



Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics

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Virtue, Goods, and Happiness in the Laws

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Abstract and Keywords

The *Laws* endorses a Dependency Thesis about goods: every good, other than virtue, is good for its possessor only on the condition that its possessor is virtuous. I argue that the Dependency Thesis is supported by the *Philebus'* claim that wisdom is the cause of the good life. I show that the Dependency Thesis explains why the *Laws* holds that the proper ultimate end of the laws is to foster virtue in as many citizens as possible, and holds that the citizens should receive a true ethical account of the basis of the laws that govern them. I show how these goals are advanced by the *Laws'* practice of attaching preludes to legislation.

Keywords: Dependency Thesis, dependent goods, Laws, Philebus, preludes

2.1 Overview

The following chapters explore in detail Plato's later psychology and ethical and political philosophy, but let me begin by sketching in broad outline some of the central differences from the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. In the opening books of the *Laws*, Plato insists that correct legislation must be founded on a true view of the goal to be attained, and criticizes Crete and Sparta for their mistaken understanding of the goal of legislation. As interpreted by his Cretan and Spartan interlocutors, the goal of their laws is victory in war (*Laws* 625D–626B). But the true goal of all correct legislation is the whole of virtue: the laws of a just city must aim at inculcating all the virtues in the entire citizen body and this is the goal of the laws in their new city of Magnesia. This understanding of the

goal of law rests on the claims that Plato goes on to make about the goodness of virtue and the relation between its goodness and the goodness of other things.

[T]he good man, since he is moderate and just, is happy and blessed whether he is great and strong or small and weak, whether he is rich or not . . . For the things said to be good by the many are not correctly so described . . . To speak plainly, I say that the things said to be bad are good for unjust men and bad for just men, while the good things are really good for good men, but bad for bad men. (*Laws* 660E2-661D3)

Plato here endorses a Dependency Thesis about goods. Every good, other than virtue, is only good for its possessor on the condition that its possessor is virtuous. Virtue, in contrast, is good for its possessors no matter what else they have or lack, and thus virtue is good by itself. Since virtue is (**p.90**) not only a great good in itself, but being virtuous is a necessary condition of benefiting from any other good, the law code aims at fostering virtue in all the citizens. Moreover, Plato's statement of the Dependency Thesis is directed not just at a philosophical elite, but to all the citizens. Thus non-philosophers as well as philosophers are expected to come to believe the Dependency Thesis and to order their lives accordingly. So in the *Laws*, unlike the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, Plato accepts

- (1) At least some non-philosophers are capable of valuing virtue for its own sake, that is, are capable of believing that virtue is good for its own sake and of desiring virtue for its own sake.

Although the laws and the city's system of education will surely fail in some cases, Plato does not think that the laws' goal of fostering virtue throughout the body of non-philosophical citizens is unattainable, and thus he accepts

- (2) At least some non-philosophers are capable of being genuinely virtuous.

Accordingly, Plato does not assign honor as the best motivation open to non-philosophers and we find in the general prelude to the law code—which is emphatically addressed to all the citizens—the claim that everyone must pay the appropriate honor to virtue.

Of all the things that belong to one, the most divine—after the gods—is the soul, the thing that is most one's own. It is the case with everybody that all one's possessions fall into two classes. The superior and better sort are masterful, while the inferior and worse are slavish. Hence one's masterful possessions should always be honored above one's slavish possessions. So I speak correctly when I urge that one honor one's soul second after the gods. . . . There is no one among us, so to speak, who assigns honor correctly, though we are of the opinion that we do. For honor is presumably a divine good, and cannot be bestowed through what is bad: he who thinks

that he is making his soul greater with words or gifts or certain indulgences, yet fails to change its condition from worse to better, seems to honor it, but in fact is not doing so at all. (*Laws* 726A6-C1)

To speak generally, 'honor' means for us following the better things and, in the case of the worse things that allow for improvement, bringing them as close as possible to the same end. And hence no human possession is more naturally well-suited (**p.91**) than the soul for fleeing the bad or for tracking down and capturing what is best of all, and, after capturing it, dwelling in common with it for the rest of one's life. That is why it was assigned the second rank of honor. (*Laws* 728C6-D3, cf. 707D1-6)

Honor here is not the passive condition of being the object of others' attitudes; it is, rather, the activity of honoring one's own soul, which consists in efforts to bring it into a good, that is, a virtuous, condition. Although non-philosophers, unlike philosophers, do not possess knowledge, Plato now thinks that they are capable of appreciating the goodness of virtue and thus are capable of instantiating the genuine value of virtue and so of being genuinely benefited by the goods they possess. Thus Plato also accepts that

(3) At least some non-philosophers are capable of living happy lives.

As we saw in our discussion of the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, it was not entirely clear how far non-philosophers could aim at the good of others for their own sake. But, more important, even if they were capable of this, they were not capable of valuing for its own sake in other people the most important constituent of happiness, i.e. genuine virtue. But in the *Laws*, this is expected of the citizens generally: 'The man who is to attain the title "Great" must love neither himself nor his own belongings, but things just, whether they happen to be actions of his own or rather those of another man' (*Laws* 732A2-4). This is part of the general prelude to the laws and is addressed to all the citizens. Virtue is presented as having a worth or goodness of its own that gives everyone, including non-philosophers, reason to promote it both in themselves and in others. The *Laws* thus accepts

(4) At least some non-philosophers are capable of valuing for its own sake the genuine well-being or happiness of others; in particular, they are capable of valuing for its own sake in other people the most important constituent of happiness, that is, virtue.

These developments in Plato's views of the ethical capacities of non-philosophers have both a backward and a forward connection. The backward connection is to Plato's epistemology and psychology, which must have changed so as to allow these developments. Plato has come to think that non-philosophers can have at least a partial and imperfect grasp of (p.92) genuine value. This requires that non-philosophers' goals are no longer set by entities which cannot grasp genuine value properties, such as the body in the *Phaedo* or the lower parts of the soul in

the *Republic*. In Chapter 3, I argue that the *Laws* abandons the *Republic's* theory of parts of the soul. The abandonment of the theory of the parts of the soul allows non-philosophers to appreciate genuine value properties, but it does not, by itself, entail that it is possible nor does it explain how it is possible. In Chapter 4, I argue that in the later period Plato develops a new understanding of how the soul's rational faculties structure and influence the rest of the soul's capacities. This account both provides a deep ground for Plato's more unified conception of the soul and allows him to explain how more ordinary forms of belief and cognition can involve an appreciation of genuine value.

The forward connection is to Plato's political theory which I discuss further in Chapter 5. Since non-philosophers are capable of genuine virtue, new conceptions of what a good city is and of what a good citizen is are both possible and required. Plato in the later period—tentatively in the *Statesman* and then decisively in the *Laws*—moves to an understanding of the good city as an association aiming at the common goal of living happy and thus virtuous lives. This goal is common to all the members of a just city, that is, its citizens, in a strong sense: it is a goal that each citizen is supposed to have and the content of the goal is that each person live happily and virtuously. The concord that sustains the pursuit of such a common goal will be more than an agreement—motivated by different basic concerns—on who should rule; it will rather be a shared agreement on what ends should be pursued. The common goal of the laws, as we shall also see, establishes a criterion of membership in the good city. Citizenship is restricted to those capable of sharing in the end of the city's laws and thus of living a virtuous and happy life. Those who perform the tasks assigned to the producer class in the *Republic* are excluded from citizenship and their tasks are given either to aliens or to slaves for the simple reason that their corruption does not directly harm the city.

I go on to examine the implications that this new conception of a city and its citizens has for basic aspects of Plato's political philosophy. I shall consider its implications for Plato's views about the appropriate relations between the citizens and the laws, the nature of political rule, and the value (**p.93**) of political activity. We shall also see that Plato's new conception allows the good political association to have a deep theological and ethical significance that it previously lacked.

I begin in the next section by examining some of Plato's programmatic remarks in the *Laws* about the nature and the role of law. By seeing what law can and should be in a just city, we can learn something about the nature and capacities of those it is designed to govern, that is, the citizens.

2.2 Reason and Law

The *Laws* begins with the following exchange.

Athenian: Is it a god or a man, visitors, who is responsible for the arrangement of your laws?

Kleinias: A god, visitor, a god, to say the most just thing. We Cretans call Zeus our lawgiver; while among the Spartans, where this man [Megillus] is from, I think they claim Apollo as theirs. (*Laws* 624A1-5)

The Athenian then asks about the semi-divine legislator of the Cretans, Minos, and the end of the laws that he established. Kleinias readily answers that all the Cretan laws were established for the sake of victory in war (*Laws* 625C-626B).

As we shall see, one of Plato's most fundamental—and his most frequently reiterated—political principles in the *Laws* rejects this as a normative claim. Despite their reputation for excellence, Crete and Sparta are radically mistaken in their conception of the ultimate end of law: the correct end for the entire legal code is not victory in war or the inculcation of any one virtue, but rather the inculcation of the whole of virtue. Similarly, insofar as the Cretan and the Spartan interlocutors claim a divine foundation for their law codes, they are radically mistaken.¹ Plato does accept, however, that in a good or just city, god, in a way, rules. Here, as elsewhere in the *Laws*, we see that unreflective common sense often hits upon the truth, but only a small part of the truth. The best existing cities recognize the formal aspect of the truth that god rules in a just city, but do not grasp what the content of such rule is. (**p.94**)

[T]here can be no rest from evils and toils for those cities in which some mortal rules rather than a god. Our argument indicates that we should imitate by every device the way of life that is said to have existed under Kronos; in our public life and private life—in the arrangement of our households and our cities—we should obey whatever within us partakes of immortality, giving the name 'law' to the distribution ordained by reason [*τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον*]. (*Laws* 713E4-714A2)

For of all branches of learning, those that have the most sovereign influence in making the learner become better are the ones that pertain to the laws—if, that is, they should be correctly set up; and they would be, or else our divine and marvelous law [*νόμος*] would in vain possess a name akin to reason [*νόηση*]. (*Laws* 957C4-7)

The word for 'reason' is '*nous*' and that for 'law' is '*nomos*', so Plato claims the support of etymology for the link he asserts between reason and law.² Since reason is itself divine, god rules insofar as reason rules and reason can rule, if it finds expression in correct or just law. Reason 'strives to become law' (*Laws* 835E5) and Plato describes law as a 'calculation' or 'reasoning' (*λογισμός*) about good and bad that has become 'the common judgment of the city [*δόγμα πόλεως κοινὸν νόμος*]' (*Laws* 644D1-3).³

The claim that law can be a good expression of reason in its highest form, that is, god's reason, should be surprising. God's reason fulfills perfectly the inherent task of reason to know the truth and thus it is a state of perfectly clear, accurate, and synoptic knowledge of the first principles of value and order and of the truths that flow from these principles. Law can be a good expression of reason, however, since reason is not exclusively directed to knowing the truth. In Book 10 of the *Laws*, Plato offers a refutation of certain atheists. These atheists hold that everything that comes into being does so either by nature, by chance, or by art. The 'greatest and finest' things come into being by nature and chance, while only lesser things are produced by art. They hold that the elements and their qualities exist by nature and chance and that it is by nature and chance that the entire kosmos comes to be. The political and legislative arts as well as justice and the gods (that is, human stories and conventions about non-existent gods) do not exist by nature, but are later products of art (*Laws* 888E-890A). Plato argues against these views that soul and the things 'akin' to it are what set bodies in motion and continue to order them (*Laws* 891E-899B).⁴ (**p.95**)

Belief, then, and supervision, reason [*voūs*], art, and law [*vōμos*] would be prior to hard things, soft things, heavy things, and light things. And, indeed, the great and first deeds and actions would be those of art, since they are among the first things, while the things that are by nature, and nature, which they incorrectly name in this way, would be later and would have as their ruling causes art and reason [*voūv*]. (*Laws* 892B3-8)

God's reason is responsible for the ordering of the world for the best. Reason 'governs' or 'rules' the world (*Phil.* 28D5-E6, *Stsmn.* 272E3-4, 273C2-3); reason orders and arranges the heavens and the entire kosmos (*Laws* 966E2-4, 967B5-6; *Phil.* 28D5-E6, 30C2-7; *Stsmn.* 273D4-5; *Tim.* 30A2-6, 37D5-7, 53A5-b4, 69B2-C3). This emphasis on divine reason as the cause of order in the world is a theme that runs throughout the late dialogues, including the *Laws*, the *Philebus*, the *Statesman*, and the *Timaeus*.⁵ Reason has an inherent tendency both to grasp what is best and to order things so as to bring them into the best condition. Reason in the individual soul grasps what is best for the individual and directs the person in the pursuit of it (e.g. *Laws* 644C-645C). Reason, as embodied in law, also pursues this ordering goal at the level of the city as a whole. Reason determines that the proper ultimate end or *telos* for the city's laws and political and social institutions is the best condition of the city itself, that is, its greatest happiness. At the level of the kosmos, god perfectly instantiates reason and orders both bodies and souls so that, as far as possible, their best condition is attained (*Laws* 903B-905D, 967B). In each of these cases, reason, insofar as it aims at what is best, aims at fostering virtue (*Laws* 906A2-B3).

Good or just law can be an especially fine expression of reason. Reason as expressed in ordinary craft production can impose good order on inanimate materials and then employ the worked up materials as a tool to order something further. Architects, for example, can construct a straight-line that they then use in building a house. Although the straight-line possesses or instantiates a kind of good order, it does not possess reason and is not itself the origin of the ordering of the other materials. Reason as expressed in law, however, can bring order to creatures that can themselves possess reason and creatures possessing reason are the finest products of reason. This is why, for example, the Demiurge endows the universe itself with a soul. (**p.96**)

It was not permitted (nor is it now) that one who is supremely good should do anything but what is best. Accordingly, the god reasoned and concluded that in the realm of things naturally visible no unreasoning thing could as a whole be finer than anything that does possess reason as a whole, and he further concluded that it is impossible for anything to possess reason apart from soul. Guided by this reasoning, he put reason in soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe. (*Tim.* 30A6-B5)⁶

And part of the explanation of why creatures possessing reason are the finest products of reason is that they can themselves be originating principles of order.

Now all of the above [the four elements] are among the auxiliary causes employed in the service of the god as he does his utmost to bring to completion the character of what is best. But because they make things cold or hot . . . and produce all sorts of similar effects, most people regard them not as auxiliary causes, but as the actual causes of all things. Things like these, however, are totally incapable of possessing any understanding or reason about anything. We must pronounce the soul to be the only thing there is that properly possesses reason . . . So anyone who is a lover of reason and knowledge must of necessity pursue as primary causes those belonging to intelligent nature, and as secondary all those belonging to things that are moved by others and that set still others in motion by necessity . . . we must describe both types of causes, distinguishing those that possess reason and thus fashion what is fine and good, from those which, when deserted by wisdom, produce only haphazard and disorderly effects every time. (*Tim.* 46C7-E6)

Reason can move itself and in virtue of moving itself can move and order other things. It does not simply transmit orderly motion that is imposed by some external necessity.⁷ We shall return to some of the metaphysical issues surrounding the idea that reason or souls possessing reason are self-movers in Chapter 4. But it is important to see that the connection between reason and the active origination of order is embedded in Plato's ethics and politics. Law can be an especially good expression of reason insofar as it helps bring to order human beings who come to possess reason within themselves and are not always subject to external direction.

Even good law, nevertheless, falls short of being a complete expression of reason on two related grounds. In each case, the problem concerns the relation between the law and the action performed in accordance with the law. (p.97) First, law is relatively fixed and cast in general terms, so that it will fail in some cases and circumstances to recommend what is best (*Laws* 875C3-D5, cf. *Stsmn.* 294A-296A). This failure of law stems from the fact that its directives cannot be as fine-grained or flexible as those issuing from living reason. But there is also a more fundamental concern stemming from the nature of law as an order. Near the end of the fourth book of the *Laws*, the Athenian asks whether the lawgiver for the new city of Magnesia should in making laws ‘explain straight away what must and must not be done, add the threat of a penalty, and turn to another law, without adding a single bit of encouragement or persuasion to his legislative edicts’ (*Laws* 720A1-2). A few lines later, the Athenian himself condemns such a procedure as ‘the worse and more savage alternative’ (*Laws* 720E4). The better method is for the lawgiver to try to persuade (*peithein*) the citizens to act in the manner that the laws prescribe. As André Laks has rightly noted, law here is seen as violent not only insofar as it threatens a penalty, but also simply in virtue of issuing a command with no explanation.⁸ As a response to this problem, Plato proposes attaching preludes (*prooimia*) to particular laws and to the legal code as a whole. Such preludes are an essential supplement to the bare commands of the law in Magnesia. So I shall now turn to a consideration of the preludes in the *Laws*.

2.3 Preludes to the Law

In Plato's own view, one of the most important innovations in the political theory of the *Laws* is the requirement that good lawgivers try to persuade the citizens and not simply issue commands to them by means of laws. '[N]one of the lawgivers has ever reflected on the fact that it is possible to use two means of giving laws, persuasion and force [*Bia*] . . . They have used only the latter; failing to mix compulsion with persuasion in their lawgiving, they have employed unmitigated force alone' (*Laws* 722B5-C2).⁹

In a series of passages from Books 4, 9, and 10, Plato introduces the notion of a prelude and offers a theory of why they are needed and of what roles they are to perform. Let us consider these passages in order. (p.98)

Is [the one in charge of our laws] just going to declare straight away what must and must not be done, add the threat of a penalty, and turn to another law, without adding a single encouragement or bit of persuasion to his legislative edicts? There is one sort of doctor who used to proceed in this way, and another sort who used to proceed in another way each time he took care of us. (*Laws* 719E8-720A3)

The analogy between lawgivers and doctors is one that Plato has appealed to in previous dialogues. But there Plato's point was that since the doctor, unlike the

patient, knows what is best for the patient in the long run, he is justified in imposing on the patient, even by force, painful courses of treatment that the patient would reject. Here Plato uses the old analogy for quite different purposes and proceeds to work out a new analogy between lawgivers and these two kinds of doctors.

We assert that there are certain persons who are doctors; and then, that there are in addition doctors' servants, whom we also call 'doctors' . . .

Whether they are free men or slaves, they acquire the art by following their masters' command, by observing, and by experience, but not by following nature, as the free doctors do, who have themselves learned in this way and who teach their disciples in this way. (*Laws* 720A6-B5)

These two kinds of doctors also differ in the sort of patients they treat and the manner of their treatment.

[S]ick people in the cities, slaves and free, are treated differently. The slaves are for the most part treated by slaves . . . None of these doctors gives or receives any account [

οὐτε τινὰ λόγον... δίδωσιν οὐδ' ἀποδέχεται] of each malady afflicting each domestic slave. Instead, he gives him orders on the basis of the opinions he has derived from experience. Claiming to know with precision, he gives his commands stubbornly, just like a tyrant, and hurries off to some other sick domestic slave . . . The free doctor mostly cares for and examines the maladies of free men. He investigates these from their beginning and according to nature, communing with the patient himself and his friends, and he both learns something himself from the invalids and, as much as he can, teaches [διδάσκει] the one who is sick. He does not give orders until he has in some way persuaded; once he has on each occasion made the sick person gentle by means of persuasion, he attempts to lead him back to health. (*Laws* 720B8-E2)

Plato unequivocally condemns the method of the slave doctor as 'the worse and more savage of the two' (*Laws* 720E5). The lawgiver in (p.99) Magnesia must instead follow the model of a free doctor treating free people.

What was called a tyrannical command, and likened to the image of the commands of the doctors we said were unfree, seemed to be unmixed law; what was spoken of before this, and said to be persuasive on behalf of this, really did seem to be persuasion, but seemed to have the power that a prelude has in speeches. For it has become clear to me that this whole speech, which the speaker gives in order to persuade, is delivered with just this end in view: so that he who receives the law uttered by the legislator might receive the command—that is, the law—in a frame of mind more favorably disposed and therefore more apt to learn something [*ἴνα γὰρ εὐμενῶς, καὶ διὰ τὴν εὐμένειαν εὐμαθέστερον*]. (*Laws* 722E7-723A6)

As a means of engaging in the right sort of persuasion—although it is not the only means to be employed in Magnesia—the lawgiver must attach preludes to the laws and the Athenian distinguishes two kinds of prelude. First, he claims that the preceding books of the *Laws* constitute a general prelude to the legal code of Magnesia and he later requires that the entire *Laws* be read by all the citizens. Second, especially important individual laws will receive their own preludes: in addition to the body of the law which specifies the offense and the attendant penalties, citizens will receive an account of why they should act as the law prescribes.

In Books 9 and 10, the Athenian expands on this account of what the preludes are supposed to achieve. But before turning to these passages, it is important to note that the explanation we have just received of why persuasion and thus preludes are necessary is not merely a claim about what would be desirable in some ideal circumstances that will not obtain in Magnesia. Rather they are intended to justify and regulate the actual use of preludes in Magnesia.

In Book 9, in the course of setting out the provisions of a law concerning theft, the Athenian explicitly refers back to the Book 4 passages we have just considered.

Athenian: [W]hat pertains to the laying down of laws has never been worked out correctly in any way . . . We did not make a bad image, when we compared all those living under legislation that now exists to slaves being doctored by slaves. For one must understand this well: if one of those doctors who practices medicine on the basis of experience without the aid of theory [*ἄνευ λόγου*] should ever encounter (**p.100**) a free doctor conversing with a free man who was sick—using arguments that come close to philosophizing [

τοῦ φιλοσοφεῦν ἐγγὺς χράμενον μὲν τοῖς λόγοις], grasping the disease from its source, and going back up to the whole nature of bodies—he would swiftly burst out laughing and would say nothing other than what is always said about such things by most of the so-called doctors. For he would declare, ‘Idiot! You are not doctoring the sick man, you are practically educating [*σχεδὸν παιδεύεις*] him, as if what he needed were to become a doctor, rather than healthy!’

Kleinias: Would he not be speaking correctly when he said such things?

Ath.: Maybe—if at any rate, he thought besides that this man who goes through the laws in the way we are doing now, is educating [*παιδεύει*] the citizens, but not legislating. (*Laws* 857C2-E5)

Such education is, however, an essential task of the good lawgiver precisely in his role as lawgiver.

But is the lawgiver alone, among writers, not supposed to give advice about the fine, good, and just things, teaching what sort of things they are and how they must be practiced by those who are going to become

happy? . . . Or is it not correct that of all writings in the cities, the things written about the laws appear, when opened up, by far the finest and the best, and that the writings of the others either follow those or, if they speak in dissonance, be laughed at? . . . should the writings [about the laws] appear in the shapes of a father and mother, caring dearly and possessing reason [*νοῦν*], or, like a tyrant and despot, should they command and threaten, post writings on the walls, and go away? (*Laws* 858D6–859A6)

The difficulty that prompted this interruption in the statement of the proposed statute in Book 9 concerns the theory of punishment. The general issue is how to match appropriately the particulars of the offence with the attendant penalty. Should, for example, larger thefts have greater penalties? But the Athenian quickly moves to what is one of the central and most pressing issues for Plato's entire theory of punishment. Both law and common sense give great weight to the distinction between voluntary and involuntary wrongdoing. Voluntariness is often an essential factor in determining whether an offense has, in fact, been committed and in fixing the appropriate punishment or other treatment of the offender. (The voluntariness of the action also, of course, affects our attitude toward the offender, even apart from the question of legal sanctions.) This distinction, however, must seem highly problematic to Plato, since he accepts the (p.101) 'Socratic paradox' that no one does wrong voluntarily (*hekōn*). If no one does wrong voluntarily, must we give up our ordinary common sense and legal distinction? If so, can it be replaced with a different distinction that better captures what the old distinction inadequately marked?

The Athenian explicitly draws our attention to this conflict and considers whether they should simply proceed to legislate in accordance with the view that all wrongdoing is involuntary.

Well, we have not found our way clear of the difficulty in these matters, nor defined what the difference is between these things, which, in all the cities by all legislators who have ever existed, have been held to be two forms of injustices, voluntary and involuntary, and have been so legislated. Is this argument now being uttered by us going to say only this much and depart, as if it were being spoken by a god, giving no argument as to why it has spoken correctly, and just legislating in defiance of the difficulty in some way? That is impossible. Before legislating, it is necessary to make clear somehow that these things are two, but that the distinction between them is a different one, so that whenever someone imposes the judicial penalty on either of them, everyone may follow the things that are being said and may be able to judge . . . what is fittingly laid down and what is not. (*Laws* 861B1–C6)

What follows is a detailed and philosophically sophisticated discussion of how to resolve the conflict, consistently with the rest of Plato's ethics and psychology. And this

discussion itself serves as a prelude to the laws concerning theft which it interrupted (*Laws* 861C–864C). The purpose of this discussion, as the passage just quoted shows, is to make clear to the Magnesians the deeper basis underlying the laws' treatment of offenders. Such an explanation must be provided in order to help the citizens to fulfill better their function as judges who will impose penalties—all citizens have a share in the exercise of judicial functions in Magnesia—and to judge whether the system of justice is being correctly carried out (cf. *Laws* 957C–958A).

The last set of Plato's programmatic remarks about the nature and the role of preludes occurs in Book 10. Here the Athenian is led to reflect on the purposes of the preludes just prior to proposing Magnesia's law against impiety. Here the Athenian imagines a dialogue between the interlocutors in the *Laws* and a young atheist. The young atheist demands (**p.102**)

just as you demanded in regard to the laws, that before you direct harsh threats at us, you try to persuade and teach us [*διδάσκειν*] that there are gods, adducing adequate evidence [*τεκμήρια λέγοντες ικανά*] . . . From lawgivers who are claiming to be not savage but gentle, we demand that persuasion be used on us first. And perhaps we would be persuaded by you, even if you did not speak more eloquently about the existence of the gods than others, as long as you spoke better as regards the truth. (*Laws* 885C8–E5)

The Athenian accepts the challenge and in the rest of Book 10 proceeds to give several elaborate and philosophically sophisticated arguments for the fundamental theses of Magnesia's theology. These include, for example, a version of the cosmological argument that tries to establish that we must account for motion in the world by means of a psychic first cause of motion and order. In considering the need for preludes, the Athenian holds that (i) those acting, or tempted to act, contrary to the laws have no good reason to act in this way (they are either akratic or hold false beliefs), and (ii) the good lawgiver should try to teach the citizens—not only about the gods, but also about what is fine and what is just—so that they do more than simply conform their actions or beliefs to what the law requires. (As we shall see below, it is also the task of the good lawgiver to bring it about that the citizens' emotions and desires do not subvert reason either by prompting them to akrasia or by deforming their reasoning processes, although the preludes are not themselves the primary way of doing this.)

As he begins his argument, the Athenian comments that the young atheists do not have a rational basis for their beliefs. They hold their view

without a single adequate argument [*οὐδὲ ἐξ ἑνὸς ικανοῦ λόγου*]—as anyone having even a small amount of reason would admit. How could someone use gentle arguments to admonish, and at the same time to teach [*διδάσκειν*], these people about the gods, and first that they exist? Yet it must be dared. For it should not be the case that both of us are maddened at the same time—some of us by gluttony for pleasure, and others by spirited anger at such men. Let some such preliminary speech as the

following proceed, without spiritedness, for those who are corrupted in their thinking [*τὴν διάνοιαν διεφθαρμένους*], and let us speak gently, quenching our spirited anger. (*Laws* 887E8-888A6)

The Athenian proceeds to urge the young atheist to consider what he is about to say carefully and to investigate it well. (**p.103**)

If you should be persuaded by me, you will wait until you have a view about these matters that has become as clear as it can be, and meanwhile you will investigate [*ἀνασκοπῶν*] whether things are thus or are otherwise, and will inquire from others, and especially the lawgiver. During this time, you would not dare to do anything impious concerning the gods. The one who establishes the laws for you should try, now and in the future, to teach [*διδάσκειν*] how these very things are. (*Laws* 888C7-D5)

The Athenian then states the following terms to the young atheist: 'either to teach [*διδάσκειν*] us that we are not speaking correctly . . . or, if he is not able to speak better than we, to be persuaded by us and live believing in the gods' (*Laws* 899C6-D1). What the disbeliever needs, the Athenian claims, is an 'argument', and he appeals to his reason: 'if you should still be in need of some argument [*λόγου τινὸς*], hearken to us as we speak . . . if you are at all reasonable [*εἰ νοῦν καὶ ὀπωσοῦν ἔχεις*]' (*Laws* 905C7-D1, 891B7-D4). At the conclusion of his arguments for the first two of the three basic claims of Magnesia's theology, the Athenian pronounces himself satisfied with the proofs given: 'That there are gods and that they exercise supervision over human beings, I would say has been demonstrated [*ἀποδεῖχθαι*] by us in no mean fashion' (*Laws* 905D1-3, cf. 899D1-2).

Once again, Plato here emphasizes the need for the lawgiver to persuade with respect to all facets of his legislation and for the citizen to do more than blindly accept the theological and ethical beliefs recommended by the laws.

Athenian: Is the lawgiver merely to stand up in the city and threaten all the people, that if they do not affirm that the gods exist and do not think and believe that they are such as the law affirms—and about what is fine and what is just and all the greatest matters [*περὶ καλῶν καὶ δικαίων καὶ περὶ ἀπάντων τῶν μεγίστων*], the same speech, and about whatever tends to virtue and vice, that it is necessary to act in these respects while thinking in the way the lawgiver has instructed in writing—is he to say that whoever does not show himself obedient to the laws must in one case die, and in another case be punished with blows and prison, and in another case with dishonors, or in other cases, with poverty and exile? Is he to present no persuasion for human beings, mixed in with

his speeches as he gives them laws, so as to make them as gentle as he can?

Kleinias: Not at all! If there happens to be even some small bit of persuasion as regards such matters, the lawgiver of even slight merit should in no way grow faint (**p.104**) . . . if [such arguments] are difficult to listen to at the beginning, there is no need to fear, so long as the slow learner can go and examine them often. Even if they are lengthy, if the arguments are beneficial, it does not seem to me to be at all reasonable or pious for any man to fail, on this account, to help these arguments as best he can. (*Laws* 890B5–891A7)¹⁰

These programmatic remarks in Books 4, 9, and 10 about the preludes, which we have now examined, possess the following main features.

- (1) What the person who is to be persuaded is asking for is to be ‘taught’, that is, to be given good epistemic reasons for thinking that the principles lying behind the legislation are true (*Laws* 885D–E).
- (2) What the lawgiver and the preludes actually do is characterized as ‘teaching’, that is, giving reasons to the citizens and bringing it about that they ‘learn’ (*Laws* 718C–D, 720D, 723A, 857D–E, and 888A).
- (3) The preludes are thus designed to be instances of rational persuasion, that is, attempts to influence the citizens’ beliefs through appealing to rational considerations. They are not intended to inculcate false but useful beliefs or to effect persuasion through non-rational means. The citizens are expected to do something rather than have something done to them. A certain kind of activity is required of them: they are to learn (*Laws* 722E–723B, 807C–D, 858D, and 890B–891A). (Here the contrast between activity and passivity is at the level of common sense, but as we shall see in Chapter 4, activity comes to have a deeper significance in Plato’s theory of the operation of reason and the nature of the soul.) As we saw in the case of the question of whether wrongdoing can be voluntary, such learning will be essential to carrying out their political responsibilities.
- (4) The preludes are meant to provide quite general ethical instruction. The lawgiver is to be a primary source of instruction about what is fine, just, and good. Thus the citizens will learn why the laws are fine and just and should also learn why following the laws and, more generally, acting virtuously is good for them. They are to receive a true and reasoned account of what is good for human beings. The preludes advocate that the citizens adopt a certain way of evaluating their actions, choices, and lives: they provide an account of what goods are to be pursued, why they are to be pursued, and of the relations among these goods.

(p.105)

(5) These passages also give a first answer to the question of why such instruction, rather than simple commands or non-rational persuasion, is appropriate for the citizens. The Athenian introduces the preludes as the analogue in the case of a city's laws and its citizens to the sort of treatment given by a free doctor to a free patient. As Plato presents the analogy, it is the fact that both are free that determines what is appropriate in their relationship. In the case of two free persons, even when the first possesses knowledge of what is good for the second that the second lacks, it is ethically appropriate that the one try as far as possible to persuade the other rationally; because of the patient's status as a free person, he deserves to be rationally persuaded.

But we can still ask for a further justification of why treatment as a free person benefits the citizen. Stepping back, what we have found in the case of the preludes is an instance of a recurring pattern in the *Laws*. The Athenian begins by deferring to tradition and by accepting a divine foundation, and correspondingly high status, for the laws of Crete and Sparta. What gradually emerges is that legislation can have a divine origin only insofar as it expresses reason, and this necessity of expressing reason leads to a radical criticism of all previous legislation on two related grounds. First, all existing constitutions fail to recognize the true value of virtue and thus fail to establish the proper goal for the laws. Second, all existing constitutions and legislators treat their citizens as slaves, not as free people, insofar as the citizens do not receive an account of the reasons justifying the laws. We should expect from what we have seen so far that these criticisms have a common basis: it is because citizens must be educated so as to be virtuous that this new way of treating them is required (*Laws* 718B-C). The aim of the laws in Magnesia is to make all the citizens virtuous and the preludes along with the rest of the citizens' education express Plato's continued commitment to the idea that rational understanding is necessary for genuine virtue. The lawgiver should aim to give the citizens the sort of grasp of the fine and the good that is analogous to the grasp of health that a free doctor should give to a free person. Such a doctor should use arguments that 'come close to philosophizing' and go back, in his explanation, to 'the whole nature of bodies' (*Laws* 857D2-4).

(p.106) The contrast with the *Republic* is both sharp and significant. The *Republic*, too, connected freedom to rational understanding and slavery to a condition of following orders without understanding. This is why Plato describes members of the lower two classes as slaves of the rulers: 'Therefore, to insure that someone like that [one whose reason is not strong enough to rule himself] is ruled by something similar to what rules the best person, we say that he ought to be the slave [*δοῦλον*] of that best person who has a divine ruler within himself' (*Rep.* 590C8-D1). In the *Laws*, however, the crucial distinction between the free and the unfree is not, as it is in the *Republic*, that between philosophers

and non-philosophers. It is, rather, between those who have been brought up and successfully educated under the Magnesian system of laws and those educated under any other sort of constitution.

We have so far examined Plato's programmatic account of the preludes. But some scholars have suggested that we must take a far more bleak view of them. As I shall argue in the next section, these worries can be met. But Plato's programmatic account does raise other serious and deep philosophical issues and in the next section I shall also try to make clear what they are.

2.4 The Place of the Preludes

Preludes and Education in Magnesia Before turning to worries that some have raised about the preludes, let us put them in their larger context within Magnesia. As the Athenian notes in Book 8, the preludes are a means of 'educating' the citizens (*Laws* 857D6-E5). Given this function, the preludes are continuous with the rest of the citizens' education. Even within the text of the *Laws*, Plato does not, and need not, draw a sharp line between stretches of text that are explicitly designated 'preludes' and those parts of the text that also explain the purpose of the laws, but are not officially designated as 'preludes'. Passages explaining the law or encouraging people to obey it are often found in connection with proposed statutes and are only sometimes termed 'preludes'. We are told that the legislator will make available to the citizens his writings on topics related to the laws, that is, on the fine, justice, virtue, and happiness, and the Athenian expects that the study of these writings will help to make the citizens more virtuous. Further, the entire text of the *Laws* itself (**p.107**) will be read by all the citizens and such study of the lawgiver's writings—both in the preludes and in the text of the *Laws* as a whole—is a central aspect of the citizens' political life.

The preludes are, however, only part of the citizens' education. This education begins with gymnastics and music. The citizens' musical education includes reading and writing, the study of the lyre, and the study of appropriate literature: appropriate literature is especially the text of the *Laws* and then whatever other prose and poetry accords with the ethical principles of the *Laws.*¹¹ The auxiliaries' education in the *Republic* was an education in music and gymnastics; the first part of the citizens' education in Magnesia will be similar in that it, too, is an education in music and gymnastics. The content of the musical education will be significantly different, however, in that it will include the principles and arguments enunciated in the text of the *Laws* itself.

But this is not the only difference. For all free citizens, there are three further branches of study (*mathēmata*): calculation and arithmetic (*logismos, ta peri arithmous*), measurement (*metrētikē*) of lengths, surfaces, and solids, and astronomy (*Laws* 817E5-818A1). This program begins with simple problems in numbering and calculation. It progresses to the measurement of lines, surfaces,

volumes, sounds, and motions. Such measurement is not, however, purely an empirical matter and it includes the study of plane and solid geometry, acoustics, and kinetics. The study that the Athenian places special emphasis on is that of incommensurable magnitudes. In recommending the study of incommensurable magnitudes for the whole city, the Athenian says that when he recently learned of them and thus of the ignorance he previously shared with the rest of the Greeks, ‘it seemed to me to be the condition not of human beings, but of pigs, and I was ashamed, not only for myself, but for all the Greeks’ (*Laws* 819D7-E1).

