

INCONSISTENCY AND AMBIGUITY IN *REPUBLIC IX*

Plato's view on pleasure in the *Republic* emerges in the course of developing the third proof of his central thesis that the just man is happier than the unjust. Plato presents it as the 'greatest and most decisive' proof of his central thesis, so one might expect to find an abundance of scholarly work on it (583b6–7).¹ Paradoxically, however, this argument has received little attention from scholars, and what has been written on it has generally been harshly critical.² I believe that this treatment of the argument has been unfair and that the relevant passages deserve a more careful and charitable interpretation. In this article, I will take up two serious charges that scholars have leveled against this proof: that it is inconsistent and that it involves a 'fatal ambiguity'. I will show that these charges result from misinterpreting Plato's text, and I will offer an alternative interpretation of the relevant passages. In doing so, I hope to shed some light on the complexities involved in Plato's unappreciated third proof.

I

In the course of developing his third proof, Plato puts forward two distinct criteria for the evaluation of pleasure. These are the criteria of *purity* and of *truth*, both of which are meant to yield the result that the philosopher's pleasures are the most pleasant (because it turns out that those pleasures are superior to all others on both criteria).³ This result would, in turn, constitute proof of the central thesis about the just man, since it has become clear by this point of the *Republic* that

* The main line of interpretation offered in this article has appeared in a chapter of my PhD dissertation. I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Jim Hankinson, David Reeve, David Sosa, Stephen White, Paul Woodruff and especially my supervisor, Alex Mourelatos. I also wish to thank George Rudebusch for his valuable comments on a draft of this article. Finally, I owe thanks to the audience at the University of Edinburgh, in particular Dory Scaltsas, for helpful comments on a shorter version.

¹ The Greek text used in this article is that of S.R. Slings, *Plato: Respublica* (Oxford, 2003).

² See, for instance, N.R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1951), 207; R.C. Cross and A.D. Woodley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (New York, 1964), 266–9; J.C.B. Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford, 1982), 97–128; D. Frede, 'Disintegration and restoration: pleasure and pain in Plato's *Philebus*' in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge, 1992), 425–63 at 435–7; and of particular importance for the present article, D. Frede, 'Rumpelstiltskin's pleasures: true and false pleasures in Plato's *Philebus*', *Phronesis* 30 (1985), 151–80.

³ In the second proof (580d–583a), Plato classifies all pleasures as belonging to one of the three parts of the soul, and identifies the pleasures of the rational part as the philosopher's/philosophical pleasures. These pleasures are, of course, the pleasures that are distinctive of a philosophical life, as opposed to the pleasures that a philosopher shares with non-philosophers.

the just man and the philosopher are one and the same.⁴ The criterion of purity (583c–585a) is based on a psychological/phenomenological account of pleasure and pain (we will call this criterion ‘PC’). The criterion of truth (585a–e), on the other hand, is based on the metaphysics of the central books of the *Republic* and the ‘degrees of reality’ theory (we will call this criterion ‘DR’).⁵

The criterion that Plato develops first in *Republic* IX, PC, is meant to prove that the philosopher’s pleasures are superior by establishing that only they are pure and that all the other pleasures are merely liberations from pain. PC is a simplistic criterion, because it creates only two classes for all that may be called ‘pleasure’, with no regard for making distinctions within the classes.⁶ It identifies such pleasures as those of smell as pure, since their being neither preceded nor followed by pain shows that they cannot be liberations from pain. As a matter of fact, PC is not only simplistic but also incomplete as a method for evaluating pleasure, since it cannot by itself explain why a liberation from pain is a lesser sort of pleasure. The reason for this incompleteness is that PC does not involve a definition of pleasure – which means that we do not even know why pure pleasures are in fact pleasures until some such definition is provided. That task is performed by DR, a criterion that works very differently.⁷

Starting from 585a8, Plato constructs a metaphorical model according to which every pleasure is some kind of process of filling, and the truth of that pleasure is determined by the truth (or reality, or being) of that which is being filled (e.g. body, soul) and that with which it is being filled (e.g. food, knowledge). But this model, DR, does not simply place pleasures into two classes (such as ‘true pleasures’ and ‘false pleasures’). Rather, it yields a scale according to which pleasures can be ranked in terms of their truth, there being many levels on the scale. We shall see, however, that pleasures rated above a certain point on the scale are identified as the ‘truer’ pleasures, and are contrasted with those lying below, the

⁴ Both the second and third proofs aim to establish the just man’s/philosopher’s greater happiness by proving him to have a more pleasant life (Plato declares at the end of both proofs that the philosopher’s life is the most pleasant [583a1–3, 587b9–10]). This strategy has raised the question whether Plato is being inconsistent, given his emphatic rejection of hedonism in the *Republic* (508e–509a). Without delving into the details of this matter, I would like to point out that I find the solution proposed by Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 103, convincing: they argue that these proofs are designed to answer the challenge posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus, and that we should see the proofs ‘not as showing that the good life is best *tout court*, but as showing it to be best by the criteria set’. On this reading, the second and third proofs aim to show not that the philosophical life is best because it is most pleasant but rather that it is best by the standard (set in Glaucon and Adeimantus’ challenge) of answering to human desires.

⁵ Cf. D. Scott, ‘Metaphysics and the defence of justice in the *Republic*’, *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 16 (2000), 1–20, at 16–18, who argues, on the basis of this passage, that ‘without the metaphysics of V–VII, [the third proof] would read as complete gibberish’. According to Scott, the third proof has a unique feature in the *Republic*, in that this passage alone constitutes a ‘revisitation’ of the defence of justice in Book II in the light of the metaphysics of the central books. This, he conjectures, might be why Plato declares the third proof to be the greatest and most decisive.

⁶ There are also experiences that are sometimes wrongly regarded as pleasures, which are in fact not pleasures at all. Plato argues that people make this mistake when they arrive at the neutral state (which is between pleasure and pain) when it follows pain – that is, when we experience a cessation of pain. For a detailed examination of this mistake, see my article, ‘Plato on a mistake about pleasure’, *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 44 (2006), 447–68.

⁷ For a discussion of why impure pleasures (liberations from pain) are a species of pleasure, albeit an inferior one, see my doctoral dissertation, ‘Pleasures in *Republic* IX’ (Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2004), ch. 2.

'less true' pleasures. For Plato's purposes to be served, both this class of truer pleasures and the pure pleasures of PC should turn out to be the philosopher's pleasures. Only then will Plato have achieved the goal he sets for himself at the beginning: proving that pleasures other than those of the *φρόνιμος* man are 'neither completely true nor pure but like a shadow-painting' (583b3–4).⁸ Indeed, this is just what Plato claims to have shown after completing his exposition of PC and DR, at 586a1–6: 'Therefore, those who are inexperienced with reason and virtue, but are always occupied with feasts and the like ... aren't filled with what really is, and they don't taste any stable or pure pleasure.'

These two passages provide clear evidence that both PC and DR are meant to yield as superior pleasures only those that are accessible to philosophers exclusively.⁹ This suggests that the superior pleasures of PC and DR are coextensive with each other and with the distinctive pleasures of philosophers.¹⁰ The third proof is designed, then, to show that the philosopher's pleasures are the most pleasant because all and only those pleasures are superior according to both PC and DR.

Dorothea Frede has argued, however, that the third proof fails to show this, since these two criteria yield incompatible results. This, Frede explains, is because the criterion of truth is much more exclusive than the criterion of purity.¹¹ She writes: 'So we are now told that "the more being (ousia) obtains, the more truth there is and the more filling with what is more truly" – and that only knowledge can bring that about'.¹² According to Frede, DR places only the pleasure of filling with knowledge (of the Forms) in the superior class of pleasures, excluding all pleasures that involve sense-perception, such as the pleasure of smell. Thus, Frede concludes, the pleasures that are true on PC are not so on DR, the two criteria yielding inconsistent answers to the question 'is X a true pleasure?'. In this form, the charge can be dismissed quickly, because PC is actually not a criterion of the truth of pleasures but only of their purity. While Frede uses the terms 'true' and 'pure' interchangeably in her discussion of *Republic* IX, the text does not support this interchangeability. The superior pleasures on PC are only called 'pure' (*καθάρᾳ*), and PC is never discussed in terms of truth.¹³ DR, on the other hand, never identifies its own superior class of pleasures as 'pure' but only as 'truer';

⁸ In the context of DR (585a8–e6), Plato never refers to any pleasure simply as 'true' (or 'false'), but only as being more or less true. I will address this earlier non-comparative reference to truth later.

⁹ Being 'filled with what really is' undoubtedly refers to DR's superior pleasures, as I explain in detail below.

¹⁰ Although there is no explicit statement of this coextensiveness, an interpretation that denies it would be hard to defend. These three classes could be non-coextensive only if one of PC or DR's class of superior pleasures were a proper subset of the other and of the philosopher's pleasures: at least one of PC and DR's superior pleasures must be coextensive with the philosopher's pleasures or else the philosophical pleasures that are left out would not qualify as superior on *any* criterion, defeating the purpose of the whole proof; we have already seen that the philosopher's pleasures cannot be a proper subset of PC or DR's superior pleasures. However, the notion that one of these criteria identifies only *some* of the philosopher's pleasures as superior weakens the argument, and renders pointless Plato's strategy of showing that the philosopher's pleasures are superior on *two* criteria. PC and DR are presented as achieving the same desired goal, and there is no evidence to support such an uncharitable interpretation.

¹¹ Frede, 'Rumpelstiltskin's pleasures' (n. 2).

¹² *Ibid.*, 160.

¹³ The word 'pure' is used in referring to the superior category of pleasures of PC at 584c1 and 586a6, and it is used in an unspecified way at the very beginning of the third proof (583b4), where neither PC nor DR have yet been introduced.

DR is expounded in terms of truth, being and reality, and purity is not an attribute that it applies to pleasure.¹⁴ So there can be no inconsistency between PC and DR with respect to either the truth or the purity of pleasures: PC has nothing to say about truth and DR has nothing to say about purity.

The problem does remain, however, in a modified way. Even though the two criteria are logically distinct, the text suggests, as I have explained, that the classes of things that satisfy the two criteria are identical. There would therefore be a serious inconsistency between the two criteria if indeed DR designated only gaining knowledge of the Forms as 'truer pleasure', while PC attributed purity to many other pleasures, such as those of simple learning or smell.¹⁵ In what follows, I will argue that this interpretation of DR is untenable, and that a better understanding of the relevant passages resolves the alleged inconsistency.

