

Plato's *Philebus*

Translated by David Horan

Persons in the Dialogue: Socrates, Protarchus, Philebus

^{11A} **Socrates:** Well, Protarchus, be clear now as to what proposition you are about to accept from Philebus, and what proposition of mine you are to oppose if it does not accord with your thinking. Would you like us to ^{11B} summarise both?

Protarchus: Yes, certainly.

Soc: So, Philebus, for his part, says that what is good for every creature is enjoyment, pleasure and delight and anything in harmony with that general category. Whereas I contend that not these but understanding, reasoning, memory and their kindred, right opinion and true thinking, are better and more desirable than pleasure for all of those who are able to acquire them, and that they are supremely beneficial to anyone who can attain ^{11C} them now or in the future. Isn't that the sort of thing we both said, Philebus?

Philebus: Yes, entirely so, Socrates.

Soc: Well, Protarchus, do you accept the proposition that has just been assigned to you?

Prot: I must accept it, since the fair Philebus has withdrawn.

Soc: In that case, should we somehow ascertain the truth about this by all possible means?

Prot: Yes, we should.

Soc: ^{11D} Well then, let's agree on something else besides this.

Prot: On what?

Soc: That each of us will now be attempting to indicate some state or disposition of the soul, capable of providing a blessed life to all people. Is this not so?

Prot: This is so.

Soc: Will you say that the state is one of enjoyment, while I, in turn, say that it is one of understanding?

Prot: That's it.

Soc: And what if some other state turns out to be better than these? In that case, if it proves to be more akin to pleasure ^{11E} then both our suggestions would be inferior to the life based firmly upon that condition, while the life of pleasure ^{12A} would be superior to that of understanding. Is this so?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: But if it is more like understanding, would understanding be victorious over pleasure and would pleasure be inferior? Do you say that this is now agreed or what do you say?

Prot: Well, I think so anyway.

Soc: And what about Philebus? What do you say?

Phil: It seems to me that pleasure is and will be completely victorious, but you should recognise this yourself, Protarchus.

Prot: Having handed the proposition over to me, Philebus, you may no longer control my agreements with Socrates or the disagreements either.

Phil: ^{12B} What you say is true. In fact, I now renounce it and call the goddess herself as witness.

Prot: And we shall act as your supporting witnesses to the fact that you have said this. Anyway, Socrates, we should try to proceed to the next stages of our discussion regardless of the willingness of Philebus or his wishes.

Soc: ^{12C} We should try, beginning with the actual goddess herself, whom Philebus here says is called Aphrodite even though her truest name is pleasure.

Prot: Yes, correct.

Soc: Protarchus, my constant awe in relation to the names of the gods is not quite human; no, it is beyond the greatest fear. So I shall now address Aphrodite¹ in the manner which is dear to that goddess. However, I know that pleasure is complex and as I said, it is necessary to begin with that, and reflect on and consider the sort of nature it possesses. In fact, it sounds as if it is only one thing; yet it has assumed multiple forms, and these are, in some way, unlike one another. Yes, think about it: we say that an unrestrained ^{12D} person has pleasure, while someone self-controlled is also pleased by that very self-control. What's more, someone devoid of intelligence and full of stupid opinions and hopes is pleased, and yet the men of understanding take pleasure in that very understanding. Now how could anyone say that each of these pleasures is like one another and not be regarded, quite rightly, as stupid?

Prot: Yes, Socrates, they originate under opposite circumstances. However, the pleasures themselves are not opposite to one another. Indeed how could pleasure ^{12E} not be completely like pleasure and how could this, of all things, not be like itself?

Soc: Yes, my friend, and colour is like colour. Colour will never be different based upon colour as a whole, and yet we all realise that black and white are different and happen to be completely opposite. And of course, shape is like shape on the same basis and as a class it is all one. However, some of its ^{13A} subdivisions are completely opposite to one another, others have lots of differences and we shall find numerous other instances of such distinctions. So do not be persuaded by this argument, which says all of the complete opposites constitute a unity. No, I am afraid we shall find that some pleasures are the opposite of other pleasures.

Prot: Perhaps, but what harm will that do to my proposition?

Soc: I shall suggest that, although they are dissimilar, you are assigning them a different name when you assert that all pleasures are good. Now no one will put forward the argument that pleasures are not pleasant, but I do say that many are bad, ^{13B} while some are good. However, you refer to them all as good, though you agree that they are not alike if someone compels you to do so in discussion. Well, then, what is the same in good and bad pleasures alike, which makes you call all pleasures good?

¹ The *Seventh Epistle* (335b) criticises the misuse of the name of Aphrodite to refer to sexual pleasure. Later in the *Philebus* (26b-c) Socrates will claim that she brings law and order to counteract the vice of humanity.

