

Deficient virtue in the *Phaedo*

Abstract: In this paper I investigate two passages in the *Phaedo* where Socrates contrasts the full virtue of the philosopher with a sort deficient virtue. I argue that despite the apparently different appraisals Socrates offers, there is a single form of deficient virtue in the dialogue, one based on the calculation of bodily pleasures and pains. In the course of making my argument, I offer a detailed account of social virtue, a condition Plato mentions in several dialogues. Finally, I end by pointing out similarities between Phaedonic deficient virtue and Epicurus' ethical theory that go beyond hedonism.

Keywords: Plato, *Phaedo*, virtue, non-philosophical virtue

Plato seems to have been pessimistic about how most people stand with regard to virtue. However, unlike the Stoics, Plato did not conclude that most people are vicious. Rather, as we know from discussions across several dialogues, he countenanced decent ethical conditions that fall short of genuine virtue, which he limited to the philosopher. Despite Plato's obvious interest in this issue, commentators rarely follow his lead by investigating in detail such conditions in the dialogues. When scholars do investigate what kind of virtue, if any, Plato thinks is open to non-philosophers, they typically look to the *Republic*.¹ But in the *Republic* Plato sets out an ideal city, and so, the virtue available to non-philosophers there is likely different from what he thinks is available to them in the real world. So, if we want to determine Plato's thoughts about the virtue of actual non-

¹ For instance, see Kamtekar 1998 and Wilberding 2009. Even those treatments of non-philosophical virtue that do look at the *Phaedo* frequently do so in conjunction with this issue in the *Republic*. See Bobonich 2002, ch.1, Kraut, 2012, and Vasiliou 2012.

philosophers, we must look elsewhere. In this paper, I set my sights on the *Phaedo* in order to do so.

In two passages in the *Phaedo* Socrates contrasts the true virtue of the philosopher with a deficient form of virtue available to non-philosophers. The first passage comes at the end of Socrates' defense of his decision to die, and so, I'll call it his 'Closing Argument' (68b7-69e4). In this passage Socrates compares genuine virtue with a counterfeit form of virtue, which I will label 'apparent virtue'. The second passage, which I'll call 'the Reprise'² (80c1-84b5) finds Socrates contrasting genuine virtue with what he calls 'popular or social virtue,' or, more simply, 'social virtue'. These passages seem to offer quite different characterizations and evaluations of the sort of virtue available to non-philosophers, leading some commentators to conclude that in the *Phaedo* Plato envisages two forms of deficient virtue.³ My central task here is to determine whether this is so. I will argue that it is not; although these passages emphasize different aspects of deficient virtue, Socrates discusses a single condition in both. Hence, in the *Phaedo* there is only one form of deficient virtue. By recognizing this and considering these passages in conjunction, I'll argue that we can gain a better understanding of Plato's view of the virtue of non-philosophers.

The structure of my investigation is as follows. First, I will set out what Socrates says about apparent virtue and social virtue. Second, I will consider the possibility that these states are distinct, beginning with evidence internal to the *Phaedo* before turning to evidence from outside of the dialogue. Third, I will provide some reasons to reject the

² Adopting the name from Pakaluk 2003, 109.

³ See, for instance, Vasiliou 2012.

evidence offered in favor of distinguishing the states, and argue that social virtue in the *Phaedo* is a species of apparent virtue. In making this case, I shall connect the *Phaedo*'s discussion of social virtue with other dialogues where the topic arises, thus offering a more complete account of this condition than exists in the literature. I will conclude by filling out the picture of deficient virtue in the dialogue. As we shall see, far from being philosophically implausible, the sort of deficient virtue I find in the *Phaedo* shares important points of contact with the ethical theory later developed by Epicurus.

1. Preliminary discussions of apparent virtue and social virtue

Before considering how they relate to one another, I'll first set out what Socrates says about apparent virtue and social virtue. Although our central passages are certainly meant to complement one another, for the sake of impartiality regarding the question of how apparent virtue and social virtue relate, in this section I shall treat them in isolation. I begin, as Plato does, with apparent virtue.

1.1 Apparent virtue

Socrates introduces the topic of apparent virtue at the end of his defense. After concluding that a person who loves wisdom, that is a true philosopher, won't fear death, he leverages this insight into the following discussion of virtue:

Then, you have sufficient indication, he [Socrates] said, that any man whom you see resenting death was not a lover of wisdom but a lover of body (φιλοσώματος), being either a money lover (φιλοχρήματος), an honor lover (φιλότιμος), or both.

It is certainly as you say.

And, Simmias, he said, does not what is called ‘courage’ (ἡ ὀνομαζομένη ἀνδρεία) belong most (μάλιστα) to men of this disposition?

Most certainly.

And the quality of temperance, which even (καὶ) the majority call ‘temperance’ (οἱ πολλοὶ ὀνομάζουσι σωφροσύνην), that is, not to get swept off one’s feet by one’s appetites, but to treat them with disdain and orderliness, is suited only (μόνοις) to those who most of all despise the body and live the life of philosophy?

Necessarily so, he said.

If you are willing to reflect on the courage and temperance of other people (τὴν γε τῶν ἄλλων ἀνδρείαν τε καὶ σωφροσύνην), you will find them strange.

In what way, Socrates?

You know that they all consider death a great evil?

Definitely, he said.

And the courageous among them (αὐτῶν οἱ ἀνδρεῖοι) face death, when they do, for fear of greater evils.

That is so.

Therefore, it is fear and terror that make all men courageous, except the philosophers. Yet, it is illogical to be courageous through fear and cowardice. It certainly is.

What of the temperate among them (οἱ κόσμοι αὐτῶν)? Is their experience not similar? Is it licentiousness of a kind that makes them temperate? We say this is impossible, yet their experience of this simple-minded temperance (ταύτην τὴν εὐήθη σωφροσύνην) turns out to be similar: they fear to be deprived of other pleasures which they desire, so, they keep away from some pleasures because they are overcome by others. Now, to be mastered by pleasure is what they call licentiousness, but what happens to them is that they master certain pleasures because they are mastered by others. This is like what we mentioned just now, that in some way it is a kind of licentiousness that has made them temperate.

That seems likely.

Dear Simmias, I fear this is not the correct exchange with regard to virtue, that is exchanging pleasure for pleasure, pain for pain, and fear for fear, the more for the

less, just as with coins. Instead, the only correct coin for which one ought to exchange them is wisdom. And buying and selling all of these pleasures, pains, and fears for this wisdom and on the side of this we have true courage, temperance, justice, and the whole of true virtue, which is on the side of wisdom regardless of whether pleasures, pains, or any such state is present or absent. But, exchanging these things for one another disregarding wisdom is, if you like, an image of virtue (σκιαγραφία), and is slavish (ἀνδραποδώδης), lacking anything sound or true. But, in truth, temperance, justice, and courage are a type of purification process and perhaps wisdom itself is a purification (68b7-69e4, Grube's translation with modifications).