In the course of developing an interpretation of DR, we face a question as to how to understand the filling metaphor. This makes it unavoidable to tackle another serious charge that Gosling and Taylor have launched against the third proof: that it involves a 'fatal ambiguity' about whether or not pleasure is a process of filling.¹⁶ I will argue that this charge, too, is untenable, and that a charitable reading of the text leaves no reason to find ambiguity in Plato's position.¹⁷

II

DR is built on the filling metaphor, according to which pleasure is 'being filled with what is appropriate by nature' (585d11). Pleasures are thus fillings in the following sense: hunger, thirst and the like are empty states of the body, while ignorance, imprudence and so forth are empty states of the soul. Partaking of nourishment and strengthening one's understanding are fillings that correspond to the empty states of one's body or one's soul (585a8–b8). All of our pleasures are

¹⁴ The word 'pure' occurs within the discussion of DR only in the question 'which classes do you consider to participate more in *pure* being' (585b11), which is irrelevant to whether the pleasures themselves are ever called 'pure'.

¹⁵ A similar charge is put forward by J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), who argues that *Republic* IX's third proof involves a 'tension' because the philosopher is presented as a different sort of person in the two different sections of the argument – the sections I have interpreted as expounding 'PC' and 'DR'. Accordingly, PC employs 'the practical conception of the philosopher', whereas DR presents the philosopher as 'the contemplator of eternal truths', there being 'a dramatic shift' between them (310–11). Annas does not offer an extended discussion of this claim, but she supports it with a reading of DR similar to Frede's, taking it to be more restrictive than PC (312).

A closely related problem is what Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 113, have called 'the problem of pure bodily pleasures'. They claim that the pleasure of smell, which qualifies under PC as pure, is a bodily pleasure, and that pleasures other than those of reason can therefore qualify as pure. This contradicts Plato's claim and weakens the conclusion that he may draw from this account. But Frede's charge of inconsistency casts a wider net: regardless of the status of the pleasure of smell, PC will identify as pure such pleasures as those of learning, even at a very basic level – a child's pleasure in learning mathematics is neither preceded nor followed by pain. It should also be noted that not all violations of the coextensiveness condition result in an equally damaging inconsistency; I address this matter in the final section of this article.

¹⁶ Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 122–6.

¹⁷ D. Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life* (Oxford, 2005), 127–35, provides a welcome reading dissenting from the negative consensus on the third proof, but does not tackle these specific charges against it.

to be understood in such a way as to allow for three elements: (i) that which is filled, the container (e.g. body); (ii) that with which the emptiness is filled, the filler (e.g. food); (iii) the filling, that is, the pleasure.¹⁸ Now Plato wishes to show that some kinds of pleasure are more pleasant than others. Doing so on the basis of DR means showing that some pleasures are truer or more real than others. But how can one kind of 'filling' be truer than another? What does it mean to compare the truth of two such different things as eating and learning, filling my empty stomach and filling some lack in my soul?

Before I offer an answer to these questions, we need to clarify a critical point regarding the filling metaphor, that pleasure is represented by the *process of filling*. The definition given at 585d11, that pleasure is 'being filled with what is appropriate by nature', is applied to *all* pleasure. But the definition is ambiguous – in Greek as in this translation – about whether pleasure is the process of being filled or the state of having been filled completely – that is, being full. Yet the way in which the filling metaphor was introduced at 585a8–b8 seems unambiguous: the metaphor is constructed by extending the analysis of the pleasure of eating and drinking to all other pleasures. Just as satisfying hunger and thirst is the filling of empty states of the body, learning is said to be filling empty states of the soul. The original cases of pleasure are undoubtedly eating and drinking, the filling process rather than fullness. Since all other pleasures are presented as following this model, it must be the case that pleasure is the filling process in all other cases as well.

Gosling and Taylor have disputed this conclusion, claiming that the text contains 'a fatal ambiguity' about whether pleasure is (a) the process of replenishing deficiencies or (b) the state of possessing what one's nature needs.¹⁹ Though they put this forward as a severe criticism of *Republic* IX, the grounds they provide for it are weak. A cornerstone of their case is the claim that Plato was confused about the distinction between the liberation from pain and the cessation of pain. But the text reveals full awareness of this distinction, and there are no signs of confusion about it whatsoever: Plato makes it clear that one experiences 'liberation from pain' (*ἀπαλλαγὴ λύπης*) during the process of replenishment (of painful deficiencies), whereas the 'cessation of pain' (*παύλα λύπης*) comes with the arrival of the 'neutral state', following the process of replenishment (and the liberation from pain).²⁰

The other key argument underlying the charge by Gosling and Taylor is the following: on the view that all pleasure is replenishment, pleasure ceases when the process of replenishment is complete. If the philosopher's desires can be genuinely satisfied, however, they will be replenished genuinely and once for all. It follows from this that the desires of the philosopher who has become wise have already been satisfied, and there can be no further replenishing of them. Thus, Gosling and Taylor conclude, 'the more successful a philosopher is, the sooner his life will

¹⁸ The *Philebus*' description of pleasure as replenishment or restoration of a harmonious state is better to think with, but the meaning of the filling metaphor is clear enough.

¹⁹ Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 122–6. The fillings are explicated as processes of replenishment/restoration, as made explicit in the *Philebus*. The *Philebus* is generally understood as treating all pleasure as such processes, but G.R. Carone disputes this standard reading, arguing that not all pleasures are processes ('Hedonism and the pleasureless life in Plato's *Philebus*', *Phronesis* 45 [2000], 257–83, at 264–70).

²⁰ This issue is discussed in Erginel (n. 7). There I also explain that the distinction is critical for the views Plato puts forward, such that a confusion or lack of care about it would be a sign of serious incompetence, which I believe we should be reluctant to attribute to Plato.

cease to be pleasant'.²¹ Needless to say, such a consequence would be devastating for Plato's whole argument in *Republic* IX, and, as Gosling and Taylor argue, it raises the question whether pleasure is actually not the process of replenishment but rather 'being in possession'.²²

Now acquiring wisdom in the fullest possible sense is, in the context of the *Republic*, acquiring knowledge of the Forms. It has to be remembered that this is an extremely difficult point to reach, and perhaps impossible outside of Plato's city, without the extremely rigorous educational programme that it provides. The question is, of course, what happens to those who *do* get to that point. We should note first that Plato does not present the philosopher as acquiring knowledge of all the Forms all at once: at the end of the Divided Line passage in Book VI, Plato describes the ideal mode of intellectual investigation – dialectic – as 'using only Forms themselves, going through Forms to Forms, and ending in Forms' (511c1–2). This suggests that one does not acquire knowledge of the Forms all at once, but rather engages in an intellectual activity, moving from one Form to others, and building one's knowledge of the various Forms gradually.²³ This makes the complete satisfaction of all philosophical desires an even more distant goal, since there may be a long time between coming to know a Form and coming to know *all* Forms.

The cave analogy in Book VII gives further support to this view, since the person who has escaped from the cave cannot at first look at the sun – which represents the Form of the Good – directly, being blinded by the light after the darkness of the cave. He needs time to get accustomed, and proceeds by first looking at the shadows and reflections of the objects in the natural world, then looking at the objects themselves, then at the things in heaven at night. Only finally would he be able to look at the sun itself (516a5–b6).²⁴ This suggests that one has to go through various other Forms before coming to grasp 'the Good itself', confirming the view that acquiring knowledge of the Forms is a gradual process.²⁵ Yet this

²¹ Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 122–3. Of course, the (fully) wise philosopher's life would cease to be pleasant only in the sense that he would no longer have philosophical pleasures; he would not cease to enjoy eating, but being left with non-philosophical pleasures is the paradoxical conclusion hostile to Plato's thesis.

²² D. Frede shares the view that the greater pleasantness of the philosopher's life is 'incompatible with the generic definition of pleasure as a *process*' (*Plato: Philebus. Translated with Introduction and Notes* [Indianapolis, IN, 1993], 61, n. 3). She does not explain why she thinks they are incompatible, but her reason could be the above worry.

²³ The precise nature of this activity, and how it relates to the study of mathematics has been a matter of debate. See, for example, C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), ch. 2; T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford, 1995), 266–80; and M. Burnyeat, 'Plato on why mathematics is good for the soul', in T. Smiley (ed.), *Mathematics and Necessity: Essays in the History of Philosophy* (Oxford, 2000), 1–81.

²⁴ As Annas (n. 15), 254, points out, 'Clearly the cave and fire correspond to the visible world, and the world outside the cave to the realm of thought'. Even if we take some items in the natural world, such as shadows and reflections of natural objects, not to represent Forms but rather intelligible objects of an inferior sort (i.e. the segment of the divided line that comes second from the top – *διάνοια*), it seems clear that the ordinary objects in the natural world represent Forms, and the sun represents the Form of the Good.

²⁵ For an excellent discussion of questions concerning the degrees of reality, participation in the attributes of Forms, and the relationship between the Form of the Good and the other Forms, see G. Vlastos, 'Degrees of reality in Plato', reprinted in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), 58–75, and G. Santas, 'The Form of the Good in Plato's *Republic*', in J. Anton and A. Preus (edd.), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Albany, NY, 1983).

does not solve the problem at hand: we must still answer the question of what happens when a philosopher *does* acquire knowledge of the Form of the Good, however late that may be.

The key here is Plato's view of philosophy as a lifelong activity, rather than something to achieve and be done with. Taking the cave analogy seriously, we find that coming to know the Form of the Good does not end the learning process, since one may go on to look at other objects in the natural world, which is vast. On this understanding of the analogy, it is actually doubtful whether any philosopher can ever come to know *all* the Forms. That there is more knowledge to gain even after reaching the epistemic pinnacle is confirmed at 540b1–2, where Plato indicates that those who have seen the Good itself will spend most of their time in philosophy. Philosophical activity, then, does not at all cease after the ultimate philosophical achievement, and the pleasures afforded by that activity continue to fill the philosopher's life.

