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Hedonism in Plato's Protagoras and Gorgias.

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HEDONISM IN PLATO'S PROTAGORAS AND GORGIAS

A Dissertation Presented

By

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Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1982

Philosophy


Keyt, David, "Plato's Paradox that the Immutable is the Unknowable ", *Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 19, pp. 1-14, 1969.


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TO MY PARENTS

MILDRED AND EARLE BIDGOOD
I first became interested in the *Protagoras* as an undergraduate when I read it in a Greek class. I had by then taken a course or two in which I read some of the other Platonic dialogues, and I had formed some sort of notion of Socrates' character and his general philosophical project.

I had what probably amounted to the standard picture of Socrates one gets from reading the *Apology* and the *Crito* and the *Euthyphro*. He struck me as something of an austere character, pursuing truth and avoiding pleasure, someone who closely resembled the hero of the *Gorgias* in his insistence on a division between pleasure and moral virtue.

So with this picture I read the *Protagoras* and found it puzzling, and a little disturbing. Especially puzzling to me was the section in which Socrates appears to be arguing that really what we should be pursuing is pleasure.

I didn't think much about the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* after that until I spent a summer a few years ago reading Terence Irwin's *Plato's Moral Theory* with Gary Matthews and Cynthia Freeland. There Irwin raises that same problem of fitting the *Protagoras* with the *Gorgias*, and attempts to fit both dialogues into a single theory, which is both clever and provocative. Irwin's theory, however, seemed to me to be wrong on a number of
fundamental issues. So, when I was discussing thesis topics with my committee, a thesis in which I examined the hedonism of the two dialogues as well as Irwin's views on the subject seemed natural.

Once I started looking around in the literature, I found that most of the discussions pointed in one of two directions. They either looked at the role of hedonism in the dialogues (raising questions of interpretation) or they examined the various arguments involving hedonism (raising questions of formulation).

Since both questions interested me, I decided to pursue both. On the one hand, I have reviewed closely many of the attempts in the literature to discover Plato's purpose in introducing hedonism to the Protagoras discussion. On the other hand, especially in the latter chapters, I have tried to formulate and evaluate the alleged arguments for and about hedonism in the Protagoras and Gorgias.

Throughout the year and a half it has taken me to write the thesis, I have incurred many debts, from friends and family, colleagues and teachers. I, of course, owe much to my parents for their financial and moral support, even when they weren't quite sure what they were supporting. I also owe much to my sister Barbara and her family for their generosity and encouragement. They have put up with my odd priorities and oddly timed trips to Massachusetts (usually in their car) on and off
for this whole summer. Over the past months Tom and Suzi Ryckman have often rearranged their schedules and habits to accommodate my weekly visits to Amherst, even as Tom was finishing his own dissertation and they were preparing to move to Iowa. I hope I can be as much help when Tom comes to defend.

My colleagues at Franklin and Marshall College have been very helpful in allowing me time to write. I have especially enjoyed the friendship of Glenn Ross with whom I have spent many pleasant hours formulating strategies for completing a dissertation during one's first year of teaching.

Needless to say, I owe much to my teachers, particularly those on my committee: Fred Feldman, Cynthia Freeland and George Dimock, who often refused to allow me merely to meet my standards, but prodded me to try to meet theirs. My thesis is much the better for that prodding.

My greatest debt and the one I am happiest to acknowledge is to my director, Gary Matthews. I can only guess how many hours he has spent reading and commenting on my thesis in its various forms. Much of what is good in here I owe to his comments and the discussions we had to and from string quartet concerts. I especially thank him for his encouragement during the times when the project seemed endless.
ABSTRACT

Hedonism in Plato's Protagoras and Gorgias

September 1982

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In this dissertation, I focus on the hedonism in Plato's Protagoras and Gorgias, paying close, but not exclusive, attention to the recent discussion by Terence Irwin in his Plato's Moral Theory and his translation of and commentary on the Gorgias.

I argue that there is a genuine ethical hedonism discussed in the Protagoras, but that we are not forced by considerations in the Protagoras to ascribe that hedonism to Socrates. Furthermore, I argue, contra Irwin, that Socrates is not committed to hedonism by his earlier ethical views. In fact, I suggest, hedonism plays no real role in the logical structure of the main argument in the dialogue (namely the argument against Protagoras for the unity of the virtues.)

In the Gorgias Socrates is clearly out to attack some version of hedonism. this attack consists of two arguments: one attempting to show that pleasure has a property which goodness
lacks, the other attempting to show that the identification of goodness and pleasure has unacceptable ethical consequences. When properly formulated, neither argument is successful against hedonism, but at best only against an identification of the good person with the pleased person, a doctrine which is logically independent from the first. There are, however, some passages in the Gorgias which suggest an argument whereby Plato may have supposed a refutation of this latter doctrine constituted a refutation of hedonism. I examine a number of ways in which the resulting argument is unsuccessful.

In general, I argue that Socrates is not committed to accepting hedonism in the Protagoras, and hence, that there is no need to view these two dialogues as reflecting a fundamental change in Platonic ethics. We need not say that Plato's ethical views were based on hedonism in the Protagoras and based on its rejection in the Gorgias. Rather, both dialogues work toward standard Socratic doctrines such as the unity of the virtues and the happiness of the good person.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .............................................................. v

CHAPTER I ............................................................ 1

CHAPTER II .......................................................... 10
   Introduction ....................................................... 10
   Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goodness ............................... 12
   Is There a Doctrine of Hedonism in the Protagoras? ....... 16
   Hedonistic Passages ............................................. 25
   Ethical and Psychological Hedonism ........................... 30
   Quantity and Quality of Pleasure .............................. 39
   Summary .......................................................... 44

CHAPTER III ........................................................ 46
   Introduction ....................................................... 46
   Passages Suggesting "The Many" Accept Hedonism .......... 47
   Textual Evidence Concerning Protagoras and Hedonism ..... 48
   Is Protagoras Committed to the Hedonistic Doctrine? ..... 49
   Textual Evidence Concerning Socrates and Hedonism ..... 60

CHAPTER IV .......................................................... 72
   Introduction ....................................................... 72
   Overview of the Dialogue ....................................... 72
   Summary of the Discussion Involving Hedonism ............. 76
   Why Hedonism? .................................................... 86
   Hackforth and Irwin ............................................. 92
   Taylor ............................................................ 112
   Interpreting the Protagoras .................................... 114

CHAPTER V .......................................................... 125
   Introduction ....................................................... 125
   Hedonism in the Gorgias ........................................ 127
   Callicles' Commitment to Hedonism ............................ 131
   Socrates' First Argument Against Hedonism ................. 137
   Socrates' Second Argument Against Hedonism ............... 153
   Summary .......................................................... 157

CHAPTER VI ........................................................ 159
   Introduction ....................................................... 159
   Hedonism in the Gorgias Again ............................... 160
The Role of Hedonism in the Gorgias ................................. 174
The Protagoras and the Gorgias ........................................ 179

CHAPTER VII ....................................................................... 187

Changes in the Notion of Pleasure in Later Dialogues ... 187
Hedonism in Later Dialogues .............................................. 189
Summary ................................................................. 192

................................................................. 197

NOTES ........................................................................... 197

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................... 225
For I say that things are good in so far as they are pleasant if they have no consequences of another sort, and in so far as they are painful they are bad...What is good and praiseworthy, I said, is also pleasant. (Protagoras 351c, 360a) [NOTE 1]

Are pleasure and goodness the same? They are not the same, as Callicles and I have agreed. (Gorgias 506c6-7)

These two passages are discomforting for at least two different reasons. In the first place, they seem to be in such opposition that, in the absence of a special explanation, it is difficult to see how Socrates could hold both views. In the second place, even putting aside the Gorgias passage, the passage from the Protagoras suggests an ethical view quite at odds with our usual picture of Socrates as a man far more concerned with virtue and truth than with pleasure.

These passages are not, of course, isolated; they are typical of what appear to be the general views of the Protagoras and Gorgias respectively. The Protagoras seems to be very sympathetic to an identification of goodness with pleasure; the
Gorgias appears to be strongly opposed to precisely that identification.

This opposition is paralleled in the Platonic corpus perhaps only by the discussion of the Forms. Even there, however, Plato provides the Parmenides to shed some light on the development and nature of his doubts about the Forms. We are provided with no such "dialectical" guide to his thinking about pleasure and goodness.

What we find, instead, is an apparent reliance on this identification in the Protagoras. There is no clear argument for the view; rather it forms the basis for an argument concerning the nature of virtue. On the other hand, we find in the Gorgias a bitter attack on the identification with no hint that Plato might have accepted hedonism, or considered accepting it. Further, there is no dialogue which can be seen as a transition between the two dialogues in the way that the first part of the Parmenides can be seen as a transition between the view of Forms that came before it and the view that came after it.

In fact, before the Protagoras and Gorgias, there is very little discussion of the nature of pleasure, or goodness, or how one is related to the other. The so-called definitional dialogues search for characterizations of justice, piety, friendship, and so forth, but rarely provide any sustained attempt to analyze the notion of goodness itself.

The only relevant early discussions of either goodness or
pleasure occur in the Hippias Major and the Lysis. In Hippias
Major (303e8-304a3), Socrates considers and shows himself
uncomfortable with the claim that praiseworthiness is beneficial
pleasure (τὸ καλὸν εἶναι ἡσουν ὑδέλιμον). His discomfort stems
in part from the fact that he supposes this yields the result
that praiseworthiness and goodness must be different (since
goodness and benefit differ). Socrates has already said at
297c2-d2 that he cannot accept the claim that praiseworthiness
and goodness are different. This suggestion that
praiseworthiness and goodness are identical is also found in the
Lysis at 216d2 (Ἀγω νῦν ταῦτας καλὰν εἶναι).

So, if the Hippias Major is an early work, as Friedlander
and Grube suppose it is, [NOTE 2] we have an indication that
before the Protagoras Socrates at least considered a relation
between goodness and pleasure (beneficial pleasure anyway) and
rejected it.

The Protagoras and Gorgias raise many questions. Do these
two dialogues represent a change in Plato's opinions about
goodness, and if so, in which direction? Do they instead
represent a change from Socrates' views to Plato's? Is there
even a genuine opposition of views between the Protagoras and
Gorgias at all?

Over the past hundred years or so, several studies have
attempted to answer such questions. Perhaps the most remarkable
feature of the group of studies as a whole is the wide divergence
of solutions they offer. The broadest difference comes out over whether the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* represent a change in Plato's own views.

The various solutions fall roughly into two categories:

1. There is no genuine difference in the views of the two dialogues, either because, contrary to first appearances, there is no hedonism formulated in the *Protagoras*, or because it is not put forth there in any serious way. When the *Protagoras* was written Plato did not accept a hedonistic view, but instead used it to defeat the arguments of the sophists. In the *Gorgias* we get Plato's true views on the matter. There is no overall change in Plato's notion of goodness.

2. There is a genuine difference in the views of the two dialogues. When Plato wrote the earlier *Protagoras*, he accepted a hedonistic account of the nature of goodness. Sometime after the writing of that dialogue, however, he became displeased with hedonism and, consequently, attacks it in the *Gorgias*.

So, to pick an example in the first category, Gregory Vlastos wrote in an introduction to the *Protagoras* [NOTE 3] that the claims of the dialogue are best understood if they are taken to express a doctrine rather weaker than hedonism, namely that while pleasure is a good, it is not necessarily the only one. Also in the first category, commentators such as Paul
Shorey in *The Unity of Plato's Thought* [NOTE 4] and F. M. Cornford in the *Cambridge Ancient History* [NOTE 5] argue that while there is a genuine hedonism in the dialogue, "the real purpose [of the *Protagoras*] is to lead the Sophists to confess that their philosophy is the same as the ordinary man's who believes that "good" means "pleasant" or that pleasure is the only good...thus the professional teachers of goodness are revealed as willing to fall in with the popular hedonism." (Cornford, p. 113) Thus when Socrates asks Protagoras at 351e2-4 and elsewhere whether pleasure itself is good, he is doing nothing more than attempting to draw Protagoras into admitting that his ethical theory is basically hedonistic.

A third view in the first category is suggested by A. E. Taylor in his *Plato: The Man and His Work*. [NOTE 6] He argues there that the main thrust of the *Protagoras* is to show that various claims of Socrates' that relate goodness and virtue to knowledge would be correct even if hedonism were true. So if goodness and pleasure are identical, then virtue consists in discovering what is best by measuring pleasures and pains. This ability to measure qualities is a branch of knowledge, Socrates argues at 357a4-b6. Thus even if pleasure were identical to goodness Socrates would be right in thinking that true virtue depends on knowledge.

Most of the commentators who hold views in the first category concentrate on trying to offer a satisfactory
interpretation of the Protagoras. There is a fairly simple reason for this. It is the Protagoras that represents the greatest problem for this sort of view. It is the position apparently taken in the Protagoras that these commentators attempt to explain away. The Gorgias is relatively unproblematic for them; they consider it relatively straightforward in its presentation of Plato's genuine opinion.

More common views concerning the Protagoras and Gorgias fall into the second of the two general views outlined above. In their simplest versions put forward, for instance, by Grote in Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates [NOTE 7] the Protagoras is merely Plato's report of Socrates' views. The Gorgias, then, according to many of these commentators (for example Hackforth in "Hedonism in Plato's Protagoras" [NOTE 8]) represents an early and independent philosophical inquiry by Plato. This dialogue, though it is later than the philosophical reporting of the Protagoras still precedes the fully mature Platonic theories found in the Republic and other later works. The Gorgias is, according to these interpretations, essentially a negative work in which Plato rejects the hedonistic theory of the Protagoras but puts nothing in its place.

One of the most interesting and well-worked-out version of this second sort of interpretation was originally put forth by Hackforth and recently revived by Terence Irwin in Plato's Moral Theory. [NOTE 9] According to both Hackforth and Irwin, the
Protagoras and Gorgias represent Plato's continuing effort to understand and incorporate the positions of the historical Socrates. So in the Protagoras Plato makes an attempt to formulate precisely the Socratic equation of knowledge and goodness, an attempt which, Irwin supposes, leads him to the hedonism of the dialogue. In the Gorgias, however, which both Hackforth and Irwin place after the Protagoras but before the Republic, Plato rejects the identification of pleasure and goodness, and, with it, much of the Socratic theory that led him to that identification.

In the following chapters, I will look at the plausibility of these various reconstructions of Plato's intentions. More importantly, however, I want to examine the actual arguments about hedonism Plato uses in the Protagoras and Gorgias. So, in the second chapter, I look closely at the hedonistic view that is formulated in the Protagoras. I argue that there is such a doctrine in the dialogue and defend that claim against those commentators (e.g., Vlastos and Goodell) who claim that there is no hedonism there. I shall also argue that the hedonism of the Protagoras is ethical and that contrary to some claims by Irwin, there is no reason to interpret the hedonism as psychological.

In the third chapter, I begin to address the question of interpretation. I argue there that while there are passages in the Protagoras which unambiguously show that "the many" are supposed to hold a hedonistic view of ethics, and that Protagoras
eventually admits that he does accept such a view, there is no passage which incontrovertibly shows that Socrates holds the view.

In the fourth chapter, I turn to an examination of the arguments in the *Protagoras*. I argue there against many of the standard reconstructions of the role of hedonism. I argue against Irwin's view that the hedonism in the dialogue is implied by the earlier Socratic ethical claims. I try to show that once we examine the logical structure of the dialogue, we can see that hedonism plays no important role in the overall argument at all. Instead, the argument against Protagoras rests on a different identification, one between praiseworthiness (τὸ χαλόν) and goodness.

In the fifth chapter, I turn to the *Gorgias*. There the problems of interpretation at first seem insignificant; it seems clear from even a cursory reading that Socrates is arguing against hedonism. Again, however, once we examine the argument closely, we find that things are different. The main thrust of Socrates' argument is not against hedonism at all, but against a related view concerning moral appraisal of persons.

Nonetheless, Socrates seems to suppose that this argument fares equally well against genuine hedonism, and in the sixth chapter, I reconstruct an argument from the *Gorgias* with which Socrates tries to justify that conclusion.

In the final chapter I return to the problem of
understanding the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* as a pair of dialogues, and argue that there is no compelling reason to see these two dialogues as representing opposite sides of Plato's ethical theory. Once we understand the arguments of the dialogue, we are free to see the two dialogues as being entirely consistent with one another. There is no need to explain away Socrates' anomalous allegiance to hedonism in the *Protagoras* because there is no evidence that he does hold it there. In the *Gorgias* on the other hand, we do get Socrates' view that goodness cannot be analyzed in terms of pleasure.
Hedonism is roughly the doctrine that pleasure and only pleasure is intrinsically good (and pain and only pain is intrinsically evil), although it comes in a number of different versions. In what follows we will have an opportunity to discuss some of them and ask whether Plato had any of them in mind in the Protagoras and, if so, how he understood them.

In the Protagoras Plato is clearly concerned with some putative relation between pleasure and goodness. It is not clear, however, what this relation is supposed to be, nor is it clear whether this relation is being put forth seriously. At least two fundamental difficulties stand in the way of ferreting out the details of this discussion.

In the first place, Socrates uses a number of different terms when expressing the relation. He most often speaks of the relation between pleasure (νόμν) and goodness (τὸ ἀγαθόν) (351b6, 351e1-2, etc.), but he also occasionally speaks of the relation between enjoyment (τὸ γεύομαι) and goodness (353d5, 354c6-7, etc). There are also some passages where he speaks of the relation between living pleasantly and living well (εὖ ζούων). Any thorough examination of this discussion will
involve deciding whether the words "pleasure" and "enjoyment" and
the words "good" and "well" are being used synonymously or are
being used to construct a number of subtly different relations.

Furthermore, it is not entirely clear what Socrates is
supposed to mean by "pleasure" and "goodness". Do these refer to
sensations, forms, collections of things, properties?

In the second place, much of the discussion of hedonism is
imbedded not only in a series of questions directed at
Protagoras, but from 353-357, Socrates and Protagoras carry on an
imaginary conversation about hedonism with "the many" (οι
πολλοί). So, for instance, Socrates and Protagoras have the
following exchange at 353e5-354a1:

So it seems to you, as Protagoras and I say, that
these things are evil for no other reason than that
they result in evils and deprive us of pleasures.
Would they agree?
We thought they ["the many"] would. (my
translation)

Whatever doctrines are suggested by Socrates' questions are not
clearly ascribable to Socrates, but neither are they clearly
ascribable to either Protagoras or "the many".

In this chapter, I would like simply to ask whether there is
some doctrine of hedonism being discussed in the Protagoras and,
if so, how it should be formulated. In this discussion, I will
treat all Socratic questions as assertions as if they represented the actual views of Socrates. In later chapters we will need to ask whether these views can be fairly attributed to Socrates, but for now let us see if we can discern exactly what topic is being discussed in the latter section of the *Protagoras*.

**Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goodness**

It is important in discussing hedonism to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic goodness. A thing is intrinsically good just in case, roughly speaking, it is good in itself or by its very nature. A thing is extrinsically good just in case it results in certain intrinsically good things. This distinction is characterized, for instance, by G. E. Moore in *Principia Ethica* in the following way:

whenever we judge that a thing is "good as a means" we are making a judgement with regard to its causal relations: we judge both that it will have a particular kind of effect, and that the effect will be good in itself...on the other hand, there are judgements which state that certain kinds of things are themselves good:...we shall be judging that the
thing itself has the property which, in the first case, we asserted only to belong to its effects.

[NOTE 10]

It is quite clear that Plato was also aware of the distinction, as this passage from Book II of the Republic shows:

Do you agree that there is a kind of good which we would choose to possess, not from desire for its aftereffects, but welcoming it for its own sake?...and can you discern a...form of good under which fall exercise and being healed and the making of money generally? For of them we would say that they are laborious and painful yet beneficial, and for their own sake we would not accept them, but only for the rewards and other benefits that accrue from them. (Shorey 357b-d)

The language in the Protagoras suggests that the distinction may not have been quite as clear to him when he wrote that dialogue as it was in the Republic. Nonetheless, I think we can see Socrates working on bringing to light these different senses of "good".

At 354a7-b2 Socrates asks with regard to surgery and starvation diets, "And are these things good for any other reason
than that they result in pleasures and the relief from and avoidance of pains" (ταῦτα οὐ ἀγαθὰ εἰσὶ δι᾽ ἄλλο τι ἦν ἄλλο εἰς ἀρχαὶ ἀποτελεῖται καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει τε καὶ ἀποτροπαῖς;) [NOTE 11] The goodness that Socrates seems to be discussing here is extrinsic goodness. The ascription of goodness to surgery is not based upon some feature of surgery itself, but rather on some feature of what results from it (i.e., pleasure and the avoidance of pain).

On the other hand, at 351c4, Socrates says, "What I say is, in so far as things are pleasant, are they not to that extent good, leaving their other consequences out of the account." (ἐφ᾽ ἃπλέγομαι καὶ ἂν ἄρεστον ἀπελευθεροῦσαν, ἂν κατὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀγαθὰ, ἦν καὶ τι ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀποθησάμεθα ἄλλο;) [NOTE 12] Socrates seems here to be attempting to show how, in at least one sense, goodness is independent of consequences. In this sense, a thing's goodness is dependent only on some feature of the thing itself, namely its pleasantness.

That Socrates, in this passage, has in mind intrinsic goodness is pretty clearly suggested by his clarification of his first question to Protagoras, which comes at 351el-2: "in so far as they are pleasant are they not good? I'm asking whether pleasure itself is not good?" (καθ᾽ ὅσον ἄφέστη ἔστιν εἰ οὐκ ἀγαθὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτῆς ἐρωτῆσαν εἰ οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἔστιν)

There are also passages which suggest that Socrates saw that a thing might be intrinsically good, on the one hand, and
extrinsically evil, on the other, and that, for instance, the thing's intrinsic goodness could be outweighed by its extrinsic evil. At 354c6-d1, Socrates says, "you even call enjoyment itself bad when it deprives you of greater pleasures than it has in itself, or leads to pains which are greater than its own pleasures." What Socrates is suggesting here is that, in this particular case, the enjoyment is pleasant in itself (and, hence, intrinsically good) but has overall painful consequences (and, hence, is extrinsically evil), and, since the painful consequences outweigh its own pleasure, we judge this episode of enjoyment to be evil.

While it is clear that Plato was aware of the distinction between the goodness of a thing itself and the goodness of its consequences, we should be aware that the distinction is never drawn explicitly in the dialogue. Plato uses a single word, "good" (ἀγαθόν) throughout. Sometimes it is most plausibly understood as meaning extrinsically good (e.g., 354b), sometimes it is best understood as meaning intrinsically good (e.g., 351c), and sometimes it seems to mean overall good, or good all things considered (e.g., 354d). Nonetheless, it is consistently clear from the context what sort of goodness Socrates is (or should be) talking about. Furthermore, it also seems clear that the emphasis in the discussion in the Protagoras is on the intrinsic goodness of pleasure.

We have not so far, however, asked how Plato understands
pleasure or goodness. In the next section I would like to turn to some attempts to show that, in fact, there is no doctrine of hedonism discussed in the dialogue. In the course of arguing that there is such a view there, I will try to draw out Plato's understanding of pleasure and goodness.

Is There a Doctrine of Hedonism in the Protagoras?

In a 1921 paper in the *American Journal of Philology*, entitled "Plato's Hedonism" (hereafter PH), T.D. Goodell claimed, "In fact, [Plato] never held any doctrine that we nowadays call hedonism. Only a superficial reader can find it in the *Protagoras*, where alone any hint of it is found." Goodell suggests that we distinguish between bodily pleasure and spiritual pleasure. While the former might rightly be called pleasure, the latter is more appropriately called joy or delight. Loosely, bodily pleasure seems to be pleasure in some sensual experience, while spiritual pleasure is to be understood as pleasure taken in some state of affairs which does not involve bodily pleasure. This is, of course, a slippery distinction which might not withstand close scrutiny. It does, however, have some intuitive appeal. We recognize some difference between the pleasure we experience while eating a well-prepared meal and the
joy or delight we take in, say, an unselfish act of charity. On Goodell's view, it is only the association of goodness with bodily pleasure that has any right to be called hedonism.

W.K.C. Guthrie seems to present a similar, although less detailed, view. He claims in the Introduction to his translation of the *Protagoras* and *Meno* that "the doctrine to which Socrates gains Protagoras' consent toward the end of the dialogue may be labelled hedonism, but it is something utterly different from this and is indeed consistent with a morality as high as most people would aspire to." [NOTE 13] The doctrine that Plato discusses allows for ["demands" says Guthrie] a temperate life and enduring pain to protect one's country. "This is hardly hedonism in any accepted sense." (Guthrie page 22)

Goodell goes further, however, and supposes that this distinction enables us to gain a proper understanding of the doctrines being discussed in the *Protagoras*. We should understand ἰδονή and χαίρειν as near synonyms meaning "pleasure [in] the widest possible application, expressly including the highest kind of pleasure." (PH, page 26) While ἰδονή is the common word for both bodily and spiritual pleasure, τὸ χαίρειν, claims Goodell, suggests, "an emotional or mental state, not one of the body." (PH, page 27) Thus, although the two words are being used synonymously, we should understand the use of ἰδονή to be restricted so as to match τὸ χαίρειν, and, hence, understand the discussion in the *Protagoras* as being directed at
the relation between goodness and spiritual pleasure. Of this relation, Goodell says, "...it is a fine declaration, in the peculiar manner of the Platonic Sokrates—probably of the historic Sokrates as well—of Plato's faith in the high origin and high destiny of man." (PH, page 25)

There is much that is wrong with Goodell's paper, but I think a good look at it will shed some light on Plato's notion of pleasure in the dialogue. From the supposed distinction between spiritual pleasure and bodily pleasure, and the central role ἱαματικὴ χάρα plays in Plato's discussion of pleasure, Goodell infers that Plato's notion of pleasure must involve spiritual delight and have no trade with any sort of sensual bodily pleasure.

Goodell seems to base an ethical distinction on the vague metaphysical distinction between spiritual pleasure and bodily pleasure. He supposes that identifying goodness with the former does not count as hedonism while identifying goodness with the latter does. This metaphysical distinction, however, does not entail the corresponding ethical distinction, nor is there any reason to think that it should unless one mistakenly supposes that one can only take spiritual pleasure in morally exemplary acts such as doing one's duty. One can, of course, take just as much spiritual pleasure in acts of gluttony, adultery, and murder as in acts of charity. Thus, even if this metaphysical distinction is to be found in the dialogue, it does not provide us with evidence that there is not a doctrine of hedonism there.
It is probably unreasonable to suppose that the sophistication which this metaphysical distinction represents is to be found in the psychological theory of the *Protagoras*, and Plato certainly marks no clear difference between kinds of pleasure. In fact, the only passage that could reasonably be construed as evidence for Plato's awareness of kinds of pleasure is most naturally understood as a passage in which we are told to ignore any differences in kind. At 358a5-6, Socrates repeats the hedonistic formula and asks Prodicus not to distinguish between ἅπα, τεσσαράνια and πώς. This could mean that Plato was aware of such distinctions and wished to put them aside for the present, or it could mean that Plato was aware merely that Prodicus made these verbal distinctions and did not, himself, want to become emeshed in them. That the latter is more likely is suggested by the fact that Prodicus is presented throughout the dialogue as making trifling and useless quibbles.

It is especially noteworthy that Socrates nowhere in the *Protagoras* analyzes the concept of pleasure. Since he uses it without explanation in an imaginary conversation with "the many", it is plausible to think that is using a pre-analytic notion of pleasure, one which may well be rich enough to count both the delight one takes in a big meal and the enjoyment one takes in contemplation as pleasures. Certainly the concept in the *Protagoras* is broad enough to include pleasures from food, drink
and sex (353c) as well as from health, wealth and safety of one's country. Far from relying on a special and sophisticated notion, as Goodell suggests, the notion of pleasure being discussed in the *Protagoras* corresponds to the ordinary conception which even "the many" share, and it is the intrinsic goodness of these pleasures that is a topic of discussion in the dialogue. Plato's use of a number of different words to refer to pleasure merely constitutes another example of his tendency to introduce synonyms or near synonyms in a discussion.

