care about it would indicate serious incompetence on Plato's part, which I am unwilling to attribute to him, though Gosling and Taylor do not seem to be.

⁹ Translation by Nehamas and Woodruff 1989.

¹⁰ The precise nature of this activity, and how it relates to the study of mathematics has been a matter of debate. See, for example, Reeve 1988, ch. 2; Irwin 1995, 266-80; Burnyeat 2000.

¹¹ Sedley 1999, 327. Even if we take some items in the natural world, such as shadows and reflections of natural objects, not to represent Forms but rather intelligible objects of an inferior sort (i.e., the segment of the divided line that comes second from the top – *dianoia*), it is clear that all Forms are represented by some of the objects in the natural world, and all Forms other than the Good are represented by objects other than the sun.

¹² See Santas 1983 for an excellent discussion of the relationship between the Form of the Good and the other Forms.

¹³ Even in the passages, in other works, where Plato brings up the ideal of godlikeness, it is made clear that a human being can achieve godlikeness (*homoiosis theoi*) only as far as possible (*kata to dunaton*). See, for example, *Theaetetus* 176a8-b2. For an examination of the Platonic ideal of godlikeness, see Annas 1999, ch. III; Sedley 1999.

¹⁴ This assumption is supported by DR, since the superiority of the philosophical pleasures is accounted for in terms of the extent to which the satisfaction of the desire in question is lasting.

¹⁵ Gosling and Taylor do not realize the significance of the scope of the pleasures of reason, and they identify these pleasures only as the “intellectual ones” (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 108), which is entirely unhelpful.

¹⁶ See *Symposium* 207d-210e; *Theaetetus* 176a-b; *Timaeus* 90a-d. Cf. Annas 1999, ch. III; Sedley 1999. The ideal of godlikeness constitutes a life of contemplation, which, as Sedley explains, involves “[contemplating] the essences of things, both severally and in their overall interrelations” (1999, 328). But this contemplative life cannot contain philosophical pleasures, since contemplation, being the characteristic activity of gods, does not involve the acquisition of anything one lacks. It is appropriate, therefore, that Plato describes the contemplative life as *eudaimon* but not as pleasant.

Sedley 1999 argues that “Platonic and Aristotelian contemplation are very much the same intellectual activity” (328). Unlike Plato, Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics* X, does characterize the contemplative life as pleasant, but this is unsurprising since he has a different view of pleasure that allows for this. Neither Sedley nor Annas (1999) brings up the lack of pleasure in the Platonic contemplative life.

¹⁷ This view is expressed very clearly in the *Philebus* 53d-54e, where all pleasure is said to be a becoming for the sake of some being. Here we see it in the understanding of all pleasure as a process of approaching a certain condition. Carone 2000 disputes this standard reading of the *Philebus*, arguing that not all pleasures are processes of becoming (264-270).

¹⁸ *Mallon einai = mallon on = ousias mallon metechein*. The inference from (7) to (9) confirms this.

¹⁹ I do not wish to take a position, in this paper, on the question of whether there can be knowledge (*episteme*) only of Forms, and whether whenever Plato uses the word “knowledge” in the *Republic*, he means knowledge of Forms. But I do assume that, if one can *know* that Socrates is a just man, this can happen only if one also knows the Form of Justice.

²⁰ (9) closes the circle begun with (1), bringing the issue back to fillings themselves. (9) builds on (7) and (8), defining being more filled in terms of the being of the filler and the container. (10) then picks this up and defines being a truer filling (pleasure) in terms of being more filled and being filled with that which is more, here leaving out the truth/being of the container.

²¹ In his exposition of DR, Plato ignores one point that he noted in relation to PC, that a bodily change, or filling, constitutes a pleasure only if it reaches the soul, or, is perceived. As we cannot attribute to him the folly of forgetting the point he made a page ago, and because there seems no good reason for him to contradict this aspect of PC by taking, in DR, an unperceived bodily change to be a pleasure, we ought to assume that only the perceived fillings are pleasures, and that he left out this point to avoid further complicating his formulations.

²² Annas 1981, for example, takes being always the same as being changeless: “In this argument, *being* is actually introduced by the notions of changelessness and stability” (312). She then complains about the point Reeve makes against this interpretation, seeing not as a weakness of the interpretation but rather as Plato’s mistake (312).

²³ See, for example, 477a-479b. Cf. Reeve 1988, 58-71.

²⁴ Reeve interprets this idea as the status of pleasure being determined on the basis of the extent to which it instantiates a relational form:

If there is a single relational form R (being filled), and two differently qualified instances of it..., R₁ (being filled with knowledge) and R₂ (being filled with food), and *x* is related by R₁ to *y*, and *z* is related by R₂ to *w*, then R₁ more completely resembles R than does R₂ if (i) *x* and *y* are always the same, immortal, and true, while (ii) *z* and *w* are never the same, and mortal. (1988, 110-1)

I am sympathetic to this treatment, and I see it as capturing the essence of DR – pleasures can be identified as instances of a particular sort of relation between containers and fillers. However, I will explain, later on in this chapter, that this formula needs to be supplemented so as to capture various complications that arise.

²⁵ Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* X, ch. 4. It should be noted that Aristotle's distinction between *kinesis* and *energeia* does not correspond to Vendler's distinction between accomplishment and activity. As Mourelatos explains, Vendler's activities are not goal-directed, whereas *energeiai* have an immanent goal: "they constitute at once both an ongoing engagement and the fulfillment provided directly by that engagement" (1993, 386). For a further exposition of the difference between the two distinctions, see Graham 1980. (Ackrill 1965 fails to see this and argues that the distinction Aristotle had in mind was the one that Vendler developed. See also Mourelatos 1968, where Ackrill's article is reviewed, along with the other essays appearing in the collection *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*.)

²⁶ Identifying a container as the object of filling identifies a climax and thereby plays the same role played by identifying "a mile" as the climax of running in Vendler's example. While "running" without a climax would be an activity term, however, "filling" cannot function without a climax – it makes no sense to say simply "he was filling", without identifying the climax.

²⁷ Vendler's taxonomy is not concerned with value, and does not attribute value to the duration of the state achieved at the end of the process. His characterization of

accomplishments does highlight, however, the way in which goal-directed processes, unlike activities, must be understood in the light of the goal in question.

²⁸ The important point, as far as the *Republic* is concerned, is not that the status of a process is inferior in value – which is important in the *Philebus* passage, since it is an (anti-hedonist) argument for the non-identity of pleasure and good – but that the value of the process is dependent on that of the resultant state.

²⁹ Gosling and Taylor argue that the extension of this model is dubious not only for pure pleasures but also for various other bodily pleasures, such as a glutton's obsession with food (1982, p 115-22).

³⁰ Indeed, it is difficult to imagine that *anyone* who enjoys intellectual pleasures – let alone Plato's philosophers – would consent to being robbed of the results of their intellectual pleasures.

³¹ Given that Plato considers the soul to be “always the same”, he probably holds that the intellectual capacities of humans are so too, and that our mode of relating to the Forms will not change.

³² Though one might be predisposed against this understanding of (3) by the view that only the Forms are always the same, that view certainly does not work here: at least the knowledge of those Forms, and the (part of) soul which contains it share that quality, on (3) itself. And we are not given a criterion of being always the same that includes these three but excludes intelligence, etc..

³³ At 477a6-7, for example, Plato writes: “if anything is such as to be and also not to be, won't it fall between that which perfectly (*eilikrinos*) is, and that which is not at all?”, establishing the whole intermediary realm of things that are neither always the same, nor never the same.

³⁴ If intelligence has a lower status than knowledge, then it seems that being filled with intelligence should also be of lower status than being filled with knowledge. The formula for determining the truth of a pleasure in terms of the status of the filler and container involved, therefore, can accommodate the notion that the pleasure of acquiring intelligence is a less true pleasure than that of acquiring knowledge. If this is right, Reeve's (1988) way of capturing this formula – in terms of the extent to which the pleasure instantiates a relational form – should also be modified so that: if there is a single relational form R (being filled), and two differently qualified instances of it, R_1 (being filled with knowledge) and R_2 (being filled with intelligence), and x (the soul) is related by R_1 to y (knowledge), and x is related by R_2 to z (intelligence), then R_1 more completely resembles R than does R_2 if y resembles more completely and unalterably its corresponding Form than does z . (See n24 above.)

³⁵ For example: “That which is more, and comes to be in something that is more, really fills more than that which is less, and comes to be in something that is less.”

³⁶ I assume that “the kind of true belief” just means the category comprising of all true beliefs, and that what you actually fill with is individual true beliefs, not the kind.

³⁷ The difference in rank between the fillings of the soul probably means that there is also a difference between them in terms of how secure a pleasure they are. And it makes sense: the fullness with, let's say, knowledge about names of flowers is more easily lost than the fullness with knowledge of the Forms, which is perhaps never lost once acquired.

³⁸ I will have more to say about this shortly.

³⁹ It is plain that Plato attributes cognitive capacities as well as desires to the non-rational parts of the soul. This is why “each part has the basic capacities to be a source of action” (Bobonich 2002, 220), making each of them agent-like. Bobonich entertains

a doubt as to whether Plato's "attributions of psychological affections and activities to the parts of the soul" should be taken literally. He then argues, I believe rightly, that not taking Plato's claims literally is problematic:

Plato's commitment to agent-like parts of the soul pervades the *Republic* and he never suggests that such talk is intended as a metaphor or as a convenient way of speaking and not as a literal truth claim. (221)

One might be inclined to resist the literal reading on the grounds that it leads to the famous "homunculus problem", which is that introducing parts in order to explain the behavior of the whole leads to an infinite regress if the parts themselves behave like agents – each part will have to be explained by dividing *it* into parts *ad infinitum*. If this were true, the tripartition of the soul would be utterly worthless for the purpose of explaining human behavior, though it is supposed to serve this purpose. Fortunately, this is not an intractable problem for Plato, and it has been adequately dealt with, without denying the agent-like nature of the parts. As Dennett argues,

Homunculi are *bogeymen* only if they duplicate *entire* the talents they are rung in to explain... If one can get a team or committee of *relatively* ignorant, narrow-minded, blind homunculi to produce the intelligent behavior of the whole, this is progress... (1981, 123)

Annas cites Dennett and explains how his reasoning, though meant for a different sort of project, can be applied to resolve Plato's problem: "Plato's parts of the soul are, I think, best thought of as just such a committee of relatively ignorant and narrow-minded homunculi" (1981, 144). Bobonich is less confident that the problem can be dismissed by this argument, but he does maintain that Plato is serious in treating the parts as agent-like and in his attribution of cognitive capacities to the parts (2002, ch. 3, especially 221-3, and 242-7).

