Pleasure as Complex, Pleasure as Temptress

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Part I: Pleasure and The Good Life in the *Philebus*

1. What Socrates Knows About Pleasure

Socrates does not presume to know the correct names of the gods, but he does *know* that pleasure is ποικίλον. About the names of the gods, Socrates says,

> I have always had an inhuman fear, surpassing the greatest. So I call on Aphrodite by whatever name is dear to her. But pleasure I know [οἶδα] is ποικίλον... (12c1-4)

Characteristic Socratic ignorance about matters divine is immediately contrasted with uncharacteristic Socratic confidence at the very starting-point of Plato's most sustained examination of pleasure and the good life. He might be persuadable on other points about pleasure, but he *knows* that it is *poikilon* [ποικίλον]: complex, variegated, elaborately worked, adorned, ornate, embroidered.

What does Socrates know, in knowing that pleasure is *poikilon*? And why does it matter so much that Plato foregrounds it in this way? As the conversation immediately turns to the many different pleasures there are, it may seem that ποικίλον here refers primarily to the sheer variety of pleasures, as that is bound up with the sheer diversity of objects or activities in which pleasure is taken. And this wide diversity matters for the dialogue's main task—the determination of whether pleasure or cognition is more responsible for the goodness of life—because such manifoldness alone would decisively defeat pleasure's claim to be the good, or ultimate good-maker. If pleasure is no single thing at all, the thought goes, then one cannot coherently aim at it as the supreme end. If it cannot organize one's life and order one's activities coherently, then it cannot be the good, nor import goodness into human life. This, for instance, is Ficino's take on the matter, and on this passage.[1]

But this line of thought is too quick. Pluralism in pleasure does not of itself entail incoherence in taking it as an end, even if some pleasures should prove to be in some sense 'opposite' of each other; and whether a good life is an orderly one, and what counts as order, is precisely the point in dispute. Moreover, this cannot be how *Plato* means the argument to go, for he immediately allows Socrates to concede that his favoured candidate is likewise many and diverse, and "would suffer the same fate" as Protarchus' (13e6). Indeed, Socrates' favourite is never given so much as a single name by which to refer to it. He introduces it as "reasoning and thinking and

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[1] Also a line taken by Gosling in his commentary (1975, 142), followed by Gosling and Taylor, 1982. Ficino's argument (Allen 1975, Vol. I, Ch. 13) is more subtle than I articulate here, laying great weight on pleasures being called (by Protarchus, in fact) not only dissimilar but also even opposite (12d8)—a claim Socrates does not make of his own favoured candidate. Knowledge, says Ficino, does not admit of genuinely *opposite* species, nor can the good do so. Ficino's argument here, I think, does not do proper justice to the hedonist's claim that pleasure *is* the good, and is so only in virtue of its pleasantness. That is, his reading seems to make the same mistake Socrates makes if he seriously thinks he can move from the diversity of pleasures to the claim that they must differ *in their goodness*, so that only some of them are good [13b]. More recently, Fletcher 2017 argues that pleasure is problematically disunified, bringing epistemological considerations to bear. I offer reasons for caution on this point, below.

remembering and things akin to this: right judgement and true calculations" (τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ τὸ νοεῖν καὶ μεμνῆσθαι καὶ τὰ τούτων αὖ συγγενῆ, δόξαν τε ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀληθεῖς λογισμούς, 11b7-8); ἐπιστήμη makes it in at 13e4.[2] And while Socrates may not conclude that intelligence is the good, still its acknowledged manifoldness should not impede its being superior to pleasure, nor indeed its being more responsible for the goodness of a human life. It is also worth bearing in mind that at this point in the dialogue, we have not been given any reason to suppose that the good itself is not, just as Protagoras claimed "complex and of all kinds" (ποικίλον…καὶ παντοδαπόν, *Protagoras* 334b6-7).

So we will have to find some other reason why the complexity or elaborateness of pleasure is so important. Ultimately, I want to argue, pleasure will indeed turn out to be inferior to cognition on account of its *poikilia*—and not just inferior, but *subordinate to* cognition. For pleasure's complexity, along several dimensions, arises from its dependency on cognition—and if on the variety of its objects, then this too is because of how cognition constructs pleasures and lends them their identity. This subordination of pleasure is not mere denigration, however, for this analysis of pleasure's complexity serves to develop a moral psychology in which pleasure can play a constructive instead of competitive role in our intentional lives—it can, as the final ranking of goods in the *Philebus* has it, play a role in making life good. Pleasure's manifold dimensions of complexity indicate ways in which pleasure is integrated into our *psyche*s, so that pleasure matters morally because of what it means, and because it can *mean* anything at all. The meaningfulness of pleasures has its source in the dependence of pleasure on cognition; and it has as a consequence the moral relevance of pleasure, including its potential to make a positive contribution to the goodness of a person and their life.

2. *Pleasure as Temptress, Pleasure as Complex*

This is not the first time Socrates has associated pleasure with *poikilia*. The *Republic* articulates a complicated, if largely negative, view of what is ποικίλον: the city unsatisfied with necessities calls in luxuries such as painting and embroidery (*Rep*. 373a-b); properly told stories will not be embellished (*Rep*. 378c); music and dance ought to aim at the appropriate rhythms, rather than favouring variety (*Rep*. 400a), and similarly with cookery (*Rep*. 404d-405a). In Book VIII, democracy, richly ornamented with every sort of character, like an elaborately embroidered cloak (ποικίλον and its relatives occur four times in 557c), is declared "a pleasant constitution, anarchic and colourful" (ἡδεῖα_πολιτεία καὶ ἄναρχος καὶ ποικίλη, 558c); and a page later, the pleasures available in a democracy themselves are *poilikas*

[2] Vogt 2019, who recognises the significance of starting with the *poikilia* of pleasure (19), offers a thoughtful treatment of the different sorts of multiplicities, and their different valencies, at issue in this opening discussion (19-21). The multifariousness of *poikilon* pleasure is, she argues, negative (19).

(παντοδαπὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ ποικίλας καὶ παντοίως, 599d).[3] As these particular contexts suggest, what is *poikilon* is not just intricate, but *eye-catchingly* so. Poetry and embroidery, and rich Syracusan delicacies, are *appealing*—not just complicated and multicoloured, but attractively so.[4] The *poikilon* has a fascinating allure in virtue of its colourful intricacy.[5]

Socrates' starting point in the *Philebus*, then, is not just the sheer variety of pleasures, but the captivating effect this multifacetednes has on us. Like the elaborately embroidered robe of Aphrodite and the shining ornately worked robe with which Hecuba entreats Athena—which Socrates obliquely refers to in his analogy in R*epublic* VIII with the democratic constitution—pleasure is tantalisingly attractive. It exerts the mesmeric pull of beauty on us.[6] The one thing Socrates' knows about pleasure, which must be acknowledged before the discussion even begins, is that it is *attractive* in virtue of its dazzling multifariousness—manifold not just severally perhaps but also individually intricate, as the embroidered cloak of Aphrodite.

If pleasure is *poikilon*, and *poikilia* names an alluring and attractive intricacy, then the moral relevance of the observation at the front of the dialogue is not hard to find. Pleasure is obviously attractive and if it is not itself the good, then it can only exert its attractions in opposition to, or at least indifferent to, real goodness.[7] This would seem to put the view of the *Philebus* within a familiar way of thinking which we might call Kantian, though it is much more widely spread than that.[8] According to

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[3] Moss 2007 presents a strong contrast between the simplicity of virtue in the *Republic* and the multiplicity of attractive but merely apparent virtue, and relates this to the true beauty of shape at *Philebus* 51c-d (Moss 2007, 426-27, 436-37). The *Philebus* passage, however, does not use *haploun* to describe these truly beautiful shapes, and the dialogue has a much more sophisticated understanding of unity than mere simplicity. For an insightful account of truly pleasant shapes 'not beautiful in a relative way', see Aufderheide 2013, 831-32.

