

The Place of Flawed Pleasures in a Good Life. A Discussion of Plato's *Philebus*

Jan Szaif

ORCID number: 0000-0002-7648-3577

University of California, Davis

ABSTRACT

The *Philebus* describes the “good” that enables human eudaimonia as a “mixture” in which cognitive states have to be combined with certain types of pleasure. This essay investigates how the various senses of falsehood that Plato distinguishes are applied to the question of the hedonic “ingredients” of the good. It argues that his theory allows for the inclusion of certain virtuous pleasures that are deficient with respect to truth: either qua “mixed pleasures” lacking in truth (genuineness) on account of the compresence of their opposite, pain, or because they are based on mistaken anticipations arising in the pursuit of virtuous and reasonable goals.

Keywords: Plato – *Philebus* – pleasure – good – falsehood – truth

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_22_10

The overall goal of Plato's *Philebus*, as a work on ethics, is to establish some common ground between the competing claims of hedonism and Socratic intellectualism, while upholding the primacy of intellectual virtues. To this end, the dialogue discusses which, if any, types of pleasure and of cognitive states can serve as "ingredients of the good," using this metaphor as a label for whatever can help to raise human life to its most favorable condition: *eudaimonia*. The dialogue's main thesis is that we can count not only all forms of cognition and skill among the contributing factors of the human good, but also certain pleasures, yet that they have to be ranked lower than the cognitive states. In the course of discussing the nature and value of pleasure, the dialogue develops a set of distinctions between various forms of falsehood, illusion, or lack of truth that can affect pleasure.

Why this focus on the alethic qualities of pleasure? When Socrates at 36c inserts the topic of truth and falsehood, illusion and real being, into his discussion of pleasure, it happens in a sudden and unprepared way. Yet book IX of the *Republic* already discussed the value of different kinds of pleasure, and one of the central ideas there was that certain very common pleasures are not true pleasures but a product of mere appearance (584a7-10, 584d1-585a5, 586b7-c5), while certain other pleasures are pure and real (584b). This idea was combined with the claim that the objects of pleasure can vary in degree of being or "truth", and that the pleasures that have the most real objects (i.e., the *forms*) are the truest pleasures (585b-e). The typical ancient audience of a dialogue as late and demanding as the *Philebus* was likely to be familiar with the *Republic* and its theory of the higher forms of pleasure. For the readers, this would be their primary point of reference when approach-

ing the dialogue's long discussion of truth and falsity, reality and illusion in the domain of pleasure. The debates about pleasure in Plato's Academy also brought up the claim that pleasures, or at least the commonly pursued "vulgar" pleasures, are a deceptive and illusory phenomenon.¹ The *Philebus* is Plato's final statement on this question.

This dialogue does not simply repeat or expand the theory of pleasure in *Republic IX*. Rather, it seems to change or precisify its perspective in various important regards. My essay will focus on the *Philebus* exclusively, but with the aim of showing that its discussion of hedonic truth and falsehood provides a surprisingly differentiated picture that allows for the inclusion of certain false or untrue pleasures linked to virtuous activity among the ingredients of the good. Socrates, as the lead speaker, repeatedly emphasizes the difference between the *human* good and the kind of perfection attainable for divine beings. This enables him to acknowledge that the human good cannot be realized without certain less perfect components susceptible to falsehood or diminished truth. With respect to cognition or skill, the dialogue takes a very clear stance. The good life, as lived by humans, needs to rely also on imprecise and merely conjectural forms of skill or expertise that give room to diminished truth and falsehood. Its position is less easy to pin down with respect to certain imperfect forms of pleasure, such as pleasures that are mixed with pain. It has been a widely held view among commentators that the *Philebus* includes only the so-called "pure pleasures" among the ingredients of the human good; yet some scholars have argued that certain kinds of mixed pleasure too have a place among these ingredients, on account of their connection with virtuous activities.² This essay will offer a new argument in support of

this thesis. Additionally, I will also discuss whether the dialogue really, as generally assumed, advocates the claim that pleasures based on mistaken hopes are categorically excluded from the human good, irrespective of what may have warranted these hopes. This issue has relevance within the framework of virtue-ethical eudaimonism: If we grant, as we should, that uncertain but pleasant expectations about likely good outcomes of virtuous activity are an integral part of virtuous life, the question arises how to evaluate cases in which a reasonable and virtuously motivated anticipation later turns out to have been mistaken. Are these merely excusable accidents in an otherwise fine life, or valid ingredients of the hedonic component of the human good?

To provide a basis for my discussion, I need to begin with an outline of how the long central part of the dialogue maps the different senses or modes of hedonic falsehood and truth onto the various kinds of pleasure. This is the topic of section (1) of this essay, which has to be condensed and cannot provide full justification for all its assumptions. Section (2) will identify and discuss the “mixing rule” that guides the selection of the ingredients of the good in the segment on mixing (59d-64c). In (3), I will analyze the main argument of this segment and show why and how it endorses not only pure pleasures, but also mixed pleasures associated with health or virtue, although they are not fully genuine *qua* pleasures due to the compresence of pain. In section (4), I am going to discuss the general criteria for differentiating between good and bad pleasures as they can be extracted from the argument of this segment. I will argue that, based on the virtue criterion and certain other Platonic assumptions, the occasional mistaken hedonic anticipations that are bound to occur in the pursuit of virtuous and reasonable goals

should also qualify for inclusion among the hedonic components of the good. The final section (5) will address certain text-based objections to this conclusion. The main task here is to show that the segment on mistaken anticipatory pleasures (36c-41a) does not, as commonly assumed, commit to the idea that groundedness in a false belief is, just by itself, a sufficient condition for the badness of a pleasure.

1

The theory of pleasure in the *Philebus* builds on an account of somatic pleasure as *felt restoration* or *felt replenishment* in the body reversing a process of “deterioration” or “emptying” (φθορά, κένωσις). In order to be felt, the somatic process has to cause a joint motion in the immaterial soul.³ Since somatic pleasure typically sets out from a process of disintegration or emptying in the body felt as pain, it is pain-involving “mixed” pleasure.

While somatic pleasures are joint motions in the body and the soul, the pleasures that Plato calls “of the soul” are motions that take place only in the soul. Socrates discusses two types of psychic pleasure: first, anticipatory pleasures (which he describes primarily as anticipations in the soul of future somatic pleasures) and, second, pleasures of perception and intellectual grasping. Anticipatory pleasures are also typically mixed pleasures. According to 34c-36c, it is the painful feeling of some need that triggers the memory of a pleasant replenishment and thus gives rise to desire and, under putatively favorable circumstances, to a pleasant anticipation. The pleasures of the second class, by contrast, are naturally *pure*, i.e., naturally unmixed with pain. Plato analyzes them as forms of

felt replenishment taking place in the soul and correlating to a naturally *unfelt* lack in the soul (51b5, 51e7-52b3). The objects with which the soul becomes painlessly replenished are perceptual or intellectual contents; for instance, the representation of a pure color or, in the case of pleasant intellectual grasping, some “learnable” content (51b-d, 51e-52b). The natural purity of these pleasant “fillings” is due to the fact that the preceding reverse processes or states of deprivation—such as forgetting and ignorance—are *naturally* painless, unlike, for instance, the lack of nutrition in the body, which makes itself felt as pain.

The *Philebus* combines the description of various kinds of hedonic experience with a distinction of the several ways in which this experience can be linked to the terminology of truth and falsehood, broadly speaking. It is important to bear in mind that the Greek terms translated as “true” and “false” cover a rather wide range of related meanings and don’t just function as *truth value* labels for propositions. The Greek word for “true” (ἀληθής) can also mean “genuine,” “real,” “non-deceptive,” and the word for “false” (ψευδής) also “deceptive,” “illusory,” “delusive,” “spurious,” “fake,” “specious,” and the like. The charge that the *Philebus* confuses different senses of truth and falsehood⁴ cannot be upheld for his discussion of pleasure, given the care with which the different ways for pleasure to be false are distinguished. The following are the four distinct kinds of hedonic falsity in the order in which they are discussed in the dialogue:

1 Representationally false/mistaken pleasure (**RepF**): an experience of pleasure that involves the imaginative representation of a non-obtaining state of affairs, based on a false belief (36c-41a).

2 Partially false/illusory appearance of pleasure (**FA-part**): an experience of pleasure that is partly an illusion since the size of the hedonic motion appears larger or smaller than it is (41a-42c).

3 Wholly false/illusory appearance of pleasure (**FA-whole**): a merely apparent experience of pleasure occurring when the person is, in fact, in a neutral state between pleasure and pain (42c-44a).

4 Untrue pleasure involving a mixing of opposites (**UTMix**): an experience of pleasure that lacks truth or genuineness due to the compresence of its opposite, pain (44d-50e).⁵

The first type of falsehood is introduced in connection with the analysis of anticipatory pleasure (προχαίρειν, 39D4, literally “pre-enjoying,” “*Vorfreude*”), which is a hedonic experience grounded in a belief about a future enjoyable outcome.⁶ The psychological mechanism that leads from such a belief to an experience of pleasure is described as involving imagination: Not yet the fact that one has a certain positive expectation, but the act of imagining the expected future pleasant situation is what creates an experience of anticipatory pleasure. Since this anticipation is not a case of mere day-dreaming but of someone’s looking forward to an *expected*⁷ outcome, the connection with a belief about a future state of affairs is essential. While the *Philebus* analyzes only the joys of hopeful anticipation, it mentions that beliefs about present or past states of affairs can also be a source of pleasures that involve mistaken representation (40d7-10, cf. 39c7-8). Beliefs are true or false, veridical or illusory, depending on whether or not they agree with what is the case (or was the case, or will be the case). The *Philebus* expands this notion of truth and falsehood by applying it

also to the acts of imagination that illustrate the beliefs (39b9-c6). I am speaking of *representational falsehood* (RepF) in order to have a term that is broad enough to cover both beliefs and imaginative representations. While this expanded notion of falsehood still seems quite intuitive, Socrates' argument in 38a-40e steers toward the much more controversial contention that this notion is applicable also to the pleasures experienced thanks to a belief-cum-imagination. The key move in this argument is difficult to reconstruct, but according to what I take to be the most plausible reconstruction, it is the act of joyful imagination of expected future pleasures that constitutes a pleasure of anticipation occurring in the present.⁸ Since this mental act is an experience of pleasure and has a representational content representing some putative future state of affairs, a pleasure of this kind can legitimately be called true or false.⁹

The other three types of falsity or lack of truth relate to modes of what is loosely known as "ontological truth." Whereas true or false beliefs have a *propositional* content with a truth value ("semantic" truth or falsehood), the broad category of "ontological truth" applies, roughly, whenever the words "true" and "false" (or their partial synonyms) are used in reference not to propositions or propositional attitudes, but to objects so as to characterize either their *mode of being* or their *mode of appearance*.¹⁰