We must be careful not to confuse the wisdom of a philosopher with the wisdom of a god. For, as *Symposium* 204a points out, a philosopher would no longer be a lover of wisdom, that is, a philosopher, if he were to become *completely* wise, as a god is: 'none of the gods loves wisdom or wants to become wise – for they are wise – and no one else who is wise already loves wisdom'.²⁶ And nowhere in the *Republic* – or elsewhere in the Platonic corpus – is it suggested that the philosopher may become so wise as to be a lover of wisdom only in name. This distinction between being completely wise and being a philosopher informs our understanding of philosophical activity as well: such activity is necessarily in the pursuit of wisdom and is performed from a position of incompleteness. What the philosopher who has seen the Good spends his life doing, therefore, cannot be the activity of someone who already knows all there is to know.²⁷

A further important point is this: even if it were possible for the philosopher to acquire knowledge of *all* the Forms, and even if this left no lack in his soul with respect to the realm of the Forms, it would not follow that the successful philosopher's life would cease to be more pleasant than non-philosophical lives. For the wise philosopher's life will cease to be especially pleasant only if he has learned *everything* there is to learn, and there are no lacks whatsoever in the rational part of his soul. At this point, the scope of the philosopher's pleasures is of the essence: if they are restricted to acquiring knowledge of the Forms, then it does follow that the wise philosopher – one who knows all the Forms, supposing that this is possible – has run out of philosophical pleasures, assuming that knowledge of the Forms is not the sort of thing one forgets and can relearn.²⁸ If, on the

²⁶ Translation by A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff, *Plato: Symposium. Translated, with Introduction and Notes* (Indianapolis, 1989).

²⁷ In several works, Plato brings up godlikeness as the ideal to which human beings should aspire (*Symposium* 207c–212b; *Theaetetus* 176a–b; *Timaeus* 90a–d and *Republic* 613a–b). In these passages, it is made clear that a human being can achieve godlikeness (ὁμοίωσις θεῶν) only as far as possible (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν), which is consistent with the impossibility of becoming as wise as a god. For an examination of the Platonic ideal of godlikeness, see J. Annas, *Platonic Ethics, Old and New* (Oxford, 1999), ch. 3; and D. Sedley, 'The ideal of godlikeness', in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, and the Soul* (Oxford, 1999), 309–28.

²⁸ This assumption is supported in the third proof, since the philosophical pleasures are claimed to be superior in terms of the extent to which the desire in question is satisfied in a lasting way. Plato explains that eating, drinking and sex are inferior pleasures because they are vain attempts to fill something that can never be filled securely, like a leaky jar (586b3–4).

other hand, the philosopher's pleasures involve lesser varieties of learning, having acquired knowledge of the Forms need not deprive him of these lesser pleasures. If, as I will argue, the pleasures of reason involve learning lesser things than the Forms, including empirical facts, it would be wildly implausible to suggest that the wise philosopher has run out of all philosophical pleasures, since that would amount to equating a philosopher's wisdom with omniscience.²⁹

This reading does not confer greater pleasantness to the wise philosopher's life over the life of an aspiring philosopher who has not yet acquired wisdom. In fact, it turns out that a philosopher who is in the process of acquiring wisdom will have more pleasant experiences than the wise philosopher: as I will show below, Plato's DR designates a diverse range of pleasures as belonging to the class of 'truer' pleasures, while also allowing a ranking of these pleasures with respect to their truth. In other words, some 'truer' pleasures can be truer than others, and hence, more pleasant. Accordingly, the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Forms will be the truest and most pleasant, whereas the pleasure of acquiring true belief is a relatively modest and less true (that is, less pleasant) truer pleasure. It follows that a philosopher who has already acquired knowledge of the Forms has already had the most pleasant pleasures, and whatever truer pleasures are left for him will not be as pleasant.³⁰

This may not be a position we expected Plato to endorse in the *Republic*, where the pleasures of the philosophical life are promoted, but I see nothing in the text that is strained by this conclusion. Plato's purpose is to prove that the philosopher's life is more pleasant than the other kinds of lives, not to prove that there is a strict correlation between one's degree of wisdom (or place in the philosophical hierarchy) and how pleasant one's life is. As long as the philosophers' lives are more pleasant than the lives of the other kinds of people, it does not matter that those philosophers who are in the process of acquiring knowledge of the Forms are at a more pleasant stage of the philosophical life than that of philosophers with complete knowledge of the Forms (if such philosophers exist). Plato's aim in *Republic* IX is to show, in this general way, that the distinctive pleasures of a philosophical life are more pleasant than all other pleasures, and that the philosophical life is therefore more pleasant than all other lives.³¹

This allows us to dismiss the key argument, discussed above, behind Gosling and Taylor's case that *Republic* IX contains 'a fatal ambiguity': they argue that the text contains evidence not only for the view that pleasure is the process of replenishing deficiencies but also for the opposed view that pleasure is the state of possessing what one's nature needs, on the grounds that only on the latter view can we maintain the 'greater pleasantness of the philosophic life'.³² We have seen, however, that this greater pleasantness can be accounted for on the replenishment

²⁹ The *Timaeus* emphasizes the impossibility of gaining complete knowledge of the empirical world: 'It is god who has both the knowledge and the power required to mix multiplicity into unity and to dissolve unity back into multiplicity, whereas no human being either is or will ever be sufficient in either of these things' (68d4–7).

³⁰ Similarly, a philosopher who has gained knowledge of the Good has already had the truest and most pleasant pleasure, even if he goes on to acquire knowledge of other Forms.

³¹ Of course, this leaves open the possibility that, while the pleasantness of the philosopher's life does not exactly correlate with his degree of wisdom, his *eudaimonia* does so correlate. To see whether there really is such a correlation requires a more detailed examination of the relationship between pleasure and *eudaimonia* in the *Republic* than can be undertaken here.

³² Gosling and Taylor (n. 2), 123.

model of pleasure, and there is therefore no reason to attribute any ambiguity to Plato's text. Even though Plato has lavish praises for knowledge of the Forms, nowhere in the *Republic* does he suggest that this *state of knowing* – as opposed to acquiring the knowledge – is pleasant. I see no reason, therefore, to resist the above reading of the pleasures involved in the different stages of the philosophical life. It follows that the charge of ambiguity rests on a groundless argument, and it may be dismissed. We may, then, proceed safely with the understanding that, in *Republic* IX, pleasure is the process of replenishment, which is represented metaphorically by the process of filling.³³

III

We left our discussion of the filling metaphor wondering how one kind of 'filling' can be truer than another. Plato's answer to this question is complicated and takes a number of steps. I will reconstruct the answer (as a series of statements rather than the original form of question and answer) as a whole, both because it is important to see how DR is developed and because I translate differently from some commonly used versions, on points that are not insignificant.³⁴

- (1) The truer filling up is with that which is more. (585b9)
- (2) The kind/species of true belief, knowledge, intelligence and further, collectively, all virtue participates more in pure being than do the classes of food, drink, delicacies and nourishment in general. (Because) (585b11–c2)
- (3) That which 'is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind' is more than that which 'is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind'. (And) (585c2–6)
- (4) The being of what is always changing/(never the same) participates less in being than does the being of knowledge. (585c8–10)
- (5) The being of what is always changing participates less in truth than does the being of knowledge. (585c11–12)
- (6) If the being of what is always changing participates less in truth, it participates less in being also. (585c13–14)
- (7) And, on the whole, the classes of things concerned with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul. (585d1–4)
- (8) The body participates less in being and truth than does the soul. (585d5–6)
- (9) That which is more, and is filled with things that are more, is really more filled than that which is less, and is filled with things that are less. (585d7–10)
- (10) If being filled with what is appropriate by nature is pleasure, that which is more filled with that which is more enjoys more really and more truly a more

³³ To be precise, pleasure is the *perceived* process of replenishment. The perception requirement for pleasure is put forward in detail in the *Philebus* (33c–34c), but it can be found already in the *Republic*, where Plato writes that all pleasures come to be in the soul and that bodily pleasures reach the soul through the body (583e9–10, 584c4–5). For further discussion of this point, see Erginel (n. 6), 449.

³⁴ I translate proposition (4) significantly differently from others. For the justification of my translation, see the Appendix.

true pleasure, while that which partakes of things that are less is less truly and securely filled and partakes of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure. (585d11–e6)

Plato proposes to evaluate pleasures in terms of how true/real they are: a pleasure is pleasant insofar as it constitutes a true/real filling (with what is appropriate). The truth/reality of a filling is, Plato tells us at propositions (9) and (10), determined by the truth/reality of that which makes a filling what it is, that which distinguishes it from other fillings. What distinguishes a filling from others is what it is a filling of (the container) and what it is filling with (the filler). Hence what makes eating a particular kind of filling is that it is a filling of the stomach with food. Gaining knowledge, on the other hand, is a filling of the soul with knowledge. Because of this difference in terms of the containers and fillers involved, these two experiences constitute not only different pleasures but also pleasures of different value, since one turns out to be truer than the other.

Turning to the details of Plato's argument, it can be seen that he begins, at proposition (1), by asserting the link between the truth of a filling and the status of the filler. Here we are introduced to the notion of evaluating the status of an object (e.g. some filler) in terms of 'being more' (or less). At (2) we find a substantial claim comparing two classes of fillers, one class consisting of what may be characterized as psychic objects and the other of bodily objects. This claim is then supported at (3) by the general principle that changeless things are 'more' than ever-changing things. Proposition (4) basically repeats this point, except now in terms of participation in being (the terms in which the claim at [2] was made) and focussing on the case of knowledge. This transition from (3) to (4) suggests that, for Plato, to 'be more' just means 'participate more in being'.³⁵ Propositions (5) and (6) then return to truth – the pivotal element for the upshot of this whole passage – and affirm that participating more in being co-varies with having more truth (being truer). At (7), Plato generalizes what was said at (4)–(6) about knowledge and what is always changing, reaching his overall conclusion about fillers, that bodily ones are less true than psychic ones.³⁶

Next Plato turns to the other element involved in any filling, the container, to explain *its* role in determining the worth of a filling: we are told that the body participates less in being, and is less true, than the soul (Proposition [8]), matching the status of the fillers of which they are the containers. This prepares us for the formula at (9), which brings us back to the fillings themselves, and defines being more filled in terms of the statuses of the container and filler in question. Finally, at (10), we reach the conclusion, which is the heart of DR: given that

³⁵ *Μᾶλλον εἶναι* = *οὐσίας μᾶλλον μετέχειν*. This is confirmed at (7)–(9), where Plato constructs an argument that assumes the interchangeability of 'being more' and 'participating more in being': (7) and (8) introduce premises concerning the status of fillers and containers, respectively, in terms of participation in being; (9) derives from these a conclusion stated in terms of being more. Of course, this passage is consistent with there being not an identity but rather an inter-entailment relationship between 'being more' and 'participating more in being', but there is no reason to prefer that more cumbersome reading.