Prot: What are you saying, Socrates? Do you really think that anyone who proposes that the good is pleasure will agree with this, and then tolerate ^{13C} your suggestion that there are some good pleasures but others that are bad?

Soc: And yet you will state that they are not like one another, and that some are opposites.

Prot: But not insofar as they are pleasures.

Soc: We are carried back again to the same argument, Protarchus, and so we shall say that pleasure is not different from pleasure and that all pleasures are alike. The examples we gave just now make no impression upon us and we go on behaving and talking like the most inept ^{13D} beginners in the conduct of discourse.

Prot: What do you mean?

Soc: That if I copy you and dare to defend myself by saying that the unlike is completely like the unlike, I shall be forced to say the same thing as you: we shall prove worse than beginners, and our discussion will collapse and come to nought. So let us work backwards, and perhaps we may be able to come to some agreement with one another by reverting to our original propositions.

Prot: How? Tell me.

Soc: ^{13E} Assume, Protarchus, that I, in turn, am being questioned by you.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: Take understanding, knowledge, reason and anything else I proposed at the outset and declared to be good when I asked what good is. Now does this proposition not run into the same problem as yours?

Prot: How?

Soc: All the branches of knowledge taken together seem numerous and some of them are unlike one another. But if some turn out, somehow, to be opposites, ^{14A} would I be a worthy dialectician now, if I were to say that knowledge does not become unlike knowledge because I was afraid of that statement about opposites? Wouldn't our discussion then be reduced to nothing, like some fairy tale, and would we then be saved by something irrational?

Prot: No, that simply must not happen except what you said about being saved. Anyway, the equal treatment of your proposition and mine is quite acceptable: assume there are many pleasures and let them be unlike, and assume there are many kinds of knowledge and let them be different.

Soc: ^{14B} Well let's not conceal the difference between your concept of the good and mine. We should set them before us for all to see, and be confident that, when tested, in some way, they may reveal whether pleasure, understanding or some third option should be said to be the good; for surely we are not in competition as to whether my views will prevail over yours or yours over mine. No, somehow we should both strive together for the supreme truth.

Prot: Yes, we should.

Soc: ^{14C} Well let's make the issue more definite by means of consensus.

Prot: What issue do you mean?

Soc: One which presents a difficulty for everybody, though some meet it willingly, others, on occasion, unwillingly.

Prot: Speak more plainly.

Soc: I am referring to a natural wonder which has emerged from this discussion. Yes, saying that many things are one and one is many is a wonder, and it is easy to argue against anyone who makes either proposition.

Prot: Do you mean when someone says that I, Protarchus, am one by nature, ^{14D} and again, that there are many of me which are opposite to one another, proposing that the same person is large and small, light and heavy, and so on, endlessly?

Soc: Protarchus, you have described the more commonplace wonders of the one and the many, but I think most people agree by now not to bother with such instances, appreciating that they are childish, facile and a considerable impediment to the arguments.. Nor are we concerned with anyone who uses an argument separating the limbs and the parts of a thing, ^{14E} having secured agreement that they all constitute a single entity, and then argues contemptuously that he has forced us into the monstrous conclusions that the one is many and limitless, and that the many is only one.

Prot: Yes, Socrates, but what sort of other wonders are you referring to on this particular issue, which are not commonplace and regarded as of no interest?

Soc: ^{15A} It arises, my boy, when someone posits a one that is not in the realm of becoming and perishing, as were the examples we were giving just now. Indeed this sort of one, as we were saying, is agreed to require no scrutiny. On the other hand, if someone attempts to posit man or ox or the beautiful or the good as a one, in the case of these unities and their like, the controversy associated with their division becomes extremely intense.

Prot: How is there contention?

Soc: ^{15B} Firstly, over whether we should accept that there are, in truth, units such as these. Then should we also accept, somehow, that each of these units, being one, always the same, with no involvement in generation or destruction, is still undeniably this single unit? In which case, is it either dispersed among the things which come into being and are in turn limitless, or else, though this seems completely impossible, does it arise whole, separate from itself, the same and one, simultaneously present in each and every thing? It is not those other contentions, Protarchus, but contentions about this sort of one and many which are responsible for utter perplexity if not properly resolved, and are responsible for excellent progress if they are.

Prot: So is this the first issue we should tackle now?

Soc: Well, that's how it seems to me, anyway.

Prot: Then take it that we shall all go along with you on this. Though perhaps it is best not to ask Philebus right now, and let the sleeping dog lie.

Soc: ^{15D} Very well then, where shall we begin this great and complex dispute about these contentious issues? Ah! What about here?