The ascription of ontological falsehood in the sense of an object's *false or misleading appearance* (FA-falsity) is usually limited to objects that exist, or appear to exist, extra-mentally. Yet owing to a peculiar twist in Plato's discussion hedonic illusion, it turns out that the hedonic motions in the soul can function as internal objects with potentially distorted modes of appearance. In 41d1-3, Socrates

explicitly distinguishes between a pleasure or pain and the distorted perception thereof, as part of an argument that introduces a new type of hedonic illusion: Whenever a pain and a pleasure are contrasted and compared with each other in the soul, this can result in an inflated or deflated mode of appearance and a wrong belief about the respective sizes of these hedonic motions.¹¹ More specifically, the passage argues that the juxtaposition in the soul of a somatic pain and a simultaneously occurring psychic pleasure of anticipation makes the one look bigger, the other smaller than they actually are.¹² Plato also suggests that if we divide an inflated pleasure into its *real* part (its actual quantity) and the inflated surplus amount, then *this surplus amount*, if considered by itself, is wholly unreal—a merely illusory appearance.¹³

Plato links this kind of deflated or inflated appearance to false judgments or beliefs, but doesn't identify the object's appearance with the belief about it. He emphasizes that the order of dependence is reversed compared to RepF falsity. In the RepF case, the hedonic experience is real (37a1-b4, 40c8-e1) but representationally false because its imaginative content is based on an erroneous belief. In the FA case, the experience of pleasure itself is to some extent illusory (42a5-b6). As such, it can induce a false belief, but this false belief is the consequence, not the cause, of the falsehood of the appearance.

Plato also introduces a second kind of hedonic FA-falsity. This is the case in which a person is in a neutral state with no real experience of somatic pleasure or pain, but it appears to him as a pleasant condition. This harks back to an idea that was introduced in the *Republic* (583c-584a). An example there was the case of a sick person remembering how it was to be healthy. Health is a stable

balanced condition and as such neither pleasant nor painful. But the act of recalling one's previous health, and juxtaposing it in one's mind to the present state of somatic pain, produces a contrasting effect that makes the previous condition appear pleasant and then also leads to a corresponding false belief.¹⁴ This type represents the simple or absolute case of false appearance in which the object (here: an apparent somatic pleasure) is wholly unreal: FA-*whole*.¹⁵ In the other case, discussed before, only a part of the pleasure is absolutely unreal (42b8-c3), which is why we may label it FA-*part*.¹⁶

A different kind of ontological truth, or lack thereof, relates to an object's *being* (i.e., its being a thing of a certain kind). One of the ways in which an object's being can be compromised is through the compresence of a contrary attribute. The *Philebus* connects this case with the notion of purity *versus* impurity and illustrates it with the help of the example of impure white (e.g., white paint), which is white mixed with other colors that dilute its whiteness and render it less true or genuine (53ab). We can refer to this as *untruth due to mixture*: UTMix. The dialogue applies this notion to hedonic motions that include the compresence of pain. When speaking broadly, Socrates includes mixed pleasures among the *false* pleasures,¹⁷ but UTMix is more fittingly characterized as *lack* of truth or genuineness. This is why the segment specifically on mixed pleasures avoids the term “*ψευδής*,” while denying that they are true pleasures.

Both RepF and FA-falsity involve *illusion*, if in different ways. In FA-*whole* and FA-*part* cases, the hedonic experience itself is either partly or fully illusionary. In RepF cases, the pleasure felt now, as a hedonic motion in the soul, is real (37a1-b4, 40c8-e1), although it is grounded in, or caused by, a *doxastic* illu-

sion (i.e., an illusory belief). Intense mixed pleasures too can involve a form of illusion: Their ostensibly intense presence and frequent occurrence conceals the fact that they are not the most genuine and most real manifestations of pleasure, but merely a mix of pleasure with pain.¹⁸

Lastly, we should note that one token of hedonic experience can instantiate more than one form of falsity or untruth. For instance, false hedonic anticipations (RepF) typically are, as noted above, mixed pleasures and hence UTMix cases (cf. 47c-d). His example of an FA-*part* illusion relates to a case of anticipatory pleasure, which could at the same time also be grounded in a mistaken expectation. This tells us that Plato does not distinguish between four separate (non-overlapping) classes of untrue pleasure-tokens. His distinction is not extensional, but intensional, based on different applications of the true/false terminology. Let's now investigate how these distinctions are applied in the quest for the “right ingredients” of the mixture.

2

The *Philebus* sets out as a debate between hedonism and intellectualism about *the (human) good*, which Socrates characterizes as a “possession and disposition of the soul” (ἔξις ψυχῆς καὶ διάθεσις) that conveys *eudaimonia* (11d4-6). In 20b-22c, the interlocutors agree that the human good can be identified neither with pleasure alone nor with cognitive states alone. It must be a type of *mixture* whose *ingredients* will have to include some kinds (at least) of cognition and pleasure, since no one in their right mind would think that a life of cognitive virtue but devoid of pleasure, or a life with the sensation of pleasure but without

reason, understanding, memory, and true belief could be complete and fully satisfactory.

This talk of *ingredients* or *parts* of the human good is, to be sure, in need of further clarification. Unfortunately, the dialogue does not say enough about how exactly it is to be understood. First, it is important to retain that the leading question, as introduced by Socrates, is about the parts or ingredients not of the good *life*, but of the *good* that renders a life good. Even a very good human life will include episodes and aspects that don't contribute to its goodness. Some of its episodes might be indifferent (such as certain daily chores that are not too burdensome); others might detract from the quality of a human life (such as episodes of illness) without altering the basic eudaimonic quality of this life as a whole. Such occurrences are, in a trivial sense, still parts of a good life, but not parts of the good that makes it a good life.¹⁹

What are the criteria for singling out the appropriate ingredients of the human good? It is self-evident that a type of pleasure or cognitive state does not qualify unless it can make some positive contribution to the quality of human life. But what counts as making a positive contribution? Socrates' argument as to why technical skills are to be included in the mixture clearly indicates that *utility* for human life is a sufficient condition. As long as a skill is useful and does not otherwise cause harm, it is a legitimate ingredient of the human good.²⁰ The dialogue also points toward a conception of intrinsic value or desirability constituted by the presence of limit and measure. By conveying measuredness, proportion, etc, these principles elevate the receiving object to an intrinsically desirable condition of virtue and beauty.²¹ Limit and measure undergird the goodness of the human good as a whole, qua mixture, and analogously

also the goodness of the cosmos (64a), yet are applicable also to components of the mixture.²² Further clarification of this issue lies beyond the scope of this essay; it will suffice to register that the dialogue's understanding of a "component" of the good is broad enough to draw on criteria of intrinsic desirability, but also mere utility value.

In segment 59d-64c, the investigation explicitly formulates and solves the task of determining which kinds of pleasure and cognition qualify as ingredients of the good. Since the argument is centered around the metaphor of mixing, I am referring to it as the Mixing segment. It begins with a brief recapitulation that includes a reminder of the criteria introduced at 20d for identifying the human good: Whatever the human good is, it must be such that it does not leave us wanting in any respect, but is something sufficient and perfectly complete (60b7-c5). In 61c-e, Socrates proposes a rule for how to approach the task of mixing. It is introduced in connection with a thought experiment purporting to construct an optimal mixture from scratch (59d10-e6, 61b11-c9). According to this rule (61e6-9, cf. 62d8-9), the safe approach is to start with ingredients that are most true or most genuine and to add less genuine ones only as a second step and only if it should turn out that the strictly true/genuine ingredients (τὰληθέστατα τμήματα, 61e6, cf. 62d8-9, e3-7) don't yet produce a fully satisfactory life (ἀγαπητότατος βίος).²³

In order to understand the import of this rule, we have to clarify how the term "truth" is used in this context. The Mixing Segment is preceded by two segments that put the emphasis on purity. The first of these segments, Socrates' investigation of true pleasures in 50e-53c, is focused on truth qua purity (i.e., absence of contrary admixture).²⁴ When

transitioning to this topic, Socrates sets the true pleasures to be discussed in opposition both to mixed pleasures and to pleasures that are merely apparent (types UTMix and FA-*whole*) (51a3-9). Belief-based representational falsehood was not mentioned, and it would also not be applicable to the case of simple but pure perceptual pleasures since these precede belief formation.²⁵ Accordingly, the notion of truth is here to be taken in an ontological sense: The “truth” that characterizes this class of hedonic motions lies in the fact that they are real (not merely apparent) and unmixed.

The language of truth is used in a more complex and more confusing way in the subsequent segment on cognitive states and skills (55c-59d). Yet while the discussion of this genus does not carefully distinguish the various possible meanings or connotations of “truth,” it again emphasizes the idea of purity and relates the degree of veridicality of the various kinds of knowledge or skill to the notion of a “pure” science. The inferior types of practical expertise or skill, because of their experience-based conjectural and stochastic nature, have what is unclear and imprecise “mixed” into them, thus failing to achieve a firm and stable grasp of the truth (55e-56b); and this is so because the subject-matters that they relate to don’t allow for precision and clarity (57b, 58e-59b). Practical expertise that makes use of measurement and mathematical concepts already has a greater share in genuine knowledge (56b-c). Yet only the exact philosophical sciences are *pure* manifestations of knowledge, since they alone reach out to an ideal, never-changing reality that allows for an enlightened cognitive hold revealing an exact and unchanging truth (56c-58a, 58cd, 59a-d). Accordingly, only these sciences will be included among the “pure specimens” of

knowledge to be used in the first phase of mixing.

In light of these observations, the underlying general idea of the Mixing Rule in 61e can be formulated as follows:

The Mixing Rule: The production of an optimal mixture should begin by adding only strictly genuine and pure specimens of each relevant kind of ingredient. Only if this fails to achieve a fully satisfactory result, specimens that are less pure and genuine may be added to the extent that this helps to optimize the mixture.

Generally speaking, the application of this rule presupposes that the pure and fully genuine instances of the kinds in question have at least some (as yet unspecified) degree of positive value for human life. If they were harmful or irrelevant, adding them to the mixture would be either detrimental or pointless. Once it has been established that the pure specimens make a positive contribution,²⁶ it is reasonable to give them priority over defective and impure specimens of the same kind, as these might be harmful because of their defects and impurities. However, the Mixing Rule also opens a path for the inclusion of certain “untrue” pleasures and inexact forms of cognition. Such less perfect ingredients will be added on condition, and to the extent, that this is necessary for an optimal outcome, and only after their compatibility with the primary ingredients has been ascertained.²⁷ For the genus of cognitive states, this second phase is explicitly carried out in 62a-d, and its result is reconfirmed in the final ranking of good ingredients (66bc). It is more difficult to establish what view the Mixing segment (59d-64c) and the final ranking (66a-d) advocate regarding impure or untrue pleasures. Are any

of these admissible among the ingredients that make up the human good? To obtain a clear answer, we need to take a closer look at how the argument of the Mixing segment unfolds.