[4] This is where the 'attractively' comes from in Christopher Rowe's translation of the anarchic and *poikilē* constitution as '*attractively* anarchic and colourful'.

[5] Fine 2021 (154) goes so far as to argue that 'in archaic poetry the concept refers not merely to a property of an object but essentially to a fascinated experience of a perceiver'.

[6] The examples of Aphrodite's robe (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 5.84-90) and of Hecuba's offering (*Il.* 6.294-95) are taken from J. Fine's illuminating study of the aesthetics of *poikilia* (Fine 2021, 154), to which I am indebted for this aspect of my discussion.

[7] This is not to say this is the only ethical relevance of ποικιλία. Fine makes an excellent case that, in the *Republic* at least, it is the connection of the particular allure of what is ποικίλος to *beauty* that poses a difficult problem for Plato to work out, because of the important role of beauty in his ethics. In the *Philebus*, however, there is markedly less interest in beauty for most of the dialogue, and it is *pleasure* that is explicitly characterised as having this appealing intricacy.

[8] Besides being shared widely among modern moral psychologies, it is even according to one modern interpreter, shared by Socrates himself (see Devereux 1995). It surfaces in certain interpretations of Plato's *Republic*, which have Plato introducing there an irreconcilable conflict between 'rational' and 'irrational'; and so in certain expressions of Aristotle which seem to codify this in a certain way – for instance "there is something in the soul besides reason, opposing it and going against it" (*EN* I.13, 1102b25), or *Eudemian Ethics* II.8 where "so separate and opposed are the rational faculty and the appetitive one that we could even speak of one part being forced and compelled by the other" as Moss (2009, 120) puts it. Such remarks are not decisive, but can be interpreted along 'Kantian' lines.

this alternative, pleasure matters to the (non-hedonist) moralist because it is tempting, and so tempts us away from doing what we ought.[9] The 'temptress' view of pleasure is based on a moral psychology which takes sensation, and especially its dimensions as pleasant and painful, as basic, and the desires related to them as quite independent 'original existences'.[10] It is reinforced by an ethical dualism according to which reason and sense-related desire have independent ends (right and pleasure, respectively, or truth and desire-satisfaction), with a distinct logic internal to each—there is moral reasoning, on the one hand, and prudential on the other.[11] With distinct ends come distinct motivations, bound sometimes to conflict; and such conflicts can only be resolved by fiat—by one simply over-riding the other, for there is no commensurability between these two types of motivation.

Plato certainly recognises the charms of pleasure, and he is suspicious of them.[12] Nevertheless, the view of the *Philebus* does not fit neatly into this Kantian picture, and pleasures on the *Phileban* account turn out to be much richer and more significant morally than the temptress view would have it. This, I shall argue, is on account of their complexity, on which Socrates so confidently and immediately focuses. In the course of the dialogue, layers and kinds of complexity are gradually unfolded: pleasure is intricate not just because its objects are varied but because it is of a sort to take on the qualities of many and diverse objects at all, and to do so in diverse ways, depending upon the overall cognitive context in which it arises. The manifold complexity of pleasure in the *Philebus* ultimately reveals a moral psychology that can hold out the promise of an integrated and unified *psychē*, in which pleasure and reason do not pull in contrary and incommensurable directions—in which pleasure need not be temptress.

So, while the *poikilia* of pleasure is most immediately glossed in terms of the variety of its objects, this variety in fact highlights pleasure's dependent nature, which dependency grounds more relevant and interesting forms of complexity. The object-dependency of pleasure implies a corresponding subject-dependency; and this, in subjects such as we are, generates a radical metaphysical dependency, crystallised in Socrates' claim later in the dialogue that 'pleasure is always *genesis*' (53c5, 54d5). Pleasure's indeterminacy (it is *apeiron*, 27e7-9, 31a7-8) places it firmly among things

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[9] "Not only from these things may virtue be determined, but also by pleasure and pain. For it is because of pleasure that we commit base actions, and because of pain that we abstain from noble ones" (*Magna Moralia* I.6, 1185b33-1185b36).

[10] The phrase is Hume's (*Treatise* II.iii.3.5) and the independence is independence from determination by cognition. Desires spring forth and need no further explanation. Anscombe 1958, 3, lays responsibility for the simplistic modern view of pleasure at the feet of Locke; and although she is in some ways inspired by Aristotle, it is no wonder that Foot 1979, §II, sees virtues as correctives to temptation, for at least at the time of that essay she held a broadly Humean picture of the *psyche*—Hume differing only in his draining of truth-aiming reason of sufficient motivational force to ever count as temptable.

[11] Frankena 1992 discusses the history of such ethical dualism.

[12] In the *Phaedo,* "the soul of a true philosopher… keeps away from pleasures and appetites and pains and fears as much as it can" (*Phaedo* 83b5-7), and in the *Timaeus* pleasure is "the greatest incitement to wickedness" (*Timaeus* 69d1).

which depend in particular upon measure, intelligence and the measured for their specific identity.[13]

But if pleasures depend for their being (identity and existence) on our truth-aiming activities, then they are not inevitably in competition with those capacities. Pleasure is rather an aesthetic dimension of intellectual activity special to embodied intelligent souls, a manifestation of how we make sense of the world and relate ourselves to it. Left unguided or haphazardly guided—developing, that is, within a psychological context uncommitted to the cognitive ideal of precise, stable, coherent knowledge of real reality—pleasures can go wrong, and even lead us astray. Pleasures that flourish in a cognitively disregulated *psychē* will be similarly disregulated, precisely because they are radically dependent on cognition for their existence and identity. But where pleasure can go wrong, it can also go right: within a cognitively well-regulated soul, pleasures naturally arising will take on the well-formed character of the cognitions they are related to, and thus positively contribute to the unity, coherence and overall *goodness* of the person. On the *Philebus*'s conception of pleasure, such harmony can be accounted a moral achievement—indeed a moral demand—and not just good luck. Thus the pleasures of the *Philebus*, some of them at least, get at the end what the Kantian could never allow: they get *a* place, not the highest place but a place, among the things that positively contribute to the unequivocal *goodness* of a good life.[14]

By tracing out the unfolding of pleasure's complexity in the *Philebus*, I wish to lay out this alternative account of pleasure and of how it figures in ethical thought.[15]

PART II: THREE KINDS OF COMPLEXITY IN THE *PHILEBUS*

1. Extensional Complexity—manifold objects or sources of pleasure

If wider aspects of *poikilia* are not at first evident, this is because Socrates at first steers the conversation towards complexity in its most obvious sense of extensional variety or differentiation. Pleasure, he says, "takes all sorts of shapes [μορφὰς δὲ δήπου

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[13] Carpenter 2011 argues for this in detail. See also Harte 2014a, 18-19, on "pleasure's status as a teleologically dependent item", and Evans 2008b, which offers a different interpretation of the *genesis* claim. Aufderheide 2013 argues that pleasure being a *genesis* is compatible with some pleasures having dependent goodness (hence, qualified goodness in their own right) and not just derivative goodness. The analysis of pleasure's *poikilia* which follows may go some way to address the question he raises of how "the properties of the content of the attitude transmit to the attitude" (2013, 832).

[14] Naturally the 'Kantian' can allow that pleasures contribute to the goodness of a life, but only by bracketing that firmly from the moral quality of that life. Plato's good is unequivocal in not supposing that the highest good must force together two things (sensory goodness and moral goodness) which have no conceptual affinity or connection to each other.