Since our concern lies with deficient virtue, we can sidestep questions about genuine virtue as Socrates describes it here. Unlike these thorny issues, many of which have divided commentators,⁴ all parties agree that the deficient virtue in this passage—

⁴ The most serious issue is how to understand the relationship between wisdom and virtue on offer. In particular, the question is whether Socrates intends to identify them, or whether he thinks they are distinct but that one is required for the other. Luce 1944 argues for the former view (cf. Pakaluk 2004, 109). Most commentators take them to be distinct and think that here wisdom is required for virtue (e.g., Gooch 1974, Kraut 2010, 53, and Vasiliou 2012, 20). Bobonich 2002, 16-18, 34 and Beere 2011, 254 both read this passage as setting out a “double role” for wisdom, as something desired for itself and because it is required for wisdom. Weiss 1987 (cf. Bostock 1986, 30-35 and Bluck 1955, 3-5) argues that in this passage virtue does not require wisdom but instead the love of wisdom. This issue is bound up with how to understand the two metaphors Socrates sets out in the last part of this passage. It is also bound up with how one translates the final sentence (“But, in truth, temperance, justice, and courage are a purification [κάθαρσις], and perhaps wisdom itself is a purification [καθαρμός]”). My translation betrays my interpretation, which is

what I am calling ‘apparent virtue’ since Socrates says it is like an image (σκιαγραφία) of virtue—is based on a calculation of bodily experiences. Indeed, there is a consensus among commentators that the deficient virtue described here is the same as the hedonic calculus identified as virtue itself in the *Protagoras*. That the virtuous among non-philosophers are hedonistic is obvious from the last section of this passage where they are said, for instance, to exchange less pleasure for more pleasure. Thus, the virtuous non-philosophers—and indeed all non-philosophers, since all non-philosophers are body lovers (68b6)—use bodily experiences, including pleasure, pain, and fear,⁵ as the ultimate standard by which they judge actions, and so, are hedonists.

Because of the value system it reflects and reinforces, Socrates criticizes this sort of deficient virtue as ‘slavish’ (ἀνδραποδώδης), which indicates his judgment that it is ignoble and not worthy of a free adult. In the context of the *Phaedo*, a dialogue in which Socrates claims that the soul is imprisoned by the body (e.g., 82e1), this characterization may also carry with it the criticism that people with this sort of virtue are slaves to the bodily. Yet, we mustn’t allow this damning flaw to overshadow the fact that according to Socrates, this deficient virtue nonetheless issues in virtuous behavior. As Socrates says the “courageous among them [non-philosophers]” face death, and the “temperate among them [non-philosophers]” control certain bodily appetites. So, we can see that although it

similar to Weiss’, namely, that the desire for, but not the possession of, wisdom is required for genuine virtue. Nothing in my present analysis relies on this interpretation, however.

⁵ Throughout the dialogue Socrates treats fear, honor, and shame as a bodily experience.

is slavish and a sort of counterfeit form of virtue, apparent virtue does enable people to act virtuously.⁶

This point is worth stressing: some non-philosophers can and do perform the virtuous act in at least some situations and they do so on account of their apparent virtue. Still, their virtue is problematic for two reasons. One is that even when non-philosophers act virtuously, they do so without the proper motivation. Instead of acting for the sake of wisdom or virtue itself, they act for the sake of bodily pleasure. The other problem, which follows from the first, is that their apparent virtue is inherently unstable. Although non-philosophers with apparent virtue can and do perform virtuous actions, their doing so is merely accidental, resulting from their calculation rather than from a proper motivation.⁷ Thus, in circumstances where the calculation does not favor virtuous action, the non-philosopher will not act well.⁸ Hence, although it appears that they have genuine virtue, what they have is merely apparent virtue.

Before turning to social virtue, there is another aspect of this passage to unpack. As we can see, Socrates does not limit his discussion to apparent virtue and genuine virtue. Instead, he also mentions what is called ‘courage’ and what is called ‘temperance’,

⁶ Like the sticks and stones in the Recollection argument, the good actions of the apparently virtuous participate in opposites (e.g., in temperance and intemperance) at the same time. Cf. Barney 2005, 120.

⁷ See Vasiliou 2012, 18, cf. Barney 2005, 121-124.

⁸ See, for instance, the example of Gyges’ ring in the *Republic*.

which I will generalize to ‘what is called ‘virtue’’.⁹ Commentators rarely elaborate on what is called ‘virtue’, presumably because most take it to be the same as apparent virtue.¹⁰ This common interpretation seems plausible since clearly both apparent virtue and what is called ‘virtue’ fall short of genuine virtue. Furthermore, since apparent virtue is an image of virtue, non-philosophers undoubtedly mistake it for virtue, and so, call it ‘virtue’.¹¹

Despite the *prima facie* support for identifying the two, it cannot be the case that what is called ‘virtue’ is the same as apparent virtue. The reason is that Socrates attributes what are called ‘courage’ and ‘temperance’ to philosophers. As we can see in the passage, Socrates says that what is called ‘courage’ belongs most (μάλιστα) to the philosopher and that what is called ‘temperance’ belongs *only* (μόνοις) to the philosopher. So, if what are called ‘courage’ and ‘temperance’ were the same as apparent

⁹ In this passage, Socrates does not mention other virtues in this same way but surely there is, for instance, what is called ‘justice’ and apparent justice. Indeed, as we shall see, in the *Reprise* Socrates mentions what is called ‘justice’. Moreover, if we turn to book II of the *Republic*, we get a discussion of what seems to be apparent justice that fits the pattern that we find in the *Phaedo*. On the popular view set out there, people agree to act justly because they lack the power to act unjustly, and so, acting justly seems most profitable (δοκεῖ λυσιτελεῖν, 359a1). Thus, they are acting justly out of greed or injustice. Hence, this sort of justice arises from its opposite, injustice. It may also be fair to speculate that the same points are implicit about piety in this stretch of the *Republic*. The conventional view of piety is characterized as permitting bribery to the gods so that one is released from punishment for vicious actions in life. Thus, sacrifices and offerings to the gods, which are surely pious actions, arise from a fundamental misunderstanding of the gods, bottoming out in disrespect toward them. Thus, such apparent piety also arises from its opposite, impiety.

¹⁰ See Gallop 1975, 99 and Kraut 2010, 54.

¹¹ cf. Kraut 2010.

courage and apparent temperance, then Socrates would be attributing to the philosopher apparent courage and apparent temperance. But the philosopher has genuine virtue, which is diametrically opposed to the merely apparent and slavish virtue of non-philosophers. So, Socrates cannot think that what is called ‘virtue’ is the same as apparent virtue.

What then is what is called ‘virtue’? Socrates outright says that what is called ‘temperance’ is “not [getting] swept off one’s feet by one’s appetites, but [treating] them with disdain and orderliness” and based on his comments, what is called ‘courage’ at least involves willingly facing death.¹² Moreover, because these conditions are what people call temperance and courage, respectively, it is pretty clear that in both cases they are what most people take these virtues to be. Thus, what is called ‘virtue’ is simply the common conception of virtue. It is worth noting that Socrates is not wholly critical of this common understanding. It seems obvious that he thinks that people get something right about what virtue is. But they also miss something important about it.¹³ In order to

¹² Rowe 1993, 146-147 concludes that what is called ‘courage’ is fearlessness in general (cf. Hackforth 1955, 57). However, for non-philosophers, at any rate, what is called ‘courage’ is the result of a calculation and it is not clear how fearlessness could be the result of the sort of calculation in question. Indeed, the sort of calculation here likely includes fears on both sides of the ledger. And even though one fear is outweighed, it persists. Presumably in such cases, the non-philosopher fears the shame of acting in a cowardly way. However, it seems to befit a genuinely virtuous person to fear acting shamefully. So, perhaps what the non-philosopher fears is the negative social consequences of acting shamefully, rather than actually acting shamefully.