3

When the interlocutors set out to create the optimal mixture, they quickly agree that, in addition to the pure forms of knowledge, good human life also requires certain practical skills and applied forms of knowledge, notwithstanding their shortcomings with respect to precision and truth. In fact, they agree that nothing speaks against including *all* these lesser cognitive forms among the ingredients of the human good. They all are innocuous as well as beneficial, at least as long as the “first” sciences are also present in the mixture (62c5-d3, 63a1-2). Of course, this agreement cannot mean that each individual needs to have every useful skill in order to attain the good life. It must relate to what contributes to human *eudaimonia* collectively.

Socrates then turns to the question which pleasures belong into the good mixture. The interlocutors agree that the safe first step is to add only true pleasures (62e3-8). In the preceding segment, I have shown that the talk of “true pleasures” is here to be understood as referring to the pure pleasures discussed in 50e-53c and again endorsed in 66c4-6. Moving on to the question whether any other pleasures beside those belong into the mixture, the interlocutors immediately agree that *if* some pleasures are “necessary,” they would also have to be included (62e8-10). But what are these “necessary pleasures”?

For an adequate understanding, it is essential not to overlook that the qualifier “necessary” harks back to how certain addi-

tions from the domain of impure cognitive skills were qualified as necessary. Protarchus conceded that it was “necessary” (ἀναγκαῖον) to add certain applied skills and competences since without them we wouldn’t even “find our way home” (62b8-9), and that it was “necessary” to add *mousikê* (music, poetry) since without it “it wouldn’t even be a life” (i.e., a life worth living; 62c3-4). While the pure philosophical sciences, directed at eternal Forms, represent a divine form of knowing (62b4, cf. 62a7-b2), human life also requires such lower types of skill and understanding. When Socrates then turns to the topic of necessary hedonic additions, he observes that if certain pleasures should turn out to be “necessary,” they will have to be added “just as in the case of cognition” (καθάπερ ἐκεῖ, 62e9). This formulation clearly indicates the intended parallelism of necessary cognitive and hedonic additions. It allows us to infer that the necessary hedonic additions correspond to necessities and conveniences of the specifically *human* life-form, just as the necessary cognitive additions do.

Up to this point (62e8-10), the existence of necessary hedonic additions has been granted only hypothetically. Socrates goes on to ask if *all* kinds of pleasure (whether pure or impure) can be included as something beneficial and innocuous (63a1-5), just as it was the case with cognitive states and abilities. The alternatives would be that only *some* impure pleasures are to be added, or none. In order to settle this question, Socrates resorts to the dramatic device of an imaginary interview with the (personified) pleasures and higher cognitive states. Its main task is to clarify whether there really are such necessary hedonic additions to the human good, and, if so, what they are. The following quote contains part of the response of the (personified) higher forms of knowledge.

They declare which forms of pleasure they are willing to cohabit with:

T-1 Yet as for the pleasures you called true and pure, you may consider them akin to us; and, in addition to these (πρὸς ταύταις), include in the mixture also the pleasures conjoined with health and a sound/moderate attitude (τὰς μεθ' ὑγείας καὶ τοῦ σωφρονεῖν), indeed, with the entirety of virtue/excellence (σμπάσης ἀρετῆς)—all the pleasures that accompany (συνακολουθοῦσι) virtue everywhere, as if appointed to attend to a goddess (καθάπερ θεοῦ ὀπαδοὶ γιγνόμεναι). Yet [to take] pleasures that follow a foolish/immoderate attitude (ἄφροσύνῃ) or any other kind of badness (κακία) and to mix them with reason/understanding (νοῦς) would be an absurd thing to do for whoever wants to see a mixture and blend that is most beautiful and free of any discord [...].²⁸ (63e3-64a1)

The first sentence of this quotation confirms that there is a second class of pleasures to be included in the mixture, namely all pleasures associated with health or with a virtuous condition of the soul. It should be noted that the pleasures of health and virtue must relate to healthy or virtuous *activities* that induce the somatic and psychic processes which make themselves felt as pleasures. The fact that this second group of pleasures is introduced as something *in addition* to the true and pure pleasures indicates that they are not themselves a subset of the true and pure pleasures. Hence, it stands to reason that they are the supplementary impure but “necessary” pleasures that still needed to be identified.²⁹

However, most commentators resist this conclusion. An influential reading suggests

that this clause introduces an additional class of *pure* pleasures not yet mentioned in the discussion of pure pleasures in 50e-53c.³⁰

This is then typically combined with the view that the “necessary pleasures” mentioned in 62e8-10 are not to be identified with this additional class of (allegedly) pure pleasures, but with certain unavoidable pleasures that pertain to the satisfaction of our *basic* human needs—needs that relate to mere survival rather than to what constitutes a eudaimonic life.³¹ A shortcoming of this reading is that it leaves unclear why Socrates mentions them at all in an account of the ingredients that together render human life eudaimonic.

Let's first address the claim that the pleasures relating to health and virtue are introduced as an additional class of *pure* pleasures. This construal of the first sentence in T-1 is not impossible, but the following reasons speak against it: *First*, in his survey of true and pure pleasures in 50e-53c, Socrates emphasizes how important it is that they clearly distinguish which forms of pleasure and knowledge are pure and which aren't, since a comparative evaluation of two genera ought to be based on an appraisal of their pure specimens.³² This makes it unlikely that this survey would leave out a substantial subclass of pure pleasures. The care with which he enumerates three subclasses of pure pleasures (51e5, 7)—two types of pure perceptual and one of pure noetic pleasure—also suggests a concern for completeness.³³ *Second*, when Socrates mentions pure pleasures again in the final ranking of ingredients, he still restricts this class to pleasures induced by noetic grasping or painless sense-perception (66c4-6). If Socrates' remark in T-1 really had the purpose of expanding the scope of pure pleasures, this ought to be reflected in the final ranking.³⁴

Aside from these clear indications in the text, the following philosophical consid-

eration also matters: When talking about pleasures associated with the exercise of virtue/excellence (ἀρετή), the interlocutors cannot resort to an Aristotelian account of pleasure as a mode or concomitant of a state of activation (ἐνέργεια, cf. *EN* X.4-5, 1174a13-75a3, 1175b30-35) sharply distinguished from “processes” or “becomings” (κινήσεις, γενέσεις). They approve instead of the view, rejected by Aristotle (*EN* VII.12, 1153a7-17), that pleasures are process-like “becomings” (γενέσεις), or essentially linked to them, and that such γενέσεις set out from a condition of lack and run *toward* a natural endpoint or goal (τέλος).³⁵ While in the case of the pure pleasures discussed in 50e-53c such lack is naturally unfelt and thus painless, in many other cases it will involve pain. Our human condition requires constant replenishment and restoration, and there is hence ample room for achieving restoration in ways that are virtuous and healthy and also experienced as enjoyable, if not free of pain. This is obvious at least for many healthy somatic pleasures. While health as such, as a state, is a neutral condition between pleasure and pain (cf. *R.* 583cd), healthy activities often convey mixed pleasure. Take, for instance, the case of eating, one of Plato’s favorite examples for a pleasant somatic activity: if done sensibly, it sets out from an (at least) mild feeling of hunger, but it is also pleasant since it restores and preserves a balanced condition of the body. Another example would be physical exercise conveying pain but also satisfaction.

Such examples from the domain of healthy activities already prove that the additional class of good pleasures mentioned in T-1 includes many mixed pleasures. We can make a similar observation regarding the exercise of virtue. Take the following example, which is in line with Plato’s general attitude as a

moralist and with his comments on mixed emotional pleasures in the *Philebus*: For a virtuous agent, the observation of injustice will trigger a painful sense of aversion. But if this agent succeeds in correcting this injustice and subjecting the unjust person to an adequate form of punishment, this will cause a simultaneous experience of pleasant satisfaction.³⁶ A related example is the case of experiencing pain and satisfaction when courageously fighting an unjust attacker.³⁷ A different dimension of the Platonic ethos is marked by the example of virtuous erotic pursuit, which, while giving joys, also involves the painful struggles graphically described in the *Phaedrus*.³⁸

We have seen that the talk of “necessary” additions from the classes of impure cognition and impure pleasure pertains to the discussion of what, beyond the pure forms of knowledge and pleasure, is required in order to complete the human good. As a result of our analysis of the Mixing segment, and also in light of what we have just said about the role of healthy and virtuous restorations in general, it is very likely that the notion of “necessary pleasures” applies to all the mixed forms of pleasure endorsed in T-1 and, moreover, that these are called “necessary” because they correspond to specific constraints of human life which would not afflict divine beings.³⁹ Such human constraints include the need to eat (which ought to be done in a healthy and virtuous manner), the urge to follow one’s *erôs* (while suppressing the bad tendencies that come with it), the social obligation to oppose and correct injustice and to defend the community against assailants, etc. Although these mixed pleasures reflect imperfections of the human condition, they are grounded in the exercise of virtue. As such, they aren’t negatives or simply neutral, but belong to

the specifically human form of eudaimonic excellence.⁴⁰

We still need to address another influential objection against the reading proposed here. It is based on the observation that mixed pleasures are not mentioned in the final ranking of ingredients at the end of the dialogue (66a-c). While the argument of the Mixing segment suggests that there are two distinct classes of pleasures to be included, the final ranking, in combination with a remark in the recapitulatory segment 66d-67b, seems to contradict this conclusion, at least according to how it is usually interpreted by modern scholars. The rather obscure wording of a key sentence in the text makes it difficult to decide whether Socrates means to end his list of ingredients with the fifth rank, occupied by the pure pleasures of sense-perception and scientific understanding, or signals the presence of a sixth rank that could contain other kinds of pleasure, which is how the Neoplatonist commentators read it.⁴¹ In this sentence, Socrates quotes from an Orphic theogony: “When reaching (ἐν) the sixth generation, end the array of the song,” and then adds that their own account likewise “seems to have come to an end when reaching (ἐν) the sixth verdict” (66c8-10).⁴² The Greek wording, by itself, can be interpreted as endorsement or rejection of a sixth class. But there is good independent evidence suggesting that the Orphic poem cited by Socrates was, in fact, an account of six theogonic generations, which, if true, makes it very probable that the quoted phrase is used to signal Socrates’ endorsement of a sixth class of ingredients.⁴³ This class would then certainly include the mixed pleasures of virtuous and healthy pursuits mentioned in T-1, as a counterpart to the fourth rank occupied by the impure cognitive states.