The purpose of these mathematical studies is not merely their usefulness for the practical affairs of household management, civic administration, and warfare.¹² The study of numbers is of the greatest importance because it ‘awakens him who is by nature sleepy and unlearned, making him better at learning [*εἰνυαθῆ*], memory, and sharpness, and thus making him surpass his nature by a divine art [*θεῖα τέχνη*]’ (*Laws* 747B3-6).¹³ These studies will acquaint all the citizens with ‘divine necessities’ (*ἀνάγκαι θεῖαι*, (p.108) *Laws* 818B3-8) and they will do so in at least two ways. First, such preparatory mathematical studies are essential to enable the citizens to carry out the astronomical studies that are an essential part of ordinary Magnesian theological instruction. All Greeks now commit the ‘absolutely intolerable’ error of speaking falsehoods and thus ‘blaspheming’ against the heavenly gods (*Laws* 820E11-821D4).¹⁴ This blasphemy consists in claiming that the sun, the moon, and the stars follow many irregular paths. The truth is, rather, that each of them always moves in a circular path and that the apparently slowest moving of them is, in fact, the fastest (*Laws* 821B-822C). The ordinary Greek belief is a blasphemy because it fails to perceive the real divine order of the heavens (*Laws* 817E-822C). Ordinary Greek theological beliefs are thus radically in error and it is a central task of Magnesia’s educational program to give the citizens sufficient mathematical and astronomical training to enable them to revise their beliefs intelligently in accordance with the truth. This recognition of the order of the stars plays an essential role in the arguments in Book 10 that the universe is ordered by intelligent gods who exercise supervision over it and over human affairs. The exact nature of the astronomical theory that Plato has in mind here is not entirely clear, but whatever he has in mind will be a mathematical theory of considerable complexity and sophistication.¹⁵

The second and related point concerns Plato’s emphasis on incommensurability as an essential topic of knowledge for all the citizens. (As we saw above, insofar as people lack precisely this knowledge, they fall short of their own rational nature as human beings.) As Ian Mueller elegantly notes, one of the most striking features of the existence of incommensurables is its ‘incompatibility with empirical facts’: the assertion of the incommensurability of the side and the diagonal of the square ‘is always disconfirmed by careful measurement’.¹⁶ The recognition of incommensurability is thus in itself a recognition of a non-sensible

property. It is, as we have seen, part of the metaphysical theology that is a fundamental part of the studies of all Magnesians. All citizens will learn that

- (i) the stars are moved by souls, and
- (ii) the real motion of the stars is circular and invariant, not wandering and irregular.

(p.109)

But the circularity of the stars' motion is not simply a neutral fact that has no normative implications. The inherent connection between circular motion and intelligence, which Plato frequently asserts in the later dialogues, is an explicit part of the theology taught in Book 10's impious prelude.¹⁷

[T]he [motion] that moves always in one place must necessarily move around some center . . . and it must in every way have the greatest possible kinship and resemblance to the revolution of reason [*vouî*] . . . [M]oving according to what is the same, in the same way, in the same place, around the same things, toward the same things, and according to one proportion and order characterizes both reason and the motion that moves in one place. (*Laws* 898A3-B2)

So the citizens' mathematical education is essential for them to grasp the following basic theological truth.

- (iii) The circular motion of the stars is an expression of the rationality of the divine souls moving the stars.

The education of all Magnesians is designed to bring it about that they recognize non-sensible properties and that they grasp the role of such non-sensible properties as principles of good order. This mathematical education thus does what the musical education of the auxiliaries in the *Republic* could not do. So our examination of the rest of the citizens' education supports the Athenian's own account of the preludes' purpose.

Nevertheless, some scholars have suggested that we should take a far more pessimistic view of the preludes.¹⁸ Although Plato's programmatic discussions of the preludes do suggest that he is recommending rational persuasion, the reality, they think, is far more depressing. The actual preludes in the *Laws*' text, it is claimed, fall dismally short of rational persuasion. How then are we to explain this gap? The most moderate and perhaps best worked-out attempt to do so is made by André Laks. Laks holds that Plato's programmatic remarks in Book 9 about the preludes are best understood as part of the 'legislative utopia' sketched in the *Laws*.¹⁹ They are deliberately hyperbolic and present an idealized picture of the activity of the lawgiver. This idealized picture proposes to do away entirely with the violent aspect of law and replace it with fully rational argumentation. But Plato throughout the *Laws* is sensitive to the inevitable gap **(p.110)** between what is best in theory and what is practically attainable. According to Laks, the actual preludes that are attached to proposed

statutes work not through rational argumentation, but rather by means of a rhetoric of praise and blame. And this is the sort of prelude that we should expect to find in any city, even a just city, that is compatible with human nature.

There are, I think, four main reasons to reject this interpretation. First, it is both true and important that Plato in the *Laws* is highly sensitive to the fact that human nature sets limits on the attainment of what would be ideally best.

Indeed, the recognition of this fact plays a central role in the *Laws'* political theory and in the construction of Magnesia. Consider the two most important examples. Although a community of property and women would be the best political arrangement, such a city would have to be inhabited by 'gods or the children of gods' (*Laws* 739D6).²⁰ Because the Athenian recognizes that such a system would be 'too demanding for the birth, nature, and education' of the actual citizens (*Laws* 740A1–2), he goes on to provide explicitly a quite different and incompatible economic system for Magnesia. Similarly, the best political arrangement would be to have an autocratic ruler who possessed full knowledge of what is best for the whole city and was always willing to act on this knowledge. But among humans, such a character can be found 'nowhere or in any way, except to a small extent' (*Laws* 875D2–3). Accordingly, the Athenian explicitly rejects autocratic rule in Magnesia and proposes a quite different sort of constitution.²¹ Plato never makes similar remarks about the possibility of educating the citizens through preludes that engage in rational persuasion. He never says that he thinks that this, like a community of property or autocratic rule, is not possible given what human nature actually is. Indeed, the Athenian (and his interlocutors) repeatedly stress that this is the model that the Magnesian lawgiver should follow (*Laws* 722A–723B, 723C–D, 858E–859B, 890E–891A, cf. 811C–E). Nor does Plato in these passages suggest that providing such preludes frees us from the necessity of attaching penalties to these laws. We thus have good reason to think that Plato believes that such persuasion is possible, at least in moderately favorable (but empirically possible) circumstances. The Athenian notes that the legislator will have some range of preludes from which to choose (*Laws* 723A–D). It is, in fact, reasonable to expect that the tendency over time in Magnesia will be toward **(p.111)** greater rational argumentation in the persuasion and education of the citizens, rather than less. The first population for whom the preludes are crafted is chosen from prospective colonists drawn from all of Greece. Although there is an examination of the prospective citizens as part of their selection procedure, their education will be radically inferior to that received by the future citizens of Magnesia.²²

Second, Laks' interpretation does not make good sense of Plato's extremely emphatic claim that such preludes are an entirely novel innovation: no previous lawgiver has ever noticed the possibility of employing the sort of persuasion that a free doctor uses in his treatment of a free person. Plato is unlikely to have thought that no previous lawgiver ever noticed the possibility of employing rhetorical and other non-rational means of persuasion to bring about greater

compliance with the laws.²³ Third, such an interpretation of the preludes' purpose cannot account for instances of sophisticated rational argumentation that we do find in some of the preludes. The prelude to the impiety law includes a version of the cosmological argument providing an account of the origin of motion and a sophisticated classification of kinds of motion. The prelude to the law on theft, as we saw, attempts to reconcile a basic and quite revisionary principle of Plato's psychology with common sense and universal legal practice. Nor can such an interpretation account for the sort of mathematical education provided to all citizens. Why insist on the study of incommensurable magnitudes for those who will otherwise receive only a simple rhetoric of praise and blame? The final reason for rejecting this interpretation is that we do not need to adopt it in order to account for the variety of preludes—some more sophisticated, some less—that we do find in the *Laws*. Such variety can be explained consistently with the interpretation I have already offered. This claim, of course, requires an argument and I shall offer one after considering some further worries.²⁴

Less moderate critical interpretations, unlike that of Laks, do not hold that Plato acknowledges the fact that his programmatic remarks only present an unattainable ideal. R. F. Stalley, for example, suggests that 'The discrepancy between what the Athenian actually does and what he says he is doing could result either from deliberate deceitfulness or from a waning of Plato's own rational powers.'²⁵ Having to choose between attributing to (p.112) Plato such deception or a grave loss of mental acuity is not an attractive dilemma and I think that we can make better philosophical sense of what is going on. But before turning to this, let us consider some further grounds that commentators have suggested for rejecting the claim that Plato intends to appeal to, and to develop, the citizens' powers of reasoning.

This second set of worries centers on the political and social conditions that provide the context for education and persuasion in Magnesia. Some have thought that Magnesia's environment is so restrictive that the citizens cannot really develop rationally grounded beliefs. The arts are subject to extensive and restrictive censorship and even children's games are highly regulated and are to undergo little change. Contact with the outside world, and ideas coming from it, is carefully circumscribed for almost all citizens. There are criminal sanctions for certain kinds of false religious belief and there is extensive legal regulation of many aspects of the citizens' private lives. On a wide range of topics, the lawgiver sets out recommendations that, although lacking the force of law, are backed up by substantial social pressure (e.g. *Laws* 762C, 880A, 914A, 917C, and 936B). Does Plato's endorsement of these practices show that he is not, despite the passages we have considered, genuinely committed to the goal of developing in most citizens rational grounding for the beliefs that they are to hold? Interpretations such as Stalley's and similar ones that appeal to the second set of worries are open to some of the same objections brought against Laks' view. What we need to provide is an interpretation that makes sense of all

that we do find in the *Laws*. We should try to find an interpretation that explains the full range of preludes and allows us to see Plato's programmatic remarks as sincere.

Let us begin by considering one of the critics' favorite examples of a prelude, that to the law on hunting.

Friends, may you never be seized by a desire or lust for hunting on the sea, for angling, or in general for hunting of animals that dwell in water, or for those basket-traps that perform the toil of a lazy hunt, whether the hunters are awake or asleep. (*Laws* 823D7-E2)

The passage continues in the same vein. Strictly speaking, this is not designated as a prelude, but we cannot avoid the worry that easily: as I have argued, we should not draw a sharp distinction between passages explicitly (**p.113**) designated as preludes and the rest of the text. The prelude to the hunting law illustrates one important facet of the lawgiver's communication with the citizens. Plato repeatedly stresses that the above prelude is addressed to the 'young'; although it will be read by all, it is especially intended for the young (*Laws* 823C5-6, D5). The more general point is that the lawgiver's task is to address all the citizens and thus he will have to speak with a great variety of people at different stages of ethical development and different levels of ethical attainment. As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 5, Plato explicitly restricts Magnesia's political community to the virtuous (or those with the potential for virtue). Nevertheless, although capital punishment or the deprivation of citizen rights are penalties for a very wide range of offenses, there is no systematic institutional attempt, apart from the penal law, to locate and reform, or exclude from the political community, everyone falling short of virtue. The Athenian stresses that the very fact that the laws have penalties attached to them is shameful, but even in Magnesia law has to deal with citizens of varying degrees of imperfection.²⁶ We should expect that the same is true of the lawgiver's teaching and instruction and we do, in fact, find a wide range of preludes.

There are the rationally sophisticated discussions in the prelude justifying Magnesia's theology and in the prelude to the law on theft. In other preludes, the reasons lying behind a law or practice are stated with relatively little argument and sometimes with rhetorical elaboration. And there are some instances in which the legislator appeals to religious myths that Plato is unlikely to endorse literally. A favorite example of many of those who are pessimistic about the preludes is found in connection with the laws concerning murders springing from the desire for pleasure or from envy. Here the Athenian recommends repeating the stories told by those involved in the mystery rites to the effect that such wrongdoers will suffer the appropriate crime-specific penalty in a future reincarnation: parricides will be killed by their sons and so on. And the Athenian hopes that such stories will serve to prevent murders by inducing fear (*Laws* 870E4-5). But as Trevor Saunders perceptively notes, these stories follow a long and discursive preamble that appeals to the value of virtue as opposed to external goods (*Laws* 870A-D). Such stories are designed for those who have failed to benefit from the education given to all and are the next

resort when persuasion and (**p.114**) education have failed. They are followed by the last resort, which is the statement of the penalty attached to violation of the law (*Laws* 871A-C).²⁷

The presence of preludes of all three types does not undermine the significant differences between the *Laws* and the *Republic*. This diversity cannot justify reading away the examples of more sophisticated preludes and holding that Plato's real intent is to provide only preludes of the second and third type. Plato did not expect that each and every citizen in Magnesia would attend carefully to the more sophisticated preludes. And he certainly expected that some would obey the law only out of fear of legal or divine punishment and that others would not be dissuaded even by fear of punishment. The education of the Magnesians is, however, designed to give them all the ability to follow the more sophisticated preludes and such preludes are addressed to the whole citizen body and are not restricted to an elite class.²⁸

Finally, we should not be surprised to find that the prelude to the impiety law is exceptional in its detail and we cannot infer from this that Plato thought it would be desirable for there to be only one prelude of this sort in Magnesia. The *Laws'* text is already extremely long and shows various signs of incompleteness. The impiety prelude by itself occupies almost all of Book 10. It would have been an unmanageable task to provide similar preludes on all the central issues in ethics. To see what such preludes might look like, we can turn to the better worked-out example in Book 10 and to Plato's programmatic remarks. (Book 10 also introduces material that is partially new. Offering simplified versions of topics already treated must have seemed a less interesting and pressing task to Plato, especially near the end of his life.) This is fully compatible with the idea that there will be other preludes that are intended for citizens at a lower level of ethical development.

Since I have discussed the issues arising from Magnesia's restrictive social environment in detail elsewhere, I shall be relatively brief here.²⁹ Plato forbids the citizens access to certain sorts of information (e.g. some sorts of poetry are banned, as are works advocating atheist conclusions) and strongly encourages the citizens, in part by social sanctions including customs of approval, to adopt certain other beliefs. Further, some of the processes by which citizens come to be favorably disposed to approved ethical beliefs do not appeal to reason in a strong sense. For example, the (**p.115**) right sorts of games and dances are supposed to give rise in children to a tendency to take pleasure in appropriate activities and stably taking pleasure in them disposes the children to approve of and value such activities.

But none of this requires Plato to reject the goal of fostering rational beliefs. First, the items that are banned do not merely contain false claims; they also tend to distort people's reasoning capacities. Inappropriate poetry, for example,



corrupts people's capacities to arrive at and maintain true beliefs. Such poetry fosters desires and emotions that tend to bring it about that we acquire false beliefs and lose true ones by non-rational processes (and it also tends to make such processes more pervasive and deeply rooted). Second, social encouragement and various kinds of habituation can lead citizens to adopt true beliefs by processes other than rational argumentation. This, however, need not be inimical to fostering rational reflection in those citizens capable of it. Even if citizens do not adopt some of their ethical beliefs through rational argument, Plato also provides for explanations of the reasons behind the law to be available and to be studied. The preludes and the lawgiver's other writings serve as a lifelong encouragement and opportunity for the citizens to come to appreciate the rational basis of the beliefs they may have adopted on other grounds.

Further, such habituation will proceed in large part through fostering certain emotions, such as shame, and appealing to certain sorts of pleasure. But such appeals to emotions and to pleasure need not undermine people's capacity to have a reasoned appreciation of their ethical beliefs. Cultivation of the right emotions and pleasures can both help prepare for the development of a reasoned appreciation of the good and help sustain it once it is in place. Such emotions and pleasures can (i) help block the formation of bad desires and emotions which would tend to corrupt people's rational capacities, and (ii) attach people to objects and courses of action for which they can come to develop a reasoned appreciation. And even in people who possess a reasoned appreciation of what is good and fine, such pleasures and emotions can serve as a separate and additional sort of motivation for acting rightly.

These are ways in which the cultivation of the right emotions and pleasures can still be indirectly rational. But they might also contribute to a person's rationality in a stronger sense by developing, at least at a fairly basic (**p.116**) level, some of the very capacities that are involved in higher exercises of reason. This is the most ambitious defense of Plato's practice in Magnesia in that it aims to show that the restrictive measures in fact directly further the goal of bringing citizens to have rational grounds for their beliefs. Such a strategy may also help to account for the remarkable emphasis that Plato gives to developing in the citizens a highly determinate pattern of pleasures and emotions. It does so, however, via commitments to strong claims in Plato's psychology and epistemology. Seeing whether this account can be made good will thus have to await our longer discussions of non-rational motivations in Chapter 4.

There are, of course, also less ambitious ways of justifying the restrictions we find, without holding that Plato is not genuinely committed to encouraging rationally grounded beliefs among the citizens. This goal, for example, may compete with others such as maintaining the long-run stability of the city and Plato might think that although restrictive measures may curtail some rational inquiry, the long-run results justify doing so. He may also both overestimate the

fragility of true beliefs and underestimate the negative consequences of such restrictions. But none of this suggests that Plato is deceptive in his characterization of the intent of the preludes and of the citizens' education or that he thinks that rational persuasion is an unattainable ideal.³⁰

Let us close this section by considering two broader issues. First, since Laks, for example, holds that the argumentative preludes are confined almost entirely to the 'legislative utopia' (he would also have to hold that this is true of other aspects of the citizens' education that aim at developing rationally grounded beliefs), he is left with the task of explaining how persuasion is supposed to work in Magnesia. Laks suggests that the primary means of persuasion is by appeal to praise and blame, pleasure and 'the opinions and attitudes normally shared by most people'.³¹ But it is difficult to see how these resources alone could produce the sort of city Plato intends Magnesia to be. Plato's proposal of an entirely new model for legislation is part of a radical criticism of all previous constitutions: this includes those of Crete and Sparta, which both did an especially good job of appealing to praise and blame and commonly shared beliefs.³² But allied with Plato's criticism of the manner of legislation in Crete and Sparta there is, as we shall (**p.117**) see in Section 2.5, a radical criticism of the results that such constitutions achieve. The citizens brought up under both constitutions have very grave ethical failings. Although they are steadfast in war, they do not know what to do with peace or leisure. A sign of this is that their own citizens think that both constitutions are designed only to cultivate the virtue of courage. These flaws ultimately rest on the failure of the constitutions to foster an appreciation of the nature and value of virtue. Genuine courage, for example, cannot exist apart from the other virtues, especially a correct conception of the ultimate end, and even the best citizens of these constitutions value pleasure and honor more than virtue. It is not incoherent to suppose that an ethical education whose primary appeals were to shame, honor, and pleasure might develop a character that valued virtue for its own sake. But even if pleasure and honor were to fix people exceptionlessly on the right actions, such an education gives them neither a grasp of what virtue is nor any reason to pursue virtue for its own sake. Even if some psychological mechanism were to bring such people to value acting in approved ways for no further end, this would not give them a rational appreciation of what is good about such action. To see whether Plato thinks that ordinary citizens in Magnesia are capable of this, we shall have to examine, in Section 2.5, the *Laws'* understanding of the goodness of virtue.

We can see Plato facing a related problem in the *Statesman* and resolving it in a way that supports the idea that rational persuasion is required. In the *Statesman*, Plato holds that among the citizens there are two types of character that are potentially good: the courageous character and the moderate character. The courageous tend toward vigorous lives and are prone to act aggressively, especially when facing opposition. The moderate seek quiet lives, mind their own business, and tend to be cautious and conservative. These differences in

action and character type are ultimately founded on disagreements about what is good and fine (*Stsmn.* 307A–308A and 311A).³³ These sorts of courage and moderation, however, fall well short of genuine virtue and one clear sign of this is that, unlike genuine virtues, they are not such that one can have one of them only if one has the other. In fact, such tendencies to courage and moderation are incompatible and those who have them are hostile to and in conflict with each other. The only way of establishing harmony in the city sketched in the *Statesman* is by imparting to (p.118) citizens ‘the divine bond’ of ‘really true and firmly settled true opinion’ about the fine, the just, and the good (*Stsmn.* 309C1–8). Such a bond is divine because it is akin to what is immortal in the soul, that is, reason (*Stsmn.* 309C).³⁴ It is only because they possess such a bond that citizens having either one of these natural tendencies can come to have a character that is genuinely fine and, in particular, can come to possess all the virtues, including genuine courage, moderation, and wisdom (*Stsmn.* 309A8–B7, 309E5–7). The initial discrepancy between these basic character types cannot be resolved by appealing to common pleasures or to a shared sense of shame or a desire for honor. It is only by giving citizens the same true ethical opinions about the fine, the just, and the good—and excluding those not capable of sharing in them—that genuine concord (*homonoia*) and friendship (*philia*) can be achieved in the city. Although Plato is not fully explicit about this, such opinions seem to consist in grasping—albeit in a way that amounts to less than knowledge—the reasons behind the law, that is, grasping why they are fine, just, and good.³⁵

There is a second set of concerns that raise important philosophical questions that will occupy us in the next section and in Chapters 3 and 4. I have argued so far that the lawgiver’s persuasion of the citizens helps solve the two problems that we noted at the beginning of this chapter for the claim that law could be an expression of reason. Insofar as the law itself is supplemented with an explanation of the reasons behind it, the citizens receive more than a bare command and violent compulsion. Second, although law itself is too general to address adequately all the varied circumstances of life, if it succeeds in giving citizens an intelligent appreciation of the basis of the law and the whole legal system, it will help equip them to deal with novel situations.³⁶

We have, however, so far concentrated on what education in Magnesia might provide for the citizens, but have not considered its limitations. The condition of the vast majority of the citizens falls short of genuine knowledge: they do not have a synoptic grasp of any body of knowledge, they are not capable of articulating and defending against all challenges an account of the basic ethical notions, and they do not seem to have extensive training in the use of the elenchus. Nevertheless, the *Laws* leads us to believe that the citizens can grasp, at least to a significant extent, what virtue is and can value (p.119) virtue for its own sake. This leaves us with several important issues. First, if Plato’s educational project is to succeed, it requires us to show that there can be a realm of ethical reflection that, although falling short of philosophical

knowledge, involves a recognition of and response to genuine value. But is such reflection sufficient to bring it about that non-philosophers can possess the virtue of wisdom (*phronēsis*)? Can ordinary citizens have such a virtue without genuine knowledge and without possessing knowledge of the Forms? Second, it was precisely their inability to attain a recognition of and appropriate response to genuine value that constituted the fundamental defect of non-philosophers in the middle period. This was the reason for Plato's bleak assessment of their ethical capacities and lives. How, then, has Plato's psychology and epistemology changed so as to allow for such recognition without philosophical knowledge?

This second question sets the agenda for Chapters 3 and 4. In the next section, I shall focus on the first question. I shall begin by showing why this question is especially pressing in the *Laws*. The Dependency Thesis, as we saw in Chapter 1, seemed to exclude non-philosophers from happiness because it required a person to possess knowledge in order to benefit from any other good. As we shall see in the next section, the *Laws* places the Dependency Thesis at the very center of its ethical theory. So I shall now turn to consider why the Dependency Thesis has such a central place in the *Laws* and whether the non-philosophical citizens of Magnesia can satisfy its demands.

2.5 The Goal of the Laws

In the *Republic*, Plato holds that the goal of the laws is to bring about the greatest possible happiness in the city (e.g. *Rep.* 419A–421C). As we have seen, however, the *Republic* does not aim at bringing it about that all of the citizens are genuinely virtuous. The crucial difficulty is that knowledge is necessary for the virtue of wisdom and wisdom is necessary for the other virtues. Since non-philosophers lack knowledge, they lack genuine virtue. The laws thus aim at doing the best for non-philosophers that can be done without making them genuinely virtuous or happy.

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(p.120) In the *Laws*, Plato still holds that the ultimate end of the legal system is to bring about the greatest possible happiness in the city.³⁷ But this is not the claim that Plato gives the greatest emphasis. In all his legislation, the lawgiver must aim at a single goal and that is virtue. In particular, the lawgiver must aim at fostering all the virtues—courage, justice, moderation, and wisdom—in the citizens as a whole.³⁸ Plato announces this claim with a fanfare at the beginning of the *Laws*, returns to it at its end, and repeatedly stresses it throughout the text.

[A]ny lawgiver worth much of anything will never set down laws with a view to anything but the greatest virtue. And this is . . . that quality which someone would call complete justice. (*Laws* 1. 630C3–6)

Keep in view what was said at the beginning, about how the Cretan laws looked to one goal. You two said this was what pertains to war. I then interrupted, saying that it was fine that such legal institutions looked

somehow to virtue, but that I could not at all go along with them when they looked only to a part and not almost to the whole. Now you two in your turn, as you follow the present legislation, must guard against my legislating something that does not aim at virtue, or that aims at a part of virtue. For I assert that the only law correctly laid down is this: one which, just like an archer, aims each time at what alone is constantly accompanied by something fine, one which leaves all the rest aside, even if there is a chance of producing some wealth and other such things by ignoring the things just mentioned. (*Laws* 4. 705D3-706A4)³⁹

In our consideration of the nature of the land and the order of the laws, we are looking now to the virtue of the constitution. We do not hold, as the many do, that preservation and mere existence are what is most honorable for human beings; what is most honorable for them is to become as good as possible and to remain so for as long a time as they may exist. (*Laws* 4. 707D1-5)⁴⁰

In brief, this was the substance of the agreement: in whatever way a member of the community, whether his nature be male or female, young or old, might ever become a good man, possessing the virtue of soul that befits a human being—whether this be as a result of some practice, or some habituation, or some possession, or desire, or belief, or certain things learned at some time—toward this . . . every serious effort will be made throughout the whole of life; no one of any sort is to be seen giving precedence in honor to any of the other things that are impediments, not even, finally, to the city. (*Laws* 6. 770C7-E1, cf. 807C1-D5)

(p.121)

[I]f our founding of the country is to have an end, there must be something in it that knows, in the first place, this goal we are speaking of (whatever our political goal may be), and then in what way it ought to attain this . . . But if some city is devoid of such a thing, it will not be surprising if, lacking reason and senses, it acts haphazardly each time in each of its actions . . . [T]here is nothing surprising in the fact that the legal customs of the cities wander, since different parts of the legislated codes in each city look to different aims. And in most cases there is nothing surprising in the fact, that, for some, the definition of justice is what allows some to rule in the city, whether they happen to be better or worse, while for others it is what allows them to become wealthy, whether they are slaves of certain people or not, and that others are set into motion by the spirited zeal for the free way of life. Others, again, have a twofold legislation that looks to both—that they may be free and may also be despots over other cities; then the wisest, as they suppose, look to these and all such aims, but not to any one, being unable to give an account of anything that is honored preeminently and toward which their other affairs should look. So then would not our

principle have been set down in the correct way a long while ago? For we declared that everything pertaining to our laws ought always to be looking to one thing, and this, we presumably agreed, was very correctly said to be virtue. (*Laws* 12. 962B4–963A4)⁴¹

This requirement that the laws aim at inculcating all the virtues in the citizens gains special significance from the contrast between what Plato proposes for Magnesia and the practice of all other constitutions. Early in Book 1 in reply to a question from the Athenian, Kleinias explains the goal of Cretan legislation.

[O]ur Cretan lawgiver ordained all our legal usages, both public and private, with an eye to war, and he therefore charged us with the task of guarding our laws safely, in the conviction that, without victory in war, nothing else, whether possession or practice, is of any value [τῶν ἀλλων οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν ὄφελος], but all the goods of the vanquished fall into the hands of the victors. (*Laws* 626A5–B4)

Although the *Laws* is not one of Plato's more elaborate literary productions, it still is constructed with some subtlety. Kleinias' statement does not make determinate the relations among victory in war, the goods the victors obtain, and the aims of the legislator. The Athenian chooses to construe this remark as the claim that the Cretan laws aim at what helps to bring about victory, that is, at courage. Cretan laws thus aim at 'part' of virtue, although not at the whole of virtue. Even understood this way, this fact shows that the (p.122) Cretan constitution is radically defective because it does not aim at all the virtues. This defect is reflected in the character of the citizens brought up under it. There is no reason to think that Kleinias and Megillus represent corrupted citizens of Crete and Sparta: rather we can take the Athenian at his word that they are its best products. The very fact that Kleinias does not hold that the constitution aims at virtue as a whole shows that it has failed in its proper task, since no virtuous person could see such a state of affairs as satisfactory.

But Kleinias has even more grave ethical shortcomings. His view that victory in war is the proper aim of the laws springs from his more fundamental view that just as each city should be organized so as to be victorious in war over all other cities, this is the right attitude for a village to adopt towards another village, for a household to adopt towards another household, and for every person to adopt towards everyone else: 'All people are publicly and privately the enemy of all' (*Laws* 626D7–9). As Kleinias spells out his view, we see that he

- (i) rejects the claim that the value of other goods depends on their possessor being virtuous, and
- (ii) even allows that a person who possesses all goods other than virtue and 'has within himself only injustice and insolence' lives basely, but also holds that he lives happily, pleasantly and profitably to himself (*Laws* 661E2–662A8).

Kleinias and Megillus are often portrayed as ethically impeccable, although slow-witted, interlocutors. But it is important to see that this is mistaken. The best products

of Crete and Sparta think that goods other than virtue are much more important than virtue itself and may well think that virtue is worthwhile only insofar as it produces these goods. It is reasonable to connect this failure with the other great failure of Cretan and Spartan laws that we have already seen, that is, their failure to treat the citizens as free people. Without some further account of the point of virtuous practices, Plato suggests that we will tend to see them as aimed at goods other than virtue. The injunctions of the Cretan and the Spartan law codes to act bravely must be brought under some conception of the good, and ordinary ethical education is not enough for their citizens to get it right.

(p.123) The *Laws'* claim that the constitution ought to aim at fostering all the virtues in the citizens as a whole sets two issues for us. First, what is the relation between making the citizens as happy as possible and fostering all the virtues in the citizens? We would expect that fostering the virtues plays a central role in making them happy, but we need a more specific account of the relation between virtue and happiness in the *Laws*. Is virtue the only good, that is, does happiness consist solely of virtue? Or if there are other goods besides virtue, what is the relation between virtue and these goods? Second, can the lawgivers in Magnesia really aim at inculcating all the virtues in the citizens? Can they foster the virtue of wisdom in any but the small elite who possessed it in the *Republic*? The *Statesman* suggested that 'firmly settled true opinion' about the fine, the just, and the good could help produce a kind of wisdom and we must see how the *Laws* develops this idea. From what we have seen, we do not have to worry that the lawgiver only tries to encourage in citizens the tendency to do what the virtuous person would while not aiming at virtue for its own sake, but rather at pleasure or honor. But we may have further concerns. If we no longer require knowledge for the possession of the virtue of wisdom, can we still retain what is distinctively valuable about wisdom? If what is valuable for the possessors of wisdom is, at least in large part, theoretical understanding, how can a lesser state still benefit them? Might it do so, for example, by being purely practical as opposed to theoretical? We can turn to these issues, however, only after first taking up the relation between virtue and other goods.

2.6 Dependent Goods in The Laws

In two passages early in the *Laws*, Plato announces a radical thesis about how the value of other goods depends on the possession of virtue.

Passage A

It is not without reason that the laws of Crete are held in especially high esteem by all the Greeks. The reason is that they are correct laws—and they are correct because they make those who use them happy. For they provide all the goods. Now goods are twofold, some human, some divine.

The former depend [^ἢρτηται] on (p.124) the divine goods, and if a city accepts the greater, it will also acquire the lesser.⁴² If not, it is bereft of both. The lesser goods are those of which health is the leader; in second place is beauty; in third place is strength, in running and in all other bodily

movements, and in fourth place is wealth—not blind, but sharp-sighted, insofar as it follows wisdom. Wisdom, in turn, is first and leader [*ἡγεμονοῦν*] among the divine goods; second, after wisdom, is a moderate disposition of soul; from these two mixed with courage comes justice in third place; and fourth is courage. All of these goods are by nature placed prior in rank [*ἔμπροσθεν τέτακται φύσει*] to the former goods, and the lawgiver must rank them in this way. (*Laws* 631B3-D2)

Passage B

You compel the poets to say that the good man, since he is moderate and just, is happy and blessed, whether he is great and strong or small and weak, whether he is rich or not. Even if someone were richer than Cinyras or Midas, if he is unjust, then he is miserable [*ἄθλιός*] and lives wretchedly [*ἀνιαρῶς*] . . . For the things said to be good [*τὰ . . . λεγόμεν’ ἀγαθὰ*] by the many are not correctly so described. It is said that the best thing is health, and second is beauty, and third is wealth—and then there are said to be innumerable other goods: sharp sight and hearing, and good perception of all the objects of the senses; and further, being a tyrant and doing whatever one desires; and the perfection of all happiness is to possess all these goods and then to become immortal, as quickly as possible. But you and I say this: that all these things, beginning with health, are extremely good [*ἀριστά*] for just and pious men, but all are extremely bad [*κάκιστα*] for unjust men. To see, to hear, to perceive, and, in general, to live as an immortal for the whole of time, while possessing all the things said to be good except for justice and the whole of virtue, is the greatest of bards [*μέγιστον . . . κακὸν*]. The bad is less when such a man lives a very brief time . . . I say plainly that the things said to be bad are good for unjust men and bad for just men [*τὰ μὲν κακὰ λεγόμενα ἀγαθὰ τοῖς ἀδίκοις εἶναι, τοῖς δὲ δικαίοις κακά*], while the [things said to be] good really are good [*ὄντως ἀγαθά*] for good men, but bad for bad men . . . Given a man who possesses in a lasting way health, wealth, and tyrannical power—and for you, I add exceptional strength and courage along with immortality and that he has nothing else of the things said to be bad—but given that he has within himself only injustice and insolence; perhaps I do not persuade you that a man living in this way is unhappy and is manifestly miserable [*ἄθλιον*]? (*Laws* 660E2-661E4)

(I prefer the awkward ‘bad’ to ‘evil’, since ‘evil’ may suggest purely moral badness and we should not build this assumption into our translation.) In (p.125) Passage A, Plato distinguishes ‘divine’ or ‘greater’ goods from ‘human’ or ‘lesser’ goods and claims that the latter ‘depend on’ the former. In Passage B, he calls the human goods ‘things said to be good’, which suggests that the difference between the two kinds of goods is more

fundamental than, for example, a difference of quantity. In the rest of Passage B, Plato elucidates the nature of this dependency.

Let us begin by considering the classifications that Plato makes and then turn to his account of dependency.

(1) The human goods comprise a rather varied group. Elsewhere in the *Laws*, Plato distinguishes among goods of the soul, goods of the body, and goods external to the soul and body (e.g. 697B-C). Human goods are drawn from all three categories. They include external goods, such as wealth; bodily goods such as health, beauty, and strength; as well as goods that are partly bodily and partly psychic such as keen perceptual capacities. But they also include some purely psychic goods. In Passage B, Plato allows that an unjust person can possess 'courage' (*andreia*, *Laws* 661E1, cf. 696D4-6), although such courage, like the human goods, does not benefit its possessor if he is unjust. This sort of courage seems simply to be an ability to resist fear in the service of whatever ends the person has and since its value, like that of the human goods, depends on its possessor being virtuous, it should count as a human good. There are indefinitely many other human goods, including immortality and the ability to do whatever one desires. In sum, human goods seem to include all the things that common sense classifies as good, insofar as they are entirely distinct from the divine good of virtue. Pleasure is not mentioned in Passages A and B, but at the beginning of Book 5, Plato distinguishes divine from non-divine possessions and classifies pleasure among the human possessions (*Laws* 726A2-3 and 732D8-E7). It seems reasonable to take this as entailing the claim that pleasure is one of the human goods and thus is a Dependent Good.

(2) The divine goods consist of the four virtues: courage, justice, moderation, and wisdom. Within this group, wisdom has a special place as the 'leader' of the other virtues. The possession of all of the four virtues is what makes someone a 'good' or 'just' person (*Laws* 660D2-3).

(3) In Passage B, the Athenian refers to 'the things said to be bad'. Although he does not give examples, the natural contrast with 'the things (**p.126**) said to be good' shows that these include sickness, ugliness, and so on. As in the case of the human goods, the positive or negative value of these 'bads' depends on whether their possessor is virtuous. Finally, corresponding to the divine good of possessing all the virtues is the bad of vice or injustice. Having this bad is, as we have seen, compatible with possessing the sort of courage or moderation that is a human good.

The value of the human goods or the things said to be good is, in some way, dependent on the divine good of complete virtue: 'the things said to be bad are good for unjust men and bad for just men, while the [things said to be] good

really are good for good men, but bad for bad men' (*Laws* 661D1–4). Thus we may call these items, 'Dependent Goods' and 'Dependent Bads'.

G is a Dependent Good if and only if G is good for a just or good person and G is bad for an unjust or bad person.

B is a Dependent Bad if and only if B is bad for a just or good person and B is not bad for an unjust or bad person.⁴³

So the value of Dependent Goods is dependent on their possessor having wisdom, courage, and moderation, and thus justice. I shall call the claim that all goods that are entirely distinct from virtue are Dependent Goods, the 'Dependency Thesis'.

Corresponding to this account of Dependent Goods and Bads, we can give an account of Independent Goods and Bads.

G is an Independent Good if and only if G is good for a person regardless of what else she possesses.

B is an Independent Bad if and only if B is bad for a person regardless of what else she possesses.

Justice is an Independent Good and vice an Independent Bad.

Let me immediately note one refinement. The above definitions of Dependent Goods and Dependent Bads are based quite closely on Plato's phrasing in Passage B. As I shall argue below, they must be complicated slightly to capture Plato's intentions. Plato need not (and I think does not) hold that every Dependent Good is bad for an unjust person; what he (**p.127**) should hold is that no Dependent Good benefits a person apart from virtue. This is true if either the Dependent Good is bad for unjust people or if it is simply not good for them. Nor should Plato hold that a Dependent Bad is actually good for an unjust person; nothing is good for an unjust person. What Plato intends is that, for example, unjust people are worse off if they are wealthy than if they are poor. But even the small amount of money that they have (their 'poverty') is not actually good for them. So what Plato should (and I think does) hold is that for an unjust person having a Dependent Bad is not good, although it is less bad than not having that Dependent Bad or than having the corresponding Dependent Good. This more precise formulation allows us to say that nothing is good for people unless they are just or virtuous. I discuss this, and some connected complications, further in Section 2.8.