¹³ Gallop 1975, 99 suggests that virtue terms are misapplied by non-philosophers. Insofar as they do not refer to a psychological condition, this is correct. But the many do seem to track fairly reliably which actions are virtuous and which are not.

diagnose what they are missing, we can observe that whatever precisely it is, both philosophers and non-philosophers can manifest, for instance, what is called ‘courage’.¹⁴ Thus, since we know that philosophers have genuine courage but non-philosophers (at best) have apparent courage, this condition can result from a philosopher’s genuine courage or a non-philosopher’s calculation of fears. Hence, what the common understanding of courage neglects is the underlying psychological condition, including motivation, for the courageous action. The same can be said about what is called ‘temperance’. According to the common view, temperance is controlling bodily appetites, regardless of why or how one is doing so.

I want to end this section with two further points about what is called ‘virtue’ before sticking a pin in this discussion. First, although not wholly misguided about what virtue really is, the common conception of virtue is superficial,¹⁵ since it disregards the underlying cognitive or conative condition of the soul.¹⁶ Second, the very fact that there

¹⁴ Because what is called ‘courage’ applies most to the philosopher, we know that it cannot be overcoming fear. For, the philosopher does not fear death, and so, does not overcome fear when facing death. Despite the definitive textual evidence for this point, there is a debate among commentators as to whether the philosopher fears death when acting courageously (see Gosling and Taylor 1982, and Weiss 1989).

¹⁵ Just as we see Socrates’ interlocutors do in so many discussions in other dialogues, non-philosophers here (are reported to) conceive of virtues in terms that emphasize actions—facing death and not getting swept away by passions—rather than in conditions in the soul that give rise to these actions. Thus, non-philosophers think that courage *just is* facing death willingly, and that temperance *just is* not getting swept away by passions.

¹⁶ Beere 2011, 280 thinks that when it comes to virtue, non-philosophers do recognize the necessity of acting for the right reason, they simply fail to do it. I, however, think the conception of virtue that Plato ascribes to them here is comparable to the conception implicit in Protagoras’ ‘Great Speech’ (*Protagoras*

is some condition that is called ‘courage’ and another that is called ‘temperance’ indicates that there is a consensus among most people as to what these virtues are. That is, even if they are incorrect about what courage and temperance are, Plato thinks that most people would agree about which actions are courageous and temperate.

1.2 Social virtue

In the Reprise (80c1-84b5) Socrates returns to the themes set out in his defense, arguing in favor of the philosophical life, though this time by considering the fate of souls after corporeal death. According to Socrates, unlike the souls of philosophers, which join the gods after corporeal death, the souls of non-philosophers don’t leave the body pure and ultimately return to the physical world in a new body. It is in the context of the re-embodiment of souls that Socrates mentions social virtue. For our purposes, the most salient part of discussion goes as follows:

The happiest of these [non-philosophers], who will also have the best destination, are those who have practiced popular and social virtue (οἱ τὴν δημοτικὴν καὶ πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν ἐπιτετηδευκότες),¹⁷ which they call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’

320c6-328d2) according to which virtue concerns only actions and not motivations. Indeed, as we shall see, there are significant similarities between the non-philosopher’s view of virtue in the *Phaedo* and Protagoras’ view of virtue. At any rate, even if Beere is correct, I am not convinced that non-philosophers would not believe someone to be genuinely temperate if she abstained from another drink tonight only in order to avoid a headache tomorrow.

¹⁷ The Greek ‘πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν’ is often translated as ‘political virtue.’ This is a fine translation, but might mislead one into thinking this is relates to the qualities of a successful politician. However, what Socrates is

(ἦν δὴ καλοῦσι σωφροσύνην τε καὶ δικαιοσύνην) and which are developed by habit and practice and without philosophy or understanding (ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης γεγονυῖαν ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ).

How are they the happiest?

Because it is likely that they will again join a social and gentle group either of bees or wasps or ants, and then again, the same kind of human group, and so be average (μέτριος) people.

That is likely.

No one may join the company of the gods who has not practiced philosophy and is not completely pure when he departs from life, no one but the lovers of learning. It is for this reason, my friends Simmias and Cebes, that those who practice philosophy in the right way keep away from bodily passions, master them, and do not surrender themselves to them; it is not at all for fear of wasting their substance and of poverty, which the majority, i.e., money lovers (οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ φιλοχρήματοι) fear, nor for fear of dishonor or ill repute, like the ambitious lovers of honors (οἱ φίλαρχοί τε καὶ φιλότιμοι), that they keep away from them.

(82a6-c6, Grube's translation with modifications)

getting at here are the qualities that lead someone to be a good member of the *polis*, which is why such people come back as social creatures.

Before considering how social virtue relates to apparent virtue, I want to call attention to four points in this passage. First, Socrates says people with social virtue are the happiest (εὐδαιμονέστατοι) of non-philosophers and that they will have the best destination after death. Thus, not only will they have the best experience of non-philosophers after death, it seems that their social virtue provides for them the best (embodied) life possible for non-philosophers. Second, Socrates says that social virtue is what people call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’ (ἦν δὴ καλοῦσι σωφροσύνην τε καὶ δικαιοσύνην). Thus, the names ‘temperance’ and ‘justice,’ as employed by non-philosophers at any rate, refer to social virtue. Hence, social virtue is comprised of what non-philosophers call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’. That is, non-philosophers aren’t reported here to call temperance and justice ‘social virtue’, but rather what they call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’ is social virtue. Third, Socrates says that social virtue arises in the non-philosophers who have it as a result of habit and practice, not through philosophy and understanding (ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης γεγονυῖαν ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ). Thus, these conditions are developed, and so presumably settle into the soul, absent the relevant cognitive aspect(s) required for genuine virtue.

The final point to mention about this passage is that it ends with Socrates contrasting the motivations of the philosopher for mastering bodily passion with the motivations of non-philosophers for doing so. According to Socrates, philosophers keep away from bodily passions, master them, and do not surrender to them because they know that the soul must be pure when it leaves the body. Non-philosophers who control bodily passions, on the other hand, seem to fall into one of two groups, with motivations

that correspond to their characters. One group of non-philosophers, money lovers,¹⁸ avoids bodily passions (when they do) for fear of wasting their resources, while the other group, the honor lovers, does so for fear of dishonor and bad reputation. Given the way he talks here, there can be little doubt that Socrates is discussing acting temperately. However, it is less than clear whether he is here still thinking about social virtue, or has reverted to the topic of apparent temperance, or whether he thinks social virtue and apparent virtue are the same, and hence, he is thinking about both. So, I want to turn now to this investigation.

2. The case for distinguishing apparent virtue and social virtue

Having seen what Socrates says about apparent virtue and social virtue, we are now in position to investigate how they relate to one another. This discussion will span the next two sections. In the present section I will offer evidence that apparent virtue and social virtue are distinct. As we shall see, evidence for this interpretation comes from the *Phaedo* itself but we find perhaps the most persuasive support for it in the *Republic*.

Based on the foregoing, there are several reasons to think that apparent virtue differs from social virtue. First, Socrates seems to evaluate apparent virtue differently than he does social virtue.¹⁹ Whereas he disparages apparent virtue, criticizing it as slavish (ἀνδραποδώδης), Socrates seems to esteem social virtue, saying that those who

¹⁸ Socrates says “the many *kai* money-lovers,” which may suggest that these are two distinct groups. But he is best understood as describing the many as body lovers, which suggests an expegetical use of *kai* reflected in my translation. A close alternative is that Socrates is saying “the many who are money lovers,” which leaves open that some of the many are money lovers and some of the many are honor lovers.