However, the overwhelming majority of modern commentators rejects this reading for two reasons which, at first blush, seem compelling. First, Socrates does not name any ingredients in his final list that would fill the sixth rank. Secondly, the brief recapitulation at the very end of the dialogue assigns the “power of pleasure” to the fifth rank (67a14-15). Since the fifth rank is occupied by pure pleasures (66c4-6), this is taken to imply that he does not endorse the inclusion of any other kinds of pleasure.⁴⁴ In response, one can point out that the final ranking still relates back to the competition between pleasure and cognitive states for the comparatively higher rank, which has been the overarching theme of this dialogue from 22c-e onwards. By ranking the purest forms of pleasure below even the impure and inferior forms of cognition (cf. 22de), Socrates seals the defeat of pleasure in this contest. To drive his point home, he does not have to spell out what belongs to the even lower sixth rank. This observation also helps to explain why the telegraphic recapitulation at the very end only mentions the assignment of the “power of pleasure” to the fifth rank. In addition, one could also argue that they are not representative *specifically* of the power (δύναμις) of pleasure since mixed pleasures contain an element of pain. In sum, the final ranking can plausibly be read as endorsing six ranks. Yet my case for the inclusion of certain mixed pleasures does not rest on an interpretation of this ambiguous passage, but on a close reading of the Mixing segment.

4

Our analysis of T-1 has shown that there are two different classes of pleasures that qualify as ingredients of the good. They cor-

respond to two independent sufficient criteria for inclusion: pleasures qualify either because they are pure and genuine or thanks to their association with virtue or health. This latter criterion has, as we have seen, the purpose of justifying certain mixed pleasures as components of the human good. Purity is, hence, not a necessary condition for inclusion. We may formulate the two criteria as follows:

(*C-purity*) If a pleasure is genuine and pure, it is a valid ingredient of the human good.

(*C-aretê*) If a pleasure is a concomitant of virtuous or healthy activity, it is a valid ingredient of the human good.

The last clause of T-1 also suggests a negative criterion based on whether or not a pleasure is connected to a bad condition of the body or soul (63e7-64a1). Socrates talks about how utterly absurd (πολλή που ἀλογία) it would be if someone whose aim is “a mixture and blend most beautiful and free of discord (ἄστασιαστοτάτη)” were to add such pleasures. On the face of it, this is merely the statement of a criterion for exclusion from the good, but we can safely assume that it is also intended as a criterion for badness. Pleasures of this kind aren’t simply indifferent or half-way between good and bad; they are bad because they antagonize the primary elements of the mixture and destroy its unity and cohesion (cf. 63d2-e3). This sets them in direct opposition to the good. We may paraphrase this negative criterion as follows:

(*NC-kakia*) If a pleasure is linked to some persistent flawed condition of the soul or to an unhealthy condition of the body, it is opposed to the good life (and hence bad).⁴⁵

In my formulation of this criterion, I speak of “persistent” defects since one could argue that all mixed pleasures—including the ones associated with healthy eating, virtuous corrective action, etc.—entail temporary deficits that make themselves felt as pain. *NC-kakia* has to be restricted to *persistent* defective states *resisting* restoration. Only these qualify as forms of badness.⁴⁶ While *C-aretê* has *NC-kakia* as its negative counterpart, there can be no analogous counterpart for *C-purity*. Impurity is not a criterion for exclusion from the good since certain mixed pleasures have turned out to be valid components of the good.

Could the joint application of *C-purity* and *NC-kakia* produce inconsistent results? Such a situation would arise if some unmixed pleasures expressed a bad attitude. As for the pure cognitive and perceptual pleasures discussed in 50e-53c, it is certain that Plato views them as fully compatible with a virtuous and healthy disposition: advancing one’s scientific understanding, or enjoying inherently beautiful perceptual objects (52cd), is never, in itself, an expression of a bad disposition. But couldn’t *schadenfreude*, for instance, be a case of unmixed but morally defective pleasure? Even worse, couldn’t sadistic pleasures be experienced by some without admixture of pain? If so, our moral intuitions would require that this conflict be resolved by stipulating that *NC-kakia* overrides *C-purity*. It is, however, more likely that Plato thinks that morally bad pleasures are never pure of pain. A case in point is the long digression on pleasures of malice or *schadenfreude* in 47d-50d, which aims to demonstrate that such pleasures too contain an element of pain, caused by some form of ill-will (φθόνος, 48b, 50a) but not easy to detect (48ab). A remark in 52a5-b3 suggests, moreover, that Plato’s notion of pure pleasures is meant to apply to pleasures that are pure

of pain *according to their nature*. C-purity should, hence, be understood as singling out types of pleasure that are naturally pure. While it might be impossible to establish that every individual instance of *schadenfreude* contains a (perhaps barely noticeable) element of pain, Plato could still hold that mixture with pain is natural for this type of pleasure.

We have established that the “additional” class of pleasures endorsed in T-1 includes certain mixed pleasures. Could it also include pleasures that are false in one of the three other senses distinguished by Plato? The philosophically most interesting and challenging case would be that of anticipatory pleasures based on mistaken expectations, which have received so much scrutiny in this dialogue. Let's turn to the question if they are categorically excluded from the mixture. Based on our results so far, there are two options for justifying exclusion: If it should be the case that all pleasures that result from a false belief or false belief-*cum*-imagination are grounded in a persistent flawed condition of the soul, then they are all condemned by NC-*kakia*. Alternatively, representational falsehood could function as an independent negative criterion (in light, especially, of Socrates' remark at 40e9-10). I am going to explore, first, whether NC-*kakia* is by itself sufficient to condemn all RepF pleasures.⁴⁷

Plato might, indeed, hold that error is always the consequence of some blameworthy intellectual failure. If so, NC-*kakia* would apply to all RepF-pleasures since Plato's notion of badness (*kakia*) in the soul is certainly broad enough to cover any case of *blameworthy* ignorance. The view that all error reveals some form of badness was later held by the Stoics. It can be established quite easily that this is not Plato's position. It is, of course, impossible that a rational person (or, in fact,

any person at all) would *knowingly* embrace illusory hopes, as this would entail the absurd proposition that some people could believe something they know to be false. Yet Plato is not, like an orthodox Stoic, committed to the idea that a virtuous person would never entertain *uncertain* beliefs. There are, to be sure, the many passages in the dialogues that urge us to test our beliefs so that we can recognize unwarranted or unclear beliefs, become aware of our ignorance, and start searching for better comprehension.⁴⁸ But it is also clear that the Platonic Socrates would not in all instances strictly withhold judgment until he has reached some ultimate clarification. Already in the early dialogues, Socrates' famous “disavowal of (expert) knowledge” does not prevent him from expressing certain strong ethical convictions. In the so-called middle-period dialogues, the Socrates character draws a crucial distinction between subject-matters that are in themselves perfectly knowable—the domain of unqualified truth—and subject-matters whose ontological imperfections render them unsuitable for rigorous science: the domain of the phenomenal or physical world.⁴⁹ This also affects the field of practical and political action. On account of the uncertainties and irregularities of the phenomenal world, our beliefs about the concrete situations that demand action and about the projected outcomes cannot be strictly scientific. Yet we need to form such beliefs if we want to act (as we must),⁵⁰ notwithstanding the fact that we risk error when judging under conditions of uncertainty.

The *Philebus* likewise endorses judgments about matters that don't allow for certainty. The way in which the segment on cognitive abilities (55c-59d) correlates the higher and lower cognitive skills with the different ontological qualities of their subject-matters

is in basic agreement with the metaphysical epistemology of the *Republic* or the *Timaeus*. We have seen that the *Philebus* argues for the inclusion of the lower “stochastic” forms of cognition among the ingredients of the human good. While the discussion in 55c-59d does not explicitly mention ethical and political deliberation about concrete situations and outcomes,⁵¹ the metaphysical distinctions in this segment imply that such deliberations and projections can never attain full certainty.⁵² It lies, moreover, in our human nature that projections of hoped-for outcomes elicit feelings of joyful anticipation. They too are, hence, an aspect of what it means to live a virtuous life, notwithstanding the fact that any one of them may turn out to be mistaken.

Take the following example which seems in line with Plato’s general attitude as an ethicist and educator: Whenever someone is committed to doing any kind of good to another person or group of persons—be it a friend or loved-one, a talented student, or the political community—one will engage in this activity with the hope and expectation that the chosen course of action will actually be helpful.⁵³ This positive expectation ought to be accompanied by a pleasant feeling if there is any real caring for the other person or the community. But, because of the uncertainty of future outcomes, this may turn out to have been an illusory hedonic anticipation. Another important area of cheerful if uncertain anticipation concerns the philosopher’s expectations about the afterlife, as exemplified by Socrates (*Ap.* 40c-41d, *Phd.* 114d-115a). Socrates cannot vouch for the truth of his mythical narratives, but whether or not they’ll come true, they help philosophically minded people to stay the course of a virtuous life and not be compromised by fear of death.

At 39e-40c, in the course of his discussion of anticipatory pleasures, Socrates makes a

remark that suggests a connection of true expectations with virtue and false expectations with lack of virtue. At first sight, this seems to contradict our interim result that mistaken hopeful anticipations are an occurrence also in virtuous human life. Yet Socrates qualifies his remark by adding that the hopes of good people will come true “for the most part” (ὡς τὸ πολὺ, 40b). In other words, *not all of their hopeful expectations will come true*. Since *good* people, by definition, are not subject to “some persistent defective condition of the soul,” i.e., to depravity or foolishness, yet nevertheless occasionally err, it follows that not *all* mistaken anticipatory pleasures satisfy the negative criterion NC-*kakia*.⁵⁴ Since, moreover, the erroneous projections of the kind just described are linked to virtuous attitudes and activities, the concomitant pleasures not only *don’t succumb* NC-*kakia*, but also *satisfy* C-*aretê*. They should, hence, not only not be classified as bad, but also be included among the elements of the human good. This is, however, only an interim result since there might be other indications in the text would that allow us to infer that Plato views the representational falsehood of a pleasure as a negative criterion in its own right, warranting the exclusion of all such pleasures from the good.

5

Our discussion in the preceding segment came to the conclusion that, judging solely on the basis of the criteria contained in T-1, the occasional mistaken joyful anticipations that occur in the pursuit of virtuous goals are not only not bad, but a concomitant of the human good, just like any other joyful anticipation which is both sensible and virtuously moti-

vated. However, a remark by Socrates, placed in the form of a question at the end of the segment on false anticipatory pleasures (40e9-10), is usually taken as a commitment to the idea that this kind of falsehood, just by itself, qualifies a pleasure as bad. If this is the lesson we readers are supposed to learn, RepF would function as an independent negative criterion applicable to all belief-based pleasures (NC-RepF). We would, moreover, have to assume that this criterion overrides *C-aretê* in those cases in which a virtuous person, reasonably pursuing some virtuous goal, joyfully entertains a mistaken hope. Note that NC-RepF could come in a stronger and a weaker version: as the rule that no representationally false pleasure can contribute to the good, or as the rule that all such pleasures are bad and hence antagonize the good.