Prot: Where?

Soc: I think we can say that arguments about the many becoming one, and the same, are in constant circulation in various guises based on particular doctrines of antiquity and

today. And this did not begin recently, nor will it ever cease; rather it seems to me that this sort of thing is an undying and ageless characteristic of our internal discourses themselves. And when any young person first gets a taste of it, he is delighted as though he had found some treasury of wisdom. ^{15E} He is inspired by pleasure and loves to set every argument in motion, first rolling it out into its distinctions and then kneading it into one. Then he rolls it out again and takes it apart, casting himself first and foremost into perplexity, followed by any of his usual associates, be they younger, older or the same age, sparing neither father nor mother nor any ^{16A} other potential listener, and indeed he would almost involve animals let alone humans, since he would not show mercy even to foreigners if only an interpreter were to be found.

Prot: Now Socrates, do you not see how many of us there are and that we are all young? Are you not afraid in case we join forces with Philebus and attack you for slandering us? Anyway, we do know what you mean, and if there is any means or contrivance to free our discussion gently from such confusion, and discover some better ^{16B} method than this to approach the argument, please apply yourself to it, Socrates, and we shall follow as best we can, for it is no trivial issue which lies before us.

Soc: No, it is not, my boys, as Philebus calls you. Well, there is not, nor could there be, a better method than the method whose constant lover I am, though it has often deserted me and left me alone and perplexed.

Prot: What is it? Just tell us.

Soc: ^{16C} It is not a difficult method to describe, but it is extremely difficult to employ. Indeed anything which has ever been discovered by means of any skill, has been made evident through this method. Look, I'll describe it.

Prot: Yes, describe it.

Soc: To me it is evidently a gift to humanity from the gods, hurled from the realm of the gods along with the brightest fire by some Prometheus. And the men of old, being superior to us and dwelling closer to the gods, passed on constantly the statement that all of the things which are generally said to be, are from one and many with limit and limitlessness enshrined within them. Now since this ^{16D} is how they are arranged, we should always assume that there is a single form associated with everything, in each case, and we should search for that, and we shall find that it is there. Then if we can apprehend it, we should consider two after one, if there is any second, and if not we should consider three or some other number, and each one of those again in the same manner until we can see that the initial one is not only one, many and limitless, but also how many it is. But we should not apply the form of the limitless to the multiplicity until we can discern its entire number lying between the ^{16E} limitless and the one, and at that stage we may then quite readily allow each one of them to proceed towards the limitless. Now the gods, as I said, have passed on to us this manner of enquiry, understanding, and teaching one another; but the wise men of today ^{17A} make one and many too quickly or too slowly in a random manner, and after one they go immediately to unlimited and whatever is in between escapes them, and therein lies the distinction between the dialectical and disputatious approach to our discussions.

Prot: I think I understand much of what you are saying, Socrates, but I would still like to hear a clearer explanation of some of it.

Soc: Well, my meaning is evident, Protarchus, in the case of letters; so understand it based upon your education in these.

Prot: ^{17B} How?

Soc: Sound which comes through the mouth of each and every person is presumably one, and then again, it is also limitless in multiplicity.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: And we are never wiser on account of one or the other of these, neither because we know the limitless aspect of it nor the single aspect. Rather, what gives us a facility with language is knowing the number of sounds and their qualities.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: And indeed it is the same thing that makes a musician.

Prot: How?

Soc: ^{17C} Well, the sound associated with this art is also, presumably, one in itself.

Prot: Yes, it must be.

Soc: However, we would propose that there is a high and low pitch and a third which is neither. Is this so?

Prot: Quite so.

Soc: But you would never be wise with regard to music if you only knew these, though if you did not know them I can safely say that you would, in a sense, be worthless as a musician.

Prot: I would indeed.

Soc: Rather, my friend, you would have to understand the numerical extent of the intervals of high and low sound, their quality ^{17D} and the distinctions between the intervals and the extent of the combinations which arise from these, combinations which our forefathers discovered and passed on to us, their successors, under the name harmonies. And there are other internal responses arising in the corresponding movements of the body, which are indeed measured numerically, and accordingly, they say, should be called rhythms and measures, and we should also appreciate that all investigation of one and many must be conducted accordingly.

So once you grasp them in this ^{17E} way, then you become wise, and whenever you select another “one” belonging to anything whatsoever and investigate it in this way, you become knowledgeable about that. But taking the limitless aspect of each of the multiplicities will make you a second rate thinker in every case, devoid of any reputation or esteem since you have never turned your gaze to of number in anything at all.

Prot: Philebus, it seems to me anyway that what Socrates said just now is excellent.