¹⁹ See Vasiliou 2012, 17-18.

possess it will be the happiest of the non-philosophers and that they will enjoy the best fates after death. Thus, given these different appraisals, it seems that Socrates thinks apparent virtue and social virtue are different states.

Second, while Socrates says that social virtue is developed by habit and practice, he does not indicate that this is the case for apparent virtue. And given what we know about the condition, it seems possible that it is not even the sort of state that is *acquired*. That is, because it amounts to trading bodily experiences for other bodily experiences, it may be the default state, such that it is what we begin with and maintain, unless we acquire some other condition, like social virtue.

Socrates' claim that social virtue comes from habit and practice but not philosophy or understanding has led some commentators to conclude that it consists in true beliefs about the intrinsic value of virtue.²⁰ The thought is that the most likely candidate for what is habituated in the socially virtuous is a set of true, stable beliefs about virtue. If this interpretation is correct, then it is a third, and decisive, difference between social virtue and apparent virtue. Although apparent virtue enables someone to act virtuously, it is neither stable nor does it consist in beliefs about virtue itself.²¹ But according to the interpretation on offer, social virtue *does* involve true and stable beliefs about virtue, which then motivate the socially virtuous agent to act in accordance with these beliefs, and so, act virtuously.

²⁰ See Kraut 2010, 56.

²¹ The hedonic calculation of apparent virtue will issue in true beliefs about which available action is virtuous in a situation. So, perhaps it results in true beliefs about which actions are virtuous (whether or not these are beliefs about the actions *as* virtuous). But, as I discuss below, it is not about the intrinsic value of virtue.

There is, however, no indication in the *Phaedo* that people with social virtue have any beliefs about virtue, stable, true, or otherwise. But if we leave the *Phaedo* and turn to the *Republic*, we can find support for this view. In the *Republic* at 429b4-430c4, as part of a larger attempt to identify the virtues in a city, Socrates and Glaucon discuss courage. According to Socrates, one type of courage is the power of preservation of the belief about what should be feared and not abandoning it in the face of pains, pleasures, desires, or fears (430b1-2). Furthermore, this courage preserves a correct (ὀρθῆς) belief that is inculcated by laws (νομίμου). Importantly for our purposes, Socrates says that this is the definition of *social* courage (πολιτικὴν γέ, 430c4).²² Thus, it seems that Socrates is here evoking the same distinction between social virtue and genuine virtue that he stakes out in the *Reprise*. And since social virtue as discussed here in the *Republic* seems to consist in true, stable beliefs about virtue, there is reason to think that this is also the case in the *Phaedo*. And if this is the case, and social virtue consists in true beliefs about virtue, then it must be distinct from apparent virtue.

So, this passage from the *Republic* supplies the evidence absent from the *Phaedo* that social virtue consists in true beliefs about virtue. Importantly, it seems to provide further, even more explicit evidence that social virtue is distinct from apparent virtue in the *Phaedo*. In this passage, Glaucon, with the approval of Socrates, contrasts social courage with a state that consists in correct beliefs about what is to be feared but that does not come from education and has nothing to do with the law. For our purposes, it is

²² In the *Reprise*, Socrates refers to ‘popular and social virtue’ (τὴν δημοτικὴν καὶ πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν) but here only to ‘social’ courage. Nothing seems to ride on the exclusion of ‘δημοτικός’ in this passage, though.

relevant that Glaucon says that this state is found in animals and *slavish* people (ἀνδραποδώδη). Of course, as we have seen, at the end of his Closing Argument, Socrates criticizes apparent virtue as slavish (ἀνδραποδώδης, 69b6). Thus, it seems that Plato has the same sort of state in mind in both passages, namely, apparent virtue.²³ The upshot of this is the following. In the *Republic* Plato distinguishes between what he calls ‘social’ courage and slavish courage. Generalizing from courage to virtue, in the *Republic* there is a distinction between social virtue and slavish virtue. And since in the *Phaedo* Plato discusses social virtue and slavish (i.e., apparent) virtue, there is reason to think that he likewise distinguishes them in that dialogue.

3. Social virtue is a species of apparent virtue

According to the evidence we have just considered, it seems that there is good reason to think that apparent and social virtue are distinct. On this interpretation, unlike people with apparent virtue, who deal only in bodily pleasure and pain, people with social virtue are motivated by virtue and perform (or refrain from) certain actions because of their beliefs about virtue.²⁴ Although this reading has its appeal, I believe that in the *Phaedo*

²³ See Irwin 1995, 194-195, 234. Cf. Kamtekar 1998, 5.

²⁴ Vasiliou 2012 sets out this view in detail (cf. Vasiliou 2008, esp. chapter 8, sections 2 and 3). I disagree with his view in part because I disagree that apparent and social virtue are distinct. But even setting this aspect of his view aside, I think there is good reason to resist Vasiliou’s account. In particular, Vasiliou denies that the philosopher in the *Phaedo* possesses genuine virtue but possesses instead social virtue (15-16, 24). However, there are two pieces of evidence that should convince us to attribute to the Phaedonic philosopher genuine virtue. First, 83e4 Socrates explicitly says that philosophers *are* temperate and just (τούτων τοίνυν ἔνεκα οἱ δικαίως φιλομαθεῖς κόσμιοί εἰσι καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι), which suggests that they possess

social virtue is not distinct from apparent virtue, but is instead a species of apparent virtue. In this section I will make the case for this claim. I shall begin by reassessing the evidence that favors distinguishing social virtue from apparent virtue, all of which is open to question. In contrast, there is very strong reason to think that in the *Phaedo* social virtue is a form of apparent virtue. Accordingly, I will end this section by offering positive reason to think that social virtue is a form of apparent virtue.

3.1 Reassessing the evidence that apparent and social virtue are distinct

The first reason considered above for distinguishing apparent and social virtue was that whereas Socrates seems to disparage the former, referring to it as an image of true virtue and calling it slavish, he seems positive about the latter, saying that its possessors are the happiest of non-philosophers.²⁵ In fact, though, this reason is rather weak, since these different evaluations are consistent with one another. That is, Socrates can at the same time maintain that some person has a condition that is slavish *and* that that person is the happiest of all non-philosophers. Rather than betraying an inconsistency within Socrates' beliefs, it may simply reflect Socrates' low opinion a life without philosophy.²⁶ Indeed, in

these, and presumably all other, virtues. Second, Socrates says that philosophers will join the gods after death (69c5-d6, 82b7-c2, 114c3), but that souls with social virtue are reincarnated (82b4). Thus, Socrates must think that the philosophers of the *Phaedo* do not merely have social virtue but have genuine virtue.

²⁵ It is worth pointing out that Kraut 2010, 56 does not take Socrates' use of 'σκιαγραφία' to be as strong a condemnation as most commentators do. Instead, Kraut interprets it to suggest a "thin" and "underdeveloped" understanding of virtue.