[15] As the focus on the *poikilon* claim should make clear, the focus of this study is on *pleasure*; and although Socrates says pleasure cannot be understood independently of pain (*Phil.* 31b), I do not think we should take pleasure and pain to be a symmetrical pair, so that what counts for one automatically counts for the other (see Erginel 2019).

παντοίας], some of them unlike one another in manner [τρόπον]" (12c7-8), and he illustrates with the following example:

> We say that the man who is dissolute takes pleasure [ἥδεσθαι], but also that the man who is temperate takes pleasure in his temperance [αὐτῷ τῷ σωφρονεῖν]; or again, the one who is foolish—full of foolish opinions and hopes—takes pleasure, while the one who is wise takes pleasure in this very being wise [αὐτῷ τῷ φρονεῖν]. Would not someone saying these pleasures are alike [ὁμοίας] appear to be a fool? (12c8-d6)

But as an argument against hedonism, pointing out the obvious extensional diversity in pleasures would seem to be going nowhere, and Plato knows it. He has Socrates hand Protarchus the rejoinder that these pleasures merely "come from opposite things. But *they* are not at all opposed to one another" (12d7-8); and before long he has Socrates suggesting they agree that both candidates are in any case on the same footing in this respect (14b), since his own favourite, designated here as "*phronēsis* and *epistēmē* and *nous* and all that sort" (13e4), also takes many forms, different from one another (13e9-10). So why is this discussion here at all?

One reason, at least, is to allow the opportunity to articulate—in order to dismiss—a 'generic feel' conception of pleasure, and thus to show that the *poikilia* of pleasure is similarly not to be exiled to the diversity of objects or sources of pleasure. By attempting at first to trace the apparent difference in pleasures exclusively to differences in their sources (or objects), Protarchus attempts to insulate something of 'the pleasure itself' from the various causes of pleasure. After all, Protarchus asks rhetorically, "How could pleasure be opposite to pleasure? How could each thing fail to be most similar to itself, of all things?" (12d8-e2).

In answer to Protarchus's rhetorical question, Socrates offers the examples of colour and shape (12e-13a), paradigmatic media for manifesting *poikilia*. Any determinate colour precludes every other, and likewise with shapes. And apart from their variety and mutual exclusivity, there is no experiencing 'colour itself', or 'shape itself'. There is, then, no generic 'experience of colour' or 'experience of shape', distinguishable from experiencing *this very colour* or shape; the cause of the visual or tactile experience does not leave its variety behind in the object. So similarly, the suggestion is, with the pleasures of Socrates' example, there is no 'sheer pleasantness' distinct from the various particular pleasures, inflected as they are—as Protarchus insists—by their various objects. The *pleasantness* in the respective experiences differs, and it differs in accordance with and because of the specific characteristics of its object. Socrates later refers back to this earlier discussion to secure Protarchus' support of the claim that "it is not difficult to see that [pleasures] too take on qualifications" (37c8-10).

Recognising the co-variance of characteristics constituting a pleasure with characteristics of its objects may give some teeth to Socrates' otherwise tendentious demand to know "What is the common element in the good and bad pleasures that allows you to call them all good?" (13b3-5). For if the qualities of pleasures vary in accordance with their objects, and there is no bare quantum of generic pleasantness abstracted from these, then there is no basis for the sort of comparison calculative hedonism needs. Perhaps every pleasure does indeed have at least a duration and an

intensity[16] (presumably *of* some feeling or another); but so do perceptions generally, and we do not suppose therefore that size is a measure of value. If all pleasures also have all sorts of other qualifications, why privilege these aspects of duration and intensity above all the others in determining how valuable, desirable and indeed *pleasant* a pleasure is?[17] Duration and intensity of feel are not, after all, wherein its being a pleasure consists. And in fact, in his later discussion with the misguided pleasure-haters, Socrates highlights for critique precisely this presumption of theirs (44c-e); and he concludes the discussion of pleasure with an explicit generalisation of this point: magnitude is not the dimension of variability that makes something what it is or imports worth (53a5-b2).[18]

The species of pleasure are finer-grained than dimensions of magnitude can articulate; in fact they seem to be exactly as varied as their objects. This is what is learned from Protarchus' failed attempt to save the unity of pleasure by exiling its diversity to its diverse causes. It is difficult to see how one should go about systematizing such diversity, and what would be gained by doing so. This, I think, is one reason why Socrates first insists upon a systematic grasp of pleasure's multiplicity (15b-19e, esp. 18e8-19a2), and then immediately abandons the project (20b). Classifying this sort of diversity of pleasure into genera is a project of little merit—perhaps it is even futile. Consideration of this deep incommensurability in the dimensions—the shape or character—of pleasures shows that if there is anything that makes all these various feelings 'pleasure', it is not to be found by closer examination of their feel.

But to reject a taxonomy of pleasures according to their objects or their feel is not to reject all analysis as futile and uninformative.[19] To bring order to the diversity of pleasures we must rather consider more deeply what makes *that* sort of classification futile; and this demands recognising a different dimension of complexity in pleasure, implicit in this first sort.

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[16] As, for instance, Bentham (or after him Feldman 2004) would be keen to insist.

[17] Consideration of this deep incommensurability in the dimensions—the shape or character—of pleasures is not yet a refutation of hedonism, but it does lay bare a presumption of hedonism that usually remains tacit: When we find hedonism plausible, or even intelligible, we are usually assuming that magnitude is the only dimension of variability that matters. Yet pleasures certainly have other dimensions of variability, and we have never been given a reason to presume that these do not and cannot matter in assessing the *pleasantness* of pleasures, even comparatively. Mill notoriously offers some kind of brute 'better-ness' between pleasures, distinct from quantity, and Feldman 2004's Mill-inspired account offers brute 'suitability to be an object of pleasure'. Neither of these explains much, nor links up with the felt phenomenological differences between pleasures, nor with the fact that there are such differences.

[18] What lacks admixture "is the truest and at the same time the most beautiful of all instances of white, rather than what is greatest in quantity or amount" (53a9-b2).

[19] Contra Fletcher 2017, who argues that pleasure lacks the sort of unity necessary to be a legitimate object of knowledge. We might recall how, similarly, analysing knowledges according to their diverse objects is rejected in the *Theaetetus* (146d-e), and is nowhere in sight when Plato does offer an analysis of knowledge—in *Republic* V-VII, for instance, or of course later in the *Philebus*.

2. Internal or Structural complexity—Pleasure and Awareness

Protarchus' attempt to banish diversity to the external objects of pleasure, and preserve some pure raw feel of 'pleasure itself', fails. But in its failure, the connection is highlighted between diversity of object and diversity of 'feel'. Such co-variance points to pleasure's internal or structural complexity, as a unity of subject- and object-aspects.