2.7 Preliminary Clarifications

Goods can be distinguished in many different ways and to understand Plato's claims, it is essential to get clear about the nature of the dependency he is asserting. Let us begin by noting that in Passages A and B, Plato is classifying different sorts of things as good *for* (or bad *for*) individual persons; he is concerned with what contributes to a person's well-being or happiness or is a

benefit for him. The notion of goodness that Plato is exploring here is essentially relational and, moreover, is relative to particular individuals. We can make this idea clearer by comparison with some modern theories of value. Thomas Nagel distinguishes two sorts of reasons for action: agent-relative reasons and agent-neutral reasons. An agent-relative reason for performing action A is a reason only for a particular person to perform A; an agentneutral reason is a reason for anyone to perform A. Let us assume a direct correspondence between reasons for action and goodness.⁴⁴

In Passages A and B, Plato is not concerned to establish what has agent-neutral goodness, that is, what things or states of affairs are good for all agents from an impartial point of view, or more precisely, from a point of view that is neutral with respect to the identities of individual agents.⁴⁵ For (**p.128**) example, Plato's claim here that health is good for a virtuous person entails that if I am virtuous, my possession of health is good for me and that if you are virtuous, your possession of health is good for you. Plato does not go on to assert that my virtuous possession of health is good for both of us or for people generally.

Although some philosophers use 'intrinsic value' to capture the idea of agent-neutral value, there is a stronger notion of intrinsic value that is also relevant. On this stronger notion, intrinsic goodness is the objective, non-relational property of goodness that is independent of all persons. This is, for example, the conception of goodness that G. E. Moore explored in *Principia Ethica*. This is again not Plato's concern in Passages A and B: he is not, for example, claiming that the world is a better place because of my being virtuous or my virtuous possession of health.⁴⁶ I am not claiming that the notions of agent-neutral goodness or intrinsic goodness (or something like them) play no role in Plato's ethics or that they have no connection to the distinction drawn in Passages A and B. Indeed, I shall argue that they have intimate connections to what is good for a particular person. Nevertheless, in these passages, the only sort of goodness that Plato explicitly considers is being good for a particular agent.

But even within the category of what is good for particular agents, Plato in his corpus draws several different distinctions. First, as we have noted, he employs a trichotomy of goods: goods of the soul, goods of the body, and goods external to both. Such a classification is especially natural within the category of things good for particular agents, since it specifies, so to speak, the location of the good with respect to the agent herself. From the perspective of a person acting to acquire or enjoy goods for herself, their location with respect to herself is a fundamental fact. But this distinction is obviously not identical to that between Independent and Dependent Goods nor is it extensionally equivalent, even if we group together both kinds of non-psychic goods, since as we have seen, Dependent Goods include psychic goods.

We must also keep the Independent/Dependent Good distinction apart from another distinction that Plato draws among things good for a particular agent. Plato recognizes the more familiar distinction between final goods and instrumental goods, that is, the distinction between things good (**p.129**) as ends and things good as means. And he sometimes, for example at the beginning of Book 2 of the *Republic*, uses the means-end distinction as a way of classifying things that are good for particular agents.

Glaucon: Tell me, is there a kind of good that we would choose to have not because we are aiming at what comes from it [*οὐ τῶν ἀποβαυόντων*], but because we welcome it for its own sake [*αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκα*]—such as enjoyment and such pleasures as are harmless and nothing results from them afterwards save to have the enjoyment?

Socrates: In my opinion, there is a good of this kind.

Gl.: . . . Is there a kind we love both for its own sake and for what comes from it [*τῶν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γιγνομένων*], such as thinking and seeing and being healthy? Surely we welcome such things for both reasons.

Soc.: Yes.

Gl.: And do you see a third form of good, which includes exercise, medical treatment when sick, as well as the practice of medicine, and the rest of moneymaking? For we would say that they are laborious but beneficial to us; and we would not choose to have them for their own sake, but for the sake of the wages and whatever else comes from them. (*Rep.* 357B4-D2)

An instrumental good, such as undergoing surgery, insofar as it is an instrumental good, is valued only for the sake of some distinct effects it brings about, e.g., the state of being healthy. To call something instrumentally good is not to claim that it possesses goodness, but rather to state a fact about its causal powers: it can be used to bring about some distinct effect that does possess goodness.⁴⁷ Thus if I could obtain the end without using the means then, *ceteris paribus*, I would have no reason at all to adopt the means. A final good, in contrast, *qua* final good, is good apart from anything that it may bring about, that is, it is good apart from its causal effects. Even if it were causally inert, I would, *ceteris paribus*, have reason to choose it. This does not, however, entail that, so to speak, it carries its goodness within it. It does not entail that it is good apart from everything else. In particular, it may be good only when it occurs in conjunction with another good (that is not a causal consequence of the final good). All that finality in itself entails is noninstrumentality; it does not, by itself, entail independence.

A Dependent Good, on the other hand, is something such that a necessary (and sufficient) condition of its being good is the presence of (**p.130**) something other than the Dependent Good. (In the case of the *Laws*, the dependency is on virtue; there could be formally similar relations in which some goods were

dependent for their goodness on the presence of something else besides virtue).⁴⁸ Thus, if we assume (what I shall shortly question) that all instrumental goods require wisdom to be beneficial and are not good in its absence, all instrumental goods are Dependent Goods, but even so, not all Dependent Goods need be instrumental goods. In Passages A and B, Plato is careful not to claim that the Dependent Goods are instrumental goods and he does not characterize the difference between divine and human goods in terms of the distinction between the value of a thing apart from its consequences and the value of its consequences. The relevant distinction is, rather, that between a thing being good for its possessor without the presence of anything else, and its being good for its possessor only in the presence of some distinct thing. We do not yet know why Dependent Goods require the presence of virtue to be good for their possessor, but it need not be the case that Dependent Goods are valuable solely for their causal effects. The notion of a Dependent Good, as we have seen it in Passages A and B, allows for the possibility that, in the presence of virtue, a Dependent Good is good for its possessor independently of any effects it brings about. Understanding how this could be so is a task I shall take up, but to illustrate the idea, consider a non-Platonic example. If I am color-blind, seeing a Rothko painting is of no value to me, but it is of value to me in conjunction with the ability to see colors. Seeing a Rothko is a kind of dependent good: its goodness is dependent on an ability to perceive (or perhaps the actual perception of) colors. But seeing a Rothko in color need not be instrumental to anything else; it may be of value to me independently of any effects it brings about. And it is certainly not a *means* to the thing on which its goodness depends, that is, in this case, the ability to see colors.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that this is a distinction between *goods* and not a distinction between things that are real goods and those that merely seem to be goods. Dependent Goods ‘really are good’ for good people, while Dependent Bads are bad for them. If virtue were the only genuine good, this would seem to undermine the claim that the goodness for people of their possession of other things *depends* on their possession of virtue.

(p.131) 2.8 The Difficulties of Dependency

In the following sections, I shall consider how Plato can ground the Dependency Thesis, but we should begin by recognizing the difficulty of justifying this claim. Plato himself in the first two books of the *Laws* draws our attention to some of these difficulties. We find there a pair of claims that formally resemble the Dependency Thesis, but differ from it in important ways; seeing their limitations will allow us better to appreciate the Dependency Thesis's demands.

Let us return to Kleinias' claims about the goal of Cretan legislation (*Laws* 626A5–B4, quoted above). Kleinias' language closely echoes some of Plato's statements of the Dependency Thesis, but Kleinias' claim is that all other goods depend on victory in war: without victory in war, no other good is of any benefit

to its possessor. This is a very simple form of dependence: the other goods are dependent on victory because without it the practices of the citizens will be disrupted and their possessions taken away. Victory in war, as Kleinias presents it, is a necessary condition of the actual existence of these goods, or, more precisely, of their existence as the possessions of the citizens: without victory in war, the goods of the losers will become the goods of the winners. A similar point is made in the *Menexenus'* funeral oration: wealth is not desirable for a coward, since he is simply ‘rich for another, rather than for himself’ (*Mx.* 246E2-4).

This dependency claim, however, cannot survive much reflection. First, victory in war is not a genuinely necessary condition of the citizens' possessing or benefiting from all other goods, since at least some of the citizens of a losing city can retain some goods and thus, on Kleinias' view, will be benefited by them. This objection is quite simple, but it points to some deeper features of the notion of dependency. On Kleinias' view, the goods gained or preserved by victory carry their goodness, so to speak, with themselves: all that is required on the side of the agent to benefit from them is to possess them and victory is only a mechanism for assuring possession. The goodness of the good things preserved by war is independent of such victory and all that victory affects is the identity of the people who have them. A person need not do anything special or have any distinctive characteristics (**p.132**) in order to gain the benefit. Benefiting is, on this view, passively receiving good things and the person is like a container that can be occupied by different bundles of goods. Benefiting people is thus only a matter of assigning to them certain goods. Since all that is required to benefit is to have the goods, no particular mechanism of acquisition is essential and so victory (or courage) must fail to be a necessary condition. Kleinias' proposal thus has two shortcomings: (i) it does not isolate a genuinely necessary condition of other goods being good for people, and (ii) it ignores the features of people that may affect whether they benefit from the goods they possess. We should wonder whether these two shortcomings are related: one way of finding a genuinely necessary condition of benefit would be to find some distinctive characteristic such that people had to have it in order to make the goodness of the Dependent Good available to themselves.

There is a second difficulty for Kleinias. In the above quotation from *Laws* 626A5-B4, he moves directly from the claim that nothing is good without victory in war to the claim that such victory is the appropriate ultimate end of the laws. The Athenian, however, objects.

The best good, however, is neither war nor civil strife—the necessity for these things is regrettable—but rather peace and goodwill towards one another. Moreover, it is likely that even that victory of a city over itself is not one of the best things, but one of those that are necessary. To think otherwise is as if someone held that a sick body, after it had received a

medical purgation, were in the best active condition, and never turned his mind to a body that had no need of such remedies at all. Similarly, with regard to the happiness of a city or an individual, anyone who thought this way would never become a correct statesman, if he looked primarily and solely to external wars, and would never become a lawgiver in the strict sense, if he did not legislate the things of war for the sake of peace, rather than the things of peace for the sake of what pertains to war. (*Laws* 628C9-E1)⁴⁹

The way in which the other goods depend on victory in war does not entitle victory to play the role of an ultimate end of the laws. The goal of legislation is the best or highest good and even if victory were necessary for attaining the highest good, it is only a precondition. In the case of sick people, medical treatment only puts them in a position to act and use the goods they have; in the case of a city, victory allows it to pursue ends other than self-preservation. Kleinias ignores this distinction, since he thinks that (p.133) once victory has secured goods for the citizens, benefiting from them is easy. But even if Kleinias were to hold that these goods automatically benefit when possessed, he should recognize the need to choose among them and use them efficiently. Such a concession, however, would only require Kleinias to give instrumental value to the knowledge required to organize and order these goods. By making virtue an ultimate end of the laws, Plato gives virtue a double role: it is both the most important non-instrumental good all by itself and it is responsible for other goods being beneficial. The challenge Plato faces is to show how virtue plays both these roles.

We find a second sort of dependency claim in the *Laws'* first two books. The Athenian puts forward Tyrtaeus, the Spartan war poet, as offering a dependency thesis. Tyrtaeus, on the Athenian's interpretation, claims that if a man does not possess justice he deserves no praise even if he possesses all the other things said to be good or fine (*Laws* 629A4-B4, 629D7-E7, 660D11-661A4). Wealth or boldness in fighting, for example, is only praiseworthy if the person possessing it is virtuous. The praiseworthiness of anything is thus entirely dependent on virtue: no possession of a person is praiseworthy unless the person is virtuous.⁵⁰ Kleinias agrees with Tyrtaeus that nothing is praiseworthy unless its possessor is virtuous (*Laws* 661E6-662A4). But Kleinias also accepts what Plato's Dependency Thesis rejects, which is that unjust people, although not praiseworthy in any respect, can be benefited by the things they possess and can live happily (*Laws* 661E-662A). Kleinias' divided reaction raises two issues.

First, we again see what Kleinias thinks about the nature of the goodness possessed by the things that Plato classifies as Dependent Goods. For Kleinias, goods such as health and life possess at least some of their goodness in a non-dependent way. By their very nature, they benefit human beings regardless of their ethical character. Although virtue may be a necessary condition of praiseworthiness, benefit works differently. On this point, Kleinias' position is surely in far better accord with ordinary intuitions, both Greek and modern. Even if virtue is an Independent Good and always adds to the goodness of other things, the goodness of the Dependent Goods is, it seems, at least to some

extent, independent of virtue. Why, after all, is health not beneficial to unvirtuous people? It does, for example, allow them better to attain whatever ends they have and may be sought even apart from (**p.134**) such usefulness. Healthy people avoid the pains of sickness and the frustration of desires that sickness often brings, and health itself seems to have its own pleasures. So it seems reasonable to think that if people can be benefited by something other than virtue, then this benefit should not always depend on whether they are virtuous. If there are goods other than virtue, then why do at least some of them not benefit both the virtuous and the unvirtuous alike?

A second issue concerns the grounding of the dependency claim attributed to Tyrtaeus. This claim seems intuitively easier for Kleinias, and us, to accept, but why does this claim seem more plausible? Perhaps the line of thought underlying the intuition is this: without virtue, one's possessions are not praiseworthy at all or fine in any respect because virtue is the only proper object of praise and thus *constitutes* what is fine or noble about the possession of Dependent Goods. Plato's Dependency Thesis, however, also involves a more complex notion of dependency. Plato, it seems, both wants to make the goodness of Dependent Goods depend entirely on virtue (i.e. the agent who lacks virtue does not benefit at all from them) and to sustain this claim without holding that virtue is the only thing that benefits the agent. But is Plato committed to the view that the goodness of Dependent Goods is entirely dependent on virtue? The claim that the Dependent Goods are bad (or not good) for their possessors unless they are virtuous is open to stronger and weaker interpretations. On less stringent interpretations of the Dependency Thesis, Plato is only claiming that, although at least some Dependent Goods benefit their possessors in some respects or in the short run, even if they are not virtuous, this benefit is outweighed so that these Dependent Goods are, all things considered, bad for them. Which of the following claims does Plato hold?

- (1) No Dependent Good is good for unjust people in any respect, for any length of time.
- (2) Some Dependent Goods are good for unjust people in some respects or for some length of time, but none is good for them all things considered.
- (3) Some Dependent Goods are good for unjust people, all things considered, but most are not good for them, all things considered.⁵¹

(**p.135**) Plato's earlier statements of the Dependency Thesis in the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno*, as well as Passages A and B in the *Laws*, suggest the strongest interpretation, (1). The *Euthydemus*, for example, concludes that the other goods, when separated from virtue, are 'by themselves of no value' (αὐτὰ δὲ καθ' αὐτὰ . . . οὐδενὸς ἄξια, *Euthyd.* 281D8-E1, cf. 292B1-C1, 280B7-281A1, 288E2-289B4). In the *Laws*, Plato claims that for a person lacking virtue, the Dependent Goods are 'the worst things' (*Laws* 661B6-8, cf. 710A2) and that

such a person is simply ‘bereft’ of the Dependent Goods insofar as they are goods (*Laws* 631C1). There is no suggestion that this claim admits of exceptions in certain cases or that this is an overall judgment that the bad factors outweigh the good. Further, (1) should be welcome to Plato, since it allows him to give a satisfying explanation of why virtue is necessary for happiness and at least greatly facilitates justifying the claim that the just person is always better off than the unjust.

On the other hand, weaker claims about the Dependent Goods, although they may be initially more plausible, present difficulties for Plato. For example, a weaker and thus more plausible claim, such as (3), may threaten Plato's claim that an unjust person who possesses all the Dependent Goods is ‘miserable’ (*Laws* 661E4, cf. 661C1–2) and might also call into question the claim that the just person is always better off than the unjust.⁵² Neither thesis is inconsistent with (3), since (a) most Dependent Goods will still be bad for the unjust person and we might hold that (b) the disvalue of injustice by itself vastly outweighs the benefit of the Dependent Goods he possesses. But we shall then need a principled explanation of why (a) and (b) are true in order to show that they are not simply *ad hoc* stipulations. (2) may seem to avoid the difficulties of both (1) and (3), but it also threatens to collapse into (3). Once again, if we allow an unjust person to benefit from a Dependent Good in some respects or for some length of time, it may be difficult to give a principled reason for holding that, for the unjust person, the possession of no Dependent Good is ever good (or is always bad) all things considered. (If someone is benefited even for a short period of time, then one who dies at the end of that interval might be benefited all things considered.) We can make progress on these issues only by considering why Plato accepts the Dependency Thesis.

(p.136) The two dependency claims we have considered suggest the challenges that a satisfactory interpretation of the Dependency Thesis must meet.

- (A) It must show that virtue is a genuinely necessary condition of benefiting from Dependent Goods (and is not just usually required). To do this, it must show why virtue is necessary for benefiting from Dependent Goods or is a condition of their being valuable for their possessor.
- (B) It must show not only that virtue is the condition of Dependent Goods being valuable for their possessor, but that virtue itself is good and is an Independent Good.
- (C) To show that the goodness of Dependent Goods for their possessor is genuinely dependent on virtue, an interpretation should show that these other things when conjoined with virtue are really good for their possessor and that their value is not simply reducible to the value of virtue.⁵³

2.9 Previous Attempts to Ground the Dependency Thesis

The *Laws'* Dependency Thesis has not attracted much philosophical attention. But scholars have discussed a dependency claim found in the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno*.⁵⁴ There Plato holds that knowledge of good and bad is necessary and sufficient for an agent to benefit from any Dependent Good. Since in the pre-*Republic* dialogues, Plato identifies virtue with knowledge of good and bad, he holds in the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno* that virtue is necessary and sufficient for an agent to benefit from any Dependent Good. (It makes no difference for these purposes whether each virtue is identical with some distinct part of the knowledge of good and bad or is identical with the whole of knowledge of good and bad.) Despite the apparent resemblance between this claim and that in the *Laws*, we should not assume that Plato holds exactly the same theory in all three dialogues. If we think that Plato does not have a fully determinate ethical theory in the early period, we might look to the late dialogues for clarification, deepening, and, (p.137) perhaps, revision of some of his earlier central claims. We would expect Plato to take up unresolved issues here and, in particular, to work out or rework the underpinnings of some of his earlier claims; and in the process of doing so, these claims may be given more determinate content as well as a firmer grounding. We shall find, for example, important connections between the later version of the Dependency Thesis and the value theory of the *Philebus*, and the epistemology and psychology of the *Theaetetus* and the *Timaeus*. Nevertheless, I shall begin by considering in this section two attempts that have been made to ground the *Euthydemus-Meno* version of the Dependency Thesis. Examining these attempts will help us to see at least part of what Plato needs in the *Laws*. Neither account can justify the claim that virtue is a genuinely necessary condition of benefit and neither explains how virtue can be both a condition of value for other goods and itself an Independent Good.

Moral Knowledge Account In his seminal work on Plato's theory of goods, Gregory Vlastos offers an account of the *Euthydemus-Meno* Dependency Thesis. We must begin with Vlastos' account of the relation between virtue and happiness. Vlastos distinguishes sharply between 'moral virtue' and 'moral value' on the one hand, and 'non-moral value' on the other. He holds that there are components of happiness other than virtue and argues for this claim as follows. As a eudaimonist, Plato holds that 'the attainment of [the agent's own] happiness [is] the final reason for [his] every rational choice'.⁵⁵ If virtue were the only component of happiness, it would follow that there is 'no rational ground for preference between states of affairs differentiated only by their non-moral values'.⁵⁶ Thus I would have sufficient grounds for choice when faced with the options of, e.g., stealing Philoctetes' bow or refraining from theft. But I would have no reason for choosing one option rather than another when faced with a myriad of everyday decisions about when to have my hair cut, what wine to drink with dinner, or, in a memorable example of Vlastos', whether to spend the night in a vomit-covered bed or a fresh one. Here, no moral value is at stake:

the differences between the states of affairs are ‘non-moral: hedonic, economic, hygienic, aesthetic, sentimental or whatever’.⁵⁷ Thus if the thesis that virtue is the sole component of happiness (**p.138**)

were true it would bankrupt the power of eudaemonism to give a rational explanation of all our deliberate actions by citing happiness as our final reason for them. On that theory, if happiness were identical with virtue, our final reason for choosing anything at all would have to be only concern for our virtue; so the multitude of choices that have nothing to do with that concern would be left unexplained.⁵⁸

According to Vlastos, the Dependency Thesis is the claim that it is ‘moral virtue’, i.e. ‘precisely what we understand by moral virtue’, which ‘makes all other things good’.⁵⁹ Although I agree that Plato recognizes components of happiness other than virtue, Vlastos’ way of distinguishing virtue from the other components of happiness undermines his own account of the *Euthydemus-Meno* Dependency Thesis. Vlastos claims that it is ‘moral virtue’ that makes all other goods valuable. What Vlastos seems to mean by ‘moral virtue’ is ‘moral knowledge,’ i.e. knowledge of the moral values at stake in the circumstances of choice (for example, knowing that stealing Philoctetes’ bow or harming another is morally bad).⁶⁰ Given this identification of moral virtue with moral knowledge, the claim that moral virtue is what makes all other goods good for their possessor is equivalent to the claim that moral knowledge is what makes all the Dependent Goods valuable. But this account has two problems. First, in the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno*, Plato claims that Dependent Goods are dependent on people’s knowledge of the good, i.e., on their knowledge of what is good or bad for themselves all things considered, and Plato simply does not draw any distinction between moral goodness and other kinds of goodness or restrict knowledge of good and bad to knowledge of the morally good and bad.⁶¹ Second, Plato does not merely fail to draw this distinction explicitly. Rather, such a distinction would be unwelcome to him because it would undermine the claim that the value of all Dependent Goods is dependent on the person’s knowledge of the good. In cases in which making moral use of Dependent Goods is good for the person, moral knowledge *might* be a plausible source of value. We would still need, however, an explanation of exactly *why* this is so, that is, of how moral knowledge makes the moral use of Dependent Goods good for a person.

But what of cases in which the Dependent Good is not being put to moral use and moral value is not at stake? Consider one of Vlastos’ own (**p.139**) examples. Vlastos asks us to imagine a person faced with the choice of spending the night in one of two beds: one covered with vomit from its previous drunken occupant or a clean, fresh bed. Vlastos uses this case to show that happiness has components other than virtue: he argues that since the two choices do not differ with respect to virtue, but the person who chose the clean bed would be happier, virtue is not the sole component of happiness. But this example also undermines

Vlastos' account of dependency. Vlastos claims that the person's 'virtue would be unimpaired if, clenching [his] teeth and holding [his] nose, [he] were to crawl in between those filthy sheets for a bad night's sleep'.⁶² But, on Vlastos' understanding of virtue, not only is it the case that the person's virtue is unimpaired if he is virtuous, but also that the condition of his soul, whether virtuous or unvirtuous, is simply unaffected by the choice. Neither would the unvirtuous person's moral condition be *improved* by crawling between the same filthy sheets or impaired by getting into the clean bed. The choice involves only 'non-moral value' and we have not been given any reason to think this non-moral value cannot be had by a person lacking moral knowledge. Specifically, the person's moral knowledge cannot be what makes this non-moral good good for him: knowing that choosing either bed is morally permissible does not make the choice of the clean bed better from the point of view of non-moral value. If one got into the clean bed without at least implicitly believing that this was permissible, this might be a moral flaw that results in a loss of moral value. But that does not show that benefiting from the non-moral value at stake requires moral knowledge. (We could avoid this problem by claiming Plato is an ethical egoist, i.e. holds that each person is morally obligated to do what is all things considered best for herself, but this would give moral value to states of affairs that Vlastos says are non-moral.) The problem is more general than it seems, since the moral knowledge explanation fails to account for benefit not only in cases in which the choice concerns wholly 'non-moral' value, but even in cases in which moral value is also at stake. Moral knowledge might include the knowledge that non-moral value is always outweighed by moral value, but this does not explain why or how non-moral value itself depends on knowledge of moral value.

So we are left with several worries. First, this account does not show that virtue is a necessary condition of benefiting from all Dependent Goods (**p.140**) because it does not show why moral knowledge would be necessary to benefit from non-moral value. People lacking virtue or wisdom may do or be willing to do bad things in order to gain some Dependent Goods such as health, they may use their health unvirtuously, or their possession of it might cause them to go wrong in some further way, but considered just by itself, apart from the cost of obtaining it and the consequences of its possession, why is health not good for them? The moral knowledge account does not provide a satisfactory answer. Second, even if we accept that moral knowledge is a necessary condition of benefiting from moral goods, why is this so? The moral knowledge account does not yet provide an explanation of the relation between moral knowledge and moral value that justifies the dependency of Dependent Goods. Finally, this account does not explain why virtue is an Independent Good.

The Productive Account There is a second explanation of the *Euthydemus-Meno* Dependency Thesis to consider. Given Plato's claim that wisdom is the 'leader' both of the other virtues and the Dependent Goods (*Euthd.* 281B1 and *Meno*

88A3; cf. *Laws* 631C6, 631D5–6), we may suppose that Dependent Goods are dependent on wisdom because wisdom is necessary and sufficient for their proper use. On this account, the relevant wisdom is the knowledge of good or correct use, that is, it consists in the knowledge of how to use Dependent Goods in order to produce a good for their possessor. (Let us call this the ‘productive account’.) Although this interpretation goes naturally with the idea that knowledge is only an instrumental good, it does not require it; it leaves open the possibility that knowledge is a non-instrumental good and an Independent Good. Further, this interpretation leaves it open how the correct use of Dependent Goods benefits their possessor: the correct use can be a means to some further goods or can itself be non-instrumentally good for the agent. But if the productive account holds that correct use of Dependent Goods is valuable solely as a means to some further good, it will ultimately have to be filled out by specifying the goods to which the correct use of Dependent Goods is an instrument and showing that wisdom is a genuinely necessary condition of their production. Given Plato's views from at least the *Republic* on, the most promising version of the productive account for the *Laws* will treat both (**p.141**) wisdom and at least some instances of the correct use of the Dependent Goods as non-instrumental goods.

The productive account has some intuitive plausibility and it is superior to the moral knowledge account in that it attempts to explain the dependency of ‘non-moral’ goods on virtue. ‘Non-moral’ goods, like any other goods, must be used correctly in order to benefit the agent and this requires wisdom, i.e. knowledge of correct use. Nevertheless, the productive account cannot explain the Dependency Thesis. We can best see its strengths and limitations by turning to the *Euthydemus*. The productive account is suggested, for instance, by some of the examples that Plato uses there: carpenters are not benefited by possessing tools and raw materials unless they know how to use them and carpentry provides knowledge of how to use means to bring about beneficial ends (e.g., *Euthd.* 280C4–E2).⁶³ More generally, the productive account seems to fit well with the overall line of argument in the *Euthydemus*.

- (1) Right use of a Dependent Good is a necessary (and sufficient) condition of its possessor benefiting from the possession of a Dependent Good.
- (2) Wisdom is a necessary (and sufficient) condition of the right use of a Dependent Good.

Therefore,

- (3) Wisdom is a necessary (and sufficient) condition of its possessor benefiting from the possession of a Dependent Good.⁶⁴

The goodness of the Dependent Goods for their possessor is thus dependent on knowledge of the good because such knowledge is necessary and sufficient for using

the Dependent Goods correctly. If you do not know how to use the resources available to you, you will not be able to use them rightly and if you do not use your resources rightly, they will not benefit you. If, on the other hand, you do know how to use your resources, you will use them rightly and they will benefit you.

Bad luck provides well-known difficulties for the claim that wisdom is sufficient for benefiting from a Dependent Good. Although Plato holds that the wise person will have no need of luck (*Euthd.* 279D6 and 280A6-B3), it is hard (**p.142**) to justify this claim on the productive account. It seems that even wise people may have so few resources that they can derive no benefit from their use and that any amount of wisdom, short of omniscience, will be subject to accidental misuse. Further, even omniscience, much less anything else, will be subject to outside intervention in the productive process. (Omniscience might only guarantee that you will know that you will be interfered with.) Wisdom, even if it is sufficient for making the best possible use of the Dependent Goods in one's possession, does not seem to be sufficient for benefit.

But there is also a little-noticed problem about good luck. Why cannot people lacking knowledge sometimes be lucky and benefit from their accidentally correct use of Dependent Goods? Although knowledge of correct use is more reliable in producing benefit, it is not necessary. Even if such cases of good luck are rare, they still are counterexamples to the claim that knowledge is a necessary condition of benefit. One might dismiss such counterexamples as trivial exceptions to the Dependency Thesis because they are empirically unlikely. And even in these cases, one could hold that knowledge is better, even apart from its results, than the state of mind of the agent who accidentally gets things right and thus hold that, although both the lucky and the knowledgeable agent benefit from their correct use of Dependent Goods, the knowledgeable agent is still better off.⁶⁵

But cases in which a person uses a Dependent Good correctly, i.e. in the way that a wise person would, while lacking knowledge or even true belief about the good, need not be rare and if we allow that the Dependent Goods benefit an agent in such cases, the Dependency Thesis is gravely undermined. Such cases need not be rare, since wrong motivations, such as thinking the good consists in honor or in the satisfaction of necessary appetites, can lead the agent, at least in many cases, to perform the same actions that virtuous people would perform because of their true understanding of the good. If all that Plato intends is to require this sort of correct use in order to benefit from Dependent Goods, the Dependency Thesis would be a clumsy way of attaining his end. If this interpretation were right, then the Athenian's emphatic and severe rejection of the Cretan and the Spartan law codes in favor of the Magnesian law code which is based on the Dependency Thesis would be misplaced, since the sort of behavior the (**p.143**) Cretan and the Spartan law codes require overlaps to a significant degree with that required by Magnesia's (*Laws* 625C-628E and 629B-632E). And in the case of the virtue of moderation, Plato in the *Laws*

rejects the possibility of benefit in such cases. People who possess moderation, construed as a natural self-restraint with regard to pleasures, but lack the other virtues and thus lack knowledge of the good, will still act, on many occasions, as a virtuous person would in rejecting certain pleasures. Nevertheless, Plato holds that this sort of moderation is of no benefit to the agent and will not make the Dependent Goods good for their possessor (*Laws* 696A-E and 709E-710B).

Moreover, the idea that the knowledgeable agent is better off than one who acts correctly on the basis of, e.g., a lucky guess because knowledge is a good ‘over and above’ correct action is simply another way of losing the very notion of *dependency*. On this account, the value of other goods is not dependent on the possession of wisdom; rather, wisdom is a reliable guide to correct use and a good in addition to correct use. The knowledge of the good found in the *Protagoras* ‘art of measurement’ might illustrate such a productive role. Without such an art, one may often go wrong in choosing and combining pleasures. But the role of wisdom is simply to guide one’s use of things so as to produce the greatest balance of pleasure over pain in the long run. Wisdom is a reliable guide to getting and keeping what is good, but pleasure carries its own goodness with it and all that one has to do in order to benefit is possess the pleasure. Further, on the productive account it is difficult to see why such knowledge should be more than instrumentally good. The productive account is not inconsistent with attributing non-instrumental value to such knowledge, but it does not give us reason to think that what is independently good about such knowledge is its capacity to produce some distinct good for the agent.

The productive account is thus too weak to justify the Dependency Thesis. But if we are to appreciate the strength of the Dependency Thesis, we must not conflate the present objection with a related idea. It is standard Platonic doctrine that genuine virtuous action requires the proper motivation: merely doing what the virtuous person would do is not sufficient for genuinely virtuous action, if one acts on the wrong reason. Agents’ motivations are (partially) constitutive of the virtuousness of their action. This is (**p.144**) an idea we find intuitively plausible, if we think of morally virtuous action. Agents who refrain from theft solely out of fear of punishment or benefit orphans solely out of a desire to have a good reputation for justice do not act in a morally virtuous way, that is, they deserve no moral credit for their actions. But the Dependency Thesis demands much more: it holds that the use or possession of a Dependent Good does not benefit agents unless they possess knowledge of the good. This does not clearly accord with our intuitions which have a tendency to a kind of dualism. We tend to think that there are two very different kinds of value, one of which is such that it must be appreciated, at least to some degree, in order to be realized (e.g. aesthetic and moral value) and one of which does not require such appreciation (e.g. that involved in having pleasure, being healthy, or having

one's desires satisfied). We need to see what justification Plato can provide for a claim which may seem so implausible to us.

A second concern for the productive account is its restriction of the things which can be good for agents. Specifically, if Dependent Goods are valuable for the agent apart from their use, the productive interpretation cannot account for this value. Although Plato insists on the distinction between having and using a Dependent Good in the *Euthydemus*, he does not there give the distinction a hard edge.⁶⁶ In the *Laws* passages, Plato does not invoke this distinction and does not claim there that no Dependent Good is of any benefit unless it is used. And it does, in fact, seem that certain Dependent Goods have at least some value apart from their use. For some goods, we can, with difficulty, give sense to the idea of using them: e.g. we might think of using certain pleasures as means to recover our energies for further virtuous activity. But the *Philebus*, by including some pleasures as constituents of the good life (62E–64A, 66C), makes it clear that some pleasures are non-instrumentally good.

For other goods, there seems to be no plausible way to give sense to the notion of using them. For example, if, as is often thought, Plato's account of justice and other-regarding concern involves the idea that the good of others can count as part of my own good, there seems to be no sense in which I must 'use' the happiness of others for it to count as part of my good. (This is not to require that using x always results in some product separate from x; e.g. I use my body in dancing, but dancing is not a separate product.) And even in (**p.145**) the case of Dependent Goods for which we can give sense to the idea of using them—e.g. harmless pleasure and awareness of beauty, both of which can be used in virtuous activity—at least some of them seem to have a value beyond their use. It seems reasonable to prefer having harmless pleasure and awareness of beauty even apart from the opportunities they provide for increased virtuous activity. More generally, virtuous actions aim at achieving some end independent of themselves, and achievement of these ends seems to have value apart from the activity of trying to attain them. For example, virtuous action may aim at harmless pleasure or at benefiting others and it is reasonable to think that agents are better off (apart from an increase in their opportunities for further virtuous activity) if they succeed than if they fail; that is, it seems that actually obtaining the end is of benefit to the agent over and above the activity aimed at bringing it about and the further activity it enables. If this is right, then at least some Dependent Goods have some value for their possessor apart from their use. If not all the value of a Dependent Good comes from or is constituted by its use, the productive account cannot explain why knowledge is necessary for this benefit.⁶⁷

In sum, the productive account fails to show why knowledge of the good is a necessary condition of benefiting from Dependent Goods. Nor does it show why

such knowledge is an Independent Good and, in fact, seems to fit best with an instrumentalist view of the value of knowledge.

2.10 Grounding Dependency

Let us take stock and consider what conditions a good explanation of the Dependency Thesis must meet.

- (1) Virtue must be necessary for benefiting from any Dependent Good, not only those Dependent Goods that are instances of 'moral value'.

As we saw, the moral knowledge account did not meet this condition.

- (2) Virtue must be genuinely necessary for benefiting from any Dependent Good and a good explanation must make clear why it is necessary.

(p.146) What we need is an account of the Dependency relation that isolates a feature of the knowledge required that makes it a genuinely necessary condition of benefiting from other things. In trying to find this, we are following the strategy of locating some distinctive feature of the person herself that is required for her to benefit from anything. Neither of the two accounts we have considered meets condition (2). A crucial shortcoming of the productive account was that it made knowledge valuable simply in virtue of its role in producing (and perhaps coordinating) various goods. But once the goods were produced, knowledge had no further role. The person needed to be active in using and producing goods, but after their production, was once again left passive: nothing special on the side of the agent was required to enjoy the benefit. On the productive account, even if knowledge were an Independent Good and had some value apart from its role in production, the value of the knowledge was simply added on to the benefit coming from the use of the goods. This leaves the person's knowledge extrinsic to the actual benefit enjoyed.

- (3) Virtue must be an Independent Good.

The moral knowledge condition, although consistent with this claim, did not provide an explanation of it. Although the productive account is also consistent with it, as we saw, it does not isolate a feature of the knowledge required that would make it an Independent Good. In cases in which you obtain goods without using your knowledge, the knowledge seems to be of no benefit.

A further condition is not explicitly stated by Plato, but is nevertheless quite plausible. The goodness of virtue should not be accidentally related to its role as a source of value for the Dependent Goods. It is because virtue is itself good that it makes other things good. This suggests the following fourth condition.

- (4) The feature of virtue that makes it an Independent Good is essential to explaining why virtue is a source of value for the Dependent Goods.

Let us begin by focusing on requirement (2). We can make knowledge a genuinely necessary condition of benefit by making the agents' knowledge **(p. 147)** itself partially constitutive of their benefiting. To see how this might work, consider an important suggestion made by Richard Kraut about the notion of

happiness. Kraut has argued that both we and Aristotle share the idea that an important aspect of happiness is the fulfillment of certain ‘subjective’ conditions, such as being satisfied or being content. Happiness requires that a person have

certain attitudes towards his life: he is very glad to be alive; he judges that on balance his deepest desires are being satisfied and that the circumstances of his life are turning out well. . . a major human good is the second-order good which consists in the perception that our major first-order desires are satisfied.⁶⁸

This is, I think, an intuitively attractive suggestion. Kraut isolates two conditions that are relevant to happiness: (i) an awareness that one's major desires are being satisfied, and (ii) a positive attitude toward the satisfaction of these desires; one is ‘glad’ that they are being satisfied. Applying this to the case of Dependent Goods, we would require (i) an awareness that one has (and in appropriate cases is using) the Dependent Good, and (ii) a positive attitude toward this, for example, a belief that one is benefited by the Dependent Good.

The idea that such an awareness of a Dependent Good and a belief about its goodness are partially constitutive of benefiting from the Dependent Good is very plausible. How could a Dependent Good benefit me, if I am unaware that I have it or I perceive it as a great evil? Such a proposal seems to succeed in solving the requirement of necessity that previous accounts failed to do.