²⁶ Compare with Diotima's (and so Socrates') claim that gazing at the Beautiful, if anywhere, is where human life is worth living (*Symposium*, 211d2-3).

the context of his Closing Argument, Socrates says that apparent virtue is fit for a slave and is an image of true virtue to highlight and stress the value of genuine virtue. In the Reprise, though, the relevant contrast is not between deficient virtue and genuine virtue but is between non-philosophers with deficient virtue and non-philosophers who lack it.²⁷ That is, in the Reprise, Socrates' point is that given the pitiful state of non-philosophers, those with apparent virtue—despite its deficiency in comparison with genuine virtue—are still in a better condition than those who do not possess it.²⁸

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that Socrates does not say that people with social virtue are happy, but only says that they are the happiest (εὐδαιμονέστατοι) of non-philosophers. Although this may seem to indicate that they are happy, it does not. In Greek as well as in English, the claim that someone is the happiest member of some group is consistent with that person being unhappy. And given that Socrates has just claimed that a person can only be happy when she is with the divine, immortal, and wise (81a4), he mustn't think that people with social virtue are happy, in life or in the afterlife. So, all Socrates is saying when he calls those with social virtue the happiest of non-philosophers is that given the miserable condition of other non-philosophers, those with

²⁷ It seems that even in the earlier passage, not everything Socrates says about apparent virtue is condemnation. For he calls the temperance of (at least some) non-philosophers εὐήθη, which can mean 'naïve.' Indeed, he later uses it to refer to himself at 100d4, and Thrasymachus says it of him in the *Republic* at 349b.

²⁸ This is so if only because people with apparent virtue are the least likely of non-philosophers to act viciously.

social virtue are the happiest, at least by being the least miserable.²⁹ Again, this is all consistent with this condition being slavish, as given that humans are capable of genuine virtue, anything short of it is not worthy of them.³⁰

The second reason we considered for distinguishing social and apparent virtue was that Socrates says the former arises from habit and practice but doesn't say the same about the latter. This reason is defeasible, though, because we cannot infer from different origins to different conditions. This is clear if we consider other cases where a single condition can arise from desperate sources. For instance, some people might be naturally disposed to having a low resting heart rate, while others have to train extensively to attain one. Or, for a Platonic example, in Book VI of the *Republic* Socrates indicates that there are two ways for someone naturally inclined to philosophy to develop into a genuine philosopher: guidance from philosophical rulers in a well-ordered state, or divine dispensation (492e5-7).

There is further reason to doubt that Socrates' claim supports distinguishing apparent and social virtue. As noted above, Socrates never says how one acquires

²⁹ Thus, I think that Kraut 2010, 54-55 overstates the case in writing that those with social virtue are not only praiseworthy for their virtuous actions, but because of their virtuous intentions. There is nothing in the text that suggests that they have such motivations, and indeed, textual evidence suggests that they perform virtuous actions aiming at pleasure and avoiding pain. And although Kraut is correct to point out that Socrates does not think that most people are exceedingly vicious, this does not require that Socrates believe that most people have virtuous motivations. It can be enough that they perform virtuous actions. Indeed, it is the actions—both good and bad—for which souls are rewarded/punished in the afterlife (113e1).

³⁰ Especially if 'slavish' is meant to capture that such the souls are enslaved to the body and its desires, as suggested above.

apparent virtue. Thus, he says nothing to rule out the possibility that apparent virtue, like social virtue, arises from habit and practice. And, based on what we can tease out from what Socrates says, I believe we have reason to believe that apparent virtue, like social virtue, results from habit and practice. To see this, recall that apparent virtue involves the exchange of pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, and fears for fears. But now consider what a successful exchange of, for instance, one pleasure for another pleasure would require. Surely it would require that the person give up one pleasure for another pleasure. But an exchange of pleasure need not require that both pleasures are present to the person. That is to say, although one of the pleasures involved in the exchange might be present, the other pleasure might be in the future. Furthermore, recall that the person with apparent virtue can act virtuously; the person with apparent courage can face death, and the person with apparent temperance can resist her appetites. Of course, when they do so, they are acting on account of fears and pleasures or pains, but they nonetheless act virtuously. And it is important to realize that not everyone does. After all, Socrates makes a point of saying “the courageous among them” and “the temperate among them”, which indicates that only some non-philosophers have apparent courage or apparent temperance. Thus, while some non-philosophers do exchange pleasures for other pleasures, others, perhaps most, do not.³¹ What could explain the difference? After all, as

³¹ Bobonich 2002, 485 claims all non-philosophers engage in the wrong exchange, and that this is sufficient for apparent virtue. This results in the unwelcome conclusion that all non-philosophers have apparent virtue. Of course, even non-philosophers without apparent virtue give up certain pleasures by indulging in other pleasures. But they do not *exchange* (καταλλάσσω) any pleasures, as an exchange requires that one has the pleasures in hand and then trades them away, rather than simply losing out on them (cf. Bailly 2011: 296). Thus, all non-philosophers trade in bodily pleasures, but not all exchange them.

body lovers, the person with apparent temperance and the person who lacks it both desire and value bodily pleasure. So, their ultimate desires and valuations cannot be the difference. But for some reason the person who lacks apparent temperance does not exchange one pleasure for another. The most likely explanation for this difference is that the person who lacks apparent temperance gives in to the present pleasure and so does not effect an exchange. In contrast, the person with apparent temperance does not give in to the present pleasure, but instead resists it and successfully exchanges it for a greater pleasure, likely in the future. Importantly for our purposes, doing so requires self-control, the very sort of ability that one has to develop and train.³² And since not every non-philosopher has it, and it does not come from wisdom,³³ this ability to resist present pleasure, and so engage an exchange of pleasures—that is, to have apparent virtue—must come from practice and habit. Hence, a proper understanding of apparent virtue suggests that like social virtue, it comes from habit and practice.³⁴

So much then for the possibility that apparent and social virtue have different origins. But there is still the third reason above, namely, the possibility that social virtue

³² Perhaps some people have it naturally, but at the very least, it is the sort of condition that can be developed through practice and habit. Indeed, although Protagoras argues in his great speech that virtue can be taught, his notion of teaching seems much closer to inculcation through practice and habit, rather than anything straightforwardly cognitive. See Barney 2005, 120.

³³ Body lovers in the *Phaedo* do not care about or possess wisdom. Hence, their apparent virtue does not come from the art of measurement as described in the *Protagoras*.

³⁴ This does not undermine the claim that the apparent virtues also come from vices. The ability to engage in a profitable exchange of bodily pleasures might come from habit, but that does not mean that it also is not still vicious.

consists in true beliefs about the value of virtue. As noted above, the *Phaedo* itself provides us with no evidence for this view, but the *Republic* does. Recall that because the *Republic* distinguishes between social courage and slavish courage, it seems to provide conclusive evidence that social virtue is distinct from slavish (i.e., apparent) virtue in the *Phaedo*. As I shall now argue, though, if properly understood, this passage does not warrant this conclusion.

In short, despite employing similar vocabulary, there is good reason to doubt that the passages are concerned with the same states.³⁵ Let's begin with the condition that Glaucon in the *Republic* calls 'slavish'. Although Socrates does apply the same term—'ἀνδραποδώδης'—to apparent virtue in the *Phaedo*, there is reason to think the conditions to which this term applies are not the same. As we know, apparent virtue in the *Phaedo* is characterized by exchanging bodily pleasures and pains for other bodily pleasures and pains. However, there is no indication—aside, perhaps, from the term 'slavish'—that this is the case for the courage Plato has in mind in this section of the *Republic*. The type of courage mentioned in the *Republic* is instead characterized by a lack of education, in contrast with social courage, which is inculcated through education and the law.³⁶ Thus, it looks like in this *Republic* passage, Plato may be referring to something other than the apparent courage of the *Phaedo*. In fact, there is evidence in this

³⁵ Alternatively, even if they are the same states, Plato has either changed his view of these states, or is presenting them in such a different way, that the *Republic* passage cannot inform us about these states as presented in the *Phaedo*. Cf. Archer-Hind 1883, Appendix I.