Before I comment on 40e9-10 and its context, let's first look at a remark in the Mixing segment which could also suggest that RepF pleasures are categorically excluded from the human good. At 64a7-b4 (repeated at 64e9-11), Socrates declares that a mixture cannot turn out good unless *truth* is also included in the mixture. One might try to infer from this statement that the good mixture excludes any components characterized by falsehood. However, this notion of "adding truth to the mixture" is still very vague. We can narrow down what Plato has in mind if we look at Socrates' supporting argument. He remarks that nothing could "truly (ἀληθῶς) become anything or, as a result of having become it, be anything," unless "truth" (ἀλήθεια) is added. This is a metaphorical way of saying that nothing can either become or be F unless it *truly* becomes or is F—at first sight, a trivial observation since the added "truly" seems redundant. Yet there is a substantive point that motivates Socrates' remark. It harks back to a

normative notion of mixture⁵⁵ in connection with a normative notion of ontological truth.⁵⁶ For Plato, *random* mixing does not yet produce a "true" or genuine mixture. For a mixture to be "true" it needs to attain some form of measured harmonious unity thanks to which it will be stable. Otherwise it would quickly self-destroy (64de). A mixture is, hence, good qua mixture, if and only if it is true in this specific sense.

Since this argument talks about truth as an ontological quality of the mixture *as a whole*,⁵⁷ it would amount to a fallacy of division if we drew any direct inferences regarding the truth or veridicality of its components. Plato is far from committing this fallacy, as we can gather from the fact that he has Socrates include impure forms of cognition in the mixture. These, as we know from 55c-59d, don't reveal any stable and precise form of truth and often have to rely on conjecture (εικάζειν) and stochastic judgment, which are imprecise forms of judgment susceptible to error.⁵⁸ In the Mixing segment, he even explicitly states that some cognitive components of the human good will involve falsity, such as the craft that uses "the *false* ruler and circle" (62b5-6), viz., the craft of building, as a form of applied geometry.⁵⁹ Our analysis of the Mixing segment has, moreover, shown that some untrue pleasures (in the UTMix sense) also qualify as ingredients of the good mixture, provided they satisfy *C-aretê*. While truth undoubtedly functions as a pivotal aspect of the good in Plato's thought, the *Philebus* does not advocate a simplistic correlation between truth and goodness such that all components of the good would also have to manifest truth in every respect.⁶⁰

However, the fact that Plato allows for some aspects of falsehood for some components of the good still leaves open the possibility that

he views representational falsehood as strictly disqualifying. This takes us to 40e9-10, which comes at the end of the segment on RepF-falsity (36c-41a) and suggests the strong version of NC-RepF. To be sure, Socrates presents this claim only in the form of a question, and his interlocutor refuses to agree. But a careful reading of segment 36c-41a in its entirety reveals how Socrates has repeatedly tried to prod Protarchus toward accepting a firm link between representational falsehood and the *badness* of a pleasure, leading up to his proposal in 40e9-10. There is, accordingly, a general agreement among scholars that Plato's investigation of hedonic RepF-falsity aims to establish that all such pleasures are bad.⁶¹ In order to ascertain if this is really the best way to read this passage, we need to review the argumentative drift of this segment.

The first mention of badness (*πονηρία*) in this segment occurs at 37d, in the course of Socrates' initial failed attempt to convince Protarchus of the possibility of false pleasures. Socrates then makes a fresh start (38a-40e), and the key part of his new argumentation (39e-40c) introduces a quasi-theological assumption that is presented as a support for the premise that humans often have false hopes. It also brings the notion of badness back into the argument. Socrates suggests, with the approval of Protarchus, that the hopes of people who are good, just, and pious will come true for the most part because such people are *dear to the gods* (*θεοφιλεῖς*), whereas bad people (*ἄδικοι, κακοί, πονηροί*) will see their hopes dashed for the most part (40b, cf. Lg. 715e-6d). This statement appeals to the popular belief in earthly success or failure as a result of divine reward and punishment, a belief that (at least superficially) is in harmony with the idea of divine governance emphatically embraced by Protarchus at 28e.⁶² Yet Socrates could have

obtained agreement to the truism that many human hopes fail without this excursion into popular theology. It is therefore likely that this detour serves some additional purpose—but which?

As soon as Socrates has completed his argument and secured Protarchus' concession that there are false pleasures of anticipation, mostly affecting bad people, he tries to make him admit that these pleasures are bad on account of their falsity:

T-2 Socr.: Now then, can we say of judgments (*δόξας*) that they are bad and useless⁶³ in any other way than because they turn out to be false (*ψευδεῖς γιγνομένας*)?

Prot.: In no other way.

Socr.: Nor, I presume, will we find a way in which pleasures could be bad other than by being false?

Prot.: What you have just said, Socrates, is quite the opposite [*i.e., of the truth*]. One would hardly regard pains and pleasures as bad because of their falsity, but, rather, because they are affected by some other great and considerable badness (*πονηρία*).
Socr.: Well, we shall talk a little later about pleasures that are bad and are such because of badness, if it will still suit us; [...]. (40e6-41a4)

In this quote, Protarchus accepts falsehood as the criterion of badness for beliefs, but resists Socrates' suggestion that it is the relevant criterion of badness also for anticipatory pleasures. He suggests instead that pleasures are bad on account of "some other great and considerable badness." He does not specify what kind of badness he has in mind, but we can assume that his response is influenced by the example in 40a and how it is framed. This example evokes the case of

a man who expects to gain much wealth and who looks forward to spending it on some unspecified pleasures. Socrates then brings up the endoxic theological view that thanks to the gods the hopes of bad people will usually turn out to be mistaken. This contextualization entices Protarchus (and the readers) to connect the case of a mistaken anticipatory pleasure with the idea of someone who would spend his wealth on ethically worthless or depraved desires. It is with this kind of scenario in mind that Protarchus now strongly resists the suggestion that representational falsehood, rather than moral failure, is the pertinent criterion of badness for anticipatory pleasures. This might be the clue that tells us why Socrates incorporates the theological consideration into his reasoning. It is unnecessary for validating the premise that not all human hopes come true, as this is a generally accepted truism. But it can be useful as a conversational stratagem to direct the attention to moral badness and to thus goad Protarchus into giving this kind of response. In other words, the very purpose of Socrates' maneuver might be to elicit this reaction from Protarchus, who initially had claimed that no pleasure, as such, could be bad (13bc). And indeed, as soon as Protarchus has committed himself to the existence of false pleasures whose badness is grounded in "some other great and considerable badness," viz., moral deficiency, Socrates abruptly postpones further discussion of NC-*kakia*. While his discussion of intense mixed pleasures will again evoke the notion of a pleasure that is bad because of the presence of some bad condition in the body or the soul (45e6), he will no longer link badness of a pleasure to RepF falsity.⁶⁴

Socrates' suggestion in T-2, 40e9-10, is usually read as an expression of his own belief.

Interpreters are then disappointed that he does not provide further clarification.⁶⁵ One might think that this is just one of the loose ends in the *Philebus*. Yet there are good reasons for concluding that Socrates' tentative proposal, resisted by Protarchus, is indeed just a teaser and does not express his considered view.⁶⁶ First, his suggestion that there is not "any other way in which pleasures could be bad than by being false" claims an exclusivity for NC-RepF which is not only manifestly absurd (since the belief-based pleasures of bad people aren't always factually wrong),⁶⁷ but also incompatible with his endorsement of NC-*kakia* in the Mixing segment.⁶⁸ Socrates' first argument in the dialogue for the existence of bad pleasures (12cd) already pointed to the idea that the connection with vice (ἀκολασταίνων) and foolishness (ἀνοηταίνων) renders a pleasure bad; and this is then confirmed in the Mixing segment (cf. T-1). His proposal in T-2 is just an outlier and can be explained, as we have seen, as part of a conversational stratagem.

Second, the *Philebus* compares judging falsely to attempting to hit a target but missing it (38d). False judgments are *dysfunctional* in that they have a goal (viz., semantic truth) which they miss. This provides an obvious teleological reason for why falsehood is the relevant criterion for a judgment's badness, qua judgment: a false judgment is "bad" on account of this dysfunctionality, without specifically moral connotations. Psychic pleasures, on the other hand, in Plato's no less than in Aristotle's understanding, express moral-cum-intellectual attitudes. To be pleased at the thought of an expected outcome one has good epistemic reasons to anticipate and good moral reasons to approve of, is a virtuous hedonic reaction, even if (because of unforeseeable circumstances) the expected outcome should fail to materialize.

We should, hence, conclude that Socrates' suggestion in T-2 does not amount to an endorsement of NC-RepF. It does not represent his (or Plato's) considered view. This is why it is also not validated by an explicit agreement among the interlocutors. Our analysis of the argumentative drift of 36c-41a with respect to bad pleasures provides, to be sure, only a negative result, telling us what is not a conclusion in this segment. Yet the fact that Socrates also nowhere else in this dialogue endorses representational falsehood as an independent criterion for the badness of a pleasure, together with the fact that the practice of virtue under conditions of uncertainty includes mistaken anticipations and that the interlocutors later agree that all pleasures linked to the exercise of virtue are legitimate components of the human good, entitles the reader to conclude that even mistaken pleasures of anticipation, if grounded in virtue, count toward the good. Mistaken anticipations are, to be sure, often the result of foolishness or intellectual laziness. These are bad because they manifest a blameworthy disposition. But taking pleasure in a future state of affairs one has good reasons to expect and good ethical reasons to welcome reveals a good disposition of the soul and is, hence, an aspect of the human good realized under conditions of uncertainty.