⁴⁰ The point that Plato has made earlier and does not repeat here is that all pleasures involve the soul in that they are perceived. Thus even bodily fillings involve the soul

somehow. It is unclear from the text whether bodily fillings cause fillings of the appetitive part of the soul, as a joint filling of some sort (as opposed to the purely psychic appetitive pleasures of anticipation which do not involve fillings of the body). Some such link must exist between a filling of the body and the appetitive part of the soul, since the bodily pleasures are classified as pleasures of the appetitive part of the soul, pleasures which satisfy the desires residing in that part. The exact nature of that link is left out of the account, which is unsurprising given its density.

⁴¹ Leporello could also be experiencing appetitive pleasures by merely imagining himself in his master's shoes, without actually believing that this will ever come true (i.e., daydreaming). (This option is probably more in line with the depiction of Leporello in Mozart's opera.) There is no reason why Plato should not be able to accommodate psychic fillers other than beliefs, but I refer only to beliefs for the sake of simplicity. In fact, the case of Leontius itself is best understood an example of a psychic filling of the appetitive part of the soul without the filler being a belief – it does not seem that the pleasure of viewing the corpses consists in acquiring or entertaining any beliefs. Of course, Leontius' odd taste may be linked to a set of beliefs, but this would mean only that the desire in question is shaped by some beliefs, not that the pleasant experience consists in being filled with a belief. In any case, if Plato's account is to capture familiar pleasures such as viewing beautiful objects, it is necessary to include a wide variety of mental events among psychic fillers.

⁴² I speak only of true beliefs since the other fillers of the rational part listed in (2) cannot enter the other parts of the soul. This is clear in the cases of intelligence and knowledge. But "all virtue" and "the things concerned with the care of the soul" at (8) have broader connotations that reach beyond the rational part of the soul, and we are expected, I think, to understand that here the terms are being used in a narrower sense. Either of these two categories, as they are normally understood, can include such things as the right amount of spiritedness required for virtue, which obviously comes to be in

the spirited part. In the context, however, the categories have to be restricted to items answering to reason's natural desire for knowledge of the truth.

The dense account does not allow for much elaboration, and Plato has no space to point out such details, but I think it is fair to attach to his account something we know independently, that the time a "filling" takes is relevant to whether it can be a pleasure; if gaining the right amount of spiritedness takes ten years of my childhood, such a filling clearly does not constitute a pleasure. Given that bringing the appetite and the spirited parts closer to the virtuous condition take considerable amounts of time, it seems more understandable why the pleasures of these two parts are not included here. Eating when hungry or hearing praises from a flatterer, though more speedy fillings, do not add to my virtue, and are not concerned with the care of the soul.

⁴³ The above argument was designed to solve a particular problem about the possibility of the same filler filling more than one container. We will shortly see, however, that it also allows us to dismiss some other difficulties, since it shows how superficially similar phenomena can be processed differently by different people, and therefore constitute pleasures of different parts of the soul.

⁴⁴ As I noted earlier, this does not prevent Plato from saying that some pleasures of reason are even truer than others.

CHAPTER 5: JUXTAPOSITION AND RESOLUTION

I have offered some preliminary remarks on the charge of inconsistency. As I have indicated, however, the inconsistency can be fully resolved only when DR and PC are put together to form a coherent, single account. This is so because the real problem is the disparity between what the two criteria entail in terms of what they designate to be the higher class of pleasures, and the fact that two apparently very different criteria are supposed to be parts of a single account. Grasping the two criteria as forming a unified account is essential also for the ultimate resolution of a problem I discussed in chapter 1, the charge that the status of liberations from pain is ambiguous. In this case, we saw that the status of these phenomena is not in fact ambiguous; a question remained, however, as to why a liberation from pain may be considered a pleasure, and we saw that the answer to this question could come not from PC itself but rather through DR. Unless one can see how the two criteria cohere, one cannot supply the answer to a problem originally about one criterion, from the other one. Finally, it was observed at the end of chapter 3 that the plausibility of Plato's argument from experience depends on the scope of the philosopher's pleasures – if these pleasures are extremely restricted, it is unlikely that their absolute superiority over all other pleasures will be endorsed by competent judges, under any reasonable (and non-circular) description of those judges. I have already argued, in my discussion of the charge of inconsistency, that the superior classes of pleasure under PC and DR do not have the substantial discrepancy Frede

attributes to them. But we have to see the full resolution of that problem in order to reach a conclusive answer about the scope of the philosopher's pleasures.

A. THE LIFE WITHOUT TRUE AND PURE PLEASURES

Let me begin by drawing attention to a passage that underlines the unity of the *Republic* IX's account of pleasures. The paragraph from 586a1 to 586b4, immediately following what I have called proposition (10), is where we find indisputable evidence that Plato meant PC and DR to fit together and complement each other in accomplishing a single job.¹

Therefore, those who are inexperienced with reason and virtue, but are always occupied with feasts and the like are, it seems, brought down and then back again to the middle, and wander in this way throughout their lives; but, not going beyond this, they don't look upward towards what is truly up, nor are they ever brought to it, and they aren't filled with what really is, and they don't taste any stable or pure pleasure. Rather, they always look down at the ground like cattle, and with their heads bent to the earth and the dinner table, they feed, fatten, and fornicate. And for the sake of outdoing others in these things, they kick and butt them with horns and hoofs of iron, killing each other because they are insatiable. For they are vainly striving to satisfy with things that are not real the unreal and incontinent part of themselves.

Here, not reaching to what is truly up, i.e., not having a pure pleasure on PC, is identified with not filling with that which really is, and not having any stable or pure pleasure.² Quite clearly, then, PC's class of liberations from pain are identified with the less true pleasures of DR. And thereby, PC's class of unqualifiedly pure pleasures is identified with the class of truer pleasures of DR. This is an explicit rejection of Frede's charge that the superior classes of pleasure under PC and DR are not coextensive – pleasures in DR's lower class just do not reach beyond the middle, and

can never qualify as pure pleasures. But a worry remains: we saw earlier that the way to determine whether any given pleasure belongs in DR's higher or lower class is to determine whether or not it is a filling of the rational part of the soul. It is possible, then, that despite Plato's remarks to the contrary, DR's higher class is more restrictive than that of PC because of the way in which the parts of the soul are distinguished from one another. In other words, if the text suggests that some pure pleasure (under PC) constitutes a filling of not the rational part but one of the others, we may have to conclude that the higher classes of PC and DR are not coextensive, and that Frede's charge is essentially correct; the gravity of this conclusion will depend on the extent to which pure pleasures qualify as fillings of the non-rational parts of the soul. We must therefore take a closer look at how Plato construes the three parts of the soul.

As I have noted, *Republic* IX largely ignores the pleasures of the spirited part (pleasures of the honor-lovers) and focuses on the more striking contrast between the pleasures of reason and of the appetitive part (which are primarily bodily pleasures). In the passage quoted above, Plato provides hints on which pleasures these latter ones are, and he expresses strong disapproval of them, likening the people pursuing them to animals. The bodily pleasures are the pleasures of eating, drinking, and sex; and the people who spend their lives after these are portrayed as extremely vulgar people. Contrasted to these brutish pleasures are the pleasures of people who like to learn and use their reason, people who are more refined and thoughtful, ranging from the mere learning-lover³ (or aspiring intellectual) to the wise man who has knowledge of the

Forms. This suggests that, at least for the most part, the lines drawn between two classes of pleasures by DR and PC match each other:

Eating, drinking, and sex are fillings of the appetitive part, and they belong to the lower class on DR. Moreover, they get assigned to the lower class also by PC, since they are liberations from pain. Learning mathematics or gaining knowledge of the Forms on the other hand, are in the higher class of DR for being a filling of the soul (i.e., of the rational part) with things that are (more than sensibles); they are also on the higher class of PC for being pleasures that are not liberations from pain. The body is such a container that it can be filled only with things that have a very low degree of being, and it cannot keep even these, always quickly emptying; its nature is also such that this inevitable lack of satiety causes pain, and filling it causes a liberation from this pain, i.e., its pleasures. The soul, however, can contain much more successfully things that have greater being, and the emptying that does take place does not cause pain – it is a painless forgetting; not having some object of learning in one's soul in the first place does not cause pain either.⁴

It seems clear that all of the pleasures that are in DR's upper class are also in PC's upper class – no filling of the rational part of the soul is a liberation from pain, as its lacks are not painful. But is the reverse true also – is everything in the upper class on PC also there on DR? This is the question that needs to be answered if we are to refute the charge that DR is more restrictive than PC (about allowing something into the upper class of pleasures). The disturbing case that needs to be examined, which Frede points

out, is the only example Plato directly gives of a pleasure which is not a liberation from pain: the pleasures of smell.⁵