Phil: ^{18A} So do I; it is excellent in its own right, but why ever has this argument been presented to us now and with what precise intention?

Soc: Well Protarchus, Philebus is right to ask us this question.

Prot: He is indeed, so you had better answer him.

Soc: I shall do that, once I have explained something else about these particular issues. Now if we take any “one” whatsoever, we are saying that we should not look immediately to its limitless nature but to some number, and similarly in the opposite

case, when we are compelled to ^{18B} apprehend the limitless first, we must not proceed to the one immediately but discern a particular number possessing some multiplicity and, from many, finish at one. Once more, let's understand what is now being described based upon the letters of the alphabet.

Prot: How?

Soc: When some god or even some divine person (the story from Egypt says his name was Theuth), observed that sound was limitless, he first noticed the vowel sounds in the limitless which are not one but multiple, and then other sounds ^{18C} which are not vowels but can be sounded, nevertheless, and that there are a number of these also. Thirdly, he distinguished what we now call mutes and after that he divided the unsounded mutes until they were single entities, and did the same thing to the vowels and semi-vowels. Once he had understood their number, he gave the additional name "letter" to each and every one of them. But observing that none of us could learn one of them just by itself without all of them, he went on to devise a bond which is one ^{18D} and somehow makes them all one, and he said that there was a single skill applicable to them, and he called it grammar.

Phil: Protarchus, I now understand the interaction of these letters more clearly than the other issues, but to me there is the same defect in the argument as there was a moment ago.

Soc: Philebus, is it that you don't see the point of all this?

Phil: Yes, Protarchus and I have been trying to see this for some time.

Soc: Then you have actually been trying to see something that, according to you, has been right in front of you for some time now.

Phil: ^{18E} How so?

Soc: Wasn't our discussion, from the outset, about understanding and pleasure and which of the two we should choose?

Phil: Yes, of course.

Soc: And indeed we said that each of them is one.

Phil: Certainly.

Soc: Well, this is precisely what the previous argument is asking us: how is each of them one and many, and why are they not limitless immediately ^{19A} but instead, at some stage, each acquires a particular number before each of them becomes limitless?

Prot: Socrates has faced us with a far from trivial question, Philebus, though I do not understand how he led us here. Anyway, please consider which of us should now respond to what is asked. Now perhaps it is ridiculous, when I have promised faithfully to take your place in the discussion, to give it back to you again because I cannot answer this question. However, I think it would be much more ^{19B} ridiculous if neither of us could answer. So please consider what we should do, for Socrates seems to me to be asking whether or not there are forms of pleasure, how many there are, and what they are like. He is also asking about understanding in the same way.

Soc: What you say is very true, dear son of Callias. Yes, our previous discussion showed that if we are unable to do this in the case of anything which is one, like or the

same, or in the case of their opposites, none of us will ever be of any value in any subject.

Prot: ^{19C} Socrates, it is quite likely that this is so. Now, while it is good for a wise man to know everything, his second best course seems to lie in not forgetting himself. Well why do I say this just now? I shall tell you. You granted this audience and your presence to all of us in order to determine what human acquisition is supreme. Indeed when Philebus said that it is pleasure, enjoyment and delight and everything of that sort, you disputed this and said that these are not the best; ^{19D} rather it is these other things which we often willingly recall, and rightly so, in order to scrutinise both possibilities side by side in mind. You seem to be proposing that the good which is really better than pleasure is reason, knowledge, understanding, skill and all that is related thereto: these we must acquire and not those others.

Well, when these two assertions were made and there was a dispute, we threatened, playfully, that we ^{19E} would not let you go home until these discussions had come to an end and had been duly clarified. You went along with this and made yourself available to us for this purpose. Therefore, we are saying now, just like children, that a gift rightly given cannot be taken back, so please desist from this manner of opposing us in the present discussion.

Soc: What do you mean?

Prot: ^{20A} Casting us into perplexity and asking questions to which we cannot give you a proper response right now. Indeed let's not imagine that our aim is to make us all perplexed; rather, if we prove unable to answer, then you must do so, as that is what you promised. So decide this for yourself. Should the forms of pleasure and of knowledge be distinguished or, instead, left alone because you are somehow able to clarify the issues under dispute in some other way and are willing to do so?

Soc: ^{20B} Well, since you put it like that I no longer expect anything dreadful, for the phrase "if you are willing" takes away all fear about anything. And besides this, I think that one of the gods has given me a reminder to help us.

Prot: A reminder of what?