The subject-aspect of pleasure is brought out via the dialogue's discussion of perception. "Regarding each of our affections [παθημάτων] of the body", Socrates observes (33d2-6), "some are extinguished in the body, without reaching the soul, leaving it unaffected, while others go through both and produce a disturbance [σεισμὸν] peculiar to each and common to both." The soul does not notice [λανθάνειν] those that do not penetrate both—thus no perception arises—while it does not fail to notice [μὴ λανθάνειν] those that do go through both (33d9), this being what we call perception (αἴσθησις, 34a7-8). Without the engagement of the soul, that is, there is no perception. This point is later explicitly applied to pleasure, with linguistic echoes referring us back to this discussion of αἴσθησις. One might be affected or acted upon in all sorts of ways, Socrates points out to Protarchus (43b-c), but unless these affects are *noticed*, there is no pleasure. Living beings do not invariably "perceive [αἰσθάνεται] it whenever they are affected in some way, so that it does not escape our notice [λανθάνομεν] when we grow or experience anything of that sort" (43b1-3). There may be unperceived changes, but these cannot be or engender pleasures and pains—there are no unconscious pleasures. Conversely, whatever is pleasant or painful is *perceived* or noticed—there is a subjective awareness of it.[20]

In being pleased, the soul should be affected in the way that it is in perception—it is structured similarly, and liable to the same constraints. The language of 'making' and 'engendering' in this passage (see ποιοῦσιν, 43c5) should not be understood as one thing (the noticing) causing another thing (the pleasure).[21] Rather, a movement of the soul as a kind of noticing—together, where relevant, with related bodily changes—*is* the pleasure. The 'making' language is there to preserve a claim about the logical dependence of 'its being a pleasure' on 'its being an episode of awareness'.[22] But in the experiencing of it, there is no wedge to be driven between the

[20] Thus I disagree with O'Reilly 2019 (289) that, on the account of pleasure offered in the *Philebus*, there might be creatures so primitive as to have pleasures without feeling them. As McCabe 2000, 132, observes, if Socrates "build[s] in the assumption that, for any feeling to be felt, it must be accessible to some cognitive capacity" as O'Reilly 2019 and also Sommerville 2021 seem to do, this "would beg the question against his opponent".

[21] See, for instance, 31e, where pleasure is identified with the psycho-somatic changes undergone, and not merely caused by these. Tuozzo 1996 takes the opposing view, arguing that pleasures are a distinct event caused by perceptions, "psychic epiphenomena" which "themselves have no intentional object" (497); but in order to do that, he must suppose that Socrates is vague or misleading in the first and third contexts where a relevant claim is made, and only stating his view precisely in the causal language of 43c. I think the causal language at 43c should rather indicate what is *responsible* in the whole process for its being a pleasure, rather than requiring that one thing (a perception) be the efficient cause of another thing (a pleasure).

[22] Carpenter 2011 argues that 'making' in the *Philebus* picks out asymmetrical relations of metaphysical and epistemic dependence.

awareness on which pleasure depends and the pleasure itself. Enjoying a drink is being aware of my drinking in a certain sort of way.[23] This is why the language of 'noticing' in discussing pleasure at 43d so closely follows the same language in the discussion of perception ten pages earlier.

This subjectivity attends every pleasure. But as pleasures vary according to their objects, the pleasure must also have an object-aspect (determined by the source or object of pleasure) as well as a subject-aspect. Thus every pleasure enjoys a kind of structural complexity, as uniting subject- and object-aspects. Indeed this subject-object duality is what Protarchus first picks up on in resisting Socrates' claim that pleasures themselves are *poikilon*. Protarchus wants to put the pleasure entirely on the subject side of the awareness, and the diversity on the object side. Socrates' slow but steady rejoinder is that the subject- and object-aspects of a moment of awareness cannot be separated from each other in this way. Rather, they constitute a single psychological event, the unity of which consists in the mutually defining relation of its parts.

This is why Plato follows the opening skirmish about the multiplicity of pleasure with extended reflection on complex unity (14c-19c)—on whether, and in what variety of ways, a 'many' may be said to constitute a genuine unity. Among the kinds of unity-in-diversity identified is that consisting in complementary fit, or mutual intelligibility. This is the sort of unity which a phonetic system might have. Theuth, the supposed discoverer of the unity of spoken sound, 'observing that none of us could learn any one of them [the letter sounds] on its own [αὐτὸ καθ'αὑτὸ] without all of them, *and reckoning this the bond which made them all in a way one*, designated them all as of single skill [τέχνη] and called it 'grammar'' (18c7-d2, emphasis mine). The fact that the parts are only *mutually* intelligible is what make the phonetic system a genuine whole. So similarly regarding pleasures: While there may or may not be some common factor running through the extensional diversity of pleasures, each pleasure taken as an event in a living being (31c) enjoys the sort of unity of a whole, any part of which is what it is (or, in the epistemological vein of 14c-19c, is intelligible) in virtue of its relations to the other parts. The subject- and object-aspects of the experience are not accidentally arising adjacent to one another, but are mutually determining in a way that makes the experience a genuine unity—and thus blocks any attempted retreat to 'bare' pleasantness, intelligible and having the character it has, distinct from its objects.

The implicit application of holistic unity to pleasure is at work in the Choice of Lives argument which follows. To circumvent the hard work of sorting the extensional complexities of pleasure (19a-20c), Socrates offers as a short-cut a thought experiment: imagine lives filled with maximal measures of one of the contenders but devoid of the other; if either candidate is itself the good or the exclusive good-maker, then such a life will be complete, sufficient, and choiceworthy (20d). But Protarchus, defender of hedonism, invited to consider a supremely pleasant life devoid of cognition, is left absolutely speechless (21d4-5). A life in which one could neither plan future pleasures, nor remember past pleasures, nor even judge that one is currently

[23] "If I have been enjoying a game", writes Ryle (1954, 50) in articulating a similar non-epiphenomenal view of pleasure, "there need not have been something else in progress, additional to the game, which I also disliked or enjoyed, namely some special sensation or feeling engendered in me by the game"; "[My] liking and disliking are special qualities of... those activities themselves" (51).

pleased is not the life of a human being but of some sort of primitive sea-creature, a jellyfish (21c9).[24]

By hypothesis, this jellyfish life is extremely pleasant. It is devoid of cognition —devoid of reasoning, intellecting, remembering (τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ τὸ νοεῖν καὶ μεμνῆσθαι, 11b7), right judgement, true calculations (δόξαν τε ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀληθεῖς λογισμούς, 11b8), and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, 13e4). But this life is not devoid of *aisthēsis*, for *aisthēsis* is never included on the list of descriptors of Socrates' preferred candidate, nor is it anywhere treated as akin to these. There is awareness in the jellyfish life, then, and it is pleasant. But a great deal of the *diversity* of pleasures we are usually familiar with is necessarily stripped away from such a life.[25] In taking away forms of cognition, one therewith eliminates whole classes of pleasure from the most pleasant life. The question of why this absence should matter to the hedonist has been seen as so significant that it eclipses the prior fact that pleasures are co-constructed *as pleasures* by the form of awareness involved as much as by the object, cause or occasion of pleasure. Yet it is this more basic fact that can on the one hand block the hedonists' retreat to a sort of generic 'pleasantness' insulated from the objects, and on the other hand points to the dependency of pleasures on the minds in which they arise.

Thus extensional complexity—the variety of objects in which pleasure is taken, and the related variety of undergoings that might be pleasures—turns out to imply a kind of internal complexity, or structure, in each respective pleasure. Pleasure is complex in the way of a mode of awareness: there are contents and a way of relating to or taking these contents, and such attitude-object pairs constitute a single event, in one of the senses of unity Socrates articulates in his discussion of one and many. Moreover, as the modes of awareness vary, so do the pleasures possible. The jellyfish argument, which directs attention to the role of the variations in subjectivity in constituting pleasure, specifically indicates that cognitive capacities in particular provide for whole classes of pleasures familiar to us in ordinary life.[26] So structural complexity extends the extensional complexity of pleasure, as the same sources of pleasure experienced via different cognitive or non-cognitive modes of awareness generate different pleasures (or in the case of the jellyfish, fail to do so because of the lack of such variable cognitive modes).

But now this structural complexity immediately grounds a third and deeper sort of diversity in pleasure. For if pleasure is an affect of the soul, then there is always some soul that is affected. And as these souls themselves differ in many ways,

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[24] O'Reilly 2019 argues persuasively that the sea-creature at issue is most likely a sort of jellyfish, and shows that in antiquity this creature stood particularly for a marked absence of intelligence—it was virtually a plant.