When we turn to look at a second attempt to show there is no hedonism in the *Protagoras*, we will find that Plato also has in mind a more abstract notion of pleasure. This second attempt is by Gregory Vlastos in the introduction to a 1956 edition of the *Protagoras*. [NOTE 15]

No matter how the view in the *Protagoras* is stated, if it is to qualify as a version of hedonism, it must at least claim that pleasure is connected in some very strong way with goodness. We will discuss the connection further on, but for now, we can say that any version of hedonism must entail the following:

1. Necessarily, pleasures and only pleasures are intrinsically good. [NOTE 16]

Vlastos suggests that no doctrine in the *Protagoras* entails (1). What is there instead is a somewhat weaker doctrine. He
says this:

\[\ldots\text{what Socrates most likely meant to assert is the }\]
\[\text{rather different proposition, or rather two of them,}\]
\[(a) \text{ that pleasure is a good (not the only one), (b) that}\]
\[\text{whatever is best will }\text{in fact}\text{ be the most}\]
\[\text{pleasant. (a) and (b) do not add up to hedonism,}\]
\[\text{i.e., to making pleasure }\text{definitive}\text{ of}\]
\[\text{good...}(\text{Vlastos, Introduction to }\text{Protagoras, page}\]
\[\text{xli})\]

While it is not immediately clear how to interpret Vlastos' claim, it is plausible to interpret it this way. Although (a) pleasure necessarily implies goodness, (b) goodness only contingently implies pleasure. The first of these statements can be represented thus:

2. Necessarily, pleasures are intrinsically good.

Pleasures are necessarily good, but perhaps not the only ones. On the other hand, what is best is only in fact the most pleasant, or, more generally, what is good is only in fact pleasant. This can be represented thus:

3. Only pleasures are intrinsically good.
While (2) and (3) might not be the very propositions Vlastos has in mind, they fit his requirements nicely. Vlastos' emphasis that goodness implies pleasure only "in fact" suggests that he intends to avoid (1) by denying the necessity of the "only if" conditional in (1). This is reflected in (3). His formulation of (b), however, which he gives in terms of "best" and "most pleasant" suggests that he has in mind something even weaker than (3), but (3) will do.

(2) and (3), of course, do not jointly entail (1). To do that, we would need the conjunction of (2) and something like

3'. Necessarily, only pleasures are intrinsically good.

Is Vlastos right about this, or are there reasons for supposing that Socrates asserts something like (3')? I think we will find that there are such reasons. There are no passages in the dialogue where Socrates makes a distinction between (3) and (3'). On the other hand, Socrates, in three separate passages (353d7-e2, 354b7ff, 354e1-2), claims that something is called good for no other reason than that it results in pleasure. So, for instance, at 354b7ff, he asks with regard to health, safety of the city, rule over others, and wealth, "are these things good for any other reason than that they result in pleasures and the relief from and avoidance of pain?" (ταύτα δὲ ἄγαθα εστι δ' ἄλλο
Socrates, here, appears to be claiming that the fact that a thing results in pleasure, in some way provides an explanation and the only explanation of that thing's being (in this case, extrinsically) good. If something other than pleasure were also intrinsically good, then we could point to it as well when we explain why an object is good. It seems reasonable, then, to suppose that Plato viewed pleasure as more than a merely contingent condition for goodness. So, it may well be that a thing's being pleasant provides the explanation for that thing's being good because of the truth of some very strong claim such as (1). This evidence that (1) is present in the dialogue is also evidence that Vlastos is wrong.

There is, however, a more general and more important worry about Vlastos' claim. Vlastos characterizes the second half of the Socratic formula as a relation between good things and pleasant things. As such, it is easy to view this as a contingent statement; it is just a matter of fact that good things (τὰ ἀγαθά) are also pleasant things (τὰ ἀπόλαξις). The discussion in the dialogue, however, is not carried on solely in terms of good and pleasant things. Often the relata are, instead, goodness (τὸ ἀγαθὸν) and pleasure (ἡ ἡδονή). These locutions are often used by Plato in later dialogues to signify the Forms. While there is no evidence that Plato had developed the theory of Forms when he wrote the Protagoras, he does seem to
be aware of the distinction between F things and F-ness. [NOTE 17]

These locutions should make it clear that we are not being given merely a relation between good things and pleasant things. Plato seems here to be talking about goodness itself and pleasure itself.

Until the theory of Forms is formulated there is no real discussion of the metaphysical relations between abstract objects like goodness and pleasure. Later, of course, in dialogues such as the Theaetetus and Sophist, Plato came to worry whether the relations into which abstract objects entered are changeless. [NOTE 18] He there asked if the abstract Forms could gain or lose relational properties over time. In those dialogues, Plato wonders whether one can make contingent statements about the Forms.

There is evidence that earlier than those dialogues, Plato supposed these abstract objects to be immutable. So, in the Phaedo, for instance, he says at 78d,

"Does that relation which we define in our discussion remain always constant and invariable, or not? Does equality (αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν) or [praiseworthiness] (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν) or any other independent entity which really exists, ever admit change of any kind? Or does each of these uniform
and independent entities remain always constant and invariable, never admitting any alteration in any respect or in any sense?" (Trenndennick)

Without evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that Plato at the time of the Protagoras took goodness and pleasure to be immutable and the relations that held among them necessary and invariant. Vlastos has ignored this when he suggests that we find in the dialogue no stronger claim than (3).

So, Vlastos and others are unsuccessful in arguing that there is no hedonism expressed in the Protagoras. Showing that they are unsuccessful, however, does not show that there is such a doctrine found there, and it is to that problem that I would now like to turn.

Hedonistic Passages

The passages in the Protagoras directly relevant to hedonism may be thought of as falling into three categories: those suggesting that pleasure is sufficient for goodness, those suggesting that pleasure is necessary for goodness, and, finally, those suggesting that pleasure and goodness are identical. [NOTE 19]
Most numerous are those suggesting that pleasure is sufficient for goodness, or that pleasure is a good. So, for instance, at 351c5, Socrates asks, "in so far as something is pleasant, is it not also good?" (καθ’ ὧν ἡδέα ἐστίν, ἄρα κατὰ τούτῳ ὡκ ἡγαθή...) At 358a5, Socrates concludes, "then you agree that pleasure is good but that pain is evil." (ὑμολογεῖτε ἣν δ’ ἐγὼ, τὸ μὲν ἡνί ἡγαθὸν εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἄγαθον κακὸν)

We have already mentioned a number of passages in which Socrates suggests that pleasure is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for goodness, since we cite as the only reason for a thing's goodness the fact that it results in pleasure (e.g., 354b5, 354c1, 354d7). There are, however, two other passages in which Socrates either states or relies on some principle such as (1) above. At 360a2, Socrates asks Protagoras and the other sophists if "whatever is praiseworthy and good is also pleasant." (οὐκοῦν, ἥν δ’ ἐγὼ, εἴπερ καλὸν καὶ ἡγαθὸν, καὶ ἃτείματο) "We certainly agree." is the reply. Finally, Socrates, in his discussion at 355–6 in which he attempts to demonstrate that nobody does evil willingly, makes the move from

4. A man does what is evil knowingly.

5. A man does what is painful knowingly.
Socrates supposes that it is legitimate to infer (5) from (4). He says a 355e3, "now let us give back the names pleasant and painful to to these same things [which we called good and evil] and say that a man does -- before we said "evil", but now let us say -- "painful" actions..." (μεταλάβωμεν ὅν ἐὰν οὐκοματα πάλιν τὸ ἀδύνατον ἔπει τοῖς ἄνωτοις τούτοις, καὶ λέγουμεν ὅτι ὑποβολὸς πράττει—τῷ ἐκ τὰς ἥλιους τὰ κοκά, νῦν δὲ λέγουμεν τὰ ἄνιγατ...)

If Socrates feels confident that he can infer (5) from (4) by substituting "painful" or "evil", it must be because he supposes that pain is a necessary condition for evil. Given that the relation between goodness and pleasure is exactly analogous to the relation between evil and pain, Socrates must also suppose that pleasure is a necessary condition for goodness. These two sets of passages should make it clear that the doctrine being discussed in the Protagoras implies that pleasure is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for goodness.

The third set of passages extends the doctrine even further by indicating that there is an identity relation between pleasure and goodness. Protagoras indicates at 351e3ff that he takes this to be Socrates' view. Protagoras, when asked if pleasure itself is not good, responds, "just as you often say, Socrates, let us investigate this, and if the question should seem reasonable and pleasure and goodness should appear to be the same (τὸ οὕτω οὐ καὶ ἄναθεν), then we will agree." (351e3-5)
Socrates responds by asking who should lead the investigation; the formulation of the question is accepted without protest. Protagoras, then, understands Socrates to be asserting an identity relation between pleasure and goodness, and Socrates seems content with that understanding.

At 355b5, Socrates proposes that we give up the use of all four words, "pleasant", "painful", "good", and "evil", since there appear to be only two things designated by them. (ἐπιμελήτων ἀπὸ ζῶν ταῦτα. διὸν καὶ ἀνόμωσιν προσαγορεύωμεν αὐτό) Socrates again shows at 357d4-6 his willingness to accept as intersubstitutable "good" and "pleasure", and "evil" and "pain". He says there, "for you have agreed that those who go wrong in their choice of pleasures and pains—which is to say, of good, and bad things--go wrong from lack of knowledge." (ἐπερί τὴν τῶν ἀδικίαν ἀνικανίαν καὶ ἀτεχνῶν τῶν ἐφαυρτάνων—ταῦτα δὲ ἐστὶν ἀτεχνῶ τε καὶ κακῶ...) These passages clearly suggest a claim that pleasure is at least co-extensive with goodness, and necessarily so.

I have claimed here and in the previous section that the discussion in the Protagoras is not restricted to good and pleasant things, but extends to goodness and pleasure itself. Plato's willingness to view "good" and "pleasure" as intersubstitutable suggests that underlying this passage is the doctrine that goodness and pleasure are identical.

In the next couple of sections I want examine a few of the
important details of the hedonism in the dialogue. By this point, however, some of the gross outlines of the doctrine should be clear. The doctrine discussed in the dialogue holds, at least, that pleasures (i.e., pleasant sensations) are the only intrinsically good things. There are passages in the dialogue which look as though he is also calling objects or activities pleasant and painful. So, at 354d1-2, we are told that food, sex and drink are pleasant and at 354e2 that physical training and amputation are painful. Are these, then, candidates for intrinsic goods and evils? Presumably not. While Plato is not as careful as he might be about the notion of pleasant things, we can interpret him here to mean that, for instance, drinking a glass of wine is pleasant because it causes in me pleasure. My pleasure is intrinsically good; if my drinking the wine causes no pain then it is extrinsically good. Drinking wine is strictly speaking, pleasant only in some derivative sense. It is my sensation that is pleasant in a strict sense. One version of hedonism, then, that is being discussed is the view that pleasant sensations are intrinsically good and nothing else is (and painful sensations are intrinsically evil and nothing else is).

In addition, there is a stronger version of hedonism expressed by such claims as, "Goodness and pleasure are identical." Here Plato seems to mean that the properties (or forms) goodness and pleasure are the same. How much Plato means by such a claim is difficult to tell. The discussion of weakness
of the will at 355a-356b seems to rely on the synonymity of "good" and "pleasant". On the other hand, passages suggesting this version may merely represent an attempt to say that there is some necessary connection between these properties. It is not clear that Plato would have recognized the difference. Nowhere, either in the Protagoras or the Gorgias, except perhaps in the argument against weakness of the will, does Plato's discussion of hedonism rest on the synonymity of 'good' and 'pleasant'.

Now let us turn to some of the details of the hedonism in the Protagoras.

**Ethical and Psychological Hedonism**

A theory of ethical hedonism claims that pleasure and only pleasure is intrinsically good. It gives a relation between pleasure and goodness. Plato's version has as its basis some principle like

6. Goodness and Pleasure are the same.

It is not a theory of human action or motivation.

A theory of psychological hedonism, on the other hand, is a doctrine about human action and motivation. Such a theory may
claim that all human action is motivated by the desire for pleasure. Bentham, for instance, champions such a view. He says, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure... they govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think." [NOTE 20] Rather than (6), a doctrine of psychological hedonism might have at its base a principle like

7. For any person, p, and thing, x, p desires x only if p believes x is pleasant.

When we come in Chapter IV to the discussion of Socrates' arguments against weakness of the will, I will claim, contrary to a number of commentators, that they do not rely on a doctrine of psychological hedonism. It is useful to see now that there is no textual evidence for such a doctrine in this dialogue. This is by no means an uncontroversial claim.

Terence Irwin, in Plato's Moral Theory, for instance, claims that the passage from 353c9 to 354e2, "is a fairly clear statement of hedonism, both psychological and ethical." [NOTE 21] The passage that Irwin cites is longer than an entire Stephanus page, and includes a number of sections which one might suppose state a theory of psychological hedonism. Irwin suggests with respect to the first section of this passage from 353c9 to 354c5 that, "Socrates' examples persuade "the many" that they
will always reject actions which promise present pleasure outweighed by future pain, and accept actions which promise present pain outweighed by future pleasure." (Plato's Moral Theory, hereafter PMT, page 104) The principle Irwin is here attributing to "the many" is this:

8. For any person, p, and action, a, if p believes a will result in more pleasure than pain, then p accepts a. [NOTE 22]

What does Irwin mean by "accept"? It is unclear what it is to accept (or reject) an action. Since much of Irwin's subsequent discussion concerns choice, we may suppose that we are to understand that a person accepts an action when he chooses to perform that action. (8), then, should be understood this way:

8'. For any person, p, and action, a, if p believes a will result in more pleasure than pain, then p chooses to perform a.

Irwin supposes that this principle captures what Socrates says at 353e-354a:

...The only reason that [the pleasures of drink and sex] are evil is that they result in pains and deprive one of other pleasures...and when you say
that some painful things are good...do you call them good because at the time they cause the most extreme suffering or anguish, or because later on...they result in pleasures and the relief and avoidance of pains?

Irwin is mistaken about this passage for two reasons. In the first place, there is no mention here of choosing acts. Rather, the discussion is framed entirely in terms of reasons for calling (καλείν) things, perhaps actions, good. This passage claims that "the many" call or judge something to be good when that thing produces more pleasure than pain. It is more natural to read this passage as one about ethical hedonism; it tells us under what conditions something is judged to be good. In the second place, given the obvious defect of (8'), [NOTE 23] when Irwin comes to state his principle formally, he does not claim that we will choose any act that we think will yield more pleasure than pain, but rather, that between any two acts, we will choose the one which we suppose will yield the greatest difference in pleasure and pain. Thus, he states on page 105,

9. "When a chooses x over y, he chooses x because he believes x will yield a greater over-all pleasure than y."
While (9) is not defective in the way (8') is, there is a problem with it. It introduces a notion of the comparative pleasures of actions, and nowhere in this passage does Socrates compare pleasures of actions. He says only that anything which produces over-all pleasure is good. Thus, to interpret this section as making a claim about choice of action, one must either understand it as the defective (8') or as (9) for which there is no textual evidence.

The second section of the passage from 354c3 to 354e2 suggests, according to Irwin, that "maximum pleasure is the goal of all ["the many's"] actions", and that, "the many agree that we choose something as good for its pleasure, and that we choose pleasure as the good." (PMT, page 104) Again, it is important to note that there is nothing about choice in this section of the passage. What we do find, however, is two more instances of Socrates challenging "the many" to name some other standard than pleasure and pain by which they call something good or evil. This is most naturally understood as a challenge to "the many" to attempt to show that they do not accept ethical hedonism.

At 354c3-5, we get the only statement in this passage which seems to concern action. In his imaginary discussion with "the many", after suggesting that they are unable to name any other standard of the good than pleasure, Socrates concludes, "so you pursue pleasure as a good and avoid pain as an evil."
While this sentence does have something to do with action, it does not mention anything about choice. Moreover, since ethical and psychological hedonism are logically independent, the fact that this sentence is inferred from the observation that "the many" seem to accept ethical hedonism seems to suggest that we should understand it as merely a more explicit statement of ethical hedonism, having the same force as "so you take pleasure to be good and pain to be evil." Indeed, that this non-literal understanding of the passage is correct is born out by the line immediately following in which Socrates draws another conclusion, "so it is pain you regard as evil and pleasure as good..." (οὖν χάριν ἄκοιν, εἶναι κακὸν, τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ ἀγαθὴν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν), again a statement about judging which things are good and evil. If the claim at 354c3-5 were taken as a claim about choosing, it would neither follow from, nor imply the claims flanking it, that "the many" make judgements about goodness and evil solely on the basis of pleasure and pain. That is

10. "The many" accept (6)

does not imply (9) without the addition of other principles, and this implication fails to hold when (9) is understood as a psychological law. "The many" may well accept ethical hedonism and yet fail to choose those acts which they believe will be most
pleasant, because they choose which acts to perform on some other basis, perhaps ease of performance or prejudice. More obviously, (9) does not imply (10). Any psychological disposition of "the many" to choose to do those acts which they regard as most pleasant provides no evidence as to the content of their beliefs about the nature of good and evil.

Contrary to Irwin, then, there is no suggestion of psychological hedonism in the passage from 353c-354e. All we find there are numerous statements about judgement which conform to and rely on a doctrine of ethical hedonism.

There is a second passage which Irwin does not discuss but which might be thought to suggest psychological hedonism. It occurs at 356b3-c3. There Socrates says to Protagoras:

For if you weigh pleasant things against pleasant, you always have to take the larger and the more (Τὸ χεῖρω ἀκαὶ καὶ πλεῖστῳ), and if you weigh painful against painful, [you always have to take] the less and the smaller. And if you weigh pleasant against painful, if the painful are outweighed by the pleasant, no matter which are nearer and which more distant, you have to do whatever brings the pleasant about (ταύτῃ τῆς πράξεως πράξεως ἐν ἡ ἂν ταύτῃ ἐνη), and if the pleasant are outweighed by the painful, you have to avoid doing it (ὡς πράξεως).
If we understand the verbs λεπτέα and πρακτέα as implying psychological necessity, then we may well find in this passage a doctrine of psychological hedonism, consisting of something like the following principles:

11. For any person, p, and actions a and a', if p believes (i) a yields more pleasure than pain and (ii) a' yields more pleasure than pain, and (iii) a yields a greater preponderance of pleasure over pain than a', then if p's choice is between a and a', p will (and is unable not to) choose a.

12. For any person, p, and actions, a and a', if p believes (1) a yields more pain than pleasure, and (ii) a' yields more pain than pleasure, and (iii) a yields a greater preponderance of pain over pleasure than a', then if p's choice is between a and a', p will choose a'.

13. For any person, p, and actions, a and a', if p believes (i) a yields more pleasure than pain and (ii) a' yields more pain than pleasure, then if p's choice is between a and a', p will choose a.
C.C.W. Taylor, in his commentary on the *Protagoras*, has suggested that it is a mistake to understand these instances of verbal adjectives ending in "τευτ" as implying psychological necessity. ἄπτεα and πρακτεά, he claims, "generally have the force of 'should'. While the verbal adjectives ending in -τευτ can also indicate what has to be done, this is in the sense of what one is obliged to do, either to achieve some purpose...or in obedience to some rule..." (Taylor, *Plato's Protagoras*, page 190) As Taylor points out, there seem to be no clear cases where a verbal ending in some variation of -τευτ signifies psychological compulsion. [NOTE 26] What sort of obligation these verbal adjectives imply is, of course, unclear. The examples suggest some sort of moral obligation, as opposed to, for instance, prudential obligation.

It would be a mistake, then, to rely on this passage at 356b to support a doctrine of psychological hedonism. The principles advanced in this section should rather be interpreted as:

11'. For any person, p, and actions a and a',

if p believes (i) a yields more pleasure than pain and (ii) a' yields more pleasure than pain and (iii) a yields a greater preponderance of pleasure over pain than a', then if p's choice is between a and a',

p should choose a.
12'. For any person, p, and actions, a and a',
if p believes (i) a yields more pain than
pleasure, and (ii) a' yields more pain than
pleasure, and (iii) a yields a greater
preponderance of pain over pleasure than
a', then if p's choice is between a and a',
p should choose a'.

13'. For any person, p, and actions, a and a',
if p believes (i) a yields more pleasure
than pain and (ii) a' yields more pain than
pleasure, then if p's choice is between a
and a', p should choose a.

These principles suggest a normative view based on ethical
hedonism, although, of course, they are not incompatible with
psychological hedonism. I claim, then, that there is no clear
evidence of the doctrine of psychological hedonism in the
Protagoras. The statements about pleasure and goodness are,
rather, most naturally interpreted as implying ethical hedonism.

Quantity and Quality of Pleasure
We have already noted in the first section of this chapter that in the *Protagoras*, Plato makes no metaphysical distinction among types of pleasure. This, however, does not preclude him from supposing that some pleasures are of higher quality than others. One of the best known sources of such a distinction is Mill's *Utilitarianism*. In the second chapter of that work, Mill says:

If one of [two pleasures] is, by those who are completely acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though, knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (page 12)

Thus, in Mill's hedonic calculus, a greater weight would be placed on the relatively meager pleasures to be gained from intellectual pursuits than from a flood of "beasts" pleasures. (ibid.)

Do we find ay such distinction coming into play in the hedonism of the *Protagoras*? In later works, Plato seems to have
been aware of it. The *Philebus*' discussion of pure and impure pleasure (52c-d), pleasures mixed with pain and pleasures unmixed, seems to be aimed toward the distinction. In the *Gorgias*, Callias expresses disgust that Socrates would discuss such low pleasures as those derived from scratching an itch (49e).

Goodell, in "Plato's Hedonism", claims not only that Plato recognized the distinction between quantity and quality of pleasure, but that in the *Protagoras* he makes central use of it. In discussing the conclusions drawn toward the end of the dialogue (360ff), Goodell says this:

> It has been agreed that what is praiseworthy (καλόν) is also good, that καλοὶ πολέμοι are all good. It is now further agreed that whatever is praiseworthy and good is also pleasant ( прият). That is a seemingly easy step in the argument, but one which carries with it an assertion of profound significance...the brave man going into war, when that is an honorable and good action, knows that he is going to what is fairer and better and also pleasant. The pleasure involved can be only of the highest and finest moral kind...whatever Plato's hedonism might be, it does not involve any low conception of hedone. ("Plato's Hedonism",
The idea seems to be that pleasure of good things is pleasure of the highest sort. The pleasure we receive from "...knowing that one's efforts and deprivations have contributed to [one's country's] safety", claims Goodell, "is recognized as one of the purest." We do not experience low pleasure from truly good actions. The whole point of the hedonic calculus, on Goodell's scheme, is to allow us to differentiate between high, fine pleasure (the mark of goodness) and low pleasure.

So, Goodell states,

The brave man knows that the moral satisfaction of fighting for one's country in a righteous cause is a pleasure that far outweighs the pain of war, including wounds and death, and even defeat of the righteous cause for which he dies...[the soul's] greatest pleasure is in choosing the best, in likening itself to god, so far as it can, by becoming dikaion kai hosion phroneseos (Theaetetus 176b). That 'art of measurement' consists in recognizing constantly, in never forgetting, this fact of the soul's nature, and in living most fully in accordance therewith." ("Plato's Hedonism", pages 35-36)
On the surface, this is a difficult interpretation to swallow, both for philosophical and for textual reasons. If one plans to assert an identity between pleasure and intrinsic goodness, then one should not try to distinguish between high and low pleasure by looking to the goodness of the objects of pleasure. Such a project is hopelessly circular. It is to Mill's credit that he was careful to distinguish between high and low pleasure solely in terms of the preferences of those who have experienced a wide range of pleasures. [NOTE 27] It is perhaps some such worry that leads Socrates to reject Protagoras' attempt at 351c1-2 to restrict good (or high quality) pleasures to those the objects of which are fine things.

There are textual reasons, as well, for rejecting any quality-quantity distinction in the *Protagoras*. Unless we are to suppose that the imaginary dialogue with "the many" fails due to gross equivocation, we must assume that "the many" understand Socrates when he uses the words ἵδουνι and τὸ χαίρειν, and that they understand these words in the same way Socrates does. "Themany" are asked a number of times if they call things good for any other reason than that they result in more pleasure than pain. If Goodell is right, Socrates is asking, in effect, if "the many" call things good for any other reason than they result in delightful mental states of the highest quality. But, surely, this question would not be so troublesome to "the many" as the question actually in the dialogue. The failure of "the many" to
answer Socrates' challenge should not be taken to indicate, as Goodell's interpretation seems to demand, that they subscribe to an unusually laudible and commendable meta-ethical view. Whatever Socrates' purpose is in questioning "the many", it is not to demonstrate how ethically enlightened they are.

Goodell, then, seems to be mistaken. Plato, in the dialogue, makes no mention or use of any distinction between pleasures on the basis of their quality. The pleasures of the safety of the city (354b) and the pleasures of food, drink, and sex (353c) receive exactly the same treatment. The hedonic calculus is noticably devoid of any consideration of the qualities of pleasure. [NOTE 28]

Summary

We find, then, in the Protagoras not only a doctrine of hedonism, but a very extreme and unqualified sort. I have tried to show that the doctrine involves the claim that pleasure and only pleasure is intrinsically good, and, in fact, even that pleasure and goodness are the same. Actions and pleasures and pains are extrinsically good just in case they produce more pleasure than they do pain. We have seen that there is absolutely no distinction made in the quality of these pleasures.
They are ranked simply according to their quantity.

We began this discussion of the formulation of the Protagoras' hedonism by acknowledging that we would put off until later questions about the purpose this doctrine has in the dialogue, its justification, and the seriousness with which it is put forth. In the next couple of chapters, I shall attempt to shed some light on these questions.
CHAPTER III

Introduction

We saw in the last chapter that there is discussed in the Protagoras a very extreme sort of hedonism. Some commentators regard the hedonism as a significant step in Socrates' developing moral theory, and so are committed to ascribing the hedonism in this dialogue to Socrates himself. Irwin, for instance, claims, "I shall argue that the hedonism is Socrates' own view intended like the rest of the Protagoras, to support positions assumed without defense in the socratic dialogues." (PMT, page 103)

This suggests two related ways we could go about investigating how the hedonism figures in the Protagoras. On the one hand, we could look closely at the way it functions in the argument of the dialogue, and in the general scheme of early Socratic moral theory. This we will do in the fourth chapter. On the other hand, we could look closely at the text of the dialogue itself, and see if from such an investigation we can discover who actually espouses the hedonism there. This information, of course, would help us in our analysis of the role hedonism plays in Socrates' arguments.

It is this latter investigation I want to undertake in this
This may seem like a trivial exercise, but it is not. One of the things that makes the Protagoras at the same time so provocative and so frustrating is the difficulty of deciding on purely textual grounds who holds what doctrine in the dialogue. Of course, all of Plato's dialogues leave the reader with some amount of homework, as if the dialogue were designed to provide only the first step in the reader's continuing dialectic. The Protagoras, however, is even more difficult in this respect than most. Not only does it leave the details of the argument below the surface to be dug out, but it does so with many of the gross features as well. So, even the careful reader of the Protagoras may wonder, at its conclusion, who is arguing for what. In this section, I want to examine the text closely for any indication of an answer to the first question above.

Passages Suggesting "The Many" Accept Hedonism

There is, I think, fairly clear evidence that 'the many' in the dialogue do accept hedonism, or more precisely, that their judgements about goodness involve a hedonistic principle. On three occasions 'the many' are asked if they call things good for any other reason than that they are pleasant. Each time they are unable to give any other criterion by which they judge the
goodness of things. While this fact does not show that they have in mind any well-worked out formulations of hedonism, it does show that they accept the doctrine.

**Textual Evidence Concerning Protagoras and Hedonism**

The textual evidence for Protagoras' acceptance of hedonism is a bit more difficult. At the beginning of the discussion of hedonism at 351c, Protagoras shows that he is reluctant to accept pleasure as the sole criterion of goodness. When asked by Socrates if a pleasant life is good, Protagoras there responds that it is so only if one takes pleasure in praiseworthy things (ἐπεὶ τοῖς καλοῖς γὰρ ἐφι, τών ἰδόμενος). It seems, then, that instead of the hedonistic identification of pleasure and goodness, Protagoras accepts rather,

1. goodness = pleasure in praiseworthy things

Protagoras does not define 'good' solely in hedonic terms, but in terms of both pleasure and praiseworthiness.

When Socrates explains exactly what he means by the identification of goodness and pleasure (351c-e), Protagoras begins to waver, and at 351e5 agrees to undertake an investigation of this identification. In part, this investigation consists of Protagoras, acting as spokesman for
"the many", being questioned by Socrates about the nature of goodness and weakness of the will. When this questioning is over (358), Protagoras ends his role as spokesman and is asked, along with Hippias and Prodicus, his opinion of various details of the preceding discussion. In this series of questions Protagoras and the other sophists reveal that they now accept the identification of goodness and pleasure. So Socrates asks them at 358a1ff:

...and I ask you — Hippias and Prodicus as well as Protagoras, (for let this discussion be shared by you) — whether what I say seems to you to be true or false...You agree then, I said, that pleasure is good and that pain is bad? (my translation) [NOTE 29]

and further on at 360a3ff, "'And if it is praiseworthy and good, is it also pleasant?' 'We certainly agreed with that.' Protagoras replied."

Is Protagoras Committed to the Hedonistic Doctrine?