Soc: Of certain propositions about pleasure and understanding which I once heard a long time ago, whether in a dream or whilst awake. I now realise that they said that the good was neither of these but a third entity, different from them and better than both of them. And indeed, once this becomes evident to us, ^{20C} then pleasure is deprived of its victory, since the good would no longer be the same as pleasure, would it?

Prot: Quite so.

Soc: And as I see it, we shall no longer need this distinction between the forms of pleasure, but that will become even clearer as we go on.

Prot: That is very well expressed. Keep discussing it like that.

Soc: Well, let's agree on a few little details first.

Prot: What sort of details?

Soc: ^{20D} Whether that which holds the rank of good must be perfect or imperfect.

Prot: Surely, Socrates, it is the most perfect of all things?

Soc: What about this? Is the good sufficient?

Prot: How could it not be? Yes, in this regard it exceeds everything else there is.

Soc: Indeed I believe it is imperative to state that whatever recognises the good, pursues and desires it, and wishes to capture and acquire it for itself, and thinks of nothing else except what also accomplishes good.

Prot: It's not possible to contradict that.

Soc: ^{20E} Well, let's consider the life of pleasure and the life of understanding and judge them, by looking at each on its own.

Prot: How do you mean?

Soc: Let there be no understanding in the life of pleasure, and no pleasure in the life of understanding. For if either of them is the good, it must not stand in need of anything else; and if either of them turns out ^{21A} to be deficient, presumably that is not yet the true good, according to us.

Prot: No, how could it be?

Soc: Now, shall we try testing them out on you?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Then answer some questions.

Prot: Just ask.

Soc: Protarchus, would you consent to live your entire life enjoying the utmost pleasures?

Prot: Yes, why not?

Soc: And do you think you would still lack something, if this life was yours entirely?

Prot: Not at all.

Soc: Are you sure you wouldn't need to understand, reason and work out what was needed, ^{21B} and that sort of thing?

Prot: But why? Surely I would have everything once I had enjoyment.

Soc: So if you lived like this, would you always enjoy the utmost pleasure throughout life?

Prot: Why not?

Soc: And yet, without acquiring reason, memory, knowledge and true opinion you must, firstly, I presume, be ignorant of the very fact that you are enjoying or not enjoying, since you are devoid of all understanding.

Prot: I must.

Soc: ^{21C} And indeed, since you have not acquired memory either, you would be unable to remember what you once enjoyed and no memory whatsoever would remain of the pleasure you experience in any moment. What's more, when there is enjoyment you could not form the opinion that you are enjoying something, since you have not acquired true opinion, and without calculation you could not work out what you would enjoy in the future. Your life would not be the life of a man, but of some jelly-fish or of

sea creatures whose bodies are encased in shells. Are these the facts, ^{21D} or are there alternatives we can consider?

Prot: No, how could there be?

Soc: Well, now do we want a life like that?

Prot: This last argument has rendered me totally speechless, Socrates.

Soc: Let's not give up just yet. We should turn to the life of reason and consider that.

Prot: What sort of life do you mean?

Soc: It arises when someone agrees to live in possession of reason, knowledge and a complete memory of everything but with no participation, large or small, in pleasure ^{21E} or pain either, but totally devoid of all such experience.

Prot: Neither of these lives would ever be attractive to me, Socrates, nor, I imagine, to anyone else.

Soc: ^{22A} And what about the composite, Protarchus, a combination formed by mixing the two?

Prot: Do you mean a combination of the life of pleasure and the life of reason and understanding?

Soc: Yes, that's the sort of thing I mean.

Prot: Surely everyone would choose that kind of life in preference to the other two; there will be no exceptions.

Soc: Now do we understand what the consequence is for the propositions we are discussing?

Prot: Yes, certainly, three lives have been proposed; two of which are ^{22B} not adequate or desirable for man or any other creature.

Soc: And isn't it obvious, at this stage, that neither of these two lives actually contains the good? If one of them did, it would be adequate and complete and desirable to any plants or animals which were capable of living their entire lives in that way. And if any of us chose any other, his choice would be opposed to the nature of the truly desirable and it would be made unwillingly, under ignorance or some unfortunate compulsion.

Prot: So it seems, anyway.

Soc: ^{22C} Then I think we have said enough to show that Philebus' goddess should not be regarded as the same as the good.

Phil: Yes, Socrates, but your "reason" is not the good either, since, presumably, the same objections apply.

Soc: Perhaps this is so, Philebus, in the case of "my reason"; but I think it is somehow different for true and divine reason. Now I shall not yet claim first place for reason over the combined life, so we must look at second place and decide what to do ^{22D} about that. Indeed one of us will probably claim that the basis of this combined life is reason, and the other that it is pleasure, and so although neither of these two would be the good, perhaps we might appreciate that one of them is the basis of the good. Now on this issue I would argue more intensely against Philebus that, in the case of this mixed life, the acquisition which renders such a life desirable and good, an acquisition which is kindred

to it and resembles it, is not pleasure but reason. And on this ^{22E} account pleasure could never be said to have a true claim to first or second place; no, it is further back than third, if my reasoning is now to be trusted.