³⁶ Although I mention only Forms as objects of knowledge, my views in this article are compatible with the minority position that objects of knowledge are *not* restricted to Forms. (For this position see Annas [n. 15] and G. Fine, 'Knowledge and belief in *Republic* 5–7', in S. Everson (ed.), *Cambridge Companions to Ancient Thought, 1: Epistemology* (Cambridge, 1990), 85–115.

pleasure is filling with what is appropriate by nature, the formula at (9) and the equivalence between being more and being truer, it follows that that pleasure is truer that consists of a filling with an object that is more in a container that is more.³⁷ The further conclusion – in fact the ultimate conclusion – emerging in the next few lines (586a1–b4), is that, given (7), (8) and (10), pleasures of the soul are truer than those of the body.³⁸

At this point, we should try to clarify the way in which any item's being (or participation in being) is tied to whether the item is 'always the same' or 'never the same'. Being always the same could be interpreted as being changeless but, as Reeve points out, 'then it is impossible to understand how something always the same could *come to be* filled with something else that is always the same'.³⁹ An alternative interpretation is as follows: in keeping with the account of being that we find in the central books of the *Republic*,⁴⁰ something that is, is F, by virtue of its resemblance to the Form of F. And something that is more, is more F, by virtue of its greater resemblance to the Form of F. Being always the same, Reeve suggests, means always resembling some Form F completely, and being never the same means never resembling some Form F completely. (Being 'immortal and true' or 'mortal' are to be explicated on this basis as well.) On this account, then, there is no difficulty about something that is always the same filling up something else that is always the same. This simply means that 'something that always resembles a form completely (a psyche) comes to be filled with something else that always resembles a form completely (knowledge)'.⁴¹ The soul (psyche) is always the same because it always resembles the Form of soul completely, and similarly for knowledge. This is what determines the superior status of the pleasure of acquiring knowledge of the Forms. On the other hand, in the case of a pleasure such as eating, the food (the filler) never resembles the Form of food completely – since it is constantly decaying – and similarly for the body (the container). Plato has told us, therefore, that the reality of the filler and the container

³⁷ In his exposition of DR, Plato ignores a point that he noted earlier (which I mention above), that a bodily change, or filling, constitutes a pleasure only if it reaches the soul or is perceived. Since there is no good reason to attribute to him the folly of forgetting the point he made a page ago, we ought to assume that only the perceived fillings are pleasures, and that he left out this point to avoid further complicating his formulations.

³⁸ This detailed analysis of how to evaluate any filling makes it clear, I believe, that the model Plato develops here is intended to rate *each individual pleasure* on the basis of *its* container and *its* filler. It is therefore misleading to think, with Russell (n. 17), 129, that Plato's designation of some pleasures as truer than others can be vindicated by the understanding that pleasure is 'a way of valuing one's life as a whole'. I agree with Russell, and I think it is important to note, that pleasure, 'in certain crucial cases, is not just a mechanical or physiological process, but involves our ability to "see" the object of our desire *as* something that will actually satisfy us' (ibid.). But such complexity is involved only in *some* pleasures, and the way we see the object of our desire plays a role in the evaluation of a pleasure only when it also constitutes (partly) the filler involved in that filling. This is plainly not the case with fillings of the body, which Plato evaluates as such, and not as fillings of the body *plus* our conception of the object we consume, since our conceptions do not enter our bodies.

³⁹ Reeve (n. 23), 111. Annas (n. 15), 312, for example, is among those who take being always the same as being changeless: 'In this argument, *being* is actually introduced by the notions of changelessness and stability'. She then complains about the problem that Reeve raises against this interpretation, seeing it not as a weakness of the interpretation but rather as Plato's mistake.

⁴⁰ See, for example, 477a–479b. Cf. Reeve (n. 23), 58–71.

⁴¹ Reeve (n. 23), 111.

are determined by the extent to which these two items completely and unalterably resemble their respective Forms, and that the truth of a filling is derived from the reality of these two items.⁴²

This derivative method for determining the status of a filling yields the obvious results when applied to acquiring knowledge on the one hand, and eating, drinking and sex on the other. But, to return to the realm of the controversial, is Frede right that *only* filling with knowledge constitutes a truer filling, or do other kinds of filling belong in that category as well? The text contains strong evidence for the view that there are many pleasures in this superior category other than the pleasure of acquiring knowledge. First, at (2) Plato puts not only knowledge but also true belief, intelligence and all virtue in the category of superior fillers, and contrasts all of these with the inferior bodily fillers. Second, he makes clear at (7) that a general class of things 'concerned with the care of the soul' – presumably referring to the items mentioned at (2) – belong in the category of superior fillers. None of this would make sense if Plato considered knowledge to be the only superior filler. It would also make nonsense of the whole passage to classify a filling with a superior filler as a pleasure in the inferior category: it is explicit at (9) that filling with a superior filler yields a superior pleasure. It seems, then, that fillings with *all* the items mentioned at (2), not only with knowledge, constitute pleasures of the superior sort.

This conclusion, however, faces a difficulty concerning Plato's comparison of two classes of filler at (3): we are told that a filler that 'is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind' is more than a filler that 'is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind'. So what are the fillers in the superior category described here? Knowledge of the Forms is related to the Forms, and it comes to be in the soul; this trio seems to fit the description in (3), all three being always the same, immortal and true.⁴³ But how about all the other items listed as superior fillers at (2)? True belief, intelligence and virtue also come to be in the soul, but are they themselves 'always the same, immortal, and true'?⁴⁴ The key question at this point is what role (3) plays in Plato's argument. The way in which Socrates moves from (2) to (3), just continuing his speech by adding a 'judge it this way' (ὥδε δὲ κρῖνε) may suggest that the subject of (3) is the same as the subject of (2), and that in (3) Plato does not distinguish knowledge from these other items. It would follow from this that these items, too, come into being in that which is always the same, immortal and

⁴² Reeve (n. 23), 110–11, interprets this idea as the status of pleasure being determined on the basis of the extent to which it instantiates a relational form: 'If there is a single relational form R (being filled), and two differently qualified instances of it ..., R₁ (being filled with knowledge) and R₂ (being filled with food), and x is related by R₁ to y, and z is related by R₂ to w, then R₁ more completely resembles R than does R₂ if (i) x and y are always the same, immortal, and true, while (ii) z and w are never the same, and mortal.' I am sympathetic to this treatment, and I see it as capturing the essence of DR – pleasures can be identified as instances of a particular sort of relation between containers and fillers. However, I will explain below that this formula needs to be supplemented so as to capture various complications that arise.

⁴³ Given that Plato considers the soul to be 'always the same', he probably holds that the intellectual capacities of humans are so too, and that our mode of relating to the Forms will not change.

⁴⁴ I assume that 'the kind of true belief' simply means the category comprising all true beliefs, and that what you actually fill with are individual true beliefs, not the kind.

true, are themselves of that kind, and are related to something of that kind.⁴⁵ Yet taking (2) and (3) this way and claiming that true belief is always the same and is related to what is always the same (as much as knowledge is) seems inconsistent with how knowledge and belief are compared earlier in the *Republic*. The Line analogy makes it clear that belief ranks distinctly *below* understanding (*νόησις*) – the cognitive power that has Forms as its objects (511d6–e2). The disparity that we find in the Cave analogy is more dramatic: the power to grasp Forms is as superior to belief as viewing real objects under sunlight is to viewing puppets in the dark depths of a cave (514a1–515c3). These passages indicate that there is a stark contrast between the status of knowledge and that of belief – even true belief – in Plato's system.⁴⁶ This contrast, in turn, makes it highly problematic to classify all the psychic fillers mentioned at (2) together, as superior fillers.

I believe that the best way to make sense of Plato's view on this matter is as follows. The subject of (3) is only a subset of the subject of (2), avoiding the problematic consequence I just mentioned. This still serves Plato's purposes, and (3) is still tightly connected to (2) because what Plato wants to establish in (3) is that the reality of a filler is determined by how it, its container and that to which it is related stand with respect to two opposite sets of attributes – 'always the same, immortal and true' on the one hand, and 'never the same and mortal' on the other.⁴⁷ Consistent with the notion that there are *degrees* of reality, there are intermediate sets of attributes between these two, and the point of (3) is to correlate the degree of reality of the filler with its status on the scale ranging between these two opposite sets.⁴⁸ Given the above analysis of these sets of attributes, then, true belief must lie somewhere between knowledge and food with respect to the extent to which it, its container and that to which it is related completely and unalterably resemble the relevant Form(s).

Let us briefly consider, in reverse order, the three interlinked items to be assessed: that to which a true belief is related is rated below that to which knowledge is related, since Plato makes it clear at 476d–478e that all and only objects of knowledge bear the properties that they do completely and unqualifiedly. Objects of belief, by contrast, invariably fail to do so, necessarily bearing both some property

⁴⁵ While one might be predisposed against this understanding of (3) by the view that only the Forms are always the same, that view certainly does not work here: at least the knowledge of those Forms, and the (part of) soul that contains it, share that quality, on (3) itself. And we are not given a criterion of being always the same that includes these three but excludes intelligence, etc.

⁴⁶ In both analogies, belief is evaluated as a cognitive power, regardless of whether a belief is true or false.

⁴⁷ Proposition (3) should therefore be seen as belonging to the sequence from (4) to (6), where Plato focusses on the case of knowledge and contrasts it with bodily fillers, in order to illustrate how some fillers are superior to others.