³⁶ See Kamtekar 1998, 5 for the same point. Although we ultimately agree that slavish courage in the *Republic* differs from the hedonic-based slavish courage in the *Phaedo*, Kamtekar takes the *Republic* version to be the result of fear of punishment, rather than rashness as I suggest here.

passage of the *Republic* that Plato is thinking of rashness. For, in addition to saying that it is slavish, Glaucon also compares it to the courage found in animals (θηριώδη). While such a description is notably absent from the *Phaedo* passage, it is present elsewhere in the corpus. In particular, we see it at *Laches* 197b, where Nicias distinguishes between courage and rashness (θρασύτης). For our purposes, it is significant that Nicias says that the latter is possessed by animals (as well as by children) but he does not appear to be ascribing to animals (or children) the hedonic calculus characteristic of apparent virtue.³⁷ More importantly, the very idea of rashness, which is characterized by haste and a lack of reflection, runs contrary to any sort of hedonic calculus, which requires consideration.³⁸ Furthermore, Nicias characterizes rashness as a condition that lacks sense (ἄνοια), not one that aims at pleasure.³⁹ This is similar to what Glaucon says in the *Republic*, as he is talking about a condition mistaken for courage⁴⁰ that comes about without learning. Accordingly, although all three passages—the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and the *Laches*

³⁷ He also reports that people confuse rashness for courage, which might be interpreted as an indication that the condition that Socrates identifies as what is called ‘courage’ in the *Phaedo* is rashness. However, this cannot be the case, since as we have seen, what is called ‘courage’ applies (most) to those with genuine courage (i.e., philosophers) but Nicias claims that rashness opposes genuine courage.

³⁸ Moreover, actions like facing death in order to protect cubs, which are popularly attributed to lions—one of the animals mentioned in the *Laches* discussion (196e3)—are not typically considered hedonistic. See also *Symposium* 207a5–c1 where animals are described as acting for the sake of love, willing to die and face starvation for their offspring.

³⁹ Socrates does say that apparent courage is illogical (ἄλογος, 68d11) in the *Phaedo* but this is because it comes from its opposite, rather than because it is senseless.

⁴⁰ Glaucon claims that he is sure that Socrates does not make this mistake, which implies that others do.

passages—discuss a condition mistaken for courage, it seems like the *Phaedo* discussion of apparent courage is the odd one out, differing as it does from the other two.⁴¹

If the foregoing is correct, then we have reason to doubt that slavish courage in the *Republic* is the same as apparent courage in the *Phaedo*. Hence, we have reason to doubt that this passage of the *Republic* draws the same contrast between apparent virtue and social virtue found in the *Phaedo*. But this still leaves the possibility that the social courage from this passage of the *Republic* is the same as the social virtue in the *Phaedo*. And if this were the case, then there would be reason to think that in the *Phaedo* Plato distinguishes between social virtue and apparent virtue. On this suggestion, social virtue in the *Phaedo* would be the same as social virtue in the *Republic*. And since social virtue in the *Republic* is surely not the same as apparent virtue in the *Phaedo*,⁴² it would follow that social virtue in the *Phaedo* is not the same as apparent virtue. However, I think there is good reason to doubt that social courage in the *Republic* passage maps onto social virtue in the *Phaedo*.

One reason is that in the *Republic* Socrates' qualification (i.e., πολιτικὴν γέ) of the condition I have been referring to as 'social courage' indicates that he is talking about the courage of the city (*polis*), in contrast to *human* courage. Indeed, at this point in the discussion in the *Republic* Socrates is focused exclusively on the virtues as they are manifested in the city.⁴³ So, when properly situated, the passage seems to suggest that

⁴¹ Plato's view need not be inconsistent across the three passages, as the mistake may well lie with the many who have an incorrect and inconsistent conception of courage. Indeed, as Aristotle discusses in NE 3.8, many different states are often mistaken for courage.

⁴² Cf. Barney 2005, 120.

⁴³ See Kamtekar 1998, fn. 8 and Sedley 2013, fn 25.

Socrates means that social, or better yet in this context, political, courage is what makes a *city*, not any individual, courageous. However, since it is clear that the social virtue of the *Phaedo* belongs to individuals, it seems that it cannot be the same as the social/political courage of this part of the *Republic*.

In response, one might argue that although Socrates is referring to the courage of the city in this *Republic* passage, since this courage ultimately relies on the courage of the auxiliaries, he really does have in mind a sort of courage that resides in individuals. But even if this is so—and we grant that social courage in the *Republic* really is a type of human courage—there are still reasons to deny that social courage in the *Republic* is the same sort of virtue we find in the *Phaedo*. First, social courage in the *Republic* is inculcated differently than Phaedonic social virtue is. As we have seen, in the *Republic* social courage is the result of education (*παιδεία*). But in the *Phaedo* social virtue is the result of habit and practice (*ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης*) without understanding (*ἄνευ νοῦ*).⁴⁴ Thus, whereas social courage in the *Republic* necessarily has a cognitive element, this is not the case with social virtue in the *Phaedo*, which might suggest that they are different psychological conditions.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In the Myth of Er at the end of the *Republic* Socrates does mention people who “participated in virtue through habit and without philosophy” (619d1). Vasiliou 2012, 9 takes this to be the same sort of state as referred to as ‘social courage’ at 430b. However, given that in the Myth of Er these people participate in virtue through habit, it seems more likely that they are the people with social virtue in the *Phaedo* (cf. Barney 2005, 120). Hence, I disagree with Broadie 2005, 100 that the people mentioned in this bit of the Myth of Er are genuinely virtuous.

⁴⁵ In his translation of the *Republic* Paul Shorey suggests in a note at 430b that Plato has four grades of courage, the middle two of which are social courage. Shorey maintains that the higher of the two is

Another reason is that there does not seem to be any room for social courage in the *Phaedo*, as social virtue appears to be exhausted by what is called ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’. Recall that Socrates says, “The happiest of these [non-philosophers]... are those who have practiced popular and social virtue, which they call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’” (82b1). Thus, he seems to restrict social virtue, in this context at any rate, to some kind of temperance and some kind of justice. That is, he indicates that social virtue simply is what people call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’. So, there does not appear to be the possibility of social courage in the *Phaedo*, which suggests that the *Republic* passage is about some other sort of state, albeit with a similar gloss.

One might object that Socrates’ omission of courage at *Phaedo* 82d1 does not rule out a form of social courage comparable to social temperance and social justice.

However, there is good evidence from elsewhere in the corpus that social virtue in its primary sense is limited to temperance and justice.⁴⁶ Perhaps the most striking and certainly the most extended example can be found in the *Protagoras* during Protagoras’ ‘great speech’ (320c6-328d2). Throughout this speech Protagoras refers to temperance

described in this passage, leaving open the possibility that the lower form, which is perhaps lower because it is not the result of education, is what we find in the *Phaedo*.