The text, then, indeed suggests that Protagoras accepts hedonism. Did he have any reason to? That is not clear. There
is in the dialogue no serious or sustained attempt to persuade Protagoras of the truth of hedonism. In fact it comes as something of a shock to find Protagoras at 358b in complete agreement with the hedonistic doctrine. As the spokesman for 'the many' in the preceding discussion, he seemed to commit 'the many' to hedonism, but he never indicated that he was so committed. Yet Socrates says, "You agree then, that pleasure is good," and Protagoras and the rest agree. The presence of the word translated "then", \( \nu \alpha \gamma \alpha \), might be thought to suggest that this agreement is established by an investigation or inquiry. Socrates, however, gives us only one premise of an argument, and that is in the immediately prior passage where Protagoras admits that what Socrates has said (to 'the many') is true.

This admission could be taken as the premise to a number of different arguments, none of which should be sufficient to convert Protagoras to hedonism. Protagoras admits at 352c–d that "...[knowledge] is something fine which can rule a man, and that if someone knows what is good and bad, he would never be conquered by anything so as to do other than what knowledge bids him." 'The many', of course, disagree with this, supposing that, on occasion, we can be overcome by pleasure so as to do exactly the opposite of what we know we should do. However one understands the subsequent discussion of weakness of the will, one conclusion must be that, if hedonism is true, someone with knowledge of good and evil will never permit the commands of
knowledge to be defeated by the prospects of immediate pleasure. Thus, if hedonism is true, Socrates and Protagoras are right about the supremacy of knowledge, and 'the many' are wrong.

If, however, this is what was said to 'the many' which convinced Protagoras, he seems to have been convinced by this obviously fallacious argument:

A 1. If hedonism is true, then no one with knowledge of good and bad is overcome by pleasure to go against the dictates of that knowledge.

2. No one with knowledge of good and bad is overcome by pleasure to go against the dictates of that knowledge.

3. Hedonism is true.

Premise (1), of course, restates the main thrust of the discussion of weakness of the will, and premise (2) has been agreed to by Socrates and Protagoras at 352 c-d.

There is another argument very similar to (A), resulting from the strengthening of the first premise, which, if accepted by Protagoras, would also commit him to hedonism.

B 1. Hedonism is true if and only if no one with
knowledge of good and bad is overcome by pleasure to go against the dictates of that knowledge.

2. No one with knowledge of good and bad is overcome by pleasure to go against the dictates of that knowledge.

3. Hedonism is true.

(B) differs from (A) by saying, in the first premise, not only that hedonism is sufficient for the impossibility of weakness of the will, but that it is necessary as well. According to it, one will be committed to the truth of hedonism from having shown that weakness of the will is impossible.

It is some such argument as (B) which Irwin, for instance, feels justified in attributing to Socrates. He says on page 106 of Plato's Moral Theory, "the argument implies that hedonism is vital for Socrates' case; for the argument shows only that hedonists cannot be incontinent, and will apply to everyone only if psychological hedonism is correct." (emphasis mine) It is clear that he supposes Socrates will be able to show weakness of the will impossible only if he accepts the truth of hedonism (in fact, psychological hedonism!).
There is, however, no evidence that Socrates puts forward the first premise of (B), let alone argues for it. We will have to ask in the next chapter if Socrates is committed to the first premise, but, for the present, let us note that in the dialogue only the first premise of (A) is discussed. It is, then, unreasonable to suppose that Protagoras finds himself persuaded to accept hedonism by (B).

Alexander Sesonske, in a provocative article called, "Hedonism in the Protagoras", [NOTE 30] argues that Protagoras is committed to hedonism because his views are tightly connected with those of 'the many'. Thus, when Protagoras agrees with Socrates, at 358ff, on the relationship between goodness and pleasure, he does so not because he is deeply impressed with Socrates' use of hedonism in explaining weakness of the will, but because 'the many' have already been forced to admit the truth of hedonism.

According to Sesonske, among the criteria for truth that Protagoras uses is universal acceptance. In his long speech (320c - 328d), Protagoras attempts to prove that virtue is teachable by appealing to the universal opinion that it can be taught. So, Sesonske says, "While the Great Speech is rich in suggestions, there is only one sort of reason or proof put forth in it. This consists in showing that it is the opinion of all mankind that virtue is a thing which is taught." (page 75) Thus at 324b7ff, Protagoras says
[Each person's tendency to correct behavior by punishment] shows his belief that excellence can be produced by education; at least his aim in punishing is to deter. Now this opinion is shared by everyone who administers chastisement either in a private or in a public capacity: And everyone chastises and punishes those whom they think guilty of wrongdoing, not least your fellow citizens, the Athenians; so according to this argument the Athenians are among those who think that excellence can be handed on and taught. It seems to me, Socrates, that I have now adequately shown that your fellow citizens are right to accept the advice of smiths and cobblers on political matters, and also that they regard excellence as something which can be taught and handed on.

The second criterion of truth Protagoras accepts is consistency. This criterion states simply that contradictory beliefs cannot both be true. According to Sesonske, "These two criteria, whether a belief is the opinion of all mankind and whether it is consistent with other beliefs, are the only two modes of 'proof' that Protagoras suggests." (HP page 75)

On Sesonske's view, once Socrates shows that 'the many' accept the identification of goodness and pleasure and,
furthermore, that this identification is consistent with Protagoras' own views concerning the supremacy of knowledge and the teachability of virtue, Protagoras is forced by his own criteria of truth to accept the truth of hedonism, which he does at 358a-b.

Is there any evidence, other than Sesonske's claims, that Protagoras in the dialogue accepted consensus and consistency as his sole criteria of truth? It is no great surprise, of course, to find Protagoras holding the principle he relies on at 339b-d that contradictory beliefs are not both true.

There Protagoras observes that Simonides has first claimed, "it is hard to become a truly good man" and later claimed just the opposite. Protagoras concludes from this observation, "so either the earlier or the later statement must be wrong." (339d8-9)

That Protagoras supposes consensus of mankind is a criterion for truth, on the other hand, is much harder to establish. Sesonske's evidence, remember, was that a number of times during his so-called Great Speech, Protagoras asserts that it is the opinion of 'the many' that virtue can be taught (e.g., 324cl-2). This, Sesonske claims, is Protagoras' prime form of proof.

In an article responding to Sesonske's piece, Henry Wolz [NOTE 31] correctly notes that far from appealing to the consensus of 'the many' as a criterion for truth, Protagoras offers the consensus of 'the many' as a counterexample to a claim
of Socrates. After reminding us that the Greeks when seeking advice on, say, ship-building, will only listen to experts, but when state policy is being discussed, they listen to anyone without distinguishing between expert and non-expert Socrates concludes,

So it is clear that they don't regard that as something that can be taught. And not only is this so in public affairs, but in private life our wisest citizens are unable to hand on to others the excellence (δόξη), they possess. So when I consider these facts, Protagoras, I don't think excellence can be taught. (319d-e, 320b4-5)

It is in attempting to answer Socrates' challenge that Protagoras offers his own interpretation of the behavior of the Athenians, and concludes at 324c3-d1,

so according to this argument the Athenians are among those who think that excellence can be handed on and taught. It seems to me, Socrates, that I have now adequately shown that your fellow citizens are right to accept the advice of smiths and cobblers on political matters, and also that they regard excellence as something that can be taught and handed on.

Wolz is correct; Protagoras is not attempting to prove the
truth of his claim by appeal to a peculiarly Protagorean alethic principle to the effect that 'Consensus on P entails P'. Rather, he is merely attempting to refute Socrates' claim that the consensus of Athenians is that virtue cannot be taught; in so far as he appeals to a consensus theory of truth, it is only to the extent that it has already been appealed to by Socrates.

Furthermore, however, at a number of points in the dialogue, Protagoras derides the opinions of 'the many'. So, for instance, at 353a7-8, Protagoras asks, "But why, Socrates, must we examine the opinions of the mass of people, who say whatever comes into their heads?" [NOTE 32] This is surely strange talk from a man who is supposed to regard consensus of 'the many' as a criterion of truth.

Sesonske is mistaken, then, in supposing that Protagoras' understanding of the truth is guided by considerations of consensus and consistency. His reliance on the Great Speech to find evidence of Protagoras' acceptance of a theory of truth rests on a misunderstanding of Protagoras' project in that section. In addition, Sesonske has failed to consider those passages where Protagoras makes clear that he has little or no regard for either the statements or opinions of 'the many'.

One might suppose, of course, that Protagoras was simply fooled into accepting some argument like (A). Cornford, for instance, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, suggests something like this. [NOTE 33] There he says:
All errors of conduct must, then, be errors of judgment in the use of the hedonic calculus. Socrates ingeniously claims this as a confirmation of his own doctrine: All wrong-doing is due to ignorance. This ignorance, he blatantly suggests, the Sophists would cure, if only the public would send their sons to be taught. Charmed with this conclusion, all the Sophists accept the whole argument: 'the pleasant is good, the painful evil'; right action can be defined as action that secures a pleasant and painless life.

So, if this is right, much of the reasoning in the dialogue is designed to trick Protagoras into accepting hedonism.

This view is unsatisfactory for a couple of reasons. In the first place, it suggests a motive for Socrates' participation in the dialogue that is entirely uncharacteristic. Throughout the dialogues Socrates emphasises that he is not arguing against a person to win a battle, but in order to examine himself and his interlocutor and to discover the truth about a matter. In this dialogue, too, Socrates makes his intentions clear at 333c7-9: "It is chiefly the thesis I am testing, but all the same it perhaps turns out to be a test for me too, as I ask the questions, and for whoever is answering." Again, at 360e6-8, he says, "Indeed I have no other object in asking all these questions than to try to find out the truth about excellence, and
especially what it is itself."

Secondly, Protagoras is portrayed in this dialogue as being quite sophisticated logically. It is well known that during the course of the dialogue he gives penetrating analyses of what he takes to be Socrates' mistakes. So, at 350c6ff, for instance, he points out what he takes to be an illicit inference Socrates makes in concluding that all daring men are courageous from the claim that all courageous men are daring. It would be remarkable, then, if we should find Protagoras persuaded by a simple argument which rests on the fallacy of affirming the consequent of a conditional.

It is possible, of course, that in writing this dialogue, Plato did not intend to reproduce accurately a conversation between Socrates and Protagoras. It is probably true that these dialogues were meant, in part, to serve as teaching aids. If so, perhaps Plato wrote the dialogue as he did with the expectation that students would search for and discover the fallacy.

This is not an altogether satisfactory explanation, however. First, the suggestion is far too speculative, requiring that we suppose we know much more about the circumstances surrounding Plato's writing of the dialogues than we actually do. Second, even supposing that Plato includes lacunae and fallacious reasoning in some or all of his dialogues as exercises for the reader, it is difficult to see how we can so interpret the Protagoras if we take it as anything more than a logical
exercise. What appears to be the fallacious argument in this dialogue seems not merely to be an inconsequential or superfluous point, but rather the crux of the whole progression of arguments involved in demonstrating that Protagoras is mistaken about virtue. If we are to understand the Protagoras in this way, it would render suspect any attempt to glean actual Platonic doctrine from the dialogues.

So, it is not clear why Protagoras comes to embrace hedonism in the latter part of the dialogue (358ff), but he does. We will examine, in the next chapter, a suggestion that much of the force of Socrates' arguments is to show Protagoras that his views commit him to hedonism.

Textual Evidence Concerning Socrates and Hedonism

Let us, then, turn to an examination of the text regarding Socrates' acceptance of hedonism. We have seen, so far, a large number of passages in which Socrates asks Protagoras or 'the many' if they accept the identification of goodness and pleasure. I have suggested above that it is difficult to know what to make of these passages. They certainly do not show Socrates directly endorsing hedonism, and yet he asks the questions in such a way that he seems to expect an affirmative answer.
Are there any passages in which Socrates reveals his own attitude toward hedonism? There are some which can reasonably be construed as evidence that Socrates endorses hedonism. At 352e5, Socrates says to Protagoras, "Come with me and attempt to persuade and teach men what this experience is that they call being overcome by pleasure and for that reason failing to do what is best when one knows what it is." This persuasion and teaching, of course, is the analysis at 355-358 which involves the hedonic calculus. Again, at 354e5ff, after Socrates has repeatedly elicited responses committing 'the many' to hedonism, he says, "...if they asked us, 'but why are you going to such length and elaboration about this?' I should say, 'I beg your pardon. First of all, it isn't easy to show the real nature of what you call being weaker than pleasures; secondly, the whole argument depends on this.'" So, here Socrates is out to explain the "real nature" of what "the many" call being overcome by pleasure. His view is that hedonism plays a role in that explanation. Socrates goes on at 377b-c to argue that what "the many" call being overcome by pleasure is no more than an error in the calculation of what is most pleasant.

This, by itself, however, does not demonstrate that Socrates accepts hedonism. His remarks can be understood as making either of these two claims:

2. The best explanation of what "the many"
call being overcome by pleasure can be given by appealing to the truth of hedonism.

3. The best explanation of what "the many" call being overcome by pleasure can be given by appealing to the fact that "the many" accept hedonism.

If, indeed, Socrates' project is to explain the phenomenon of being overcome by pleasure, then (2) is the more plausible interpretation of Socrates' remarks, yet it is not clear how hedonism, itself, can explain why being overcome by pleasure is, in fact, an error in calculation. Even if pleasure is identical to goodness, and if, as Socrates supposes, I desire what is best, it does not follow that my choices of action are based on some calculation of what is most pleasant. [NOTE 34] But if my choices of action are not based on some calculation, the Socratic analysis certainly does not entail that my incorrect choices are based on some miscalculation.

On the other hand, if I accept that pleasure is identical to goodness and if I desire what is best, then one might expect my choices of action to be based on some calculation of what is most pleasant. When I choose what is less than best, believing the
best to be the most pleasant, I will have miscalculated about what is most pleasant. The explanation of my being overcome by pleasure involves my belief that what is best is most pleasant, not the identity itself.

So, if Socrates is attempting to explain the phenomenon 'the many' call being overcome by pleasure, there is some presumption in favor of understanding his remarks at 352e and 354e along the lines of (3). Socrates' acceptance of (3), however, in no way provides evidence that Socrates, himself, accepts the identification of goodness and pleasure.

There is another passage, discussed by Taylor, which might be thought to provide evidence that Socrates accepts a hedonistic doctrine. He translates it this way: "Don't you think that, as Protagoras and I maintain, the only reason that these things, (i.e., poverty and diseases) are bad is that they result in pain and deprive one of other pleasures?" As Taylor notes, when translated this way, the passage suggests that it is both Protagoras' and Socrates' opinion that painfulness is the sole bad-making property. As Taylor also notes, however, this sentence can be translated a second way, namely: "Don't you think, as Protagoras and I maintain (sc. that you think), that the only reason [that these things (i.e., poverty and diseases) are bad is that they result in pain and deprive one of other pleasures.]" (Taylor p. 176) Taylor supposes that while this latter understanding is not impossible, it is less attractive
than the first. [NOTE 35] He presents two arguments for this conclusion. He says, first, "...in his presentation of the imaginary dialogue with the many Socrates has so far represented himself as concerned to elicit their views by questions, and not by eliciting their views in such a direct fashion." (ibid.) Thus, in the latter passage, but not in the former, Socrates is, in some way, leading 'the many' to some conclusion. But surely, this is no reason to reject the translation, for this is Socrates' accustomed manner, at least in this dialogue. So, for instance, at 354d1-3, Socrates says to 'the many', "For if you call enjoyment itself evil for any other reason and by reference to any other result, you would be able to tell us what it is. But you can't." This formulation is essentially repeated at 354d8-e2. Taylor is simply wrong about Socrates' method of questioning. Socrates almost always asks leading questions, although he is careful to give his interlocutors opportunity to dissent. The passage under discussion is no exception.

Taylor also suggests that a defect of this translation is that "it asserts a unanimity between Socrates and Protagoras which is not justified by anything said previously," (ibid.) although he acknowledges that it is also a defect of other readings as well. Again, Taylor is mistaken. There is a difficulty in the reading Taylor adopts because his reading suggests that Protagoras and Socrates are in agreement on a criterion of evil (or goodness), for which there is no evidence.
Protagoras and Socrates, however, do have reason to be in agreement about the criterion 'the many' use. In a slightly earlier passage, they have the following exchange:

'Do you suppose, Protagoras, that they would give any other answer than that they are bad not because they produce immediate pleasure, but because of what comes later, diseases and the like?'

'For my part,' said Protagoras, 'I think that is what most people would say.'

'And surely in causing diseases they cause pains, and in causing poverty they cause pains. They would agree I think.'

Protagoras agreed.

It is clear that Protagoras is here agreeing with Socrates that the following are true:

4. 'The many' can give no other reason for things being evil than that that they produce bad results.

and

5. 'The many' believe these results are bad because they result in pain.

The passage at 353a5-354a1, then, is a direct consequence of
Socrates' and Protagoras' acceptance of (4) and (5):

'Don't you think, as Protagoras and I maintain, that the only reason these things are evil is that they result in pains and deprive one of other pleasures?' They would agree.

Thus, Socrates is claiming that he and Protagoras would agree that

6. 'The many' give no other reason for things being evil than that they produce painful results.

So, far from being an agreement "which is not justified by anything said previously", this passage, read in the way Taylor rejects, follows exactly from Protagoras' and Socrates' agreement in the immediately previous passage. Read this way, however, it only shows that Socrates holds that 'the many' accept hedonism, not that he himself accepts it.

There remain two other passages which can reasonably be interpreted as suggesting that Socrates accepted hedonism. The first occurs at 358aff, after Socrates has concluded his imaginary discussion with 'the many' concerning weakness of the will and the hedonic calculus. He resumes his dialogue with Protagoras and the Sophists and says, "That's what we should have said in reply to 'the many'. And now...I ask you...whether you think what I am saying is true or false."
This is one of the few passages in the dialogue in which Socrates makes an assertion in his own person, and if his reply to 'the many' involved acceptance of hedonism, then it would appear that Socrates is here embracing the doctrine. Unfortunately, as Taylor correctly points out (page 201), it is entirely unclear what this passage is referring to. We have the same difficulty with this passage as we had with 354e5ff. If Socrates' reply to 'the many' was that weakness of the will is analyzable as miscalculation because 'the many' accept hedonism ((3) above), then this passage does not commit him to hedonism. If, on the other hand, his reply to 'the many' was that weakness of the will is analyzable as miscalculation because hedonism is true ((2) above), then in this passage Socrates is committed to hedonism. Our reasoning about the original passage at 354e suggests that we should take this passage in the first of the two ways suggested. Read this way, Socrates remains uncommitted to hedonism.

The final passage that might be interpreted to show Socrates committed to this view occurs at 360a2-3. There Socrates says to Protagoras, "'Well now,' I said, 'if it's praiseworthy and good (καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν) is it also pleasant?'" "That's what was agreed." replies Protagoras. Taylor says of this passage (p. 209):

...since Socrates is here arguing in his own person it would be dishonest on his part to allow the
sophists to accept his inference if he were aware that the proposition had not been previously agreed at all, but merely accepted by an imaginary opponent on the basis of assumptions which he (Socrates) rejects...This passage is therefore the strongest evidence that Socrates is represented by Plato as sharing the assumptions of the common man and the conclusions which he (Socrates) derives from these assumptions rather than merely forcing the common man to accept the implications of assumptions which he (Socrates) rejects. Socrates then assents in his own person that all and only pleasant things...are good, probably because he himself maintains the thesis that pleasure is identical with the good...

Again, Taylor here is going a little quickly. He presents two possible interpretations, (a) that Socrates is trying to persuade Protagoras of some conclusion using hedonistic premises that he (Socrates) accepts, and (b) that Socrates is trying to persuade Protagoras of some conclusion using hedonistic premises that he (Socrates) rejects. The latter, Taylor characterizes as 'dishonest' and concludes that Socrates must accept these premises.

There is, however, a third possibility which Taylor
considers earlier with regard to other passages (e.g. 358a), but neglects to consider here, namely that while Socrates rejects the premises, they are accepted by his interlocutors (in this case, Protagoras) and, hence, are available for use without dishonesty. We will have more to say about this passage in the next chapter. Let us merely note here that to use this passage to show that Socrates is committed to hedonism presupposes a certain view of what Socrates' purpose is in the dialogue.

In the next chapter, I will try to discover just what part Socrates plays in the Protagoras. For now, however, it is enough to note that there are no passages which clearly attribute to Socrates an acceptance of any form of hedonism. [NOTE 36]

Are there, on the other hand, any passages which suggest that Socrates does not accept the hedonistic doctrine? There are two; they are, however, by no means indisputable. At 333c6, Socrates says that he will let Protagoras answer for 'the many', "provided that you answer the questions whether you believe the answers or not. It is chiefly the thesis I am testing, but all the same, it perhaps turns out to be a test for me too, as I ask the questions, and for whoever is answering."

This passage is uncharacteristic of Socrates who usually rejects answers that do not reflect the opinions of his interlocutors. This may suggest that we should be leary about ascribing any of the views in the discussion with 'the many' to Socrates.
The second passage occurs at the end of this same section (after he demonstrates that weakness of the will is nothing but miscalculation about pleasant and painful consequences). There Socrates says at 357e4-e9:

So this is what being weaker than pleasure is, the greatest of all errors, for which Protagoras here and Hippias and Prodicus claim to have the cure. But because you ['the many'] think that it is something other than error you neither consult these sophists yourselves nor send your sons to them to have them taught this...and as a result you do badly both as private individuals and in public affairs.

Whatever doubts we have about Socrates' other views in this dialogue, surely this passage is ironical. Socrates does not believe the sophists have the cure for much of anything, let alone for akrasia. If, on the analysis of akrasia Socrates has just presented, it turns out that one's best course is to consult a sophist, we have good reason to conclude that Socrates is not taking his analysis altogether seriously.

We have seen, then, that there is clear textual evidence that 'the many', or at least Socrates' and Protagoras' version of 'the many', accept hedonism. We have seen that there is textual evidence, although somewhat less clear, that Protagoras is
persuaded to accept hedonism. We found, however, that a preliminary analysis of the dialogue yielded no clear reason why he needed to do so. Finally, we found the text offers no compelling evidence that Socrates, himself, accepts hedonism. But this fact does not directly help us with the problem of what role the hedonism does play in the logical structure of the dialogue.

In the next chapter, I want to examine this question by looking at the standard answers that are produced in the literature. In so doing, I will pay special attention to those pieces suggesting that the best understanding of the arguments in the Protagoras is one in which Socrates is committed to hedonism. I shall argue that such a view is mistaken.
Chapter IV

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall, at last, turn to the arguments in the Protagoras that concern hedonism. In doing so, I have two goals in mind. The first is to discover the role the doctrine of hedonism plays in the arguments themselves. The second is to discover Socrates' part in this dialogue. It is the pursuit of this latter goal which will lead us to consider the interpretations of various commentators concerning Plato's purpose in writing the Protagoras.

Overview of the Dialogue

The discussion of hedonism is one part of a much larger discussion of what virtue is and whether it is teachable. The dialogue begins with Protagoras and Socrates disagreeing about the teachability of virtue; Protagoras maintains that it is teachable, Socrates denies it (319-329). After listening to a long speech by Protagoras, Socrates claims to be convinced that virtue is the sort of thing that can be taught, but admits to
having one remaining worry.

At 329c-d, Socrates asks if the virtues (viz., holiness, courage, justice, wisdom, and temperance) are distinct parts of virtue itself or if they are identical. Protagoras answers that they are distinct parts and suggests as evidence the fact that one sees people who have some of the virtues but lack others. If the virtues were really identical, this situation would be impossible. The rest of the dialogue consists of a series of arguments against Protagoras' position.

The first of these arguments occurs at 330c-331c. There Socrates argues that if, for instance, justice and holiness are different things, as Protagoras supposes, then it follows that holiness is not just, and, hence, unjust, which is absurd. [NOTE 37] Protagoras has worries about the argument but does not articulate any specific objection. He is nonetheless represented at 333b6 as having conceded that justice and holiness are nearly the same (οὐχ ὄντων ἵνα τούτων ὄντων).

The second argument occurs at 332a-333b. There Socrates and Protagoras agree that each virtue has exactly one opposite vice, and vice versa (332c5-d1). Protagoras then admits that folly is the opposite of wisdom (332a5) and that folly is also the opposite of temperance (332e5). From this, Socrates presents Protagoras with a dilemma: "Which of our theses shall we give up, then, Protagoras? The thesis that each thing has only one opposite, or the one that said that wisdom is distinct from
[temperance]? (333al-3) Since the uniqueness of opposites claim is unquestioned, Socrates concludes at 333b4-5, "So [temperance] and wisdom would be one?" [NOTE 38] Presumably, Protagoras' silence signifies his assent.

Protagoras admits without argument at 333al-2 that nobody is both unjust and temperate. The argument supporting that view is interrupted by a dispute over the method of discussion and by a digression into the topic of poetry.

When the discussion gets back on track at 349d, Protagoras agrees that four of the virtues resemble one another fairly closely (ἐπιτικωσταραμάγεια ἀλλήλοις) (349d3-4), but claims that courage is altogether different. This is true he says because, "you will find many men who are totally unjust, and irreligious, and intemperate, and ignorant, but most outstandingly courageous." (349d6-8) In response to this claim, Socrates presents his fourth argument against Protagoras, in which he argues that courage and wisdom are the same.

While there has been a large amount of literature over the years discussing the details of this argument, the broad outline is clear enough. Protagoras here agrees that those who are courageous (ἀνδρικός) are daring (ἀνομολόγος) and that those who are most daring are those who have knowledge or wisdom. Furthermore, he admits that anybody who is daring but ignorant is not courageous. From this, Socrates concludes at 350c1-5, "So... these people who are wisest are also most daring, and being
most daring are most courageous? And according to this argument wisdom would be the same as courage?"

Protagoras does object vigorously to this argument; from his admission that whoever is courageous is daring, Socrates has illegitimately inferred that whoever is daring is courageous.

Rather than pursue their disagreement, Socrates moves on to a new argument for the identification of wisdom and courage. (350b6-360c6) It is in the course of this new argument that the topic of hedonism is introduced. After eliciting Protagoras' assent that pleasure and goodness are the same, Socrates persuades Protagoras that the courageous person is successful in calculating which things are fearful and which things are not (i.e., which things are painful and which things are pleasant), the coward unsuccessful. (360a-d) This act of calculation, however, is a sort of wisdom: wisdom of which things to fear. The courageous person has this wisdom; the coward does not. Courage, then, turns out to be "wisdom about what is to be feared and what is not." (360d5) Hence, as Protagoras reluctantly admits at 360e, it is impossible for someone to be both courageous and altogether ignorant.

This point settled to their satisfaction, Socrates returns to the point he left at 329, namely, the teachability of virtue. Since, Socrates concludes, this same sort of analysis could be given for each of the other virtues (361b1-3), virtue itself "consists wholly in wisdom" (361b5-6) and, hence, must be
teachable.

It is important to note that the discussion of hedonism occurs as a step in an argument for the unity of the virtues, which is, itself, a step in an argument for the teachability of virtue; for our immediate purpose, however, we can ignore those other discussions. We will have occasion to return to fill out this brief sketch of the logical structure of the dialogue at the end of the chapter. Let us now, however, turn to the discussion of hedonism.

Summary of the Discussion Involving Hedonism

Hedonism makes its first appearance in the well-known discussion of *akrasia* or weakness of the will. (353b-357e) Socrates and Protagoras have agreed at 352b-c that nobody will ever voluntarily act contrary to what he knows to be right. This they make clear differs from the opinion of 'the many':

Do you [Protagoras] agree with 'the many' there too or do you think otherwise? The opinion of 'the many' about knowledge is that it is not anything strong, which can control and rule a man; they don't look at it that way at all, but think that often a man who possesses knowledge is ruled not by
it but by something else, in one case passion, in another pleasure, in another pain, sometimes lust, very often fear; they just look at knowledge as a slave who gets dragged about by all the rest. Now are you of a similar opinion about knowledge, or do you think it something fine which can rule a man, and that if someone knows what is good and bad, he would never be conquered by anything so as to do other than what knowledge (ἐπιστάμενον) bids him? In fact, that intelligence (φήνησις) is a sufficient safeguard for a man?

My opinion is indeed as you say, Socrates.