⁴⁸ At 477a6–8, for example, Plato writes: 'if anything is such as to be and also not to be, won't it fall between that which perfectly [*εἰλικρινῶς*] is, and that which is not at all?', establishing the whole intermediary realm of things that are neither always the same nor never the same. Furthermore, it cannot be the case that there are only three categories with respect to reality, two kinds of things at the extremes and one intermediary category without the possibility to distinguish between the things in that category: Plato tells us at 515d (in the Cave analogy) that, if a prisoner at the bottom of the cave is released from his bonds and turns around, he will encounter the things whose shadows he had seen before; these things, according to Plato, are 'more real' than their shadows.

(F) and its opposite (not-F).⁴⁹ It follows that objects of knowledge do completely and unalterably (unqualifiedly) resemble the corresponding Form(s), whereas objects of belief do not.⁵⁰ The status of what a filler is related to does not come up meaningfully in the case of food, but a comparison of their containers does explain why true belief should be ranked above food: true belief, like knowledge, comes to be in the soul, and we have already noted why the soul fares better than the body by the standard being employed here. Given the above two considerations, we can already see why true belief lies somewhere between knowledge and food.

Turning to the status of true belief itself, we should first note that 'X is a true belief' attributes not one but two properties to X, being true and being a belief. This suggests that, in the case of true belief, there are two relevant Forms: the Forms of Truth and Belief.⁵¹ Considering how true belief does with respect to each of these Forms, we find that it does less well than knowledge with respect to the Form of Truth, since instances of true belief do not resemble the Form of Truth completely and unalterably, given the above point that objects of belief necessarily fail to resemble the relevant Form completely and unalterably.⁵² Instances of knowledge, on the other hand, do resemble the Form of Knowledge completely and unalterably (it is unclear whether true belief does better than food in this respect). Turning to the Form of Belief, we can see that true belief does less well than knowledge but better than food: we are more likely to abandon a true belief than we are to abandon some knowledge (cf. *Meno* 98a). This greater stability of knowledge over true belief means that a true belief does not resemble the Form of Belief unalterably, whereas instances of knowledge do unalterably resemble the Form of Knowledge. Nevertheless, a true belief is not lost so easily as food ceases to be food, which means that food does even less well than true belief in resembling the corresponding Form. We may conclude from the above that true belief ranks below knowledge, but above food, with respect to the extent to which it, its container and that to which it is related completely and unalterably resemble the relevant Form(s).

It turns out, then, that DR is capable of comparing not only psychic fillers with bodily fillers but also two different psychic fillers, in terms of their status/rank. It is evident, however, that Plato is not interested in developing this line of comparing the soul's various fillers. In fact, we can see in this whole passage that he is not concerned about using DR to distinguish between the soul's various

⁴⁹ What Plato says is that knowledge is only of what is, whereas belief is of what both is and is not. The 'is' here is generally understood predicatively, meaning that knowledge is of what is F unqualifiedly ('F' being some predicate), whereas belief is of what is both F and not-F in some way. Cf. Annas (n. 15), 195–203.

⁵⁰ This is so whether we endorse the mainstream view that only Forms are objects of knowledge or follow Annas (n. 15) and Fine (n. 36) in rejecting this view: whether it is a Form or not, only an object of knowledge is what is unqualifiedly.

⁵¹ A question may be raised about whether the 'Theory of Forms' allows the existence of these Forms. Two views emerge as prominent in the extensive literature on the Forms: (i) Forms are meanings of general terms; (ii) Forms are properties/universals (see G. Fine, 'Introduction' in id., *Plato 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology* [Oxford, 1999], 19–20; Reeve [n. 23], 293, n. 35). There would be no difficulty in Truth and Belief qualifying as Forms in either of those views. Nor would there be any difficulty in Reeve's view, according to which 'the form of F is what Fs would instantiate in the best of all possible human worlds' (85). We would face a problem only under the most restrictive view on Forms, endorsed by G.E.L. Owen ('A proof in the *Peri Ideon*' in R.E. Allen [ed.], *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* [London, 1965], 293–312).

⁵² I take it that the belief 'X is F' is true insofar as X really is F.

fillers or fillings with respect to their truth/reality. What he *does* appear to be concerned about, rather, is the distinction between the fillers and fillings of the soul on the one hand, and those of the body on the other. Proposition (7) places the whole class of fillers concerned with the care of the soul above those concerned with the care of the body, in terms of truth and being. And (8) points out that the corresponding containers of the two classes of fillers in (7), the soul and the body, stand in the same relation to one another: the former participates more in truth and being than the latter.

As in the case of (7), which compares two classes with no regard for distinctions within the classes, and (8), which simply compares two items, (9) appears unconcerned about differences within the two classes of fillings. The precise formulation of (9) also underscores this understanding: the rule to determine the status of a filling is structured on the status of the container, specifying which kind of container is more filled. Now this rule does not preclude making such distinctions either, but it does not tell us how that would work, suggesting that it is not a matter of concern for Plato here.⁵³ Finally, the climax of the whole passage, (10), is based on this rule, also focussing on the container and determining which container enjoys a truer pleasure.

This lack of concern about such distinctions might give the impression that DR holds all the fillings of a given container to be equal in truth and reality. Yet I believe that this is a false impression. First, despite this lack of concern, we can see at (10) that the status of the filler *does* play some role in determining the status of a filling: what enjoys a truer pleasure is that which is more filled *with that which is more*, and not merely that which is more filled. Given this wording, it would be very odd if the status of fillers were to be disregarded in determining the status of fillings. That would also be odd because of the amount of space that Plato spends on explicating the status of fillers: propositions (2) through (7) are about the status of fillers. It would be inexplicable for Plato to devote more than half of the key passage on DR to the status of fillers and then leave them out of the assessment of fillings. Since different fillers of the soul are rated differently (as explained above), DR is best understood as also rating the fillings with these different fillers differently.⁵⁴ Second, and more conclusively, Plato explicitly rejects the notion that the pleasures of a given container are equally true, arguing at 586e4–587a1 that each part of the soul will enjoy ‘the best and truest pleasures

⁵³ If Plato really were concerned about such distinctions, he could have formulated the rule differently, placing more emphasis on the truth of fillers (and suggesting that the different fillers of a container may vary in their truth and being) but he does not do this. He could have written, for example: ‘That which is more, and comes to be in something that is more, really fills more than that which is less, and comes to be in something that is less.’

⁵⁴ If true belief has a lower status than knowledge, then being filled with true belief should also be of lower status than being filled with knowledge. The formula for determining the truth of a pleasure in terms of the status of the filler and container involved, therefore, can accommodate the notion that the pleasure of acquiring true belief is a less true pleasure than that of acquiring knowledge. If this is right, Reeve’s (n. 23) way of capturing this formula – in terms of the extent to which the pleasure instantiates a relational form – should also be modified so that: if there is a single relational form *R* (being filled) and two differently qualified instances of it, *R*₁ (being filled with knowledge) and *R*₂ (being filled with true belief), and *x* (the soul) is related by *R*₁ to *y* (knowledge), and *x* is related by *R*₂ to *z* (true belief), then *R*₁ more completely resembles *R* than does *R*₂ if *y* resembles more completely and unalterably its corresponding Form than does *z*. (See n. 42 above.)

possible for it' if the rational part is ruling a just soul.⁵⁵ This makes it clear that the same container can have different kinds of pleasure (filling), and that the different pleasures may have different degrees of truth and reality.

We may conclude, then, that DR allows for different degrees of truth and reality among the pleasures of the same container, while focussing not on this but rather on the relative status of the fillings of the two containers in question (body and soul). This should not be surprising at all, since the aim of the third proof, and therefore also of DR, is to demonstrate that the philosopher's pleasures are more pleasant than all the other pleasures. Though the mechanism devised for this purpose also shows that some of the philosopher's pleasures are truer, and hence more pleasant, than others, this thought is not developed because it does not serve the overall purpose of Plato's argument.⁵⁶

IV

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

First, the fillings of the body that Plato mentions – eating and drinking – correspond to pleasures of the appetite, and there seems to be no bodily filling that

⁵⁵ What we find here is not merely the notion that different pleasures of the soul may have different statuses, but the more specific (and stronger) claim that, even within each part of the soul, there are pleasures of varying ranks. In the next section we will have to consider the tripartition of the soul in relation to DR.

⁵⁶ A question might be raised about 583b3–4, where Plato claims that the pleasures other than those of the philosopher are 'neither completely true [*παραληθής*] nor pure'. It might be asked whether this claim suggests that all of the philosopher's pleasures are completely true, ruling out the possibility of different degrees of truth among the philosopher's pleasures. I do not think so, for two reasons: first, this comment appears well before the introduction of DR, and hence the assignment of degrees of truth to pleasures. At this point, therefore, it would be premature for Plato to make the more sophisticated claim that only the philosopher's pleasures are in the superior category of 'truer' pleasures, and that all the other pleasures are less true. On the other hand, it would be misleading for him to say simply that only the philosopher's pleasures are true, since it turns out that the other pleasures contain some truth as well. We may therefore understand 583b3–4 as making the point that the philosopher's pleasures are superior with respect to truth, albeit in a relatively unsophisticated way. Second, even if one takes only the pleasure of gaining knowledge to be 'completely true', 583b3–4 would be consistent with the view that there are pleasures of different status among the philosopher's pleasures. For Plato is there claiming that non-philosophical pleasures cannot be completely true, which is perfectly consistent with the notion that some philosophical pleasures, too, are less than completely true. His point, here at the very beginning of the third proof, is that the philosophical life contains pleasures of a calibre that is unavailable in non-philosophical lives. This point is not threatened by the presence of less-than-completely-true philosophical pleasures.

corresponds to the pleasures of spirit – Plato does not offer any and it would be untenable if he did. The pleasures of spirit, therefore, constitute counterexamples to the notion that all pleasures other than those of reason are bodily fillings. Second, not all the pleasures of appetite can be characterized as fillings of the body: at 584c7–9 Plato claims that the pleasures of anticipation are liberations from pain – that is, that they are not pure pleasures. So they cannot be pleasures of reason. The pleasure of anticipating a feast fills no emptiness in my body and, independently of Plato's claim that pleasures of anticipation are not pure pleasures, it would be difficult to characterize it as one of reason. The filler in this case seems to be a belief and, accordingly, must be assumed to have cognitive content, but not everything that has cognitive content is a filler of the rational part.⁵⁷ Third, consider the famous case of Leontius, which Plato uses to illustrate the distinction between the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul: Leontius has a morbid desire to view corpses, and his enjoyment of the view is a pleasure of the appetitive part (since the desire belongs to that part), even though the viewing does not constitute a bodily filling (439e5–440a4). Fourth, there is evidence in the *Republic* that beliefs, even true beliefs, can come to be in the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul. That is, they are not composed solely of drives and urges, which would pre-empt any cognitive content, nor do they contain only false beliefs. In Book IV's discussion of the virtues in the city and the soul, Plato argues that the virtuous man is temperate (*σώφρων*) because all three parts of his soul believe in common (*ὁμοδοξῶσι*) that the rational part should rule (442c9–d2), just as the good city is temperate because citizens of all three classes agree about who should rule (431d9–e2).⁵⁸ Furthermore, the oligarchic man is criticized in Book VIII for falling short of the 'true virtue of a soul that is of one mind (*ὁμονοητικῆς*) and harmonious' (554e4–5), and for holding his evil appetites in check 'not by persuading them that it is not better [to satisfy them] ... but by compulsion and fear (*ἀνάγκη καὶ φόβῳ*)' (554d1–3). As Bobonich points out,

For this criticism to have a point, Plato must think that the philosopher can persuade his Appetitive part by communication, by means of *logoi*, that it is better for it to go along with reason. The Reasoning part does not merely suppress the worse desires or somehow block them from bringing about an action; the effect of the Reasoning part's communication on the Appetitive part is not simply causal. This persuasion is a form of rational interaction ...⁵⁹

⁵⁷ I will have more to say about this shortly.