In sum, this essay has shown that the theory of the *Philebus* includes certain flawed or "false" pleasures among the contributing factors of the "human good." Our analysis of the Mixing segment has shown that it is best read as endorsing mixed pleasures associated with a healthy or virtuous disposition. This is not the trivial claim that mixed pleasures occur even in a virtuous person's life. It responds, rather, to the guiding question of the *Philebus* concerning the components of the human good that together render a life

eudaimonic. The more speculative part of our investigation concerned the status of mistaken hedonic anticipations. It has established that the interlocutors do not commit to condemning belief-based pleasures solely on the grounds that the belief is false. It has also shown that the dialogue acknowledges the cognitive uncertainties involved in human action, which are the reason why the exercise of virtue and practical deliberation creates at least some mistaken anticipatory pleasures that can relate to significant aspects of a virtuous life. Since the interlocutors endorse both pure and virtue-based pleasures, the arguments of the dialogue enable the reader to conclude that such instances of mistaken hopeful anticipation also count among the good pleasures of a humanly pleasant and eudaimonic life.⁶⁹

Bibliography

- Brandt, R. (1977). Wahre und falsche Affekte im platonischen *Philebus*. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 59, p. 1-18.
- Carone, G. R. (2000). Hedonism and the Pleasureless Life in Plato's *Philebus*. *Phronesis* 45, p. 257-283.
- Cooper, J. M. (1977). Plato's Theory of Human Good in the *Philebus*. *Journal of Philosophy* 74, p. 714-730.
- Damascius (1959). *Lectures on the Philebus wrongly attributed to Olympiodorus*. Text, translation, notes, etc. by Westerink, L. G. North-Holland Publ., Amsterdam.
- Delcomminette, S. (2006). *Le Philèbe de Platon. Introduction à l'agathologie Platonicienne*. Brill, Leiden.
- Dillon, J (2003). *The Heirs of Plato. A Study of the Old Academy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Evans, M. (2008). Plato on the Possibility of Hedonic Mistakes. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 35, p. 89-124.
- Fletcher, E. (2014). Plato on Pure Pleasure and the Best Life. *Phronesis* 59, p. 113-142.
- Fletcher, E. (2018). Plato on Incorrect and Deceptive Pleasures. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 100, p. 379-410.

- Frede, D. (1985). Rumpelstiltskin's Pleasures: True and False Pleasures in Plato's *Philebus*, *Phronesis* 30, p. 151-180.
- Frede, D. (1993). *Plato: Philebus*. Translated with introduction and notes. Hackett, Indianapolis.
- Frede, D. (1997). *Platon: Philebos*. Übersetzung und Kommentar (= E. Heitsch, C. W. Müller [eds.]. *Platon: Werke*, vol. III.2). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1931). *Platos dialektische Ethik: Phänomenologische Interpretationen zum Philebos*. Meiner, Leipzig.
- Gosling, J. C. B. (1975). *Plato: Philebus*. Translated with notes and commentary. Clarendon, Oxford.
- Gosling, J. C. B. and C. C. W. Taylor (1982). *The Greeks on Pleasure*. Clarendon, Oxford.
- Guhtrie, W. K. C. (1978). *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 5. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Hackforth, R. (1945). *Plato's Examination of Pleasure (The Philebus)*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Harte, V. (2004). The *Philebus* on Pleasure: The Good, The Bad and The False. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 104, p. 113-130.
- Ionescu, CH. (2019). *On the Good Life*. SUNY Press, Albany.
- Irwin, T. (1995). *Plato's Ethics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Kenny, A. (1960). False Pleasures in the *Philebus*. A Reply to Mr Gosling. *Phronesis* 4, p. 45-52.
- Lovibond, S. (1989/90). True and False Pleasures. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 90, p. 213-230.
- Migliori, M. (1993). *L'uomo fra piacere, intelligenza e Bene. Commentario storico-filosofico al "Filebo" di Platone*. Vita e Pensiero, Milano.
- Mooradian, N. (1996). "Converting Protarchus: Relativism and False Pleasures of Anticipation in Plato's *Philebus*." *Ancient Philosophy* 16, p. 93-112.
- Mouroutsou, G. (2016). "Placing Pure Pleasures beyond the Chain of Hunger." In Jirsa, J.; Karfik, F.; Špinka, Š. (eds.). *Plato's Philebus. Proc. of the 9th Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, 130-151. Οικουμενη, Prague.
- Muniz, F. (2014). Propositional Pleasures in Plato's *Philebus*. *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* (São Paulo) 8.1, p. 49-75.
- Penner, T. M. I. (1970). False Anticipatory Pleasures: *Philebus* 36a3-41a6. *Phronesis* 15, p. 166-78.
- Philippson, R. (1925): Verhandlungen über die akademische Lustlehre. *Hermes* 60, p. 444-481.
- Shorey, P. (1933). *What Plato Said*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Stallbaum, G. (1842). *Platonis Philebus, recensuit, prolegomenis et commentariis illustravit*. Menning, Gotha.
- Szaif, J. (1996/98). *Platons Begriff der Wahrheit* (2nd edition 1998). Alber, Freiburg/München.
- Szaif, J. (2017). Socrates and the Benefits of Puzzlement. In: Karamanolis, G.; Politis, V. (eds.). *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 29-47.
- Szaif, J. (2018). Plato and Aristotle on Truth and Falsehood. In: Glanzberg, M. (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Truth*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 9-49.
- Taylor, A. E. (1956). *Plato: Philebus and Epinomis*. Translation and Introduction. Nelson & Sons, London.
- Teisserenc, F. (1999). "L'empire du faux ou le plaisir de l'image. *Philèbe* 37A-41A." In: Dixsaut, M. (ed.). *La fêlure du plaisir*, vol. 1: *Commentaires*. Vrin, Paris, p. 267-297.
- Tuozzo, Th. M. (1996). The General Account of Pleasure in the *Philebus*. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, p. 495-513.
- Vogt, K. M. (2017). *Desiring the Good. Ancient Proposals and Contemporary Theory*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Warren, J. (2014). *The Pleasures of Reason in Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic Hedonists*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Waterfield, R. A. H. (1982). *Plato: Philebus*, translated with an introduction. Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- West, M. L. (1983). *The Orphic Poems*. Clarendon, Oxford.
- Whiting, J. (2014). Fools Pleasures in Plato's *Philebus*. In: Lee, M.-K. (ed.). *Strategies of Argument. Essays in Ancient Ethics, Epistemology, and Logic*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 31-59.
- Wolfsdorf, D. (2013). *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Notes

¹ Cf. Philippson 1925; Dillon 203, p. 64-77.

² Cf. Cooper 1977, p. 726-30; also Irwin 1995, p. 331 (referencing Cooper); Carone 2000, p. 282f; Mouroutsou 2016, p. 135; Ionescu 2019, p. 63-68.

- ³ Cf. 31a-32b, 34c-36c. Initially, Socrates talks as if somatic pleasures are to be *identified* with restorative processes *in the body* (32ab, cf. 31d, 42cd), yet his considered view, according to 43b1-c7 (cf. 33c-34a), is that somatic pleasures occur only if the change in the body is powerful enough to cause a joint motion in the soul; cf. Tuozzo 1996, p. 498–502. Strictly speaking, the account of somatic pleasures as felt *restorations* applies only to the normative case of *healthy* somatic pleasures. Bad somatic pleasures compensate for a felt lack or imbalance without restoring the natural harmony of the body (cf. 44e-47b; also *Ti.* 86b-e). All very intense somatic pleasures are like this (45e).
- ⁴ Cf. Gosling 1975: 212 (“rank equivocation”).
- ⁵ Gadamer 1931, Frede 1993 and 1997, Irwin 1995, p. 328f, and Wolfsdorf 2013 adopt a similar fourfold breakdown of false pleasures. Other commentators acknowledge only a threefold division (e.g., Hackforth 1945; Gosling 1975; Delcomminette 2006).
- ⁶ A so-called “new school”-approach developed by Harte 2004 and others (following up on Lovibond 1989/90) claims that the pleasures in question are false because, roughly, they incorporate a wrong belief or attitude regarding what is truly enjoyable (similarly Brandt 1977, p. 11-18; Teisserenc 1999), yet the example in 40a9-12 and the remarks in 40c8-d10 show that Socrates is talking here about factual expectations regarding the future; see also Evans 2008, p. 93–103 and Whiting 2014 for criticism of this approach and section 5 below for an analysis of 39e-40c.
- ⁷ ἔλπις and its cognates in 36a7-c1 and 39e4-40a6 (cf. 47c7) are usually translated as “hope,” but Socrates’ example is more accurately described as a case of (positive) “expectation.” One can knowingly hope against the odds, while expectation entails that one views the outcome as probable. Cf. *Lg.* 644c-d for ἔλπις in the sense of “expectation.”
- ⁸ This comes very close to Gosling’s reconstruction of the argument in 40a3-e5 (1975, p. 215-19), except that Gosling thinks that this position involves a fallacious identification of picture and picturing and that only the picture could be said to be true or false. I would grant Socrates that he is not talking about the “image” as an abstract repeatable content but as an individual and dynamic mental act and that such acts, just as the act of judging, can be conceived as legitimate truth-bearers. The main crux among the various problems with this argument (cf. Gosling/Taylor 1982, p. 437-440) is the apparently illegitimate leap from the falsehood of an image that represents a falsely assumed future pleasure to the notion of a false feeling of pleasure. To bridge this gap, we have to assume that Socrates equates the currently experienced pleasure of anticipation with the act of gladly imagining an expected future pleasure. This is how he can conceive of anticipatory pleasure as having a representational content.
- ⁹ The question of how the meaning of ψευδής, as an attribute of RepF pleasures, compares to falsehood as a quality of beliefs, remains a controversial topic. Are pleasures of anticipation *propositional attitudes* whose propositional content can be true or false (cf. 37a and Penner 1970; Frede 1985)? Or does the *Philebus* contain merely a vague idea of false belief-*cum*-imagination somehow “filling” or “infecting” anticipatory pleasure with its falsehood (cf. 42a7-9 and Mooradian 1996, p. 103; cf. Muniz 2014 for a review of this debate)? My analysis of 40a3-e5, which I cannot lay out here, has some kinship with the propositional attitude approach since it views anticipatory pleasure as constituted by an act of imagination that has a representational content and is true or false as a function of the truth-value of the belief it illustrates. It is, however, not unproblematic to equate the content of an imagination with a proposition. Images don’t seem to have the kind of logical structure that characterizes propositions (such as a subject-predicate structure, quantifiers, etc), and they also offer more detail than the proposition they illustrate.
- ¹⁰ While the use of the truth terminology to denote aspects of “ontological truth” is conceptually dependent on the basic semantic sense of “truth,” those usages are still different in important ways; cf. Szaif 1996/8, p. 25-71; 2018, p. 9-14.
- ¹¹ This is, admittedly, a controversial interpretative approach to 41b11-42b7. What it does presuppose is a capacity for internal observation of one’s psychological states susceptible to misleading appearances. Appearances, generally speaking, are attributed to the object of a perception or judgment. They are dispositions to cause misperception and misjudgment. In the case of a transitory private internal object like a motion in the soul, it is, to be sure, harder to see how its appearance could be anything other than how it is perceived here and now by the subject. But linguistically, there is still a clear difference between predicating of an internal object that it appears in a certain way and predicating of the subject that it perceives the object in a certain way. The partly illusory character is attributed to the internal object on account of its inflated or deflated appearance, and this is the criterion for classifying the sense of “falsehood” involved as falling under the ontological notion of truth. The truth or falsehood of an internal perception or perceptual judgment (cf. 21c4f, 60d7-e1), by contrast, is a case of representational or semantic truth-value.
- ¹² Commentators often relate FA-*part* to situations in which the size of a *current* somatic pleasure is overestimated in comparison to *future* pain (e.g., Frede 1997, p. 261f; Warren 2014, p. 124f; also Damascius, §187). Yet this does not agree with the first part of Socrates’ argument (41b11-d4, cf. Delcomminette 2006, p. 401), which refers back to the case of somatic *pain* triggering a desire and pleasant antici-

pation. The key sentence in the second part of the argument (42b2-6) is grammatically difficult, but amenable to a construal in line with the example of pleasant anticipation: anticipating a desired future pleasure, one brings it closer to the mind's eye and, by the same token, creates a mental distance from the current somatic pain (taking διὰ τὸ πόρρωθὲν τε καὶ ἐγγύθεν ἐκάστοτε μεταβαλλόμεναι θεωρεῖσθαι as indicating the switching of the distances whenever the mental focus turns). This reversal alters the appearance and thus affects the mind's comparative assessment (ἄμα τιθόμεναι παρ' ἀλλήλας). This is plausible phenomenologically: feeling thirsty and longing for a glass of water, the apparent intensity of the anticipated pleasant act is liable to become inflated (cf. Wolfsdorf 2013, p. 86, Gadamer 1931, p. 140).