Frede notes that the pleasures of smell involve sense-perception, and claims that involvement with sense-perception excludes a pleasure from DR's superior class of unqualifiedly true pleasures (1985, 160). But we have seen that this cannot be right, since many pleasures that belong in that superior class, such as the pleasure of learning geometry, also involve sense-perception. She apparently agrees that all such forms of learning involve sense-perception in the relevant sense, and maintains that the only pleasures that make the cut are those of gaining knowledge of the Forms, which do not involve sense-perception in any way at all. However, this is not where the line is drawn by DR, and involvement with sense-perception cannot be the criterion for being disqualified from the superior class. The scope of pleasures in DR's superior class can only be determined, as I have argued, by an understanding of how the three parts of the soul are construed.⁶

B. THE APPETITIVE PART OF THE SOUL

In *Republic IX*, Plato condemns all appetitive pleasures as the pleasures of extremely brutish people, and the non-bodily appetitive pleasures are construed as derived from the basic urges for food, drink, and sex. The image that goes along with the appetitive pleasures is that of a brutish tyrant, and not of some refined hedonist. In addition to the passage I quoted above, Plato identifies, at 587a13-b1, the part of the soul most distant from the rational part with the erotic and tyrannical desires, and again at 587b14-c4 the

tyrant represents the worst of the three kinds of pleasures. Plato's earlier comment at 580d10-581a1 confirms this view about the scope of the appetitive part of the soul: he contends that the largest and strongest thing in the appetitive part of the soul is the desire for food, drink, sex, and the things associated with those; this is said to be why this part is called appetitive (*epithumetikon*). The only other desire Plato explicitly attributes to the appetitive part, is the desire for money, which he claims to be instrumental for those basic desires. We should also examine some other passages in the *Republic* in order to get a better grasp of the scope of appetitive pleasures.⁷

Looking back at how Plato introduces the appetitive desires in Book IV, we find that he mentions hunger and thirst as the clearest (*enargestatas*) examples (437d3). He adds sexual desire soon thereafter (439d6), but the only examples of appetitive desires he gives are those basic biological urges. Thirst is discussed at some length, and it is characterized, in agreement with *Republic IX*'s treatment of appetitive desires, as a simple and brutish craving: it drives and drags the person to drink like a wild beast (439b3-5, 439d1-2), is present due to affections and diseases (439d1-2), and is excitable (439d7-8). This characterization is presented as applying to all appetitive desires, and the appetitive part itself is said to be irrational (*alogiston*) (439d7).

It is suggested not only that these desires are unconcerned with the agent's overall good – which only the rational part of the soul takes into consideration (442c6-8)⁸ – but also that they are not guided by a conceptualization of even the appetitive part's good. At a critical step in the argument for dividing the soul, Plato tells us that

the soul of the man who is thirsty, insofar as he is thirsty, does not wish anything other than to drink, and wants this and is impelled toward it. (439a9-b1)

This is because “thirst itself is by its nature only for drink itself” (439a6-7), and not, for example, for good drink. Thirst itself, therefore, is simply impelled toward drink, and is not informed by a conceptualization of drink as, or understanding that drink is, good for the appetitive part of the soul (or the body); this is why what forbids us to drink poisonous water has to be something other than thirst. The only cognitive performance involved in determining the object of desire and proceeding to satisfy it is grasping that this glass of water, for example, will satisfy my thirst.⁹ This analysis confirms the impression we get from Plato’s characterization of the appetitive desires as in blind pursuit of their own particular object. As Irwin puts it, “appetitive desires are not based on any assumption about the goodness of their objects” (1995, 215).¹⁰

Having examined the above characterization of appetitive desires, we need to observe that there must be other bodily desires besides those of food, drink, and sex. Plato has told us that he is offering the *clearest* examples, and these also constitute the largest and strongest thing in the appetitive part, which makes sense of why Plato would choose to focus on them. It is clear, however, that there are other desires that belong with these. Annas points out that the desire for sleep must be counted among them, as a desire that we have “merely by virtue of having a body” (1981, 129). Cooper argues that “it is not difficult to recognize other desires besides the recurrent biological urges as having essentially the same status” (1984, 128): other desires (besides those for food, drink, and sex) that are based on physical and physiological causes must include

“the desire to be warmed up when cold, or, in general, the aversion to pain” (1984, 128). It seems clear that, though Plato does not mention these specifically, any charitable interpretation of the tripartite psyche would admit these to be appetitive desires. Not only do we share these desires with other animals¹¹, but they also match the characterization of brutish appetitive desires we found in Book IV – we are simply and blindly drawn to the object that satisfies these desires, with no regard for anything else. Just as we thirst after drink even when we know our condition makes it bad for us, the desire to sleep, or to be warmed when cold, involves no conceptualization of the agent’s overall good. These desires also meet Book IX’s criterion for being a bodily desire, since they are deteriorated states of the body that are satisfied by replenishment and by bringing the body back to its balanced/harmonious state. (Not all appetitive desires are bodily, but all bodily desires are appetitive.)

We now have an expanded set of basic bodily desires, all of which conform to Book IV’s characterization of appetitive desires as simple cravings. It needs to be added that

certain other more complex desires can be treated as transformations of these and other such appetites: thus all particular likes and dislikes in food and drink. Some tastes are simply found to be pleasant, and those which are, generate, by straightforward physical causation, desires for them. (Cooper 1984, 128)

Thus we get desires for particular kinds of food, drink, sexual partner etc. But we are still within the realm of brutish desires, and almost no cognitive capacities need to be brought in for these transformations of the basic urges.¹² (As we all know, even cats and

dogs can have particular tastes.) It has been argued, however, that these brutish desires “cannot be the whole story”.¹³

Annas argues that Plato’s harsh characterization of appetitive desires in Book IV must be meant only for the basic bodily urges, which are offered as the clearest examples. She explains that “all the emphasis on the basic and forceful nature of desires makes it look as though no cognitive performance at all should be ascribed to this part” (1981, 129). As she points out, however, only a few lines after the above remarks, Plato offers the case of Leontius, whose appetitive desire to look at corpses is, though apparently based on sexual desire, clearly more complex than thirst or hunger; she rightly infers from this that the appetitive part “cannot be completely unreasoning”. She is also right to note that, since money is desired because of its instrumental role, the appetitive part “is thought of as being able to reason out how to obtain its desires, and valuing means to this end” (1981, 130).¹⁴ And Cooper has to be right in claiming that all sorts of things besides money can be desired by the appetitive part of the soul on account of being instrumental in acquiring the objects of the basic appetitive desires (1984, 128). Thus it is an appetitive desire that I have for getting to the restaurant when I am hungry. It is clear, then, that cognitive capacities and instrumental reasoning can be involved in the determination of appetitive desires, and that these desires extend beyond what we share with other animals. I have given further reasons, from Book IX as well as from earlier books of the *Republic*, that the appetitive part is capable of having cognitive content and engaging in reasoning, and I think the text is unambiguous on this matter.¹⁵

But the critical question here is what objects may be pursued by this relatively sophisticated appetitive part of the soul. What we have established so far is that the appetitive part has the following kinds of desire: (i) a set of basic bodily desires that contains more members than those Plato offers, all of which are simple cravings; (ii) transformations of these basic bodily desires into more specific bodily desires, particular tastes with respect to the basic desires; and (iii) desires for various objects *for the sake of* acquiring the objects specified in (i) and (ii). A fourth class that needs to be added to these is non-bodily desires which have been derived from (i), (ii), and (iii), using our conceptual apparatus, but not instrumentally¹⁶: the tyrant's desire to watch the slave-girls undress qualifies as an appetitive desire, since it derives from his bodily desire for sex. Satisfying this desire constitutes an appetitive pleasure, even though it involves no bodily replenishment and it is not instrumental in procuring such replenishment. In addition, the pleasure of daydreaming about satisfying the desires (i), (ii), and (iii) must be a pleasure of the appetitive part, since it is clearly derived from appetitive pleasures. Pleasures of anticipating the satisfaction of these appetitive desires must also be appetitive pleasures, for the same reason.¹⁷ Pleasures of daydreaming and anticipating appetitive pleasures must, then, constitute processes of satisfying appetitive desires.¹⁸

We now have four kinds of appetitive desire, and four kinds of appetitive pleasure corresponding to these. The important point is that (ii), (iii), and (iv) are all derived from (i): appetitive desires are either basic bodily desires, based on physical/physiological causes, or they are *somehow* derived from those. This is why

Plato condemns *all* pleasures of the appetitive part as extremely vulgar, and does not seem to allow refined appetitive pleasures. The pleasures of smell, however, do not satisfy any desire that can be captured under this description: it does not belong in (i), since it is not a simple, blind, brutish craving.¹⁹ It also does not belong in (ii), (iii), or (iv), since the desires corresponding to the pleasures of smell do not, in any way, derive from (i). I think it would be in vain to cook up an account such that the pleasures of smell *somehow* derive from the desire for food, drink, sex, or another brutish craving. If I am right about this, then the charge of inconsistency can be dropped, since we are left with no reason to claim that a non-rational pleasure may be pure.

It may be objected, however, that I have been too restrictive in my account of appetitive desires. Cooper argues that, contrary to the view I have laid out, there are appetitive desires that do not derive from the basic bodily desires. His claim is based on the desires of the democratic man. Plato describes this character's life as follows:

Sometimes he drinks heavily while listening to the flute; at other times, he drinks only water and is on a diet; sometimes he goes in for physical training; at other times, he's idle and neglects everything; and sometimes he even occupies himself with what he takes to be philosophy. He often engages in politics, leaping up from his seat and saying and doing whatever comes into his mind. If he happens to admire soldiers, he's carried in that direction, if money-makers, in that one.²⁰
(561c7-d5)

Cooper claims that all the desires of the democratic man are appetitive, from which it would follow that even "the democratic man's pleasure in dabbling at philosophy" (1984, 129) is an appetitive pleasure. But if it is the case that the appetitive pleasures are large enough a class to include low-level philosophizing (i.e., philosophy without engagement with the Forms), it might turn out that I was completely wrong about the

scope of appetitive pleasures, and it may turn out that many of them are pure, resulting in a large mismatch between the superior pleasures of PC and DR. But is it true that all of the democrat's desires are appetitive?