⁴⁶ Hence, we would have to conclude that in the *Republic* what is glossed as ‘social courage’ does not fit in with what is meant by ‘social virtue’ in some other dialogues, at least dialogues that pre-date the *Republic*. However, it seems plausible that even in the *Republic* strictly speaking social virtue is limited to temperance and justice. At 500d5 Socrates refers to ‘temperance, justice, and the whole of δημοτικῆς virtue.’ Recall that in the *Phaedo* Socrates employs the same word when identifying social virtue (“τὴν δημοτικὴν καὶ πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν”). Thus, even in the *Republic* Plato appears to limit what we have been calling ‘social virtue’ to temperance and justice. For a similar observation, see Kahn 1996, 217-218 (though also see 223) and Adkins 1960 *passim*.

and justice as ‘social virtue’, but *never* mentions courage, as a virtue, as a part of social virtue, or as a part of the political art.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems that on Protagoras’ understanding, which Socrates does not challenge, social virtue is restricted to temperance and justice.⁴⁸

If we turn to the end of Diotima’s speech in the *Symposium* we find a similar discussion. Diotima does not explicitly identify temperance and justice with social virtue, but she does characterize them as dealing with the proper ordering of cities and households (209a5), which is precisely how Protagoras identifies social virtue prior to his speech (319a1). Thus, there seems to be agreement across the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* regarding social virtue, in particular in identifying it with forms of temperance and justice. Moreover, at the very end of her speech, Diotima contrasts this social virtue with the genuine virtue of the philosopher. In fact, she implies that the social virtue of the best non-philosophers is an image of virtue (212a4, εἶδωλα ἀρετῆς), which, of course, is

⁴⁷ He does mention cowardice but indicates that the way to avoid it is to keep one’s body fit (326c1). Thus, courage is quite unlike the other virtues Protagoras discusses. Indeed, Protagoras confirms that this is his view—which is itself likely a reflection of the popular view—late in the discussion: “What I am saying to you, Socrates, is that all these are parts of virtue, and that while four of them [wisdom, temperance, piety, and justice] are reasonably close to each other, courage is completely different from all the rest” (349d2-3, Lombardo and Bell translation).

⁴⁸ Two further points relating Protagoras’ view with what we find in the *Phaedo*. First, given that the *Protagoras* ends with Socrates and Protagoras identifying virtue with hedonic calculation, we can tentatively conclude that the same goes for social virtue discussed in his speech. This would indicate that like apparent virtue, social virtue is based on hedonic calculation. Second, as noted above, the ‘teaching’ advocated by Protagoras seems much more like training and habit-forming, which is precisely how social virtue in the *Phaedo* is inculcated. This sort of teaching is importantly different from the education responsible for social courage in the *Republic*, which is instituted by the rulers and so is based on wisdom.

similar to what Socrates says about apparent virtue in his Closing Argument, calling it ‘σκιαγραφία’ of true virtue. Thus, in the *Symposium* Plato unflatteringly describes social virtue—again limited to temperance and justice—in the same way he does apparent virtue in the *Phaedo*.

By investigating these two passages from other dialogues,⁴⁹ we see that Plato—perhaps following common usage—restricts social virtue to temperance and justice. Thus, we have reason to think that Plato is employing this same notion of social virtue in the *Phaedo*, where it is once again limited to temperance and justice. This, in turn, gives us good reason to think that the discussion of social courage in the *Republic* is importantly different from the discussion of social virtue in the *Phaedo*. Hence, there is good reason to think that this passage from the *Republic* does not shed relevant light on the relationship between apparent virtue and social virtue in the *Phaedo*. Accordingly, even if we understand the *Republic* passage as contrasting social courage with a type of slavish courage, this gives us no reason to think apparent virtue differs from social virtue in the *Phaedo*. It also means that the characterization of social courage in the *Republic* is not the same as social virtue in the *Phaedo*. Moreover, by considering the passages from the *Protagoras* and *Symposium*, we have at least some reason to think that social virtue in the *Phaedo* is importantly related to apparent temperance and apparent justice. As I shall now argue, there is sufficient reason from within the *Phaedo* itself to draw the same conclusion.

⁴⁹ To these two we could also add *Republic* 500d5, mentioned above (fn. 46).

3.2 *Social virtue is apparent temperance and apparent justice*

I have just argued that the evidence does not warrant distinguishing between apparent virtue and social virtue in the *Phaedo*. In this section I want to offer further positive evidence that they are not distinct states. As we have just seen, in other Platonic discussions, social virtue is restricted to some form of temperance and justice.⁵⁰ Accordingly, I will argue that likewise, in the *Phaedo* social virtue is apparent temperance and apparent justice.⁵¹

I believe decisive evidence that social virtue is a species of apparent virtue comes in the Reprise when Socrates identifies what motivates non-philosophers to act temperately. As we have seen, shortly after mentioning social virtue, Socrates contrasts the philosopher's motivations for avoiding bodily passions with the motivations of the money lover and the honor lover. Because it is important, I will again quote in full:

⁵⁰ Irwin 1995, 384 argues that social virtue is a species of apparent virtue, but maintains that it is a superior type of apparent virtue, and presumably thinks that it includes a form of courage. This would mean that social virtue is apparent virtue plus some additional positive feature. The most likely candidate for this additional feature would be a concern for virtue itself. However, as we shall see, since all non-philosophers are body lovers, which means that they ultimately value only bodily pleasure (including honor), there is no room for them to care about virtue in itself. Accordingly, there does not seem to be any space for the view that social virtue is a superior species of apparent virtue.

⁵¹ Strictly speaking, social virtue is 'what is called 'temperance' and 'justice'', which, as we have seen, refers more to actions than full character states. However, since Socrates is talking about non-philosophers who participate in what is called 'temperance' and 'justice', we know that they have merely apparent temperance and justice.

No one may join the company of the gods who has not practiced philosophy and who is not completely pure when he departs from life, no one but the lover of learning. It is for this reason, my friends, Simmias and Cebes, that those who practice philosophy in the right way keep away from bodily appetites, master them, and do not surrender themselves to them; it is not at all for the fear of wasting their substance and of poverty, which the majority, i.e., the money lovers fear, nor for the fear of dishonor, and ill repute, like the ambitious and lovers of honor, that they keep away from them.

Two features of this passage support my interpretation of social virtue. One is that although Socrates does not explicitly mention temperance here, it is clear that he is referring to it. Socrates' characterization of "mastering and not surrendering" to bodily appetites recalls the earlier definition of what is called 'temperance,' namely "not to get swept off one's feet by one's appetites" (68c6-d1), as well as his earlier claim that people with apparent temperance "master certain pleasures" (69a1). And, as when he discusses apparent virtue earlier, he is here allowing that non-philosophers can act temperately, but that they do so for reasons relating to other bodily desires.⁵²

The other feature of this passage that supports my interpretation is Socrates' mention of money lovers and honor lovers. Socrates' previous claims commit him to including people with social virtue among the money lovers and honor lovers. Recall that

⁵² Note that although honor lovers are more closely associated with apparent courage than they are with apparent temperance, Socrates is not describing honor lovers acting courageously at the end of this passage; he is describing honor lovers acting temperately on account of shame and ambition.

he earlier identifies money lovers and honor lovers as species of body lovers (68c1). And he also claims that if someone is not a philosopher, then she is a body lover (68b6). Thus, all non-philosophers, including those with social virtue, are either money lovers or honor lovers (or both). Thus, even those people with social virtue act temperately for the reasons Socrates here contrasts with philosophical reasons. And as we know, in his Closing Argument Socrates identifies apparent virtue as dealing with exchanging bodily pleasures for other bodily pleasures. Hence, because social virtue also involves this very same exchange, it must be the case that social virtue is the same as, or at least a species of, apparent virtue.⁵³ And since we know that social virtue is what people call ‘temperance’ and ‘justice’, we can conclude that social virtue is a species of apparent virtue, namely, apparent temperance and apparent justice.⁵⁴

4. An account of apparent virtue

I have argued that in the *Phaedo* social virtue is a species of apparent virtue. Thus, in the *Phaedo* apparent virtue is the only form of deficient virtue. This means that the only form

⁵³ See Irwin 1977, 162, 322 and Irwin 1995, 235 (fn. 16).