Socrates and Protagoras, then, agree on:

1. No person who knows what is good voluntarily acts contrary to that knowledge.

'The many', of course, reject the truth of (1), because they accept the truth of:

2. People often know what is good and do otherwise because they are weaker than (ἐπιστόμοιομενος), or overcome by (ἐκπληθομένοις), pleasures. (353c2, 355b1,3 etc.)

and at 353c, Socrates and Protagoras set out to explain why (2) is impossible.
Socrates easily convinces them, in this imaginary dialogue, that things are plain-good because they produce a preponderance of pleasure over pain for the person experiencing them. Socrates shows, at 353d-354e that 'the many' accept:

3. Pleasure and goodness are identical.

and, presumably,

4. x is better (worse) than y iff x is more pleasant (painful) than y. [NOTE 39]

But at 355b, Socrates claims that it follows from (3) that "good" and "pleasant" are intersubstitutable. Substituting "good things" for "pleasures" in (2) we get:

5. Some people know what is good and do otherwise because they are overcome by goods things.

(5) is absurd, according to Socrates (355d). In the literature that are a number of attempts to discover what Socrates takes to be absurd about (5). Gerasimos Santas in his 1966 article, "Plato's Protagoras and Explanations of Weakness", [NOTE 40] suggests that what is absurd bout (5) is that it contradicts psychological hedonism, which is accepted at 356c.

What Socrates has shown is that on the assumption of hedonism (ethical and psychological), one explanation of the weakness commonly given by
the masses, "overcome by pleasure", reduces to absurdity in the sense that...it contradicts the very principle of psychological hedonism which is universally employed by hedonists in the explanation of behavior. (page 283)

There are a couple of fairly obvious difficulties with this view. In the first place, it implies that there is a doctrine of psychological hedonism in the dialogue, for which we have seen no compelling evidence. In the second place, the alleged statement of psychological hedonism at 356c does not occur until nearly a full Stephanus page after the occurrence of (5).

Gregory Vlastos, in his 1956 introduction to the Ostwald translation of the Protagoras maintained that (5) itself is a contradictory statement. But surely, (5) itself is not inconsistent, at least it is not presented by Plato as being so. At 355b406, Socrates claims that (5) will be seen to be absurd if we consider certain other propositions which result from the intersubstitutability of "good" and "pleasure".

I think Vlastos in his 1969 paper, "Socrates on Akrasia", [NOTE 41] correctly points out what strikes Socrates as absurd about (5). Suppose S is faced with a choice between two acts, a and b. Suppose a is a good act (involving much good and little evil) while b is evil (involving little good and much evil). Suppose, further, that while S knows that this is the case, he is
overcome by the goods of \( \beta \) so that he chooses to do \( \beta \) rather than \( \alpha \). If \( S \) is really overcome by the goods of \( \beta \), then it is the consideration of those goods that leads him to choose to do \( \beta \) rather than \( \alpha \). But, \( \beta \) involves less good than \( \alpha \). To suppose that \( S \) chooses \( \beta \) is to suppose that \( S \) chooses to take, "greater evils against lesser goods" (355e3) knowing that he is so choosing. Thus, (5) on Socrates' view entails

6. Some people know what is good and do otherwise because they choose a situation involving lesser good and greater evil.

Socrates considers this proposition, which is entailed by (5), absurd because it entails that some people choose the lesser good knowing it to be the lesser good, which Socrates regards as an impossibility.

This is a position that Socrates maintains in many of the early dialogues. It is a position, in fact, that is never abandoned in the entire Platonic corpus. In its most general form, it is the claim that if a person knows what is best he will never desire or choose to do anything less. So, for instance, Socrates and Meno have this exchange at Meno 78a-b.

Soc: Does anybody want to be unhappy and unfortunate?

Men: I suppose not.

Soc: Then if not, nobody desires what is evil, for what
else is unhappiness besides desiring evil things and getting them?

Men: It looks as if you are right and nobody desires what is evil.

Thus, (5) is impossible, and nobody can be overcome by goods to choose a course of action which he knows to be evil. But since (5) follows from (2), (2) is impossible as well.

[NOTE 42]

With this argument completed, Socrates moves on to present a second argument against (2). Instead of substituting "good" for "pleasure" in (2), he substitutes "pleasure" for "good" in (2) and gets,

7. Some people know what is most pleasant and do otherwise because they are overcome by pleasures.

Suppose that S knows some action $a$ to result in a preponderance of pain over pleasure and knows some alternative action $b$ to result in a preponderance of pleasure over pain. (7), then, asks us to imagine that $S$, who knows that $b$ will result in more pleasure (and less pain) than $a$, is overcome by the small amount of pleasure that $a$ does result in and, therefore, chooses to do $a$. By consideration of these pleasures, $S$ is led to choose the smaller package of pleasures and reject the larger. So, (7) amounts to,
8. Some people know what is most pleasant and do otherwise because they choose a situation involving less pleasure and greater pain. According to 'the many' pleasure is the only good. If pleasure is the only good, the the situation in which one is led to choose less pleasure knowing that there is more available to him is impossible.

Socrates' argument, then, amounts to showing that (2) together with the doctrine of hedonism yields, on the one hand, (6), and, on the other, (8), both of which he takes to be unacceptable. His arguments against (2) complete, Socrates goes on to draw a moral about knowledge, to which we will return later.

It is, according to Socrates, the science of measurement and only the science of measurement which will allow one to calculate correctly which course of action will produce the most pleasure. So Socrates says at 357a6-b3, "well then, gentlemen, since we have seen that the preservation of our life depends on a correct choice of pleasure and pain, be it more or less, larger or smaller, or further or nearer, doesn't it seem that the thing that saves our lives is some technique of measurement, to determine which are more, or less, or equal to one another?"

Since pleasure and goodness are identical, it is the science of measurement that enables one at any time to know what is best.
Furthermore, Socrates states, but without an argument, this knowledge can come from no other source than the science of measurement: "'In the face of this would they agree that it is the art of measurement that would save us, or some other?' 'Measurement', he agreed." If one fails on some occasion to choose what is best, he has made an error in measurement.

[NOTE 43]

This argument is far too complex and problematic for us to give anything more than a cursory summary of it here, nor is it important that we do so. The important thing to note is that by the assumed intersubstitutability of "good" and "pleasant", Socrates supposes that he has shown that 'the many' were wrong to believe (2), since anyone who is 'overcome by pleasure' has failed to apply correctly the science of measurement and thus does not really know what is good. His doing otherwise is simply a result of his ignorance (i.e., error). So, at 357dl-d7, Socrates concludes:

For you have agreed that those who go wrong in the choice of pleasures and pains - which is to say, of good and evil things - go wrong from lack of knowledge, and not merely of knowledge, but, as you have already further conceded, of measurement. And you surely know yourselves that wrong action done without knowledge is done in error.
Following the discussion of weakness of the will, hedonism reappears in the discussion between Socrates and Protagoras beginning at 358a. Protagoras agrees that

3. Pleasure and goodness are identical.

and agrees that the following are true:

9. For any act, \( a \), if \( a \) contributes to a painless and pleasant life, then \( a \) is praiseworthy.

10. For any act, \( a \), if \( a \) is praiseworthy, then \( a \) is good.

Socrates points out that he and Protagoras have already agreed upon the following claims:

C. No person who knows what is good voluntarily acts contrary to that knowledge. (1)

C'. One voluntarily fails to do what is best if and only if he is ignorant of what is best.

Now Socrates turns the argument toward the relation between courage and wisdom and suggests at 358d5-ε1:

11. \( S \) fears \( x \) =df \( S \) expects \( x \) and \( S \) believes that \( x \) is evil.
But, (1) entails

12. Nobody who knows what is evil voluntarily acts so as to acquire it. (358d)

Hence,

13. Nobody who knows what is fearful acts so as to acquire it. (359e3-6)

At 359d5, Socrates infers

14. If anyone acts so as to acquire what is fearful, he acts in ignorance and error.

Cowards avoid praiseworthy acts while courageous men perform them. Since everything praiseworthy is good, (10), and all good things are pleasant, if a coward avoids praiseworthy acts, he avoids those acts which are most pleasant. The only reason he would avoid these praiseworthy acts is that he mistakenly thinks they are fearful, i.e., that they are not good and, hence, unpleasant. Thus, the coward acts as he does because he has made an error in calculation. Socrates says at 360c2-4, "...they are cowards as a result of their error about what is to be feared...so it is in consequence of that error that they are cowards?" One who fails to make such errors, however, correctly chooses what is praiseworthy and, hence, not to be feared. This person is the one with courage. Socrates concludes at 360d5, "So wisdom about what is to be feared and what is not is courage since it is the opposite of error about that." [NOTE 44]
With this, Socrates finally concludes his refutation of Protagoras' claim that one could be courageous and altogether ignorant. Courage and wisdom (about what is to be feared) turn out to be one and the same thing.

Why Hedonism?

Vlastos in "Socrates on Akrasia" makes two claims regarding the presence of hedonism in the dialogue. The first is that Socrates puts forth the hedonism merely to preclude irrelevant objections to his claim that virtue is knowledge; the second is that one of the arguments against weakness of the will is independent of the hedonistic doctrine.

Concerning the first point, Vlastos notes that there is absolutely no attempt made to differentiate between higher goods, such as goods of the soul (presumably wisdom or, even, happiness) and lower goods, physical pleasure, health, comfort etc. In fact, the higher goods are completely ignored in the discussion (Vlastos, page 74). Vlastos suggests that Socrates wants to prove to 'the many' that if a man knows what is good, he will never voluntarily act contrary to that knowledge. Recognizing that 'the many' do not count the higher goods as goods, he is willing to assume, temporarily, that 'the many' are correct about
what things are good and what things are not. That is, he is willing to assume that only pleasure, safety, wealth and the like are goods. He needs to do this, Vlastos claims, in order to avoid side-tracking the debate onto a discussion of what things actually are good. It is not Socrates' purpose here to put forth an argument defending the higher-goods. Vlastos suggests:

How then, in default of such an argument, could he have hoped to block counterexamples which he himself would have considered spurious, — cases in which our supposed knowledge of the good we betray has no grounding in our own unconstrained, sincerely felt, convictions about good and evil? Only by resorting to some manoeuvre that would keep the argument on terrain which represents common ground between himself and his present adversaries. To execute this manoeuvre he needs some sort of theoretical cover. He finds this in the hedonistic premise he foists on "the multitude" in this discussion. (Vlastos page 75)

Socrates, then, does not actually subscribe to the hedonistic doctrine, but only presents it in the knowledge that 'the many' will accept it. Vlastos does not explicitly say how he understands Socrates' position in all this. The passage cited above reads as though Vlastos (i) has Socrates carefully put
aside a minor point so that he can get on to his main objective, namely showing akrasia impossible, and (ii) understands the correctness of this proof to be unaffected by this move. The passage, however, can also be read as though Vlastos supposes that Socrates' purpose was to win an argument with 'the many' and the "foist[ing] on the multitude" of the hedonistic doctrine is simply one of the debator's tricks Socrates employs. That this latter interpretation represents the correct understanding of Vlastos' position is born out by a claim on page 86 in which Vlastos says "...Socrates has good reason to think that the doctrine of his thesis about akrasia will be specially effective against his adversaries if offered them under a hedonistic umbrella."

There are, however, a number of difficulties with this interpretation. The most obvious is this: Socrates is not debating 'the many'. He is talking with Protagoras, who is answering for 'the many'. Thus, there is no need to worry about 'the many' side-tracking the discussion with questions about the nature of the good. Perhaps Socrates is worried that Protagoras, who already agrees with Socrates about the worth of the higher goods (356c8-d3), will take so seriously his part as spokesman for 'the many' that he will raise these questions so as to side-track the debate. If this were a transcript of an actual discussion, this might be a plausible explanation for Socrates' move here, but the Protagoras is, presumably, not a transcript,
but a piece of dramatic fiction, however closely it represents the characters' or author's actual views. The debate will not get side-tracked unless Plato wants it to.

Even supposing that Socrates does deliberately limit the scope of the discussion, how does this help him philosophically? Vlastos has claimed that Socrates is trying to show that nobody ever voluntarily acts contrary to his knowledge of what is good. With the discussion restricted in the way Vlastos suggests, all Socrates can hope to get from an argument which depends on the hedonistic premise is that nobody ever voluntarily acts contrary to his knowledge of what is good, when that knowledge tells him that what is good happens to be what is pleasant. This is a much weaker conclusion than the one Socrates sets out to establish.

Vlastos bridges this gap by saying, "If Socrates' thesis about the power of knowledge is true, it should work in these cases [where the good and the pleasant coincide]. And if it does work here, it will not follow that it will only work here." (Vlastos page 78) This is not much of a bridge. Without some more convincing understanding of how Socrates can get from his limited proof about hedonistic akrasia to one about akrasia generally, Vlastos has done nothing to elucidate the workings of this dialogue.

While Vlastos does not make any further attempts to show how an argument against akrasia which presupposes hedonism can be shown to work without presupposing hedonism, he does attempt to
show that one of Socrates' arguments against akrasia is independent of the hedonistic doctrine. The argument in which (2) is rejected because it entails (5) involves substituting "goods" for "pleasures". For this substitution to be legitimate, we do not need the full hedonistic claim as expressed by (3), but rather only a much weaker claim such as

3'. All pleasant things are good things.

Vlastos says on page 86, "For this master dialectician it would have been child's play to see that if he got me to grant him [(3')], I could not fail to concede [(5)], since 'all pleasure is good' entails that 'defeated by pleasures' entails 'defeated by goods', and hence warrants the substitution of 'goods' for 'pleasures'.' Since (3') can hardly be considered hedonistic one version of the refutation of (2) proceeds without presupposing hedonism. Of course, showing that one argument can be understood so as not to rely on hedonism does not in any way render more plausible his overall interpretation of this section of the dialogue, which we discussed above. But, has he even shown that this argument is independent of hedonism?

Vlastos realizes that to state the hedonism that Socrates is discussing here, involves saying not only that pleasure and only pleasure is good, but also that the more pleasure the better and vice versa. While the first argument against (2) involves only the substitution of "goods" for "pleasures", the doctrine that
allows this substitution must also include this comparative claim. In fact, Vlastos indicates that he understands this argument to involve, in addition to the substitution of "good" for "pleasure", the substitution of "better" for "more pleasurable". (Vlastos, page 83n) This comparative claim, however, does not allow for the neat separation that Vlastos requires.

Assuming that the relations better than and more pleasant than order [NOTE 45] the sets of goods and pleasures, respectively, then,

15. If x is more pleasant than y then x is better than y.

entails

16. If x is better than y then x is at least as pleasant as y. [NOTE 46]

While (16) is not exactly a statement of hedonism, anybody who objected to hedonism would, no doubt, object to (16) as well. The theory, then, that allows one to make the substitution of "goods" for "pleasures" is not as innocent as Vlastos supposes; it has (16) as a consequence. Thus, even the first version of the refutation of (2) is not completely independent of hedonism.

Vlastos' understanding of the dialogue is, in the end, inadequate. He has neither provided good reason for the
introduction of hedonism in the *Protagoras* nor demonstrated that any part of the argument can get along without the hedonistic doctrine, or something very close to it.

**Hackforth and Irwin**

In an article in the 1928 *Classical Quarterly*, [NOTE 47] R. Hackforth suggests that the *Protagoras* represents an attempt by Plato to work out the details and implications of the Socratic view that courage (and virtue in general) is knowledge. Hackforth says there:

*My conclusion is that Plato in the *Protagoras* is making a serious attempt to understand for himself, and explain to his readers, what the Socratic equation really meant. I do not see how we are to understand the *Protagoras* unless we assume that Socrates had left the meaning and implications of his equation unexplained, or, rather, inadequately explained.* (Hackforth, page 42)

Hackforth goes no further than to say that Socrates never fully makes specific the notion of goodness. He does not explain just what details Plato felt he needed to fill in nor why Plato resorted to hedonism to do it.
Recently, this view has been revived and expanded by Terence Irwin in *Plato's Moral Theory*. Irwin argues that it was Plato's worries about the so-called Craft Analogy that led Plato to look to hedonism as an explanation for why Socrates supposes virtue is knowledge. Before looking at Irwin's account, let us look briefly at the craft analogy, itself.

Crafts (*téxvai*) represented for Socrates one of the paradigms of human rational behavior. There are a number of reasons for this. According to Socrates, a craft proceeds in some way which is subject to an account. So medicine is a craft because, "it has investigated the nature of that which it treats and the reasons, and is able to give a rational account of each." (Gorgias 501a1f) This account guides the craftsman's actions in practicing that craft. Thus, in the *Apology* (22d4ff) Socrates says that craftsmen are full of "impressive knowledge", at least about their crafts, and in the *Charmides* (165d3) that architecture is the knowledge (*episthémē*) of building. Finally, crafts can be taught. So, in the *Meno* (94b) Socrates relates that Pericles had his two sons, Paralus and Xanthippus, "taught horsemanship and music and athletics...and educated in all other crafts so as to be second to none."

Given the rationality of crafts, it is reasonable that Socrates looked to them for enlightenment about virtue, which he took to be the most rational of all human activities. It is clear from the dialogues that he saw some similarity or analogy
between crafts and virtue. He may have even have supposed that virtue is a craft. Irwin assumes that he did.

Anything that is a craft, according to Irwin, must have a product that can be recognized and evaluated apart from the process that produced it. He claims that:

to explain and justify a productive process we must identify the product apart from the process; we know someone is doing the right thing to make a table if we can identify a table without knowing how it is produced. (Irwin, page 76, section 11.2)

A product is identifiable independently of the process that created it if and only if the definition of the product does not include or make reference to the process. Irwin calls these independently identifiable products 'determinate products'.

If the definition of "a shoe" is, say, "a rigid protective covering for the foot", then it is possible for someone to know and use this definition without knowing anything about the craft or process of cobbling. Since shoes are, therefore, identifiable independently of cobbling, they are determinate products of that craft. On the other hand, some works of art, for instance, may be identifiable as such only when we know how they were produced. Without knowing this, perhaps we would not be able to tell them from natural objects or accidents. So, such works do not count as determinate products, and, on Irwin's analysis, the process that produced them does not count as a
craft.

According to Irwin, Socrates' search for the determinate product of the craft of virtue leads him to accept hedonism in the Protagoras. Irwin suggests (PMT, page 82 section 12.2) that Socrates supposes the product of virtue to be happiness (εὐδαιμονία), which, if it is the product, must be determinate. Happiness also turns out on Irwin's scheme to be the final good; it is that which everybody desires and that for the sake of which everything is desired (PMT, page 79, section 12.3). These two claims entail that virtue is the craft which produces happiness; the final good and a determinate product.

If Irwin is right about this, then when Socrates finally gets around to specifying the details of the final good he should show it to be something which is identifiable independently of any process which produces it. These are the very details Irwin supposes Socrates supplies for us in the Protagoras. Irwin says of the hedonism discussed there by Socrates, "I shall argue that the hedonism is Socrates' own view...Hedonism explains the rather indefinite talk of the final good [and] provides a clear subject matter for the craft of virtue..." (PMT, page 103, section 1.3) [NOTE 48]

Irwin takes it for granted that pleasure is a determinate product and suggests that it may well be the only available candidate for a product of virtue that qualifies it as the final good. Thus, Irwin claims, "Happiness is maximum overall
pleasure; virtue is the craft of measuring pleasures and pains so as to find the action which yields the largest surplus of pleasures over pains." (PMT, page 109, section 3.3) According to him, the view that happiness is an independently identifiable product "requires happiness to be a determinate end..." (PMT, page 110, section 3.4)

Irwin supposes, then, that Socrates is very serious about hedonism in the Protagoras. It provides the determinate product Irwin insists Socrates needs to fill out the craft analogy. The Protagoras, therefore, should be viewed not as an anomaly to be explained away, but as the culmination of the early dialogues' search for an understanding of virtue.

Irwin's view thus rests on his interpreting the craft analogy to require that virtue, like other crafts, have a determinate product. I think Irwin is wrong about this. There is overwhelming evidence that Socrates in the dialogues did not think was that either virtue, in particular, or crafts, in general, must have determinate products. So, the need to find a determinate product for virtue is not what motivates Plato's interest in hedonism in the Protagoras.

Perhaps the most striking passage regarding crafts and determinate products is found in the Charmides at 165e3ff. There, Critias scolds Socrates for looking for a product of each craft. He says:

...for wisdom is not like the other sciences
any than they are like one another; but you proceed as if they were alike. For tell me, he said, what result (ἐποίημι) is there of the craft of calculation or geometry as (ἀνέγκι) a house is of building or a garment of weaving, or other results which one can show of many other crafts. Can you show me any such result of these? You cannot. [NOTE 49]

If we understand "result" in this passage to mean "determinate ends (products)", then Socrates is suggesting a contrast between those crafts with determinate products, such as building, and those without, such as calculation. If, on the other hand, we understand by "result" something rather vague, such as simply "end" or "product", then Socrates is suggesting a contrast between those crafts with products of some sort, such as building, and those without any products at all, such as calculation. Either reading directly contradicts Irwin's claim about the Socratic view of crafts and products.

In his brief discussion of this passage, Irwin points out that as the passage continues, Socrates does attempt to show that each craft has a subject matter, that it is 'of' something, and that this subject matter is distinct from the craft itself (PMT, page 75, section 11.1 and page 298, footnote 44) He then suggests that, in fact, Socrates does mention a determinate product of
calculation: Socrates' claim at 166a5ff that calculation is of the odd and even, how numbers relate to themselves and to each other, "suggests the product – the right answer is a product of the calculation distinct from the steps of the calculations themselves."

Irwin's claim here is confused. In the first place, he fails to notice that in the passage quoted above, Socrates has already conceded that there is nothing that is the product of calculation in the way that a house is the product of building. Secondly, although Socrates does indeed say that the odd and even and their relations are the subject of calculation, i.e., that calculation is of numbers, this certainly does not commit him to the supposition that numbers and their relations are the products, let alone, the determinate products, of calculation. "Right answer" could also mean whatever results from the correct application of the craft of calculation. In this case, however, the right answer would fail to be a determinate product since such an answer can be recognized to be right only by reference to a procedure that produced it. Even if an understanding of "right answer" could be specified which allows it to be a determinate product, Socrates gives no indication that he so understands it in this passage.

It should really come as no surprise that Socrates does not require that all craft have products, given the range of things he considers to be crafts. In the *Phaedo*, for instance, Socrates
refers to the craft of calculation (τῆς μετὰ τοὺς λογικός τέχνης) which he suggests can be used to decide whether arguments are good or bad (90b7). In the *Hippias Minor*, Socrates refers to both the craft of astronomy (τοῦ ἀστρονόμου ἢς ἢ ἢς τέχνης ἐτι μᾶλλον ἐπιστήμων) and the craft of geometry (η γεωμετρίκης) (367e9). In the *Gorgias*, all of these crafts are referred to again, as well as that of arithmetic (η ἀριθμητικὴ καὶ λογικὴ καὶ γεωμετρικὴ καὶ ἄλλα) (450d4). Finally, in the *Ion* (532c8, 532e4), Socrates refers to πολιτική and καθηκόν τέχνη, which, given the context, might best be understood as "poetic and artistic criticism."

While Socrates calls all of these τέχνης, there is no clear product of any of them and, a fortiori, no determinate product. The crafts of calculation, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy certainly do not produce equations, numbers, figures, and celestial bodies respectively. Nor do they serve to improve these things.

The only candidate for a product of these crafts, and this is entirely without textual support, is knowledge in those who practice these crafts. Yet, it is doubtful that even this product could reasonably considered to be determinate. Astronomical knowledge is based on whatever conclusions are reached by a careful application of the techniques of astronomy; logical knowledge is based on whatever conclusions are reached by application of logical techniques, and so forth. It appears,
then, that in many passages Socrates presents sciences as crafts and places no restriction on them that they must have either a determinate product or any product at all.

In the passages discussed so far, Socrates has not emphasized at all the notion of a product. Are there any passages in which he is concerned to show that crafts have products? Irwin points out (PMT, pages 75-76) that Socrates does occasionally search for products of various crafts. This is not enough for Irwin's argument, however. What Irwin needs is a passage where Socrates either says or suggests that having a determinate product is a necessary condition for any process to qualify as a craft. He produces no such passage.

There appears to be only one passage in which Socrates even suggests that products are in some way identifiable independently of their crafts. At 128e4-1 of *Alcibiades I*, Socrates and Alcibiades have the following exchange:

Soc: But how could we have known what craft makes a shoe better without knowing shoes?

Alc: Impossible.

Soc: Nor, indeed, what craft makes a ring better without knowing rings?

Alc: True.
Soc: Well then, could we have known what craft makes us better being ignorant of what we are ourselves?

Alc: Impossible.

Even here, Socrates' point is only that in order to know which craft benefits a certain thing, we must know what that thing is. He does not say that we must know this thing independently of knowing or experiencing the craft that benefits it. Furthermore, even if something suggestive of Irwin's claim were said here, Alcibiades I is most likely not a dialogue that Plato wrote, as Irwin himself indicates in his Index Locorum.

We have, then, no passage that supports Irwin's claim, that according to Socrates, every craft must have a determinate product, and a number of passages which suggest that it is a mistake to suppose that Socrates thought such a thing.

It was, however, largely on the basis of this view of crafts that Irwin made his claim about the presence of hedonism in the Protagoras. I have argued that Socrates does not demand, or even discuss the need for, determinate products of either crafts in general or virtue in particular, and in the Charmides even suggests that such a view is misguided. While we shall look at other features of Socrates' views that Irwin supposes leads Socrates to hedonism, we can already conclude that Irwin is mistaken in thinking that Socrates was so led by the need to find
a determinate product of the craft of virtue.

There is a second characteristic of crafts which Irwin thinks important. It is this. Crafts, as we have mentioned above, proceed in some way which is subject to an account; they are not random activities. This account can explain why the craftsman performs the particular step he performs when he performs it. So the account of medicine tells why a doctor gives a patient one medicine instead of another. Activities which fail to proceed according to an account do not qualify as crafts. So, Socrates says in the Apology (22b-c), poets are not craftsmen, "since...it was not wisdom that enabled them to write their poetry, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers or prophets who deliver their sublime messages without knowing in the least what they mean." (Trendennick's translation)

Irwin sees a necessary feature any account must have. An account must not contain "disputed terms". (PMT, page 72) While Irwin never tells us just what it means for a term to be disputed, he seems to mean that it is vague or open to a number of interpretations. Thus, the baker giving a strict account of his procedure will never say, "And now I throw in a bunch of yeast," although he might say "And now I throw in a teaspoon of yeast." The word "bunch" is vague; the word "teaspoon" is not. Any dispute about how much yeast to put into a loaf of bread could be solved by appeal to the latter account but not to the
former. What makes the former term, "bunch", vague, or disputed, to use Irwin's terminology, and "teaspoon" not, is that the latter allows for precise measurement. One could follow precisely an account involving "teaspoon"; one could not follow an account involving "bunch".

Of course, if virtue is a craft, it must also be subject to an account, indeed, one that does not include disputed or vague terms. That is, the account of virtue must contain only terms, disputes about which can be settled by a procedure analogous to measurement. Such an account provides "paradigms or standards for deciding whether actions or persons are virtuous." (PMT, page 72) So, claims Irwin, "An account of virtue which allows the use of measurement in reaching moral conclusions will satisfy Socrates' demand for a paradigm" (ibid.)

This is formalized by Irwin as a principle called "ED":

ED: "An adequate account [of virtue] must eliminate disputed terms and provide a paradigm which allows measurement."

( ibid.)

Prior to the Protagoras, however, there was no such account of virtue available. Words like "good", "just", and "admirable" are simply too vague to be included in accounts of virtue.

This gap, is filled by the theory of the Protagoras. There
these vague terms are discarded in favor of "pleasure", which is subject to precise measurement. So "virtue is the craft of measuring pleasures and pains so as to find the action which yields the largest surplus of pleasure over pain." (PMT, page 109) and "the Protagoras offers exactly the measuring procedure which removes the disputes, by freeing us from the puzzles created by conflicting appearances (356c6-e2). The disputes are removed because the final good is defined by reference to pleasure, a determinate end; now all the virtues can be similarly defined without disputed terms." (PMT, page 110)

It is surely true that Socrates was concerned with attempting to be precise in giving moral definitions or accounts. Was he concerned to be precise in order that he could find some moral analogue to measurement? That is not so clear. Irwin apparently realizes that Socrates never actually endorses anything like a requirement that states moral definitions must be formulated without using 'disputed' terms. So, Irwin says on page 72:

Socrates endorses neither ED nor NED [which states that no correct moral account can eliminate disputed terms] in the Socratic dialogues... though Socrates does not explicitly accept ED, he has reason to welcome it if it could be achieved, if moral disputes could be settled by some analogue to measurement.
Not only does Socrates not explicitly endorse anything like (ED), but he does not proceed as if he endorsed it. Throughout the early dialogues, Socrates often, without hesitation, gives partial accounts of moral properties which involve other moral terms. So, for instance, in the Charmides Socrates objects to Critias' definition of temperance as the doing of good actions because according to that definition, one could be temperate accidentally by doing good actions accidentally. Socrates objects to the definition because he supposes it yields an unacceptable result, not because it contains disputed terms. [NOTE 50]

Even in the Protagoras, itself, where Irwin supposes he finds Socrates using hedonism to give an account of virtue and goodness, it is not clear that Socrates' overriding concern is to find an account which provides an "analogue to measurement". However we understand the discussion with 'the many', when Socrates returns to Protagoras at 360, the discussion includes the word "praiseworthy" (καλόν), which, barring an analysis, must be, to Irwin's understanding, a disputed term. So, even in the Protagoras, Socrates is not obviously interested in eliminating moral terms, per se, from the discussion.