Nevertheless, this is still too weak for Plato's purposes. To see why, consider some examples. First, it is reasonable to hold that I can be benefited by an appropriate awareness of fine or beautiful objects. Let us grant that I have the appropriate productive knowledge. I know how to produce fine objects and how to use them: I know how to produce fine paintings and know that they should be placed at a proper viewing height, adequately separated from other adjacent paintings and looked at frequently. I am also aware that I have such a painting and that I am looking at it and I believe that viewing this painting is a great good. Nevertheless, it seems that I shall not be benefited by the painting or such experiences of it, if what I find good about such things is, for example, the intense sexual excitement I derive from looking at the (**p.148**) picture or the excitement I get from seeing it as a depiction of myself as an omnipotent tyrant. Similarly, suppose that a person possesses superb argumentative skills. She reasons quickly and cogently and is especially good at producing conclusive counterexamples to complicated positions. She is aware of this ability and considers it a great good. But suppose that what she finds good about it is her ability to humiliate others and impress bystanders. Once again, it seems reasonable to deny that she is benefited by her argumentative skills.

The problem in both cases is that there is not an appropriate relation between the person's beliefs and the goodness of the Dependent Good. What is potentially beneficial about fine objects is that they allow me to have an awareness of real beauty and this requires that I appreciate the features of the object that make it

genuinely good or fine. Similarly, what is potentially valuable about fine reasoning abilities is that they allow for (or, when exercised, constitute) a grasp of the truth. What the person needs in both cases is an appreciation of the genuinely valuable features of the Dependent Good.

Let us apply this idea to the Dependency Thesis. The knowledge in question here is wisdom (*phronēsis*), that is, knowledge of the good. An adequate explanation of why this is required for benefit should appeal to what is essential to such knowledge. Although such knowledge may allow its possessor to produce good things and use them correctly or well, this is merely a consequence of the essential nature of such knowledge. What is part of the essence or nature of such knowledge, however, is that it is knowledge of what goodness is, or of what makes something good.⁶⁹ Holding that knowledge of the goodmaking features of a Dependent Good is partially constitutive of the beneficial use or beneficial possession of a Dependent Good resolves the problem of necessity that the other accounts failed to handle. The Dependency Thesis can now be seen to be exactly what Plato needs and not too strong a claim as it was on the productive account. Even if correct use is possible without knowledge, the Dependency Thesis still holds, because an appreciation of the good is partially constitutive of benefit. We at last have an account that makes knowledge of the good a genuinely necessary condition of benefit.

Since knowledge of the good is not limited to knowledge of what is morally good, condition (1) is satisfied. Condition (3) is satisfied, since knowledge (**p.149**) of the good is an Independent Good for Plato. Finally, on this account, it is precisely the feature of wisdom which makes it such an important Independent Good that allows it to play the role of the condition or source of value for the Dependent Goods. Knowledge of the good is itself a great good because it is knowledge of what goodness is, and this is the feature of such knowledge on which the goodness for the agent of other goods depends. The agents' knowledge of the good is what puts them, so to speak, in contact with the goodness inherent in things. The appreciation of the goodness of a thing forms a bridge between the objective goodness of a thing that is independent of my desires and beliefs and my benefiting from it.⁷⁰

The present interpretation of the Dependency Thesis also guarantees, at least for practical purposes, that certain subjective conditions are fulfilled when virtuous people benefit from a Dependent Good: they will recognize that they possess the Dependent Good and appreciate that such possession is good for themselves. The Dependency Thesis thus guarantees the fulfillment of the sort of subjective conditions that Kraut suggests, and it is reasonable to think that the person is benefited by this. Indeed, as we shall see in our discussion of the *Philebus* in the next section, Plato does require the satisfaction of similar 'subjective' conditions in the good life. Nevertheless, this does not exhaust the idea behind the Dependency Thesis. The Dependency Thesis requires not merely

the awareness *that* one's desires are satisfied, but also an appreciation of the fact that the objects of one's desires are good. The fundamental difference is between the awareness or belief that one's desires have been met (which is all that is necessary for being satisfied or content) and an appreciation of the features of the objects of one's desires which make them really worth desiring. (And insofar as our rational desires are for what is really good, it is the fact that certain objects of our desires possess genuine goodmaking features that explains why we rationally desire them.) More is required for such correct appreciation than the awareness of the satisfaction of a higher-order desire that one's first-order desires are satisfied, or a higher-order endorsement of one's first-order evaluations.

We shall need to see in greater detail why Plato thinks that more is required. I have so far simply appealed to our intuitions to support this interpretation of the Dependency Thesis. I shall turn in the next section to **(p.150)** show how this explanation of the Dependency Thesis is supported by Plato's views in the later dialogues, especially by the *Philebus'* claim that wisdom is the cause of the good life.

But let us begin by considering some basic issues that this interpretation immediately raises. First, we might be concerned that we are attributing to Plato a far too subjective account of the good. Specifically, this interpretation makes the benefit people receive, that is, what is good for them, depend on their attitudes or beliefs. Thus on one prominent contemporary account of what is objectively good for a person, Plato is not an objectivist about the goodness of Dependent Goods. On an 'Objective List' conception of well-being, things are good or bad for people, independently of their attitude toward them.⁷¹ But we cannot avoid denying that Plato is an objectivist in this sense. Simply by making the goodness of Dependent Goods depend on the agent's virtue, Plato makes their goodness depend on the agent's beliefs about and desires for the good. The Dependency Thesis is just inconsistent with making the benefit of Dependent Goods independent of the agent's attitude toward them. Plato is not, however, committed to stronger and more controversial forms of subjectivism. The Dependency Thesis does not entail that a Dependent Good is good for people, if they believe that it is. Indeed, since it makes knowledge (which is truth-entailing) a necessary condition of benefit, it is inconsistent with such a claim. Nor is it Plato's view that the agent's desire or belief constitutes the value in the Dependent Goods; rather his idea is that the agents' appreciation or recognition of the genuine goodmaking features of Dependent Goods is a necessary condition of their benefiting from them. Objects, activities, and states of soul possess these goodmaking features independently of our beliefs about them or desires for them, but the possession and use of these Dependent Goods only benefit a person when these goodmaking features are recognized as such. The appreciation or recognition of the thing's value does not confer value or goodness on the thing in question: that is determined by whether the thing

possesses objective goodmaking features. But our appreciation of these features helps to determine that it benefits us.

We should not, however, understand the sort of appreciation required in too passive a way. In order to benefit, we must not only appreciate the value of the Dependent Good (and its possession and use), but this awareness (**p.151**) must actually structure and govern our engagement with the Dependent Good. Mere appreciation of the value of a Dependent Good, if it is causally idle and not the focus of one's engagement with the Dependent Good, will not suffice for benefit.⁷²

Our first worry was that the Dependency Thesis was too lax, but our next concern is that it is too stringent. Does it, for example, give an implausibly stringent account of instrumental goods or of the benefits in ethical character that a person can enjoy without becoming wise? Suppose, for example, that taking a certain drug allows me to continue living a virtuous life. Taking this drug, it seems, benefits me even if I have no beliefs (or have false beliefs) about its goodness or even if I am unaware that I am taking it. But Plato should not want to deny that the drug is instrumentally good and need not do so. The requirement for appreciation should be restricted to non-instrumental goods and non-instrumental goodmaking properties. This is not an unprincipled restriction, since the value of instrumental goods is entirely derivative from their causal consequences (what really possesses the good are the causal consequences) and the Dependency Thesis will apply, e.g., to both the possession and use of health.

We might also be concerned about cases in which the agent undergoes what intuitively seems to be an improvement in ethical character without acquiring wisdom. Consider the ethical education of children. Until this education is at least well-advanced, children may lack the knowledge necessary for recognizing the goodmaking features of things. Nevertheless, although the children might not think that they are benefited by their ethical education, we think that they are and this is what justifies our action in providing for such education. But Plato can, consistently with the Dependency Thesis, justify such educational practices. Even if children are not really benefited until they acquire a virtuous appreciation of the goodmaking features of things, even the early stages of education are in children's interests, since they bring the children closer to the stage at which they will actually be benefited. Further, since some mistakes about the good are worse than others, even early education can move children from worse states to states that are less bad.

But even if we accept the idea that appreciation of value is essential to certain kinds of benefit (e.g. in cases of aesthetic or ethical value), is it (**p.152**) plausible to hold that appreciation is required for all kinds of benefit? The example above concerning a beautiful painting involved a case of what we would think of as aesthetic value and there it seemed not unreasonable to think that

appreciation was required for benefit. Similarly, it is plausible to think that benefit from ethical action requires appreciation of the value at stake. But what of cases not clearly falling in either of these groups? For example, is it really the case that benefiting from harmless pleasures or from health requires some appreciation of their goodmaking features? If so, what is such appreciation like? We shall have to return to this issue after our discussion of the *Philebus*. But even now, we might start from cases that seem plausible and hope to extend the account. The example concerning the ability to reason well may also give us some encouragement. The person's desire to humiliate others is an ethical failure, but we may be inclined to judge not merely that she acts wrongly, but that she herself fails to benefit from her abilities because she does not recognize the value of knowing the truth. A further reason for hope is provided by the fact that Plato does not think ethical and aesthetic value are fundamentally different from each other or from other sorts of value: it is one and the same goodmaking property that makes all good things good. If the notion of being benefited has a common content in all cases, then it would be puzzling if it were instantiated by two radically different ways of standing in the right relation to the fundamental goodmaking property.

A final but important concern is that of how much knowledge the Dependency Thesis requires, and whether it requires knowledge in the strict sense (*epistēmē*). If knowledge of the Form of the Good or of the highly abstract account hinted at in the *Philebus* were necessary, then few people in Magnesia would be benefited. As we saw in Chapter 1, Plato's pessimistic view of non-philosophers in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* rested on his view that they failed to appreciate the genuine value of things. If he is to avoid this result in the *Laws*, Plato needs to develop an account of the virtue of wisdom that allows for an appreciation of the good that falls short of full-blown philosophical knowledge. As we shall see below, one important route of access to such appreciation is through Magnesia's theology. But most citizens of Magnesia will be neither philosophers nor theologians. What Plato needs to explain is the value of the active ethical and political life that the citizens actually live.

(p.153) So it will not be an easy task to show how the Dependency Thesis can play a role in justifying the citizens' actual lives. But we have good reason to look for such an account. The Dependency Thesis itself plays a fundamental role in the ethical and political theory of the *Laws*. It explains why the proper ultimate end of the laws is to foster virtue in as many citizens as possible, and it also explains Plato's insistence that the citizens receive a true ethical account of the basis of the laws that govern them and his low estimation of legal systems which do not provide such accounts. What we need to see is exactly how the requirements of the Dependency Thesis might be met by Magnesia's citizens.

2.11 The Philebus

The *Philebus* is a wide-ranging dialogue. Its topics include the place of knowledge and pleasure in the good life, philosophical methodology, and basic issues in metaphysics. But one theme that unites the dialogue is its concern with goodness or value: Plato not only discusses the role of knowledge and pleasure in the happy human life, but also sketches a metaphysical analysis of goodness. We may thus hope to find here some further account of the relation between what is good for me and what possesses the non-relational property of goodness itself. And as part of its examination of goodness, the *Philebus* provides a subtle exploration of different ways in which the goodness of a thing, including states of soul, depends on the cognitive condition of its possessor.

Mollusks and the Dependency of Pleasure In the *Philebus*, Plato argues that the good life for human beings is a mixed life composed of both pleasure and knowledge. He begins his argument for this claim by showing us the unsatisfactoriness of any life composed solely of either pleasure or knowledge. Early in the dialogue, Socrates asks his hedonist interlocutor, Protarchus, whether he would find choiceworthy (*aipετός*) a life of the 'greatest pleasures' which has no wisdom in it (*Phil.* 21B3–4).

If you did not possess reason [*νοῦν*] or memory [*μνήμην*] or knowledge [*ἐπιστήμην*] or true opinion [*δόξαν . . . ἀληθῆ*], in the first place, is it not (p.154) necessary that you be ignorant about this very thing, that is, whether you were enjoying yourself or not, given that you were empty of all wisdom [*φρονήσεως*]? . . . And likewise, if you had no memory, you could not remember that you ever did enjoy yourself and no recollection at all of pleasure encountered at one moment could remain. If you had no true opinion, you could not judge that you were enjoying yourself when you were and if you were deprived of the power of calculation you would not be able to calculate that you would enjoy it in the future. Your life would not be that of a man, but that of some mollusk or one of those sea creatures whose bodies are encased in shells.⁷³ (*Phil.* 21B6–C8)

All that Socrates does in this passage is appeal to Protarchus' immediate and untutored intuitions (*Phil.* 21A4). Plato does not try here to show that this conclusion follows from a deeper philosophical theory. Nor should we assume that Protarchus' conception of knowledge or of why it is valuable is adequate. This opening counterexample calls Protarchus' simple-minded hedonism into question, but it is only a starting point for the hard philosophical work done in the rest of the dialogue. Although this counterexample justifies only a much weaker conclusion than that Plato comes to at the end of the dialogue on the basis of some strong philosophical claims, it has more content than is usually thought. It is sometimes suggested that what this thought experiment shows is the importance of memory and practical reason in anything that can count as a distinctively human life. But this still leaves unclear what it is about memory and practical reasoning that

makes them valuable and how it is that they add value to one's life. And as we shall see, Plato goes out of his way to suggest that Protarchus fails to appreciate what sort of cognitive attainments are distinctive of a human life and what role they should play within it. To begin, what the counterexample shows is that a life of pleasure without the presence of something else is not desirable; the greatest pleasures are only worthy of choice on the condition that the person possesses something else. The desirability or goodness of pleasure is thus *dependent* on something else, in particular, on some other state of the person. Let us now fill in the details.

First, since the failure of the two lives of unmixed pleasure and unmixed knowledge prepares the conclusion that the mixed life is the good life, all that Plato needs to establish is the weak claim that neither unmixed life is (**p.155**) the good life according to the strong conditions specified at *Philebus* 20C8–21A3. Two of these three conditions require the good life to be 'complete' (*τέλεον*) and 'sufficient' (*ικαρόν*) and Plato understands these to require that the good life is unimprovably good.⁷⁴ Thus the failure to satisfy these conditions is consistent with the rejected lives being very good, yet allowing of some improvement. But it seems clear that we should have a far more negative view than this of the unmixed life of pleasure. Socrates' characterization of this life as that of a mollusk and Protarchus' reaction that such a life would not be 'sufficient or choiceworthy for any human being or animal' (*Phil.* 22B1–2) suggest that such a life is not worth living for a human being and that its pleasures would be of little or no benefit to us.⁷⁵ It seems fair to conclude that for Protarchus, most, if not all, of the value of pleasure depends on the person possessing the sort of knowledge lacking in the counterexample.

So exactly what sort of lack of knowledge causes the unmixed life of pleasure to be undesirable? Plato mentions three forms of knowledge here:

- (a) knowing that you are presently having pleasure;
- (b) remembering that you had pleasure in the past;
- (c) calculating that you will enjoy pleasure in the future.

(a) is the primary case of missing knowledge, while (b) and (c) apply (a) to the past and the future.⁷⁶ All three are very simple forms of knowledge or reason: (a), for example, seems only to involve basic self-awareness along with the ability to grasp that what one has is 'pleasure'. But they still have more content than is usually thought.

Consider, first, how the life of unmixed pleasure will seem to Protarchus (and the counterexample is supposed to appeal to his judgment). Protarchus takes over *Philebus'* claim that pleasure is the good: 'good' and 'pleasant' are two names for the same thing, that is, for the same 'nature'.⁷⁷ Thus, from Protarchus' point of view, this is a life in which, because he has the 'greatest pleasures', he has the 'greatest goods'. Nevertheless, he is not aware that he has them. This identity between pleasure and the good is central to the correct understanding of the

counterexample's force. It is the fact that he would be unaware of having *the good* and not merely the fact that he would be unaware of having pleasures, that should account for the life's (**p.156**) undesirability. If Protarchus held that pleasures are indifferent or bad, he would have no reason to find his lack of awareness of them undesirable. This change in the counterexample asks us to imagine him rejecting hedonism and then considering the imagined life. But, similarly, if he retained his hedonism, but imagined a life in which he had the greatest pleasures and was aware of them as pleasures, but within that life held that pleasure was bad or indifferent, it seems that he should also find such a life deeply undesirable.

This thought experiment's place in the text also directly supports the idea that the unmixed life's undesirability is a result of the person's lack of awareness of his possession of the good. It immediately follows Plato's statement of the third and 'most necessary' of the three conditions on the good life (*Phil.* 20D7).

[E]verything capable of knowing hunts for it, and desires to take hold of it and possess it, caring nothing for anything else [*τῶν ἀλλων οὐδέν φροντίζει*] unless its accomplishment involves some good' (*Phil.* 20D8–10).⁷⁸ Thus a human living a mollusk's life would not be aware that his ultimate desires for the good were being satisfied to any extent. By itself, this seems to make such a life deeply undesirable. One might object that the third condition is not relevant, since within the unmixed life, the person would neither register the apparent absence of goods nor retain the desire for the good that the third condition attributes to people. But while the unmixed life of pleasure seems to have these cognitive limitations, this does not count against the suggestion that the undesirability of such a life is a result of a lack of awareness not merely of pleasure, but also of the good. A person living such a life would equally fail to register the apparent absence of pleasure and to be aware of deep, unsatisfied desires for pleasure. In either case, if the counterexample is to work, Socrates and Protarchus will have to accept that the proper standpoint for evaluating such a life is not from within that life, but rather that provided by the correct standpoint. And since Protarchus accepts the third condition (*Phil.* 20D11), it is reasonable for it to enter into his judgment of proposed lives.

On this understanding of the counterexample, pleasure should only be a special case of a more general thesis that it is undesirable to possess a good without being aware that what one has is good. Such a generalization is suggested by the third condition itself. The good, whatever it may be, is the (**p.157**) ultimate end of our desires and thus it seems that any life in which we were completely unaware of whatever good we possessed would be deeply undesirable.⁷⁹ This is not to hold that the only thing that is bad about our failure to be aware of possessing the good is the experienced frustration of desires. If that were so, then we should not be so quick to accept the undesirability of the mollusk's life: it lacks such desires for the good (or at the very least is unaware of them) and

suffers no frustration. Indeed, if the frustration of our desire for the good were the only thing bad about such lack of awareness, the mollusk's case might lead us to think that we should try to rid ourselves of such desires for the good. Part of what our intuitive response may suggest upon reflection is that having such desires is an essential aspect of having a good human life. Seeing why this is so will have to wait, however, until much later in the dialogue.

A final point to note about the counterexample is that there is a striking gap between the language that Plato uses in discussing the thought experiment and the lessons that Protarchus draws from it. What Plato takes the case to show is the need for knowledge (*epistēmē*), reason (*nous*), and wisdom (*phronēsis*) in the good life. But the sort of awareness that Protarchus finds crucial falls well short of anything that Plato would count as genuine instances of these. A sign of this disparity is that Plato stresses that the sort of life he is describing is simply not a 'human life' (*Phil.* 21C6–8), thus suggesting that the sort of wisdom we are seeking is something distinctively human. But Protarchus began with the claim that the good is the same for all animals (*Phil.* 11B4–6, C5–8) and the counterexample does not convince him that the good must involve anything distinctively human: the life described is not choiceworthy for 'any human being or animal' (*Phil.* 22B1–2).⁸⁰ The sort of awareness of pleasure or the good that is missing there should be found, Protarchus thinks, in any good human or animal life.

What role, then, does the counterexample suggest for knowledge in the good life? First, concentrating on one's present experience, the only sort of knowledge the counterexample justifies is the simple awareness that what one has is good. What it justifies is thus something like the subjective conditions on happiness discussed above. For Protarchus, this is the self-awareness involved in being aware of oneself as having pleasure and the (**p.158**) capacity to recognize this as the good. It is not clear exactly what mental resources are necessary for doing this, but it is plausible to think that what Protarchus has in mind is, roughly, the ability to treat pleasure as the ultimate end of action. To treat something as the good is to treat it as satisfying the three conditions stated at *Phil.* 20C8–D10. The good is always desired and is the ultimate criterion guiding our choices and actions.⁸¹ Treating something as the good in the thin sense of the counterexample need involve nothing more than giving it (or recognizing that it has) this role in our thought and action. Since our thoughts and actions are temporally extended, this will involve memory, calculation, and thus some ability to discriminate the good from other things and reidentify it over time. But it need not involve considering whether pleasure is entitled to play this role or grasping the features that make it worthy of being an ultimate end. The awareness that Protarchus demands requires more than the passivity of a mollusk, but it still involves only a low-grade form of activity. The person need only be aware of his own states, find himself drawn to pleasant states, and be capable of some simple kinds of reflection. In doing so, he will satisfy the

subjective conditions on happiness: he will perceive that his ultimate desires are being satisfied (and expect future satisfaction of them).

Nor does the counterexample justify a strong role for practical reason in the form of rationally weighing different courses of action and making a choice on the basis of good reasoning. Expecting to get the recognition of the value of such a conception of practical reason out of the counterexample is unfair to Protarchus' original position. A hedonist need not concede so much and we can find a weaker and more acceptable interpretation of the reference to 'the power of calculation' at *Phil.* 21C5–6. If you value pleasure as your ultimate end, it also seems reasonable to value remembering your past pleasures and anticipating your future pleasures. Lovers of wine and Don Juans value not only their present experiences, but also dwell lovingly on the past and keenly anticipate the future. They value such memories and anticipations because they value wine or sex, not because they value the exercise of practical reason. Such anticipation need not involve a rich conception of weighing different options and choosing among them, but only projecting into the future more instances of the present valued experience.

(p.159) The counterexample thus gives only minimal content to the sort of knowledge required. It also establishes only weak claims about the value of such knowledge. All that hedonists need do is attribute value to their knowledge of pleasure; they need not, and will not, attribute value to any other kind of knowledge or true belief.⁸² Thus the hedonist has been given no reason for valuing knowledge or true belief as such, that is, for the characteristics which make them knowledge or true belief. The counterexample does not establish that knowledge or true belief as such have any value. So despite Protarchus' reaction, the hedonist should not yet be especially worried. Nothing we have so far seen suggests that it is the goodness of knowledge or true belief that contributes to the goodness of the good life.

Nevertheless, Plato's position so far bears a formal similarity to the Dependency Thesis, which is sufficiently significant to make it unlikely that it is unintentional. Plato does not, for example, criticize hedonism by raising the standard objection (which he himself has previously made) that there are bad pleasures or that we all do, in fact, recognize goods other than pleasure. His point simply is that pleasure is a kind of dependent good, i.e. it is only good for its possessors if they possess something else. Even on the weakest reading of the counterexample, pleasure's goodness is dependent on a kind of knowledge, that is, the knowledge that one is having pleasure. On a stronger reading, the resemblance is closer: the value of one's possessions depends on one's knowledge that they are good. But on either reading, there are important differences from the Dependency Thesis. On a weak reading, all that is required is awareness of pleasure as pleasure, not as something good. I have argued, however, that awareness of pleasure as a good is also needed and, once we

accept this, Plato's third condition on the good life suggests that we extend the requirement to other goods, if we reject hedonism. Plato, however, has not yet justified these steps, nor has he given us reason to require genuine knowledge or any appreciation of why a thing is good. But seeing Plato's criticisms as involving some version of dependency prepares us for a deeper account of the sort of dependency involved in the good life. Such an account will require a more adequate understanding of the knowledge required for leading a good life. Plato will eventually argue that the sort of reason required is related to divine reason and is intimately related to the virtue of wisdom, genuine knowledge, and art.

(p.160) *The Metaphysics of the Mixed Life* Plato proceeds in the rest of the *Philebus* to offer a richer account of the place of knowledge in the good life. This involves both a general metaphysical account of what makes anything good, that is, an account of non-relational goodness (and not just an account of what is good for human beings), as well as a fuller description of the sorts of knowledge that are ingredients in the good life. Plato characterizes different forms of knowledge in terms of truth (*ἀλήθεια*) and purity (*τὸ καθαρόν*) and includes all these forms of knowledge in the good life (*Phil.* 55C–59E and 61E–62D).

But knowledge has another role besides that of an ingredient. As we have seen, Protarchus' intuitions require the good life to be a mixture of pleasure and knowledge. But the rest of the *Philebus* shows that this conclusion has a deeper metaphysical basis. Plato begins by sketching a division of 'everything that really exists now in the universe' into four ultimate kinds (*Phil.* 23C4). These are:

- (1) the indeterminates (*apeira*),
- (2) the determinants (*peras echonta, perata*),
- (3) mixtures (*summeikta*) arising from the combination of a determinant with an indeterminate, and
- (4) the causes (*aitiai, aitia*) of these mixtures.

On the theory that Plato develops, all good things are mixtures in that they are mixtures of the indeterminate (*apeiron*) and the determinant (*peras*).⁸³ Plato's examples of the indeterminate include things such as the hotter and colder, drier and wetter, faster and slower, greater and smaller, and higher and lower. These are things whose nature takes on 'the more and the less', that is, these are things that lack a definite quantity or measure (*Phil.* 24A6–D7). The determinants are numerical ratios or proportions, such as double or equal, that do not admit of the more and less and that impose order on the indeterminates and make them measured and harmonious (*Phil.* 25A6–B3, D11–E2). 'So the mixture of the indeterminate and the determinant is responsible for good climate and generally for everything we have that is fine [*καλὰ*] . . . There are countless other things which I pass over: the fineness [*κάλλος*] and strength of health, and many other very fine things in souls' (*Phil.* 26B1–B7). Since the goodness of a thing consists in its **(p.161)** being an appropriate combination of a determinant and an indeterminate, all good things are essentially mixtures. And what makes a thing good is its being the mixture of the indeterminate and the determinant

that it is. This provides a general theory of what makes anything good that will be refined later in the *Philebus*.

But in addition to the determinant and the indeterminate and the resulting mixture, Plato posits a fourth kind of entity, the cause (*ἡ αἰτία, τὸ αἴτιον*) of the mixture (*Phil.* 23D7–8). Plato seems, however, to give two characterizations—which are not obviously equivalent—of the cause of the mixture that is the good life. First, he claims that reason (*nous*) is the cause and second, that the three properties of fineness (*τὸ κάλλος*), proportion (*ἡ συμμετρία*), and truth (*ἡ ἀλήθεια*) are the cause. To understand these claims and their relation to each other, we need to start with Plato's first account of the cause of the good life.

I will not now champion reason for the prize against the combined life, but we must look and see what to do about second prize. It may be that each of us will claim his own candidate as the cause [*αἰτιώμεθ*] of this combined life—one of us, that reason is the cause [*αἴτιον*]; the other, that pleasure is—so that while neither is the good, one might claim that one of them is the cause [*αἴτιόν*] of it. On this point I should be even readier to contest *Philebus*. I should hold that in this mixed life, whatever it is the possession of which [*ὅ λαβὼν*] makes the life at once both choiceworthy and good, it is reason that is more akin to it and more nearly resembles it [*συγγενέστερον καὶ δημοιότερόν*]. According to this account, it would never be truly claimed that pleasure had a share in either first or second prize. If my reason is at all to be trusted at the moment, it will not even get third prize. (*Phil.* 22C7–E3)

Plato here distinguishes (a) reason (*nous*) which he explicitly characterizes as the cause of the mixed or good life, that is, the cause of its goodness, and (b) that whose possession by a life makes that life good. The latter is the property or properties in virtue of which a life is good. (I shall call these the ‘goodmaking’ properties or the ‘goodmakers’.) Later on, Plato explicitly calls these goodmakers the ‘cause’ of the good life.

But it is certainly not difficult in the case of every mixture to see the cause on account of which it is either of the highest value or of none at all [*δι' ἣν ἡ παντὸς ἀξία γίγνεται ἡτισοῦν ἡ τὸ παράπαν οὐδενός*] . . . any mixture whatever that (p.162) fails of measure [*μέτρου*] or the nature of proportion [*συμμέτρου*] necessarily destroys its ingredients and, most of all, itself.⁸⁴ For it is no mixture, but truly an unmixed jumble, and always is really a disaster for what it afflicts . . . So now the power of the good has fled and taken refuge in the nature of the fine [*τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν*]. For measure [*μετριότης*] and proportion [*συμμετρία*] everywhere turn out to be fineness [*κάλλος*] and virtue [*ἀρετὴ*] . . . And we said that truth [*ἀλήθειάν*] was mixed with them in the mixture . . . Then if we cannot

capture the good by means of one idea [*μιᾶ...ἰδέᾳ*], let us take hold of it with three: fineness, proportion, and truth. Let us say, treating them as one, that this is the element in the mixture that we should most correctly regard as the cause [*ὅρθότατ' ἀν αἰτιασάμεθ'*], and that it is on account of this as being good that the mixture itself has become good . . . So now anyone could judge adequately between pleasure and wisdom and decide which is more akin to the highest good and is of greater honor among men and gods. (*Phil.* 64D3–65B2)

These three goodmakers—fineness, proportion, and truth—are the cause of the good life in that they are the properties that constitute what it is for a thing to be good, that is, they constitute the goodness of any mixture. As such, they are necessary and sufficient conditions of the goodness of any mixture and, in particular, are both the necessary (*Phil.* 64A, 64D3–E3) and sufficient conditions (*Phil.* 22D6–7, 64D3–65A5, 65A1–5) of the goodness of the good life.⁸⁵ Indeed, they are necessary conditions of the mixture having any value at all: whatever fails to have them is not a genuine mixture and lacks all value (*Phil.* 64D3–E3). Since they account for the goodness of all mixtures and not just the goodness of the good life, they must be nonsensible and non-psychic properties.

Now that we have seen how the goodmakers are the cause of the goodness of the good life, we need an explanation of how reason is the cause of the good life. Any satisfactory interpretation must do justice to Plato's claim (*Phil.* 22C7–D4) that being the cause of the good life is sufficient to entitle reason to second place after the mixed life itself and this at least requires that reason in its role as cause is non-instrumentally good. Let us first consider the suggestion that reason is the cause of the goodness of the mixed life because it is the best ingredient in the mixed life. On this line, we could argue that since the value of reason is much greater than the value of pleasure, reason will be responsible for the goodness of the mixed life by being responsible for most of its value. But this is not an adequate explanation. **(p.163)** The three goodmakers are the cause of the good life because they constitute the determinant which is imposed on all the ingredients of the good life. If reason is to be a cause of the mixed life in a similar way, it must in some way be involved in the imposition of order on the mixed life as a whole, that is, it must be responsible for the mixed life being the mixture that it is. If reason were the cause of the goodness of the good life only insofar as it is the best ingredient in it, reason would have no role to play in explaining the goodness of the other ingredients of the good life; in particular, it would have no role to play in explaining the goodness of pleasure.

The requirement that reason account for the goodness of the ordered whole that is the good life is supported by Plato's application of his fourfold classification to pleasure and reason (*Phil.* 23B–31A), which immediately follows the initial claim at *Phil.* 22C7–D4 that reason is the cause of the good life. Here Plato characterizes the cause of the mixture as what produces the mixture or brings it into being (*Phil.* 26E2–27C2). This suggests that reason is the cause of the mixed

life insofar as practical intelligence acts to produce the proper order within one's life, that is, insofar as it is an efficient cause of the mixture or, more precisely, the efficient cause of the mixture's instantiation of the goodmakers.⁸⁶ But the fact that reason is the efficient cause of the mixed life is not, as such, sufficient to explain why reason, in virtue of being the cause of the mixture, is non-instrumentally good, since an efficient cause, *qua* efficient cause, is only instrumentally good. Nor does this interpretation give any significant point to Plato's use of divine creative activity as his illustration of reason as a cause. If Plato's only point were that reason can exercise efficient causality, then appealing to the productive crafts would be simpler and less controversial. Indeed, if the point only concerned efficient causality, there would be no reason to appeal either to god's creative activity or to craft production. Any run-of-the-mill instance of deciding to do something and then acting to bring about a result would serve just as well as an illustration. Plato, rather, seems to be suggesting that there is a deeper resemblance between the way that god's reason is the cause of the orderly whole of the world and the way in which individual reason is the cause of the orderly whole that is the good life.

In order to see how the practical aspect of reason has more than instrumental value, Terence Irwin suggests returning to Socrates' opening (**p.164**) counterexample against the life of unmixed pleasure. On Irwin's account, the kind of knowledge involved here is the sort of rational consciousness 'involved in being aware of myself over time; memory, self-consciousness and rational calculation'.⁸⁷ To show that reason is the cause of the mixed life, Irwin suggests that

Plato might reasonably appeal to his argument against the unmixed life of pleasure. [He] argues against Protarchus that such a life lacks the essential element of rational consciousness and planning that connects the different episodes of pleasure into a life for a rational agent. If they are unconnected, the different pleasures are still goods, and they are the raw material for a good life; but they do not constitute parts of a good life until they are connected and arranged by the right sort of rational consciousness.⁸⁸

On Irwin's interpretation, the sort of reason that is the cause of the good life is the sort of knowledge missing in the mollusk-like life of the counterexample.

This is, however, too weak an account of how reason is the cause of the good life. First, on this interpretation, the notion of reason as the cause of the good life undergoes no development from the beginning to the end of the dialogue. But our understanding of reason has grown much deeper and we have seen that the sorts of knowledge for which the counterexample shows a need are not genuine instances of reason or knowledge. We should thus seek a stronger interpretation of how reason functions as a cause of the good life. Second, immediately following the initial claim that reason is the cause of the goodness of the mixed

life (*Phil.* 22C7-D4), Plato explains how reason is the cause of mixtures by discussing how god's reason is the cause of the mixture that is the world. In the same section, he also draws a more intimate connection between the microcosm and the macrocosm.

Socrates: Each element in us is small and insignificant, and is in no way pure at all or endowed with the power that is worthy of its nature . . . There is something called fire that belongs to us, and then again there is fire in the universe . . . And is not the fire that belongs to us small, weak, and insignificant, while the fire in the universe overwhelms us by its size, fineness, and every power that belongs to fire . . . is the fire in the universe nourished, generated, and ruled by the fire that belongs to us, or, on the contrary, does my fire, and yours, and that of all living beings, owe all this to the universal fire?

(p.165)

Protarchus: That question does not even deserve an answer.

...

Soc.: Realize that the same holds in the case of what we call the cosmos. It would be a body in the same way, since it is composed of the same elements . . . Does the body of the universe as a whole provide for the sustenance of what is body in our sphere, or is it the reverse, and the universe possesses and derives all the goods enumerated from ours?

Prot.: That, Socrates, is another question not worth asking.

...

Soc.: But where does [our soul] come from, Protarchus, unless the body of the universe were ensouled, since that body has the same elements as ours, although finer in every way?

Prot.: Clearly from nowhere else.

Soc.: We surely cannot believe, Protarchus, that those four kinds (the determinant, the indeterminate, their mixture, and their cause—which is present in everything)—we cannot believe that this last item, the cause, while it is recognized as all wisdom of every kind, since among us, it gives souls to our bodies and provides training for the body and medicine for its ailments and in other cases order and restitution, but has nevertheless failed in the case of the elements of the whole universe (although they are the same elements that pervade the whole heaven on a great scale and are fine and pure) to contrive what is finest and most honorable . . . [W]e had better pursue the alternative account and affirm, as we have often said, that there is in the universe a plentiful indeterminate and a sufficient

determinant, and that there is, above them, a by no means insignificant cause that orders and arranges the years, seasons, and months, and may justly be called wisdom and reason. (*Phil.* 29B6–30C7)

Plato does not spell out the relation that holds between the universe's body and our bodies and between the reason that rules the universe and our reason, but he clearly intends something more than the assertion of causal dependence. At least part of what he is asserting is that the orderliness of the world provides a paradigm for us in ordering our own lives and that, in particular, the activity of divine reason as the cause of good order in the world provides a paradigm for individual reason in its role as the cause of order in the good life. What appears to ground the idea that divine reason is a paradigm for our reason is sameness in composition. Although the fire in us is weak and insignificant it is the same sort of stuff as that which is in the universe; similarly, both our bodies and the body of the universe are ensouled. **(p.166)** We are invited to see our reason as the same sort of thing as divine reason and thus as having similar capacities.

God is certainly aware of himself as a rational agent over time and possesses memory, self-consciousness, and is aware of planning for the future (or at least he has some non-temporal analogues), but these are not the most significant features of god's creative activity. What is, rather, most significant about this activity is its orientation toward the good. In the first characterization in the passage above of the cause in the universe we learn that it orders and arranges years and seasons and Plato concludes that his account 'confirms the utterances of those who declared of old that reason always rules the universe' (*Phil.* 30D7–8). This is a reference to Anaxagoras and should remind us of the *Phaedo*'s claim that reason orders all things for the best. This claim is also very prominent in the *Timaeus* and the theology of Book 10 of the *Laws*. Divine reason possesses perfect knowledge of the good and the goodmakers and because it is itself good, it orders the universe so that it instantiates the good as far as possible (e.g. *Laws* 903B ff. and *Tim.* 29E ff.). Thus reason insofar as it is in its best state both knows the good and seeks to instantiate it. (Plato stresses that the pattern used by god is apprehensible by *logos* and *phronēsis*, *Tim.* 29A6–7.) If, as the parallel suggests, we should seek a common feature between the way that divine reason and our reason are the cause of mixtures, what we should expect is that individual reason's awareness of the good and intention to impose good order on the individual's life is the feature of individual reason that entitles it to be the cause of the goodness of the mixed life.

We can begin our search for a stronger interpretation than Irwin's by returning to a passage quoted above, *Philebus* 22C7–E3. In this passage, Plato claims that reason is akin to the goodmakers and that reason is the cause of the good life, but what is the relation between these two claims? This is an important point, since Plato here appears to make two different suggestions.

- (1) Reason deserves second place, after the mixed life, in virtue of being the cause of the good life.

(2) Reason deserves second place, after the mixed life, in virtue of being more akin to, and more like, the goodmakers than pleasure is.