Cooper's interpretation rests on the development of the democratic character from his oligarchic roots. The oligarch's life is ruled by appetitive pleasures (553c-d), but he restrains all of his appetitive desires except for the necessary ones and the desire for money (554a). His son, the democrat, acts similarly to his father in his youth, but then gives in to temptation, living in an unrestrained pursuit of necessary and unnecessary appetites alike (559d-60e). If he is lucky, when he grows older and "the great disturbances have passed by" (561a8-b1), he allows some of the things he had previously expelled to return. From this point onward, he treats all pleasures as on an equal footing, "surrendering to whatever desire comes along, as though it were chosen by lot, until it is satisfied" (561b2-4). It is in this phase that the democrat pursues all kinds of pleasure, including that of dabbling at philosophy. But does this course of development establish that all the pleasures in the mature democrat's life, listed in the passage quoted above, are appetitive?

First, there is no explicit statement that all of the mature democrat's desires are appetitive. Second, as Scott argues,

the references to military and political aspirations suggest that he supplements his enjoyment of the appetitive pleasures with the satisfaction of spirited desires: on some days, he champions a cause and the pursuit of victory becomes his goal. (2000, 23)

Scott adds that, similarly, the democrat's pursuit of some sort of intellectual interest suggests that he occasionally satisfies rational desires. Even though the democrat has purely appetitive oligarchic roots, on Scott's view, his mature interest in this wide variety of pleasures is better understood as him satisfying all three kinds of desire (2000, 23-6). Scott argues, correctly in my view, that each part of the soul pursues a characteristic type of object. We have seen how the desires of the three parts are distinguished by their distinctive objects at 580d ff., and as Scott points out, "this is no preliminary sketch of the theory but a summary of its essentials presented to the most sophisticated of Socrates' interlocutors" (2000, 24). Given this "object-oriented" understanding of the three parts of the soul, it becomes very difficult to classify as appetitive the democrat's desire for the characteristic objects of the spirited and rational parts (2000, 24). It follows from this that the democrat's dabbling in philosophy is not an appetitive pleasure, and does not constitute a counterexample to my construal of the scope of appetitive pleasures.

Scott resists the notion that, by engaging in political and military pursuits or dabbling in "philosophy", the democrat does not actually pursue the characteristic objects of the non-appetitive parts of the soul. It could be argued that "whatever he does on the battlefield... has nothing to do with the love of honour or victory", but, Scott maintains, it is implausible to suppose that the democrat has no spirited desires at all.²¹ Likewise in the case of dabbling in philosophy, Scott maintains that Plato allows all sorts of characters to have some kinds of rational desire. However, Scott concedes

that the spirited and rational desires of the democrat are different from those of an honor-lover and a philosopher, respectively:

since his spirited and rational desires do not arise from the proper functioning of those two parts, these desires differ radically from their analogues in the just person and the timocrat. (2000, 26)

Scott thinks this downgrading of the democrat's spirited and rational desires is essential for making sense of how Plato ranks the democrat "in the series of degenerate characters". According to this view, the democrat's intellectual pleasures are "quasi-appetitive" because he just "goes for" these different things, without considering them to be worthwhile (2000, 26). I believe it has to be added that at least some of the democrat's apparently non-appetitive pleasures are in fact appetitive. I have explained how, in my terminology, two superficially similar items can constitute different fillers that belong in different containers, i.e., different parts of the soul. Furthermore, this is not only consistent with, but also supported by, the object-oriented reading of the soul's parts: since rational desires aim at the truth *as such*, the desire for "the truth, because it will make me money" is not a rational one. In any case, if Scott is right that the democrat's dabbling in philosophy involves a rational desire, then Cooper does not have his counterexample against my narrow reading of the appetitive desires.²² If, on the other hand, the dabbling has to be understood as an appetitive desire, it can be characterized as a desire derived from the basic set, as, for example, intellectual activity pursued as a means to satisfying some basic bodily desire. Whether or not the democrat's pleasures are appetitive, then, there is no reason why my construal of appetitive pleasures should be altered so as to include such pleasures as those of smell.

C. THE PLEASURES OF SMELL: LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT PART

Where, then, do the pleasures of smell belong? The manifest goal of the third proof in Book IX, and consistency between PC and DR would have them belong to the rational part, but might they not belong to the spirited part instead? No critic of *Republic IX* (that I am aware of) has claimed that they belong to the spirited part, but I think it is fruitful to pursue this question. It is clear that the pleasures of smell do not belong to the spirited part as Plato explains it in the key passages: this is “the part with which we feel anger” (439e2-4), and can be found in the rage of infants and animals (441a7-b2), as well as in more complex forms, such as Odysseus’ anger at Penelope’s maids for sleeping with her suitors (441b3-c2), and Leontius’ anger at himself for wanting to look at the corpses (439e6-440a3). As Reeve explains, anger is an emotion with both desiderative and cognitive components:

If A is angry with B, then (typically) he must believe that B has purposely done something bad to him and desire to retaliate as a result. Now the embedded belief here appears to be both reflexive and good-relative. If A believes that B has done something *bad* to him, some conception of his own good, and what conduces to it or detracts from it, must bear on this belief. This conception, however, and the level of self-conscious reflection it involves, need not be very sophisticated or explicit. (1988, 136)

We can see the varying degrees of sophistication involved in the different cases of anger cited above. (Cf., Reeve 1988, 136-7) But regardless of this variety, the conception of the spirited part as the seat of anger has no room for the pleasures of smell. *Republic IX*’s identification of the spirited part’s desires as aimed at mastery, victory and high esteem (581a9-10) does not help on this front either.

We now face a problem about the scope of the spirited part and the merits of Plato's tripartition of the soul: given Plato's explicit account of the three parts of the soul, critics have pointed out, it is difficult to see how these parts "[exhaust] the different types of possible motives" (Irwin 1995, 216). The three parts seem to have no way of accommodating our rich emotional lives, with no room for such desires as are involved in emotions like compassion and friendliness.²³ Expanding the scope of the spirited part beyond what Plato tells us explicitly seems to provide the solution: Irwin argues that "the attitudes Plato ascribes to the spirited part are meant to illustrate, not to exhaust" the desires of that part. Accordingly, the spirited part encompasses *all* desires that are based on evaluation and are therefore not appetitive, but not "optimizing desires" either, and therefore not rational (1995, 216): Irwin claims, quite rightly, that all and only the rational desires are "guided by a conception of the agent's overall happiness or welfare (*eudaimonia*)" (1995, 215).²⁴ Just as in the paradigmatic case of anger, the compassionate and friendly desires of the spirited part involve some evaluation, some reference to the agent's good, but are not wholly determined by a conception of the whole good, and may come into conflict with the rational desires that are so determined; my spirited desire to be reunited with an old friend by helping him escape from prison is likely to come into conflict with my rational desires.

It is worth emphasizing, however, that even when the spirited part has not been corrupted by bad upbringing but is rather well-trained as an ally to the rational part (441a), and agrees with it as to what course of action or state of affairs is to be preferred, it does not desire these things under the same description. Whereas the

rational part desires whatever it desires *as best* for the agent's overall good, the spirited part does not desire them *as such* – the two parts have desires with different intentional objects. This is required by Plato's object-oriented account of the three kinds of desire, as well as the interpretation of DR I have defended: the fillings of the three parts of the soul must be distinguishable by virtue of the fact that the objects satisfying the desires of the three parts, understood correctly, are different. This is why even the just philosopher's appetitive or spirited pleasures are not true.

But where does all this leave us as far as the pleasures of smell are concerned – does the expanded version of the spirited part capture these pleasures? The pleasures of smell seem to be of a completely different kind than the many emotional desires the expanded spirited part is meant to contain. Plato gives us no reason to believe that the pleasures of smell are evaluative in the way other spirited pleasures are, but, unfortunately, this is because he tells us nothing about these pleasures other than that they are pure. Similarly, therefore, we are given no (textual) reason to believe that these pleasures belong to the rational part. And it would be difficult to argue that the pleasures of smell are satisfactions of desires that aim at learning the truth, or the agent's overall good.

Could it be that it is good for me, all things considered, to smell a rose? But this can be established only if smelling a rose is already known to satisfy some rational desire (i.e., for learning), or a necessary non-rational desire.²⁵ Since it does not seem to satisfy a non-rational desire, could it be that this pleasure somehow satisfies the desire to learn? I may be gathering some information about my environment when I

smell the rose (namely, that this rose smells the way that it does), and even this low-level acquisition of information may, perhaps, constitute a filling of the rational part, but this reasoning is flawed: the pleasure of smelling a rose is not the pleasure of learning that the rose smells as it does. Otherwise the pleasure of smelling a rose would be just like the pleasure of learning this through other means (e.g., being told by a reliable person with a discriminating nose). Even if there is no way to get this kind of information about phenomenal quality except through experiencing it, it is doubtful that acquiring such information would satisfy any rational desire. Besides, if smelling a rose were pleasant *qua* learning about the phenomenal quality of smelling something, then smelling a rotting corpse should be pleasant for the same reason.

Ultimately, it seems that Plato does not provide us with adequate information to reach a conclusive answer about where to locate the pleasures of smell. The above examination of the three parts suggests that the pleasures of smell cannot belong in any of them. Though this is not an ideal situation as far as *Republic IX*'s consistency is concerned, it is not very damaging either. For it has turned out that the rest of Plato's text is ambiguous as to the status of these pleasures, from which it follows that we have no good reason to reject his explicit claim that all pure pleasures, without exception, are also true pleasures. To be sure, we have uncovered a weakness in the *Republic*, but this weakness is not the inconsistency Frede attributes to Book IX's account of pleasure, but rather the incompleteness of his account of the soul.