[25] Although the defeat of hedonism is not my focus, I agree with Sommerville 2019 that this argument converts Protarchus from a 'raw feel' conception of pleasure to an attitudinal conception of pleasure, and the relevance of attitudes in constructing pleasure is key. I would not, however, deny the jellyfish its pleasures. If there can in principle be non-cognitive awareness, then there can be diffuse and unspecified pleasures such as a jellyfish might enjoy. But these are not pleasures we can recognise as such.

[26] Indeed Evans 2007's 'conservatives' take the view that all "human pleasure is to some extent cognitive" (340).

so too will differ the pleasures which depend the subjective element for their identity.[27] This diversity in human souls is foreshadowed in the libertine and the temperate character with whose pleasures the talk of complexity began. Socrates does not just say (as Protarchus takes it) that the men enjoy different things; he says they are different men: "the dissolute man takes pleasure, but also the temperate man takes pleasure in his temperance". Presumably, if the temperate man really is by character temperate, he would not enjoy the self-indulgence of the libertine (certainly not in the same way), and conversely the libertine would take no joy in self-restraint. That is to say, the very same things (objects or activities) are pleasures or not, depending not just on the sort of cognitive capacities a creature has but on the specific configuration of those cognitions—that is, on the overall state of the soul, or character, of the person experiencing them.

§3 *Radical Complexity*

This third sort of complexity of pleasure is a radical complexity, for we do not simply have new modes of pleasure according to the various modes of cognition (as shown by what the jellyfish life lacks). These new modes of awareness, being cognitive, are of a sort to take much more highly articulated content, and to interact with each other in the specification of this content. Since cognition aims at mutual coherence between cognitions,[28] introducing cognitive modes of awareness in particular connects pleasures up to the experiencer's wider cognitive set. Thus, pleasures will be determined as the pleasures they are not just by the fact of having memory, judgement, and intelligence as forms of possible awareness, but by a person having *just these* memories, judgements, reasons and convictions when the occasion for pleasure arises.

Further reflection on the libertine of Socrates' first example of pleasure's *poikilia* may illustrate this, for it seems likely on reflection that even two libertines would not enjoy their debauchery in the same way, neither qualitatively nor in degree. All the particularities of cognition that make them differ, as we say, in their personalities, contribute to shaping the nature of their particular pleasures, so that one libertine's pleasure in his debauchery is unlike another's. But we need not lean on such an extension of Socrates' first contrasted pair, for Plato gives us in fact *three* pairs through which to think through the dimensions of complexity: the temperate person and the libertine illustrate, in the first instance at least, extensional multiplicity of pleasures (their pleasures have different sources); the jellyfish and the human illustrate the internal or structural complexity of pleasure, and therewith the dimension of variability according to mode of awareness. The third contrasting pair comes at the conclusion of the argument for the first sort of false pleasures, and it serves to

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[27] Because of the nature of the relationship between *aisthēsis* and pleasure, it should follow that perception itself is liable to such radical complexity. However the arguments against bare pleasure do not convert automatically to arguments against bare perception. A more precise study of *aisthēsis* in the Philebus would be required to settle the question.

[28] This claim obviously requires much further substantiation, in the form of a close study of the analysis of Socrates' own preferred candidate in the *Philebus*, and the work it does within a soul. Here one might just gesture at the cosmological passage of the *Philebus* (28c-30e), which takes intelligence to be the prime cause of the cosmos, which *therefore* is not a heap but a well-ordered whole.

illustrate the dimension of radical complexity due to the systematic mutual influence of the mental.

The way to this third contrasting pair is carefully paved so that it rests on the unity of soul and the implications of cognition in that soul. Plato has Socrates open the direct examination of pleasure we finally get at 31b *ff.* with a peculiar circumlocution. Instead of simply saying that pleasures are had by animals (including humans), Socrates says that pleasures arise "in the common kind" (31c2). Protarchus' puzzlement allows Socrates the chance to belabour the point: we, in whom pleasures arise, are 'mixtures' (*meikta*) of the sort discussed in the preceding passage as well-formed wholes in which "all the unlimiteds are tied down by limit" (27d9). In any mixture, the intelligible, measureable structured relations provide the place and identity to ill-defined or indeterminate constituents, which constituents owe their identity to their being so related. We are such *meikta*—not mere combinations of body and soul, but *well-ordered*, where the well-relatedness of elements is due to the orderliness of the *psyche* (30a-e), and to the intelligence (σοφίαν, 30b4) in the *pyschē* in particular. Pleasure has been agreed (rightly or wrongly, and perhaps for different reasons by different persons) to be unlimited (28a3-4), and so we are being reminded by this way of opening the examination of pleasure that it is among the things 'tied down by limit' in a many-facultied soul whose internal order is due to intelligence.[29]

Emphasising further the unity and mutual interaction of the complex *psychē* including cognition, Socrates asserts that to go beyond this point of determining the metaphysical kind and location of pleasure, "we must take up first what memory is, and I fear go back and even before memory consider perception, if these things are to become clear to us in the right way" (33c8-11). Within a page, we have added 'non-perception', forgetting, and recollection to the catalogue, as well as desire. Investigating the complexity of pleasure is apt to require the introduction of a complete moral psychology. The subsequent introduction of false pleasures (36c) affords the opportunity to explicitly reincorporate into our conception of pleasure the cognitive forms of awareness excluded in the jellyfish thought experiment, including opinion (δόξαι, 36c11; δοξάζειν, 37a2), expectation (προσδοκίας, 36a5), and hope (ἐλπίδι, 36a8). It is in the course of this argument that the mutual formation of these different cognitive and affective elements becomes particularly prominent.

The suggestion that pleasures can be false is a difficult one, and the argument for the first 'propositional' sort of false pleasures is especially so. Scholarly discussion of this first argument for false pleasures has focused on whether (and how) the argument offered warrants Socrates' conclusion that pleasure is not merely associated with a judgement, but has judgement so integrated into it that the pleasure itself may be true or false—and if he has made his case, how this contributes to an argument against a hedonist who may not especially care about truth and falsity. I propose to set these questions to one side in order to consider the argument as it articulates a view of

[29] Emily Fletcher argues in 'The Disunity of Pleasure' (2017) that we should not take this classification of pleasures as unlimited to apply to all pleasures. Carpenter 2011, by contrast, argues that we may do so, provided we understand it as a provisional statement to be fully understood only in the metaphysical sense of *genesis* given later. The fact that some pleasures may be 'tied down by limit', and therefore be measured does not mean that pleasure is no longer unlimited. On the contrary, it means that it is such as to owe whatever limits, whatever determinate shape it has at a given time to something other than itself.

the moral psychology of pleasure, especially as unfolding further the *poilikia* of pleasure.

To win Protarchus round to the notion that pleasures may be false, Socrates begins by setting up an analogy between pleasure and opining or judging (δοξάζειν):

> Is there for us something judging is? (Yes.) And there is taking pleasure? (Yes.) And then there is also that which is judged?" [τὸ δοξαζόμενόν] (Of course.) And also that which is enjoyed [τὸ ἡδόμενον]? (Very much so.) (37a2-10)

However it figures in the argument for falsity in pleasures, the structural similarity identified here supports the basic idea that pleasures as modes of awareness have content—and, in particular, that where that mode of awareness is cognitive, they have determinate content.[30] Conversely, contents are ways that subjects conceive of or grasp their objects.[31] Because the attitudes in (non-jellyfish) pleasures are cognitive, in taking pleasure, my awareness of objects (or activities) is awareness *of* something *as* being this or that.[32] And as modes of apprehension, this content-so-conceived partially constitutes the identity of any pleasure as the pleasure it is. The structural unity of pleasure again ensures that, with this new layer of specificity, the highly articulated qualities of particular pleasures co-vary with their objects.