(p.167) Some scholars hold that (2) simply replaces (1) as Plato's 'real' view: Hackforth, for example, holds that here 'Socrates corrects or modifies his first suggestion, that reason, rather than pleasure is the cause of the goodness of the Mixed Life.'⁸⁹ But such an interpretation is unattractive. First, Plato reiterates (1) later in the dialogue.⁹⁰ Second, jettisoning (1) renders pointless Plato's long discussion of how reason acts as the cause of mixtures (*Phil.* 28D–31A). Third, rejecting (1) results in an undesirably restricted understanding of the goodness of knowledge, since it seems to commit us to the view that knowledge is good only insofar as it is one of the ingredients of the good life and has a high value as an ingredient. On the other hand, Plato stresses (2) at the end of the dialogue (*Phil.* 61A4–5, 65A7 ff., and 67A10–12) and mere efficient causality is not enough to warrant giving reason second place.

But we do not have to give up either (1) or (2). Plato can and should hold that reason deserves second place in virtue of being a cause, but in virtue of being a special sort of cause. What Plato needs to hold is

(3) Reason deserves second place because it is the cause of the good life in virtue of the properties which render reason akin to the goodmakers.

Understanding (3) will lead us into some of the more difficult aspects of Plato's later metaphysics and epistemology, so let me briefly sketch what we shall find. The notion of reason being akin to the goodmakers is complex.

1. Reason is akin to the goodmakers in the straightforward sense that reason instantiates the goodmakers. Reason is not simply some mental capacity or other, but is the best condition of the soul. Indeed, the claim that reason is the best condition of the soul is true in two ways. First, the psychic state that is best for people, that is, most benefits them, is one in which they have attained or exercise reason. But, second, the possession of the goodmakers is what makes a thing non-relationally good. A soul possessing the goodmakers is, so to speak, the best thing that a soul can be.

Since reason is the best condition of the soul, it is more than merely the capacity to reason correctly. As Plato understands it here, reason is a state of the soul that instantiates knowledge. And it is the instantiation of **(p.168)** knowledge that makes reason good. So we can refine (3).

Reason is the cause of the good life insofar as it instantiates knowledge. Thus (3) is the claim that knowledge is the cause of the good life because of the features that make it the knowledge that it is. And since it is the instantiation of knowledge that makes reason good, reason is the cause of

the good life insofar as reason is itself good. We can thus give sense to the idea that reason by its own goodness makes the good life good.

2. But there is another strand of Plato's argument. In virtue of what sort of knowledge is reason the cause of the good life? The knowledge in question will be knowledge of what makes the ingredients of the good life worthy of rational choice and of how these ingredients are to be ordered and mixed. This will be an appreciation of the goodness of the ingredients and of their proper mixture. Thus reason will stand in a double relation to the goodmakers: it will know them and in virtue of knowing them it will instantiate them.

Let us turn to the details. Plato describes reason as 'more akin and more similar' and 'more attached and fitted to' and 'more naturally related' to the goodmakers than pleasure is.⁹¹ There are two lines of argument leading to this conclusion. The first begins from Plato's analysis of different kinds of knowledge at the end of the *Philebus*. The most important distinctions Plato draws (*Phil.* 55C–59B) are with respect to accuracy (*akribēia*), clarity (*saphēneia*), purity (*katharotēs*), and truth (*alētheia*). As we shall see, the degree to which different kinds of knowledge possess these features is relevant to the question of why knowledge and reason are akin to the goodmakers. In particular, the more fully knowledge is accurate, clear, pure, and true, the more akin it is to the goodmakers. And it is more akin to the goodmakers because it knows them and instantiates them.

Purity has a central role among these distinctions and we can begin to see what Plato means by the purity of knowledge by considering other items he classifies as pure.

How can there be purity in the case of whiteness, and what sort of thing is it? Is it the greatest quantity or amount, or is it rather the complete lack of any admixture, that is, where there is not the slightest part of any other color? . . . this is the truest and the finest of all instances of white, rather than what is greatest in quantity or (**p.169**) amount . . . a small portion of pure white is to be regarded as whiter than a larger quantity of an impure whiteness, and at the same time, finer and truer. (*Phil.* 53A5–B6)⁹²

Insofar as the white is purer, it is also finer and truer.⁹³ Plato immediately applies this understanding of purity to the case of pleasure. '[T]his example suffices to prove that in the case of pleasure, too, every small and insignificant pleasure that is pure from pain [*καθαρὰ λύπης*] will turn out to be pleasanter, truer, and finer than a greater quantity of the impure kind' (*Phil.* 53B8–C2). A pleasure is pure to the extent that it is unmixed with pain. And insofar as a pleasure is purer, it is also finer and truer.

Knowledge will thus be impure insofar as it is mixed with error or ignorance and will be pure insofar as it is unmixed with error or ignorance.⁹⁴ This understanding of the purity of knowledge allows us to see two important connections that purity has. First, the accuracy, clarity, and truth of knowledge

go along with its purity. Second, purity goes along with determinacy and impurity with indeterminacy. The sort of mixture that makes either knowledge or pleasure impure also makes the resulting mixed state indeterminate.⁹⁵

Knowledge is accurate, clear, and true insofar as it grasps the nature and structure of the objects with which it deals. What Plato emphasizes toward the end of the *Philebus* is that knowledge is clearer, more accurate, and truer insofar as it more precisely grasps the nature of its object in mathematical terms or in the way that mathematics grasps the nature of its objects. Subject matters differ in the extent to which such clarity and accuracy is possible. Plato, for example, contrasts music and shipbuilding.

But let us first find out whether within the manual arts there is one side more closely related to knowledge itself, and the other less closely; second, whether we should treat the one as purest, the other as less pure . . . If someone were to take away arithmetic and the sciences of measurement and weighing from all arts, the rest might be said to be worthless . . . All that would be left for us would be to conjecture and train our senses through practice and experience. We would have to rely on our ability to make guesses that many people call art, once it has acquired some proficiency through practice and labor . . . This is clear, to start with, in the case of music. The harmonies are found not by measurement, but by guesswork based on practice, and flute music throughout tries to find the measure of each note as it is (**p.170**) produced by guess. So the amount of unclarity mixed up in it is great, and the amount of security small . . . But the art of building, I believe, employs the greatest number of measures and instruments which give it great accuracy and make it more scientific than most arts. (*Phil.* 55D5–56B6)

Music suffers a relatively great degree of unclarity not because it cannot produce harmonies, but because in its productive efforts it can only discriminate more or less accurately the underlying structure of musical order.

But there is a greater difference between arts such as building and the ‘most accurate’ arts of arithmetic and especially, dialectic (*Phil.* 56E, 57D, 59B-C). This difference in their accuracy depends on their subject matter. Arithmetic is divided into two kinds: that of arithmeticians and that of the arithmetically naive.

The difference is not a small one, Protarchus. For some arithmeticians calculate with unequal units, for instance two armies and two oxen and two very small or incomparably large units. But the others refuse to agree with them, unless it is declared that none of the countless units differs in the least from any of the others. (*Phil.* 56D9–E3)⁹⁶

The units of the naive, unlike those of genuine arithmeticians, suffer compresence with regard to their numerical properties. Dialectic, on the other hand, deals with ‘being,

the real and what is always the same' (*Phil.* 58A2-3). Although Plato does not explicitly call these items Forms here, it is reasonable to hold that this is what he has in mind and, in any case, they share with Forms the feature of being purely and determinately F.⁹⁷

The purest and most accurate sort of knowledge thus grasps objects that are themselves pure and determinate. Nor is this link accidental: it is the fact that such objects are themselves pure and determinate that allows the knowledge that grasps them to be pure and determinate. The features that make such objects pure and determinate are those that make them knowable.⁹⁸ Knowledge itself is purest and most determinate when it grasps principles of order and structure, that is, when it grasps what makes its objects determinate.

The different kinds of knowledge differ not only with respect to accuracy, clarity, purity, and truth. The arts of measurement are the 'ruling' or 'leading' parts of the productive arts and what is left after they have been (**p.171**) removed is 'worthless' (*Phil.* 55D10-11, 55E1-3). Indeed, those arts employing measurement more accurately are 'more fully arts' than the others (*Phil.* 56B4-6). These different kinds of knowledge can also be ranked along a dimension of value that is not their value to us.

Secure and pure and true and what we may call unalloyed have to do with the things that are forever in the same state, without anything mixed in, or with that which is most akin to them. Everything else ought to be regarded as secondary and later . . . And of the names applied to such matters, would it not be just to give the finest names to the finest things? . . . Are not reason, then, and wisdom the names that we should honor most? . . . Then these names are applied most accurately and correctly to cases of thinking about true being . . . And these are the very names that I brought forward at the beginning for our verdict. (*Phil.* 59C2-D8)⁹⁹

Pure and true knowledge is the sort of knowledge that has the highest non-relational value. This should not be surprising, since the second important connection that purity has is with determinacy. Just as impure pleasure is indeterminate insofar as it is impure, impure knowledge is indeterminate insofar as it is impure.¹⁰⁰ And as we have already seen, determinacy is a value property: what makes anything good is that it consists in the appropriate combination of a determinant and the indeterminate.¹⁰¹ So what makes knowledge non-relationally good is that it grasps the order and structure of its objects, that is, the features making the objects determinate and thus good. This is not, however, unrelated to the question of what is best for us. There are two immediate indications of such a connection. First, as Plato notes at the end of the above quotation, his candidate for the sort of knowledge that makes a life happy was that which has just been ranked as finest. Second, shortly before this when Plato considered what knowledge is clearest, most accurate, and truest, he said that he was putting to one side the question of which kind of knowledge most benefited us (*Phil.* 58B9-C2). But he did note in passing that there is a

faculty of our souls that ‘loves the truth and does everything for its sake’ (*Phil.* 58D4–5).¹⁰²

At the end of the *Philebus*, Plato returns to the question of what is best for us and draws together the themes of the preceding discussion. This is the second line of argument leading to the conclusion that reason is more akin to the goodmakers. He first gives an explicit account of what makes ‘any (p.172) mixture whatsoever either of the highest value or of none at all’ (*Phil.* 64D3–5). This is an account of what makes any mixture good or valuable; it is not simply an account of what makes the mixed life or other things that we can have good for us. It is thus a characterization of what makes things non-relationally good.¹⁰³ What makes anything non-relationally good is its possession of the three goodmaking properties: fineness (*κάλλος*), proportion (*συμμετρία*), and truth (*ἀληθεία*, *Phil.* 65A2). This is a way of specifying the idea that it is the imposition of the appropriate determinant on the indeterminate that makes anything good and thus it gives us a second line of argument.

Plato then undertakes to compare wisdom and pleasure directly to the three goodmakers (*Phil.* 65B5–7). On the basis of the fact that knowledge is much more akin to the goodmakers than is pleasure, knowledge is judged to be a better thing for us. Thus Plato moves from the claim that something is non-relationally good to the claim that it is good for us. For now, it is enough to note that he does this, later we shall have to consider what justifies such a move.

So what, then, settles the question of whether wisdom or pleasure is more akin to the three goodmakers? With regard to each of the three goodmakers—truth, proportion, and fineness—reason is judged to be more akin to the goodmaker in virtue of instantiating it or instantiating it more fully (*Phil.* 65B10–66A3). Let us start with truth.

Socrates: Take truth [*ἀληθείας*] first, Protarchus. Take it, and after looking at all three, reason, truth, and pleasure, take plenty of time, and answer whether you think pleasure or reason is more akin [*συγγενέστερον*] to truth.

Protarchus: What need is there to take one's time? For the difference, I think, is great. For pleasure is the greatest of impostors. And the story goes that in the pleasures concerning sex, which seem to be the greatest pleasures, even perjury is pardoned by the gods, as if pleasures, like children, did not have the smallest share of reason. But reason is either the same thing [*ταῦτὸν*] as truth or, of all things, the most like it and the truest [*πάντων ὁμοιότατόν τε καὶ ἀληθέστατον*]. (*Phil.* 65B10–D3)

Truth, as a goodmaking property, is non-cognitive and non-propositional: a true F is an F that displays all the features found in the definition of F and does not display any of

the features that are the opposite of F. As we have seen, (**p.173**) the truest instance of white is the ‘most unmixed, in which there is no trace of another color’ (*Phil.* 53A6–B2), true pleasures are those unmixed with any pain, and the truest forms of knowledge are those that provide a full and accurate representation of their object, unmixed with ignorance or error.

How, then, is reason akin to truth as a goodmaking property? Reason can possess truth in a straightforwardly propositional way, that is, it is an instance of knowledge. It is ‘akin to’ and ‘like’ non-propositional truth in several related ways.

- (1) A true F is an especially valuable cognitive item: since it instantiates F without defect or admixture of the opposite of F, it provides a good basis on which individual reason can form a clear and accurate understanding of F.¹⁰⁴
- (2) When reason expresses knowledge about what is F, what it grasps are the definitional features that make it the case that the F is F.

We must also remember that these principles of order and determinacy are goodmaking properties, that is, value properties. When reason fully possesses the truth about its subject matter, it is in its best state, that is, it instantiates the goodmaking properties.¹⁰⁵ But for reason fully to possess the truth about its subject matter is for it to grasp fully and completely the nature of its subject, that is, its order and structure. This is to grasp what makes it determinate, that is, to grasp its goodmaking features. So reason instantiates the goodmakers by knowing them.

Similar remarks should apply to the other two goodmakers.¹⁰⁶

We thus have an account of what makes reason akin to the goodmakers and thus of the grounds that Plato gives for its being good for us. But we still face an important concern. Accepting the link between what is non-relationally good and what is good for us, what the above argument seems to show is that theoretical wisdom or reason, that is, knowledge of the goodmaking properties, is the best good for human beings. This would entitle it to a prominent place in the good life as a main ingredient. But showing that reason is the most valuable ingredient of the good life does not yet show that reason is the cause of the good life. And this is what we need to show. This brings us back to the issue that Irwin rightly noted (although I argued that we should not accept his solution).

(p.174) The cause of the good life, as we have seen, should play a role in bringing it into being. One might think that this would exclude theoretical intelligence from being the cause of the good life, because theoretical intelligence in itself is causally idle. This is a worry of which Socrates shows himself to be aware. When he considers what sort of knowledge must be present in the mixed life, he reminds Protarchus that they distinguished two kinds of knowledge: ‘one kind deals with a subject matter that comes to be and perishes, the other is concerned with what neither comes to be nor perishes, but is always

unchangingly the same' (*Phil.* 61D10–E3). The latter is the truest kind of knowledge, but Socrates asks whether this is enough for a human being.

Suppose, then, there is a person who possesses wisdom [$\phi\varphi\omega\nu$] about what justice itself is, and can give an account in accordance with his knowledge [$\tau\hat{\omega}\nu\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$], and has the same kind of comprehension about all the rest of what there is . . . Will this person have sufficient knowledge, if he has an account of the divine circle and sphere themselves, but is ignorant of the human sphere and these, our circles, using even in housebuilding those other yardsticks and those circles? (*Phil.* 62A2–B2)

Strikingly, this is the first and only time that the *Philebus* states that justice is an object of the highest sort of knowledge. Immediately after Socrates claims that justice is an object of the best sort of knowledge, he reminds us of the need for human beings to act. His point cannot only be that human life will require the practice of certain sorts of arts, such as housebuilding. The lesson that we should draw is, rather, that the best sort of knowledge of justice must be appropriately related to action. (There is, as it stands, an odd gap in the argument of the *Philebus*. This passage might be thought to suggest that although the best life includes the highest sort of knowledge, the next best life is composed rather of the knowledge of housebuilding and similar arts without an explicit place for virtue. We can fill this gap by recognizing the need for the knowledge necessary for selecting the ingredients of the good life. Such selection should proceed in accordance with the ranking that Plato does give of the goodness of various kinds of knowledge.) Nor is the need to act simply an unfortunate aspect of our limited human condition that we would be better off without. As we have already seen, the love of truth need not be purely theoretical but can also be a desire to order. Plato (**p.175**) has stressed that god's reason orders the world and this indicates what the best sort of reason will do by its own nature.

Reason thus has a place as a productive cause. When reason acts as a productive cause that includes the recognition of value, then it acts in virtue of what it is essential and it acts in its best state. Moreover, since its appreciation of goodness and order is what makes it good, its own goodness is productive of the goodness of the mixed life. But this is not yet enough to settle our original concern. What of the other constituents in the mixed life, that is, the various forms of knowledge and pleasure that are admitted? Do they have some value for the person, even if they are not selected by reason in its best condition or in something approximating its best condition? If they do, we might worry that we have not shown that their value to the person is dependent on reason.

That their value is dependent on reason in this way is what we should expect, if reason at the end of the dialogue plays as important a role in the good life as it did in the opening counterexample. There we saw that no other pleasure or

possession was of benefit to a human being without reason. Specifically, no other pleasure or possession benefited a person unless he was aware of its goodness. But as we saw, the sort of awareness of goodness required by the counterexample was of a very weak sort. In the end, after Plato's conception of reason has been enriched by showing its relation to objectively goodmaking properties, is reason still of such central importance? Is it a condition of benefit?

The *Philebus* does not provide a full explanation of its answer to this question, but it points to the most important part of what is missing. Any account of what is good *for* a creature must be grounded in an account of that creature's essential nature. Our attention was drawn to this fact by the opening counterexample itself. Protarchus rejected the original unmixed life lacking reason because it would not be 'sufficient or choiceworthy for any human being or animal' (*Phil.* 22B1–2). But at that point in the dialogue, that is as far as he is willing to go. He concedes a place only for the sort of reason that is needed for something more than the life of a mollusk. He shows no sign of recognizing that reason might have very different roles to play in the lives of humans and of non-human animals that are nevertheless higher than mollusks. (Nor is he especially motivated to do so, given (**p.176**) the version of hedonism he endorses.) As we have seen, the *Philebus* stresses that there is an intimate kinship between our reason and god's reason (although the difference between our reason and god's gives pleasure a place in our lives that it does not have in his). To see what grounds Plato's answer, we shall have to turn to his account of what human beings are and this will come in Chapter 4 when we consider the psychology of the *Timaeus*.

Nevertheless, the *Philebus* points to an answer to our question. Let us first consider some textual evidence.

- (1) Protarchus is willing to admit the other kinds of knowledge into the mixed life only on the condition that the person has the 'first' or highest kind (*Phil.* 62D1–3). This first kind of knowledge includes knowledge of the good, and the other kinds of knowledge will not do harm, and will be beneficial, only if the person has such knowledge.
- (2) With regard to the admission of pleasures, Socrates says on their behalf: 'It is neither possible nor beneficial for any kind to remain alone, in isolation and in its pure form. Of all kinds, comparing them with one another, we think the best to live with is the one that brought knowledge of everything else, but especially as perfect knowledge as possible of each of us' (*Phil.* 63B7–C3).

The text provides some difficulties here, but pleasures are admitted only on the condition that the person has knowledge of them. Specifically, the knowledge required is the best kind of knowledge which knows these pleasures and all other things. This knowledge is thus more than simple self-awareness and, if it is the best sort of knowledge, it will know the pleasures as they really are. The admitted pleasures are

'akin' to reason and are thus determinate. The knowledge will be the knowledge of what makes them the determinate things they are and thus knowledge of what makes them good. These are the pleasures that personified reason itself claims as desirable in light of its goal 'to discover in this mixture [the mixed life] what is good in man and in the universe and to get some vision of the nature of the good itself' (*Phil.* 64A1–3).

(3) Insofar as reason is causally productive of the mixed life, it orders its ingredients and imposes measure on them. Whatever lacks such (p.177) measure is a pseudo-mixture that lacks any value (*Phil.* 64D3–E3). If reason is the cause of the goodness of the good life, it should be a necessary condition of its goodness.¹⁰⁷

Making an appreciation of goodness a necessary condition of the other sorts of knowledge benefiting us also helps to explain why the other kinds of knowledge should count as constituents of the good life at all. Although human beings may need shelter from the weather in order to lead a good life, this hardly shows that knowledge of housebuilding is a necessary component of the good life or is good except for its products. But Plato ranks such arts in respect of non-relational goodness in terms of the extent to which they employ measurement. This ranking is in terms of the extent to which they grasp the determinate features of mixtures, that is, the features that make the mixtures good. Plato, as we have seen, accepts an inference from the fact that something is non-relationally best to the claim that it is best for us. Thus if such kinds of knowledge are to be non-instrumentally good for us, their benefit to us should consist in the fact that they constitute a grasp of order (albeit not the truest or purest sort of grasp). If they are to be non-instrumentally good for human beings, it will not be because of the needs of the human body for shelter. It will rather be because they constitute one of the ways that human beings can, given their cognitive limitations, grasp the good. Similarly, pure pleasures will constitute a kind of grasp of the orderly features of their objects and even sensory pleasures, insofar as they are valuable, will be an appreciation, in a sensory mode, of order.

Reason thus has a twofold role in the good life. First, it is a constituent of every ingredient and insofar as it is a constituent it is there because it grasps the order and determinate nature of things and thus is a grasp of objective goodness. Music, for example, insofar as it is included, is the art (and exercise) of musical theory that grasps the proportions and ratios that regulate pitches, tones, and lengths and imposes a determinate structure upon an indeterminate sound. It is, by its very nature, an appreciation of goodness: musical theory does not simply catalog various possible combinations of determinants and the indeterminate, but picks out the ones that are fine and good by their nature (*Phil.* 26B1, 7). A person able to catalog, even in a mathematically precise way, various sounds, but who does not recognize the (p.178) appropriate harmonies as fine and good, fails to possess the musical art as Plato understands it.

Similarly, a person who produces a harmony by accident, perhaps by dropping a

lyre with a lucky bounce, does not possess the musical art and is not benefited by such production.

A fuller account of how reason can enter into pleasures must await the psychology of Chapter 4, but even now we can see that the pleasures that Plato allows as good are, or intimately involve, a perception of order. True pleasures, which Plato counts as good, include, for example, pleasures of sight, and these are pleasures taken in things that are fine by themselves by their very nature and not things that are merely fine relative to something else (*Phil.* 51B-C). These things include sensible objects possessing the appropriate geometrical shapes, and such pleasures are an appreciation of good and fine order in a sensory mode. Plato may also allow certain impure but necessary pleasures to count as good and as constituents of the good life.¹⁰⁸ These, perhaps, include even pleasures associated with eating and drinking. But the value of these pleasures also depends on their being a perception of fine order. Insofar as what one enjoys in satisfying one's appetites is the intense release from prior tension, such pleasures are indeterminate and are not good or are bad for the person. So even the pleasures of health, when enjoyed in this way, do not benefit their possessor. The sort of pleasure taken in health that could count as good for the person would require not valuing the intensity of the release from tension, but enjoying and valuing the activity of maintaining one's physical constitution and the good order of the body. This is also, albeit in a less elevated form, a perception in a sensory mode of something as determinate and thus is a perception, in a sensory mode, of good order.¹⁰⁹

But in addition to reason's role as an ingredient in kinds of knowledge and pleasure, it has a role in selecting and ordering the constituents. This includes a grasp of why they are worthy of choice and of how they are to be ordered so as to form a life that is itself determinate and well-ordered and is thus both non-relationally good and good for the person who lives it. It is both by grasping order insofar as it functions as a constituent of the ingredients of the good life, as well as by grasping the determinate order of the life as a whole, that reason brings itself into an orderly and good state (cf. *Tim.* 42E–44C and 89E–90D).

(p.179) This theory of the *Philebus* thus does not rest simply on our intuitions, but is rather part of a complex account involving strong metaphysical claims, especially claims about the nature of the objective goodmaking properties of things, and about how reason is akin to or similar to these goodmakers. As we have noted, the *Philebus* does not answer all our questions. First, we have seen that reason bringing itself into a good state by grasping order is a constituent of every good for a human being. But if humans consist both of reason and some distinct faculties or capacities, why should this be true? To answer this question, the *Philebus'* account must be supplemented by an account of what human beings are. Second, we need some further explanation of how ethical activity involves the grasping of good order. Finally, we have not said how pure, clear,

accurate, and true one's grasp of goodness must be in order for a person to benefit. Insofar as the *Philebus* counts as constituents of the good life things other than the highest exercise of reason, however, it shows that such a grasp can be less than complete. In Chapter 4, I say more about the first of these issues and in the next section, I discuss the last two. But the value theory that we have explored in the *Philebus* does, I think, show that Plato holds that a grasp of objective goodness is a necessary condition of benefiting from things and shows at least part of the justification for this claim.

2.12 The Dependency Thesis

My main concern in this section will be to consider how the Dependency Thesis is embodied in the ethical life of Magnesia. Doing so will raise questions about Plato's psychology and epistemology and in Chapters 3 and 4, I take up these issues. Let us begin by drawing together the strands of our discussion in order to give a fuller account of the Dependency Thesis.

Benefits and Harms I have argued that knowledge of the good is a genuinely necessary condition of agents benefiting from the Dependent Goods they possess and use. This knowledge is required in order to appreciate the goodmaking features of the Dependent Goods and of their use and to (**p.180**) appreciate how the various Dependent Goods fit together into a good life. Thus Dependent Goods can be good for the just agent in several ways. First, a Dependent Good can be used in virtuous action and such actions can be non-instrumentally good for the virtuous agent. For such use to be beneficial, the agent has to recognize the goodmaking features of the action and value them for their own sake. Some other Dependent Goods, such as certain pleasures (e.g. those associated with the perception of fine objects) or forms of knowledge, or the welfare of others benefit the agent apart from use of them. But once again, to benefit from these Dependent Goods, the agent has to value them for their genuine goodmaking features. For example, the pleasure associated with the awareness of fine objects should be valued because it is pleasure taken in genuinely fine objects. Further, some of the agent's virtuous actions, in addition to being non-instrumentally good insofar as they are virtuous actions, will be of benefit by improving or maintaining the agent's ethical character or producing Dependent Goods that can be used in further virtuous actions or that benefit the agent apart from their use.

We can also now give an account of the disvalue of the Dependent Bads. For the just person, Dependent Bads can be bad for more than one reason. First, the possession of Dependent Bads, such as sickness and poverty, may reduce the agent's opportunities to act virtuously. Serious ill health may also interfere with the agent's ethical character: e.g. chronic pain can disrupt one's thoughts and the unhealthy, Plato thinks, have more difficulty resisting bad sexual desires. But certain Dependent Bads, such as pain, can be bad for the just person even apart from the effects they have in diminishing virtuous activity. Given a choice

between two virtuous lives that are equal in all other respects, a rational person has reason to avoid the one containing significant pain. (Pain is or involves the perception of a disordered and unmeasured state and is regarded as bad by the virtuous person for that reason.)

What we now need is an explanation of Plato's claim that Dependent Goods are bad for unjust people and that Dependent Goods are good or, rather, less bad for them than the corresponding Dependent Good would be. Dependent Goods can be bad for unjust people in several ways. There are two straightforward ways in which Dependent Goods can be bad for (**p.181**) unjust people, both of which focus on the ways in which unjust people use their Dependent Goods. (It is important to see that another straightforward account does not work. Unjust people's use of Dependent Goods will tend to be defective. They will, for example, use their wealth to pursue intense pleasures and such a course of behavior will tend to undermine their chances of gaining and keeping other Dependent Goods. Their pursuit of intense bodily pleasures will, for example, tend to undermine their health. But they are better off, or, more precisely, less badly off without Dependent Goods.)

(1) Unjust people's use of Dependent Goods will tend to have bad effects on their ethical character. Since not all unjust states of character are equally bad, there is room for ethical degeneration even among the unjust. This ethical degeneration will usually be hastened by the possession of more Dependent Goods. The satisfaction of some akratic desires by an autocrat speedily leads to complete injustice and the immoderate satisfaction of desires for food, sex, and drink tends to encourage the growth of bad desires and thus to make the person even more unjust.

(2) Injustice is sufficient for misery and thus the lives of unjust people are not worth living. So any Dependent Good that prolongs their lives, e.g. health, will only prolong their misery and so make them worse off overall.

Although these are important reasons why Dependent Goods are bad for unjust people, they do not provide a full explanation. For example, Plato asks us to consider a person who permanently possesses all goods except justice and claims that even for such a person, all his Dependent Goods are 'the worst things' for him (*Laws* 661B6-7). Nothing suggests or requires that this unjust person's character continually grows worse. Moreover, it is implausible that each Dependent Good that the unjust person has extends his life. But even if it did, this does not entail that no Dependent Good benefits him for some length of time or in some respect.

We can begin by noting that, to a first approximation, Plato holds that any action springing from an unjust character is an unjust action (cf. *Laws* 862A7-B4). In particular, even when an unjust person does what a just person would do in the

same circumstances, his action is still unjust. Since all unjust actions are non-instrumentally bad, any use of a Dependent Good (**p.182**) by an unjust person is bad for him. This argument is a useful beginning, since it gives us reason to hold that any use of a Dependent Good by an unjust person is bad for him. But we need to go further to say why this is the case. Such an explanation will help explain why Dependent Goods do not benefit, even if use of them is not required, and why they do not benefit even partially or temporarily.

Plato should appeal to the special role of wisdom in explaining this harm or lack of benefit. Unjust people suffer serious harm in their dealings with Dependent Goods because they have the wrong attitude toward genuine value. They will both fail to appreciate (and may disvalue) what is good about the Dependent Good and what they value about it is something bad or at least not good. For example, a fine painting will be valued for the sexual pleasure it gives rise to, and the pleasures of health will be valued as the intense release of the tensions of deprivation.¹¹⁰ They will fail to appreciate or find tedious the abstract symmetry of the fine object (and will thus find unappealing some of the best instances of fine objects, the crafted geometrical shapes of the *Philebus* that are non-relatively fine or the intelligent, orderly motions of the heavens) or the healthful activity of self-maintenance. Unjust people will value their argumentative skills, if they possess some, because, for example, these skills allow them to bend others to their own will or because they allow them to humiliate others in debate. They will not value them because they provide insight into the fine, orderly structure of knowable objects (nor will they see these skills themselves as instances of such order).¹¹¹ Their lack of wisdom thus cuts them off from the genuine value inherent in things and leaves them with the double misfortune of disvaluing the good and valuing the bad or the worthless.¹¹² Such valuing will have two aspects: judging good and desiring or loving. Plato can reasonably hold that unjust people suffer something bad both with respect to what they judge good and what they love.¹¹³

Filling out this story completely would require a full examination of the various Dependent Goods and the varieties of psychopathology found among the unjust. We might wonder, for example, whether Plato holds that an unjust person always fails to appreciate the goodmaking features of every Dependent Good. Plato does think that judgments of goodness—whether correct or incorrect—tend to hang together more tightly than most contemporary (**p.183**) philosophers would think they do. Since Plato thinks that there is a single goodmaking property, recognizing value is recognizing the same property in its different instantiations. Getting it right in some cases will tend to increase one's chances of getting it right in others to a much greater extent than it would on more pluralistic theories of goodness. Nevertheless, the same property is not equally evident in all cases and one cannot mechanically apply the account of goodness to different kinds of things. (Even in relatively nearby cases, such as fine or good shapes and sounds, recognizing the goodmaking features in one case still leaves a great deal

of work to be done in the other.¹¹⁴) Thus anything less than perfect knowledge will fail to get some cases right. Further, one can approximate more closely or more distantly the correct account in any particular kind of case. Even the account of the good that Plato offers in the *Philebus* is not fully adequate and requires much further specification. With regard to incorrect views about goodness, Plato tends to think that there is a fairly limited range of unjust characters and that within each type, the person's ultimate ends are fairly uniform, e.g. maximizing honor or satisfying intense pleasures. So each type of unjust character will tend to make the same sort of mistake in all cases. And even if we were to hold that an unjust person could adequately recognize the goodmaking features of a Dependent Good in some particular case, this would be consistent with the account of the Dependency Thesis we have developed. If there is benefit in this case, what explains this benefit is an appreciation of the good.

Finally, we may turn to the effect of Dependent Bads on the unjust. At *Laws* 661D1, Plato claims that Dependent Bads are actually 'good' for unjust people. But it seems clear that we should not take this assertion literally. What Plato means is that for an unjust person having a Dependent Bad is less bad than not having that Dependent Bad (and, in particular, is less bad than having the corresponding Dependent Good: e.g. for an unjust person health is worse than sickness). Nevertheless, having a Dependent Bad is not genuinely good for anyone, even for an unjust person. To see why this is so, consider the ways in which it is 'preferable' (a description neutral between 'less bad' and 'good') for an unjust person to have the Dependent Bads. First, since an unjust person's life is not worth living, a Dependent Bad that kills him shortens a life of negative value. A fatal disease that kills him in five (**p.184**) days reduces the total amount of misery in his life, but it does nothing more than that. This does not constitute a positive benefit for the agent, but only the avoidance of further harm. It does not make any segment of an unjust person's life (or any aspect of his life) better than or equal to non-existence.¹¹⁵ Second, Dependent Bads can forestall ethical degeneration. Consider two character states both of which are bad, but one of which is worse than the other: for example, that of a tyrannical man who is not an actual tyrant and the state of soul he would be in if he were an actual tyrant. The power and wealth of a tyrant would allow him to indulge his bad desires, which will then grow and make his character even worse. Lack of power and poverty forestall this, but if he deals with them unjustly, they simply help constitute a way of life that is not worth living. Third, the Dependent Bads hinder people from performing unjust actions (which are non-instrumentally bad for them). Nevertheless, since these Dependent Bads only help minimize the number of unjust actions and prevent the further deterioration of an already unjust character, they do not constitute a positive benefit, but only prevent further harm.¹¹⁶ Finally, there are cases in which a Dependent Bad leads to ethical reform, especially those in which it serves as an

effective punishment. Although these do not seem to be the main cases that Plato has in mind in the *Laws'* passages, they are possible. But even when the punishments succeed, if the person moves from one more unjust state to another unjust state that is less unjust, the improved portion of the person's life still is not worth living. If the move is from injustice to justice, then we could say that the Dependent Bad is instrumentally good for the person and being just is non-instrumentally good for him. The pain, though, considered in itself, seems to have no positive value for the person.¹¹⁷

Although the *Laws* gives wisdom a special place as the leader of the other goods, it makes the value of the Dependent Goods depend on the agent's possession of the whole of virtue which includes, but is not limited to, knowledge of the good. In what way, then, are the Dependent Goods dependent on the other non-wisdom virtues, in particular, on courage and moderation?

Courage and moderation (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3) are the two virtues that prevent akratic action and conflict. They play two (**p.185**) roles in doing so. First, they have a direct role in preventing the agent from acting akratically: roughly, courage is a disposition that allows a person to resist desires and emotions that prompt to akratic action and moderation is a harmony between one's desires and emotions and one's knowledge of the good. Second, they also have an indirect role, since Plato thinks that desires and emotions can, not only lead people to act against their overall judgments of what is best, but also can bring it about that agents irrationally form an overall best judgment or irrationally change a true overall judgment they already possess. Thus the value of Dependent Goods depends on courage and moderation in at least three ways. These virtues enable agents to use Dependent Goods in virtuous action, by (1) enabling them to form and retain rational overall judgments, and (2) to act on their rational overall judgments once formed. And (3), by enabling the agent to form and retain rational judgments about the good, these virtues enable the agent to benefit from Dependent Goods apart from their use.

Finally, we may wonder whether wisdom itself is an Independent Good or whether it requires courage and moderation in order to have value. Some passages, for example, might seem to suggest that wisdom itself does not benefit a person without moderation (e.g. *Laws* 709E7–710A2). Without courage and moderation, (a) wisdom will sometimes not find expression in action, and (b) may itself be undermined. But we might still see this as a case of wisdom retaining (at least part of) its value, while the person loses other goods. Plato, however, may not have been especially concerned to insist that wisdom retains at least some of its value even in these cases, since in the absence of courage and moderation, wisdom itself is quickly undermined.

Dependency in the Republic Before considering in more detail how the Dependency Thesis is embodied in Magnesia's ethical life, we can gain a valuable contrasting perspective by looking back at the *Republic*. It is surprisingly difficult to determine the *Republic's* position on the Dependency Thesis. As a first sign of this difficulty, consider the *Republic's* first and best-known classification of goods. As we saw in Section 2.7, the famous classification of goods at the beginning of Book 2 that sets the terms for Plato's task in the rest of the *Republic* is the distinction between things good as ends and things good as means. As we also saw, this is a different distinction than that (p.186) between Dependent and Independent Goods. But further, it is tempting to see the *Republic* 2 passage as giving a verdict about certain goods that is incompatible with the Dependency Thesis. There Plato counts sight, health, hearing, and harmless pleasures as things that are good for their own sake or good as ends (*Rep.* 357B-C, 367D1). Since there is no hint of any qualification to the claim that these are good for their own sake, we might understand this as asserting that although sight and health may have bad consequences for some people (i.e. those lacking virtue), they are, at least to some extent, good for anyone who possesses them.¹¹⁸ But according to the *Laws*, sight, health, and hearing are Dependent Goods and thus only good for virtuous people (*Laws* 661B-C).

But perhaps we need see no conflict here. The *Republic* passage comes early in the text and the specific examples may not matter much: perhaps all that Plato is trying to do here is to make the means/end distinction clear with the help of a few intuitively plausible examples and is not concerned with the ultimate analysis of particular cases. Moreover, Plato does not explicitly say that hearing and so on benefit people regardless of their character, and adopting the means/end distinction does not exclude also holding the Dependency Thesis. Plato can go on to claim that keen hearing is a non-instrumental Dependent Good for virtuous people and that it is neither instrumentally nor non-instrumentally good for the unvirtuous. Indeed, asserting the Dependency Thesis at this point in the *Republic* would either be question-begging or a case of laying down a promissory note that could only be redeemed much later.

Nevertheless, there are obstacles to such a compatibilist interpretation. First, on this line, we might expect Plato at some point in the *Republic* to state the Dependency Thesis explicitly. We should especially expect this, since the Dependency Thesis would be an enormous help in proving the *Republic's* central ethical claim, that is, that a just person is always better off than an unjust person, no matter how other goods are distributed between them. The Dependency Thesis would allow Plato to show that no Dependent Good is of any benefit to an unjust person. But, as we shall see shortly, there is no unequivocal textual evidence in the *Republic* for the Dependency Thesis. Second, the

Dependency Thesis sits uneasily with the rest of the *Republic* and Plato at least flirts with a different sort of theory.