Prot: Well, Socrates, it seems to me that pleasure has now fallen as if struck down by your words as it battled for first place. Reason, on the ^{23A} other hand, seems to have acted wisely when it did not claim primacy, for the same thing would have happened to it. But if pleasure were now deprived entirely of second place, she would suffer a disgrace in the eyes of her own lovers, for she would no longer appear quite so beautiful even to them.

Soc: In that case, is it not better to leave her alone rather than subjecting her to the pain of intense scrutiny and cross-examination?

Prot: You are talking nonsense, Socrates.

Soc: ^{23B} Is that because I am proposing something impossible, namely, that pleasure experiences pain?

Prot: That's not the only reason. You are also forgetting that none of us will ever let you go until you have brought the discussion of these matters to a conclusion.

Soc: Oh, dear Protarchus, then a lengthy discussion lies ahead, while the current issue is hardly an easy one either. Indeed it also appears that we need another means of securing second place for reason; different weaponry from the previous arguments, though perhaps some will be the same. Is this what we must do?

Prot: Yes, we must.

Soc: ^{23C} But we should try to be careful about where we propose to begin.

Prot: What do you mean?

Soc: Let's divide everything that is now in the universe into two, or better still, if that is alright, into three.

Prot: On what basis would you propose to do this?

Soc: Let's take some elements from our own arguments.

Prot: Of what kind?

Soc: I believe we said that the god revealed the limited and also the limitless in things that are.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Well, let's propose these as two of our forms, and the third combines both of ^{23D} them into one. But it does seem that I am a comical fellow when it comes to defining and enumerating forms.

Prot: My goodness, what are you saying?

Soc: It appears to me that a fourth category is also required.

Prot: Tell us what it is.

Soc: Note the cause of the commingling of these with one another, and grant me that as the fourth in addition to the other three.²

Prot: Would you not also need a fifth element which is able to separate them?

Soc: Perhaps, but I don't think we actually need it right now. However, I presume you will ^{23E} forgive me if I do go after a fifth category, should that prove necessary.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Well then, having first separated three of the four and noted that two of these are each multiple as they are split up and dispersed, let's make each of them one again and try to understand how each was ever both one and many.

Prot: If you could tell me about them a little more clearly, perhaps I might follow you.

Soc: ^{24A} Well, I mean that the two which I am referring to are the same as the two we discussed earlier, the limitless and that which has limit, and I shall try to explain that the limitless is, in some way, many. That which has limit can wait.

Prot: Yes, let it wait.

Soc: Now think about this. Indeed what I am asking you to consider is controversial and difficult, but consider it nevertheless. First ask whether you could ever discern any limit to hotter and colder, or whether the greater and the lesser which resides within these categories themselves would never allow any end to come about ^{24B} as long as more and less are present. Indeed if an end were to come about, the more and less would be finished.

Prot: What you say is very true.

Soc: However, we say that both the greater and the lesser are always present in the hotter and the colder.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: Then our argument shows that these two are always without an end; and surely, as they have no end, they are entirely limitless.

Prot: Yes, it shows that quite strongly, Socrates.

Soc: Now you have answered very well, dear Protarchus, and have ^{24C} reminded me that the word "strongly", which you have just uttered, and the word "weakly" have the same force as the "greater" and the "lesser". Indeed, wherever they are present they do not allow a particular quantity to exist but they always make activities stronger rather than weaker, or the other way around, and give rise to more and to less, but they eliminate definite quantity. For as we just said, if they did not eliminate quantity but allowed quantity and measure to arise where ^{24D} greater, lesser, stronger and weaker are situated, these classes themselves would disappear from the very positions they occupied.

Indeed they would no longer be hotter or colder once they had acquired quantity, for hotter is constantly advancing and does not stand still, and the same applies to colder; but quantity is fixed and has stopped advancing. So based upon this argument, hotter, and its opposite too, turn out to be limitless.

² The four categories are: limited, limitless, their mixture and the cause of their commingling.

Prot: So it appears anyway, Socrates; but as you say, this is not easy to follow. And perhaps ^{24E} going over it again and again may demonstrate that questioner and respondent are in quite close agreement.

Soc: Yes, that is a good suggestion and we should try to do that. But first consider whether we shall accept a particular characteristic of the nature of the limitless, so that we do not make the discussion too lengthy and detailed.