D. PLEASURES OF SMELL AND THE THREE KINDS OF LIFE

A question that arises at this point is why Plato offers the pleasures of smell as an example of pure pleasure, given their dubious status. One reason is that, while they belong in the superior class of pleasures (on both PC and DR), they are the most accessible of all pleasures in that class, and they are the best examples to convey to Plato's audience what he means by pure pleasure. Another reason may be that Plato actually wanted to present the most modest of the pure, true, and rational pleasures, and to mark the lower limit of that class – marking the extremes is the best way to convey the scope of the class.

It is also significant that the pleasures of smell, even if they do fail to qualify as rational, are unlike most other non-rational pleasures in that they are not at all inconsistent with a philosophical life, and do not constitute a threat to its claim to greater pleasantness. Though the philosopher enjoys the basic appetitive pleasures insofar as they are necessary, the pursuit of these pleasures is distinctive of a non-philosophical lifestyle. The pleasures of smell, however, no more belong to the money-lover or honor-lover than they do to the philosopher. Their nature is such that they do not drag people into unjust, non-philosophical, and brutish lives, and the fact that they can be experienced without significant (if any) cost or effort explains why they do not cause the fierce competition we find in the case of the appetitive pleasures – people do not “kick and butt” others in the pursuit of the pleasures of smell. Furthermore, it must be no accident that Callicles does not cite the pleasures of smell as an ingredient of the sybaritic life he advocates²⁶: these pleasures, since they are pure, lack the sort of

intensity found in impure pleasures (which I have explained in Part I). One who is thrilled by the intensity arising from the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain will not find what they want in the pleasures of smell.

The non-philosophical people “who are inexperienced with reason and virtue” spend their lives feverishly struggling to satisfy their insatiable and painful desires, which presumably makes it difficult to stop and appreciate the smell of roses. These people, Plato says, are always looking down at the ground like cattle, and “with their heads bent to the earth and the dinner table, they feed, fatten, and fornicate” (586a6-8). This explains why “they don’t look upward towards what is truly up, nor are they ever brought to it” (586a4-5), i.e., they do not experience pure pleasure.²⁷ The preoccupation of non-philosophical people with their impure pleasures explains why they are incapable of experiencing even those pure pleasures, like those of smell, for which they do not lack the requisite cognitive and sensory apparatus (unlike, for example, the cognitive apparatus required for enjoying acquiring knowledge of the Forms).

There is also another important difference between the way in which the philosopher and the other kinds of people experience the pleasures of smell: a money-lover (or honor-lover), though not lacking the requisite cognitive or sensory apparatus, has unrestrained and insatiable appetites that prevent him from experiencing the pleasures of smell in pure form, unmixed with the pain of his hunger, thirst, or sexual appetite. Even though the pleasure of smell is not *itself* mixed with pain (the corresponding desire not being painful), the overgrown and unruly desires of non-philosophers are so strong and ever-present that such people cannot experience the pure

pleasure of smell without being disturbed by the pain of these desires. These pains detract especially from the experience of pure pleasures, since these do not have the intensity of liberations from pain – one’s hunger detracts less from his/her pleasure of satisfying thirst than it does from his/her pleasures of smell.

The above discussion shows why Plato has good reason to treat the pleasures of smell as belonging to the philosophical life, whether or not it is, strictly speaking, a rational pleasure. It therefore also provides reasons as to why Plato is not too concerned about the status of the pleasures of smell, and offers them as examples even though he has not made it clear why these can be classified as rational pleasures. But, clearly, the points made above apply to all pure pleasures, and help explain how Plato can insist that non-philosophers cannot *really* experience even low-level intellectual pleasures (which are pure). Indeed, they must apply to the other pure pleasures even more strongly, since the pleasures of learning (typically) require more time and effort than the pleasures of smell, and are therefore even less accessible to someone preoccupied with satisfying their brutish desires. Furthermore, one’s hunger will detract even more from one’s pleasure of reading a book than one’s pleasures of smell, especially if one is not the contemplative sort to begin with. An additional point (which seems not to be applicable to the pleasures of smell) is that, since most rational pleasures involve mental exertion and effort, those who are not particularly suited to intellectual activity will quickly tire and the exertion will become painful to them, again detracting from the experience.²⁸ It turns out, then, that even though Plato allows some rational desires to non-philosophers,

these people are incapable of *really* experiencing any rational (or pure) pleasures, much less experiencing so much of them as to qualify as *experienced* with them.

E. PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

While we are left with some ambiguity concerning the pleasures of smell, we have seen that this constitutes no danger to Plato's project in *Republic IX*. I believe I have also made it very clear that, the question of smell aside, PC and DR are entirely consistent, with coextensive superior classes of pleasure. In other words, the charge of inconsistency can be dismissed, leaving behind a non-threatening question mark about the status of the pleasures of smell. Any pleasure that is a filling of the rational part of the soul is both true and pure, and the rational part of the soul can be filled by a wide range of objects: "the kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence, and further, collectively, all virtue".

All of the rational pleasures are pure, because the rational part's desires are painless; there is no pain that is mixed with the pleasures of reason, either sequentially or simultaneously (i.e., there is no pain either during the pleasure, or before and after it). These pleasures therefore start from the middle (the neutral state), and move upwards, always yielding positive net hedonic value. The rational pleasures are also true, ultimately because they constitute (more) stable, or secure, fillings, i.e., fillings which yield a (more) stable, long-lasting, fullness. This ability to provide long-lasting fullness is itself due to the nature of the fillers and container in question – the rational part of the soul and the objects it desires are such that, when this part is filled with one of those

objects, this fullness will not be lost for a long time, if ever. The non-rational pleasures, on the other hand, are impure because the desires corresponding to them are painful. These painful desires persist throughout the pleasure, which means that the pleasure-component in such experiences coexists with pain at all times – the pleasure is mixed with pain not only sequentially but also simultaneously. They are also not true, because they do not constitute stable fillings, since the fullness they yield are not long-lasting. Their *inability* to provide long-lasting fullness is (similarly to the rational pleasures' ability to do so) due to the nature of the fillers and container in question – the body, and its companion, the appetitive part²⁹, are like a leaky jar, and start emptying as soon as the filling is complete.³⁰

The two criteria for the evaluation of pleasure – truth (DR) and purity (PC) – need to be juxtaposed in order to explain the unattractive lives of people who pursue the inferior pleasures. The money-lover and the honor-lover live like the brutes described in 586a1-b4, because their pleasures are both impure and not (unqualifiedly) true.³¹ Both of these features of their pleasures are essential, because their pleasures: (a) lack purity since these pleasures are necessarily mixed with pain; and (b) they lack truth since the fullness they may bring about does not last, and hence the cessation of pain is very short-lived. If the impure pleasures were to provide stable fullness, people who are devoted to these pleasures would be able to avoid the corresponding pain for long periods. But then they would not have to live like cattle most of the time. They do so live, not only because their desires are painful but also because those painful desires are ever-present, and therefore dominate such people's lives.

These people spend their lives pursuing pleasures that are “neither entirely true nor pure” (583b3-4), but their “so-called pleasures” qualify as pleasures nevertheless. We have seen that the reason for this comes not from PC but from DR: PC is a criterion for evaluating pleasures with respect to whether or not they are pure. It does not, however, tell us whether or not an impure pleasure is a genuine pleasure, just as it assumes, but does not explain why, a pure pleasure is a genuine pleasure. The answer to these questions is provided by DR, since Plato’s definition of pleasure in *Republic IX* is couched in terms of explicating how DR works. We find, at the end of the passage where the mechanics of DR are laid out, Plato’s definition of pleasure: pleasure is a process of being filled with that which is appropriate to our nature (585d11-12). Since impure pleasures satisfy this condition, they qualify as pleasure. In other words, a “liberation from pain” – unlike the “cessation of pain” (which *does* get mistaken for pleasure) – is, in fact, a pleasure, albeit an impure one. DR also tells us that

that which is more filled with that which is more enjoys more really and more truly a more true pleasure, while that which partakes of things that are less is less truly and surely filled and partakes of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure. (585d12-e5)

This, then, explains why impure pleasures are also less true pleasures than the pleasures of the rational part of the soul. (We have seen that, though we can distinguish between the truth of various rational pleasures, Plato treats them as the class of (unqualifiedly) “true” pleasures, in contrast with the other pleasures, which are “not entirely true”.)

By means of integrating the “degrees of reality” theory and his definition of pleasure, Plato can explain why the impure pleasures *are* pleasures, and why they are

lacking in the extent to which they are truly/really pleasures, apart from their absolute lack of purity.³² This brings a full resolution to the questions surrounding the status of liberations from pain. We saw, in Part I, that, contrary to Gosling and Taylor's claim, the distinction between a liberation from pain and a cessation of pain is absolutely clear in the text. We also saw that, contrary to Frede's claim, there is no good reason to think that a liberation from pain is not a pleasure at all. The question that was left unanswered at the time, *why* liberations from pain/impure pleasures are pleasures, has now been answered.

It has emerged that there are, on the one hand, pleasures which are true and pure, and, on the other hand, the shadows of these, which resemble the true pleasures, yet are not exactly like them; these possess some truth and being, but less so than those unqualifiedly true and pure pleasures. It has also emerged that the scope of those true and pure pleasures is fairly large. Contrary to Frede's view on this matter, we have found that it is not only acquiring knowledge of the Forms that constitutes true (and pure) pleasure. Given this consistency, we can be confident in asserting that the philosopher's pleasures, as Plato conceives them, is the large class of rational pleasures, which includes many pleasures enjoyed by intellectuals who fall short of the philosopher-king.³³ This illuminates my discussion in Part II, of Plato's appeal to the judgment of those who are experienced with pure pleasure. Now that the wide scope of the superior pleasures has been confirmed, my sympathetic treatment of Plato's argument rests on solid ground. Given this scope, it is not implausible for Plato to say that people who are experienced with these pleasures will find them more pleasant than

other kinds of pleasure. Similarly, it is not implausible for Plato to say that a life dominated by these pleasures is more pleasant than the alternative kinds of life.