Moreover, cognitive attitudes are dynamic and interacting. "It is from memory and perception", Socrates observes, "that opinion and the attempt to come to a definite opinion [διαδοξάζειν] arise" (38b12-13). One has appearances, which one might question (38c9) and determine an answer (ἀποκρινόμενος, 38d5) which is then kept in mind (διανοούμενος, 38e6) for some time. Determining the content of any thought involves coordinated capacities aiming at mutual coherence. So similarly, we are meant to understand, with pleasure: it has determinate content, and it having such content depends upon the dynamic interaction of the *psychē*, led by the cognitive capacities within it. This point is conveyed through the fanciful introduction of a metaphorical 'scribe' and 'painter' into the soul, whose joint work associates

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[30] "The very point of Plato's aggressively drawn analogy between pleasure and belief, writes Evans 2008a, 119, "is precisely to deny that beliefs are the only attitudes that have robust representational roles."

[31] 'Contents' (rather than 'object') here is to capture the object-as-experienced as the object of experience. My own view, which I cannot argue for here, is that in the *Philebus* the only objects which are not this-object-as-this-person-experiences-it-now are fully intelligible objects—which may include Aufderheide 2013's abstract objects of pure pleasure. This coheres with what I take to be Plato's overall epistemological commitments in the *Philebus* (Carpenter 2015) and the *Republic* (Carpenter 2012-13). See also Vogt 2012, Ch. 2, for similar perspective on Plato's epistemology.

[32] See Harte 2014b, §4, for what 'aboutness' does and does not amount to here. Contra Moss' account of pleasure and appearing in Plato—on which "appetite does desire things *qua* good: it desires pleasures just *because* it takes them to be good" (Moss 2006, 528)—I take it rather that to be seeing *x* as pleasant is to be apprehending *x* as good. On the conception of pleasure as having cognitively enriched contents, there is no independently identifiable 'pleasure' to be presented as good; rather taking pleasure is itself presenting its objects as, in some determinate way, good. Evans 2008a argues that it is the fact that pleasures do represent things *as* good that makes them liable to be truth-apt ("taking pleasure in something is a way of valuing it, and hedonic error (in general) is a kind of evaluative error" (2008a, 113). Evans 2008b goes so far as to say that Socrates' view is that "pleasures aim at being correct, and that pleasures succeed in being correct just in case their objects are perfect goods" (140).

judgement and pleasure more closely than mere analogy, so that pleasures themselves may be considered false in their own right. However this might work as an argument for false pleasures,[33] the painter's work is intertwined with and dependent upon the work of the scribe whose words he illustrates.

The implications of this are captured in a curious claim with which Socrates concludes his argument. This is where we are introduced to a third pair of contrasting characters, the pair illustrating the radical complexity of pleasure. Two persons—one good, and one wicked—entertain the same hope, each envisaging himself "having abundant gold and many pleasures as a consequence" (40a10-11). But "in the case of good people these pictures are usually true, because they are dear to the gods, while for bad people it is usually quite the opposite" (40b2-4).

There is much that is difficult about this claim, particularly regarding what role we should think the gods' endorsement plays here.[34] But taken as an observation of phenomena and phenomenology, the argument contains the less controversial observation that the same thing—in some relevant sense of 'the same'—may be enjoyed very differently by different persons. Furthermore, less uncontroversially, the implicit claim is that experiences may differ along hedonic dimensions, *because of* differences in character, or in the wider cognitive conditions of the soul in which the pleasure arises.[35]

In Socrates' example, two persons of different character entertain the same hope. They each enjoy thinking 'When I'm rich...', and yet their pleasures are strikingly different. The difference cannot be located in the object, because that is deliberately thinly described here so as to be the same for both. The passage's prior introduction of memory, desire, perception and judging indicates that we should rather locate the source of the difference here: it is cognitions that determine the specific contents of a pleasure, and thereby make it determinately this very pleasure it is. In this case, an anticipatory pleasure is determined by one's beliefs, memories, conjectures of what the world is like (What does 'rich' mean? What can one do with money?); what one is like oneself (What would I be like, rich? How would I spend the money? What would that be like for me?); and above all by one's understanding of

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[33] My aim is to explore the moral psychology of pleasure at work in the passage, not to evaluate it as an argument for the truth-aptness of pleasures, though Carpenter 2006 takes up the latter question along with why the hedonist should care about such falsity. Frede 1985 remains a centrally important discussion of how this passage argues for falsity in pleasure.

[34] Frede 1993 notes that "it is not likely that Plato is merely referring to the common (but also much disputed) Greek folk wisdom that those whom the gods love are those who prosper in life", and concludes (too swiftly) that "he must also be implying that the *moral content* of foolish pleasures is mistaken" (*Plato: Philebus*, Hackett 199e, p. 44n2). Frede 1997, 256-58 offers as an improvement a more cognitive gloss, which is in spirit similar to the systematically diglossic reading of this passage put forward in Carpenter 2006: Unlike Protarchus, Socrates understands 'the gods' as a stand-in for 'intelligence'—intelligence being that wherein the goodness of the good person consists. Those who value intelligence are thus unmysteriously rewarded with pleasures informed by this truth-orientation. Whiting 2014 makes the claim equally unmysterious by the opposite strategy of defining as 'true pleasure' only that which is taken in good objects (43).

[35] This is perhaps more evident in future-oriented cases, where there is no possible object but that constructed by our mental engagement; but as Socrates' carefully described first case shows (38c-e), this applies "in like manner to all times" (39c12), past, present and future.

what it is good to have or to be—these together constituting the difference between whether one is a good or a wicked person.[36] The dialogue's later discussion of malice adds into the mix our social understanding—how we do and ought to stand with respect to others, in particular whether it is good that others should be worse-off than us.

Our souls, unlike jellyfish souls, are cognitive souls; and, where it is present, cognition takes a leading role in determining the nature of a complex whole and the role of elements in constituting it. Pleasure, as something to be made determinate (it is, in itself and by its own nature, unlimited or indeterminate), does not just have contents or 'aboutness'; it has contents which are determined in their specificity by our other mental capacities, including not just *aisthēsis* but also memory, opining, thinking, calculating, knowing and all the other things on Socrates' list. What each pleasure is and how it feels is inescapably determined by the complex psychology of the person enjoying it.

Unless we are rendered quite incapacitated, our pleasures are experiences *of objects under particular circumstances, understood as such*. And it is our so understanding them and their circumstances which gives them determinacy as *this* very pleasure. The flavour I enjoy is '(me sipping slowly)-orange-juice-(which my grandmother always swore by even though nutritionists now say we should avoid fruit juice)-in-a-quiet-moment-on-this-bright-morning-before-an-especially-stressful-day'. Even this is only a poor approximation of the actual rich specificity with which we experience and enjoy the world, and yet it already reveals something of a moral outlook or character.[37] The complexity of a subject's cognitive capacities complicates, articulates—makes more specific and determinate—the objects of pleasures, and so the pleasures (the *pathē*) themselves, thus widening many times over the variety of and variegation in pleasures.