It may well be true that Socrates would be dissatisfied with an account of, say, courage which did not allow us to use it to discover the courageous act among its non-courageous alternatives. It does not follow from this that the account of,
again say, courage must contain only non-moral terms which allow for measurement. It follows only that we should understand the terms, both moral and non-moral, used in the account.

Even on the supposition that Socrates was looking for an account of virtue which used no disputed terms, there is reason to hope that he would not turn to an account which relied solely on pleasure. As Irwin, himself, notes on pages 110-112, descriptions involving pleasures may not eliminate disputed terms in the way he supposes they must. If pleasure is not a uniform sensation, or is differentiable in terms of quality, then it might be impossible to settle moral disputes by simply measuring quantities of pleasures. Prior judgements might need to be made concerning which pleasures are worth measuring or how to compare different sorts of pleasure, in which case accounts of virtue, even ones containing terms about pleasure, will also contain unanalyzed moral terms. Irwin says on page 112, "If judgements of pleasure sometimes depend on other judgements of value, they will not always settle conflicts of values; and then Socrates loses the measuring science which settles disputes about good and evil and the virtues."

Socrates was certainly aware, for instance, that judgements of pleasure may depend on other judgements of value; Protagoras raised the suggestion at the beginning of the discussion at 351. Irwin says that once we consider the difficulties with hedonism, we will see that Socrates was mistaken to reach for it to solve
the problems he finds in the craft analogy.

In a way, Irwin has set up a straw man here. He reads the early dialogues so that there is a gap in Socrates' theory. He reads the Protagoras in such a way that hedonism is used to fill that gap. Finally, he criticizes the use of hedonism, after noting that it does not do such a good job anyway. It seems, rather, that one might take these defects of hedonism as evidence that Socrates never intended to use the doctrine to fill out the craft analogy, especially when the evidence for such an intention is very weak anyway.

Irwin's reconstruction should be rejected. Socrates never mentions the need for undisputed terms (as Irwin appears to understand them) in accounts of crafts, nor does he ever reject an account because it contains disputed terms. He does, however, produce a number of moral claims in which one moral term is partially analyzed in terms of another or others.

Furthermore, he has no reason to reject them. His concern with precision does not in any way suggest that he must embark on a project to eliminate moral (and hence, disputed) terms from accounts of moral crafts. And if Socrates thinks that moral properties and terms are essentially irreducible to purely non-moral terms, he will have no sympathy for this project.

Finally, the one solution Irwin proposes, namely using the undisputed term "pleasure" at the center of moral accounts and definitions, is no good. Terms involving "pleasure" will not be
undisputed in the way they must be to fit Irwin's requirements.

Irwin, then, produces a faulty analysis of Socrates' underlying conception of crafts and their accounts. On the basis of this analysis he claims Socrates finds himself committed to hedonism. This, Irwin notes, is unfortunate, since hedonism does not appear to fit the bill. Once we see that Irwin's initial account is mistaken, there is no longer any need either to suppose he embraced hedonism as a remedy for some defect in his theory, or to criticize him for failing to notice that hedonism was a wrong choice.

Now let us turn to the third and final feature of Socrates' early views of the craft analogy which Irwin supposes commits Socrates to hedonism in the Protagoras. [NOTE 51] According to Irwin, Socrates, in the Hippias Minor, is concerned with the fact that the mere possession of knowledge of some craft will not guarantee that the craft is practiced correctly and not misused in some way. So, for instance, there is nothing in the art of medicine which insures that someone who possesses it will always put it to good use. If this is a common feature of all crafts, then if virtue is a craft, we are faced with a disturbing and very un-Socratic consequence: even somebody who possesses the craft of virtue might misuse it, i.e., fail to do those actions virtue tells him are best. This consequence can be headed off only if it is shown that the product of virtue is something that everybody wants more than anything else, and that it is incapable
of misuse. (PMT, page 77)

Again, hedonism, Irwin thinks, fills in the theory. If virtue yields the greatest overall pleasure and psychological hedonism is true, then virtue produces something which everybody desires more than anything else. Anybody who truly possessed the craft of virtue could not help but correctly practice it. So, Irwin says on page 87, "...the paradox of the Hippias Minor need not worry Socrates; since the product of virtue is a determinate end everyone pursues, someone who knows what virtue produces and requires will act virtuously." [NOTE 52]

So, on this view, the Protagoras is to be seen primarily as an attempt to solve the paradox of the Hippias Minor, with hedonism as the key to that solution.

It is important to notice right away that the Hippias Minor discussion is not centered on crafts. To be sure, crafts are mentioned: astronomy and geometry (367e), medicine (375b), smithing and weaving (368b-c), but non-crafts are discussed, too. Thus, a voluntary eye-blinking is compared with an involuntary eye-blinking (374d), voluntary lameness is compared with involuntary lameness (374d), where both blinking and lameness are taken to be defects of the eye and leg respectively. Socrates is not worried in this dialogue solely about the misuse of a craft, but more generally about doing shameful and evil things voluntarily. If crafts are not the central topic of the dialogue, then it is less plausible to see the Protagoras as
presenting a solution to the *Hippias Minor* puzzle.

None the less, the misuse of crafts seems to play some role in the *Hippias*. Does the problem it raises about crafts require the hedonism of the *Protagoras*? I think not. In the first place, if it required hedonism, of any sort, it would require psychological hedonism. The possibility of disobeying the dictates of the craft that results in the greatest preponderance of pleasure over pain is ruled out only if it is a psychological law that we act in such a way as to maximize our expected pleasure. We have seen, however, in Chapter II that there is no doctrine of psychological hedonism in the *Protagoras*. Without a doctrine of psychological hedonism, it is always possible that a person, even one with the relevant knowledge, will choose to take the less pleasant of two alternative courses, and, hence, misuse the craft of maximizing pleasure, viz., virtue.

On the other hand, hedonism is not even needed to solve, to Socrates' satisfaction, the problem in the *Hippias Minor*. Socrates must resort to hedonism, supposing pleasure to be a determinate end in Irwin's sense, only if as a craft virtue must have a determinate end. We have seen above that it does not. Even granting Irwin's supposition that at the end of the *Hippias Minor* we are left in the position of needing to discover a result of virtue which will be desired more than anything else, there is no need to turn to hedonism. Socrates supposes that virtue and only virtue consistently results in happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*)
(Charmides 176a, Euthydemus 281a) and that everybody desires happiness more than anything else. It follows that nobody who possesses virtue would voluntarily act counter to the dictates of virtue. This is a result Socrates would warmly embrace, although, Irwin supposes, happiness is not a determinate product (PMT page 108).

It does not appear, then, that Socrates is forced in the Protagoras to endorse hedonism in order to prevent misuse of the craft of virtue, nor does he suppose himself to be committed to anything which so forces him.

We have looked at a number of attempts by Irwin to show that the early Socratic doctrines are connected in such a way that their combined requirements force Socrates to accept hedonism in the Protagoras. In each case Irwin is unable to show this result. I do not mean to deny that the early Socratic doctrines are connected to each other; I do deny that they are connected in the way Irwin supposes. The basic problem with Irwin's account is that it places severe restrictions on what can count as the products of crafts, restrictions which, as we have seen, the text will not support. While there are certainly doctrines in the Protagoras which share a strong connection with doctrines in earlier dialogues, it does not seem possible to read the dialogue in such a way as to make it an answer to the various puzzles and shortcomings of early Socratic ethics.
Taylor

There is a third attempt in the literature to explain the hedonism in the *Protagoras*. It is presented most extensively by A.E. Taylor in his *Plato: The Man and his Work*. [NOTE 53], although hints are also found in Grube’s "The Structural Unity of the *Protagoras.*" [NOTE 54] According to this view, Socrates assumes the truth of the strong hedonistic thesis of 'the many' and the sophists. He then proceeds to show that even on the supposition that hedonism is true, two central Socratic theses also turn out to be true. Weakness of the will proves to be some sort of error, and courage and the other virtues show themselves to be nothing more than knowledge of good and evil.

Support for this view is supposed to come from Socrates’ qualifications on the scope of his investigation. So, for instance, Socrates says to 'the many':

Now, if you are content with that, and aren't able to call anything good or bad except what results in that, listen to what follows. I maintain that, if that is your position, it is absurd for you to say that a man often does bad things though he knows they are bad and could refrain from them. (my emphasis, 355a4-b1)

and at 357d2-7:
...but now if you laugh at us you will be laughing at yourselves. For you have agreed that those who go wrong in their choices of pleasures and pains — which is to say, of good and bad things — go wrong from lack of knowledge...

The whole argument, then, is designed to show 'the many' and the sophists that even given the particular understanding of the good they have, they are committed to, at least, these Socratic conclusions. It is not only important to this view that we find these qualifications popping up in Socrates' statement of his arguments, but it is also crucial that we not find any passages in which Socrates unequivocally commits himself to hedonism. The investigation in the last chapter in which we found that there are no such passages yields just the results expected by this reading.

Irwin levels two charges against this reconstruction (Plato's Moral Theory, pages 308-309, n. 13). The first is that this reading is defective because Socrates, "does not represent hedonism as the position which the many advocate; he has to convince them that in their own choices they accept it." It is not at all clear why this is a criticism. Socrates is careful not to appear to persuade them to accept hedonism. If he did this, it would, indeed, seem odd to say that Socrates is trying only to draw out the conclusions of the beliefs of 'the many'.

So, Socrates does not persuade 'the many' to accept
hedonism; he only persuades them that they already accept hedonism. From this, it is perfectly legitimate for Socrates to show that they must also accept the Socratic views which result from that and other premises.

Irwin's second criticism is that if this view is right, then Socrates has not gone one whit toward arguing either for the impossibility of *akrasia* or for the unity of the virtues. All he has produced is an argument that commits 'the many', and perhaps the sophists as well, to these views. Irwin is probably right here, at least if we understand his criticism in the following way. If every important argument in the *Protagoras* is an *ad hominem* against those who accept hedonism, then either a view such as Taylor's is wrong, or the *Protagoras* was not meant to establish anything more than that hedonists are committed to certain views.

While not a crushing objection, if it is correct, it shows that the *Protagoras* is something of a disappointment, given its extremely limited scope. Beyond noting that, however, let us put off a discussion of this point until the next section.

**Interpreting the Protagoras**

I have outlined above the general structure of the argument
against the possibility of akrasia. Socrates spends a great deal of time pointing out that 'the many' already accept hedonism. Almost the entire section from 353d to 355a is devoted to this task. What is involved here is hardly persuasion. There are no arguments; there are only observations about the habits of 'the many' concerning value judgements.

Once this is clear, Socrates moves on to a demonstration designed to show that 'the many' cannot accept the possibility of being overcome by pleasure so as to do what is wrong, since they also accept the identification of goodness and pleasure. There is no reason to suppose that Socrates, himself, accepts the hedonistic doctrine of 'the many'. Furthermore, on a straightforward reading of the passage Socrates is merely showing that 'the many' must concede that weakness of the will is impossible.

If this were the whole purpose of the dialogue, then Irwin's criticism would apply to this interpretation as well. The dialogue, however, is far from over. Those who suppose that the demonstration of the impossibility of akrasia is partly aimed at Protagoras are wrong. This proof would be wasted on him. He has agreed from the start that it is impossible to act contrary to the dictates of our ethical knowledge (352c-e). What Protagoras does not agree with is the identification of pleasure and and goodness. [NOTE 55]

None the less, the discussion with Protagoras resumes at
By this time, Protagoras appears convinced of the truth of hedonism, and Socrates appears to be arguing in his own person. We should expect here, then, that Socrates' argument will have a standard Socratic thesis as its conclusion and premises which Socrates accepts.

Let's look first at the argument for the unity of courage and wisdom. At the beginning of this chapter, we outlined the argument as follows:

17. Pleasure and goodness are identical. [3]

18. For any act, a, if a leads to the most overall pleasant life, then a is praiseworthy. [9]

19. For any act, a, if a is praiseworthy, then a is good. [10]

20. For any person, x, if x knows what is good, x will not act contrary to that knowledge. [C]

21. For any person, x, x voluntarily fails to do what is good if and only if x is ignorant of what is good. [C']

22. S fears x = df S expects x and S believes that x is evil. [11]
23. There is no person, x, such that x knows what is evil and voluntarily acts so as to acquire it. [From the supposition that if a person knows what is good, then that person knows what is evil.]

24. There is no person, x, such that x knows what is fearful and acts so as to acquire it. [From (22) and (23)]

25. There is no person, x, such that x acts so as to acquire what is fearful.

This argument is found from 358b to 359d5, and the conclusion is stated at 359d5: "So, if that demonstration was correct, no one goes for things that he regards as fearful, since giving in to oneself turned out to be error."

The important thing to notice about this argument is that the crucial premises (19) and (20) are already accepted by Protagoras at the beginning of the hedonism discussion. At 351c1-2, Protagoras makes it clear that it is not mere pleasure that is sufficient for goodness, but pleasure in praiseworthy things (τοῖς καλοῖς). Praiseworthiness is the good-making
property Protagoras subscribes to at 351 and agrees to again at 358, when he accepts (19). We have already discussed Protagoras’ acceptance of (20). He is especially eager at 351c-d to join Socrates in claiming that no one will ever act contrary to the dictates of knowledge.

Once Protagoras accepts the definition of fear, at 358d, the conclusion comes straightaway that anyone who acts so as to acquire what is fearful acts in ignorance. The first two premises, (17) and (18), are not needed. The hedonism introduced here is superfluous; Protagoras has accepted enough to commit him to the conclusion, apart from accepting any doctrines about pleasure.

After Protagoras concedes that no one goes for what he regards as fearful, Socrates moves on to his final conclusion that cowardice is ignorance and courage is wisdom.

Socrates claims at 359e that if no one goes for what he regards as fearful, then everyone must go for what he is confident about. Socrates and Protagoras both agree that those who are courageous go for praiseworthy things, that praiseworthy things are good, and that good things are pleasant. (360a) Socrates and Protagoras also agree, however, that cowards refrain from going for praiseworthy things, and, instead, prefer disgraceful things. So, it follows, cowards do not go for what is good and pleasant.

But, if one refrains from going for what is good and
pleasant, then one must fear those things that are good and pleasant. Cowards, then, fear good and pleasant things. One fears a thing only if one regards it as evil. Hence, cowards regard things that are good as evil.

This is simply a mistake on their part. Cowards are cowards because they are fearful and confident about the wrong things. Socrates says at 360a6, "Cowardice proves to be error about what is to be feared and what is not." But, claims Socrates, since courage is the opposite of cowardice and wisdom is the opposite of ignorance, it follows that courage is wisdom of what is fearful. At this point, we are told, Protagoras reluctantly concedes that his initial claim was false and that it is impossible to be courageous and altogether ignorant.

The actual argument proceeds thus:

26. Everybody goes for what he is confident about.

27. Those who are courageous go for praiseworthy things.

19. All praiseworthy things are good.

28. Those who are courageous go for good things. (27, 19)

29. Any good thing is a praiseworthy thing. (360a3)
30. Cowards do not go for praiseworthy things.

31. Cowards do not go for what is good and pleasant. (19, 29, 30)

32. Cowards fear good and pleasant things. (360b)

33. Cowards regard good things as evil.

34. Cowardice is ignorance of what is fearful.

35. Courage is the opposite of cowardice and wisdom is the opposite of ignorance.

36. Courage is wisdom of what is fearful.

37. It is impossible to be courageous and altogether ignorant.

Again, the hedonistic claims in this argument are superfluous. The logic of the argument remains unchanged if we drop all references to pleasure and pleasant things. As in the previous argument, this argument depends on the notion of praiseworthiness, the definition of fear, and the claim that nobody goes for what is evil (and, hence, fearful). All of these
Protagoras accepts, and none relies on any doctrine about pleasure. The argument is valid and contains no essential hedonistic premise. The general outline, then, of the last third of this discussion is this. Socrates shows 'the many' that if they accept hedonism they cannot consistently accept the possibility of *akrasia*. On the basis of this discussion, Protagoras admits that he, too, is persuaded as to the truth of hedonism. Socrates then shows Protagoras via a proof that does not rely on hedonism, that cowardice is ignorance of what is fearful and courage is wisdom about that same thing.

Why does the hedonistic language remain in this section? It does not remain for its contribution to the workings of the dialogue. As we have seen, it plays no part in the argument following the discussion with 'the many'. It is possible, of course, that it is there either to prove to anybody reading the dialogue that a hedonist is further committed to the identity of courage and wisdom, or to dramatize the fact that the Sophists are sympathetic to hedonism without making the argument depend on the truth of hedonism.

In the end, there is no clear reason why hedonism remains a part of the discussion. What is important is that Socrates has provided what he takes to be a proof of the unity of courage and wisdom which relies only on concepts and principles that Protagoras and, presumably, Socrates already accept.

What we are left with however is a proof that is not, in
itself, very helpful. It is nearly impossible to evaluate Socrates' argument without a developed understanding of praiseworthiness (καλὸν). Furthermore, Socrates' proof rests on the peculiar view that nobody deliberately goes for, or acts so as to acquire, what he fears, i.e., what he regards as evil. This view, at least on the surface, seems false. Even if a necessary condition of fear is an expectation of evil, it does not seem to be a sufficient condition, unless we suppose that no one can eagerly await an approaching evil. It is, however, this latter claim which Socrates must also adopt as part of this 'peculiar' view. Without these claims, the fact that cowards go for disgraceful (evil) things would not count as evidence that they act in ignorance of what is praiseworthy and good.

Plato may see the Symposium and the Hippias Major as attempts to come to understand praiseworthiness (or "beauty" as τὸ καλὸν is translated in those dialogues). So, for instance, in the Symposium's story of Diotima, we are given characterizations of praiseworthiness (although no definitions) and, of course, much of the Hippias Major is devoted to an attempt to discover the nature of praiseworthiness. The Meno, on the other hand, Plato may see as an attempt to show that nobody goes for what he regards as evil (77b-78b). But that would be another story.

In the third chapter, we saw that there is strong textual evidence that 'the many' accept hedonism. The evidence regarding Protagoras' acceptance of it is far more ambiguous. While he
eventually admits that he accepts it, there is reason to be sceptical about that acceptance, since it seems to come without reason. Regarding Socrates, there is absolutely no compelling textual evidence that he accepts the doctrine.

In this chapter, I have claimed that the argument against the position of 'the many' is entirely ad hominem. The argument against akrasia depends on 'the many's' acceptance of hedonism. It is not a general argument against akrasia. Perhaps that is not needed since both Socrates and Protagoras already deny its possibility.

The final argument for the identity of courage and wisdom makes no essential use of a hedonistic doctrine. While hedonism appears in the argument, it plays no part there. That argument, rather, relies on a notion of praiseworthiness, and the claim that nobody goes for what he is fearful about — claims which Plato is concerned to discuss or defend in other dialogues such as the Meno, Symposium, and Hippias Major. I claim, then, that the most natural reading of the Protagoras is one which does not involve Socrates' or Plato's adopting a doctrine of hedonism.

In the next two chapters, I shall turn to the Gorgias. That dialogue contains Plato's strongest attack on hedonism. The purpose of the dialogue is far more apparent than the purpose of the Protagoras. Unlike the arguments in the Protagoras, those in the Gorgias are presented in complete earnest, almost with fervor. We shall, therefore, be able to spend more time examining
the arguments themselves.
CHAPTER V

Introduction

The Gorgias, like the Protagoras but unlike earlier dialogues, such as the Euthyphro, attempts to defend central Socratic ethical views. Those earlier dialogues, as has often been pointed out, were solely, or primarily, elenctic; in them Socrates sought only to draw out and refute the view of his opponents. We have seen in the Protagoras that there Socrates was not content with mere refutation, but wanted also to persuade his interlocutors of the truth of his own views such as the impossibility of akrasia and the and other doctrines. To be sure, the Protagoras, like the elenctic dialogues, ends in puzzlement. Socrates suggests in the final lines of the dialogue that he has some doubts about the truth of what he has said. By contrast, the Gorgias ends in no such uncertainty. In this dialogue Socrates sets out to prove two doctrines of whose truth he appears to have no doubt. The first is that the just man is always happier than the unjust man, and the second is that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it. In attempting to demonstrate these claims, Socrates bitterly attacks both the view that happiness consists in unrestrained pursuit of pleasure and the hedonism on which he supposes the view that advocates such
pursuit rests.

The *Gorgias* consists of three separate discussions involving Socrates, each with a more radical and extreme interlocutor than its predecessor. (1) The first discussion (448d-461a) is between Socrates and Gorgias, whom Socrates quickly leads into a contradiction. Polus, a follower of Gorgias, comes to his master's rescue. (2) This second part of the dialogue (461b-481b) centers on the question of whether it is better to commit injustice than to suffer it. Polus maintains that it is worse to suffer it, and in so doing, praises the life of the tyrant, who can commit injustice with impunity. Socrates, of course, maintains that the life of the just man is better.

The disagreement as characterized by both Polus and Socrates is whether the just man is happier than the unjust man (470d, 472d). Polus agrees that to commit injustice is more shameful (*ἀνοχυροῦ*) than suffering injustice (474c). After a long and torturous argument, Socrates convinces Polus that what is more shameful is also worse (475d1-3). Finally, at the conclusion of an equally protracted argument, Polus is led by Socrates to agree that the worse a person is, the less happy he is. Thus, Polus agrees (479e8-9) that the unjust man is more unhappy than the just man.

(3) Finally Callicles enters the discussion at 481b and attacks Socrates for refuting Polus by taking advantage of his willingness to call committing injustice shameful. Callicles
rejects entirely the constraints of conventional justice, that Gorgias and Polus recognize, and so, he supposes, rejects the views by which they are caught in contradiction. Callicles claims that it is more shameful to suffer injustice than to commit it and even that it is a praiseworthy thing to commit it.

Callicles' praise of the unrestrained satisfaction of desires and the accumulation of power by the absolutely unjust man represents the most extreme contrast to Socrates' own views, and, indeed, fully half of the dialogue is taken up by the discussion with Callicles (482c-527e). In this and the subsequent chapter, I want to examine the treatment of hedonism in this dialogue. In this examination I will concentrate on Socrates' discussion with Callicles. It is there that hedonism is formulated most clearly and argued against most strenuously. We will find that while the arguments are put forth seriously, they are defective in rather fundamental ways.

Let us turn to the doctrine of hedonism as it is formulated in the Gorgias.

Hedonism in the Gorgias

Hedonism may first seem to enter the dialogue in Socrates' discussion with Polus. At 475a4-5 Polus congratulates Socrates
for "defining praiseworthiness in terms of pleasure and
goodness." A close analysis of Socrates' reasoning in this
section, however, shows that when this rather vague formulation
is sharpened up to meet the requirements of the argument, there
is really no hedonism involved.

Polus maintains that,

1. Doing injustice is more shameful \( \gamma\phi\kappa\iota\alpha\omicron\upsilon \) than suffering it, but it is not worse
\( \kappa\omicron\kappa\iota\alpha\omicron\upsilon \) (474c5-7).

and so denies at 474d1-2 that

2. \( x \) is praiseworthy =df \( x \) is good.

where "praiseworthy" and "good" are the contradictories of
"shameful" and "evil". Socrates gets Polus to agree at 474a5-b2
that

3. A thing, \( x \), is more praiseworthy than

another thing, \( y \), iff \( x \) is either more

pleasant or more beneficial than \( y \).

and conversely,

4. A thing, \( x \), is more shameful than another

thing, \( y \), iff \( x \) is either less pleasant or

less beneficial than \( y \).

Polus has already agreed that doing injustice is more shameful
than suffering it, so, from (3), is forced to admit that
5. Doing injustice is either less pleasant or less beneficial than suffering injustice.

Both Socrates and Polus recognize that

6. Doing injustice is not less pleasant than suffering injustice.

So, it follows that

7. Doing injustice is less beneficial than suffering injustice.

While Socrates never states

8. For any things, x and y, x is better than y iff x is more beneficial than y,

he surely relies on it when he concludes at 475c that

9. Doing injustice is worse than suffering it, (from (7) and (8))

thus contradicting Polus' claim in (1) that it is not worse, and refuting his insistence on the non-identity of praiseworthiness and goodness.

Vlastos has pointed out in a 1967 article called "Was Polus Refuted" [NOTE 56] that this argument is ultimately unsuccessful because Polus should never have accepted Socrates' questions as they were cast. For instance, Socrates asks whether doing injustice is less pleasant than suffering it, with the
implicit qualification "for those suffering it". Put this way the answer is obvious, but the question is irrelevant. Had Socrates asked instead whether doing injustice is less pleasant than suffering it for everybody concerned, the answer is less obvious. Had Polus insisted on the latter formulation, he could have avoided Socrates' conclusion.

The important point to note here, however, is that even if Socrates' argument were successful, it nowhere relies on a doctrine of hedonism. At most it makes use of an alleged identity between goodness and benefit, and a fortiori the identity between goodness and either benefit or pleasure at 477a.

It is not until the final discussion with Callicles that a serious doctrine of hedonism makes an appearance. At 495a, Socrates asks Callicles whether pleasure is the same as goodness (τὸ αὑτὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἄγαθόν;) or whether something is pleasant which is not good. Callicles admits that his praise of intemperance commits him to the former alternative. This position is brought out a second time at 495 when Socrates again formulates Callicles' position, this time stating unequivocally that he disagrees with it.

Soc: ...Let's remember this, that Callicles of Acharnae said that pleasure is the same as goodness (ἡδὺ καὶ ἄγαθόν ταύτου πάλι), but knowledge and courage are different from each other and from the good.
Cal: And Socrates, here, of Alopece doesn't agree with this, or does he?

Soc: No he doesn't. [NOTE 57]

Taken literally, this shows that Callicles commits himself to a straightforward identification of pleasure and goodness. No subtleties are added to the doctrine. Any pleasure is good, even, we are told at 494d-e, the pleasure of scratching an itch. We will return to the formulation of hedonism in the dialogue; but let us for now understand it as the same sort of extreme doctrine we found in the Protagoras.

There seems, initially, to be some reluctance on Callicles' part to assent to the truth of hedonism in this form. When he is first asked by Socrates if he thinks pleasure and goodness are identical, he answers, "Well, so that I don't leave my argument inconsistent if I say they are different, I say they are the same." (495a5) This suggests that Callicles' inclination is to deny the complete identification of goodness and pleasure, especially when the range of pleasures is unrestricted. He finds himself, however, forced into the admission by his arguments earlier in the discussion. Let us turn briefly to Callicles' earlier claims.

**Callicles' Commitment to Hedonism**
Callicles disdains conventional justice which he characterizes as "charms, incantations [and]...rules contrary to nature." (484a) He rejects Socrates' praise for the just man, who lives temperately according to rules, in favor of the man who lives justly according to nature. This man, if he is to live rightly,

should let his appetites grow as large as possible and not restrain them, and when these are as large as possible, he must have the power to serve them with whatever he has an appetite for at any time. (491e7 - 492a3) But in truth, Socrates...it is this way; luxury, intemperance, and freedom, if it is well supplied, this is virtue and happiness; and those other things, those ornaments, those agreements of men contrary to nature, those are rubbish, worth nothing. (492c5-8)

Callicles, then, believes that the truly good man is the one with extraordinarily large appetites who is able to satisfy the demands of those appetites. One gets better, on this view, as a function of the size of one's appetites and the ability to satisfy them.

But satisfying desires, according to Callicles, is just the cause of pleasure. Pleasure is simply the feeling that comes from the satisfying of desires. The appetite is a precondition of that satisfaction.
This understanding of the phenomenon of pleasure seems to appear for the first time in the *Gorgias*. Certainly nothing like it made an appearance in the *Protagoras*. The fact that Plato has Socrates resort to analogies about jars (493a - 494b) might suggest that Plato had not yet fully worked out this analysis. If he had, we might expect something more along the lines of an account. According to the analogy presented, appetites are like jars with holes in them, and pleasure is like liquid flowing into them. What we call a large appetite is analogous to a jar in which the holes are very large. The quantity of pleasure is represented by the quantity of liquid flowing into the jar.

This comparison, whatever its merits, points up two consequences of the view analyzing pleasure as desire satisfaction: (i) as jars with holes do not remain filled, so appetites do not remain satisfied, (ii) as one's appetites grow larger, so does one's capacity to receive pleasure. Appetites are a precondition for experiencing pleasure and their size limits the quantity of pleasure one can take in.