⁵⁴ If this is correct, one might wonder why Socrates thinks that those with social virtue in particular (and not apparent virtue in general) are the happiest of non-philosophers. I suggest that Socrates must think that it is possible for someone to have apparent courage without having apparent temperance or apparent justice, and vice versa. And given what it might take to possess apparent courage—a control over fear—it is plausible that someone with this condition is more likely to act viciously or violently—perhaps out of anger—than someone with apparent temperance and apparent justice, which requires control over appetites. Thus, it seems likely that there is not a unity of apparent virtue, and that those who only possess apparent courage are more likely to act viciously than those with apparent temperance and justice.

of virtue open to non-philosophers is based on a hedonic calculation.⁵⁵ This is a worthwhile conclusion on its own, but before ending, I want to develop a more complete characterization of apparent virtue. In order to do so, I will try to determine Plato's considered evaluation of deficient virtue in the *Phaedo*. In addition, I will examine in more detail the motivations of agents with apparent virtue. I'll begin with the latter.

My particular interest here is whether people with apparent virtue are motivated by virtue or conceive of their actions as virtuous. In the course of investigating the relationship between social virtue and apparent virtue, I considered a version of this thesis. The view entertained was that people with social virtue possess and act on beliefs about the intrinsic value of virtue. Thus, on this view, these agents conceive of their actions as virtuous and are motivated by virtue. Although we saw that there is no direct evidence that this is how to understand social virtue in the *Phaedo*, we can now consider the possibility that some apparently virtuous agents—not necessarily only those with social virtue—do conceive of their actions as virtuous.⁵⁶ Of course, because all non-philosophers are body lovers, and so motivated only by bodily pleasure and pain, they

⁵⁵ Because the philosopher pursues wisdom and virtue, which is pleasurable, some commentators have argued that she too is a hedonist (e.g., Gosling and Taylor 1982). However, there is no indication at all in the dialogue that the philosopher is motivated by wisdom and virtue because of pleasure (cf. See Weiss 1989 and Shorey 1971, 30). Indeed, this runs contrary to the picture we get of the philosopher throughout the dialogue.

⁵⁶ For this understanding of apparent virtue, see Bobonich 2002, 17. Kraut 2010, 55 claims that non-philosophers have conflicting beliefs about virtue, but thinks that one of the beliefs is that virtue is valuable in itself.

would never be motivated by virtue itself.⁵⁷ Simply put, non-philosophers do not think that virtue is intrinsically valuable, and so virtue alone cannot motivate them. But might a non-philosopher value virtue instrumentally? That is, could a non-philosopher value virtue insofar as she believed that virtue always maximizes pleasure, at least in the long term? If the answer is ‘yes’, then a person with apparent virtue could conceive of an action as virtuous and so perform it on account of that belief.

In order to determine whether or not this is a live possibility, we must recall the two points made about what is called ‘virtue’ at the end of §1.1. First, non-philosophers have a superficial conception of what virtue is, one that focuses on actions but misses out on what virtue really is. Thus, because they do not grasp what virtue is, a non-philosopher could conceive of an action as virtuous without that conception providing her with any motivation to act. Accordingly, it is certainly possible that some people with apparent virtue do conceive of their actions as virtuous. This is because if they did in fact understand what genuine virtue is, they would understand that it outstrips the value of bodily pleasure, and so, be motivated by it. However, since they do not understand genuine virtue, they can believe that an action is virtuous—based on their superficial understanding of virtue—and fail to be motivated by this belief.

The second point is that there is, in fact, a general consensus among non-philosophers about what virtue is. That is, given that all, or at least most, non-

⁵⁷ This allows that all else being equal, they could sometimes be motivated by an action because they thought it was good. However, whenever there was a conflict between maximizing their positive bodily states and doing what they thought was virtuous, the former would win out. Moreover, as we shall see, because non-philosophers have a superficial conception of virtue, they do not have the proper conception of virtue, and so, fail to see the value in it.

philosophers call the same actions ‘courageous’ and the same actions ‘temperate’, there is widespread agreement about what these virtues are.⁵⁸ Thus, in general non-philosophers will recognize when someone acts virtuously. But by the same token, they will recognize when someone fails to act virtuously or acts viciously. And for this reason, it seems that all people with apparent virtue would have to take into account whether or not a prospective action is virtuous when they go about performing their hedonic calculation. After all, painful legal punishments or negative social repercussions could follow any vicious action.⁵⁹ Thus, in order to engage in profitable exchanges, people with apparent virtue would have to be sensitive to what is called ‘virtue’ and would typically have to act in accordance with what they believe is virtuous. So, I suggest that it is not only possible that people with apparent virtue conceive of their actions as virtuous and value virtue instrumentally, both must be the norm among them.

If this is correct, then there seem to be striking similarities between the sort of virtue that Plato ascribes to the best of non-philosophers and the most well-known hedonist of antiquity, or any era, Epicurus. We know from his extant works and from reports of his views that Epicurus advised honoring virtues only if they bring pleasure,

⁵⁸ In light of this agreement, it seems that non-philosophers are not subjectivists. Indeed, although they are hedonistic and accept that pleasure is the standard of value, they do not seem to think that their own pleasure determines what is virtuous. This does, however, leave open the possibility that they are relativists of one stripe or another.

⁵⁹ As we have seen, according to Socrates, honor lovers act temperately for fear of negative social repercussions for failing to do so (82c5-6). Moreover, in his speech Protagoras recommends that one claim to be just even if one is unjust, stressing the negative consequences for acting unjustly and being exposed as vicious.

but saying ‘goodbye’ to them if they did not.⁶⁰ Further, Epicureans portrayed the virtues as slaves to pleasure, with the sole function of guarding a person from pain or alerting her when a potential action might have negative social consequences.⁶¹ Despite this disdainful attitude toward virtues, Epicurus thought one should always perform virtuous action. For, he believed that no one could ever be completely confident that her vicious actions would remain concealed.⁶² Thus, on his view virtue is not intrinsically valuable, but it is instrumentally valuable, in particular, in helping one to avoid pain. It seems to me that this is the very sort of attitude that Plato attributes to the best of the non-philosophers in the *Phaedo*, namely those with apparent virtue.

So, Plato attributes to non-philosophers a sophisticated form of deficient virtue in the *Phaedo*. But what does he think about those people who possess it? Based on what we have seen, Plato does not have a wholly negative view of those with apparent virtue, despite his appraisal of this condition in comparison to genuine virtue. To begin with, people with apparent virtue do avoid vicious action and perform virtuous actions. Although they do not act for the correct reasons, this does not make their actions worthless.⁶³ After all, whatever their reasons, people with apparent virtue can typically be counted on to do the right thing in many situations, especially in a city with decent laws and law enforcement. And those with social virtue in particular can be counted on to

⁶⁰ LS 21M. Note that we find a similar phrase employed in the *Phaedo*. In particular, see 82d1, where the philosophers “says ‘goodbye’” to bodily concerns.

⁶¹ LS 21O.

⁶² LS 22A.

⁶³ *Pace* Kraut 2010, 54-55. As noted above (fn. 29), souls in the afterlife are rewarded for their good actions, despite their base motivations.

contribute to the harmony of the city. Moreover, as I have argued, the apparently virtuous act well because of something about themselves, namely control over their passions. However, by locating value only in the bodily, no matter how much control they have over their passions or how many virtuous actions they perform, non-philosophers can at best only have a sort of counterfeit virtue.

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