⁵⁸ It seems plain that Plato attributes cognitive capacities, as well as desires, to the non-rational parts of the soul. This is why, as C. Bobonich puts it 'each part has the basic capacities to be a source of action' (*Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics* [Oxford, 2002], 220), making each of them agent-like. Here I side with the mainstream view, endorsed by Annas (n. 15); Bobonich; J. Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', reprinted in id. *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), 118–37; Irwin (n. 23); and R. Kamtekar 'Speaking with the same voice as reason: personification in Plato's psychology', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 31 (2006), 167–202, among others. This view has been rejected by H. Lorenz, 'Desire and reason in Plato's *Republic*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 27 (2004), 83–116; H. Lorenz, 'The analysis of the soul in Plato's *Republic*', in G. Santas (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 2006), 146–65; and R. Stalley, 'Persuasion and the tripartite soul in Plato's *Republic*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32 (2007), 63–90. I cannot address this issue at length here, but I remain convinced that the textual evidence favours the mainstream view.

⁵⁹ Bobonich (n. 58), 243.

It appears, therefore, that the non-rational parts of the soul are so capable of having cognitive content that they can communicate with the rational part through a form of rational interaction, as well as agreeing or disagreeing with it. Finally, Plato argues in his second proof that each part of the soul has its own distinctive pleasures (580d), and identifies the pleasures of the rational part as the philosopher's pleasures (581b–e). It would be very odd for Plato to now claim that the philosopher's pleasures are fillings (i.e. pleasures) of the *whole* soul, ignoring the finer classification that has been made.⁶⁰

These observations suggest that the contrast between the fillings of the soul and those of the body does not adequately cover the whole range of pleasures on which DR must pass judgement. The pleasures of appetite and spirit cannot all be classified as fillings of the body; and the philosopher's pleasures, which have been characterized as fillings of the soul, are in fact fillings of the rational part of the soul (consistent with what Plato says at 581b–e). The pleasures of spirit must then correspond to fillings of the spirited part of the soul, and the pleasures of appetite must be the fillings of the appetitive part of the soul, along with fillings of the body.⁶¹ Achilles enjoys a pleasure of the spirited part of his soul, gazing at the sight of mutilated enemies lying under his feet, and so does Euthyphro, hearing public praises of his wisdom at the marketplace. Don Giovanni enjoys appetitive pleasures on yet another day of conquest, while Leporello has to be content with the appetitive pleasure of believing that he will one day experience what his master does in abundance.⁶² The philosopher, on the other hand, enjoys his pleasures of reason by filling not the whole of his soul (or just any part of it) but its rational part specifically, with true belief, intelligence and knowledge. This is the picture that Plato should have developed, or perhaps would have developed if he had the space for it. Given his constraints, he may have chosen to keep simple DR's comparison of the status of containers by treating the contrast as one between body and soul, the indisputably different natures of which make the contrast more striking.

⁶⁰ It seems to me that if X is a pleasure of Y, and Y is a part of Z, then X cannot be a filling of the whole Z.

⁶¹ The point that Plato has made earlier and does not repeat here is that all pleasures involve the soul in that they are perceived. Thus even bodily fillings involve the soul somehow. It is unclear from the text whether bodily fillings cause fillings of the appetitive part of the soul, as a joint filling of some sort (as opposed to the purely psychic appetitive pleasures of anticipation, which do not involve fillings of the body). Some such link must exist between a filling of the body and the appetitive part of the soul, since Plato classifies bodily pleasures as pleasures of the appetitive part of the soul (580e), pleasures that satisfy the desires residing in that part. The exact nature of that link is left out of the account, which is unsurprising given its density.

⁶² Leporello could also be experiencing appetitive pleasures by merely imagining himself in his master's shoes, without actually believing that this will ever come true. (This option is probably more in line with his depiction in Mozart's opera.) There is no reason why Plato should not be able to accommodate psychic fillers other than beliefs, but I refer only to beliefs for the sake of simplicity. In fact, the case of Leontius itself is best understood as an example of a psychic filling of the appetitive part of the soul without the filler being a belief – it does not seem that the pleasure of viewing the corpses consists in acquiring or entertaining any beliefs. Of course, Leontius' odd taste may be linked to a set of beliefs, but this would mean only that the desire in question is shaped by some beliefs, not that the pleasant experience consists in being filled with a belief. In any case, if Plato's account is to capture familiar pleasures such as viewing beautiful objects, it is necessary to include a wide variety of mental events among psychic fillers.

My modification to the simple (and simplistic) contrast made explicitly in DR may appear contrived, and apologetic for what is in fact Plato's blunder. But, aside from the fact that the blunder would be an extraordinarily grave one, there is evidence that Plato must have been aware that his simple account had to be developed in the way I suggest. The evidence comes from the solution to a related difficulty: as already discussed above, (9) and (10) determine the status of pleasures/fillings primarily in terms of the status of the containers. The contrast between the truth of a philosophical pleasure and a non-philosophical pleasure, then, depends primarily on the contrast between the truth of the containers in question. However, since the pleasures of spirit and appetite are not philosophical pleasures, and given our finding that the pleasures of spirit and appetite can be fillings of the soul just as well as the pleasures of reason, how can we sustain the contrast between their statuses?⁶³ It appears that the pleasures of the three parts can share their container, which destroys DR's mechanism for determining the truth of a pleasure.

The problematic assumption here is that the soul is a single container, which has a status (truth/reality) as a whole. This means that the parts of the soul are not distinguished with respect to their truth/reality. But this assumption comes into tension with the way in which DR ranks fillers and containers:

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

As we have already noted, (3) says that the status of a filler can be determined by considering how it, its container and that to which it is related stand with respect to two opposite sets of attributes – 'always the same, immortal and true' on the one hand, and 'never the same and mortal' on the other. Though this is not stated explicitly, it is clear that the status of a container, too, is established in terms of how it does on the scale between these two sets of attributes (and perhaps how its fillers fare).⁶⁴ However, it is hard to see how the soul as a whole could be evaluated in this way, since the different parts of the soul seem to rank differently on this scale.

In particular, there is evidence that the spirited and appetitive parts do not in fact have as lofty a status as the rational part. At *Republic* 518d–e, Plato argues that wisdom differs from the other virtues in that it belongs to something 'more divine, which never loses its power', whereas the other virtues of the soul are probably 'close to those of the body' and are acquired later than wisdom. It seems clear to me from this passage that the rational part of the soul is construed as occupying a position that is superior to the other two parts. This view is confirmed in Book X's discussion of the immortality of the soul.

Having argued that the soul is immortal (608d–611a), Socrates warns us against thinking that the immortal soul 'in its truest nature is full of variety, dissimilarity and conflict with itself' (611b1–3). For, he explains, it would not be easy for something to be immortal if it is composed of many parts (611b5–7). It seems

⁶³ Given that this contrast is based primarily on the contrast between the containers, it would not do to shift the burden to the status of the fillers.

⁶⁴ Indeed, DR provides no other way to determine the status of containers. We are told at (8) that the soul is more real than the body, but the only available explanation for this superiority is in terms of the sets of attributes at (3).

inconsistent, then, to suppose that the immortal soul is composed of three parts, as Plato argues in Book IV and as is assumed up until this point of the *Republic*. This apparent, and potentially serious, inconsistency is thankfully resolved immediately, as Socrates proceeds to explain the true nature of the soul: what has been said about the soul so far is true only of the soul as it currently appears (611c4–5). The current condition of the soul, we are informed, is like that of the sea god Glaucus, whose original nature is hard to see because he has been mutilated and covered with shells, seaweeds and rocks. To see the soul's true nature, we should look at its love of wisdom

and consider what it grasps and the sorts of things with which it longs to associate, because it is akin to what is divine and immortal and what always exists, and what it would become if it devoted itself completely to this. (611d8–e3)

The picture emerging from these passages is that the true/original nature of the soul corresponds to the part of the soul that is engaged in philosophy, and that the other two parts – like the shells, seaweeds and rocks on Glaucus – neither belonged to the soul originally nor will they do so if the soul manages to escape from its current condition.⁶⁵ We can now see why the apparent inconsistency mentioned above is not a real one: that the tripartite soul could not easily be immortal is not worrisome because Plato takes only the rational part of the soul to be immortal.⁶⁶

Given this evidence, we may conclude that the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul are not immortal and always the same, as the rational part is, confirming the contrast between their truths as containers. The fact that Plato's formulation of the truth of a container allows this contrast between the parts of the soul is indication,

⁶⁵ In other words, it is the rational part that existed before the soul sinned and got caught in the cycle of reincarnation (described at *Phaedrus* 246a–250c), and it is only that part that will remain when the soul manages to escape from the cycle and return to where it came from. Cf. W.K.C. Guthrie, 'Plato's view on the nature of the soul', in *Recherches sur la tradition platonicienne, entretiens*, vol. 3, Fondation Hardt, *Pour l'Étude de l'Antiquité Classique* (Vandoeuvres-Genève, 1957), reprinted in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays II: Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion* (Garden City, NY, 1971), 230–43 at 242 (the page numbers of the later version are used in this article).