This understanding of pleasure, which Callicles accepts, makes no qualitative distinction among kinds of appetites or their corresponding pleasures. Even the endless scratching of a constant itch counts as pleasant, since it is the satisfaction of a desire. [NOTE 58]

Since being a good person, for Callicles, consists in satisfying one's well-developed appetites, and this satisfaction
always results in pleasure, being a good person consists in experiencing great amounts of pleasure. The sole criterion, then, for the goodness of a person is the amount of pleasure experienced by that person. [NOTE 59] Socrates suggests, and Callicles agrees, that this view depends on the identification of goodness and pleasure. So, at 495a, Callicles admits that his praise of the completely intemperate man rests on that identification.

Jussi Tenkku [NOTE 60] has argued, in his "Evaluation of Pleasure in Plato's Ethics", that Socrates unfairly forces Callicles to accept hedonism, by forcing him to admit that any pleasure is good, even the pleasure of scratching. Tenkku writes on page 75:

As a reckless aristocrat, Callicles does not care if he is called unjust; he may even be proud of it — but to be put on the level of an itcher and scratcher or of a catamite, is extremely repugnant to him.

Actually Socrates acts unfairly towards Callicles in introducing such ignoble examples. From his own point of view, Callicles might have been able to admit that pleasure in scratching and itching is evil, for in his defense of the pleasures as conditioned by the passions, he hardly meant bodily pleasures, as Socrates refers to. He
meant only such pleasures of the soul as may be obtained from the struggle for power in social life. Such pleasures would be noble from his point of view because injustice, intemperance, luxury, and license are honorable according to nature.

Tenkku's charge, then, seems to amount to this: Socrates presents Callicles with a case which involves a sort of pleasure different from the pleasures Callicles praises. This, in some way, forces Callicles to concede that experiencing "ignoble" pleasures constitutes a good life. According to Tenkku, however, the sort of pleasure Callicles has in mind is the tyrant's enjoyment of his power and authority, or his feeling of security in his position. He is not, on this view, lauding mere bodily pleasures such as that gotten from eating and drinking, let alone, scratching!

Nonetheless, when Socrates asks Callicles what pleasures he has in mind, it is just this latter sort of pleasure Callicles agrees to:

Soc: ...Tell me now, are you talking about something like being hungry and eating when you are hungry?

Cal: I am.

Soc: And being thirsty and drinking when you are thirsty?

Cal: That's what I am talking about -- and about having
Callicles, himself, agrees that he is referring at least to bodily pleasures. Given this response, Socrates has good reason to ask if the appetite to scratch and its satisfaction are things which Callicles would also be willing to praise. It appears, then, that Socrates is not being unfair in asking Callicles to consider the life of a scratcher, especially when he gives Callicles the chance to dissent. By his question, Socrates has shown that Callicles praises any life of pleasure, however that pleasure is obtained.

There is a second point, claims Tenkku, at which Socrates is unfair to Callicles. He says on page 76, "Socrates ignores Callicles real position and forces him to equate good and pleasure." It is difficult to see just what this charge amounts to. While it is true that Socrates brings Callicles around to accept hedonism at 495a, this position is closely related to his earlier praise of pleasure. At this point in the dialogue, Socrates is merely trying to ferret out the consequences of Callicles' stated position.

While Callicles could maintain his praise of the pleasant life without endorsing hedonism, hedonism provides one theoretical foundation for that claim. It turns out to be the one Callicles admits to. That he does might reveal the fact that Plato was primarily interested in discussing hedonism in the
or it might reveal that Plato misunderstood the logical relation between Callicles' views and pure hedonism. (More will be said about this in the next chapter.) To follow Tenkku and say that Socrates unfairly forces Callicles to accept hedonism seems only to make things less clear. [NOTE 61] Let us now turn to the arguments Socrates offers against Callicles' position.

**Socrates' First Argument Against Hedonism**

Socrates presents two arguments against hedonism in the section of the *Gorgias* from 495d - 499b. The first denies the identity of goodness and pleasure on the basis of a divergence in their properties; the second denies their identification on the basis of its unacceptable ethical consequences.

We can take as a preliminary formulation of the first argument the one given by Irwin (*Plato's Moral Theory*, page 311 note 13) which runs as follows:

A 1. Doing well and doing badly are opposites.  
(495e3-4)

2. Opposites cannot both be present to the same person (or part of him) at the same
3. Pleasure and pain can both be present to the same thing at the same time.

4. The presence of pleasure is not identical with doing well, nor the presence of pain with doing badly. (497c3-4)

5. Pleasure is not identical with goodness. (497a4-5) [NOTE 62]

That (4) follows from premises (1) - (3) is pretty clear and Socrates just supposes that (4) implies (5). He says at 497a3-5:

"Thus, enjoyment is not doing well, nor is being in pain doing badly; and so (NOTE) pleasure turns out to be different from goodness." "Enjoyment" and "pleasure", here, are synonyms. [NOTE 63] This inference relies on the principle:

A4.5 Doing well is good; doing badly is evil. [NOTE 64]

Even if valid, much of this argument is fairly obscure. We need to ask just how Socrates views doing well and badly as genuine opposites, which cannot both be present to the same person at the same time.

To be clear about the argument in the Gorgias, one needs to pay special attention to a number of different terms. In addition to talk of "doing" or "living well", Socrates sometimes
introduces considerations having to do with a person's happiness (εὐραιμονία) and, of course, sometimes worries about the goodness of a person. While it is difficult to say with certainty that Socrates views these three notions, living well, happiness, and goodness as identical, he surely sees them as very closely related to each other. So at 496b5 in this argument, when Socrates has finished with the preliminaries and is ready to turn to the main point, he says, "Regarding goods and happiness..." (καὶ τάγαθα καὶ τὴν εὐραιμονίαν...). Goodness and happiness are also clearly related at 470e and 494a-b.

At 478e, Socrates agrees that the person with evil in his soul lives badly. Moreover, he claims at 477d7-9, in the discussion with Polus, that the person with no evil in his soul is happiest. Socrates does not bother to connect in any way these two claims so as to conclude that the person with evil in his soul lives badly or that the person with evil in his soul is wretched and unhappy. He does not bother, I suggest, because he takes it as obvious that a person lives well if and only if he is happy. Indeed, at 507c4-6, Socrates claims, "...and the man who does well must be blessed and happy, and the base man who does badly is wretched..."

We will have occasion to examine more closely the relation between these notions in the next chapter. Yet even this brief look should be sufficient to warrant rewriting our initial argument (A). Given the supposed obviousness of the step from
premise (4) to (5), we can replace phrases "doing well" and "doing badly" with "goodness" and "evil". The result, then, is this argument in which the conclusion clearly follows from the premises

A' 1. Goodness and evil are opposites.

2. Goodness and pleasure cannot both be present in the same thing at the same time.

3. Pleasure and pain can both be present in the same thing at the same time.

4. Pleasure is not identical with goodness.

By saying that goodness and evil are opposites, it is reasonable to understand Plato as claiming that they are least contraries. When he elaborates this relation, it is clear that he views them as contradictory properties. With regard to health and sickness, he says, "a man isn't at the same time healthy and sick, nor does he get rid of health and sickness at the same time." Health and sickness, then, turn out to be contradictory properties according to Plato since one cannot have both or lack both at the same time. So too, regarding goodness and evil Socrates says at 496b6-c3,

And goods and happiness and the opposites of these, evils and wretchedness -- doesn't a man also gain each of these in turn ...[and]...if we find some
things that a man gets rid of at the same time and has at the same time, it's clear these won't be the good and evil.

We can, then, take Plato here to be claiming:

10. x is good iff x is not evil.
If the range of 'x' is unrestricted, (10) is unacceptable. There are presumably any number of things in the world which are so insignificant as to be neither good nor evil, or which are in themselves simply evaluatively neutral. (10), rather, is apparently meant only to apply to non-neutral morally significant things, and specifically, Socrates tells us, persons. The whole discussion of opposites from 495e to 496c is framed in terms of opposites belonging to persons. Socrates must be relying on the view that persons are so morally significant that they cannot be neutral, neither good nor evil. Suitably restricted, i.e., to persons, (10) seems plausible. We might suppose that a person is good if and only if he is not evil. [NOTE 65]

From the fact that goodness and evil are opposites in the way specified, it follows that it is not possible for a person to be both good and evil at the same time. So, Socrates claims at 496b5-7, "And goods and happiness, and the opposite of these, evils and wretchedness, — doesn't a person also gain each of these and lose each in turn?"

The third premise requires a more thorough discussion. Both
Callicles and Socrates appear to be in agreement about the notion of bodily pleasure. Bodily pleasure comes about, on this view, when a particular appetite is satisfied. The appetite consists in a want or lack of something, for example, food. As such, it is painful. So my being thirsty or hungry is painful.

Soc: ...do you agree that every lack and appetite is painful?

Cal: I agree. (495d3-5)

One receives pleasure from filling this want only until it is filled, whereupon both the pleasure and the pain cease. When we have eaten enough to satisfy our appetite fully, we no longer experience hunger pains, but neither do we derive any further pleasure from eating.

Soc: And don't we cease from hunger and all other appetites and from pleasures at the same time?

Cal: That's right. (497c8-d1)

The only support actually given in the dialogue for the third premise of (A') is this psychology of pleasure. If that view is right, the third premise is beyond reproach. Tenkku (page 82-86) points out some of the deficiencies of this psychological view. He notes, rightly, that not all wants or lacks are painful. Some are so slight that they are not painful, or are, on some occasions, even pleasant, as when one savors his
appetite for an impending well-prepared meal. There may be no pain but only pleasure in eating such a meal. Further, he points out, one may continue to have a pleasant feeling from a meal long after the original appetite is satisfied.

From this, he concludes that the third premise is false, and hence, that Plato's proof is defective. Tenkku has succeeded in pointing out that the psychological theory of pleasure found in the Gorgias is unsatisfactory, but does it follow that Plato's argument fails?

It should be clear that the argument Socrates presents here depends on finding some property that the pair goodness-evil has (or fails to have) that the pair pleasure-pain fails to have (or has). That this should be clear is shown by the following passage. After Socrates and Callicles agree that a person cannot be both good and evil (or neither good nor evil) at the same time, Socrates says, "then, if we find some things that a man gets rid of at the same time and has at the same time, it is clear that these won't be the good and the evil." (496cl-3) The property that, according to Socrates, goodness-evil has and pleasure-pain fails to have is the property of mutual exclusivity.

The pair goodness-evil has that property because good and evil cannot both belong to the same object at the same time. That is,
11. It is impossible for a person to be both good and evil simultaneously.

Socrates goes to some length to show that pleasure and pain are not exclusive in this way, that,

12. It is possible for a person to feel pleasure and pain simultaneously.

What Socrates does not establish, but Tenkku apparently feels he needs to, is,

13. Pleasure and pain, if felt at all, are always felt simultaneously.

Tenkku's criticism clearly shows the falsity of (13). So, he concludes (pages 85-6), "...it is quite reasonable to agree with Plato that one may have both pleasure and pain at the same time, though Plato goes too far when he states that pleasure and pain when conditioned by desire are always simultaneous."

What Tenkku has not seen is that Socrates' argument does not rely on showing the truth of (11) and (13), but rather, on showing the truth of (11) and (12). For this, he need only show that pleasure and pain can be experienced simultaneously. To show the truth of (12), Socrates does not need to show the constant conjunction of pleasure and pain, but only an example to demonstrate their occasional or even possible conjunction. This project is entirely independent of the exposition of a well-worked-out psychological theory. The examples in the
dialogue, I suggest, should be understood independently of the
defective psychological theory in whose context they are
presented. Tenkku's criticism, then, is irrevelant to Socrates' actual project, and the examples Socrates constructs to show that pleasure and pain can be had simultaneously may well be right.

[NOTE 66]

It is unclear whether Plato actually recognized that he needed only (12) and not (13). His statement at 496c1-3 is in the indicative: "Some things that a man gets rid of or has..." (απαλλάττεται...καί ἡμα ἐξε!) which gives no evidence whether or not it should be read as a modal statement.

Let us now turn to a closer look at this argument. The property that Socrates supposes distinguishes goodness from pleasure is that the latter but not the former can be had and gotten rid of by a person at the same time as its opposite. Socrates is not at all careful to explain what he means by these terms. If the relationship he is getting at here is one of acquiring and shedding properties, then the argument he has in mind is this:

B 1. Good and evil are opposites.

2. There is no person, x, such that goodness belongs to x at some time, t, and evil belongs to x at t.

3. There is some thing, x, such that pleasure
belongs to $x$ at some time, $t$ and pain 
belongs to $x$ at $t$.

4. Pleasure is not identical with goodness.

Let us suppose with Socrates that premises (1) and (2) are true. What about premise (3)? "Pleasure belongs to $x$" is ambiguous in a number of ways. It might mean that $x$ is an instance of pleasure, or that $x$ is a pleasant experience (or object), or that $x$ experiences pleasure. Premise (3) of this argument is ambiguous in just the ways the above phrase is ambiguous.

If we understand (B3) so that "pleasure belongs to $x$" is taken in the first way suggested, then (B3) reads,

B3a. There is some thing, $x$, such that $x$ is an instance of pleasure at some time, $t$, and $x$ is an instance of pain at $t$.

I think (B3a) is clearly false, and, hence, the resulting version of (B) is unsound. Instances, or sensations, of pleasure are just that; they cannot also be instances, or sensations, of pain. [NOTE 67] If this is what Socrates meant, then he has failed to show that pleasure and goodness are not identical.

(B3) can also be understood so that "pleasure belongs to $x$" is read in the second way suggested. So to say, for instance,
"pleasure belongs to my receiving a gift" means "my receiving a gift is pleasant." It is not to the pleasant sensation that the property belongs, but to the object (or experience or state of affairs) which generates that sensation. If we understand "pleasure belongs to x" along these lines, then (B3) reads,

B3b. There is some thing, x, such that x is pleasant at some time, t, and x is painful at t.

It is quite unclear whether or not (B3b) is true. Many things are not pleasant or painful in themselves, but are, instead, what might be called the objects of pleasure, the thing at which a person's pleasure is directed. "My receiving a gift was pleasant" really amounts to "I was pleased at receiving a gift." In so far as my reception of the gift (or the gift itself) is the object of my pleasure, it can be said to be pleasant.

Other things, such as my hunger or thirst, might be themselves pleasant or painful, but it is not clear that they can be both. Certainly Socrates does not think so. He says at 496c-d:

Soc: In speaking of hunger, were you saying that it is pleasant or painful? I'm talking about hunger itself.
Cal: I say it's painful. But I say that eating when you're hungry is pleasant.

Soc: I understand. But at any rate, being hungry itself is painful.

If this is the case generally with pleasant and painful things, then there may be no clear instance where something is simultaneously pleasant and painful. [NOTE 68] What about cases where my hunger is pleasant, say, when it returns after a long illness, and so, signals my recovery? In such a case it may not be the hunger, itself, that is pleasant, but rather my experiencing hunger, which is something very different. It is unclear whether or not (B3b) is true, and, hence, it is unclear whether or not the argument using it is sound.

At any rate, this does not seem to be the understanding of (B3) that Socrates wants. When the third premise is stated, it is stated this way (496c5-c6, 497a2):

Soc: ...you say someone is distressed and enjoying at the same time...you are agreed that it is possible to be in pain and enjoyment at the same time.

This suggests that Socrates intends "pleasure belongs to x" to be understood as "x experiences pleasure", which is the third of the alternatives mentioned above. This not only fits the text better than either of the first two possibilities, but is consistent with the limitations that were earlier placed on the second
premise. Clearly the range of "x" in both the second and the third premises must be limited to persons. The third premise, then, should be read as:

B3c. There is some person, x, such that x feels pleasure (is pleased) at some time, t, and x feels pain (is pained) at t.

The resulting argument runs as follows:

C 1. Goodness and evil are opposites.

2. There is no person, x, such that x is good at some time, t, and x is evil at t.

3. There is some person, x, such that x is pleased at some time, t, and x is pained at t.

4. Pleasure is not identical with goodness.

But surely, this argument as it is stated is no good. Even if the premises are true, it does not follow that pleasure and goodness are different. Suppose they are identical. This is consistent with each of the premises. Suppose, further, that a person, p, is simultaneously pleased and pained. If pleasure is good and pain evil, then it is good that p is pleased and at the same time it is bad that p is pained. But from the fact that p's being pleased is good it does not follow that p himself is good,
and from the fact that p's being pained is evil, it does not follow that p himself is evil.

The goodness of persons might depend on quite different factors which preclude the possibility of p's being simultaneously good and evil. In this case the premises are true even though goodness and pleasure are identical, i.e., the conclusion is false. So, this argument fails to show that goodness and pleasure are distinct.

It is to Plato's credit that he devised an argument which is of the proper sort to refute hedonism. It appears to attempt to find a property of goodness that is not a property of pleasure, and is fairly sophisticated in its attempt. Even Dodds in his commentary on the Gorgias (page 310) supposes that the argument is successful as far as it goes: "All he seems to do in the Gorgias is to establish the non-identity of two concepts (Pleasure and Good) by the non-identity of their marks (capacity in one case, incapacity in the other, for co-existence with its contrary)."

For the reasons given above, however, the argument is defective as a proof of the non-identity of goodness and pleasure. The conclusion that does seem validly to follow from the premises is one that says being a good person is not the same as being a pleased person. This does not say anything about the properties of goodness and pleasure simpliciter, but only about the goodness and pleasurable experiences of persons.
Is this defect disasterous for Socrates' argument? I do not think so. Callicles, after all, is arguing that being a good person really (by nature) amounts to being a pleased person. As a criticism of Callicles' position, Socrates does not need to show the non-identity of goodness and pleasure. The only argument that Socrates needs against Callicles is the following:

D 1. Goodness and evil are opposites.
   2. There is no person, x, such that x is good at some time, t, and x is evil at t.
   3. There is some person, x, such that x is pleased at some time, t, and x is pained at t.
   4. Being a good person is not the same as being a pleased person.

Both Callicles and Socrates accept the premises of this argument, and, hence, are both committed to its conclusion. This argument, then, constitutes a refutation of Callicles' position (given the agreed upon assumptions). It does this not by refuting the hedonism which Callicles has also agreed to; Socrates' argument has failed to do that. It does, however, attack Callicles' identification of the good person with the pleased person (call this doctrine "Hedonism*"). [NOTE 69]

Irwin, on pages 120-1 of Plato's Moral Theory suggests some
criticisms of this argument on Callicles' behalf. He says there, "[Socrates] shows that enjoying some pleasure is not the same as doing well on the whole [i.e., being a good person]; but he does not show that doing well on the whole [i.e., being a good person] is not simply having more pleasure than pain on the whole."

So, while Socrates has shown it to be false that x is a good person at some time if and only if x is a pleased person at that time, where "is a pleased person" means "experiences some pleasure", he has not refuted the claim that x is good person at some time if and only if x is an over all pleased person at that time. than pain."

Irwin has missed both the point and the subtlety of Socrates' argument. In fact, it is difficult to see just what bearing Irwin's criticism has on this argument at all. Socrates believes he has shown that Callicles' defense of intemperance rests on the identification of goodness and pleasure (or of being a good person and being a pleased person). If he is successful in proving their non-identity, he has loosened the theoretical underpinnings of Callicles' claim. Socrates sets out to attack these underpinnings, and Irwin criticises him for not attacking as well an argument based on that underpinning.

Of course, Callicles or Irwin, could maintain that, theoretical justification aside, the good person is the pleased person. So, Callicles might hold,
14. $x$ is a good person at some time, $t$, iff $x$ is more pleased than pained at $t$.

I suspect Callicles might have some objections to (14), but they are such that they should not prevent us from supposing that it adequately represents a view Callicles might hold. It is not clear that Callicles would be willing to call a person good who is pleased to a very small degree and pained to an even smaller degree. His claims suggest that the good person must experience enormous amounts of pleasure. If this is the case, then a person who received only slight pleasure would not count as good.

Socrates' second argument can be seen as an attempt to refute a claim such as (14), and it is to that argument that I should now like to turn.

Socrates' Second Argument Against Hedonism

Socrates presents his second argument against hedonism at 497e - 499b, and summarizes it at 499a-b.

Soc: ...we say that the wise and brave man is good, don't we?

Cal: Yes.

Soc: And that the foolish and cowardly man is evil?

Cal: Of course.
Soc: And that the man who has enjoyment is good?
Cal: Yes.
Soc: And that the man in distress is evil?
Cal: It must be so.

[Soc: Don’t they have distress and enjoyment, both the foolish and the wise and the cowards and the brave men, about the same, you say, but the cowards more than the brave men?
Cal: I agree.] 498b7–c1

Soc: And that the good and evil man has pain and enjoyment similarly, but perhaps the evil man has it even more?
Cal: Yes.
Soc: Then doesn’t the good and the evil man turn out to be similarly good or the evil man even more good?

[NOTE 70]

This argument can be fairly straightforwardly formulated as the following reductio ad absurdum:

E 1. x is a good person at some time, t, iff x experiences more pleasure than pain at t.

2. If x is brave at some time, t, then x is a good person at t.

3. If x is a coward at some time, t, then x is an evil person at t.
4. It is possible that a coward enjoys as much pleasure over pain at some time as a brave person.

5. It is possible that an evil person enjoys as much pleasure over pain at some time as a good person.

6. It is possible that an evil person is as good as a good person. [NOTE 71]

But, of course, evil persons are by definition worse than good persons, so (E6) is false. Since (E6) follows from (E1) and agreed upon assumptions, (E1) is false as well. If the argument is good, it shows Callicles cannot consistently hold on to his criteria for being a good person as well as his belief that courageous persons are good persons.

Faced with this argument, Callicles maintains his conviction that anybody who is brave is also good and gives up his view about pleasure and goodness. This response is certainly not demanded by the hedonism he holds; a hedonist (or hedonist*) could instead concede that brave men are not always good (e.g., those that do not experience sufficient pleasure) thereby holding on to their conviction that pleasure is part of the criterion of the goodness of a person.

As an attack against Callicles' particular sort of hedonism,
this argument is successful. Can Callicles' position be modified in any interesting way so as to avoid the thrust of this argument? Probably not, as long as the features of the position involve two separate and independent, sufficient conditions for the goodness of a person (in this case pleasure and bravery), so that it is always conceivable that the two conditions are satisfied in ways which yield contradictory results.

How would this argument stand up against a more extreme Calliclean position, one which a Thrasymachus might hold? Here the pleased person is the good person, and no other criterion applies. That is, this position denies the second and third premises which claim that being brave (cowardly) is also a sufficient condition for being a good (evil) person. Obviously, the argument formulated as (E) would not work against such a position. Nor, I suspect, would any reasonable variant of this argument except this question begging version.

F 1. x is a good person at a time, t, iff x experiences more pleasure than pain at t.

2. It is possible that some good person experience less pleasure over pain at some time than an evil person.

3. It is possible that some evil person experience as much pleasure over pain at some time as a good person.
4. It is possible that an evil person is as good as a good person.

for which there is no textual evidence anyway.

Socrates' argument, E, then, is successful only against views which hold multiple criteria for goodness. It is the earliest argument in Plato, or anywhere else for that matter, to show the inconsistency involved in employing two independent criteria of goodness.

Summary

We have looked at the hedonism in the Gorgias and at two arguments against it. It should be clear that the doctrine involving pleasure which is most discussed in the dialogue is one identifying good persons and pleased persons (which we called "hedonism*").

As presented, the two arguments of the dialogue are aimed exclusively at Callicles' view about personal goodness. So construed, they achieved a limited success; the first demonstrating that "good person" and "pleased person" do not mean the same thing, the second showing the difficulty of holding that being pleased is one of two independent marks or criteria by
which we can judge the goodness of persons.

In the next chapter, I want to discuss how these arguments fare against the stronger hedonism discussed in the Gorgias and the relation of this stronger hedonism to the hedonism of the Protagoras. The text of the Gorgias makes it evident that Plato thought these two forms of hedonism were very closely linked and that the arguments discussed here were successful against both.
CHAPTER VI

Introduction

In the Gorgias, unlike the Protagoras, Socrates is out to attack hedonism. We saw in the previous chapter that the Gorgias discusses at least two doctrines which could be appropriately labeled hedonism. Our interest centered on these two:

Hedonism: Goodness and pleasure are the same.

Hedonism*: Being a good person and being a pleased person are the same.

Both of these doctrines are formulated in a very simple way, ignoring worries about such things as quality of pleasure or types of goodness.

The arguments of the Gorgias, as they are presented, seem most plausibly construed as arguments against the identification of good persons and pleased persons. Nonetheless, there appears in the dialogue the stronger conclusion that goodness and pleasure themselves are different from one another.

In this chapter, I would like to return to the hedonism of the Gorgias and reexamine the evidence we had for its
formulation and its presence in the dialogue. There is an argument suggested in the dialogue to the conclusion that, in effect, a refutation of hedonism* constitutes a refutation of hedonism. We will look at some formulations of that argument. Finally we will ask whether it is plausible to construe the Gorgias as a repudiation of the hedonism in the Protagoras.

Hedonism in the Gorgias Again

We have already seen that there are two sorts of doctrine regarding pleasure discussed in the Gorgias. The first is doctrine about the nature of goodness; the second is a doctrine about the nature of good persons.

These are not only different doctrines, they are logically independent as well. That is, it is possible for either to be true while the other is false. So, good and pleasure could be the same (making hedonism true), although when it comes to the moral status of a person, that depends on something other than the degree to which he or she is pleased (i.e., hedonism* is false). A person's goodness might depend on the amount of pleasure that person produces in other people, or on the number of right acts that person performs, or on any number of other features. On the other hand, it could turn out that all and only
good persons are pleased persons, even though pleasure, itself, is not the only intrinsically good thing, making hedonism false.

In Chapter V we noted that the view Callicles holds concerns the goodness of persons, rather than goodness itself. If we examine the dialogue in its entirety, we will find that this is also true of the discussion as a whole. Repeatedly, Socrates makes it clear that he is concerned with the nature of the good person. So, for instance, at 499a1-2, he says that the wise and brave person is a good person. At 499c4 he wonders if the person who has enjoyment is a good person. At 527b5-6, Socrates exhorts Callicles and the others not only to seem but to be good persons. The most revealing passage occurs at 506d-e. Here, Socrates claims that it is the presence of some structure or order that makes a particular thing good, be it tool, body, soul, or animal. "Then, it is some order — the proper order for each of the things that are — which makes the thing good by coming to be present in it." (506e2-4)

This is most plausibly understood as a claim about what makes a thing of a certain sort a good thing of that sort. The claim here seems to be that \( x \) is a good \( F \) if and only if \( x \) is structured or ordered in the way appropriate to \( F \). This cup on my desk is a good cup if and only if it is structured in the way appropriate to cups. [NOTE 72] Immediately after this passage when Socrates says that the temperate soul is good (because the
temperate soul is ordered in the way appropriate to souls), he should be understood as claiming that the temperate soul is a good soul.

These and similar passages provide good evidence that not only Callicles but Socrates, himself, is primarily concerned in this dialogue with the notion of good persons.

From what was said in the previous chapter, it might nonetheless appear that Plato simply confused Hedonism and Hedonism*. Certainly several of his arguments are presented as if that were the case. So, it was suggested there, while Plato thought the Gorgias constituted a refutation of hedonism, at best it only presented difficulties for hedonism*. Indeed, Socrates says a number of things which lend credence to such a suggestion. He concludes the second argument against hedonism by saying, at 499b, "then don't the evil man and the good man turn out to be similarly good, or the evil man even better? Doesn't this follow if someone says that the same things are pleasant and good?" At 497a, Socrates says, concluding the first argument against hedonism, "then enjoying is not doing well nor is being in pain doing badly; and so the pleasant turns out to be different from the good."

Irwin, for instance, seems to be accusing Plato of confusing hedonism and hedonism* when he says on page 121 of Plato's Moral Theory.
...Socrates' objection, then, is a fair ad hominem argument revealing an inconsistency in Callicles' position. But Socrates goes further, and speaks as though he had refuted hedonism and shown that there are good and bad pleasures (499c6-7). He has only refuted Callicles' version of hedonism.

Yet as attractive as this supposition might be for its power to explain the above passages, it is not clear that it is warranted; we might be unfair to accuse Plato of being confused on this point. We may find that he is confused on a closely related point, but here some passages suggest an argument designed to show a close logical connection between Hedonism and Hedonism. At 498d2-4, Socrates displays a relation between good persons and good things; he says, "Don't you know that you say good persons are good by the presence of (μακρονύμια) goods and evil persons evil by the presence of evils?" We are really in no position to formulate the argument which this passage suggests until we get a handle on what Socrates means by claims of the sort, 'x is good by the presence of goods'.