(p.187) Let us first consider some of the textual evidence. I shall consider three passages that might be thought to assert the Dependency Thesis. The first is Plato's description in Book 4 of the just person.

One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other . . . he harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. (*Rep.* 443D1–E2)

The most that this passage claims is that before pursuing anything the *Laws* would count as a Dependent Good, one should establish a just condition of soul and then give priority to maintaining this condition of soul over the attainment of any Dependent Good. Since the just person is right to do this, we may conclude that the course of action that establishes and maintains one's own justice is always better for the person than any other course of action, no matter how other goods are distributed among the available courses of action. But this only requires that the good of justice should always outweigh the benefit of any amount of other goods; it does not require that other goods are only good for the just person.

The second passage comes from Plato's first statement, at the end of Book 4, of the answer to the question of whether justice is more profitable than injustice. This passage goes on to claim that the just person is always better off to give priority to a just condition of soul.

This inquiry looks ridiculous to me now that justice and injustice have been shown to be as we described. Even if one has every kind of food and drink, lots of money, and every sort of power to rule, life is thought to be not worth living when the body's nature is ruined. So even if someone can do whatever he wishes, except what will free him from vice and injustice and make him acquire justice and virtue, how can his life be worth living when his soul—the very thing by which he lives—is ruined and in turmoil? (*Rep.* 445A5–B3)

In this passage, Plato goes further and claims that an unjust condition of soul is sufficient to make one's life miserable, no matter what other goods one has. But Plato does not claim that no other good can be of any benefit to the unjust person. In the terms of the metaphor of bodily health, Plato (p.188) claims that a person with a ruined physical constitution is miserable, no matter what kind of food and drink he has. He does not claim that a person with a ruined constitution is not better off if he has some food and drink. (He might, so to speak, be better off dead, but while living with his disease, it may be better for him to have food and drink than to suffer hunger and thirst.) Perhaps Plato means to suggest the stronger point that if one's health is

totally ruined, then no external good is of any benefit at all. If I am unable to move and wracked with great pain, perhaps no external good would be of any use to me. Is Plato claiming that injustice is the psychic equivalent of such a complete physical collapse? He does not say this and he does not think that every form of injustice involves a complete collapse of one's ability to set and fulfill goals. If we accept the intuitive appeal of the idea that justice is a form of psychic health, we shall expect that injustice will tend to interfere seriously with the proper use of one's other goods, but this is a much weaker claim than the Dependency Thesis.

The first two passages refrain from asserting the Dependency Thesis, but the third suggests that Plato is not willing to rely on it. In Book 2, Socrates claims that justice is both good for its own sake and for its consequences. But his interlocutors demand that Socrates leave entirely aside any appeal to the good consequences of justice; he is to show that the life of the just person is always better than that of the unjust without taking into consideration the 'rewards and reputation' that come from justice. Plato accepts the challenge and is satisfied that he has met it by the close of the dialogue (*Rep.* 612B). But near the very end of the *Republic*, Plato lets the 'rewards and reputation' coming from justice, back into consideration. He makes two points. First, the gods have arranged things so that the bad things the just person suffers turn out to be better for him in the long run.

[E]verything that comes to someone who is loved by the gods, insofar as it comes from the gods themselves, is the best possible, unless it is the inevitable punishment for some mistake he made in a former life . . . the same is true of a just person who falls into poverty or disease or some other apparent evil, namely, that this will end well for him, either during his lifetime or after he has died, for the gods never neglect anyone who eagerly wishes to become just . . . and must we not suppose that the opposite is true of an unjust person? (*Rep.* 612E8–613B4)

(p.189) Plato's point is not that poverty or disease is not in any way bad for the just person, but that the present harm is outweighed by future benefits.¹¹⁹ The 'opposite' that we would expect to happen to unjust people is that the present gains they make in goods such as health are outweighed by future harms. The idea that goods such as health are of short-run benefit to the unjust but are outweighed by future evils, is strongly suggested by Plato's second point here. This is that, even leaving the gods aside and looking only at consequences coming from human beings, just people 'for the most part' by the end of their lives have a favorable balance of good consequences and the unjust an unfavorable balance. Just people usually have a good reputation, rule if they wish, and marry and give children in marriage to whom they wish (*Rep.* 613D). Clever but unjust people are like 'runners who run well for the first part of the course, but not for the second. They leap away sharply at first, but they become ridiculous by the end and go off uncrowned with their ears drooping on their shoulders' (*Rep.* 613B10–C2).

As for the unjust people, the majority of them, even if they escape detection when they are young, are caught by the end of the race and are ridiculed. And by the time they get old, they have become wretched, for

they are insulted by foreigners and citizens, beaten with whips, and made to suffer . . . punishments, such as racking and burning . . . (*Rep.* 613D5–E2)

These empirical generalizations about unjust people are dubious, but they would be entirely inept if Plato held the Dependency Thesis. If the benefit of the sorts of goods that unjust people could acquire were dependent on their possessor being virtuous, there would be no need for the hazardous claim that unjust people usually lose these goods and acquire evils when they get older. If Plato held the Dependency Thesis what he should do when he reintroduces external goods is point out that their benefit is dependent on their possessor being virtuous. (Moreover, the Dependent Bads that the unjust are usually supposed to suffer when older would, in fact, be better or less bad for them than the Dependent Goods they had when younger.) Plato does not do this and simply pursues a line of argument that is only needed if he is no longer willing to rely on the Dependency Thesis and which rests on what he himself must have thought was at least a highly controversial premiss.

(**p.190**) Although these passages are not decisive, we can also see why Plato might be uncomfortable with the Dependency Thesis in the *Republic* and discern the inchoate outlines of an alternative approach.¹²⁰ I have argued in Chapter 1 that if virtue is required in order to benefit from the possession of Dependent Goods, then neither auxiliaries nor producers can benefit from their possession of Dependent Goods in the *Republic*. This is not simply because they lack the sort of knowledge required for virtue in *Republic* Book 4. As we saw, both classes have false beliefs about the good and the goodness of virtue that would disqualify them from benefiting, even if all that were required to benefit from Dependent Goods were true beliefs about what justice is and what sort of good it is. Although, as we saw in Chapter 1, Plato is quite pessimistic about non-philosophers in the *Republic*, there are some signs that he may have allowed them to benefit from the possession of some Dependent Goods. Instead of explicitly making virtue a necessary condition of benefit, Plato ordinally ranks with regard to virtue and happiness the different kinds of lives he distinguishes, by reference to which part of the soul rules in the person—the philosophic or just life, the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic, and the tyrannical lives. This ordinal ranking is not in itself inconsistent with the sharp cut-off postulated by the Dependency Thesis, since an ordinal ranking does not commit Plato to the claim that each class of person is happy to some degree: the tyrant, for example, is clearly miserable. Plato might think that since all classes other than philosophers lack virtue, they all fail to benefit from their Dependent Goods, although the timocrats are the least badly off.

But there are further reasons that suggest a modification of the Dependency Thesis beyond the mere fact that Plato supplies an ordinal ranking of kinds of lives. The ordinal ranking comes during Plato's discussion of the different kinds of lives led by people who are ruled by different parts of the soul. This division of the soul may give Plato reason to recognize exceptions to the Dependency Thesis. The next chapter discusses the *Republic*'s psychological theory in greater

detail, but as we have already seen in Chapter 1, the *Republic* divides the soul into three parts—the Reasoning part, the Spirited part, and the Appetitive part. Each of the three parts seems to have its own good and the person's good seems to be the common good formed by the composite of the goods of the three parts. Plato does (**p.191**) not provide much detail about the exact nature of the good of each of these parts or about how they combine to form the good of the whole soul (the composite is not necessarily a simple aggregate).¹²¹ Nevertheless, we can see how an alternative theory to the Dependency Thesis could be developed on this basis. Presumably the good of the Spirited part consists, roughly, in the long-run satisfaction of its desires for honor and predominance, and the good of the Appetitive part consists in the long run satisfaction of its desires for bodily goods. Plato need not think that it is *pro tanto* beneficial, e.g., to the Appetitive part to satisfy each of its desires; perhaps there are certain insatiable, bestial, or unnecessary desires whose satisfaction is in no way good for the Appetitive part. But it seems plausible that the good of the Appetitive part consists in the long-run satisfaction of at least some subset of bodily appetites. On the basis of this account, Plato can explain in the *Republic* how things other than the welfare of the Reasoning part affect the person's happiness. In addition to achieving what the Reasoning part thinks of as good for itself, the person can attain the goods of the lower parts of the soul and thus be benefited by goods other than virtue and knowledge, such as honor and the satisfaction of certain bodily appetites.

If we take seriously the idea that each part of the soul has its own good consisting in the satisfaction of its own characteristic desires and that the good of the person is a composite of these, then there may be reason to allow that some goods can be attained for the lower parts of the soul (and thus for the person), even if the person lacks virtue. We thus have reason to recognize exceptions to the Dependency Thesis and such exceptions could occur in more than one sort of case. Consider, for example, a case in which the overall good of the soul requires some significant sacrifice of bodily goods. Here the bodily goods sacrificed are the objects of exactly the sort of moderate and wholesome appetites whose satisfaction the Reasoning part would endorse, if they did not in this case conflict with the more important goods of the other parts of the soul. But the Appetitive part cannot take into account the welfare of the other parts of the soul. From its point of view, it is simply missing out on the sorts of items that it values. It thus seems plausible to hold that, at least in some cases, the Appetitive part of the soul would be better off if the person pursued the bodily goods and did not act in accordance with a true judgment of what is best overall. Even if the (**p.192**) person would be better off rejecting the bodily goods in order to gain honor or some good of the Reasoning part, why would the Appetitive part never be better off if its desires had been satisfied? (Even if the Appetitive part is not on the whole better off, there may be a conflict with the Dependency Thesis if it benefits to some extent or in some degree.) Exceptions to the Dependency Thesis seem even more likely where there is no conflict

between the goods of the different parts, but the person pursues, e.g., moderate bodily pleasures, while lacking virtue. Even if people lack a genuine appreciation of what is good and are unaware of what benefits the soul as a whole, it seems possible for them to identify and pursue, with some degree of adequacy, long-run healthful bodily satisfactions. In a virtuous person, the Reasoning part will endorse (some) of these satisfactions as benefiting the Appetitive part and the whole person. But why should the same satisfaction not benefit the Appetitive part and the whole person, if the Reasoning part fails to have a proper conception of the end and endorses the Appetitive part's desires without reflection?¹²² In sum, once Plato allows that the parts of the soul have the characteristic desires that they do, it seems that the most he can plausibly hope for is that, in the long run, the goods of each part tend to coincide. There seems to be no clear rationale for ruling out the possibility that the lower parts can benefit from Dependent Goods, even in a person who lacks virtue.

The possibility of benefiting from Dependent Goods without virtue also seems to be accepted by Plato in his two arguments in Book 9 about the pleasantness of the just life. Although Plato argues that the philosopher has by far the most pleasant life, he allows that both timocrats and oligarchs, although they lack virtue, have some pleasures: the timocrat enjoys the pleasures of the Spirited part and the oligarch enjoys those of the Appetitive part. Since Plato presents considerations about pleasure as part of his answer to the question about the happiness of different kinds of lives, it seems reasonable to hold that such pleasures benefit those who have them, even if they are not virtuous.

This alternative theory fits well with the passages in the *Republic* that seem only to claim that the badness of unjust action outweighs any possible benefit. Plato can hold that the good of justice always outweighs any good of the lower parts without holding that the goods of the lower parts benefit (**p.193**) the lower parts (and thus the person) only when the whole soul is just. Although the Reasoning part may usually be much better than the lower parts of the soul even at determining what is in the long-run interest of the lower parts themselves, it is hard to see why attaining something good for the lower parts of the soul requires that the Reasoning part possess the sort of knowledge of the good needed for virtue.

I have argued that the *Republic* does not explicitly endorse the Dependency Thesis and that some of Plato's remarks show how an alternative theory may be developed. The *Republic* at times also seems to suggest that the satisfaction of the lower parts of the soul is relatively trivial.¹²³ But we must distinguish two different ways in which their satisfaction may seem trivial. First, it may be the case that the Reasoning part never finds much good in the sorts of things that the lower parts go for: the lower parts characteristically have (nearly) worthless objects. Although Plato does not think that honor and the satisfaction of the bodily appetites are the most important things in life, he need not deny that

some of these are genuine goods and that reason can endorse their pursuit as genuinely worthwhile. The more troubling point about the satisfaction of the lower parts concerns the limitations of their point of view. The Spirited part pursues its objects because it desires honor or predominance, not because these honors are genuinely good or fine. Similarly, the Appetitive part pursues its own satisfactions for its own reasons. For the Spirited part, for example, to achieve its own good is for it to satisfy the moderated desires it has for honor. In achieving its own good, however, it does not come to adopt the outlook of the Reasoning part. But the importance to the Reasoning part of the Spirited part's being satisfied is not clear. The Reasoning part might think it is good to pursue certain honors because such honors are good (they are a deserved response to real merit), but this is not the same as finding it good that the Spirited part of the soul is satisfied. (Similarly, certain bodily or sensory pleasures may have something fine about them, but the Appetitive part is not sensitive to the fineness of its replenishments.) The Spirited part is satisfied, not because it shares the Reasoning part's view about why such honors are worth pursuing, but because its own partial, and thus faulty, conception of what is worthwhile has been achieved. If the Spirited part is unsatisfied, it may interfere with the other parts and the Reasoning part (**p.194**) may have reason to avoid the frustration of the lower two parts. But this does not make it reasonable for the Reasoning part to attribute much intrinsic importance to the satisfaction of the lower parts. Seeing to their satisfaction will be important primarily in order to prevent disruption of the soul's harmony. Attaining certain honors or certain bodily or sensory pleasures may be good from the Reasoning part's view and by its own standards, but this requires more than that the desires of lower parts are satisfied or that they enjoy their characteristic pleasures.

We have thus seen one way to avoid the Dependency Thesis in the *Republic* which requires taking seriously the idea that the parts of the soul have their own evaluative outlook and their own good. If Plato does not, in fact, hold the Dependency Thesis in the *Republic*, he may have a somewhat less pessimistic, although still low, evaluation of the lives of non-philosophers than he did in the *Phaedo*. But this view requires a troubling lack of integration between the Reasoning part's standards of valuation and the person's own spirited and appetitive desires. In Chapter 3, we shall see that Plato has a more unified conception of the soul in the *Laws*.

The Wisdom of Non-Philosophers We can set our following discussion of whether non-philosophers can possess the virtue of wisdom in a broader context by considering an alternative to the account I have developed. As we have seen, the central problem for non-philosophers in the *Republic* is that their ends are set by the lower parts of the soul and the lower parts of the soul fail to grasp the features that make things genuinely valuable. So one way in which the ethical standing of non-philosophers might be improved is if Plato revised upward the capacities of the lower parts of the soul. On such an account, even if the

education of non-philosophers does not give them a rational appreciation of the good, more sophisticated desires and emotions of the lower parts might allow for a significant improvement in their ethical character. I shall argue in Chapter 3 that the *Laws* gives up the *Republic's* partitioning of the soul. But even now, it is clear that Plato in the later period is not sympathetic to the view that a good ethical character can be constituted simply by improving the emotions and desires that the *Republic* associates with the lower parts of the soul. We can see this by turning to the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus*.

(p.195) In the *Statesman*, as we have seen, Plato holds that there are two broad classes of people: the courageous and the moderate. Although it is a mistake to read the *Republic's* theory of parts of the soul into the *Statesman*, the character of each class of people is formed, more or less, around a natural tendency to pursue ends that the *Republic* would associate with the lower parts of the soul. The courageous are self-assertive and pursue predominance and honor; the moderate pursue a comfortable and peaceful life. Should we infer that Plato now thinks that these natural tendencies, although not the highest or best form of virtue, are sufficient for a significant sort of excellence of character? Despite the fact that Plato calls these natural tendencies 'virtues', it is clear that the answer to this question is 'No'. These character states are not near misses at genuine virtue, but are serious defects. People who have only these natural tendencies without further education are excluded from citizenship in a good city ruled by the science of statesmanship because they fail to achieve genuine virtue. The persistence of these two natural conditions, without further education, results in the destruction of cities (*Stsmn.* 307D). What these people require is an education that imparts to them 'genuinely true and firmly settled opinion about what is fine, just, and good' (*Stsmn.* 309C5–7). These true opinions are a 'divine bond' that is akin to the 'immortal part' of the soul and this bond binds or works upon the rational part alone and not upon the mortal part. Thus these true opinions should be supported by reasons and not just trained emotions and desires. The *Statesman* is insistent that the sort of virtue necessary for citizenship in a good city requires an education that inculcates a rational grasp of what is fine. It is essential that the citizens be brought to see and accept good reasons for their views about the actions and character states that they recognize as fine, just, and good. Reliance on anything less is a sufficient ground for exclusion from citizenship in a good city.

Toward the end of the *Timaeus*, Plato again considers the role of reason, as opposed to the emotions and desires associated with the lower parts of the soul, in leading a good life.

Let these remarks suffice, then, on the subject of . . . how a man should both lead and be led by himself in order to have the best prospects for leading a rational life [*κατὰ λόγον*]. Indeed, we must give an even higher priority to doing our utmost to make sure that the part that is to do the

leading is fitted for that task in the finest (**p.196**) and best possible way . . . There are . . . three distinct types of soul that reside within us, each with its own motions . . . We ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as god's gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit. This, of course, is the type of soul that . . . resides in the top part of our bodies. It raises us up away from the earth and toward what is akin to us in heaven . . . For it is from heaven, the place from which our souls were originally born, that the divine part suspends our head . . . So if a man has become absorbed in his appetites [*επιθυμίας*] or his ambitions [*φιλονικίας*] and takes great pains to further them, all his thoughts are bound to become merely mortal . . . But if a man has seriously devoted himself to the love of learning and to true wisdom [*τὰς ἀληθεῖς φρονήσεις*], if he has exercised these aspects of himself above all, then there is absolutely no way that his thoughts can fail to be immortal and divine, should truth come within his grasp . . . [C]onstantly caring for his divine part as he does, keeping well-ordered the guiding spirit that lives within him, he must indeed be supremely happy. Now there is but one way to care for anything, and that is to provide for it the nourishment and the motions that are proper to it. And the motions that have an affinity to the divine part within us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe. These, surely, are the ones which each of us should follow. We should redirect the revolutions in our heads that were thrown off course at our birth, by coming to learn the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, and so bring into conformity with its objects our faculty of understanding [*τῷ κατανοούμενῷ τὸ κατανοοῦν*], as it was in its original condition. And when this conformity is complete, we shall have achieved our goal: the best life offered to humankind by the gods, both now and for evermore. (*Tim.* 89D2–90D7)

Plato goes on to describe the different sorts of reincarnation that the different kinds of soul undergo.

Land animals in the wild, moreover, came from men who had no tincture of philosophy and who made no study of the universe whatsoever, because they no longer made use of the revolutions in their heads but followed instead the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest [i.e. *thumos*]. (*Tim.* 91E2–6)

We do not need to decide whether to take such talk of reincarnation literally. But in the *Timaeus* as well, Plato insists that a decent human life requires an advanced form of rational education and that genuine excellence in character cannot be achieved simply through the training of spirited emotions and appetitive desires. Specifically, it is by studying orderly objects by means of mathematics that our thoughts become orderly and in the condition (**p.197**) requisite for leading a good life. The *Timaeus* attributes special prominence to

the study of astronomy in attaining our own proper condition. And, as we have seen, all the citizens of Magnesia are expected to develop a fairly sophisticated, mathematically based grasp of the movements of the stars.

The late dialogues thus seem to agree that the training of spirited emotions and appetitive desires is not enough to produce a good state of character and a good life. Given the sort of creatures that we are, the perfection of our non-rational faculties by themselves is not sufficient for a good life. This is precisely what we should expect on the basis of the Dependency Thesis and the two passages at *Laws* 631B-D and 660E-661E that make the possession of wisdom a necessary condition of benefiting from one's Dependent Goods.

Let us now turn to the question of how far reason will be developed in non-philosophers in Magnesia. The minimal formal requirement in Plato's statement of the Dependency Thesis is that non-philosophers possess the virtue of wisdom (*phronēsis* or *nous*) which is the leader of the other virtues and of the Dependent Goods (*Laws* 631C6, D5, 660E3). In Book 3, which follows the two earlier statements of the Dependency Thesis, Plato returns to the importance of wisdom. '[O]ne should not pray or be eager to have everything follow one's own wish, but rather to have one's wish follow one's wisdom [*φρονήσει*]. This is what a city and each one of us should pray and strive for—to possess reason [*νοῦν*]' (*Laws* 687E5-9). So having wisdom or reason is a goal that is to be pursued by 'each one of us', that is, by all the citizens. Nevertheless, we might worry that Plato in the *Laws* sometimes distinguishes wisdom from true opinion and suggests that only those who have gone through very advanced studies will have wisdom. '[T]he one who frames the laws will set up guards—some grounded in wisdom [*φρονήσεως*], some in true opinion [*ἀληθοῦς δόξης*]—so that reason [*δόνοῦς*] will knit together all these things and may declare that they follow moderation and justice rather than wealth or love of honor [*φιλοτιμίᾳ*]' (*Laws* 632C4-D1). But even here, Plato emphasizes that the laws are to aim at inculcating justice in the citizens and has just said that justice includes wisdom (*Laws* 631C7-8).

A second passage helps to resolve the apparent inconsistency. In Book 3, the Athenian reminds his interlocutors of their opening discussion about the proper goal of the laws. (**p.198**)

[Y]ou two maintained that the good lawgiver should lay down all his enactments for the sake of war; I, on the other hand, maintained that this would constitute an exhortation to set up laws for only one virtue out of four, whereas what should be done was to look to the whole of virtue, and especially at the first part, the leader of all virtue, which would be wisdom,

and intelligence and belief [*φρόνησις δ' εἰη τοῦτο καὶ νοῦς καὶ δόξα*], with eros and desire following upon these. (*Laws* 688A4-B4)

What this passage suggests is that the cognitive condition that is to play the role of the leader of the other virtues and that is a condition of the Dependent Goods being valuable for their possessor includes both some kinds of true opinion, as well as more epistemically advanced states.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, insofar as ‘wisdom’ is the name of a virtue, it is partly honorific and applies in a strict sense only to the highest sort of cognition.¹²⁵ But since some sorts of true opinion are sufficient to make the Dependent Goods valuable for their possessor, Plato is quite willing to call such a state ‘wisdom’ and to hold that the goal of Magnesia’s laws is to bring about at least such a state in all the citizens.¹²⁶

Directly after the passage quoted above (*Laws* 687E5-9), in which Plato claims that wisdom is the goal for all citizens, he goes on to elaborate what he has in mind by means of a contrast with the vice of ignorance (*ἀμαθία*) or foolishness (*ἀνοίᾳ*): ‘[D]issonance between pleasure and pain and the belief that is according to reason [*τὴν κατὰ λόγον δόξαν*] I assert to be the ultimate and greatest ignorance [*ἀμαθίαν*]’ (*Laws* 689A7-9). This belief ‘according to reason’ is the person’s belief about what is fine or good (*Laws* 689A5-6).

[N]othing that pertains to ruling is to be given to citizens who are ignorant in the above respects; and they are to be blamed for their ignorance, even if they are shrewd at calculating . . . It is just the opposite sort who are to be proclaimed wise [*σοφοίς*—even if, as in the proverb, they ‘know neither how to read or swim’—and the ruling offices are to be handed over to them on the ground that they are the wise ones [*ἔμφροσιν*]. For without consonance, my friends, how can wisdom [*φρονήσεως*—even in its smallest form—come about? It is not possible. But the finest and greatest of consonances would most justly be called the greatest wisdom [*σοφία*], and whoever partakes of this evidently lives according to reason [*κατὰ λόγον*]. (*Laws* 689C7-D8, cf. 696C-D and 710A-B)

(p.199) If all that Plato requires for wisdom is consonance between one’s judgments of what is overall fine and good and one’s desires, then he seems to count as wisdom cases in which these judgments are entirely unreflective and do not involve any appreciation of their rational basis.¹²⁷

But as we have seen, we have good reason not to attribute such a view to Plato. Most citizens will not undergo the advanced studies received by members of the Nocturnal Council and they will not possess the sort of knowledge or understanding (*epistēmē*) that Plato contrasts with true belief. Thus they will not, for example, be able to give the sort of account of how virtue is both ‘many’ and ‘one’ that is expected of the members of the Nocturnal Council, nor does Plato say that they will have explicit beliefs about Forms as such. Magnesia will not be a city composed solely of philosophers, and most citizens will always lack the synoptic grasp of a field and the ability to respond to all sorts of challenges

that Plato associates with genuine knowledge (*epistēmē*). Thus they could, unlike genuine knowers, be persuaded to adopt false beliefs—and this is why censorship is required (cf. *Tim.* 51E). What we would like to show, however, is that non-philosophical citizens can still grasp and appreciate the basic non-sensible properties of goodness and fineness although they do not possess understanding (*epistēmē*) in a strict sense. Seeing how this is possible will require the examination of Plato's psychology and epistemology I undertake in Chapters 3 and 4. In the rest of this chapter, I consider what sort of education the citizens do get and the role of such wisdom in their ethical life.

All citizens are to learn that virtue is non-instrumentally good, that it is an Independent Good, and that it is a condition of value for all other goods. Unlike the producers and auxiliaries of the *Republic*, the non-philosophers of the *Laws* will be educated to value reason for its own sake. In the *Laws*, the 'golden cord' of reason is found within each individual and non-philosophers are capable of cooperating with reason because they recognize its value. The Athenian's justification for providing preludes to the laws also makes it clear that simply following reasonable commands, without grasping for oneself the reasons underlying them, is the condition of a slave. Thus the citizens' education will employ arguments that 'come close to philosophizing' in order to provide them with a rational grasp of the principles underlying the lawgiver's account of the good life. Although they are to (p.200) accept the guidance and superior knowledge of some, they should recognize that reason is the most valuable aspect of each human being and that thus they cannot simply accept the laws' guidance about the good life without themselves trying to grasp why what the law commands is good.

Non-philosophical citizens will, it seems, even be educated to have some true beliefs about the value of more strictly contemplative goods. And, as we also saw, they receive a sophisticated education in mathematics and in astronomy, which for Plato is a branch of theology. In both mathematics and astronomy they become aware of non-sensible principles of order. Indeed, the fundamental principle of Plato's theology in Book 10 is that the fineness and good order of the universe is explained by an intelligent, non-material cause. The stars are animated by gods and thus insofar as the motions of the stars are studied, citizens take as actual objects of study and contemplation the movements of the gods. The goodness of the heavens is connected to its order and this order is explained in non-material and non-sensible terms: that is, by reason acting for the best in mathematically determinate ways. And as we saw in the *Timaeus*, such contemplation is one central way of bringing order to the reason inside each of us. The *Philebus* provided a further account of how this is so. The study of mathematics and of mathematical astronomy involves grasping principles of order and determinacy and such principles are themselves value properties. By

grasping them, reason brings itself into a state that is both non-relationally good and good for its possessor.

A comparison with Kant may provide further illumination of Plato's views. Plato is a metaphysical or substantive realist about value. He holds that the value of things and actions is a non-relational property that they have independently of our attitudes. As Kant rejects realism as a solution to the traditional problems of metaphysics, so he rejects metaphysical or substantive realism about value. For Kant, the good will or the power of purely rational choice is 'the source and condition of all the value in the world; goodness, as it were, flows into the world from the good will, and there would be none without it.'¹²⁸ The only thing that has unconditional value is the power of purely rational choice and thus what makes any thing or action good is that it is the object of rational choice. It is rational choice that confers upon anything its value.

(p.201) For Plato, the direction of explanation runs in the opposite direction. It is the possession of the non-relational goodmaking properties that makes whatever is good good and thus it is these properties that confer goodness on reason itself. Practical rationality, for Plato, must be characterized in terms of objective value. Reason itself is made good by the fact that it constitutes a grasp of non-relational goodmaking properties. To be practically rational is to recognize the value inherent in things and to respond appropriately to it. Such appropriate recognition and response to objective value has both cognitive and desiderative aspects: it involves grasping the good and loving the good. This is not to say that any sort of practical pursuit of one's own good, even if it is correct and successful, is a seeking after what is objectively valuable. There might be creatures—e.g. various non-human sorts of animals—that could seek out what is good for them, although what is good for them is not something possessing objective value. This sort of practical inquiry, even if complex, would not be an activity of reason for Plato. Yet even in non-human animals, we should, at least in general, expect a significant coincidence between what is good for a creature and the possession of objective value. But this is not because the notion of what is good for a creature gives content to the notion of what is objectively good, but rather, because the world is providentially ordered.

This understanding of practical rationality may allow us to make progress with three important remaining issues. First, as we saw, Plato justifies explaining the basis of the law to the citizens by an appeal to freedom. In virtue of being free, people are owed an explanation of the principles governing their conduct. Nevertheless, one of the most disturbing features of Magnesia's political and social structure is its tight restrictions on the lives of citizens and on the information available to them. If Magnesia's social structure violates people's autonomy, can Plato's appeal to freedom really be sincere?

Second, in both the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, the contemplative ideal was a prominent component of the good life. Especially in the later dialogues, we find Plato relying on the idea that the goal of human life is an assimilation to god (*homoiōsis thōi*), e.g. in the digression in the *Theaetetus* (171D–177C), the Book 10 theology of the *Laws*, and in the *Timaeus* passage we have just examined. This claim may suggest an ideal that similarly calls (**p.202**) into question the value of action. David Sedley provides a fascinating account of how this tension was reflected in later Platonists.¹²⁹ Focussing on the *Timaeus*, we can ask what the result will be of assimilating our reason to the patterns provided by the World Soul. For Xenocrates and the Middle Platonists, this ideal was essentially what we would describe as moral. The patterns of the World Soul produce the cycles of the seasons and thus sustain the good order of the entire universe. Assimilation to it is the source of benevolence and other-regarding concern. In particular, against the Stoics who saw justice growing out of our natural affinity to other human beings, these Platonists saw justice deriving not from human nature, but from our assimilation to the benevolence of the World Soul.

But as Sedley points out, there is another tendency in Platonism. Plotinus, for example, sees assimilation to god as a purely intellectual assimilation to a higher being. The moral virtue of justice as psychic harmony described in *Republic* 4 is simply a quasi-virtue produced by habituation that must be transcended in the effort to reach pure intelligibles. Sedley suggests that Plotinus' interpretation, although extreme, may well be right and Sedley refers to a passage from *Republic* 7 that dismisses courage and moderation as 'so-called virtues of the soul [that] are akin' to the virtues of the body (*Rep.* 518D9–10) and to the *Timaeus* passage quoted above (*Tim.* 89D2–90D7) that locates human happiness in the godlike state of the rational soul, not in the harmony of all three parts. If this is right, it suggests a bifurcation: intellectual activity for the philosopher and a very different kind of practical virtue for others.

A third set of concerns is provided by Plato's particular conception of value properties. We may feel that a considerable range of value is missing. Mathematics and mathematical astronomy might be a salutary propaedeutic to abstract ethical reasoning, but what will ethical reasoning itself look like? And how is it related to the breathtakingly abstract notion of value sketched in the *Philebus*?

Finally, let me note a related set of issues that I shall postpone to Chapter 4. It is a standard objection against realism about the good that it creates a motivational mystery. If the good is specifiable independently of our contingent motivation and of our capacities of rational choice, what guarantees that it is motivating *for us*? If the good is specified independently of actual (**p.203**) human motivation, might it not be the case that human beings simply are indifferent to it? This problem faces Plato in an especially acute form. On the account developed, Plato accepts a very tight connection between objective

value and what is good for people. First, there is something approaching direct proportionality between the objective goodness of things and actions and their goodness for people. Second, an awareness of objective, non-relational value is a necessary condition of benefit *for the person*. These are much stronger claims than simply holding that it is good for a person to value the objectively valuable. What grounding can Plato give them? I shall take this issue up in Chapter 4, since Plato's answer to the question of why a grasp of objective goodness and fineness is good *for us* depends on his account of the sort of creatures that we are.

In the dialogues we are considering, Plato does not raise these questions explicitly in these forms. What his answer would be is, I think, clearest in the case of freedom and autonomy. On the other issues, Plato may not have a fully worked-out view and this may be reflected in controversies among later Platonists. Indeed, further reflection on the relevant issues sometimes raises problems that are more adequately articulated only later in the Greek tradition. Nevertheless, the problems are sufficiently important to warrant inquiry.

Autonomy There are aspects of Plato's thought that suggest a striking concern for freedom and autonomy. As we have seen, the appeal to the idea that Magnesia's citizens deserve to be treated as free people and benefit from such treatment is at the heart of Plato's justification of preludes in the *Laws*. But even in the *Republic* there are passages that seem to attribute value to autonomy. Consider, for example, the notorious passage from Book 9 quoted above (*Rep.* 590C-D) in which Plato advocates that members of the lower classes be 'slaves' to the philosopher rulers so that all citizens are, in one way or another, ruled by reason. What draws our attention in this passage is the suggestion—which we inevitably find shocking—that in a just city almost all citizens will occupy the position of 'slaves', at least insofar as their lives are directed by others. But we should also notice that in this passage Plato takes it as obvious that it is better for a person to be ruled by an inner principle than by something external: 'it is better for everyone to be ruled by (**p.204**) divine reason, preferably within himself and his own' (*Rep.* 590D3-5). It would not be wrong to be reminded of certain modern theorists.

I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer—deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or other men as if I were a thing, or animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realizing them.¹³⁰

Insofar as we find the ideal of autonomy as self-direction attractive, we will tend to see Plato's use of the language of freedom in the *Laws* as disingenuous or as applying to only a few people or to ideal circumstances. But we can better understand what is going on in terms of Plato's theory of value.

For Plato, what is essential to rationality and to the possibility of benefit is that one actually grasps and responds to genuine value. The value of ethical reflection itself is constituted by the value of the psychic states and activities it involves and issues in: ethical reflection is good for the person to the extent that it replaces false beliefs or ignorance with true beliefs, develops rational support for true beliefs, and eventually attains knowledge. If one thought, as for example Kant did, that the goodness of any end depends on its being the object of free, rational choice, then paternalistic attempts to restrict and guide inquiry will be deeply problematic. Indeed, insofar as paternalistic means render the choice less than fully rational, they rob such choice of any value. Using paternalistic means that infringe upon the rationality of the person's choice in order to make it more likely that the person chooses well is simply an impossible strategy.¹³¹

Plato's evaluation of such cases must be more nuanced. Many things that would be rejected by a Kantian would also be seen as problematic by Plato. Getting people to do the right thing out of unreflective habit or because they are deceived about the reasons for doing it, would fail to bring them into the right relation to values and would thus not benefit them. (Although Plato might think that even this is less bad for such people than allowing their bad desires to have free expression.) Nevertheless, if one (**p.205**) could be brought to grasp and love genuine value by a route that did not fully respect the person's autonomy, Plato would not have the grounds for objection that Kant would. Moreover, the case for paternalistic restrictions may be stronger if one is trying to develop something less than full-blown knowledge (*epistēmē*).¹³²

Why, then, for Plato is it better for rational direction to come from inside rather than outside? It is not because self-determination is valuable in itself or is a condition of value.¹³³ The claim that it is better for rational direction to come from inside is simply an affirmation of the ultimate end as knowing the truth and ordering things in accordance with it. Unless rational direction comes from within, the person's reason is not grasping values in the best way. Only when directing reason is within oneself is one's own Reasoning part doing what it is intended to do, that is, bringing itself into good order by appreciation of genuine value and ordering other things accordingly. It is better to have something akin to such rule imposed on one from outside than to have no kind of order in one's life, but this is a *lower* sort of value, the realization of which frustrates the higher capacities of the soul. Reason is an inherent orderer and thus it fails to realize its own nature insofar as it serves as passive material to be ordered from without.

Assimilation to god and the virtues Sedley rightly calls attention to a little-noticed passage from the *Republic*, that is, Plato's claim that courage and moderation are 'so-called' virtues that are, unlike wisdom, 'akin' to the virtues of the body (*Rep.* 518D9–10).¹³⁴ This passage presents an issue of central importance to Plato's ethics that has not received much attention, although I do not think it is the issue to which Sedley himself points. The *Republic* passage suggests, Sedley holds, an 'unfavourable contrast of moral with intellectual virtue'.¹³⁵ But what the passage draws is, rather, an unfavorable contrast between the good condition of the lower parts of the soul and the good condition of the Reasoning part. This is not to draw an unfavorable contrast between moral and intellectual virtue or between strictly contemplative goals and other-regarding goals, since nothing rules out the possibility that we might have *rational* motivations for moral virtue or other-regarding concern. If so, Plato's relative dismissiveness of the good condition of the lower two parts would not call such concern into question.

(p.206) There are two lessons to draw from this passage. First, the *Republic* passage does raise doubts about the value of the good condition of the lower parts of the soul and in so doing raises doubts about the value of the virtues of courage and moderation insofar as they consist in such conditions.¹³⁶ The fundamental reason for Plato's relatively low estimation of these conditions is that even at their best the lower parts cannot grasp the truth about value and appropriately respond to it. This is an important point, since modern virtue theory often sees as one of its advantages the fact that it gives a central place to feelings and emotions in its understanding of a good human character. Insofar as Plato sees such emotions and desires as associated with the lower parts of the soul, he cannot give them such primacy.