Pleasures take a diversity of objects. This is an obvious manifoldness which Socrates argues affects the pleasure, which itself varies according to its objects. The diversity cannot be sequestered in the objects, leaving a homogenous bare 'feel' of pleasure, because pleasures are modes of awareness of the objects or activities in which pleasure is taken. Every pleasure is thus a complex unity of subject and object, of mode of awareness and the contents of that awareness. (Even jellyfish pleasures have content of some indeterminate sort.) But because modes of awareness themselves come in kinds, this structural complexity immediately amplifies the extensional complexity of pleasure, as whole classes of pleasures are made possible by the different modes of apprehension or cognitive attitudes available. This then lays the ground for a third and radical dimension of complexity. So long as we are not jellyfish—so long, that is, as our modes of awareness are cognitive—then pleasure is the experience of an object or occasion *as* being this or that, in highly specified ways. Moreover, it owes this specificity to the dynamic cognitive context in which it arises, and has no definite nature of its own independently of that. A pleasure *in* or *of* this-as-

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[36] Socrates does not explicitly say that pleasure is perceiving or judging things good, though the *Philebus*'s analysis of false pleasure clearly intends some close connection between pleasure and apprehension of goodness. Harte 2004a, Evans and Moss 2013 offer two attempts to pin down whether, how and where the connection is made.

[37] As the jellyfish thought experiment showed, pleasures devoid of such cognitive richness are scarcely imaginable for us.

such-and-such arises from the interacting engagement of the full range of our conceptualizing cognitive capacities, so that it is these that do the discriminating of the object of pleasure in its context.[38] The objects of pleasure taken as contents are complex not just because their independently identifiable objects or activities are many and various, but also—in a different way—because *their subjects* are complex, and cognitively complex in particular. This makes pleasures manifold and complicated in the sense that Socrates is ultimately pursuing as relevant to the dispute in the *Philebus*.

PART III: PLEASURE AND MEANING, GROUNDED IN PLEASURE'S COMPLEXITY

Understanding the ways in which pleasure is *poikilon* and the reasons for this has important ethical implications.

1. Pleasure, Character and Philosophy

First to note is a surprising consequence of this way of understanding the subjectivity —and subjective differences—of pleasures. Ordinarily, what is subjective is thought to enjoy thereby a certain sort of immunity from error. But because pleasure is subjective by way of being rooted in a subject's understandings of the world and of objects, their relations and significance, the supposed 'subjective' variation in pleasures makes it liable to fully *objective* standards. For, of course, I might get it wrong about what 'being rich' is; and I might get it wrong about what it *means*—perhaps I think it means I am admired and enviable, successful and strong; and perhaps, sadly, it means none of those things. I might even get it wrong about what it would mean *for me* to be rich—I would finally be free from anxiety, I think; and yet this is not so.[39]

If pleasures are partially constituted by cognition, as the *Phileban* picture has it, then desires for pleasure are not just 'original existences'—as Hume would later call them—arising in us out of nowhere, and either commanding action or else requiring forcible repression. We ought perhaps not think of 'desires for pleasure' at all, but rather of desires for their respective objects conceived of in a certain way.[40] This is why Socrates observes in his analysis of desire and the role of the *psychē* in pleasure (34d-35d) that in order for something to appear as desirable to me, I must

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[38] Sommerville 2019 goes so far as to argue that "these attitudinal pleasures are to be counted as instances of thinking" (262). Taken literally, this may create trouble when, towards the end of the dialogue, *all* forms of cognition are admitted into the good and well-mixed life (62c).

[39] One could even be wrong about what pleasure is, a complication which Socrates raises regarding the pleasure-haters of 43d-44d, who say "it is the most pleasant thing of all to be without pain" (43d7-8), and so believing manage to affect their phenomenology (44e7).

[40] It is rather different, then, from Moss 2006's explication of the *Republic*, which takes there to be some distinct thing, 'pleasure', which "is dangerous because it is a deceiver... it deceives us by appearing to be good when it is not" (504). In the *Philebus* pleasure is no more essentially *deceptive* than perception; it is the apprehension of something *as* good which, like perception, lacks internal resources to question the reality of this appearance.

have some previous experiences of it.[41] These conceptions arise depending for their particular identity, and for their occasions to *be* effective occasions at all, on our beliefs and values, our memories and our discernment. The person who sees and inhabits the world from a collective cognitive set on which temperance is good does not *enjoy* the activities in which debauchery consists. This is the force of Socrates calling pleasures 'true' and 'false': they are part and parcel of our meaning world, not something added to it, either as epiphenomena or as independent events. The person who sees money as the ticket to the power to indulge every whim cannot enjoy *the same* pleasure of anticipation of wealth that the generous, thoughtful and wise person might—and they cannot do so in virtue of the overall condition of their various truth-apt mental capacities that make meaning of experience.

Because of pleasure's conformity to judgement and other cognitive attitudes and activities, one can modify one's pleasure by the same means by which one modifies one's beliefs: not, of course, by capriciously choosing what to believe, but by valuing the practices and standards which make cognitions good, which make memory and even perception good—namely, values of truth, accuracy, consistency, fittingness, coherence, caring to distinguish appearance from reality and prefer the latter to the former where they differ. Actively pursuing these values and practices in our cognitive lives improves our cognitive condition—and also thereby improves the nature of our pleasures, which more accurately and with more nuance reflect what objects really are, what experiences we are really undergoing, and what their import is —therefore, which of these are to be welcomed, in what way and why. On this view, attending to making our understanding as true, accurate and coherent as possible is a central part of any 'therapy of pleasure'—so that philosophical practice does indeed shape our moral characters.[42]

2. Pleasure and Virtue: Moralising?

This is not a conclusion that everyone welcomes. There are those who celebrate the bifurcation of impulses and reasons, as directed respectively at pleasure and right, as a significant advance in moral thinking.[43] People, they might say, are pleased by all manner of things—this is the one thing Kant was right about!—and it is wrong to get all moralistic about this or to hold people accountable for it.[44]

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[41] "Any given instance of thirst is for something more specific, say, ginger tea," observes Vogt 2017, 33, in connection with the *Philebus*' account of desire. See Harte 2014b for the significance of memory in desire in bringing paradigmatically 'bodily' phenomena within the purview of, and under the rule of, the rational soul.

[42] In fact, this is precisely the guise in which the complexity of pleasure appears in the *Republic*, attaching qualities of character to their differential cognitive success and values—see *Republic* 557c5-9, 558c5-8, 559d9, 561e5, 604e-605a5. Carpenter, *forthcoming*, explores epistemic ideals as character-forming in the *Republic*.

[43] This is, of course, how Kant himself saw it when he sets his own view up in contrast to the *eudaimonism* of the Ancients (*KpV* 64, 111).

[44] D'Arms and Jacobson 2000 coin the phrase 'moralistic fallacy' to object to those who suppose the fittingness of emotions generally—not just pleasures—is not independent of their moral goodness. For a recent expression of a similar sentiment in the specifically Platonic context, and with added layer of reflective complexity, see Evans' remark that "it is one thing to criticize people for endorsing a certain claim about the value of being pleased, and it is quite another to criticize them for 'finding satisfaction' in being pleased" (2008a: 113-14).

Being moralistic is of course always disagreeable. Intuitions here do differ on whether this sort of judgement is indeed an obnoxious over-reaching of moral judgement or not. But what has emerged is that this difference is not just a difference of intuition or preference. The rival intuitions draw their strength from rival conceptions of pleasure, and of our psychology *tout court*.