In the first place, there is a difficulty about what things count as goods. It could mean anything that is good (a good meal, a good work of art, a pleasure) or anything that is intrinsically good, or even goodness itself. In the second
place, Socrates is not altogether explicit about the meaning of "by the presence of."

First, what are the "goods" by whose presence a person is good? I think it is safe to say that Socrates would not allow the range of goods here to be completely unrestricted. There are many good things which are good only accidentally or extrinsically, such as surgery or a new pair of shoes. There is no clear relationship between these and the goodness of a person. Certainly their possession is not sufficient for a person to be good. Perhaps we would do better considering only a limited range of goods, such as intrinsic goods. He suggests at 506c9-d2 that goodness itself and pleasure itself are connected in some way with personal goodness and personal pleasure. Socrates claims:

And pleasure is something such that, if it has come to be present we take pleasure, and the good something such that if it has come to be present we are good.

Indeed, Socrates' own claim reveals that he sees a certain closeness between these goods and goodness itself. At 497el-3 Socrates provides an analogy to illustrate this relation: "Don't you call men good by the presence of goods, just as \(_{\text{Kalov}}\) you call praiseworthy things praiseworthy by the presence of praiseworthiness. (\(_{\text{Kalov}}\))." (underlining mine)
If there is a relation between good persons and goodness or intrinsically good things, what is it? Irwin, in his commentary on the Gorgias suggests this:

Expressions of the form 'the F is present to x' or 'F-ness (abstract noun) is present to x' are standard ways of saying that x is F, that F is predicated of x. (page 203)

Gerasimos Santas in his recent book on Socrates [NOTE 73] suggests the almost equivalent formulation:

...the most natural way to take the notion of presence...is the way in which 'F thing(s) are present to x' is equivalent, at least in truth value, to 'x has F things' and 'x is F'.

Both Irwin and Santas have failed to see an important aspect of this passage. Both analyze Socrates' phrase in terms of ordinary predication 'x is F' or 'F is predicated of x'. This seems to be the wrong direction to go. We need to take seriously the presence (explicit at 506 and suggested at 498) of the universal. It is the presence of goodness (or pleasure) itself that makes a beautiful person good (or pleased). We see Socrates expressing a similar claim in the Phaedo where he says, "It seems to me whatever else is apart from absolute praiseworthiness is
beautiful because it partakes in praiseworthiness." (100c)

What we have here in the Gorgias passage is a claim that might be expressed in later dialogues in the language of participation. The only language Plato has available to him here is that of presence, and what enters into the relation is a universal (although it is not clear what ontological status this universal is supposed to have). It is goodness and pleasure that enter into these relations, the same goodness and pleasure that has been the subject of much of the dialogue. The presence of, for instance, goodness in a thing is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for that thing's being good. [NOTE 74]

This suggests an argument by which Socrates may have supposed that a refutation of hedonism* constituted a refutation of hedonism.

A 1. Some pleased persons are not good persons.

2. $x$ is a good person iff goodness is present in $x$.

3. $x$ is a pleased person iff pleasure is present in $x$.

4. Some persons with pleasure present in them are not persons with goodness present in them.

5. Goodness is not identical with pleasure.
The first premise is the conclusion of Socrates' first two arguments against Callicles. The second two premises come from the passages at 497 and 506. The fourth premise and conclusion follow from the first three. There are difficulties with this argument. We will discuss later the details of the metaphysical relationship between goodness and good persons, and between pleasure and pleased persons. For now, a more serious point is this. We noticed in Chapter II that Plato is aware of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goodness. What sort of goodness is the goodness of good persons? We need a version of this argument that is more specific than A.

Suppose the goodness being talked about here is intrinsic goodness and that when we say, "Jack is a good person," we mean "Jack is a person and Jack is intrinsically good." In this case, Argument A reads as follows:

A' 1'. Some persons are such that they are pleased but not intrinsically good.

2'. A person, S, is intrinsically good iff goodness is present in S.

3'. A person, S, is pleased iff pleasure is present in S.

4'. Some persons with pleasure present in them are not persons with goodness present in them.
5. Goodness is not identical with pleasure.

While A' is valid, this analysis of the phrase "good persons" is unacceptable. When we distinguish between good persons and evil persons, we are not distinguishing between things which are intrinsically good and things which are intrinsically evil. This especially so for an ethical hedonist, against whom this argument is directed, since, for him, pleasures not persons are the only intrinsic goods. The reading of "good persons" suggested above, in effect, begs the question against the hedonist.

Let us return to the notion of presence. At 498d2-5, Socrates suggests that a person becomes good by the presence of goods and that a person becomes pleased by the presence of pleasures. (οὐκ ἐκεῖνος ἐκ τῶν ἄγαθων ἄγαθῶν παρευθεὶς εἶναι ἄγαθὸς ..καὶ ..τοῖς χαίροντις πάρεστιν ..οὶ ἄχροναι;) Plato may have in mind the following sort of ontology. Socrates sometimes speaks of pleasures (αὐτῶν ἄχρονα), sometimes speaks of pleasure (αὐτὸν ἄχρονον), and often of pleased persons. Furthermore, he claimed above that persons are pleased by the presence of pleasures. Pleasures instantiate (perhaps, perfectly) pleasure itself. We might even go so far as to say that persons do not instantiate pleasure, at least not in the same way, otherwise they would have the same status as the pleasures themselves. So, it is plausible to suppose that Plato has in mind a scheme whereby pleasures
instantiate pleasure, and by the presence of pleasures we are pleased. The same story, presumably, can be told about goodness. We do not instantiate goodness directly, since that would make us intrinsically good, but rather we have present in us things, goods, by which we are good persons.

This suggests, then, the following further revision of Argument A:

A" 1". Some pleased persons are not good persons.

2". A person, S, is a good person iff goods are present to S.

3". A person, S, is a pleased person iff pleasures are present to S.

4". Some persons with pleasures present in them are not persons with goods present in them.

5". Pleasures instantiate pleasure and goods instantiate goodness.

6". Goodness and pleasure are not identical.

This understanding of the relation of presence sounds plausible with regard to pleasure. There it is easy to understand just what the pleasures are; pleasant experiences seem to be the obvious candidate. What, on the other hand, do we say about goodness? What are the goods by whose presence we are good? Plato cannot say they are pleasures; that would commit him to
hedonism. There seems, however, to be nothing that obviously fills the role of goods the way pleasant experiences fill the role of pleasures. [NOTE 75]

This suggests that there is not a strict parallel in the explanation of pleased persons in terms of pleasures and good persons in terms of goods. If we are going to stick with Plato's ontology, this suggests, further, that pleasure might be related to pleased persons in a different way than goodness is related to good persons.

Indeed, there is reason to think that Plato made use of two different relations in the early and middle dialogues. While we have seen instances where Plato talks about pleasures being present to a person, he more often expresses the relation differently when he is talking about other properties of persons. Plato's more usual practice is to use the singular in referring to presence, saying not that P's are present, but that F itself is present. So, for instance, in the Lysis, 217b3-6,d4, he talks about the presence in objects of evil (κακόν) and whiteness (λευκόν), in the Charmides, 161a9, about the presence of temperance (ομορφοσύνη), and in the Hippias Major, 294a1-2, about the presence of the appropriate (μορφή). In these and other passages, Plato talks about the presence of the universal itself, not of evils, or whites, or appropriates.

A good person, then, might be good not by the presence of goods, but by the presence of goodness itself, just as a person
is temperate by the presence of temperance itself. This claim might be worrisome, of course, because we seem to lose the distinction between persons as good persons and persons as intrinsically good things. If we are to explain good persons by the presence of goodness itself, then we might be hard pressed to explain how a thing could ever be intrinsically good.

More importantly, however, appealing to this other notion of presence ruins the argument. Suppose pleasure and goodness are identical and that pleasures are the only intrinsically good thing. We qualify as pleased persons when we are related to pleasure (goodness) in such a way that we have pleasures present in us. Call this relation presence(1). On the other hand, we qualify as good persons when we are related to goodness in such a way that it is present in us. Call this relation presence(2). In general, our relation to sensations, pleasure, pain, excitement, etc., seems most plausible if we understand it as presence(1), while our relation to properties, white, tall, good, etc., seems most plausible when understood as presence(2). In this case, a pleased person may not be a good person, because while she is related to goodness (pleasure) by presence(1), she is not related to goodness by presence(2).

More formally, Plato seems to be using two notions of presence. The first seems most applicable to sensations and involves the presence of things, the second seems most applicable to other properties and involves the universal itself.
The effect of these two notions of presence on Socrates' argument is predictable. The first three premises of argument A, then, should look like this:

A'' 1''. Some pleased persons are not good persons.
2''. A person, S, is a good person iff goodness is present(1) in S.
3''. A person, S, is a pleased person iff pleasure is present(2) in S.

But now, the only version of the fourth premise that follows is

4''. Some persons with goodness present(1) in them are not persons with pleasure present(1) in them.

and from this, it does not follow that

5. Goodness is not identical with pleasure.

Suppose goodness and pleasure are identical; (4'') only tells us that some people bear to goodness one relation but fail to bear to it a different relation. Once we disambiguate the phrase, "present in", we can see that the argument is valid only by equivocation.

Did Plato see clearly the two notions of presence? He may have felt uncomfortable with his univocal notion involving goods and pleasures, since at 506d1-3 he uses the universals goodness
and pleasure in the presence relation. On the other hand, at 498e1-5 he allows in one sentence goods and praiseworthiness to stand in presence relations. So, it is not clear that he saw the different ways something could be present in an object.

Even given, then, Plato's metaphysical system, a refutation of hedonism does not constitute a refutation of hedonism. At most, Plato's argument shows that either pleasure is not identical with goodness or the good person is not related to goodness in the same way the pleased person is related to pleasure.

We can explicate the defect of Plato's argument in yet another way. Suppose one becomes a pleased person by experiencing pleasure, but becomes a good person, not by experiencing goodness, but, for instance, by performing good acts which themselves result in goodness. Suppose goodness is the same as pleasure. I am pleased when I experience pleasure; I am a good person when I perform good acts which produce pleasure. Here again, the difference between good persons and pleased persons is not explained by a difference in properties, but by a difference in relations to a single property, in this case, pleasure. We have, of course, seen other instances in Plato where things can stand in different relations to goodness and, so, be good in different ways. In the *Protagoras* some things were good in and of themselves while others were good because their consequences were good in and of themselves. We can
understand this as intrinsically good things standing in one relation to goodness with extrinsically good things standing in a different relation to goodness. Plato has done nothing here to rule out the same situation with regard to good and pleased persons.

There is, then, no successful argument in the Gorgias against an outright identification of goodness and pleasure. The arguments found there are either directed against a different doctrine (hedonism*) and so do not refute hedonism, or if they are supposed to be directed against genuine hedonism, fail for the reasons outlined above.

The Role of Hedonism in the Gorgias

It was noted in Chapter V that hedonism did not play a crucial role in the part of the discussion with Callicles in which it appears. Callicles' position there involved the identity of good persons and pleased persons and did not rely on actual hedonism.

Socrates, however, sets out to do more than merely refute Callicles on this one point. Much of the Gorgias is devoted to showing that the temperate and just person is happier than the intemperate and unjust person. Let us ask with regard to the
overall argument of the *Gorgias* whether a refutation of hedonism (rather than hedonism*) is crucial for its success.

Early on in the *Gorgias*, Polus and Socrates focus the discussion of what turns out to be the topic for the remainder of the dialogue. From 470d - 471a Polus and Socrates have the following exchange.

Pol: ...For these things that have happened yesterday or the day before are enough to refute you thoroughly and show that many men doing injustice are happy.

Soc: What sorts of things are these?

Pol: I suppose you see this character Archelaus, son of Perdicas, ruler of Macedon?

Soc: Well, if I don't I hear of him.

Pol: Then do you think he is happy or wretched?

Soc: I don't know Polus; I've never met the man.

Pol: What? You could tell if you'd met him, but otherwise you can't tell at once that he is happy?

Soc: Indeed I can't by Zeus.

Pol: Then it's clear, Socrates, that you'll say you can't even tell that the Great King is happy.
Soc: Yes, and I'll say what's true. For I don't know how he is off for education and justice.

Pol: What? Is the whole of happiness in that?

Soc: Yes, so I say, Polus. For I say that the fine and good man and woman is happy, and the unjust and base is wretched.

Socrates' argument in support of his view comes in the discussion with Callicles at 506e - 508b. There Socrates claims the good person is the person who is properly ordered (506e2-4), but to be properly ordered is to be temperate (509a1-2). Furthermore, the person who is temperate is just (507b1-4). Finally, since the good person is happy, the just person is happy. So, Socrates concludes at 507c9-d2, "The man who wants to be happy must pursue and practise temperance, and flee intemperance as fast as each of us can run." This suggests the following argument:

B 1. For any person, p, p is a good person iff p is ordered in the way appropriate for persons.

2. For any person, p, p is ordered in the way appropriate for persons iff p is temperate.

3. For any person, p, p is temperate iff p is
4. \( F \text{ any person, } p, \text{ } p \text{ is a good person iff } p \text{ is happy.} \)

5. \( F \text{ any person, } p, \text{ } p \text{ is just iff } p \text{ is happy.} \)

The argument as it is stated is valid. The fourth premise is an assumption shared by all the participants in the \textit{Gorgias} discussion. There is disagreement over who is the good person, but none over the fact that the good person, whoever that is, is happy. [NOTE 76] The third premise follows from Socrates' general view that if a person has one of the virtues he or she has them all. Anybody who is truly temperate is also just, pious, and brave. The only argument offered for this claim in the section we are considering is stated as follows:

\textbf{Soc:} Now the temperate man would do fitting things (\textit{ποιησις\kappa\omegaντα}) toward both gods and men. For surely he wouldn't be acting temperately if he did unfitting things...Now by doing fitting things towards men he would do just things, and by doing fitting things towards gods, he would
do pious things. And someone who does just and pious things must be just and pious (507a7-b4).

The crucial notion in this argument is one of fittingness. [NOTE 77] Exactly how we are to understand it (however problematic it is) is not important here. What is important is that it seems to have nothing to do with the identification of pleasure and goodness.

The second premise of Argument (B) is also difficult, containing as it does, references to orderliness and appropriateness. Irwin understands order in the soul or person as an ordering of desires, "so as to achieve one's overall goals." (Commentary on Gorgias page 220) While this will not do as a general account of order, applied for instance to a trowel or cup, it may be the sort of order Socrates has in mind with regard to persons. The appropriateness of an ordering to a thing no doubt is dependent on the function or purpose of that thing. The appropriate order of each thing, Socrates says at 506d5ff, "doesn't come to be present in the best way just at random, but by some structure and correctness and craft." Socrates does not say here when an order is appropriate for a thing. We might look forward to Republic II and suppose that an order is appropriate for a thing just in case it best allows that thing to fulfill its purpose. Even on this understanding of order and
appropriateness, Socrates offers no reason why a person so ordered must be temperate. Again, despite these defects, there is no dependence on a doctrine of hedonism.

It is the establishment of the first premise for which Plato seems to think he needs to refute hedonism. Socrates characterizes the life Callicles recommends as a life of "disorder" (493c1-7). This disordered life, of course, is the life of unrestrained desire-gratification. Thus, to show that the orderly life is the good life (the ordered person is the good person), Socrates needs to show that the person engaged in such desire-satisfaction is not the good person. But, to do this does not require refuting hedonism, but only hedonism*. The general argument of the Gorgias does not depend on a refutation of hedonism. The plot of the dialogue does not depend on a discussion of hedonism. Any such doctrine found there is superfluous.

The Protagoras and The Gorgias

Even if the arguments of the Gorgias do not work against genuine hedonism, is it reasonable to see the Gorgias as an attack on the doctrines discussed in the Protagoras? A number of commentators have supposed so. Tenkku, for instance, says, "In the Protagoras [Plato] defended hedonism, but he is strongly anti-hedonistic in the Gorgias. (Tenkku, page 60) So too, Irwin
in *Plato's Moral Theory*, page 116 says, "I have argued that the *Protagoras* accepts a hedonistic view of virtue and the good; and I will argue that the *Gorgias* rejects it." Evaluating such a claim raises questions about the actual similarities between the two dialogues and their chronological order. Let us look first at the dating of the two dialogues.

The majority of twentieth-century scholars agree that the *Gorgias* is a later work than the *Protagoras*. This agreement is by no means unanimous, with such well-known figures as A.E. Taylor and G.M.A. Grube dissenting. A.E. Taylor (Plato page 103) finds it clear that the *Protagoras* is "the product of a riper mastery of dramatic art" than the *Protagoras*. He continues:

...I cannot also help feeling that with all its moral splendor, [the *Gorgias*] is too long; it "drags". The Plato of the *Protagoras*, as I feel, would have known how to secure the same effect with less expenditure of words; there is a diffuseness about our dialogue which betrays the hand of the prentice, though the prentice in this case is a Plato. For this reason I think it is a mistake in principle to look, as some have done, for an ethical advance in doctrine as we pass from the *Protagoras* to the *Gorgias*. 
Against Taylor's claim that the *Gorgias* is somewhat crude compared to the *Protagoras*, Irwin claims in the introduction to his commentary on the *Gorgias*:

"[The view that the *Gorgias* is crude and, hence, early] is not easily shared by anyone who has considered the very careful arrangement of the interlocking arguments of the dialogue. If the complex structure counts one way or another on the chronological question, it suggests that the *Gorgias* is later than the shorter and simpler dialogues; even the *Protagoras* does not display the carefully managed returns to earlier questions when materials have been provided for answering them."

Both of these works are so rich and complex, that the attempt to date them by appeal to the sophistication of the drama is probably fruitless. There are, however, features of the *Gorgias*, both philosophical and stylistic, which suggest that the *Gorgias* is the later work.

Both Irwin and Dodds point out a number of these. We have already noted the lack of hesitancy and uncertainty in the conclusion of the *Gorgias*, an increasingly prominent feature in the later dialogues. The increased interest in geometry (450b-c,
508a, etc.), the distinction between knowledge and belief (454e - 455a), the hints of the theory of forms (503a) all suggest that the Gorgias was a more advanced work than the Protagoras. [NOTE 78] In addition, the Gorgias contains the first occurrence in Plato's works of the view that structure is a good-making or virtue-making property. This view, of course, is of central importance in the Republic, which is surely a later work than the Gorgias.

In spite of these features of the Gorgias, Grube argues that there is a natural progression in the discussion of hedonism from the Gorgias to the Protagoras, that "the Protagoras takes up the problem exactly where the Gorgias left it." His understanding of this progression is outlined as follows: the Gorgias shows that pleasure and goodness are not identical, since some pleasures are good while others are evil. In the Protagoras Socrates examines the position of "the many" that some pleasures are good and others are evil. (Plato's Thought page 59) Grube says on page 61, "...in the Gorgias, Plato proved that hedonism in its crudest form is untenable, in the Protagoras he makes clear that it is not enough to admit, as Protagoras did, that some pleasures are bad unless you are prepared to provide, which Protagoras was not, another criterion than pleasure by which to judge them."

This view is defective both as an analysis of the dialogues and, as an understanding of their chronological order. Even granting that Grube is right about the success of the Gorgias
arguments against the identification of goodness and pleasure, this view would be plausible only if the Gorgias ended at 499d. There Callicles admits that some pleasures are good while others are evil. If Grube were right, it might be plausible to go on to say that in the Protagoras Plato carried the discussion to the next point by arguing that we need a new criterion by which to judge the goodness of various pleasures. In fact, however, this discussion is carried on in the Gorgias itself. At 506c-e, Socrates claims that the pleasant must be done for the sake of the good and that the criterion to be used in judging good and evil pleasures has something to do with order and disorder in the soul.

So, Grube's view leads to the unacceptable result that much of the discussion in the Protagoras simply covers the same ground as the last part of the Gorgias. [NOTE 79]

Assuming, contrary to Grube, that the Gorgias is a later dialogue than the Protagoras, let us turn to the relation between the two. A number of commentators have argued that the hedonism discussed in the Protagoras is identical with that in the Gorgias. A.E. Taylor says, "the ethical doctrine of the two dialogues is identical." [NOTE 80]

While there are similarities in the hedonisms of the two dialogues, the differences are far more striking. We have already noted the interest in hedonism* in the Gorgias. Do we find any such talk in the Protagoras? There is ample evidence in
that dialogue that Socrates was interested in the nature of the
good person (as is clear from the discussion of the poem by
Simonides 339a – 347e, the discussion of the nature of virtue at
349b, etc), but there is really no direct evidence that Socrates
wanted to discuss the identification of the good person and the
pleased person. The brief exchange at 351b–c about living well
would perhaps have turned to this identification, if pursued. It
was not, and the work focused instead on the nature of goodness
and right action, and their relation to pleasure. The Gorgias,
as has been noted a number of times, does not pursue in depth
questions about the nature of goodness, but about the nature of
good persons.

Another way of expressing this difference is to recognize
the emphasis in the Gorgias placed on the concept of happiness.
Part of what it is for a person to be good, according to
Socrates, is for that person to be happy ("For I say that the
fine and good man and woman is happy." 470e10). As one might
expect, much of the dispute with Polus and Callicles over
personal goodness is expressed as disagreement over criteria for
happiness. At 472d, Polus maintains, but Socrates denies, that a
person who is unjust can be happy. At 492c, Callicles maintains
that a person who is completely intemperate is happiest. At
494e, Socrates criticizes Callicles for saying without
qualification that those who have enjoyment are happy.

Turning to the Protagoras, we find no discussion of
happiness in the dialogue; in fact the word does not even appear in the work. In light of the close connection between happiness and personal goodness in the Gorgias, this constitutes some evidence that the Protagoras is not intended to contain any analysis of the concept of a good person.

All of this suggests that the topics of the two dialogues are really quite distinct: the Protagoras about the nature of goodness, the Gorgias about the nature of happy or good persons. There are, however, the passages mentioned at the end of the last chapter and the beginning of this one, which make it clear that Socrates in the Gorgias at least approached the topic of genuine hedonism. Some of these passages are perhaps better interpreted as referring to good persons. Callicles' concession at 499b4-c7 that some pleasures are good and some are evil can be read as stating that some pleasures contribute to a person's being good and some contribute to the opposite.

Not all of these passages can be interpreted in this way. As we noted early in the previous chapter, Socrates does talk in the Gorgias about the identification of goodness (τὸ ἄγαθόν) and pleasure (ἀγάπη). But although such identifications are present, they do not contribute to Socrates' arguments against hedonism*, and it is these arguments that are central to Socrates' attempt to extol the virtuous person as the good person.

In the Republic, both topics are addressed more fully. In
the early books of that dialogue, Socrates is interested in the features of the good man. Later on (Book VII), he becomes concerned with the notion of goodness itself. Even there he can do no more with the problem except to say that goodness is analogous to the sun shedding light on everything else.
CHAPTER VII

Changes in the Notion of Pleasure in Later Dialogues

The concept of pleasure in the Protagoras and Gorgias is, as we have seen, a very simple and unembellished one. In the Gorgias it is nothing more than a satisfaction of desires, and what analysis there is of the notion is presented by way of analogy with jars and liquids.

This notion changed and became somewhat more sophisticated in the later dialogues. The most important change occurs in the so-called middle dialogues: the group including the Republic and Phaedo. If commentators such as Ritter, Friedlander, and Grube [NOTE 81] are correct the dialogues in this group were written sometime after the Protagoras and Gorgias, but before the very late dialogues such as the Philebus and Timeaus.

In the ninth book of the Republic, for instance, Plato allows for different kinds of pleasure. These different kinds of pleasure correspond to the well-known tripartate division of the soul. There is pleasure that results from making money and the things it buys, the pleasure that results from being honored and esteemed, and, finally, the pleasure that results from gaining knowledge and wisdom. (582d–e) The pleasures associated with
money-making are, of course, what are often called pleasures of the body. Plato gives a less fine-grained distinction between pleasures of the body and pleasures of the soul in the sixth book of the Republic at 485d-e. The philosopher, he suggests, has desires concerned with the pleasures of the soul, in itself, and will be indifferent to the pleasures of the body.

In the Phaedo we get the same distinction when Socrates urges the philosopher to abandon pleasure of the body and devote himself to pleasures of the soul, which arise from the acquisition of knowledge.

In what must be a much later dialogue Plato has Timeaus suggest that pleasure of the mortal part of the soul (ἡ ἐμφύσει τῆς ψυχῆς) is the result of the motion of particles in the body. (64e-65) Presumably, these bodily pleasures are to be contrasted with the pleasures of the immortal soul which Plato does not discuss in this dialogue.

It is clear, then, without engaging in detailed analysis, that sometime after the Gorgias Plato routinely distinguished at least two sorts of pleasure: bodily, sensual pleasure, and spiritual, intellectual pleasure.

The more important question for our purposes, however, is whether Plato ever came to identify pleasure, of any sort, or its possession with goodness or the good life.
Hedonism in Later Dialogues

Plato's interest is divided in the later ethical dialogues between hedonism and hedonism*. Surely, the Republic and the Philebus are both concerned with hedonism. Book II of the Republic opens with a discussion of goodness itself, and in Book VI (505b-c) Socrates briefly discusses its relation to pleasure. He argues there that given the obvious truth that there are good and bad pleasures, one would be inconsistent to assent also to the claim that goodness is identical with pleasure. The specific argument seems to be this:

Suppose pleasure is identical with goodness. Then, any pleasure is good. But, of course, there are some pleasures that are bad (or evil). Consider any evil pleasure, A. If any pleasure is good, then A must be good. So, A is both good and evil. Hence, pleasure cannot be identical with goodness.

In this section, Plato is not only concerned with rejecting hedonism, but with rejecting other definitions of goodness as well. All knowledge, he claims, depends on knowledge of goodness (506a); it like the sun, he says, illuminates all other truths and makes them accessible to the intellect. Plato refrains from
offering any precise characterization of goodness. His use of analogy which makes the intellectual grasp of goodness logically prior to any real knowledge suggests that he supposed goodness to be altogether indefinable.

In the Philebus, far from being indefinable, goodness is, according to Plato, a combination of beauty, truth, and measuredness (κόλλοσ, ἀλήθεια, μετεκλάσμα) (65b). As Socrates emphasizes in the remainder of the dialogue, it is certainly not identical with pleasure.

All this provides strong evidence, then, that nowhere in the later dialogues did Plato endorse hedonism, and in at least two of those dialogues (Republic and Philebus) rejects it. Plato's position on hedonism*, however, is otherwise. In the Gorgias Socrates argues that a person is happiest who reduces his desires to a minimum. Since the capacity for experiencing pleasure, according to the Gorgias conception, is directly proportional to the size of one's appetites, Socrates is here advocating the good life as one free of pleasure.

Once Plato has distinguished, in the dialogues following the Protagoras, between various kinds of pleasures (pleasures of the body and pleasures of the soul) he returns to the topic of hedonism* with a different attitude. Plato, of course, never comes around to agree with Callicles that a constant and torrential influx of bodily pleasure makes a person good, and indeed Callicles' hero becomes the tyrant of the Republic (Book
IX), but Socrates does claim in Book VI of the Republic that the philosopher, best of all men, will revel in his pleasure. The philosopher's pleasure is, needless to say, the pleasure of the soul. (Republic 485d-e) We find in the Phaedo, in a passage we have cited above (114e), Socrates making the same claim that the best life is one evoted to pleasures of the soul. Finally, in the Laws, probably Plato's last written work, Plato's mouthpiece, the Athenian, argues that the just person is the most pleased.

[NOTE 82] (662d1-2) The just person is, of course, the good person, so the good person is the most pleased person.

Again, while there is no evidence that Plato ever accepted hedonism, he eventually accepted a version of hedonism* (especially in the Republic): not the crude version of the Gorgias, but one identifying the good person with the person who has an abundance of pleasures of the soul. The reason for this acceptance has it roots in the Gorgias. It is there that Socrates is first made to claim that the goodness of a person consists in a proper ordering of the soul. (Gorgias 506e) But he goes on to argue in the Republic (585dff) that it is the proper arrangement of the soul that results in the most overall pleasure. So the good person is the pleased person, not because being pleased is what our goodness consists in, but because being good results in our being pleased. Put another way, Plato never seems to accept the conceptual identity of the good person and pleased person, but rather only the close (perhaps causal)
relationship between being a good person and being a pleased person. This doctrine, however,
bears little resemblance to the doctrine Socrates attacks in the Gorgias, and even less resemblance to the doctrine in the Protagoras.

Summary

In the preceding five chapters, I have argued for a number of points which together suggest that it is impausible to look at the Protagoras and Gorgias as a pair of dialogues which together reflect a turning point in Plato's views about the nature of goodness. Specifically, I have tried to show that it is not plausible to understand the Protagoras as a dialogue in which Plato accepts hedonism and the Gorgias as a dialogue in which Plato, having changed his mind about the nature of goodness, rejects hedonism.