Prot: What sort of indicator do you mean?

Soc: Whatever appears to us as more and as less, or involves strength and mildness, or excess and everything of that sort, ^{25A} should all be placed in the limitless as though it were a single category. This is based on our previous argument that whatever is split up and dispersed should be brought together and characterised, as best we can, by a single nature. Do you remember?

Prot: I remember.

Soc: Again, whatever does not involve these but involves their opposites; the equal and equality, and after the equal, the double and any relation of number to number or ^{25B} measure to measure, all of these should, it appears, be counted among the limited. What do you think?

Prot: Yes, very properly, Socrates.

Soc: Very well, but what about the third category, the mixture of these two? What characteristic shall we say that this possesses?

Prot: I think you are also going to answer that question for me.

Soc: A god will certainly answer, if one of the gods happens to hear my prayers.

Prot: Then pray and watch.

Soc: I am watching, Protarchus, and it seems to me that one of them has befriended us just now.

Prot: ^{25C} What do you mean and what evidence have you?

Soc: I shall answer of course, but please follow my argument.

Prot: Just speak.

Soc: We used the terms hotter and colder just now, is this so?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: Now add drier and wetter to these, also greater and lesser, faster and slower, larger and smaller, and whatever we previously included in the single nature which involves more and less.

Prot: ^{25D} Do you mean the nature which is limitless?

Soc: Yes, and combine this in turn with the offspring of the limited.

Prot: What offspring?

Soc: I am referring to the nature of the limited, which we should also have drawn into a unity just now, just as we did with the limitless. We did not do so, but perhaps we shall

get the same result, if the latter nature is made evident by drawing the other two into a unity.³

Prot: What nature? What do you mean?

Soc: The nature which contains equal and double and whatever prevents opposites from differing from one another,^{25E} and renders them symmetric and harmonious by introducing number.

Prot: I understand. I think you mean that, when these are mixed, certain products arise as a consequence in each case.

Soc: Yes, your understanding is correct.

Prot: Keep going.

Soc: Well, in the case of disease, doesn't the proper combining of these opposites produce a healthy nature?

Prot:^{26A} Yes, certainly.

Soc: And in the case of high and low pitch, and fast and slow, which are limitless, the same products arise; and once limit is brought about, the combinations establish all of music in perfection. Is this so?

Prot: Absolutely.

Soc: And indeed if the combinations arise where there is cold or heat they remove the excessive and limitless and bring about measure and symmetry.

Prot: Yes, indeed.

Soc:^{26B} Don't the seasons and all the other beauties of our world arise from this commingling of the limitless with whatever has limit?

Prot: It must be so.

Soc: Yes, and there are countless other instances which I omit mentioning, such as beauty and strength in addition to health, and also the countless different and varied beauties of the soul.

For this goddess, dear Philebus, beholding the insolence and general vice of everyone, without any limit on the pleasure or gratification among them, introduced law and order which do possess limit. You may say that she^{26C} afflicted us, but I would say the opposite, she saved us. Is this how it seems to you, Protarchus?

Prot: Socrates, this is very much to my way of thinking.

Soc: Well, you may notice that I have now described the three categories.

Prot: Yes, I think I can see that. Indeed you seem to be saying that the limitless is one, and the limit in things is second and is also one. However, I do not quite understand what you mean to designate as third.

Soc: Yes, no wonder, the sheer scale of the third category has overwhelmed you. However, the limitless class also demonstrated^{26D} multiplicity and yet it turned out to be one as it was stamped with the mark of the category of more and its opposite.

³ The 'latter' is the limitless and the 'other two' are the limitless and their combination with the limited.

Prot: True.

Soc: Nor indeed did we make difficulties because the limited neither involved multiplicity nor was it one by nature.

Prot: No, why would we?

Soc: There is no reason at all. But assume that I regard the third as the entire offspring of the other two, taken as one, a product brought into being from the measures which are generated along with the limited.

Prot: I understand.

Soc: ^{26E} Well now, besides these three we should also consider the fourth category we mentioned earlier.⁴ Let's share the enquiry. Ask yourself whether it is necessary that everything which comes into being is generated because of some cause.

Prot: I think so; for how could it come into being without a cause?

Soc: But doesn't the nature of the maker differ from the cause in nothing except its name, and should the maker and the cause properly be described as one?

Prot: Correct.

Soc: ^{27A} And indeed we shall also find that "what is made" is, in turn, different in nothing except name from "what comes into being". Is this so?

Prot: It is so.

Soc: Now isn't it natural that the maker always leads, while what is made follows it, and comes into being because of it?

Prot: Certainly.