¹³ Cf. 42b8-c3. The idea of subtracting (ἀποτεμόμενος) the unreal part from an *inflated* hedonic impression (τὸ φαινόμενον ἀλλ' οὐκ ὄν) is still quite intuitive, but the sentence in question speaks of subtraction with respect to both inflated and deflated pleasures and pains. In the case of deflation, this would have to be subtraction of the *negative* numerical value relative to the real size. The sentence also assumes two levels of distinguishable inflated or deflated things, the φαινόμενον (the pleasant or painful act or situation as it appears?) and the correlating feeling of pleasure or pain (τὸ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μέρος τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ λύπης γιγνόμενον).

¹⁴ Cf. *R.* 583cd. The *Philebus* does not give an example.

¹⁵ D. Frede 1993, p. 39 (n. 2) and 1997, p. 273 (n. 83) claims that the *Philebus* is committed to the "facticity" or "incorrigibility" of pleasure (an idea suggested by Socrates in the form of a question at 36e5-8) and that the segment on merely apparent pleasure formulates not an actual phenomenon, but a theoretical idea held by some philosophers. However, while it is true that 42c-44a introduces this notion as a lead-up to Socrates' critique of the extreme anti-hedonist, his introductory remark at 42c5-7 (cf. 51a3-6) extends the experience of this kind of illusion not just to ordinary people, but to sentient living beings in general. In the *Republic* (583d-585a), merely apparent pleasure is also clearly presented as a real-life phenomenon. Cf. Whiting 2014: p. 29-32; Fletcher 2018.

¹⁶ Wolfsdorf 2013 also uses the terminology of semantic and representational *versus* ontological truth or falsehood, but classifies the second type differently, viz., as a form of representational falsehood (p. 89f, 99f), arguing that in this case the pleasure is still real qua pleasure, only its size is misjudged. Yet see n. 11 above. The fact that Plato tries to reduce this second type, FA-part, to FA-whole also indicates that he sees them as closely related.

¹⁷ In 42c5-7 (cf. 51a3-9), Socrates transitions to the discussion of FA-whole and UTMix (ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας ... φαινόμενας [=FA-whole] τε καὶ οὐσας

[=UTMix]) by saying that these are "even more false (ψευδεῖς ἔτι μᾶλλον)" than FA-part; cf. D. Frede 1997, p. 265, 274f; also Wolfsdorf 2013, p. 88.

¹⁸ In 51a, Socrates states that intense mixed pleasures are "ostensibly (φαντασθείσας) both intense and numerous," while they are actually "kneaded together with pains as well as release from most intense pains." The φαντασθείσας should not be interpreted as a denial of the reality of the hedonic components in mixed pleasure since the same sentence clearly distinguishes them from the case of merely apparent pleasures (τινὰς ἡδονὰς εἶναι δοκούσας, οὐσας δ' οὐδαμῶς). In this regard, the argument of the *Philebus* differs from that of the *Republic*, where he does seem to reduce mixed pleasure to a mere appearance of pleasure (584d-585a, 586a-c). The context of 51a is important: Socrates is driving at the idea that the intensity of these pleasures makes them appear more real than the pure pleasures he is going to discuss next, which is why hedonists of a certain kind—the type represented by the fictional character of Philebus, or the real personality of Aristippus the elder—no less than their anti-hedonist opponents like to focus on them. In truth, those pure pleasures are the more real ones (cf. 44d-45c together with 52d-53c). The intensity of such hedonic motions has nevertheless a basis in reality since the underlying strong imbalance in the body or the soul causes intense desires, the satisfaction of which results in violent hedonic motions (cf. Stallbaum 1842, p. 53). Gosling 1975, p. 224 mentions the distinction between "elements in the good life" and "elements that make some contribution to its goodness." Cf. Vogt 2017, p. 19-27 on the meaning of the question "What is the good?" in the *Philebus*.

²⁰ 63a1-2 (cf. 62a-c, d1-3) mentions two criteria, positive utility value (ὠφέλιμον) and the absence of negative utility value (not causing harm, ἀβλαβές), connecting them with a τε...καὶ-construction. I take this to mean that a good skill has to be *both* useful *and* such as not to be, in its specific nature, a source of harm.

²¹ This theory is only adumbrated; cf. 20d, 60bc on goodness and desirability; 64c-e on the connection of goodness and beauty with the presence of fitting measures and proportions (μετρίότης, ἔμμετρία, συμμετρία) (cf. Frede 1997, p. 359f); 30a-c, together with 25b-26c, on how intellect, operating as a cause, provides mixture with fitting measures and proportions and thus generates stable well-ordered being both in individual people and in the entire cosmos; 66ab on the primacy of measure and proportion among the constitutive factors of the human good.

²² This notion of the good is referred to in 22d5-7 (cf. 64c7-9) ("whatever this thing is thanks to which, when acquired, [the mixed] life becomes both desirable and good"). Socrates argues that scientific understanding and knowledge has a particularly high degree of kinship to this principle (65d), yet

- he attributes measuredness also to the class of pure pleasures (52cd).
- ²³ In 62d8-e1, Socrates remarks that they can no longer apply the Mixing Rule as planned since they have already allowed impure forms of knowledge into the mixture before starting to add pure specimens of pleasure. However, this should not be understood as a dismissal of this rule, but as an acknowledgement of the flaws in the actual course of their investigation. They have followed the rule at least partially, at any rate, since they added the pure forms of cognition before the impure forms. They'll do the same with regard to pleasures, as we will see.
- ²⁴ Socrates justified his focus on purity by referring to the following methodological principle for comparative evaluation: The comparative assessment of cognition and pleasure ought to be based on an evaluation of their pure specimens, since only those can reveal the intrinsic nature and value of the phenomenon in question (52d6-e4, 55c4-9, 57a9-b2, cf. 32c6-d6). In the segment that actually carries out the comparative evaluation (64c-66a), Socrates lets Protarchus take the lead, and he fails to restrict the comparison to pure specimens. But the Mixing segment and the Final Ranking (66a-d) make use of the distinction between pure and impure specimens.
- ²⁵ Plato distinguishes between a pleasure's *being grounded in a belief* and its *grounding a belief* (e.g., a belief about the occurrence of a pleasure or its size and quality); cf. 41d1-42b7; 21c4-5, 60d7-8.
- ²⁶ The dialogue does not present a proof of the life-enhancing capacity specifically of pure pleasures. The initial argument for the inclusion of pleasure (21d9-e4) simply appeals to the intuition that a life totally devoid of pleasure would not be worth living. Yet in 52c1-d1, Socrates emphasizes that pure pleasures are characterized by measuredness (ἔμμετρία), which gives them some degree of kinship with the good (cf. n. 21 above) and thus renders them desirable also from the view-point of reason (cf. 63e3-4). Their measuredness is presumably due to the absence of the pleasure-pain dynamic, which causes the limit-transgressing intensity of impure pleasures (cf. 45a-e). It is also supported by the nature of their objects.
- ²⁷ Cf. 63d2-e3. Compatibility with the primary cognitive and hedonic ingredients is necessary for preserving the overall unity and cohesion of the mixture.
- ²⁸ The sentence goes on to evoke an analogy between human and cosmic good, hinting at an underlying "form" (ιδέα). I am leaving this out since this reference to a universal good is not immediately relevant for the argument at hand.
- ²⁹ Cf. Waterfield 1982, p. 143 (n. 4) and Migliori 1993, p. 304, who don't offer much of an argument, unlike Cooper 1977, p. 724-30, who argues the case compellingly, yet limits the "necessary pleasures" to pleasures of the virtuous satisfaction of *appetitive* needs, which is too narrow according to my reading. Ionescu too argues for the inclusion of mixed pleasures, but qua "true pleasures" (2019, p. 63-68); this is, however, based on her claim that Plato separates between the criteria of truth vs. falsehood and *purity* vs. *impurity*, whereas 53a-c clearly indicates that Plato views purity as a form of (ontological) truth. Note also that a pleasure that is not genuine, qua pleasure, because of the compresence of pain could still be true in other regards, e.g., because its pleasure component is based on a true expectation. Cf. Gosling/Taylor 1982, p. 139; Frede 1997, p. 353f; Warren 2014, p. 151.
- ³⁰ E.g., Gosling 1975: p. 133; Frede 1997, p. 351; Delcomminette 2006, p. 552f.
- ³¹ Cf. n. 24 above.
- ³² Fletcher 2014 argues that pleasures of anticipation can also be free of pain, citing 32c6-d6 as evidence, yet this sentence can be translated in different ways depending on the reference of ἐν γὰρ τοῦτοις ... ἑκατέροις and the meaning of ἀμείκτους λυπηρῆς τε καὶ ἡδονῆς. The text might even be corrupt (Diès and others). Since anticipations are linked to desires, painlessness is certainly not something grounded in their nature, even if they might sometimes be experienced without pain.
- ³³ Delcomminette 2006, p. 555 wants to subsume the pleasures of virtue under the pure pleasures of reasoning, but there is no supporting evidence for this reading in Plato's text.
- ³⁴ Cf. 53c-55c. Some commentators argue that the fact that the Socrates character does not claim authorship for the process theory indicates that Plato is not committed to it. But Socrates twice expresses his gratitude to the alleged authors of this theory (53c6-7, 54d4-6), and his own account of somatic pleasures already suggested that pleasure is a path toward οὐσία (32b3), thereby implying that it is a process (γένεσις). Gosling/Taylor 1982, p. 153f and Fletcher 2014, p. 133-35 claim that this theory clashes with Socrates' views on anticipatory pleasure and pure pleasure. Yet hedonic anticipations anticipate future process-like fillings, and pure pleasures are the perceived filling of an unmet lack (51b5, 51e7-52b5). A shortcoming of the theory in 53c-55c is that it fails to mention that somatic processes have to have an impact on the soul to be felt as pleasure.
- ³⁵ Cf. 49bc: ignorant people, if powerful, inspire not ridicule but fear and hatred; and 49d3-4: it is just to cheer if these people suffer some misfortune. Accordingly, just people will, for instance, fear and hate a tyrant (who, for Plato, is always someone ignorant of what is truly good), but cheer his downfall. We can infer that the same mix of emotions would also arise if the person were not only a passive observer, but directly involved in the toppling of the tyrant, performing an act of justice. This can be transferred to all virtuously motivated punitive