The second point is that in order to see other-regarding concern as having a higher value we need to see it as not cut off from the values grasped in contemplation. On some interpretations of Aristotle, for example, there is such a split between contemplative activity at its best and fine practical activity. On such an interpretation, philosophy and other forms of contemplative activity might recognize, among other things, the value inherent in fine ethical activity. Nevertheless, this sort of contemplation does not, even in part, constitute the value of ethical practice; the value of good ethical practice is complete before contemplation enters the picture. The understanding of the Dependency Thesis that I have advanced points to a way of bringing contemplative activity and fine practical activity more closely together. What the Dependency Thesis requires is that good ethical practice, including that displaying a concern for others, should proceed from a grasp of the value of such activity. In its most perfect form, practice will proceed from the sort of knowledge of the good and the fine that the philosopher seeks in contemplation.¹³⁷ But as I shall argue in Chapter 4, good ethical activity of the sort open to non-philosophers still proceeds from a less clear and accurate grasp of the very same properties. And in Chapter 5, I

argue that Plato grounds the other-regarding concern involved in good ethical activity in a response to objective value.

Value Properties Finally, we must take up the question of the content of value properties for Plato and, in particular, of how far they are mathematical. This is an unusually contentious and often obscure issue. Rather than argue for a (**p. 207**) particular interpretation, I shall try to show that the account developed so far is consistent with a wide variety of reasonable interpretations. The strongest interpretation would be that all value properties *are* mathematical properties. This is, perhaps, suggested by Myles Burnyeat.

No-one would feel the force of the answer [to the question 'What is the Good?'] 'Good is One' let alone believe it unless they had previously come to feel the force of the idea that goodness resides in abstract mathematical harmony and proportion . . . and that these are the bonds of unity . . . It is still harder to believe that the goodness which resides in mathematical relationships is one and the same as the goodness that one needs to govern oneself and others . . . Speusippus, like Aristotle, had every reason for resisting Plato's proposal for mathematizing ethics and moralizing mathematics. But the very fact of resistance shows us what Plato's proposal was.¹³⁸

Does this mean that ethical properties such as good, fine, justice, and virtue are identical with various mathematical properties?¹³⁹ Even if Plato holds such a view, it is neither one that he works out in detail in the dialogues nor one that we find (nor would he expect us to find, prior to the appropriate mathematical studies) intuitively plausible.

Nevertheless, whatever the proper account of the nature of value properties is, it is important to show that non-philosophers' thought about values can be continuous with philosophers' knowledge of the same values. We see two tendencies in the *Laws*. First, Magnesia is committed to the central importance of political and social structures designed to encourage ethical and political discussion. We have seen the emphasis placed on the ethical education of citizens and, in Chapter 5, we shall see that the political arrangements of the city require citizens to devote a considerable amount of their time to political and ethical conversation as part of carrying out their civic duties. The citizens are expected to find such political activity not a burdensome necessity, but a valued part of their lives. This discussion will not make explicit reference to Forms. There will, however, be discussion about what justice or courage requires. Other advanced topics that are less directly practical will receive something like metaphorical treatment. As we have seen, for example, the idea that free citizens deserve a certain sort of treatment is a publicly available regulative principle in Magnesia. But underlying it is a complicated story about the objectivity of value and, ultimately, a psychological and epistemological theory about how Forms enter into everyday thought.

(p.208) The theology advanced in Book 10 is based on what Plato takes to be true claims about divinity. Moreover, Magnesia's theology gives Plato a way to articulate a standard of objectivity that does not require full metaphysical detail. The main targets of Plato's attack on atheism are those who deny the objectivity of value. And in an implicit rejection of Protagorean relativism, Magnesians are taught that god, not man, is the measure of all things (*Laws* 716C). This is not, however, to make Euthyphro's mistake, since although the Athenian does not go into details, he makes it clear that ethical standards are not dependent on god. God is seen as bringing the world into its best condition and doing so because he is responding to the goodness of this order. As such, he provides a paradigm for the citizens' own actions and also allows them a way of understanding that certain Dependent Goods are objectively good. They, for example, will not be able to choose health on the basis of a Timaean account of the good order that health instantiates. But they will choose health because it allows them to engage in virtuous activity and because it instantiates what they can recognize, at a very general level, as the proper kind of providentially designed natural order.

The second tendency is more explicitly mathematical. The citizens of Magnesia will be educated from youth onwards to understand goodness as constituted by the order imposed on what is disorderly. In the simple forms of harmony in song, and rhythm in dance, goodness is constituted by the order (*taxis*) imposed on the naturally disorderly movements of voice and body. But the citizens are also educated to grasp more sophisticated forms of order. Their study of incommensurable magnitudes is valuable because such truths are worth knowing apart from their application and the mental acuity they develop (*Laws* 817E ff.). But such studies also allow the citizens to realize for themselves that the motions of the heavens are not, as is usually thought, disorderly, but rather display the divine order of circular motion which is akin to the movement of reason itself. The instantiation of this order in the stars and planets allows Plato to infer that the intelligence which is the cause of this order must be 'good with every virtue' (*Laws* 899B6). The teaching in the prelude to the theological law goes further and claims that it is fundamentally the same form of order that constitutes virtue in souls as well as in bodies and in the world at large (*Laws* 906C2–6).

(p.209) We may see a related development in the *Statesman*. In the *Philebus*, Plato suggests that virtue can be understood as a mixture of the unlimited and a determinant (*Phil.* 26B5–C2). The *Statesman* seems to try to work this idea out. Plato flirts with the claim that virtuous actions and states of soul can be understood as mean states in a sense that is at least quasi-mathematical. The particular version of this view sketched in the *Statesman* is not worked out in much detail and does not seem especially promising.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, perhaps more important than the details of the proposal is that it suggests a quasi-

mathematical account of the ethical value of particular actions and character states.

We shall be able to spell out more precisely the continuity between non-philosophers' thought about value and philosophers' knowledge of value only after considering Plato's psychology and epistemology in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 4, I shall argue that non-philosophers can have access in their ethical thinking to the very same non-sensible value properties that philosophers know.

2.13 Virtue and Happiness

We began this chapter by looking at some of Plato's claims in the early books of the *Laws* about the goodness of virtue and the relation between its goodness and the goodness of other things. Let us end the chapter by examining the *Laws'* position on the relation between virtue and happiness. Plato, throughout his career including the *Laws*, held the principle of rational eudaimonism.¹⁴¹

The principle of rational eudaimonism: For each individual, the ultimate end of all her rational actions is her own (greatest) happiness.

Insofar as she is rational, each person pursues her own greatest happiness for its own sake, not for the sake of anything else and she pursues everything else for the sake of her own greatest happiness. Thus if rational agents are to be virtuous and act virtuously, virtue must contribute optimally to their own happiness. The relation between virtue and happiness was a central concern of Plato's ethics at all stages and much scholarly attention has been (**p.210**) devoted to analyzing the positions of various dialogues. So we can begin by focusing on some of the claims that were prominent in previous dialogues. I use 'virtue' here to mean 'complete virtue', that is, the state consisting in the possession of courage, justice, moderation, and wisdom. Most straightforwardly, Plato in the *Laws*, like all other ancient ethical theorists, holds that being virtuous is necessary for being happy. The necessity of virtue for happiness follows easily from the Dependency Thesis and Plato explicitly draws our attention to this fact (e.g. *Laws* 660E5–661E4).¹⁴² Since nothing benefits or is good for a person who lacks virtue, and happiness requires having at least some goods, an unvirtuous person can never be happy. The Dependency Thesis is not, however, required for holding that virtue is necessary for happiness, since it might be the case that virtue is so great a good that a person cannot be happy without it.¹⁴³ But if we were to allow that things such as health and pleasure have value and benefit people apart from virtue, we would need to show why virtue is of so much greater value. The Dependency Thesis allows us to avoid such calculations of weight.

A greater challenge is provided by the question of whether virtue is sufficient for happiness. But before turning to the relevant texts, there are two important preliminary issues. First, does Plato in the *Laws* think that happiness is a maximally or unimprovably good state or does happiness come in degrees such that A can be happier than B, although both A and B are happy?¹⁴⁴ Second, does

Plato thinks that happiness consists solely in virtue or does he allow that there are other components of happiness besides virtue?¹⁴⁵ An awareness of these possibilities will allow us to avoid some fruitless disputes. If, for example, one scholar cites evidence that Plato thinks that virtue is sufficient for happiness, another might argue that those passages should not be taken literally since we have other compelling evidence that Plato recognizes components of happiness besides virtue. If the first scholar assumes that Plato holds a scalar conception of happiness while the second assumes that he holds a maximalist conception, then the real grounds of their disagreement may remain obscure and we might dismiss the *Laws'* position as simply muddled.

Let us begin with the second question, since if happiness consists solely in virtue, then answering the question of whether virtue is sufficient for happiness (**p.211**) is considerably easier.¹⁴⁶ The view that Plato holds that happiness is identical to virtue has not attracted much support in modern scholarship, but it has recently been skillfully defended by Julia Annas.¹⁴⁷ She argues that Plato held such a view throughout his career and that, in particular, he holds it in the *Laws*. She interprets the *Laws'* distinction between divine and human goods along the lines of the Stoic distinction between the genuine good of virtue and preferred indifferents. Plato, Annas holds, thinks that only virtue is good and only vice is bad. Human goods motivate us to pursue them and human bads motivate us to avoid them, but actually obtaining them does not affect our happiness at all.

Concentrating on the *Laws*, we find that some of Plato's claims are, as they stand, inconsistent with the Stoic view that only virtue is good. For example, Plato claims that things such as health and good perceptual capacities are 'very good' (*ἀριστά*, *Laws* 661B6) for just people and, indeed, 'really are good' for them (*οὐτως*, 661D2-3). Similarly, ill health and other such things are 'bad' for just people (*κακά*, *Laws* 661D2). This is a clearer commitment to the goodness or badness of these things when possessed by virtuous people than Plato makes in the *Euthydemus*.¹⁴⁸ But Annas holds that despite Plato's actual use of 'good' and 'bad' here, we should interpret him as claiming that Dependent Goods and Dependent Bads are, respectively, good or bad for a person only insofar as they 'encourage' or 'retard' virtue. She gives two reasons for this. First, in the same passage, Plato asserts that virtue all by itself is sufficient for happiness. Since I do not think it is clear that the passage says this and even if it does, it would not entail that virtue is the only good if Plato holds a scalar conception of happiness, I shall leave this aside for the moment.

Annas' second reason is that taking these claims literally produces an odd asymmetry in Plato's views. She argues that we face an awkward asymmetry if we allow any conventional goods (e.g. health) to contribute to a person's happiness in any other way than by encouraging virtue. Conventional evils or

bads (e.g. sickness) when possessed by an unjust person are not bad in the way that we conventionally think that they are bad. Indeed, they are good insofar as they make the unjust person more capable of becoming virtuous. If we allow conventional goods to be good for virtuous people in any other way than by contributing to their virtue, we would allow that conventional (**p.212**) goods benefit in a conventional way (the way that most people think they do), while conventional bads do not harm in a conventional way.¹⁴⁹

Such an asymmetry does not produce an incoherence in Plato's position and we might accept it. But there is not, in fact, the sort of asymmetry that Annas describes, since Plato does not hold that Dependent Goods benefit the virtuous person in the way that most people think. As we saw in the case of our interlocutors, most people think that virtue is *for the sake of* the Dependent Goods. Or at least they think that Dependent Goods benefit people whether or not they are virtuous. On the interpretation of the Dependency Thesis I have argued for, Dependent Goods must be appreciated in order to benefit their possessor. Keen sight, for example, is good for a just person because it allows for the perception of fine objects that are appreciated for the features that actually make them fine, and not because it allows for the better appreciation of sexually stimulating scenes. The benefit of Dependent Goods for the virtuous person requires a correct appreciation of value and is thus apparent only from the perspective of the virtuous person. So we can accept that Plato's actual usage fairly reflects his position while avoiding the asymmetry.

There are, in addition, considerable costs to Annas' interpretation. First, in the *Philebus* some pleasures are a necessary part of a life that is completely happy. Similarly, in the *Laws* Plato holds that the most just life will be the happiest only if it is also pleasant. In neither case is it plausible to think that Plato is confusing pleasure being part of the good life with its being an indifferent.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, attributing the Stoics' position to Plato would leave very awkward gaps in his theory. It is a notorious problem for the Stoics whether they can explain the rationality of the just person's pursuit of preferred indifferents (and rejection of dispreferred indifferents) since they hold that getting these things is not good (and that getting the dispreferred indifferents is not bad) for the person. The Stoics develop an elaborate theory to meet the challenge. Whether or not we think they are successful, they acutely feel the gap in their position without such a theory and this issue was an obvious and frequent source of criticism. Plato shows no signs of recognizing such a gap nor does he ever hint at anything like the Stoic solution. Further, Annas' interpretation seems to require not only that we attribute to Plato a Stoic theory of the good and of indifferents, but also a (**p. 213**) Stoic theory of action as an entirely inner process.¹⁵¹ In sum, we have good reason to hold that Plato does allow that happiness has components other than virtue and that Dependent Goods can benefit people in ways other than encouraging or increasing their virtue.

So are there passages that claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness? The most promising passage occurs in Book 2, in which the Athenian ironically compliments his interlocutors:¹⁵² ‘You compel your poets to say that the good man, since he is moderate and just, is happy and blessed, whether he is great and strong or small and weak, whether he is rich or not’ (*Laws* 660E2–5).¹⁵³ This passage and others in the *Laws* fall short of claiming that a person can be happy without any Dependent Goods, although it does suggest that the virtuous person does not need many goods in order to be happy. This passage’s significance, however, depends on our first question, which is whether Plato in the *Laws* has a maximal or scalar conception of happiness. There are passages in the *Laws* that suggest, although they do not conclusively establish, that Plato holds a scalar conception of happiness such that A can be happier than B, although both A and B are happy (*Laws* 662D–663A, 662E, 734C–E, 742E–743E). And even if Plato held an official definition of happiness as an unimprovably good state, we can see why he might choose to employ scalar language. If happiness is a maximally good state including virtue and the possession of some other goods, then it seems reasonable to hold that some of these other goods might be subtracted from such a life while still leaving the person a life well worth living, although not one that attains happiness. There should be many such virtuous lives that are filled with goods, although they are not maximally good and for most practical purposes our concern will be with picking out lives that are well worth living. Calling such lives ‘happy’ as long as they are sufficiently high up among lives that are well worth living would not be unreasonable and is not such an abstruse and sophisticated move that it could only occur as the culmination of a long dialectical debate.¹⁵⁴

The more pressing issue is how badly off a virtuous person can be, while still remaining virtuous. Is virtue by itself, no matter how few Dependent Goods one has and how many Dependent Bads, always sufficient to give a person a life well worth living or even a life worth living at all? Some scholars have argued that Plato in some dialogues usually classified as early or (**p.214**) middle held that a life might be virtuous, but still not worth living.¹⁵⁵ The *Laws* does not explicitly address this question, although *Laws* 660E2–5 suggests that virtue is sufficient for lives that are well worth living, even if they include few Dependent Goods and many Dependent Bads.¹⁵⁶ Plato does not, however, explicitly say that the virtuous person always has a life worth living no matter what and Plato may have thought that, from the point of view of practice, it was not necessary to address this question. First, the practical question that agents face is what course of action is best for themselves in the long run, overall. Plato thinks that a person is always better off pursuing virtue. So even if virtue can be subject to great misfortunes, this does not affect the question of whether people should pursue virtue. Second, the misfortunes of the virtuous are not permanent, since in the long run god apportions happiness to justice. We do not need to invoke this theological claim to show that the virtuous person is always better off than

the unvirtuous one (if we did, we could not meet the challenge of the *Republic*), but it does give virtuous people added reason to be content with their lives.

What it is important for Plato to show, given his eudaimonism and his categorical demand that each person pursue justice, is that people are always better off being just no matter what misfortune they may suffer and no matter what goods an unjust course of action may bring.¹⁵⁷ Given the Dependency Thesis, it will be the case that nothing benefits unjust people. But this is not sufficient to settle the comparative question, if we allow that enough misfortunes can make the just person's life not worth living. (If such misfortunes could at most render life of no value, then the just person would always be better off.) What Plato needs to show is that both the goodness of virtue and the badness of vice have a special prominence. Here again an appeal to the sort of argument we shall consider in Chapter 4 may help. The basic idea of this argument is that each of us is identified in some especially intimate way with our rational capacities and that these rational capacities, in turn, have the function of standing in the appropriate relation to objective value. Standing in the right relation to objective value thus helps constitute what it is for the individual to benefit. The metaphor that Plato uses several times in the *Laws* to describe the condition of the unjust is one of darkness: the unjust are caught in a fog or create a darkness within (**p. 215**) themselves (e.g. *Laws* 663B, 875C). Their central problem is that they fail to appreciate (where appreciation involves both a cognitive grasp as well as love) what is really good and instead value what is bad or lacking in value. If what is most essential to human beings is that they are by nature formed to seek and act upon the truth, this is the greatest of misfortunes. No matter how badly impaired virtuous people's appreciation of value may be and no matter how poor their surroundings, it is not unreasonable to think that they will be better off than the unjust. If we consider, for example, what is good for the eyes as eyes, it is reasonable to think that seeing eyes, even if their vision is impaired and they have an impoverished visual environment, are better off than eyes that are blind. Indeed, this metaphor puts the case for justice too weakly. The objects of thought are more reliably available to a person than the objects of vision. Even more important, unjust people, insofar as they have a false conception of the good (and Plato thinks that this is the typical outcome of akrasia), are not merely failing to grasp the good, but are attributing value to what lacks it and loving what is not deserving of love. This would be more like having eyes that loved their own blindness and darkness itself.

Just people can have Dependent Bads and these are genuinely bad for them. There is thus an important asymmetry between goods and bads: while virtue is a necessary condition of gaining any benefit, vice is not a necessary condition of suffering some bad. Sickness can cut short their lives and pain can disrupt, without destroying, the good order of their soul.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, if acting on and expressing their appreciation of what is good benefits people, the failure of their efforts may be bad for them. Nevertheless, by being virtuous they will have

realized, at least partially, the most essential aspect of their identity: they will have some appreciation of what is objectively good. Plato's value theory, along with his understanding of what human beings are, may thus be capable of sustaining the importance that he attributes to virtue.¹⁵⁹

Notes:

(1.) Cf. Pangle (1980, pp. 379–80). For Aristotle's criticism of Crete and Sparta, see *E.E.* 8.3 (7.15), *Pol.* 2.9; S. White (1992, pp. 219–46) and Whiting (1996).

Rep. 544c1–3 classifies Crete and Sparta as timocracies, cf. 545a2–3.

(2.) *Laws* 714a2 connects 'distribution' (*dianomē*) with *nomos* and *nous*. See England (1921, ad loc.) who plausibly suggests a link with *daimones*; I am indebted to remarks made by André Laks at the 1996 Princeton Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy. For Aristotle on the connection between law and reason, see *N.E.* 1180^a13–24. For the claim that the primary referent of *nous* is not the faculty of reasoning, but rather the good condition of the reasoning faculty, that is, a virtue, see Broadie in Gentzler (1998, p. 294 n. 5) and Menn (1995, pp. 14–18).

(3.) *Laws* 835e4 speaks of *logos*, rather than *nous*, but cf. 836e4.

(4.) The *Laws'* cosmology and its relation to that of the *Timaeus* are controversial. For my purposes, I do not need to take positions on whether (1) the creation of the world is intended literally, or (2) soul is the source of all motions or only of all motions within the formed world. For a start on the literature, see Mohr (1985, chs. 2, 7, 8, 9), T. Robinson (1995, pp. xviii–xix, xxiv–xxxii, 59–110, 145–57), and Vlastos (1994, vol. 2, chs. 15, 16).

(5.) Cf. Menn (1995, pp. 6–13).

(6.) I remain neutral on whether *nous* can exist apart from souls. See, e.g., Menn (1992), (1995), Mohr (1985, ch. 10), and T. Robinson (1995, pp. xix–xxii, 59–110). Translations of the *Timaeus* draw on Zeyl in Cooper (1997) and Bury (1975).

(7.) See Menn (1995, pp. 41–2).

(8.) Laks (1991, pp. 221–3).

(9.) I accept Ast's emendation at 722c1. See England (1921, ad loc.) for the correct construal of 722b6–7: another course was open to previous lawgivers, besides the exclusive use of force, as far as the uneducated state of the masses would permit. Plato is not suggesting that most of the citizens of Magnesia are a 'mob lacking in education'. *Ochlos* is very pejorative and Plato does not use it to describe the citizens of Magnesia: see 670b8, 700c7, 707e3, 734b6, and 819b2. At 817c5, the *ochlos* hanging around the marketplace might be citizens in other cities, but would be non-citizen metics and slaves in Magnesia.

(10.) On Kleinias' reply, see Bobonich (1996, pp. 269–73).

(11.) *Laws* 811c–812a. On education in Magnesia, see Morrow (1960, pp. 297–398).

(12.) This point is well discussed by Morrow (1960, pp. 343–8). Plato requires only some citizens, the future members of the Nocturnal Council, to pursue these mathematical studies ‘with precision’ (*akribēias*, 818a1). But in the *Laws*, Plato requires all citizens to pursue mathematics for more than practical reasons, while in the *Republic* the study of mathematics for more than practical purposes marks the decisive distinction between the auxiliaries' musical education and the education of the philosophers. On the pig as a symbol of ignorance, see Burnyeat (1999, p. 231).

(13.) Cf. *Laws* 819dff. and the close parallel at *Rep.* 525bff.: mathematics is the study that especially turns people toward ‘truth and being’ (525c6).

(14.) Compare the *Republic*'s straightforward and unsophisticated regulations (337d–392a) against the citizens ‘blaspheming’ (*Rep.* 381e5, cf. *Laws* 821d2) the gods.

(15.) The fact that such sophisticated training is part of Magnesia's basic education intended for all gives us further reason to take Plato at his word that Book 10's theological arguments are to be presented to all the citizens. On the astronomical theory suggested here, see G. E. R. Lloyd (1982, pp. 86–94), (1991, pp. 268–9), Mendell (1998), Neugebauer (1969, pp. 153–5), Vlastos (1975, pp. 23–65, especially 49–51, 64–5, 99–102), and Yavetz (1998).

(16.) Mueller (1980, p. 115). Also see Knorr (1975, pp. 94–6).

(17.) For discussions of the relation of circular movement to reason that come to different conclusions, see Lee (1976) and Sedley in Fine (1999b, pp. 317–19).

(18.) For recent discussions of the preludes and related issues, see Bobonich (1991), (1996), Cohen (1993), Cooper (1999, pp. 184–90), Curren (1994), Irwin (1995a, pp. 349–53), Laks (1990), (1991), (1995), (2001), Morgan (2000, p. 166), Morrow (1953), (1960, pp. 552–60), Nightingale (1993), (1999b), Popper (1971, pp. 139–40), Stalley (1994), Versenyi (1961), and Yunis (1996, pp. 211–36).

(19.) Laks (1991).

(20.) See England (1921, ad loc.).

(21.) Laks (2000, pp. 269–70) offers four cases in which the *Laws* substitutes a humanly possible arrangement for what would be ideally best: (1) the allowance of private property; (2) the rule of law rather than individual rulers to avoid abuses of power; (3) the mixed constitution for the same reason; and (4) ‘human’

forms of praise, appealing to pleasure, are instituted in contrast to forms of praise appealing to ‘honor’ and ‘reputation’. Cf. Laks (1987). But in all of these cases, Plato makes it as explicit as he can that the ideal is unrealizable and for that reason advocates a ‘second-best’ alternative for Magnesia. (For (1), see 739e–740a; for (2), see 874e–875d; for (3), see 691c–692a. (4) is the odd man out, since Plato does not suggest doing without appeals to honor, but supplements this with the claim that the just life is the most pleasant life, 732eff.) Plato does not say anything like this about his programmatic justification for the preludes.

(22.) Susan Sauvé Meyer made the importance of this point clear to me.

(23.) The Athenian stresses the novelty of using such preludes in Book 4 (722b–e), which Laks himself accepts as non-hyperbolic and as a model for the actual preludes found in Magnesia.

(24.) (1) Laks holds that the depiction of the preludes in the medical analogy of Book 4 is consistent with the Hippocratic tradition, but that the medical analogy found in Book 9 goes well beyond this and is thus conscious hyperbole. One consideration that Laks advances in support of this view is that Book 9 goes so far as to picture the doctor ‘going back to the general nature of bodies’ in his quasiphilosophical discussion with the patient (857d3–4). (a) But 857d3–4 need not be seen as a reference to all physical bodies as opposed to all animate or human bodies, see England (1921, ad loc.). (b) Even if we were to take it as such, there are precedents for thinking that cosmological theory is necessary for understanding illness both in the medical tradition, see, e.g., M. Frede (1987, pp. 225–42), G. E. R. Lloyd (1984, pp. 146–51), and in Plato see, *Tim.* 82aff. (2) Laks holds that Book 9 is distinctive and hyperbolic in using the language of Platonic dialectic. But we find similar language in Book 4, see 720c3–5. The only word in Book 9 that overlaps with the terminology of Platonic dialectic is *dialegesthai* at 857d1, but this verb is not uncommon in the *Laws* in a non-technical sense, e.g. 648a8. Further, as England (1921, ad loc.) rightly notes, 857d3 echoes 720d3. (3) Laks holds that the Book 9 passage suggests that legislation can be renounced entirely. But Plato does not make so strong a claim. Plato says that the sort of prelude recommended here is a way of educating the citizens and is not itself legislating or stating laws with their penalties. But nothing in Book 9 suggests that a city can do without laws and in Book 9 itself the Athenian states laws with their penalties (e.g. 864dff.). From the fact that some in Magnesia need penalties, it does not follow that the Athenian intends to provide rational argument exclusively for an elite group of rulers.

Other criticism has focussed on the Book 10 prelude to the impiety law itself. It is sometimes held that the only intellectually sophisticated discussion that the Athenian offers to the citizens is the prelude in Book 10. But I have argued that this is false, since *Laws* 861c–864c serves the same purpose as a prelude and is

addressed to the citizens. But even if the Book 10 prelude were unique—and its length and argumentative detail show why this would not be surprising—we would still have to account for the fact that Plato includes it. A more worrisome criticism is the suggestion that Plato introduces it only as an antidote to widespread false stories about the gods and does not value the rational instruction it provides (a claim that might be thought to find support in 886a–891e, especially 890d–891b; e.g. Annas (1999, pp. 112–14)). But this is not a convincing reading of 886a–891e. (a) The appeal to widespread false beliefs about the gods is a poor justification for providing an intellectually sophisticated argument only in the case of impiety: (1) the only people who would be liable to hear such stories would be the first generation of colonists; if the Athenian valued the arguments only as an antidote and was suspicious about providing rational arguments to most citizens, he should restrict the prelude to the first generation; (2) as we have seen, Plato thinks that many ordinary and fairly respectable ethical views (e.g. Cretan and Spartan) are radically mistaken and thinks that even with the benefit of a Magnesian education, people will tend to be overly partial to their own interests; he thus has similar reasons to provide rational arguments as antidotes on other ethical topics; and (3) as we have also seen in the case of Cretan and Spartan views about the gods' goal for their law codes and in *Republic* 2, Plato thinks that ordinary views about the gods are shot through with serious ethical error, so he should not be willing to rely on ordinary theological views. (b) Despite Plato's occasional praise of primitive innocence (e.g. 679b3–e4), he makes it clear that primitives' lack of the right sort of cognitive sophistication is a serious ethical failure, e.g., 678b1–3 and *Stsmn.* 272b1–d2. Cf. Nightingale (1999a, p. 304). (c) Kleinias does say that giving the Book 10 prelude requires them to go 'outside the realm of legislation [*nomothesia*]’ (891d7–8), but (i) he still advocates that they do so, and (ii) we already knew that the sort of education the lawgiver is to provide to the citizens is not in itself legislation (857e4–5). (d) On 634d–635a, see Bobonich (1996, p. 260 n. 22). (e) Members of the Nocturnal Council will study much more intensively a comprehensive group of theological arguments and related topics (*Laws* 967d–968b), but this does not undermine the fact that the Book 10 prelude is intended for all citizens. (f) Although Plato is concerned about the corrupting effects of false beliefs, his pragmatic remarks about the preludes make it clear that he thinks that the citizens will be better off if they grasp the reasons for their true beliefs. We should thus see him here as ironically downplaying to his interlocutors the importance of education in order to encourage them to assert the need for it themselves, cf. 820c4–d6 and 890d1–891a8.

(25.) Stalley (1994, p. 171 n. 65).

(26.) e.g. *Laws* 853b–854a and 880d–e; cf. Yunis (1996, p. 218).

(27.) Saunders (1991, pp. 210–11). This elaborate and explicit threefold structure should also be borne in mind with respect to *Laws* 854b–c, 873e–874a, and 913c1.

(28.) I discuss the special studies for members of the Nocturnal Council in Ch. 5.

(29.) Bobonich (1991), (1996).

(30.) Both Seneca and, according to Seneca (*Ep.* 94, 38), Posidonius think that the preambles in the *Laws* really do teach. Posidonius, however, disapproves of Plato's proposal and holds that law 'should be a voice, as it were, sent down from the gods'. Posidonius thus holds that the law should be a 'sacred text', but he sees this as a criticism of Plato. Cf. Nightingale (1993).

(31.) Laks (1991, p. 428), translation mine. Compare Aristotle's views on what results, if we rely on the attitudes of most people. Rhetoric avoids conflict with ordinary beliefs about virtue and happiness, and these beliefs especially concern the value of external goods. So rhetoric will avoid, for example, claiming that virtue is the most important part of happiness or perhaps even that virtue is part of happiness, as opposed to merely a necessary condition of it. See Irwin in Rorty (1996, pp. 142–74).

(32.) Cf. Aristotle at *N.E.* 1180^a24–^b1: Sparta, more or less alone, is concerned with the education of its citizens.

(33.) For further discussion, see Bobonich (1995b). Other recent studies of the *Statesman* include Gill (1995), Kahn (1995), Lane (1998), and Rowe (1995a), (1995b), (1996).

(34.) See Rowe (1995b, ad loc.). Translations of the *Statesman* draw on Fowler in Fowler and Lamb (1975) and Rowe in Cooper (1997).

(35.) For a discussion of the *Statesman* that shares this reading, see Cooper (1999, pp. 165–91).

(36.) In stating the general principles that justify a particular law, the preludes may help the citizens to know how to apply the law in novel circumstances. Cf. Silverthorne (1975).

(37.) E.g. *Laws* 631b3–6, 718b2–4, 743c5–6, 806c3–7, and there is further discussion in Section 5.6.

(38.) Also see *Laws* 660dff., 696b–697c, and 742d–744a. Note that justice includes wisdom (*phronēsis*), 631c5–8. There will be citizens, to be sure, in whom the law fails to instill the whole of virtue, but Plato never suggests that

the laws fail in the case of every non-philosopher. Indeed, he expects that there will be quite a few successes, cf. n. 126.

(39.) The text is troubled, but I agree with the reading of Burnet, des Places, England, and Saunders. Saunders' note (1972, p. 15) is especially helpful.

(40.) The virtue of the constitution is secured by making the citizens as virtuous as possible. Note the echo in Aristotle *Pol.* 1253^a27–30.

(41.) The last two sentences are spoken by Kleinias, but the Athenian immediately endorses them, 963a5.

(42.) I accept the emendation *paristatai* for the manuscripts' reading *polis ktatai*, see England (1921, ad loc.). But this dispute does not significantly affect the sense; if we keep the manuscripts' reading, we must cash it out along the same lines. See Bobonich (1995a, p. 137).

(43.) Cf. Bobonich (1995a, p. 137), Brickhouse and Smith (1994, pp. 134–5), Ferejohn (1984, pp. 111–20), and Section 2.12.

(44.) See Korsgaard (1996a, p. 277).

(45.) For a helpful discussion, see Korsgaard (1996a, pp. 276–82). Other important discussions include: Darwall (1983, pp. 117–67), Korsgaard (1996b, pp. 132–45), Nagel (1970, pp. 90–8), (1986, pp. 152–63), Parfit (1984, pp. 142–4), and Scheffler (1987), (1988, pp. 1–13, 243–60), (1992, pp. 103–8).

(46.) Cf. Korsgaard (1996a, pp. 225–74). In these passages, Plato does not seem interested in the question of whether a Dependent Good, even when possessed by a virtuous person, is good in all possible circumstances. Bodily health is not good for a disembodied soul and keen sight would not benefit a virtuous person in a world with no visible objects. Plato seems to be assuming normal human background conditions. I focus for now on the question of necessity. I return to sufficiency in n. 158.

(47.) Cf. Aristotle *N.E.* 1096^b8–14: instrumental goods do not, as such, participate in the Form of the Good. Cf. N. White (1984).

(48.) See, e.g., Slote (1983, pp. 61–75).

(49.) Kleinias shows some verbal inconsistencies over whether the goal of legislation is victory in external warfare alone, victory in both internal and external wars, the courage necessary for such victories, the goods secured by such victories, or the virtue necessary for victory in both. I focus on what seems to be his basic view.

(50.) This is an ‘improved’ reinterpretation of Tyrtaeus who is originally presented as only concerned with courage in external wars (*Laws* 629a–630b); literally read, Tyrtaeus 9.13 (Diehl) may suggest that such courage is the whole of virtue.

(51.) An overall or all-things-considered judgment should take into account both various respects in which a thing is good and temporal considerations. We might also consider the possibility that although most of a person’s Dependent Goods are good for that person, their overall balance is negative.

(52.) The precise sense of *athlios* is not clear, but it at least suggests that such a life is far from worth living. If *athlios* is the polar opposite of ‘happy’ (*eudaimō*) and ‘happy’ describes an optimal state, then this suggests that a Dependent Good is of no benefit at all to an unjust person.

(53.) Is there is a *tertium quid* between justice and injustice and how would this affect the Dependency Thesis? In Passages A and B Plato seems to treat ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ as mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive: e.g. 660e8–9 and 661c2–4. *Laws* 631b6–c1 appears to claim that if you do not have the virtues, then you will lack the Dependent Goods too. In any case, if Plato thinks that there is a *tertium quid*, and especially if he thinks that this is the category to which most people belong, then we would expect him to discuss it. But he does not mention or suggest the possibility of a *tertium quid* in Passages A and B and this suggests that, even if there are such cases, they are not of great ethical significance.

(54.) E.g. Annas (1999, pp. 40–51), Brickhouse and Smith (1987), (1994), Ferejohn (1984), Irwin (1986b), (1995b, pp. 52–63), Santas (1994), Striker (1996, pp. 316–24), and Vlastos (1985), (1991, pp. 200–32). Also see Chrm. 173a–175a. For a plausible account of one possible important difference between the *Euthydemus* and the *Republic*, see Striker (1996, pp. 320–4).

(55.) Vlastos (1991, pp. 215, 203 n. 14).

(56.) Vlastos (1991, p. 225).

(57.) Vlastos (1991, p. 225).

(58.) Vlastos (1991, p. 225). The thesis that virtue is the sole component of happiness is open to a stronger objection. Since virtue is identical to knowledge of the good, the thesis that virtue is the only component of happiness is equivalent to the claim that knowledge of the good is the only component of happiness. This idea, although not incoherent, results in an oddly empty account of virtue and happiness. Virtue and happiness would be knowledge of the good, but the only possible good would be this very knowledge of the good. Another way of putting this is that the only thing good by itself would be the knowledge

that everything except this very knowledge is at best instrumentally valuable insofar as it contributes to this knowledge.

(59.) Vlastos (1991, pp. 200, 220).

(60.) It is no solution to hold that the distinction between wisdom or virtue and other goods is in itself a distinction between moral and non-moral value, since we still must answer the question of whether wisdom consists only in knowledge of the moral good. Since Vlastos thinks that if virtue were the only component of happiness, we would have reason to act only in cases in which states of affairs are differentiated by their moral values, it seems that he does not include knowledge of non-moral good in the knowledge that comprises virtue.

(61.) Cf. Moravcsik (1993, pp. 208–9).

(62.) Vlastos (1991, p. 215).

(63.) Annas (1999, p. 46 n. 48) rightly notes that the skill and productive analogies are not present in the *Laws*.

(64.) Cf. Irwin (1995a, p. 56). I take correct use to be necessary for benefiting from a Dependent Good and not merely necessary for happiness. The stronger reading is supported by *Euthd.* 280e4–281a1, 281b4–6, and 281d5–e1.

(65.) Brickhouse and Smith (1994, pp. 130, 133).

(66.) The *Euthydemus* holds that, in addition to possession, correct use is necessary to benefit from a Dependent Good (e.g. 280d4–7, cf. *Meno* 88a4–5), but it draws heavily on simple productive examples and does not consider hard cases such as pleasure or the welfare of others. Even if we accept the *Euthydemus* principle, we could hold that, although some use is necessary for any benefit, once some use is made, the Dependent Good has some additional value apart from use. Some of the goods mentioned in *Republic* 2's classification of goods (e.g., harmless pleasures, 357b7–8) seem to have more than use value.

(67.) One might think that 'use' in the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno* is sufficiently broad that it avoids these problems and that it also includes an appreciation of value. Such a 'use' of, e.g., pleasure might be simply experiencing it. For my present purposes, I do not need to decide whether this is the correct account of these dialogues. My point is that the need for appreciation of value has not been clearly recognized. Once it is, a number of significant philosophical questions, as well as some important connections between the *Laws'* Dependency Thesis and the *Philebus*, come into clearer focus.

(68.) These should not be confused with *feelings* of satisfaction or contentment, see Kraut (1979, pp. 170, 173).

(69.) If *a* is F, then there are some features of *a* that make it the case that *a* is F. I shall call these features in virtue of which *a* is F, 'F-making properties' or 'Fmakers'. Cf. D. Armstrong (1997, pp. 2-3).

(70.) Knowledge of the goodmaking properties of things is a much more plausible condition of value than simply knowledge of what is good for me. Why, after all, should knowledge of what is good for me be of significant benefit apart from its correct use in relatively favorable circumstances? Why, for instance, would I be significantly benefited from knowing that pleasure is good if I cannot obtain pleasure? Cf. Kraut in Kraut (1992, pp. 311-37) and Striker (1996, pp. 320-4).