In arguing for this thesis I have attempted to establish a number of preliminary claims. In the second chapter we saw that there is a wealth of textual evidence showing that Plato discusses in the Protagoras a doctrine of hedonism. In looking at this evidence, we examined a number of attempts by Vlastos, Goodell and others to interpret the doctrine in the Protagoras as
something other than an unqualified equation of goodness and pleasure. When examined closely, such interpretations failed.

While there is a hedonistic doctrine discussed in the dialogue, we saw in the third chapter that it is impossible on purely textual grounds to determine if Socrates is espousing the view. The 'many' surely agree to it and Protagoras, himself, finally accepts it at 358a. Aside from asking a number of leading questions, Socrates never actually commits himself to the view.

Some commentators have, nonetheless, argued that there is good philosophical reason for supposing that the hedonism of the Protagoras is Socrates' own. For the most part these commentators either argue that the arguments Socrates presents in the dialogue depend on hedonism or that claims which Socrates has made in earlier dialogues depend on hedonism, and the Protagoras represents the development of those claims.

C.C.W. Taylor is a good example of a commentator holding the former position. More interesting, however, is the second position which is put forward most recently by T. Irwin. Neither of these positions is acceptable: the former, we we saw in Chapter III, because it depends on a rather naive understanding of Socrates' argument and his motivation in presenting it. The latter position fails, in large part because Socrates' claims in the earlier dialogues do not commit him to hedonism, so there is no reason to read the Protagoras as a
development of that commitment.

In arguing against various common interpretations of the Protagoras, I have attempted to detail the actual role hedonism plays in the dialogue. In so doing, I have also argued against a view of the Protagoras-Gorgias pair which is implicitly accepted by most commentators.

The standard picture seems to be that the main topic of the Protagoras is hedonism (and the apparent endorsement of it), and it is this topic that is again treated in the Gorgias with the emphasis this time on its rejection.

When we looked closely at the arguments of these two dialogues, we found that this was not the case. While hedonism surely plays a central role in the argument of the Protagoras from 351 to 358 (the section containing arguments against "the many"), the primary argument against Protagoras over the unity of the virtues (358ff) does not rely on hedonism at all. The doctrine plays no essential role in the logical structure of the argument there. Rather, Protagoras is convinced (as are, presumably, the other sophists) by arguments relying on the identification of praiseworthiness (τὸ καλὸν) and goodness. Praiseworthiness is not analyzed by Socrates in terms of pleasure; in fact, at 351c, it is presented by Protagoras as quite independent of pleasure.

The situation is similar in the Gorgias. We saw in Chapter V that there is some sort of hedonistic doctrine discussed in the
dialogue, but in the main, the dialogue does not attack hedonism directly. Most of the Gorgias, rather, is an attack on the life of unrestrained and undisciplined desire gratification. As such, the dialogue seems designed to refute what I called hedonism* which identifies, not goodness and pleasure, but the good person and the pleased person.

In fact the two 'anti-hedonistic' arguments of the Gorgias (one at 495e-497a, the other at 497e-499b) fail completely as arguments against the identification of goodness and pleasure. What success these arguments achieve comes when they are interpreted as attacks on Callicles' endorsement of hedonism*.

To be sure, however, some comments in the Gorgias show that Plato supposes that a refutation of hedonism* constitutes a refutation of hedonism. In Chapter VI we looked at a way of formulating an argument along the lines suggested in the dialogue. The resulting argument is defective in rather fundamental ways.

So, far from being a pair of dialogues involving radically different views concerning a common ethical problem, hedonism, the Protagoras and Gorgias only peripherally concern hedonism at all. Furthermore, with respect to the hedonism that is found in the Protagoras, we saw no compelling reason, either textual or philosophical, to suppose Socrates (and, thus, Plato) endorsed it. So, we are free to interpret the dialogue in such a way that the Protagoras represents no radical or profound change in
Plato's notion of Goodness.
NOTES

1. I follow C. C. W. Taylor in translating Καλὸς as "praiseworthy". I do this for two reasons. Καλὸς is often translated with a different word in different dialogues, often by the same translator. This can be misleading. I have used "praiseworthy" as the translation of Καλὸς wherever it appears in the dialogues. The word is important enough so that it deserves to be translated consistently. In addition, it is surely an ethical term and "praiseworthy" captures that, unlike some common renderings like "beautiful" or "fine". I do not mean to convey by the use of this word that it implies a community of praisors. I take it that a thing can be praiseworthy even if nobody existed.


11. All translations of passages from the *Protagoras*, unless otherwise noted, come from C. C. W. Taylor's commentary on the *Protagoras*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976.

12. I have not included the other half of this or the previous formulation which concerns, in the former case, enjoyment with painful consequences, and, in the latter, the evil of pain. Plato is almost always very careful to include both parts of these claims. How important it is to remember this will become apparent in Chapter V.

14. We might also interpret Goodell as claiming that there is no low Benthamite conception of hedonism to be found here, but rather a hedonism which identifies goodness with some high quality pleasure. This interpretation I investigate later in the chapter.


16. It is doubtful whether any contemporary version of hedonism actually entails this. (1) is related to those versions of hedonism which claim that intrinsic value belongs to certain mental phenomena. We can understand this in a couple of different ways. For instance, we might take the *Protagoras* statement that pleasures are good to mean that pleasant experiences are good and nothing else is.

The difficulty with such a view is that on this view experiences are the prime bearers of intrinsic value. Suppose I have a pleasant experience on an amusement park ride. It is implausible to say that a pleasant experience of the ride is intrinsically good. Why? Whatever is intrinsically good is so necessarily, since, as we have characterized it, intrinsic goodness involves some feature of the good thing itself. But my experience is only contingently connected with my pleasure. My experience could just as easily (or even more easily) result in dizziness and discomfort. So, if we were to understand certain
experiences as pleasures and use them as the prime bearers of intrinsic goodness, then these prime bearers would be at best only contingently intrinsically good, which is unacceptable.

We might say instead that what is to count as intrinsically good is not an experience at all, but a pleasure, a feeling. This pleasure, of course, could never be other than a pleasure, so it satisfies the requirement we put above on the bearers of intrinsic goodness. It could never fail to qualify as a pleasure and, hence, could never fail to be intrinsically good.

It is most likely something of this sort that Plato had in mind in the Protagoras. It, however, has problems. Suppose I have at some time a very great pleasure and a very tiny pain. There is an intrinsically good thing, the pleasure, and an intrinsically bad thing, the pain. A hedonist should want to say that the compound of these two things is still intrinsically good (since the pleasure is so much greater than the pain). Our present formulation does not allow that. While it says that pleasures are intrinsically good and pains are intrinsically bad, it says that nothing else is either intrinsically good or intrinsically bad. The compound of a pleasure and a pain, however, is just that, a compound. It is neither a pleasure nor a pain, so we get the undesirable result that the compound is intrinsically worthless.

Most modern discussions of hedonism do not rely on mental events (pleasures) as the bearers of intrinsic value, but, rather
on states of affairs or propositions. So it is not my pleasure that counts as intrinsically good, but the state of affairs of my being pleased, or a certain proposition that I am pleased. Letting states of affairs, for instance, be the bearers of intrinsic value has two advantages. First it has the advantage of the previous view, that if a state of affairs involves pleasure, it does so necessarily. So, if it is intrinsically good, it is so necessarily. Its second advantage is that it seems to get around the problem with the above view. That problem was that, on one hand, we want to allow compounds of intrinsic goods to be intrinsically good, but, on the other, a compound of pleasures is not itself a pleasure and cannot be intrinsically good. Compounds of states of affairs, however, are still states of affairs, albeit complex ones.

If the problem with taking pleasures as the sole intrinsic goods was that we could not account for the godness of compounds, the difficulty is just the opposite regarding states of affairs. Surely, one of the major problems in formulating a version of hedonism based on the intrinsic goodness of certain states of affairs is trying to discover how to distinguish simple states of affairs out of which complex states are constructed. It is important to be able to pick out these simple states because the intrinsic value of complex states of affairs will be a function of the intrinsic value of these simple states.

Detailed and valuable discussions of using states of affairs
as the prime bearers of intrinsic goodness can be found in Warren Quinn's, "Theories of Intrinsic Value", American Philosophical Quarterly, 1974, and Edward Oldfield's revision of Quinn's view, "An Approach to a Theory of Intrinsic Value", Philosophical Studies, 1977. Comprehensive and excellent discussions can be found in Fred Feldman's manuscript, Doing the Best One Can and in Earl Conee's doctoral dissertation, Pleasure and Intrinsic Goodness.

For our purposes, there is a further problem with any version of hedonism based on states of affairs. There is no evidence that Plato ever contemplated the existence of such things, let alone ever considered assigning intrinsic value to them. To cast Plato's version of hedonism in terms of states of affairs would be gratuitous, since there is nothing in his writings that would allow us to discuss the subtleties of such a view.

Let us here, then, take Plato's hedonism to be a view about the intrinsic value of feelings of pleasure, namely, that pleasures and only pleasures are intrinsically good, and we will leave aside the problems inherent in such a view.

17. So, for instance, at 330c-e, Socrates inquires whether there is such a thing as justice-itself or holiness-itself. Satisfied that there are both, he asks if they are themselves just and holy, respectively. As is well known, he answers affirmatively,
but the mere fact that he entertains the question shows that he is at least dimly aware of such a distinction. So also we are told at 332b5f that foolishness (ἀφομιμία) is different from the foolish acts, and is what makes them foolish.


19. By far the greatest number of passages in the dialogue directly related to hedonism have to do with the claim that pleasure is good. Socrates begins the discussion (351b6), however, not with the claim that pleasure and good are related, but with the claim that living well and living pleasantly are related. ( subur εἴσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἔρχον τέλευτας ἑαυτοῦ; οὐκ ἐὰν ἐὰν οὐκέτι οὕτως ἄλλως ἀνίκεια; Should we take this as a second doctrine to be discussed in the dialogue? Or should we take this to indicate that the discussion that follows is about living well rather than about goodness itself? I think neither. This is not a doctrine to be discussed in the remainder of the dialogue. After 351c, there is no mention at all of living well. There is one passage at 356e8 where Socrates speaks of doing well (έτερων ὑποτελέων), but it is not directly involved in the discussion of hedonism.

In fact, we can take this passage to suggest a contrast in the dialogue between the identification of pleasure and goodness
and the identification between a pleasant life and a well-lived life. At 351b4-7, Socrates asks Protagoras to accept the claim

1. If a man lives pleasantly, he lives well.

and Protagoras does. Protagoras rejects, however, the conclusion Socrates draws from (1), namely,

2. A pleasant life is good.

Protagoras rejects it claiming that only a certain sort of pleasant life, a life involving noble (καλὸς) pleasures, is really good. When Protagoras rejects the inference from (1) to (2) he must reject also

3. A well-lived life is good.

since (1) and (3) entail (2):

1. A pleasant life is a well-lived life.
3. A Well-lived life is good.

2. A pleasant life is good.

By explicitly rejecting (2) and implicitly rejecting (3), Protagoras has introduced the worry about good and pleasure while, at the same time, drawing a distinction between a topic which is not going to be discussed, namely, the relation between pleasure and living well, which might not be an ethical problem, and the topic which is to be discussed, the relation between pleasure and goodness, which is certainly an ethical problem. We
might want to draw the same distinction between the non-ethical claim that a person's large salary guarantees that he is living well and the ethical claim that a person's large salary guarantees that this life is a good one.


22. I have suppressed the corresponding principle about rejecting actions that are believed to yield more pain than pleasure.

23. (8') is, of course, defective since it entails that in cases where we know that a number of different acts are each more pleasant than painful, we will choose to perform all of them. So, for instance, if I believe that sitting in my back yard watching birds today will be more pleasant than painful and I believe that staying indoors today and watching the Detroit Gran Prix on television will be more pleasant than painful, then (9') entails that I will choose to do both.

24. Mill's "proof" aside.

Gregory Vlastos, Doubleday & Co. Inc., New York, 1971, pages 264–298, also mistakenly thinks that the passage at 354c3–5 is primarily a statement about choice, and, hence, understands it as a statement of psychological hedonism. He says on page 281–2,

This interpretation of the hedonistic principle...is perfectly consistent with—indeed it is suggested by—the psychological hedonism that Socrates and Protagoras earlier attribute to the masses: people "pursue pleasure as being a good and avoid pain as being an evil" (354c). "Pursue" and "avoid" (diokein and pheugein) must be understood to refer to one's seeking to obtain pleasures and seeking to avoid pains, not to one's actually obtaining pleasures and successfully avoiding pains. The principle asserted is not that (1) people always act in a way that maximizes their pleasures and/or minimizes their pains, but that (2) people always seek to act in such a way as to maximize pleasures and/or to minimize pain...

26. The examples given by Goodwin in his Greek Grammar, Macmillan Education Ltd., London, 1971, are all instances of obligation: "they must go to war", "we must bear these things", "we must not abandon to the Athenians...", and so forth.
(emphasis mine) Furthermore, Thompson, in *A Syntax of Attic Greek*, Longmans & Co., New York, 1907, says, verbally ending in -teos, "express necessity (what should be done)..."

27. Although even with this caution, some have thought Mill's distinction runs aground. See, for instance, Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pages 78-79.

28. Goodell recognizes that the hedonic calculus of the *Protagoras* seems to be restricted to purely quantitative measurement. His explanation is that for the moment, and only for the moment, Plato is accepting the vulgar use of "pleasure" in which no distinction in the qualities of pleasure is recognized. (Goodell, page 32) Why Plato does this, he does not say.

29. C.C.W. Taylor translates the beginning of this passage, "...And now, on behalf of Protagoras and myself I ask you, Hippias and Prodicus (for you can answer jointly), whether you think that what I am saying is true or false." The Greek is...ἐπαίνος ἃς ὥς ἐντὸς Πρωταγόρου ἐρωτᾶ, ἄν προτέοι τε καὶ Πρόδικον (κοινὸς γὰρ ὥς ἐστὶν ὑμῖν ὁ λόγος) πότερον δοκῇ ὑμῖν ἀληθὴν λέγειν ἐν γαίησθαι." According to this translation, Socrates and Protagoras seem already to be in agreement about the hedonism and are merely trying to convince the others. While this is not an
impossible reading, it is difficult both philosophically and
textually. It is difficult philosophically because it suggests
that Socrates, at the end of the discussion with 'the many'
already counts Protagoras in his camp. There is, however, no
reason to suppose that Socrates would have expected Protagoras to
have been persuaded to accept hedonism based on that discussion.
It is difficult textually because ἤδε ὅν most naturally connects
ὑπᾶς and μετὰ Πρωταγόρας, making these both the objects of ἐρωτῶ.
If, however, we understand μετὰ Πρωταγόρας to supply a second
subject of ἐρωτῶ, then ἤδε ὅν has no function in the sentence. My
reading agrees on this point with both Guthrie's and Jowett's.

30. Sesonske, Alexander, "Hedonism in the Protagoras", Journal

31. Wolz, Henry, "Hedonism in the Protagoras", Journal of the

32. Others at 333c2, 317a4.

33. Cornford, F.M., "Athenian Philosophical Schools" in The
Cambridge Ancient History, Edited by Bury, J.B., S.A. Cook, F.E.

34. I take "desire" here to signal an opaque context.

35. The Greek is entirely neutral on this point: οὐκοῦν
φαίνεται, ἦ ἄνθρωποι, ὑπᾶς ὡς δαίμον ἐγὼ τε καὶ Πρωταγόρας, δι᾽
36. This is in contrast to what, for instance, Crombie claims in his An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, in which he draws a connection between the Protagoras and the Republic and says:

Suppose there were a dialogue in which Socrates twice said 'Aren't all beds beds by imitating the perfect Bed?', showed that common opinion subscribed in practice to this view, and went on to prove some standard Socratic position in the light of it; I am sure we should be told that in this imaginary dialogue Socrates sponsors the perfect particular view of Forms. It is only because hedonism is a naughty view that there are any reservations about saying that Socrates maintains it in the Protagoras.

I think it should be clear that whatever its similarities to the Republic, the Protagoras is by far a more perplexing dialogue. For all of its difficulties, it is fairly clear what Plato is up to in the Republic. He makes it even clearer by prefacing in Book X the passage Crombie paraphrases with phrases like, "Are we not in the habit of saying..." We are on entirely unfamiliar terrain in the Protagoras. Furthermore, there is in the Republic no attempt to explain a popular phenomenon through an imaginary
discussion; the conversation, in Book X, is strictly between Socrates and Glaucon. Crombie's claim is based on an overly simple reading of the Protagoras that is not supported by the subtleties and complexities that exist there, and that is certainly not supported by any comparison with the Republic. While some worry about attributing hedonism to Socrates might motivate a closer look at the dialogue, it is a mistake to suppose that there is no other reason to be sceptical of such a view.

37. The argument is presented thus by Socrates:

"Tell me, is that thing that you have just mentioned, justice, itself, just or unjust?" I should reply that it is just. (330c)

"And do you say that [holiness] is itself such as to be unholy, or such as to be holy?...how could anything else be holy, if holiness itself is not to be holy?" (330d)

"You seem to be saying that the parts of virtue are related to one another in such a way that none of them is like any other." (330e)

"So, holiness is not such as to be something just...but rather such as to be not just, and so unjust." (331b)
and can be formulated simply as:

(i) Justice is just.

(ii) Holiness is holy.

(iii) The parts of virtue are independent.

(iv) It is not the case that: holiness is just.

(v) Holiness is unjust.

The conclusion (v) is, of course, taken to be absurd and, so, constitutes, according to Socrates, a refutation of (iii).

38. Socrates presents the argument as follows:

"The opposite of folly is wisdom, is it not?"

(332a)

"Acting foolishly is the opposite of acting sensibly." (332b)

"Folly is the opposite of good sense." (332c)

"Each member of an opposition has exactly one opposite." (332c)

"[So,] good sense and wisdom would seem to be one and the same." (333b)

39. This formulation ignores the more careful formulations presented in Chapter I concerning intrinsic and extrinsic goodness. Once he has formulated these distinctions, he makes no
use of them in his argument.


42. It is worth adding that Socrates may see a further problem with (5), namely, (5) claims that it is by considering the good that we are led to choose the act which involves less good. See also Dyson, "Knowledge and Hedonism in Plato's Protagoras", pages 32-38.

43. Taylor, in his commentary on the Protagoras has incorrectly formulated the general structure of the argument in such a way that he supposes that Socrates has committed the fallacy of denying the antecedent:

If anyone regularly makes correct choices of pleasure and pains, he employs the appropriate sort of knowledge. He then (357d3-7) treats that as identical with the thesis that anyone who fails to make correct choices does not employ the appropriate knowledge. (Taylor, pages 191-192)
Taylor's mistake is in not seeing that Socrates supposes that one regularly makes correct choices of pleasure and pain if and only if he employs the appropriate sort of knowledge. From this Socrates can and does validly infer that if one fails to make a correct choice of pleasure and pain, he does not employ the appropriate knowledge.

44. It is an interesting consequence of this analysis of courage that the courageous person does not act in spite of his fear; he simply does not have any fear.

45. Where by this I mean that these relations are transitive and assymetric.

46. Proof: Let 'Pxy' be 'x is more pleasant than y', and let 'Bxy' be 'x is better than y'.

1. \((x)(y)(Pxy \rightarrow Bxy)\) Premise
2. Show: \((x)(y)(Bxy \rightarrow "Pyx)\)
3. Show: \((Bab \rightarrow "Pyx)\)
4. Bab Assume
5. Show: "Pba
6. Pba \rightarrow Bba From 1
7. Bba 6,7
8. Bba \rightarrow "Bab ordering
9. "Bab 8,9 Contra 4

48. By "subject matter", we must understand Irwin to mean "determinate product." Irwin's confusion on this point is discussed below.

49. Sometime after this chapter was written, I discovered that this passage is also discussed briefly by George Klosko in "The Technical Conception of Virtue", Journal of the History of Philosophy, Vol. 19, pages 95-102, 1981.

50. Irwin cites Charmides 163d1-e2 as evidence that Socrates objects to the disputed terms Critias introduces into the definition of temperance. This misses the point of the passage. Socrates' specific objective in criticizing Critias, in the passage Irwin cites, is to deliver an ad hominem attack against Critias who is relying on the "endless distinctions" of Prodicus. Socrates' real objection to Critias does not come until 164a-d. If Socrates is worried about the craft analogy at all, here is where that worry is expressed. If craftsmen must follow a rational plan in practicing their crafts, then any theory which allows craftsmen to practice their crafts through accident and ignorance must be defective. But this is just what Critias' definition of temperance allows. Hence, it is faulty. But Irwin has missed this section of the argument completely, and so has seriously misunderstood the entire passage.
51. This is the least well developed of the views of Irwin's we have considered. It was pointed out to me by Cynthia Freeland.

52. We should be leary about discussing the paradox of the Hippias Minor. There are at least two. Irwin, I think, is talking about the paradox which says that somebody who possesses virtue, i.e., knows what are the right actions, might do otherwise than virtue commands. The dialogue actually ends with the paradoxical conclusion that the person who voluntarily does wrong is the good person. The most famous Socratic paradox, that nobody does evil voluntarily, makes at least a cameo appearance at the end of the dialogue when Socrates expresses doubt that there could exist a man who does evil and disgraceful things voluntarily. (376b4-6)


55. If he finds himself committed to hedonism, it is probably through the same process that led 'the many' to discover that they are so committed.

Phaedo, for instance, a rudimentary version of this doctrine is presented. At 60c-d, Socrates notes how closely pleasure and pain are associated when he comments on how closely the pain from his fetter is followed by pleasure when it is released. This view is found most fully developed in the Philebus: "What Philebus and his friends call pleasures are, according to them, never anything but escapes from pain." (44c1-2)

One of the purposes of the Philebus seems to be to reconcile these two ways of understanding pleasure with the view of pleasure in which it is entirely separate from pain or painful appetites. This discussion, of course, leads to the distinction between pure and impure pleasure (51c sq).

59. To avoid obvious counterexamples, such a principle should make reference to the amount of pain experienced as well. Neither Callicles nor Socrates make any such attempt in this discussion. Socrates does show his awareness of the need for this complication in the Protagoras (e.g., 354c-e).


61. Irwin, on page 199 of his commentary on the Gorgias, also offers a suggestion that Socrates was unfair. After Callicles agrees that the scratcher is happy because of his intake of pleasure, Socrates infers that he is unable to distinguish between good and evil pleasure. Irwin says there:
But Callicles could easily distinguish good pleasures, those which offer more pleasure, from bad ones, those which offer less.

Irwin's criticism here is ambiguous. He could mean either of the following:

(i) Good pleasures are those whose consequences produce more pleasure; bad pleasures are those whose consequences produce less.

(ii) good pleasures are those which in themselves are more pleasurable; bad pleasures are those which are in themselves less pleasurable.

It seems that Irwin has in mind the latter distinction since his example contains no mention of consequences: "If I enjoy eating steak more than I enjoy ice cream, then the pleasure of eating steak is apparently a better pleasure, because more pleasant, than the pleasure of eating ice cream."

Using quantity to rank pleasures, one better than another, has already been discussed by Plato in the Protagoras (364a–c). Providing a ranking of pleasure is not the same as providing a distinction between good and bad pleasures. Any quantative point at which one marks a line above which pleasures are good, below
which pleasures are bad, is either arbitrary and, hence, unsatisfactory, or based on some other criterion, in which case quantity of pleasure is not the distinguishing mark of good and bad pleasures. Contrary to Irwin, Callicles has presented no way of distinguishing good from bad pleasure.

62. Strictly speaking this argument is not valid. Rather than showing that pleasure is not identical with goodness it merely shows that the pair goodness-evil is not identical with the pair pleasure-pain. Of course, hedonism as Plato understands it claims both that pleasure is the only intrinsic good and that pain is the only intrinsic evil. Thus, and argument which shows that the pair goodness-evil is distinct from the pair pleasure-pain also shows that hedonism is false. I thank Earl Conee for pointing this out to me.

63. See Chapter II

64. "Doing well" (εὖ ὁπτάτερ) is, presumably, synonymous with "living well" (εὖ ἀθλίον), both of which suggest the happiness of an agent.

65. Tenkku is wrong to suppose that one can object to (10) by pointing out that nobody is wholly good or wholly evil, while most fall "in the interval between them." In that interval there will be those who are good to some degree and those who are evil to some degree. (i), is simply to be understood as claiming that
a person is good to some degree iff that person is not evil to some degree.

66. Has Tenkku made a logical blunder by, in some way, confusing (12) with (13)? I think not. However, his criticism of Socrates' reasoning is based on an even more serious misreading of the argument. Tenkku supposes that the difference Plato sees between goodness and evil, on the one hand, and pleasure and pain, on the other, is that the latter are indistinguishable while the former are not. They are indistinguishable because they are always had or lost simultaneously. Tenkku explains this principle this way:

...on the other hand, Plato seems to think that pleasure and pain are not distinguishable from each other because of their simultaneity...it does not follow, however, from a co-existence of two properties that they are not distinguishable from one another.

Against this reading of Plato, Tenkku's criticism is exactly right. Such a argument appears nowhere in the text, nor would Plato have any reason to endorse such an argument.

67. Masochists might object that their sensations of pain are pleasant, but it is not clear that this is the case. When a masochist is beaten, he may find pleasurable the sensations we
would ordinarily regard as painful, or while finding them painful he may take pleasure in the fact that he is feeling pain. He might even turn out to be a "lupist", and regard pain as good. In none of these cases is a single sensation both an instance of pleasure and an instance of pain.

68. As in Chapter II, I take these pleasant and painful things to be metaphysically private enough so that we need not worry about cases where something is pleasant to me and painful to you.

69. In all of this discussion, I have ignored a second version of this argument which Socrates produces at 497c-d. It can be represented as follows:

1. Goodness and evil are opposites.

2. There is no person, x, such that x is not good at some time, t, and x is not evil at t.

3. There is some person, x, such that x is not pleased at some time, t, and x is not pained at t.

4. Being a good person is not identical with being a pleased person.

This argument has difficulties directly analogous to those of the argument we have just discussed.
70. While I have been following Irwin's translation through most of this section on the Gorgias, here I have used my own translation which makes much more sense than Irwin's almost incomprehensible "then doesn't the bad man turn out to be good and bad similarly to the good man or even better?"

71. Nothing in the text indicates explicitly whether the range of "t" is single instants of time or durations of time, such as entire lifetimes. It is not crucial to the argument which we choose.

72. What makes a structure or order appropriate is not discussed in this dialogue, nor will it be discussed here. Plato takes up this worry in the Republic.


74. Plato may be nervous in other dialogues about claiming that the presence of goodness is a sufficient condition for a person being a good person (Irwin suggests Lysis 217b) He reveals no such nervousness here in the Gorgias. I make these claims about presence boldly and leave aside the enormous literature centered on this concept. For our purposes, here, a journey down that path is unwarranted.

75. It may well be that the goods Socrates has in mind are
certain orderings of the soul or virtues, as Irwin suggests (p. 219 of his Commentary). This is difficult. In the first place, as Irwin notes, it is certainly not obvious that the presence of such a thing is sufficient to make us good. Indeed, the metaphysics involved in this argument are not discussed by Socrates and Callicles. It needs, then, to be uncontroversial if it is to be used to refute Callicles' ethical view. The claim that it is some ordering of our soul which makes us good is not uncontroversial in the way the claim that pleasures in us make us pleased is.

We have already noticed in the previous chapter that Irwin claims that the pleasures referred to in this argument are not pleasant sensations, but capacities or powers to achieve a pleasant life in the long run. Might this suggest that we should not understand pleasures here as pleasant sensations? While perhaps, Socrates would have been better off to discuss such a doctrine, he certainly does not do so in the Gorgias. The discussion of the psychology of pleasure at 493–494 shows that Socrates is speaking of sensations of pleasure and pain. He makes it clear at 494b–c that he is talking about the individual pleasures of, for instance, eating and drinking.

76. I think Dodds (Commentary page 335) is wrong to suppose that this is one of the conclusions of the argument. Rather this has been assumed all along. See 492c5–6, 470c10.
77. See Roderick Chisholm's, "Ethics of Requirement" for a contemporary reliance on fittingness. *American Philosophical Quarterly* Volume 1, 1964, page 147.

78. For more detailed discussions of these features see Dodds pages 20-22 and Irwin, *Plato's Gorgias*, pages 5-8.

79. In addition, of course, the *Protagoras* does not probe the consequences of admitting that some pleasures are good and others evil. That topic is discarded at 351c-d.


82. Plato actually talks about just and pleasant lives, but this amounts to talking about just and pleasant persons.
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