- acts. On the virtuous rationale behind punitive action, e.g., *Grg.* 525bc.
- ³⁷ Cf. *R.* 440b-d, *Ti.* 70ab on the painful thymoeidetic reaction to the experience of injustice and impulse for courageous fight, and *Phlb.* 12d on the sense of satisfaction associated with virtuous acts.
- ³⁸ Cf. *Phdr.* 253d-256e; the *Philebus* too mentions *erôs* as a source of mixed pleasure (47e1, 50c1).
- ³⁹ On the difference between human and divine modes of life see 32d9-33b11 (cf. 22c3-6, 30a, 55a).
- ⁴⁰ *Republic* 581d10-e4 provides an interesting parallel, referring to all pleasures that are pleasures not of learning, but of the appetitive or thymoeidetic parts of the soul (cf. 580de), as merely *necessary* components of a philosopher's life. 586d4-587a6 asserts that the appetitive and thymoeidetic parts can enjoy their (relatively) truest pleasures whenever they are guided by reason. These better forms of appetitive and thymoeidetic pleasure correspond, at least roughly, to the virtuous and healthy, but mixed, pleasures endorsed in T-1. The example of toppling a tyrant would be an instance of a mixed thymoeidetic pleasure under the guidance of reason.
- ⁴¹ Cf. Damascius' commentary (1959), §§ 251-257, who reports that Syrianus and Proclus took the sixth rank to be occupied by pleasures that are necessary and/or impure. The middle Platonist Plutarchus, on the other hand, cites this passage as an example of Plato's estimation of the number 5 (cf. *De E apud Delphos*, 391de). The few supporters of the sixfold among modern commentators include Shorey 1933, p. 327f (whose suggestion that the sixth rank is reserved for Phileban pleasures is unacceptable); Hackforth 1945, p. 140 (n. 3); Taylor 1956, p. 91; Guthrie 1978, p. 236; Waterfield 1982, p. 32-35. If the attribution of six ranks is correct, there is also merit in the Neoplatonic proposal (reported in Damascius) that the six classes are arranged in three pairs such that the first member of each pair represents the pure manifestation of the genus in question (measure by itself, pure science, pure pleasure).
- ⁴² Translation partly based on West 1983. The ambiguity of the *Philebus* passage is in part due to the vagueness of the preposition ἐν. I take it that it has to be understood here either as "in the presence of" or in a temporal sense ("in/at the time of"); cf. LSJ s.v. ἐν.
- ⁴³ Cf. West 1983, p. 116-139. West argues that the sixth generation in this theogony (viz., the children of Zeus, and especially Dionysus) conveys "the poet's religious message" (p. 136). Hence any contemporary Greek reader at least vaguely familiar with this theogony could not fail to realize that there are six classes.
- ⁴⁴ Cf. Frede 1997, p. 366f.
- ⁴⁵ In T-1, Socrates specifies the pleasures to be excluded as "τὰς δ' αἰετ' ἀφοροῦνης καὶ τῆς ἄλλης κακίας ἐπομένας (*suppl.* ἡδονάς)" (63e7-8) and sets them in opposition to "τὰς μεθ' ὑγείας καὶ τοῦ σωφρονεῖν, καὶ δὴ καὶ συμπάσης ἀρετῆς (*suppl.* ἡδονάς)" (63e4-5). In these two contrasting descriptions, ἀφοροῦνη functions as the antonym of τὸ σωφρονεῖν, while the phrase ἡ ἄλλη κακία encompasses not only intellectual and ethical defects in general, but also bodily defects (because of the opposition to μεθ' ὑγείας). In my formulation of NC-*kakia*, I simply distinguish between bodily and ethical or intellectual defects.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. *Ly.* 217a-218c on badness as a condition incompatible with pursuit of the good.
- ⁴⁷ Criterion C-*purity* is irrelevant for this question despite the fact that Socrates used the language of truth in his phrasing of this criterion. For it presents only a sufficient, not a necessary condition for inclusion in the mixture. Moreover, the talk of truth in this passage, as we have seen, does not relate to semantic or representational truth, but to the genuineness of hedonic motions that are real and painless.
- ⁴⁸ E.g., *Men.* 84a-c, *Cra.* 428d, *Sph.* 228e-230e; cf. Szaif 2017.
- ⁴⁹ Witness the self-characterization of the *Timaeus* as εἰκὼς μῦθος (29d2, 68d2), which builds on the metaphysical epistemology of *Republic* V-VII; cf. *Phlb.* 58e-59c.
- ⁵⁰ Academic and Pyrrhonian sceptics tried to refute the objection that suspension of judgment would result in *apraxia*. Yet the success of their defensive arguments is doubtful, and Plato was not a radical sceptic.
- ⁵¹ He mentions two arts closely associated with political craft: strategy (56b) and rhetoric (58b-d). Both involve projections of outcomes with a significant degree of uncertainty.
- ⁵² In *R.* 477e, Socrates attributes infallibility to the philosopher-ruler's knowledge (ἐπιστήμη); but in the same argument, he also confines the subject range of infallible ἐπιστήμη to the Forms.
- ⁵³ This is not to say that there can't be desperate circumstances in which one tries to help with little hope of succeeding, just so as not to forgo even the smallest chance. However, such a situation does not lend itself to joyful anticipation.
- ⁵⁴ In 40c, Socrates calls false anticipatory pleasures "ridiculous" imitations of true pleasant anticipations (μεμμημένα τὰς ἀληθεῖς ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιώτερα). The discussion of "ridiculousness" (τὸ γελοῖον) in 48c-49c identifies ignorance about oneself, and especially the foolish conceit of wisdom, as the form of badness (πονηρία) that makes weak people look ridiculous. Given how careful a writer Plato is, it is tempting to connect the two passages and to suggest that the remark in 40c contains an implicit critique of foolishness and lack of self-knowledge as the root-cause of false anticipations (cf. Frede 1997, p. 257; Teisserenc 1999, p. 296). However, since the *Philebus* acknowledges the need for error-prone

- conjectural and stochastic modes of thinking, this gibe can be directed only at the false anticipations of the (all too many) fools.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Frede 1997, p. 194-202, 355f.
- ⁵⁶ Cf. Szaif 1996/98, p. 49-56; 2018, p. 13 on the attributive usage of “ἀληθής.”
- ⁵⁷ This is confirmed by the subsequent comments in 64d3-65a6, which list truth as one of the three main qualities (alongside measuredness and beauty) that explain the goodness of the mixture as a whole.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. 55e-56b, cf. 56cd, 57b-58a, 58e-59c; εικάζειν and stochastic: 55e5, 7, 56a4, 6, 62c1.
- ⁵⁹ The adjective “false” in this sentence should be understood as qualifying both “ruler” and “circle.” This is also an instance of *ontological* falsity: the circle and ruler are not strictly circular or straight by the standards of pure geometry. They deviate from this ideal standard. Yet because of this deficit in the object, the corresponding type of applied knowledge cannot attain the same degree of *epistemic* truth as in pure geometry. Cf. Szaif 1996/98, p. 72-163, 300-324; 2018, p. 18-26 on Plato’s use of the truth terminology in the context of his metaphysical epistemology.
- ⁶⁰ See also 58b9-d8, which can be read as cautioning us against simplistic inferences from truth to goodness or *vice versa*. Socrates grants Gorgias that the art of rhetoric may be the most useful, and thus best, form of expertise, but insists that it is not the purest or truest exemplification of knowledge. Socrates’ remark, notwithstanding the irony in his deference to Gorgias, signals to the reader that an undifferentiated equation of truth/genuineness and goodness/benefit is to be avoided.
- ⁶¹ E.g., Frede 1993, p. liii; Evans 2008, p. 90f (his “Grounding Thesis”); Warren 2014, p. 3; Whiting 2014, p. 43f.
- ⁶² Pace *Gadamer* 1931, p. 138f, Kenny 1960, p. 51f, and especially the “new school” interpretations (cf. n. 6 above), I find it unnecessary to assume that the claim in 40b is meant to convey Plato’s (or Socrates’) understanding of divine providence.
- ⁶³ Accepting Apelt’s conjecture κἀχρήστους.
- ⁶⁴ The Greek wording of the last sentence in T-2 (41a5-6) could be understood as hinting at a distinction between pleasures that are inherently bad (because they are false?) and pleasures that are bad because of some bad condition like vice or illness associated with them. Yet it might also merely acknowledge that any bad pleasure requires the presence of some form of badness. At any rate, Socrates is here only mentioning a topic of further investigation, not endorsing a specific result.
- ⁶⁵ E.g., Evans 2008, p. 91.
- ⁶⁶ It is hardly adequate to describe the exchange in this passage as “Socrates hold[ing] his ground” (Whiting 2014, p. 43). Socrates neither sticks to his suggestion nor explicitly disowns it, but only hints that they might return to the topic later.
- ⁶⁷ A strict equivalency of falsehood and badness would also suggest a correlation of the factual truth of an anticipation with goodness (as the opposite of badness). The vicious anticipatory pleasures of a succeeding despot would then (absurdly) qualify as good.
- ⁶⁸ It is hard to see how NC-*kakia*, which hinges on the underlying bad condition of one’s body or soul, could be reduced to NC-RepF as a special case of NC-RepF. The underlying belief of an anticipatory pleasure is about a future state of affairs, and bad actors don’t always go wrong in their particular expectations. The “new school”-reading (n. 6 above) seems to come down to the idea that the belief underlying a false anticipatory pleasure is wrong about what is truly enjoyable, which would make it a case of disorientation about some general truth that also holds in the present. But the example in 40a9-12 together with 40c8-d10 entail that the truth or falsehood of an anticipatory pleasure is a function of whether or not the expected future state of affairs will come to pass.
- ⁶⁹ An earlier version of this essay was written for the IX. West Coast Plato Workshop at NAU. Thanks to Emily Fletcher and Gail Justin for commenting on this draft and to George Rudebusch and Julie Piering for hosting the conference.