Aside from all the necessary non-rational pleasures, this life involves all intellectual pleasures aimed at learning the truth *as such*. Despite the finding that the class of superior pleasures is large, we should be careful not to exaggerate the extent to which Plato would allow into that class intellectual pleasures as we ordinarily conceive them today. Reading a novel, or going to the opera, are superior pleasures only insofar as they are enjoyed *as* learning the truth – Plato makes no concession to those who value the emotional or phenomenal aspect of such experiences. This approach determines the status of enjoying art in general: the enjoyment of art has a place in the most pleasant life insofar as it constitutes learning the truth, or insofar as it assists, or is conducive to, such learning. Nonetheless, given the present understanding of the scope of the superior pleasures, more forms of art appreciation qualify as superior pleasures, and more forms are permissible in the most pleasant life, since it is easier to be conducive to simpler forms of learning than to acquiring knowledge of the Forms.

It is crucial, at this point, to keep in mind the point I made earlier, that superficially similar activities can provide entirely different fillers, and hence entirely different fillings, for different people. It may well be true that most people enjoy art in a predominantly non-rational way, satisfying some complex form of appetitive or spirited desire; people may be enjoying the opera because of its emotional appeal, which satisfies some emotional desire of the spirited part. But this does not prevent the philosopher from enjoying these things in a rational way, the rational part of his soul

being filled with whatever truth the art in question affords.³⁴ (Of course, this is not to deny that the philosopher may find too little truth and too much emotional disturbance in some forms of art to let them into his life.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

¹ So Frede is wrong to consider this paragraph as belonging to DR account only (Frede 1985, 159,160; Frede 1992, 436).

² The comparative talk is given up here, and absolute expressions like “that which really is” and “the unreal part of themselves” replace them, probably just to underline the distinction between the two categories of pleasures. These absolute expressions do not refer to narrower categories than initially set by DR: the unreal part that people try to fill is the body, and this cannot be any different than the “less real” container mentioned in (8). Also, for the fillers, the examples of prudence and virtue in the paragraph indicate that ‘that which really is’ is not really different from “that which is more”.

³ *Philomathes* - used in 581b9 for the rational part of the soul.

⁴ Unlike those of the body, many of the soul’s lacks are never brought to fullness in most people.

⁵ Gosling and Taylor point out this case as problematic too, calling this “the problem of pure bodily pleasures”. Their particular treatment of the problem is convoluted since they tie the problem to two of their false claims I have discussed – that there is no clear distinction between liberations from pain and the cessation of pain, and that a pleasure’s lack of truth has to do with false judgments about the pleasure. I will therefore refrain from addressing their particular claims, and focus on the basic charge that a bodily pleasure turns out to be pure (Gosling/Taylor 1982, 111-5).

⁶ The way to find out where a pleasure belongs on DR is to identify the part of the soul of which it is a filling, and this can be done by identifying the part, the desires of which are satisfied by the sort of object (filler) involved in that filling. To be able to do this, we must have a good grasp of what sorts of objects each part of the soul desires.

⁷ Nowhere throughout *Republic IX*'s treatment of pleasure is there a suggestion that the pleasures of the appetitive part involve more refined pleasures than those associated with food, drink, sex, and money-making.

⁸ Cf., Irwin 1995, 214-6.

⁹ My account of impure pleasures in Part I shows that the conceptual apparatus is involved in our awareness of even the most brutish pleasures, but this apparatus need not play a role in determining the object of the desire. Thus my awareness of eating as a pleasure may involve my conceptual apparatus, but the desire is not determined, or informed, by it. Reeve 1988 brings up the distinction between necessary and unnecessary appetitive desires, and argues that only unnecessary appetitive desires are completely good-independent. Since the satisfaction of necessary appetitive desires is beneficial and therefore tied to the good, they are "appetitive-part-good-dependent". He points out that the oligarchic man "enslaves his [unnecessary] desires" (554a5-8) in order to better satisfy his "insatiable desire to attain what [he] has put before [himself] as the good, namely, the need to become as rich as possible" (555b9-10, 562b3-4). These, he argues, show that necessary appetitive desires have as their natural object the good of the appetitive part of the soul (136). I think Reeve is right about this, but I believe we may insist that even the necessary appetitive desires are not (or at least need not be), guided by a conception of their natural object as good for the *whole* appetitive part, as best for it all things considered etc.. This is why, given two necessary desires that cannot be satisfied simultaneously, if the agent realizes that it is better for the appetitive part that one of them be satisfied, the other desire does not disappear or

diminish in force, continuing to push the person in the direction of its object. My necessary desire for bread is unaffected by my necessary desire for water, even though I see that it is better for my appetitive part that I satisfy my thirst now and delay satisfying my hunger. (Of course, it is beyond doubt that appetitive desires are not *at all* guided by a conception of the agent's overall good.) In any case, I grant that appetitive desires are not limited to those described in the above Book IV passages, as I will explain shortly.

¹⁰ In agreement, Scott 2000 puts the same point thus: "To feel an appetite for something is to pursue it just because it offers one pleasure, not because one independently sees any goodness in it" (25).

¹¹ This does not, by itself, show that these desires must be appetitive, since other animals share some of our spirited desires as well – what it shows is that they cannot be rational desires (441a-b).

¹² We might wonder how far this mechanism can take us: can a gourmet's discriminating enjoyment of expensive French wine be a pleasure of the appetitive part? The question to be raised, then, is whether the gourmet's pleasures are merely such transformations at sophisticated levels, or whether one may desire the taste of the expensive wine independently of thirst.

¹³ Annas 1981, 129. Cooper too claims that appetitive desires go beyond these brutish ones (1984, 128).

¹⁴ As I have pointed out in a previous footnote, Plato claims that the oligarch enslaves his unnecessary appetites in the single-minded pursuit of becoming as rich as possible, which he has determined to be the good (554a-5b). This must be a perverted appetitive desire, since Plato claims that the oligarch enthrones the appetitive part of his soul as his ruler (553c4-7), and a desire for money so great as to enslave all unnecessary appetites

can only be a perverted fixation on the principal means for satisfying appetites. Cf. Cooper 1984, 127n13. For a helpful discussion on perversion, see Nagel 1979. Nagel explains how it would be a perversion of hunger if “someone liked to eat cookbooks, or magazines with pictures of food in them, and preferred these to ordinary food”, since this would be a displacement or serious restriction of the desire to eat, given the psychological structure and complexity of this desire (41-2). Arguably, an obsession with the means to satisfying some natural desire is also a perverted form of the natural desire.

¹⁵ This seems to be widely, if not unanimously, accepted by scholars. Cf. Cooper 1984, 126-30; Irwin 1995, 209-11; Bobonich 2002, 220.

¹⁶ These desires are therefore derived from (i) and (ii) in a different way than the instrumental derivation of (iii).

¹⁷ Plato indicates, at 584c, that anticipatory pleasures are liberations from pain.

¹⁸ It is unclear, however, what desire exactly it is that these pleasures satisfy – I do not seem to have any desire to anticipate a pleasure or to daydream about one. A complicated model would have to be developed on Plato’s behalf: we would have to stipulate a deteriorated state in the appetitive part of the soul, corresponding to every deteriorated state in the body. When I am hungry, anticipating, or daydreaming about, eating does not replenish my body but, perhaps temporarily, restores the corresponding deteriorated state in my soul. In *Republic IX*’s language, beliefs or images would be filling the lack in the appetitive part of my soul. This lack would be what the desire is, which might be construed as a lack of certain kinds of sensation, which can be provided, to some extent, by such mental acts as daydreaming or anticipating the genuine satisfaction. Developing this line to cover all cases is not something that can be done here, but this project seems doable to me.

¹⁹ A possible objection at this point is that, contrary to Plato's strong language against this, the basic bodily desires (i.e., items in (i)) should be understood as those that are satisfied by mere physiological restorations (that are perceived), whether or not they are brutish cravings. All of these basic desires, unlike the more complex ones, are satisfied by a restorative physical change that is perceived by the soul and one's cognitive apparatus has almost no role to play in fixing the object of desire. The pleasures of smell can be understood, perhaps, as mere restorations of some bodily harmonious state. In fact, Plato suggests something like this at *Timaeus* 64d-65b, claiming that the pleasure of smell is introduced by an intense bodily restoration, while this is not preceded by pain because the corresponding depletion is gradual. However, Plato does not, in *Republic* IX, introduce this model that would explain pure bodily pleasures. And this absence does not seem to be merely due to neglect, or to limited space: it would be inconsistent with Plato's characterization of appetitive desires throughout the *Republic* to permit such refined appetitive pleasures. It would also be inconsistent with Plato's treatment of appetitive pleasures as unstable fillings, if it turned out that the depletion corresponding to an appetitive filling could be very gradual: fillings have a lasting effect to the extent that they are fillings of a more real container. The appetitive pleasures, however, are fillings of the least real part, which is like a leaky jar, and a rapid depletion begins as soon as the filling ends.

²⁰ Translation of this passage from Grube-Reeve 1992.

²¹ Scott points out that spirited desires were present in his father, the oligarch, though kept firmly in check (553d1-7), and that Plato is extremely generous about who is capable of having spirited desires, including children and animals (441a7-b3) (2000, 24).

²² A relevant point here is that the democrat cannot be experienced with pure pleasure, as this would contradict Plato's claim that only the philosopher can be experienced with

them. The quasi-appetitive status of his non-appetitive pleasure must somehow account for this. The appetitive element in his intellectual activities might, for instance, prevent him from experiencing a rational pleasure without the coexistence of pain.