⁶⁶ C. Shields, 'Simple souls', in E. Wagner (ed.), *Essays on Plato's Psychology* (Lanham, MD, 2001), 137–56, at 146, offers an alternative approach to resolving this inconsistency, arguing that the tripartite soul is not in fact composite in the relevant sense because the parts of the soul are merely conceptual, as opposed to aggregative or organic, parts. Leaving aside whether or not the Book IV argument for tripartition can be understood as yielding merely conceptual parts, we have seen that Book X does not support such a resolution to the problem, since the immortal soul excludes the lower two parts, whatever sorts of parts they are.

It is worth noting that this view of the soul is what we find in the *Timaeus* as well. At 43a–44c, for instance, Plato explains the disturbances that the immortal, rational soul is subjected to from the moment of birth. Furthermore, at 90a–c we are told that the most authoritative part of our soul is given to each of us by God as a *daimon*, and that one can achieve immortality only to the extent that one takes care of this divine part by devoting oneself to philosophy (cf. Sedley [n. 27], 316–20). It therefore seems clear to me that, in the *Timaeus* too, the rational part of the soul alone is divine and immortal. Guthrie (n. 65), 242, argues that this is Plato's consistent view about the soul 'once he had emerged from the purely Socratic phase of thought', tackling, and dismissing, apparent inconsistencies between this view and passages in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*. I am inclined to agree with his interpretation of these passages, but this matter falls outside the scope of the present article. See also Shields (n. 66); and F.D. Miller, 'The Platonic soul', in H. Benson (ed.), *A Companion to Plato* (Oxford, 2006), 278–93.

I believe, that he was aware of the need to develop DR and apply the principles that it establishes to the parts of the soul. While (2) and (8) focus specifically on bodily fillings versus psychic fillings and body versus soul, respectively, the rest of the propositions provide general principles that can accommodate the modified DR without difficulty.

Having dealt with the question about containers, we must turn to the complications caused by the modified DR for the status of fillers. Proposition (3) ties their status to their own nature, the status of the container in which they come to be, and the status of what they are related to. But the possibility of true beliefs coming to be in the spirited and appetitive parts as well as in the rational part raises a difficulty about their status. If the status of a true belief cannot be distinguished from that of another on the basis of its own nature or of the status of what it is related to, all that remains is the status of its container. Proposition (3) suggests that a particular kind of filler can come to be only in a particular kind of container, that a particular filler cannot come to be in more than one container, but this is not as obvious with the modified DR as it was with only body and soul at play. In fact, the above point that the different parts may share a belief seems to contradict just that suggestion. What needs to be done here is to reconsider how the filling analogy operates.

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

The question remains, however, whether there can be anything that is indeed a filler of more than one container; reasons must be given as to why this cannot ever happen. A hint is provided by (7): 'And, on the whole, the classes of things concerned with the care of the body participate less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul'. The truer fillers are concerned with the care of the soul, whereas the less true ones are concerned with the care of the body. This worked straightforwardly on the simple understanding of DR, and it holds up on the modified version as well. The fillers that are concerned with the care of the soul are fillers of the rational part, whereas those that are concerned with the care of the body are fillers of the appetitive part. A true belief about mathematics can be a filler of the rational part and not the appetitive part because it is concerned with the care of the soul and not the body.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the true

⁶⁷ I speak only of true beliefs, since the other fillers of the rational part listed in (2) cannot enter the other parts of the soul. This is clear in the cases of intelligence and knowledge. But

belief that I will eat at my favourite restaurant tonight fills not the rational but the appetitive part, being concerned with the care of the body and not the soul. This criterion, however, is inadequate because it says nothing about the fillers of the spirited part.

V

What we need at this point is an independent understanding of the natures of the three parts of the soul, brought in from the rest of the *Republic* (i.e. from parts other than the third proof in *Republic* IX). I cannot embark on a full-fledged discussion of the tripartite soul here, so I will be brief. Debates on the details notwithstanding, scholars generally agree that the three parts of the soul desire different sorts of things – this can be garnered from the passages earlier on in Book IX as well as in other books. We are told that ‘there are three pleasures corresponding to the three parts of the soul, one for each part, and similarly for desires and kinds of rule’ (580d2–4). This establishes that each part has a distinct set of objects of desire, which explains why each part also has distinct pleasures, since the pleasures of each part are the processes of satisfying these distinct desires. Plato goes on to tell us what each part desires: the rational part desires knowledge of the truth (581b6–7); the spirited part desires mastery, victory and high esteem (581a9–b1); and the appetitive part desires food, drink, sex and everything else that follows them (580e2–5). He adds that we can call the appetitive part the ‘money-loving’ (*φιλοχρήματον*) part ‘because such desires are most satisfied by means of money’ (580e5–581a1). The desire for money, then, is an appetitive desire because it is instrumental for the satisfaction of the basic appetitive desires.

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

‘all virtue’ and ‘the things concerned with the care of the soul’ at (8) have broader connotations that reach beyond the rational part of the soul, and we are expected, I think, to understand that here the terms are being used in a narrower sense. Either of these two categories, as they are normally understood, can include such things as the right amount of spiritedness required for virtue, which obviously comes to be in the spirited part. In the context, however, the categories have to be restricted to items answering to reason’s natural desire for knowledge of the truth.

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

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

The spirited part of the soul does not care about the truth of the view, while the rational part of the soul does not care about esteem. Thus a particular belief can enter both parts and be involved in a pleasure of both, but the filler is not, strictly speaking, that particular belief. And because the particular belief that is really the filler of a rational part ranks higher on the scale between 'always the same and immortal' and 'never the same and mortal', it turns out to be a truer filler than any filler of the other two parts.⁶⁸ It does so rank because its content is some truth beyond one's immediate experiences, as compared to the beliefs that fill the other two parts, which concern only the agent's gratification.

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

The above discussion shows that the modified version of DR can overcome the various difficulties that DR faces, and that Plato must have meant for DR to be understood in this way. This more sophisticated reading of DR more successfully contrasts the pleasures of reason against the pleasures of spirit and appetite. We are now in a better position to tackle Frede's charge of inconsistency. It was her understanding of DR that gaining knowledge of the Forms alone constitutes a pleasure in the superior category with respect to truth – 'the more filling with

⁶⁸ Of course, a filler of the rational part is truer/more real also because it comes to be in, and is related to, things of higher rank on this scale.

what is more truly'. It is this interpretation that underlies the charge that there is an inconsistency between the two criteria put forward in the third proof (PC and DR), but fortunately we are now in a position to reject this interpretation.

We have seen that DR aims to contrast the pleasures of the rational part of the soul – including filling with true belief, intelligence and so forth – with the pleasures of the other two parts, focussing on the most basic pleasures of appetite. I have shown that Plato's argument shows little regard for distinguishing between the various fillers and fillings of the rational part. It is unequivocal in (2), and then in (7), that the various fillers of the rational part, including mere true belief as well as knowledge of the Forms, are treated as a whole, as the class that is above the class of the body's fillers. On the modified version of DR, the superior and inferior classes of fillers are the fillers of the rational part of the soul and the fillers of the other two parts respectively. (7) leads to (9), which ties the being and truth of a filling to the being and truth of the filler and the container involved, and (9) is, in turn, assumed in the climactic proposition (10), where the 'filling' metaphor is finally tied to pleasure and its truth. Plato's critical statement about what constitutes a truer pleasure therefore focusses on the superiority of the fillers and fillings of the rational part of the soul, as a whole. I believe that this constitutes conclusive evidence that Plato considers *all* pleasures of reason, and not only the pleasure of acquiring knowledge, as belonging to the superior class of unqualifiedly true pleasures.⁶⁹

Bearing these in mind, we can see why Frede's interpretation of DR is untenable, and that gaining knowledge is not at all the only pleasure that is 'truer'. Yet what has been said so far does not bring to full relief the charge of inconsistency. For the problem will be fully resolved only when it is shown that DR yields a class of truer pleasures that is coextensive with the class of pure pleasures under PC.⁷⁰ We have established that the truer pleasures constitute a large class including all pleasures of reason, from which we may conclude that *most* pure pleasures are also truer pleasures. But coextensiveness requires something stronger than this, that *all* pure pleasures are also truer pleasures.⁷¹ In particular, there is a persistent problem that is not addressed by the above interpretation of DR: the pleasures of smell, which Plato identifies as pure pleasures, seem not to belong with DR's truer pleasures, supporting the charge that PC is more permissive than DR.⁷²

⁶⁹ As I noted earlier, this does not prevent Plato from saying that some pleasures of reason are even truer than others.

⁷⁰ As we have seen, the truer pleasures are the pleasures of the rational part of the soul, which are the philosopher's pleasures by definition.

⁷¹ It seems uncontroversial that all of the pleasures that are in DR's superior category are also in PC's superior category – no filling of the rational part of the soul is a liberation from pain, as its lacks are not painful. It may be argued, of course, that Plato is wrong to suppose that the rational pleasures are always pure (and never mixed with pain), but that is another matter. What seems clear is that Plato does maintain this view – PC would otherwise be an obvious failure and completely superfluous as a component of the third proof.

⁷² A complete treatment of this problem should start with questioning whether the pleasures of smell (or any alleged problem case) indeed fail to qualify as truer pleasures under DR. As we have seen, the way to find out where a pleasure belongs under DR is to identify the psychic part of which it is a filling. This requires, in turn, identifying the part, the desires of which are satisfied by the sort of object (filler) involved in that filling. The full resolution of the problem of inconsistency, then, requires a detailed examination of what sorts of objects each part of the soul desires. We would then try to see which part's desires seem to be satisfied by the pleasures of smell. Such an extended discussion of the tripartite soul, however, is beyond the

But supposing that the pure pleasures of smell fail to qualify as truer pleasures, how damaging would this be to Plato's argument? It would be troubling if a significant portion of pure pleasures failed to be truer pleasures (as Frede argues), since the third proof would then fail to serve its goal of showing that the philosopher's pleasures are superior by two distinct criteria at the same time. What we have here, however, is apparently an isolated species of pleasure and not a variety of pleasures. Even so, it would clearly be very troubling if, for instance, sex turned out to provide pure pleasure. For then a pleasure the pursuit of which is distinctive of a non-philosophical life would turn out to be superior on a criterion that is supposed to show precisely that such pleasures are inferior pleasures. This worry, however, does not arise in the case of the pleasures of smell. For the pleasures of smell no more belong to the money-lover or honour-lover than they do to the philosopher.