(71.) See Griffin (1988, pp. 33-4) and Parfit (1984, pp. 493-502). Also on some desire-satisfaction accounts of the good, although agents must desire the relevant object, they do not have to be aware that their desire has been satisfied.

(72.) I am indebted to John Cooper on this point.

(73.) Translations of the *Philebus* draw on Fowler in Fowler and Lamb (1975), D. Frede in Cooper (1997), Gosling (1975), and Hackforth (1972c).

(74.) See ad loc. Bury (1897), D. Frede (1993), and Hackforth (1972c).

(75.) This judgment is supported by the imaginary reply of the personified pleasures to Socrates' later question of whether they prefer to live alone or with wisdom at *Phil.* 63b7-c3. This passage's apparent implication that the two isolated lives are equally undesirable is not necessarily Plato's own position, since it is the pleasures themselves who are speaking and their stress on the idea that the best form of knowledge especially knows about pleasure suggests that they are not entirely reliable spokesmen for Plato. Similarly, the initial rejection of both unmixed lives at *Phil.* 20b-c need not commit Plato to the claim that the two unmixed lives are equally undesirable. All that Plato needs for the argument at that point is that neither unmixed life is the good life; he does not need to establish that they are equally lacking in value. And Plato does accept a significant asymmetry between them: the life of unmixed pleasure is that of a mollusk, while the unmixed life of reason is a god's life. The latter life might not be possible for us to live and it might not satisfy some of the desires and needs we actually have; thus a mixed life is better for us than an unmixed life of reason. But this does not entail that such an unmixed life of reason, if we could live it, would be deeply undesirable or that knowledge without pleasure has no value for us. The different values of knowledge and pleasure, however, cannot be established by this direct appeal to intuitions (either Protarchus' or our own) and requires the philosophical theory developed in the rest of the *Philebus*.

(76.) (a) is mentioned first and separately (*Phil.* 21b6–9); Protarchus seems to hold that calculating the way to obtain future pleasure is only instrumentally valuable to *having* the pleasure (21b2). Plato's back reference, at *Phil.* 60d8–e1, to the counterexample does not mention calculation about the future.

(77.) *Phil.* 11b4, cf. 60a7–b1. On Protarchus' relation to Eudoxus, see Gosling (1975, pp. 139–42), Gosling and Taylor (1984, pp. 157–64). On Eudoxus, see Aristotle *N.E.* 1172^b9–25, Diogenes Laertius 8.86–91.

(78.) I adopt Gosling's (1975) translation, we may also translate 'everything that knows it hunts for it . . . '

(79.) *Phil.* 60d4–e1 claims that one would not wish to have anything at all, including, but not limited to, pleasure, without knowledge. Plato thus explicitly holds that all goods, not just pleasure, are subject to a knowledge requirement. The weakest interpretation of such knowledge would require knowing that one has the possession, but self-conscious possession is hardly sufficient to make something even *prima facie* desirable. Interpreting this as the knowledge that the possession is pleasant would render pointless Plato's proceeding to ask whether we wish to have the life of reason without any pleasure (*Phil.* 60e1–3). It is thus plausible to construe this knowledge as the awareness that what one has is good.

(80.) Eudoxus appeals to the alleged fact that all animals, and not just humans, pursue pleasure to support the claim that pleasure is the good, cf. n. 77.

(81.) Very roughly, we might distinguish three steps in the development of the notion of an ultimate end. Let us start with a set of desires. Their objects are already intentionally characterized, so we have exercised our ability to discriminate and identify objects. We then recognize that our desires have, more or less, a certain pattern: the satisfaction of some has no further end in view; others are 'for the sake of' something else. A second step is a normative step: we conclude that some objects of our desires should be treated as ends of action and we try to make our ends of action into a consistent whole. This step need not involve sophisticated reasoning; we might simply have a brute preference for certain ends, or we might adopt certain ends because our desires for these objects are especially frequent or intense. Finally, we can try to develop objective standards to determine what ends really are worth desiring.

(82.) Irwin (1995a, p. 334) makes the interesting suggestion that hedonists might agree that some form of rational consciousness is needed in the good life, but hold that what is good in such a life consists solely in the pleasures taken in rational consciousness and not at all in rational consciousness itself. Plato, however, might not think that this is a genuine possibility. Presumably agents would have to be aware of the pleasure taken in rational consciousness for this pleasure to be desirable. If they are not aware of this pleasure, then it too should

be subject to the counterexample. But if agents must be aware of the pleasure taken in rational consciousness, then the hedonist seems committed to separating the single intentional act of being aware of a pleasure into two components, the awareness and the pleasure one is aware of, and attributing value solely to the latter. While it would not be obviously unreasonable to attribute value to some state of affairs apart from one's awareness of it, the counterexample shows that the hedonist does not do this with regard to pleasure. It is less clear that it is acceptable to attribute no value to pleasure unless one is aware of it, but to hold that within the act of being aware of pleasure only the pleasure has value. But it does seem that, in response to the counterexample, all that hedonists need do is attribute value to their knowledge of pleasure, they need not, and will not, attribute value to any other kind of knowledge. Thus we can at least conclude that they do not value knowledge as such, that is, they do not value knowledge for the characteristics that make it knowledge. Thus the counterexample does not show that knowledge as such has any value.

(83.) There is a considerable literature on the issues surrounding *peras* and *apeiron*; important contributions include Cooper (1999, pp. 150–64), Gosling (1975), Meinwald (1998), Moravcsik (1979a), (1992, pp. 213–49), and Striker (1970). I accept Cooper's (1999, pp. 150–5) account of good things as mixtures.

(84.) Cf. ad loc. D. Frede (1993) and Poste (1860).

(85.) *Phil.* 64c5–7 emphasizes that these are the cause of the goodness of the good life. The inclusion of truth at *Phil.* 64d9–65a3 is prepared for by the assertion at 64B2–3 that truth is a necessary condition of a mixture being a mixture at all. On the relation between measure and fineness, see Gosling (1975, pp. 134–6) and Hackforth (1972c, p. 133); on the distinction between fineness and proportion at *Phil.* 66a4–c2 and the apparent absence of truth from this passage, see ad loc. Bury (1897), Gosling (1975), and Hackforth (1972c). Also see Aristotle, *Meta.* 1078^a31–^b36 and Cooper (1999, pp. 273–6).

(86.) Cf. Murphy (1938, pp. 117–18).

(87.) Irwin (1995a, p. 334).

(88.) Irwin (1995a, p. 338).

(89.) Pace Hackforth (1972c, p. 36), *καὶ μᾶλλον ἔτι* at *Phil.* 22d5 is not a rejection of the claim at 22d3–4 that *νόος* is the αἴτιον of the mixed life; rather, it picks up *οὐκ ἀμφισβητῶ πω* at 22c7–8. *τούτου* at 22d4 does not point forwards to the claim that reason is more akin to what makes the mixed life good, but rather, as is typical, backwards to the claim that reason is the cause of the mixed life (and thus deserves second place). (If Hackforth were right, we should expect

toutou de instead of the more inferential *toutou dē*.) I am indebted to Liz Asmis and Christian Wildberg for discussion of this issue.

(90.) At *Phil.* 23b6–9, Socrates claims that in order to establish that reason deserves second place, he needs his fourfold classification of ‘all the things that now exist in the universe’ (*Phil.* 23c4–5) and he returns to this point at *Phil.* 27c3ff. after distinguishing and enumerating the four genera: the determinant, the indeterminate, the mixture, and the cause of the mixture. In particular, Socrates claims that by answering the question of which genera reason and pleasure belong to, he will answer the question of which deserves second place. Protarchus sees where this line of argument is leading (*Phil.* 28b1–c5): once reason is established as the cause of the mixed life, this will be sufficient to establish that it deserves second place. Socrates' reiteration of the idea that simply by establishing the genera to which pleasure and reason belong, we establish which deserves second place, shows that he has not given up (1). *Phil.* 30d10 *ζητήσει* picks up *ἐξητούμεν* at 27c5; 30d10 *ἀπόκρισιν* points to 28a4–7, but 28a4–7 is part of the section beginning at 27c3.

(91.) *Phil.* 22d4–e3 *συγγενέστερον καὶ ὁμοιότερον*, 64c5–9
προσφυέστερον καὶ οἰκειότερον; reason is also said to be
οἰκειότερον καὶ προσφυέστερον (67a10–12, cf. 11d11–12a4) to the good or mixed life than pleasure is. Also see *Phil.* 65a7–66c2.

(92.) I have changed a question into a statement where assent is clearly expected and is given.

(93.) A pure white is ‘whiter’ (*leukoteron*) than a mixed white (53b5) and pure pleasure is ‘more pleasant’ (*hēdiōn*) than a mixed pleasure (53c1). In both cases, a pure F is more F than an impure one; a pure F is a genuine F or an F without qualification. Similarly, pure knowledge is ‘more fully’ (*mallon echomenon*) knowledge than a less pure kind (55d6). Cf. *Phil.* 56b4–6: more accurate (*akribēs*) knowledge is ‘more of an art’ (*technikōteran*) than less accurate knowledge. On the link between accuracy and purity, see 56a7, b5, c5–6, 57b6, c1–3, c7, d1. For a helpful discussion of the connections among Plato's criteria, see Cooper (1999, pp. 156–8).

(94.) Impurity does not seem to require a mixture of F with the opposite of F. Pure pleasures are free of pain, but pure white is free of admixture with any other color, not just with black. This allows for the possibility that impure forms of knowledge are mixed, if either ignorance or false belief is present. Purity also seems to involve some notion of a continuum or a comparison class: the purity of a pure white is undermined if it is mixed with some other color, not just by having some non-color property.

(95.) This is what we should expect, since being a correct mixture of the determinant and the indeterminate makes something a good thing and impure forms of knowledge and pleasure are less good than pure forms. On the connection between impurity and indeterminacy, see Cooper (1999, pp. 151–7, 162–3) and Fine (1993, pp. 100–1). Fine rightly connects such indeterminacy with compresence. But we need a notion of compresence that is narrower than Fine's notion of 'broad compresence', since pure pleasures as well as impure pleasures are both pleasant and not-pleasant in the broad sense, because everything but the property of F is F and not-F in the broad sense. A narrower notion of compresence (that still is not Fine's 'narrow compresence') seems, intuitively, to be what is needed to capture the example that Fine uses to show the need for a notion broader than narrow compresence. Fire in the *Timaeus* (49c–51d) is both fire and not-fire, but no sensible sample of fire is both fire and not-fire in the narrow sense. The problem with fire is that each sample has bits of earth and other elements mixed in with it. Sensible samples of fire will be broadly compresent with respect to being fire, but this is too broad a notion to capture this point about fire. Even if a sensible sample were entirely unmixed with anything else, it would still be broadly compresent with respect to being fire, since any sensible sample of F is in broad compresence with respect to being F (like Socrates with respect to being a man, a sensible sample of fire is in broad compresence in virtue of having coincidents).

(96.) Cf. *Rep.* 525d–526a and Burnyeat (1987, pp. 225–7).

(97.) *Phil.* 58a1–5, 59a8–d6, 61d10–e4. Cf. Fine (1993, pp. 97–101); the claim that the Form of F is purely and determinately F does not entail that the Form cannot be described as indeterminate in some respects.

(98.) See Cooper (1999, pp. 156–7) on the ways that the subject matters of empirical sciences are less determinate. This is not inconsistent with the possibility that sensibles might be described determinately with respect to some properties and that knowledge of them is possible (at least in some respects) on the basis of knowledge of Forms.

(99.) Cf. *Phil.* 59c5–6 with *Laws* 896b10–d8. *Phil.* 59c2–d8 goes beyond, in the expected direction (53a9–b1, c1–2), 58b9–d8. The final ranking at 66a4ff. makes it clear that this is a value ranking.

(100.) *Phil.* 52c2ff. and see Fine (1993, pp. 100–1).

(101.) Cf. *Phil.* 59a11–b5. The inferiority of the objects of the inferior kinds of knowledge with respect to accuracy, truth, and fixity can be explained by the notion of indeterminacy and a kind of compresence rather than strictly by temporal change, cf. n. 95.

(102.) The sentence does not assert the existence of such a faculty, but the context shows that Plato accepts it. We might also translate 'loves the truth and goes to all lengths for its sake'.

(103.) Note that this picks up the characterization of the limit (*peras*) at *Phil.* 25a6-b2 and thus helps to show that this is non-relational goodness.

(104.) The epistemic value of a pure or true F holds on more than one reasonable interpretation of the notion of purity: see, e.g., Code (1994); Cooper (1999, pp. 156–60); Fine (1993, pp. 46–61 and 100–1), and Kahn (1981).

(105.) *Phil.* 66b8–c2. Since knowledge is a non-instrumental part of the good life, the knowledge in the good life instantiates the goodmakers.

(106.) Nothing is more measured than knowledge and reason, *Phil.* 65d9–10 and, as we have seen, knowledge involves a grasp of measure. Reason and wisdom are the finest things, *Phil.* 59c8–9. In the middle period, Plato claims that the soul or its reasoning part is capable of knowing the Forms because it is like the object known: *Phd.* 79d1–7, *Rep.* 490a8–b7, cf. *Symp.* 211d8–212a2. In the *Timaeus* (35aff.), we find the difficult but related idea that the reasoning aspect of the soul is composed, at least in part, of Forms.

(107.) We should note two points about Plato's views on causation. First, Plato is not concerned here to show that reason is a sufficient condition for the goodness of all Dependent Goods. Cf. nn. 46, 158. Second, one might appeal to the *Phaedo*'s notion of a 'clever cause' to suggest that reason in virtue of being a cause need not be a necessary condition, since clever causes are not necessary conditions. Indeed, it seems that clever causes are such that it can be true that not only a particular clever cause is the cause of a certain effect, but the opposite of this clever cause can cause the same effect (fever is a clever cause of disease, but so is hypothermia). But the notion of a clever cause is too weak to capture what Plato intends to assert about the role of reason in the good life. From the opening mollusk counterexample to the closing discussion (*Phil.* 60c6–e5), Plato is explicit that he is trying to show the necessity of reason. This attempt fits well with the causal principle that like causes like which we have independent reason to ascribe to Plato. We might also think that even instances of causal explanation by clever causes are made true by the holding of the appropriate instance of like causing like, although this will often require considerable care in specifying the cause and effect. For example, 'fever causes disease' is made true in virtue of the fact that excess heat in certain parts of the body causes certain internal structures of the body to become excessively hot and this is a form of disease. On Plato on causation, see Annas (1982a), Fine (1987), Gallop (1975), A. C. Lloyd (1976), Makin (1990–1), Morris (1985), Sedley (1998b), and C. Taylor (1969).

(108.) I follow Cooper (1999, pp. 161–3).

(109.) Such pleasures, insofar as they benefit the person, are subject to a twofold regulation by reason. As we shall see in more detail in Ch. 4, the perception of order itself involves an exercise of reason and reason is also involved in the appreciation of this order as such.

(110.) For a fine analysis of the pleasures of health, see Cooper (1999, pp. 160-3).

(111.) Moderation, when isolated from the other parts of virtue, deserves no honor, but only ‘speechless silence’ (*Laws* 696d11-e1), and does not benefit its possessor (710a5-b2).

(112.) Most, if not all, of the value of health consists in (1) its enabling various other beneficial activities, and (2) the healthful and good pleasures that such a state involves. Knowing that health advances all of one's activities is not enough for the sort of knowledge required for benefit, since this is open to unjust people. They think that health is good because it allows unjust activities and involves, for example, certain intense unmixed pleasures. But neither of these benefits the person. We can thus see why the intuitively plausible idea that sickness is worse for the unjust than the just, because the unjust pursue projects that are more easily affected by sickness, is mistaken. The projects the unjust would otherwise engage in are not beneficial to them. Similarly, we might think that the exercise of sight, insofar as it is a utilization of a basic human capacity, would benefit both the just and unjust. But the unjust do not use sight in order to appreciate genuine value, and since reason is inherently directed towards value, they are not exercising a distinctively human capacity. I am indebted to Sally Haslanger and Martha Nussbaum for discussion of these issues.

(113.) *Laws* 688a-689c and for related modern discussions, see Chisholm (1986), Lemos (1994, pp. 73-7), and Nozick (1981, pp. 505-51).

(114.) We might, for example, need to know something about the medium of instantiation (and we can remain neutral on whether knowledge of the general account of goodness when conjoined with the relevant knowledge about the medium of instantiation is always sufficient to specify deductively an account of goodness in the particular case).

(115.) In the *Laws*, Plato gives exactly this sort of explanation of the value of a Dependent Bad in the only example discussed in detail: immortality is bad for an unjust person and a shorter life is preferable because it is ‘a lesser bad’ (661c1-5).

(116.) In the *Euthydemus*, Plato claims that it is preferable for people without knowledge to lack the Dependent Goods, since they will make fewer mistakes and thus will be less harmed (*Euthd.* 280e5-281a1, 281b8-d2, especially c2). We should not cash out harm in terms of losing Dependent Goods, since losing them

would not harm the unjust person. The idea that a Dependent Bad could benefit unjust people would conflict with the *Euthydemus'* claims (280e5-6) that knowledge is necessary for correct use and that if people use a thing incorrectly they are harmed.

(117.) It might be good for a person to grasp correctly why the bad is bad, but (i) having this piece of knowledge does not require having the Dependent Bad, and (ii) unjust people fail to grasp why the bad is bad. The reasons in the text provide a general explanation of why Dependent Bads are preferable for the unjust and this seems to be what Plato intends—he does not suggest that their preferability depends on very special circumstances. Cases in which the Dependent Bad, in the form of punishment, leads to ethical reform do not seem to be the main cases Plato has in mind. Some Dependent Bads are not plausible punishments (e.g., ugliness and bad sight would seem to require punishments that maim and these would be inappropriate for free citizens) and others that sometimes might be punishments (e.g. poverty) often afflict people without being penalties, and such penalties do not always lead to reform.

(118.) The *Euthydemus* and the *Meno*, like the *Laws*, hold that health is only good for the virtuous person. Cf. Vlastos (1985, p. 17 n. 55) where he distinguishes the Socratic conception of happiness in which health is only good for the virtuous person from the 'Platonic [i.e. Plato from the middle period on, including the *Republic*] and Aristotelian conceptions of happiness (where, e.g., health is good, so far as it goes, for all persons, regardless of their moral character)'. Vlastos (1991, pp. 200–32) omits this claim.

(119.) This does not entail that there is any stretch of time during which people would be better off overall if they had not been just; Plato holds that people are always worse off being unjust no matter how long they continue to live, cf. Kraut in Kraut (1992, p. 337 n. 31). It is consistent with this claim that there can be short-run losses of other goods that are only made up in the long run. That Plato is concerned here with the long-run, overall balance of benefits is shown by the 'either during his lifetime or after he has died' qualification at *Rep.* 613a6–7. Plato's point is not simply about the virtuous person's good use of apparent evils; what use could a virtuous person make of human illnesses when dead?

(120.) We might argue that although Plato holds the Dependency Thesis in the *Republic*, he does not choose to rely on it in his arguments for justice. Plato might want to show that, even if an unvirtuous person could benefit from goods other than virtue, a just person would always be better off. He might choose to argue in this way because he wants to show someone, whose view is that only goods other than virtue are of any real value, that (i) virtue is a good, and (ii) virtue is vastly more important for any human being than all other goods. This allows Plato to engage effectively someone who might resist (or might even not be able to understand) the stronger claim contained in the Dependency Thesis. (I

am indebted to John Cooper for making this possibility clear.) Even if Plato were following such a strategy, it is puzzling that he does not make his support for the Dependency Thesis clearer. Yet I do not think that the evidence allows us to establish clearly what the *Republic's* position is with respect to the Dependency Thesis. Other relevant passages include the following. (1) *Rep.* 491a-492a and 495a-b assert that many goods can, when a person does not receive a proper education, corrupt the soul by leading it away from philosophy. These goods are thus on the whole bad for the person, but the passages do not clearly claim that they are of no benefit at all to the person or that their only benefit is the degree to which they lead the person to philosophy. (2) *Rep.* 505a distinguishes two cases in which people do not benefit: (a) if they know other things without knowing the good, (b) if they possess all things without possessing the good. Even if (a) claims that the value of all forms of knowledge is dependent on knowing the good, this does not exhaust the range of Dependent Goods; (b) seems to be the weak claim that what you have must be good if you are to benefit. (3) Perhaps the most promising passage is *Rep.* 505d11-506a2, especially if we construe 505e3-4 as 'miss [the benefit from other things] even if there is some benefit from other things' rather than as 'miss [the good] even if there is some benefit from other things'. Yet even on the former translation, it is not obvious exactly what positive requirement Plato here asserts for benefit. He claims that one misses the benefit from other things if one is 'at a loss' as to what the good is and has no 'settled opinion' about it. But it is not clear how much or what kind of knowledge is necessary to avoid these two faults. We may, however, think it best not to press this passage too far. We might see it as a slight overstatement, especially if the above claim that all other knowledge without knowledge of the good fails to benefit is also a slight overstatement, cf. Ch. 1, n. 65. (4) *Rep.* 589d-590a and *Rep.* 591c-592a do not clearly assert dependency and are consistent with the idea that the value of virtue is so much greater than that of the Dependent Goods that virtue is always the decisive consideration.

(121.) We might accept that each part of the soul has its own built-in objective or end, but still doubt whether the notion of 'good for a part of the soul' really has application. For my present purposes, I remain neutral on this question as I remain neutral on what the *Republic's* position on the Dependency Thesis ultimately is. But Plato does explicitly characterize wisdom (whether or not he is to be taken literally) as knowledge of what is good for each of the three parts and for the community formed by all three (*Rep.* 442c5-8). For some who do think that 'good for a part of the soul' has application in the *Republic*, see Irwin (1995a, pp. 245-7) and Reeve (1988, pp. 142-3, 153-9).

(122.) *Rep.* 586d claims that when the lower parts pursue the pleasures recommended by the Reasoning part, they will attain their most beneficial pleasures, but this does not show that the lower parts cannot attain any beneficial pleasures without the Reasoning part's guidance and even when the

lower parts attain their best pleasures, they will not enjoy those pleasures proper to the Reasoning part. Each part might also need the awareness that its desires were satisfied, but this is far less than the Dependency Thesis requires. Nor is the *Republic*'s ordinal ranking of lives at 580a-c obviously consistent with the *Euthydemus'* apparent claim (281b-c) that one is less harmed if, when lacking knowledge, one also lacks moderation and courage.

(123.) See, especially, the claim at *Rep.* 581d10-e4 that the pleasures of the lower parts are 'very far from pleasure' retaining *tēs hēdonēs* at e2. This point explicitly concerns pleasure and not goodness and the relation of this argument to the evaluation of the happiness of lives is controversial; but the passage offers some reason for thinking that a similar claim is true about the goodness of the satisfactions of the lower parts. The text here is troubled; I agree with Shorey (1892, p. 366), against Adam, that we should put a question mark after *μαρθάνοντα* at 581e2 and retain *τῆς ἡδονῆς* and construe it with *οὐ πάνυ πόρρω*.

(124.) Plato pursues two distinct strategies that he does not distinguish sharply. First, he allows true belief, as well as knowledge, to be a satisfactory leader of the other virtues: *Laws* 688b1-4, cf. 689b2-3, 653a7-b1, and 644d1-3 (also see *Ep.* 7 342c5). Second, he sometimes allows that some form of true belief can qualify as wisdom: 689c6-e2, cf. 710a5-b2. See the helpful discussion in Irwin (1995a, pp. 347-53). The important question is whether the *Laws* accepts that true belief of the right sort can embody an appropriate grasp of non-sensible value properties and I defend this claim in Chs. 3 and 4. Stalley (1983, p. 48) suggests that Plato's use of *phronēsis* for the virtue of wisdom is significant and that he is here anticipating Aristotle's usage. But we should not accept this suggestion. In the *Laws*, as elsewhere in his corpus, Plato frequently interchanges *phronēsis* and *sophia* and their cognates: 689d2, d4, d5, d7, 696c8, and 710a6. Guthrie (1987, vol. 5, pp. 478-9) attributes such a distinction to Xenocrates, not Plato; also see Saunders (1962, p. 46) and A. E. Taylor (1929, pp. 246-51).

(125.) Compare Plato's narrower and broader uses of *epistēmē* and *nous* in the *Philebus* (e.g. 21b-22a and 58a-59e, especially 59c-d) and cf. Broadie in Gentzler (1998, p. 294).

(126.) For the aim of the laws as instilling complete virtue and Plato's expectation that it will succeed in many cases, see, e.g., *Laws* 630c, 631c-d, 641b-c, 647c-d, 705e-706a, 707d, 731e-732b, 734e-735a, 742c-743c, 770c-771a, 790b, 807c-e, 817b-c, 818c-d, 822e-823a, 853b-c, 876c-d, 878a-b, 913b-c, 921d-922a, 945b-e, 946e-947b, and 963a. Also see Vlastos (1981, pp. 14, 426). For happiness, see, e.g., 790b and 947b.

(127.) Cf. Irwin (1995a, pp. 349-53).

(128.) Korsgaard (1996a, p. 259). On types of realism in ethics, see Korsgaard (1996b, pp. 28–48, 205–8, 245–6).

(129.) On the ideal of assimilation to god (*homoiōsis theōi*), see especially Sedley in Fine (1999b, pp. 309–28).

(130.) Berlin (1977, p. 131) and cf. Ober (1998, pp. 6–7).

(131.) See, e.g., Korsgaard (1996a, pp. 335–62). For further discussion, see Christman (1989).

(132.) Cf. Bobonich (1996, pp. 262–81).

(133.) More precisely, Plato does not think that it is unconditionally good for people's choices and actions to be determined by their own beliefs and desires, not even their beliefs about and desires for the overall good. As we shall see in Ch. 4, however, Plato does acknowledge one way in which self-determination can be unconditionally good. In the *Timaeus*, Plato suggests that *nous* at its best is a form of self-determining activity and that failures in rationality can be understood as the effects of external forces that impinge upon and distort *nous* and to that extent leave us passive.

(134.) It is plausible to see *Rep.* 518b–e as evidence that the *Republic* accepts the theory of Recollection, cf. Ch. 1, n. 85. If so, 518d10–e2 tells us something quite important about the conceptual content of the lower two parts of the soul. What it suggests is that the condition of the lower two parts of the soul, even in a courageous and moderate person, does not involve any concepts based on Recollection.

(135.) Sedley in Fine (1999b, p. 323).

(136.) Courage and moderation properly understood should include a good state of the Reasoning part of the soul, see Ch. 1, Section 1.11. Plato's fundamental worry about the emotions, insofar as they consist in certain conditions of the lower parts of the soul or in non-rational motivations, is not that they are not within the agent's control, but that their objects lack serious value.

(137.) For further discussion, see Section 5.8. Good choice of particulars will require a grasp of the appropriate universal, if we think of practical deliberation as moving deductively from the universal to the particular. But good choice of particulars may require grasp of the appropriate universal, even if one rejects a deductivist (or a rule/case) conception of practical deliberation. Even on a specificationist account, a grasp of the universal might be necessary in order to set the range within which further specification occurs.

(138.) Burnyeat (1987, pp. 238–9).

(139.) Or perhaps, quasi-mathematical: e.g., all ethical properties are specifiable in terms of some continuum plus determinants that are mathematical ratios or proportions.

(140.) See Bobonich (1995b, pp. 315–19).

(141.) See, e.g., *Laws* 662d–e and Irwin (1995a, pp. 343–5). For further discussion, see Section 5.8. I speak of ‘greatest happiness’ here without meaning to prejudge the completeness issue.

(142.) For other instances of the necessity claim, see *Laws* 716a2–b5. This passage may seem to offer a distressingly instrumentalist reason to be just and a restricted view of what justice is. But the passage illustrates a recurrent rhetorical strategy in the *Laws*. This is the first address to the colonists who have been educated in ordinary Greek cities and have thus received a very defective ethical education. The first address is at a simpleminded level, but points beyond itself. Plato offers this as part of an account of assimilation to god, but as we have seen, citizens will later come to recognize that this involves grasping the rational order of the world and joining with god to bring about justice in the world, 742e4–743c4, 874d2–5. By the ‘nurture and education of the soul’, Plato means the nurture and education which produces virtue, cf. 854e5–6. It is thus virtue whose presence makes life livable and without virtue, life is not worth living (899d8–e4 (cf. 905b–c), and 906a2–b2).

(143.) The necessity of virtue for happiness is much less controversial if happiness is understood in a maximalist fashion. Appealing to differences in weight between the value of virtue and that of other goods is more problematic if we recognize degrees of virtue and hold that the more virtuous one is, the better off one is, no matter how other goods and bads are distributed. We would then have to claim that the smallest difference in virtue outweighs the largest possible difference in other goods.

(144.) It is difficult to find a passage that clearly commits Plato to the claim that A is happier than B and both A and B are happy. Relevant passages include *Gorg.* 478d–e, *Rep.* 465dff., and *Symp.* 195a6. I am indebted to David Johnson for these references and discussion of them.

(145.) I discuss the notion of a part or component of happiness further in Section 5.8.

(146.) The sufficiency thesis would not, however, follow trivially: e.g., if a minimum length of time is necessary for happiness, a person might attain virtue, but fail to be happy. The claim that happiness consists in virtue is weaker than the claim that virtue is the only non-instrumental good, since if there are a

plurality of non-instrumental goods, happiness might consist in some proper subset of them.

(147.) Annas (1999, pp. 31–51). Although I argue against some of Annas' claims, I have learned a great deal from her work.

(148.) Cf. Irwin (1995a, p. 346).

(149.) Annas (1999, p. 44).

(150.) Annas (1999, p. 38) seems to accept this point about the *Philebus*, cf. Irwin (1995a, pp. 335–7). The *Euthydemus'* apparent claim (280a) that wisdom is sufficient for success in art is explicitly rejected in the *Laws* (708e–709e). On the *Menexenus* (cf. Annas (1999, pp. 40–1)), 247a seems to suggest that parents are better off, i.e. happier, if their children are good. I have argued above in the text that in the *Republic*, (1) the external goods that come from justice affect one's happiness (612aff.), and (2) the person's happiness is affected by the satisfaction of the desires of the lower parts of the soul.

(151.) Annas (1999, p. 42) seems to suggest that virtuous activity (in addition to the condition of soul that constitutes virtue) is necessary for happiness (this is why external goods are pursued and non-vice evils rejected) and to understand virtuous activity in a fairly normal sense, that is, it does not occur wholly within the agent's body. But this view faces problems in accounting for, e.g., the happiness of the just person on the rack. Annas thus sometimes seems to go further and attribute to Plato the full-blown Stoic view of indifferents, e.g. Annas (1999, pp. 44, 48–9). And on Annas' interpretation of the Stoics, they handle rack cases by appealing to their metaphysics of action and identifying the virtuous activity necessary for happiness with something that goes on entirely within a person's body, Annas (1992b, pp. 98–102), (1993, pp. 398–405). But a theory of indifferents and such a theory of action are very strong theses to attribute to Plato without explicit textual evidence.

(152.) Other relevant passages include the following: (1) *Laws* 662cff. seems to suggest that the most virtuous life available to a person is the happiest life available to him. This may not be enough to show that virtue is sufficient for happiness: (a) even if the most virtuous life available to a person is the happiest life available to him, this does not entail that such a life is happy, and (b) waiving (a), the passage entails that the most virtuous life is happy, but not that the virtuous life is happy. (2) 829a1–5 suggests that one cannot prevent oneself from suffering injustice unless one becomes 'completely good'. Although Plato goes on to discuss war, he cannot be implying that the virtuous are immune from suffering injustice because they are invincible fighters (cf. *Laws* 638a). Rather we might interpret the passage along the lines that Vlastos suggests for a similar passage from the *Apology*. Vlastos (1985, pp. 9–10) interprets the claim at *Ap.* 30c5–d5 that a good person cannot be harmed as meaning that the good

person can suffer no significant harm. The idea here is that although there are goods other than virtue, virtue is sufficient for happiness, so that harm done to virtuous people, as long as it did not impair their virtue, would still leave them happy. This is a possible reading of the *Laws* passage, but the Greek, in any case, does not say that becoming completely virtuous guarantees suffering no injustice, but only that it is a necessary condition, see England (1921, ad loc.).

(3) At 906a2-b2, Plato claims that injustice destroys us, while justice 'saves or preserves [*sōizei*] us'. This seems compatible, however, with the idea that virtue guarantees that we are not miserable, although it is not sufficient for happiness.

(4) *Laws* 742e4-743c4, if one takes *schedon* at 742e4 literally, it suggests that virtue is not sufficient for happiness.

(153.) *Laws* 660e2-3 loses its point unless we construe the participle as causal (note the parallel at 660e6) and is so translated by R. Bury, Saunders, and A. E. Taylor.

(154.) Cf. Annas (1999, pp. 44-5).

(155.) Their primary evidence consists of several passages from the early dialogues that seem to suggest that a sufficient degree of ill health could render the life of even the virtuous person not happy and, indeed, not worth living. (See Brickhouse and Smith (1987), (1989, pp. 163-7), Irwin (1977b, p. 100), (1986b), Kraut (1984, pp. 37-9), and Vlastos (1991, pp. 200-32).) Important passages include *Crito* 47e and *Gorgias* 512a-b (cf. 505a). My primary concern here is with the *Laws* and I take no position on the interpretation of the early dialogues, but let me note the following two points: (1) we can explain, consistently with the claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness, the idea that a sufficient degree of ill health may prevent one's life from being happy. As Vlastos (1985, p. 8 n. 62) suggested, Plato's point may be that extreme ill health affects the soul and destroys or disrupts its virtuous condition. (2) Allowing that a virtuous person might have a life that is not worth living has some troubling consequences. Consider a person *P* who is virtuous and a person *S* who is more virtuous than *P*. (I assume here that virtue comes in degrees, cf., e.g., *Laws* 757c, 854d-e.) It seems clear that Plato would say that *S* is better off, i.e. happier, than *P*. (This is suggested by Plato's argument that one should never do an injustice because any act of injustice makes one's soul worse, e.g., *Ap.* 28b-d, *Crito* 47a-49b.) Now suppose that *S* has a degree of ill health that makes *S*'s life not worth living. Given the assumption that the more virtuous people are, the better off they are, it still follows that *S* is better off than *P*. Since *S*'s life is both better than *P*'s life and not worth living, it follows that *P*'s life is not worth living no matter what other goods *P* has. A similar argument can be made for any person *P* except someone who is such that there can be no one more virtuous, i.e. someone who is maximally virtuous. It thus follows that no life, except the most virtuous possible life, is worth living.

(156.) Indeed, *Laws* 874d2–5 seems to claim that virtue is sufficient to make one's life worth living, but it is not clear how far we should press this passage.

(157.) See Kraut in Kraut (1992, pp. 311–37) and, e.g., *Laws* 726a–728c.

(158.) Let us take up the issue of sufficiency. In the *Laws*, the two most elaborate and detailed statements of the Dependency Thesis (631b–d, 660e–661e) do not stress that virtue is sufficient to benefit from Dependent Goods. One sign of this is that Plato asserts that Dependent Goods benefit the just person without asserting that virtue guarantees correct use or that the Dependent Goods *always* benefit the just person. And, in the *Laws*, unlike the *Euthydemus*, Plato does not hold that wisdom makes good luck unnecessary, cf. n. 150; also see n. 46. *Laws* 660e–661e claims that the just person can be happy with relatively few Dependent Goods, but we do not have to hold that the *Laws* intends to assert the sufficiency of virtue for benefit that made the *Euthydemus'* position so open to counterexamples. The explanation of the Dependency Thesis that I have offered shows why, although virtue may not be strictly sufficient for benefit, it typically suffices.

(159.) In several passages in the *Laws*, Plato employs a rough trichotomy of goods: (1) goods of the soul, (2) goods of the body, and (3) goods concerned with property and wealth. See *Laws* 870a6–c1 and cf. 697b2–6, 717c2–6, 726a–728d, 743d–e. Cf. Aristotle *E.E.* 1218^b32–4, *N.E.* 1098^b12–20, *Pol.* 1323^a25–1324^a4, especially 1323^b7–29, *Protrep.* Ross 11, Düring b21; also see Cooper (1999, pp. 292–311), and Kraut (1997, pp. 53–9). This trichotomy in Plato is not fully elaborated; we are not told, for example, whether it is exhaustive or where, if anywhere, virtuous action or the welfare of others is classified. *Laws* 870b5–6 does not claim either that (a) virtue of the soul is the only psychic good and virtue of the body is the only bodily good, or (b) that the only psychic good which bodily goods are ‘for the sake of’ is virtue. *Laws* 870b4–5 states Plato’s point in general terms: wealth is for the sake of the goods of the body and we are to supply (on the strength of 870b3–4) the corresponding point that bodily goods are for the sake of psychic goods. The claim that wealth is third after the virtue of the body and the soul logically follows, since bodily virtue is a bodily good and the virtue of the soul is a psychic good. Plato singles out these goods—the virtue of the body and the virtue of the soul—because of their special importance within their particular classes, but his claim does not entail and should not be read as suggesting either (a) or (b). On a strict interpretation of this passage, wealth is instrumental only to bodily goods, but this is surely too restrictive; wealth might also be instrumental to psychic goods.

Goods in the second and third categories are Dependent Goods. ‘Goods of the soul’ include virtue which is an Independent Good, but could include other goods of the soul, e.g. pleasure. The most important new point that this passage seems to add is that the lower two kinds of goods ‘are for the sake of’ the goods of the

soul. Plato thus seems to be claiming that the lower two sorts of goods are of value only insofar as they are used in good psychic activity or instrumentally contribute to psychic goods. This goes beyond Plato's previous claims that such goods are Dependent Goods. But this is also apparently the position of the *Philebus*, since the only components of happiness it recognizes are psychic states.