²³ Murphy, for instance, has complained that compassion and friendliness are left out of the tripartite soul, and argued that the three parts must not be meant as exhaustive (1951, 29-30).

²⁴ Similarly, Reeve 1988 argues that only rational desires are “whole-good-dependent” – only they have the agent’s whole good (i.e., overall good) as their object (137).

²⁵ I can have an “optimizing” desire to drink water if and only if I already have a necessary appetitive desire to drink water and drinking water is, under the present circumstances, good for me, all things considered. Optimizing desires aim at the overall good of the agent, but they take up the (extensionally described) objects of the other desires and aim at them *as* good for the whole agent, if this happens to be the case – the intentional objects of optimizing desires are distinctive, but, in an extensional context, these objects are shared with other desires.

²⁶ By calling the Calliclean life “sybaritic” I mean only to point out this life’s unrestrained pursuit of satisfying as many and as large desires as possible – I do not mean to reject Rudebusch’s claim that Callicles’ view is not “sybaritic hedonism”, which he construes as being devoted exclusively to “short-term, bodily appetites” (1999, 36-8). As I have already pointed out, I believe Rudebusch is right in arguing that Callicles’ interest reaches beyond the bodily appetites.

²⁷ The reference to the metaphor of up-down-middle is clear enough, but Plato also states explicitly, at 586a6, that these people “don’t taste any stable or pure pleasure”.

²⁸ Here too, the pain that enters into the experience is external to the pure pleasure, unlike the way in which the pain of hunger accompanies the pleasure of eating; the pain of mental exertion is distinct from the desire to learn, while the pain of hunger *just is* the desire to eat.

Plato could analyze these cases, where some pain detracts from the experience of pure pleasure, in terms of the hedonic scale discussed in Part I: the scale was meant to measure the hedonic value of individual fillings, but it can also be used to measure the hedonic value of the sum of one's experiences at a given point in time. It can be argued that, while the non-philosopher has some positive hedonic value insofar as she experiences a pure pleasure, the fact that this experience is necessarily accompanied by some significant amount of pain brings the net hedonic value of the whole experience down into the negative zone. In contrast, the philosophers' controlled and moderate non-rational desires do not constitute so life-dominating pains, allowing them to have plenty of positive net hedonic value, with respect to this holistic hedonic evaluation.

²⁹ The non-bodily appetitive pleasures – those corresponding to the appetitive desires in my categories (iii) and (iv) – cannot bring stable satisfaction either, since they derive from the insatiable bodily desires, and cannot satisfy due to the source-desire being insatiable. No amount of viewing erotic images will bring stable satisfaction to anyone, since the source-desire for sex is itself insatiable. As soon as that desire is satisfied, the emptying/deterioration begins, and the basic desire as well as the derivative desires reemerge.

³⁰ The metaphor of the leaky jar suggests, in fact, that the emptying is taking place even during the filling process; presumably the jar can reach momentary fullness because, during the filling process, more goes in than leaks out. In other words, the body is constantly deteriorating/being depleted, even during the process of restoring it; this is not unreasonable, since, for example, we digest and burn calories even during a meal.

³¹ The passage deals explicitly only with appetitive pleasures, and it may be read as describing only the lives of the money-lover, but Plato tells us, at 586c7-d2, that those pursuing the pleasures of spirit will suffer similar things to those pursuing the pleasures of appetite. Throughout the third proof in *Republic IX*, Plato focuses on the contrast between the pleasures of the rational part and the appetitive part, but in this brief remark towards the end of the proof, he reassures us that the honor-lover is not in better shape than the money-lover with respect to pleasure: his pleasures too are impure and untrue, and he too has to spend his life like a brute.

³² As I have pointed out earlier, the PC's evaluation of pleasures on the basis of purity does not admit of degrees. What we have here is a strictly binary distinction – a pleasure is either pure or impure – with no room for “degrees of purity”.

³³ Everything Plato says about true and pure pleasures in the third proof is in perfect agreement with what he says about rational desires elsewhere in the *Republic*. This shows that Plato is not operating with a narrower conception of rational pleasures than is suggested by the other passages in the *Republic*.

³⁴ This is why my inclusion of enjoying art in the most pleasant life is consistent with Plato's well-known hostility toward art in the *Republic* (especially Book X), as well as his attack against sight-lovers in Book V. I cannot discuss these issues in any detail here, but suffice it to say that the philosopher's enjoyment of art is perfectly consistent with the arts being banished from Plato's city, as well as with Plato's view that those who pursue the many beautiful things rather than Beauty itself are in serious error (479a-480a). It is debatable which forms of art are banished from Plato's city, but even if all are, it would be consistent to say that all art is dangerous to the citizens, who may be affected by art in a bad way, but that the philosopher could derive rational pleasure out of some art. (Nehamas 1982 argues that only poets are banished from the city, and the other artists are not. Cf. Janaway 1995.) Likewise, there is no inconsistency

between this rational enjoyment of art and Plato's argument that "the sight-lovers cannot give the right account of the beautiful [since] they confine themselves to the many beautifuls" (Irwin 1995, 268). A sight-lover "recognizes beautiful things, but does not recognize the beautiful itself, and is unable to follow anyone who could lead him toward the knowledge of it" (476c2-4), but, clearly, the wisdom-lover is not in the same condition. The wisdom-lover will recognize the beautiful things as inferior to the beautiful itself, and will enjoy them insofar as they lead him to the beautiful itself (assuming that this wisdom-lover has not already grasped the beautiful itself). Smith 1999 explains the role that can be played by images in education; images can play a constructive, educational role, as long as they are "understood by their consumers *as* images, in the consumers' educational quest for some understanding of higher realities" (133).

CONCLUSION

In *Republic IX*, Plato sets out to prove that the philosopher's life is superior to the lives of other kinds of people. The second and third proofs aim to establish this thesis by proving that the philosopher's life is the most pleasant kind of life. The philosopher's life is ruled by the rational part of the soul, whereas everyone else's life is ruled by the other two parts of the soul – the spirited and appetitive parts – and each part of the soul has its own distinctive desires (580d), with the corresponding pleasures. The second and third proofs aim to show that the philosopher's life is most pleasant by showing that the pleasures of the rational part of the soul are more pleasant than the pleasures of the other two parts. The second proof (580c9-583b2), which I discuss and defend briefly in Chapter 3, turns on the notion that, though every person judges that the pleasures distinctive of their lives – the pleasures of each part of the soul – are most pleasant, the philosopher's judgment about pleasures is superior to the judgments of everyone else. This is claimed to be the case because the philosopher is superior to everyone else with respect to all factors that determine whether someone is a good judge of pleasure, including greater experience with all types of pleasure. It is in the third proof (583b2-587c3), however, where we find Plato's account of pleasure and pain, and this account has been the main subject of my dissertation.

On the basis of his account of pleasure and pain, Plato seeks to show, in the third proof, that only the philosopher's pleasures are: (a) pure; and (b) entirely true (583b3-4). He develops two distinct criteria for evaluating pleasure – what I have called PC

and DR – corresponding to the two parts of this claim. PC is designed to show that only the philosopher’s pleasures are pure, and DR is designed to show that only the philosopher’s pleasures are entirely true. I have explained that the third proof is widely regarded to be an extremely flawed account. In particular, I have focused on three substantial criticisms of the account: (i) Plato’s argument on the basis of PC is full of confusion and ambiguity; (ii) the account is inconsistent, because PC and DR yield classes of superior pleasures that are not coextensive; and (iii) Plato’s claim that the philosopher is a superior judge of pleasure, on the basis of his greater experience with all three parts of the soul, is flawed (with respect to both the second and third proofs), and this claim provides, contrary to Plato’s intentions, no intuitive support for the superior pleasantness of the philosopher’s pleasures.

I have shown that all of the above charges may be dismissed. In Chapters 1 and 2, I develop my interpretation of PC, explaining Plato’s distinction between pure pleasure and liberation from pain (impure pleasures), showing that Plato’s text contains none of the ambiguities attributed to it. Plato is aware of how controversial his claims are, and it is in the context of PC that he offers an explanation for why people are so badly mistaken about the pleasantness of different kinds of pleasure. In Chapter 1, I defend Plato’s view that it is *possible* to be mistaken about our own pleasures, by discussing several modern and contemporary philosophers’ views on this matter. In Chapter 2, I dismiss the charges of ambiguity, though a question remains about why both pure and impure pleasures qualify as pleasures; answering this question is postponed until later, when I discuss DR, since only DR (and not PC) provides a

definition of pleasure. I then show that Plato offers a highly sophisticated and underappreciated psychological explanation for the false judgments most people have about pleasure. It turns out that non-philosophers are, due to their lack of experience with pure pleasures, deceived by the appearances that result from the various ways in which we process our own pleasures and pains. I conclude, however, that Plato's claim that these appearances are false needs to be grounded by some appeal to our intuitions about pleasure.

I argue, in my Chapter 3, that Plato attempts to provide this intuitive grounding to his claim by appealing to experience, and arguing that those who are experienced with pure pleasure know that those pleasures are incomparably superior to impure pleasures, which non-philosopher spend their lives pursuing. I discuss this appeal to experience in relation to the second proof's appeal to experience, as well as Mill's similar argument in his *Utilitarianism*. I show that Plato's appeal to experience is not nearly as flawed as his critics claim, and that this appeal could, in fact, provide significant intuitive support, depending on the scope of the philosopher's pleasures. Plato's contention that the philosopher's life is most pleasant gains plausibility on a wide conception of his pleasures, whereas it loses intuitive appeal on a narrow conception. Whether the pleasures of Plato's philosopher are to be conceived widely or narrowly depends, in turn, on whether, and how, we can resolve the charge of inconsistency.