On the *Phileban* account outlined, pleasure is a way of experiencing the world —more specifically, a way of taking things (including myself) *to be*, or an apprehension of how things are. In this respect, and in being a mode of awareness available in virtue of being embodied, pleasure is perception-like.[45] Because pleasure has determinate contents which it presents *as good* or choiceworthy, it might resemble an evaluative judgement. Judgement, however, being part and parcel of our cognitive capacities, can discriminate; it begins with appearances, and in conjunction with our wider cognitive capacities, it can recognise them as mere appearances, distinct from reality. Pleasure, by contrast, is just the appearing. Inasmuch as it must necessarily be the appearing of something as being like this or like that, the specific contours of any particular pleasure owe its specific identity as much to our cognitive capacities as to our physical-sensory ones. Since we are not born afresh every moment, our ways of taking the world are informed and determined in part by our memories, beliefs, thoughts, expectations, values, comparisons, evaluations of probabilities, ways of relating to previous experiences, as well as by our concurrent perceptions, judgements, pleasures and pains (these last of which the *Philebus* deals with in its description of the second sort of 'false pleasure').

Pleasures, that is, arise dependently upon all the messy, cognitively rich detail that makes us who we are, and they express in their particularity our way of looking at the world and ourselves in it. Such an understanding of pleasure explains why we can and indeed *ought* to judge persons by their pleasures. Plato's view does not simply by *fiat* declare that 'good men take the right pleasures in the right things at the right times'. He offers a conception of what pleasure is within our *psychēs*, and therefore within our lives, such that we are entitled to suppose there to be an informative link between pleasures and persons.[46]

At the same time, it is a conception of pleasure which can explain when such judgements go wrong, and are indeed moralising. For if I am to judge you bad for the pleasures you take, this requires that I know at least which sort of views, values, judgements and outlooks actually support this pleasure or that—*and* I must know

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[45] Recall the *Phaedo*'s claim that pleasure and pain 'make the soul believe the truth is what the body says it is' (*Phd*. 83c-d)

[46] Without some such account of pleasure as Plato offers in the *Philebus*, by contrast, it is difficult to see how we can make good this claim. Why, on the Aristotle-epiphenomenal view, is one entitled to judge a person's character from her pleasures? What is it Foot 1979 thinks grounds "the fact that a man is *tempted* to steal is something about him that shows a certain lack of honesty" (11)? Or that "pleasure in the good fortune of others is, one thinks, the sign of a generous spirit; and small reactions of pleasure and displeasure often the surest signs of a man's moral disposition" (5)? The tension between this and a view of pleasure as temptress does not become evident because, as Anscombe rightly said, as well as lacking a thoughtful account of intention, we today also lack a thoughtful account of pleasure (Anscombe 1958, 5-6; 15). Other Aristotelian views are available, of course: Burnyeat 1980 and Aufderheide 2016 offer ways Aristotle might be warranted in supposing pleasures to be functions of character.

which of these complex cognitive states are indeed false, misguided, or inapt. In principle, judging persons by their pleasures is validated; in practice, it is shown to be severely circumscribed by our own ignorance. Failure of such circumspection is yet another incidental theme Socrates picks up in the course of the *Philebus'* discussion of the malicious pleasures of comedy (47d-50a).[47]

3. Pleasure as Temptress or as Complex?: Two Accounts of Why Pleasure is Morally Relevant

There is a common view, the implications of which are most evident in Kant, that pleasure is relevant to ethics because it is reason's Other: Our nature is susceptible to pleasure, and attracted to it, as an alternative source of motivation, independent of any moral motivation (should there be such). It can at best be not directly antagonistic to the demands of morality, but it can never contribute to the real moral worth of an activity.[48] This view of pleasure is, I suspect, shared even by the anti-Kantian who rejects talk of 'distinctive moral worth' as so much high-minded nonsense. Pleasures on this view are fundamentally idiosyncratic, arising as they do due to causes utterly independent of our truth-valuing capacities and aims; any logic of pursuing, accumulating or comparing pleasures is liable to different standards from those of moral reasoning, so that the two modes of experience are deeply incommensurable. Pleasure on this view matters to the moralist because happiness is quite different from virtue, so that by tempting us towards the former, pleasure tempts us away from the latter.[49]

Such a view has the advantage of easily accommodating our familiar experiences of conflict, but at the price of laying down a radical fissure within our *psychē*s, divorcing what we enjoy from our moral identities. This is a price some of us are not willing to pay, and we are more impressed by the ways that we can and do resolve and dissolve inner conflict, or experience a harmony of our diverse modes of experience.[50] We might, then, take our cue from Socrates in the *Philebus*, for whom pleasure's complexity explains not just its waywardness but also its liability to becoming fruitfully integrated into the ethical task of seeking coherent and correct cognition of reality, so that pleasure is as much an expression of *our* goodness as of a life's goodness.

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[47] Notice also how the virtue of not rushing to judgement was modelled in the person who wants to determine what they see in the distance at 38c-d.

[48] Devereux 1995 expresses this outlook forcefully in his defence of (what he takes to be) Socrates' uniquely (to Greece) Kantian conception of morality: "Why should such a person [who has to struggle against contrary desires due to bad upbringing] be considered inferior, from the point of view of moral character, to someone who does not need to struggle to do the right thing? The person with Aristotelian virtue is more fortunate in that he has greater equanimity, but this seems to be a contribution to his happiness and well-being, not to his moral character" (406).

[49] For instance, Nagel 1986, 194-200, resists 'good life is the moral life' (Plato) and 'moral life is the good life' (Aristotle) in favour of one that recognizes the irreconcilability of 'the good life' and 'the moral life'.

[50] An over-eagerness to explain recalcitrant desires can end up saddling Plato with an account on which all desires seem to be recalcitrant (e.g. Moss 2006), and which cannot explain the quite common case where our cognition *does* correct our desires and our pleasures. An account which acknowledges this latter can provide ground for amelioration and reconciliation not provided by the Kantian account.

CONCLUSION

Socrates knows, we all know, that pleasure is variegated, complicated, elaborate, highly articulated, manifold, complex. The things in which people take pleasure are indeed bewilderingly diverse—but this diversity is not confined within the sources or occasions of pleasure alone, as opposed to some simple 'raw' feel of pleasantness. The variegatedness pertains to the pleasures themselves, and it does so because pleasure as mode of awareness enjoys a mutually constituting unity of subject and object. This structured nature of pleasure might remain a relatively simple added complexity if only a non-cognitive mode of bare awareness were available to us. But we are not jellyfish. We have a diversity of modes of apprehension, and in particular we have *cognitive* modes (memory, foresight, anticipation, discernment, judgement, thinking, knowing), which open up distinct classes of pleasures—notably those of recollection, of anticipation, of reflective awareness. But because these modes of apprehension are cognitive, they interact with each other to further refine and define their objects, making the objects of pleasure more highly articulated according to the particular interactions of the specific cognitions in a given soul. This is how it is that experience, and experiences of pleasure in particular, may be meaningful. But it is also what makes pleasure *poikilon* in a radical sense, for the contents of any pleasure are dependent upon the cognitive context in which it arises. Pleasure is always in *my-doing/undergoing-this-in-this-way-under-these-circumstances*, engaging in *this* activity-so-understood-for-these-purposes, and thus it is dependent upon the enjoyer's highly individuated overall cognitive state. Pleasure differs from perception in that it does not just apprehend its objects, but apprehends its highly articulated contents as *good*.

Pleasures might still conflict with other beliefs or desires about what is good. But this is because we ourselves might have at one time multiple conflicting and unclear apprehensions or views about goodness and about ourselves, others, the sort of world we inhabit. We do not, most of us, have the sort of clearly and thoroughly worked out grasp of reality and of the good that would eliminate all possible conflict. But we are responsible for these pleasures all the same—not because we directly choose our pleasures, but in the same way that we are responsible for our uncorrected prejudices, biases, self-ignorance, failures to keep relevant facts in mind or to acquire them in the first place. The way to address *such* conflict is through the conscientious practice of trying better to pursue truth and understanding.[51]

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