Not only are the pleasures of smell nowhere mentioned as belonging to non-philosophical lives, but they are also fundamentally dissimilar to the pleasures that *are* identified as belonging to such lives. Unlike the pleasures that are distinctive of non-philosophical lives, the pleasures of smell do not drag people into unjust, unthinking and brutish lives. One who is thrilled by the intensity arising from the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain will not find what they want in the pleasures of smell (586b–c). Moreover, the fact that they can be experienced without significant (if any) cost or effort explains why they do not cause the fierce competition we find in the case of the non-rational pleasures – people do not ‘kick and butt’ others in the pursuit of the pleasures of smell (586b). Given Plato's characterization of non-philosophical lives, then, the pleasures of smell appear more consistent with the philosophical life than with its rivals, even if they fail to qualify as rational pleasures. Most importantly, the pure pleasures of smell do not pose a challenge to the greater pleasantness of the philosophical life over its rivals, and therefore do not constitute a threat to Plato's case in the third proof.

It follows from the above that, even if the pleasures of smell violate the coextensiveness condition, this is a fairly harmless violation that does not jeopardize Plato's argument in the third proof.⁷³ Given also the above interpretation of DR, we may conclude that the coextensiveness condition is generally satisfied, with what appears to be a harmless exception. The charge of inconsistency, then, fails to detract from Plato's third proof. Confirming that the philosopher's superior

scope of this article. In Erginel (n. 7), ch. 5, I engage in such a discussion and argue that the information that we have about the tripartite soul leaves this question unanswered: the pleasures of smell do not match Plato's conception of any of the parts' pleasures.

⁷³ A problem might be raised about the accessibility of the pleasures of smell: we were told that non-philosophers do not get to taste superior pleasures on either criterion, but the pure pleasures of smell seem to be widely accessible. The solution to this problem, too, might lie in Plato's characterization of non-philosophical lives. Non-philosophical people ‘who are inexperienced with reason and virtue’ spend their lives feverishly struggling to satisfy their insatiable and painful desires, which presumably makes it difficult to stop and appreciate the smell of roses, for instance. These people, Plato says, are always looking down like cattle, and ‘with their heads bent to the earth and the table, they feed, fatten, and copulate’ (586a6–8). The preoccupation of non-philosophical people with their impure pleasures explains why they are incapable of adequately experiencing even those pure pleasures, like those of smell, for which they do not lack the requisite cognitive and sensory apparatus (unlike, for example, the cognitive apparatus required for enjoying acquiring knowledge of the Forms). The pleasures of smell must nevertheless be the most accessible of the pure pleasures, which would explain why they are an appropriate example for conveying the idea of a pure pleasure.

pleasures (on both PC and DR) include a wide range of pleasures in addition to that of acquiring knowledge is also instrumental in dismissing the charge that Plato's text is fatally ambiguous. For it now turns out that the philosopher's life is more pleasant than the alternative lives even if he has reached the highest epistemic level and acquired all knowledge.

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Appendix

Proposition (4) (585c7–9) is the sentence about which I disagree with others most, not only in translating the Greek but also about what the Greek Plato wrote must have been. I side with Adam in replacing the standard *ὁμοίου*, as in both Slings and Burnet's Oxford Classical Texts (OCT) editions, with *ἀνομοίου* on grounds of corruption, as the standard version is hopelessly problematic.⁷⁴ Then, in translating I disagree with those who take *ἐπιστήμης* to be the alternative to *οὐσίας*,⁷⁵ and take it to be the alternative to *ἀεὶ ἀνομοίου*, with the *οὐσία* assumed. Adam argues that we must take the sentence this way, and that there must have been an *ἡ* that was somehow dropped by a copyist, before *ἐπιστήμης*, standing in for *οὐσία*. Thus the sentence reads as *ἡ οὖν ἀεὶ ἀνομοίου οὐσία οὐσίας τι μάλλον ἢ ἡ ἐπιστήμης μετέχει*, as opposed to OCT's *ἡ οὖν ἀεὶ ὁμοίου οὐσία οὐσίας τι μάλλον ἢ ἐπιστήμης μετέχει*. (The answer to this question, *οὐδαμῶς*, is what justifies my casting of [4] in terms of participating less. A direct translation would be 'Does the being of what is always changing participate more in being than does the being of knowledge? – Certainly not.') My reasons for this unorthodoxy are as follows:

(i) The regular translation, in taking *ἐπιστήμης* to be the alternative to *οὐσίας*, does not make sense in the context. The negative answer to their version of the question, 'And does the being of what is always the same participate more in being than in knowledge?' (Grube and Reeve), means that it either participates in being and in knowledge equally or more in knowledge than in being. Then, when the question is repeated with 'truth' in place of 'knowledge' (585c11), the negative answer means that it (the being of what is always the same) participates either equally in the two or more in truth than in being. Given this, Socrates' next question appears very odd and out of place: 'And if less in truth, then less in being also?' But what has been said does not allow for it to participate less

⁷⁴ J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato: Edited with Critical Notes, Commentary and Appendices* (Cambridge, 1902); J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera IV*, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford, 1902); Slings (n. 1).

⁷⁵ See, for example, A. Bloom, *The Republic of Plato: Translated with Notes and an Interpretive Essay* (New York, 1968); G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve, *Plato, Republic: Translated and Revised* (Indianapolis, IN, 1992); C.D.C. Reeve, *Plato, Republic: Translated from the New Standard Greek Text, with Introduction* (Indianapolis, IN, 2004); P. Shorey, *The Republic, with an English Translation*, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1930); R. Waterfield, *Plato, Republic: Translation with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1993).

in truth, and there is no reason to suppose that Socrates now decided to ask a question disconnected from what precedes it.

There is another way in which the text loses coherence on this translation: the context suggests that the negative answer to the questions at 585c8–9 and 585c11 means not that it participates in the two alternatives equally but more in one than another. Given that one is said to be more, the question at 585c13, which indicates that whatever participates less in truth also does so in being, appears nonsensical. For this question would be correlating participation in truth and being, whereas the preceding lines were contrasting them. Furthermore, it can be seen clearly at 585d7–e5 that degrees of participation in truth and being are not distinguished. Neither the ‘degrees of reality’ theory, as we find in Books VI and VII, nor what is said in this passage can make sense of a difference between participation in being and in truth/knowledge. It would seem very strange, therefore, if Socrates’ interlocutor were giving the confident answers (οὐδαμῶς, οὐδὲ τοῦτο) to such bizarre questions. If, on the other hand, the negative answers to the questions mean that the degrees of participation in the two things in question are equal, then it is very misleading for Plato not to make this clear. For the overall structure of the passage is that superior items are contrasted with inferior ones, serving the ultimate purpose of DR.

(ii) Taking the text to read *ὁμοίου* also makes the passage incomprehensible, even if the sentence is translated so as to avoid the problems above, as ‘And does the being of what is always the same participate more in being than does the being of knowledge’. We run into a problem with contrasting the being of ‘what is always the same’ and that of knowledge (in their degree of participation in being). This is because (3) (585c1–6) suggests that knowledge is itself one of the things that are ‘always the same’; there, the filler which is related to that which is always the same and its container are themselves claimed to be always the same. Thus the sentence entails the nonsense of comparing knowledge with knowledge (and of concluding that knowledge rather than knowledge participates more in being).

It should also be remembered that DR is designed to prove the superiority of the philosopher’s pleasures over the other pleasures, so the comparisons are meant to be between things that are involved in the philosopher’s pleasures and things that are involved in the other pleasures. We see from (2) to (8) a pattern of comparing things from the opposite sides of this divide, serving the ultimate purpose of proving the superiority of the philosopher’s pleasures. Reading the text with *ὁμοίου* does nothing to serve the purpose of DR and does not fit this pattern of comparing items from the opposite sides of the divide.

Furthermore, (7) (585d1–3) is presented as something that either follows from, or is a natural continuation of, the preceding discussion (οὐκοῦν ὅλως ...). But this appears so only under my translation. With the standard translation, as well as the third alternative mentioned in (ii) above, (7) turns out to be a sentence unrelated to what precedes it.

(iii) Ferrari, too, has argued that, although our hesitation to emend the text is not a bad thing, emendation is necessary in this case, where the sentence makes no sense as it stands in the OCT editions.⁷⁶ While he finds similar reasons to

⁷⁶ G.R.F. Ferrari, ‘Plato, *Republic* 9.585c–d’, *CQ* 52 (2002), 383–8, at 384. This emendation underlies Griffith’s translation of the *Republic*: T. Griffith, *Plato: The Republic: Translation*, edited by G.R.F. Ferrari (Cambridge, 2000).

reject the standard text, he suggests a different emendation. On Ferrari's view, the text should be amended as ἡ οὖν ἀεὶ ὁμοίου οὐσίας τι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπιστήμη μετέχει and translated as 'Well, does anything have a greater share in the being of what is always the same than knowledge does?' This rendering is superior to the standard text and its standard interpretation, but it has some problems of its own: as I note above, knowledge is itself identified as one of the things that are always the same. It seems vacuous to ask whether anything has a greater share in the being of what is always the same than something that is always the same, and I do not see how it does anything for Plato's argument. Second, this option is unappealing from a stylistic point of view, since the whole passage, from (1) to (10), is a series of propositions comparing two items or classes – the superior versus the inferior fillers, containers or fillings. In Ferrari's version, however, (4) (585c8–10) breaks this pattern and does not contrast knowledge with the inferior fillers. The emendation I defend avoids this stylistic disadvantage.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ For a more grammatical discussion of the emendation of the standard text, and other kinds of emendations by scholars to resolve the text's difficulties, see Adam (n. 74), 381–3; also Ferrari (n. 76).