In Chapter 4, I offer my interpretation of DR, and in addition to defending DR against various other criticisms, I argue that an adequate understanding of the text does

not support the charge of inconsistency. It is in Chapter 5, however, where the charge is brought to full relief, through an examination of Plato's views on what sorts of desire belong in what part of the soul: since, on my interpretation, DR determines the status of a pleasure (its truth) on the basis of the part of the soul of which it is a filling, I discuss various other passage in the *Republic* in order to arrive at a reliable understanding of the pleasure of each part. I conclude that the charge of inconsistency can be dismissed, and that the particularly problematic case of the pleasures of smell does not constitute a threat to the cogency of Plato's argument in the third proof.

This conclusion is reached, moreover, by reading Plato's conception of the superior class of pleasures – the philosopher's pleasures – as wide, with the result that many intellectual pleasures familiar to us have a place in the most pleasant life. This, then, allows us to conclude that Plato's claims that the philosopher's pleasures are the most pleasant, and that those who are experienced with all kinds of pleasure can tell this, are plausible. Plato's assessment of different kinds of pleasure becomes much more persuasive, that is, because the philosopher's life turns out to be much less austere and much more inclusive than many have supposed. From this juxtaposition of PC and DR, we also find the answer to the question why both pure pleasures and impure pleasures qualify as pleasures. DR provides a definition of pleasure – being filled with what is appropriate to our nature (585d11) – and we find that impure pleasures, which turn out to be the pleasures of the non-rational parts of the soul, satisfy this definition, albeit in an inferior way compared to the pure pleasures, which are the pleasures of the rational part.

The pleasures of the spirited and appetitive part of the soul are impure, which means that they are not only sequentially but also simultaneously mixed with pain. As I explain in Chapter 2, these pleasures yield always and only a negative net hedonic value, despite the fact that they are more intense than pure pleasures, and most people devote their lives to the pursuit of these pleasures. These are also pleasures that are not unqualifiedly true, though I have explained that they contain some truth nevertheless. As I show in Chapter 4, this low grade of truth corresponds to the fact that the desires involved in impure pleasures are insatiable. Plato's view that the desires of the non-rational parts of the soul are not only painful but also insatiable explains his contention that non-philosophers who spend their lives in the pursuit of non-rational pleasures live brutish lives. Even though the appearances of their impure pleasures deceive them into thinking that their own pleasures are most pleasant, the pleasantness of their lives is drastically inferior to the life of the philosopher. I believe I have shown that Plato has coherent and compelling arguments for this conclusion, and that his account of pleasure in *Republic IX* is far more interesting and sophisticated than its critics have realized.

APPENDIX

In translating the passage from 585b9 to 35 as the propositions (1) through (10), I make some unusual choices on points that are philosophically significant. Here I describe the peculiarity of my translation and give my reasons for those choices. But first I reproduce my translation of the whole passage, to make it easier to follow the arguments that follow.

- (1) The truer filling up is with that which is more. (585b9-11)
- (2) The kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence, and further, collectively, all virtue participate more in pure being than do the classes of food, drink, delicacies and nourishment in general. (Because) (585b12-c1)
- (3) That which “is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind” is more than that which “is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind”. (And) (585c1-6)
- (4) The being of what is always changing (/never the same) participates less in being than does the being of knowledge. (585c7-9)
- (5) The being of what is always changing participates less in truth than does the being of knowledge. (585c10-11)
- (6) If it participates less in truth, it participates less in being also. (585c12-13)
- (7) And, on the whole, the classes of things concerned with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul. (585d1-4)
- (8) The body participates less in being and truth than does the soul. (585d5-6)
- (9) That which is more and is filled with things that are more, is really more filled than that which is less, and is filled with things that are less. (585d7-10)

(10) If being filled with what is appropriate by nature is pleasure, that which is more filled with that which is more enjoys more really and more truly a more true pleasure, while that which partakes of things that are less is less truly and securely filled and partakes of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure. (585d11-e5)

A. What I translate as “and further, collectively, all virtue” in proposition (2) is often translated as “and, in sum, all virtue” (e.g., Bloom, Grube-Reeve). The Greek is “*kai sullebden au pases aretes*” (585b14-c1). I believe that my translation reflects the sense of the phrase better, particularly by removing an ambiguity created by the alternative translation. The ambiguity is between these two ways of understanding the phrase: (a) “all virtue” is an additional item (a class) on the list, which does not subsume the preceding items; (b) “all virtue” refers to the preceding items and more, covering a wide variety of items in a summary way; here “in sum” indicates that the long list begun with “the kind of true belief, knowledge and intelligence” is cut short by giving what unites all of them – they constitute all virtue. My translation unambiguously picks option (a), which is the only one that is tenable. For (b) holds that the three items listed are virtues, and this cannot be the case: even if we take “*arete*” to mean excellence in general, and not just moral virtue, these three items cannot be placed in that class. Knowledge would qualify, and intelligence might, but true belief would not qualify as an excellence, even under the loosest conception of that term. It should also be noted that “*au*” generally introduces a new item, favoring the reading (a).

B. I translate “*ta gene*” as “the classes...”, at 585b12 (2) as well as at 585d1 (7), rather than adding to it as Reeve does – “kinds of filling up with...”. It makes a difference

that Plato is talking about the fillers rather than the fillings because the claim (1) is explained by tying the reality of the filling to the filler and the container. The meaningfulness of the order of the claims is destroyed if already at (2) and (7) it is declared that such and such fillings are less true/real. It can be seen especially vividly in (7)-(8) that the truth/reality of a filling is derivative from the truth/reality of the filler and the container involved. Reeve's translation confuses this.

C. Proposition (4) is the sentence in which I disagree with others most, not only in translating the Greek but also about what the Greek Plato wrote must have been. I side with Adam in replacing the standard "*homoiou*", as in the OCT, with "*anomoiou*" on grounds of corruption, as the standard version is hopelessly problematic. Then, in translating I disagree with those who take "*epistemes*" to be the alternative to "*ousias*" (e.g., Grube-Reeve, Bloom, Shorey, Waterfield), and take it to be the alternative to "*aei anomoiou*", with the "*ousia*" assumed. Adam argues that we must take the sentence this way, and that there must have been a "*he*" that was somehow dropped by a copyist, before "*epistemes*", standing in for "*ousia*". Thus the sentence reads as "*he oun aei anomoiou ousia ousias ti mallon e he epistemes metechei;*" as opposed to OCT's "*he oun aei homoiou ousia ousias ti mallon e epistemes metechei;*". (The answer to this question, *oudamos*, is what justifies my casting of (4.1) in terms of participating less. A direct translation would be "Does the being of what is always changing participate more in being than does the being of knowledge? – Certainly not.") My reasons for this unorthodoxy are as follows:

(i) The regular translation, in taking “*epistemes*” to be the alternative to “*ousias*”, does not make sense in the context. The negative answer to their version of the question, “And does the being of what is always the same participate more in being than in knowledge?” (Grube-Reeve’s translation) means that it either participates in being and in knowledge equally or more in knowledge than in being. Then, when the question is repeated with “truth” in place of “knowledge” (585c10), the negative answer means that it (the being of what is always the same) participates either equally in the two or more in truth than in knowledge. Given this, Socrates’ next question appears very odd and out of place: “And if less in truth, then less in being also?”. What has been said does not allow for it to participate less in truth, and there is no reason to suppose that Socrates now decided to ask a question disconnected from what precedes it.

There is another way in which the text loses coherence on this translation: The context suggests that the negative answer to the questions at 585c7-8 and 10 mean not that it participates in the two alternatives equally but more in one than another. Given that one is said to be more, the question at 585c12, which indicates that whatever participates less in truth also does so in being, does not make sense. (That degrees of participation in truth and being are not distinguished is seen clearly in 585d7-e3.) Neither the “degrees of reality” theory as we find in Books VI and VII, nor what is said in this passage help us understand the difference between participation in being and in truth/knowledge. It would seem very strange, therefore, if Socrates’ interlocutor were giving the confident answers (“*oudamos*”, “*oude touto*”) to such bizarre questions. (If,

on the other hand, the negative answers to the questions mean that the degrees of participation in the two things in question are equal, this whole discussion would turn out to be a pointless digression in the context).

(ii) Taking the text to read "*homoiou*" also makes the passage incomprehensible, even if the sentence is translated so as to avoid the problems above, as "And does the being of what is always the same participate more in being than does the being of knowledge". We run into a problem with contrasting the being of "what is always the same" and that of knowledge (in their degree of participation in being). This is because (3) suggests that knowledge is itself one of the things that are "what is always the same"; there, the filler which is related to that which is always the same, and its container are themselves claimed to be always the same. Thus the sentence entails the nonsense of comparing knowledge with knowledge (and of concluding that knowledge rather than knowledge participates more in being). Also, the negative answer to this version of the question would rule out the being of a Form (something that is always the same) being greater than that of knowledge. Given that "knowledge" here seems, from the context, to refer to knowledge of Forms and/or a lesser kind of knowledge, and not to the Form of Knowledge, the answer would have to be wrong, since the being of a Form must be greater than the being of something that can reside in the souls of human beings.

It should also be remembered that DR is designed to prove the superiority of the pleasures of reason over the other pleasures, so the comparisons are meant to be between things that are involved in the pleasures of reason vs. things that are involved

in the other pleasures. We see from (2) to (8) a pattern of comparing things from the opposite sides of this divide, serving the ultimate purpose of proving the superiority of the pleasures of reason. Reading the text with “*homoiou*” does nothing to serve the purpose of DR and does not fit this pattern of comparing items from the opposite sides of the divide.

(iii) The sentence at 585d1-3, (7), is presented as something that either follows from, or is a natural continuation of, the preceding discussion. (“*oukoun holôs?*”) But this appears so only under my translation. With the standard translation as well as the third alternative in (ii) above, (7) turns out to be a sentence unrelated to what precedes it.

For a more grammatical discussion of the emendation of the standard text, and other kinds of emendations by scholars to resolve the text’s difficulties, see Adam 1902, 381-3.

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