Soc: So the cause, and whatever serves the cause in the productive process, are different and not the same.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Therefore, whatever comes into being, and whatever everything arises from, provide us with the three categories.

Prot: They do, indeed.

Soc: ^{27B} And indeed we say that the fourth which produces all these is the cause, since we have adequately demonstrated that it is different from them.

Prot: Yes, it is different.

Soc: Well, now that the four have been distinguished, it is a good idea to list them in sequence as a reminder of each one.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Then I place the limitless first, the limited second and the mixed-being produced from these third. And it would hardly be a mistake to say that the ^{27C} cause of the mixing and production is the fourth.

Prot: No, how could it be?

⁴ This refers to 23d.

Soc: Well then, what is our next topic of discussion and what consideration brought us to these issues? Wasn't it this? We were deciding whether the second best life should consist of pleasure or understanding. Wasn't that it?

Prot: Yes, that was it.

Soc: However, since we have now made this four-fold distinction, perhaps we may be better able to finalise the decision about first and second place which was, of course, the first issue we disagreed about.

Prot: Perhaps.

Soc: ^{27D} So come on, we awarded the victory to the mixed life of pleasure and understanding. Is this what we did?

Prot: It was.

Soc: Shouldn't we look at this life and what it is and which category it belongs to?

Prot: Why not?

Soc: And we shall say, I presume, that it is part of the third category⁵, for this does not consist of just two elements but of the sum of all that is limitless, bound by limit. On this basis it is appropriate that this victorious mixed life should be part of that category.

Prot: Yes, you are quite right.

Soc: ^{27E} Very well, but Philebus, what about your life of pleasure which is unmixed? In which of the categories we mentioned should it properly be included? But before you tell us let me ask this question.

Phil: Just ask.

Soc: Do pleasure and pain have limit, or are they in the category involving both more and less?

Phil: Yes, pleasure involves more, Socrates, for it would not be entirely good unless it happened, by nature, to be limitless in extent and in intensity.

Soc: ^{28A} Nor would pain be entirely bad, Philebus, so we should both look for something other than the limitless nature of pleasure in order to furnish it with some part of good. So you may include these two⁶ in the limitless category. But Protarchus and Philebus, into which of the categories we mentioned may we now, without impiety, place understanding, knowledge and reason? Yes, I think there is a lot at stake if we do not get the answer to this question right.

Phil: ^{28B} Now you are exalting your own god, Socrates.

Soc: Yes, and you are exalting yours, my friend, nevertheless the question must be answered.

Prot: What Socrates is saying to you is right, Philebus, and you should do as he says.

Phil: Didn't you volunteer to speak on my behalf, Protarchus?

⁵ The third category is the mixture of the limitless with limit.

⁶ The two are pleasure and pain to which Philebus denies any natural limit.

Prot: I did indeed; but now I am a bit perplexed, Socrates, and I need you yourself to act as our spokesman so that we don't miss the point and make some inappropriate statement about your contestant for second place.⁷

Soc: ^{28C} I should do as you say, Protarchus, as you are not making a difficult request. But did I really upset you with that playful exaltation, as Philebus calls it, when I asked what sort of category reason and knowledge should be in?

Prot: You certainly did, Socrates.

Soc: Anyway, it is easy to answer, for all of the wise concur, in genuine self-exaltation, that reason is our lord of heaven and earth, and perhaps they are right. But we may carry out a more lengthy investigation of the category itself, if you wish.

Prot: ^{28D} Proceed as you wish, Socrates! Regardless of the length, you will not bore us.

Soc: Well said! Let us begin by repeating this question.

Prot: What question?

Soc: Whether we should say, Protarchus, that this so-called universe and everything else is ruled by an irrational and random power, and that things happen by chance, or conversely as our forefathers said, that it is governed by reason and ordered by a wonderful understanding.

Prot: ^{28E} It's you, Socrates, who is wonderful, but the two accounts have nothing in common. I see the first option sounds quite irreverent to me. However, the statement that reason brings order to everything is worthy of the ordered vision of sun, moon and stars and the revolving heavens, and I myself would never say nor even think anything else about them.

Soc: Well, is this what you want? Should we agree ^{29A} with our forefathers and join them in declaring that these things are so, not merely speaking the words of others in safety but sharing the danger and partaking of the abuse whenever a clever man says that the universe is not ordered like this but is disordered?

Prot: Yes, what else could I want?

Soc: Then come on and think about the argument we are facing here.

Prot: Please explain.

Soc: I presume we realise that fire, water, air and earth, which storm-battered sailors call land, are involved in the formation of the physical nature of all creatures.

Prot: ^{29B} Very much so, and we are truly being battered by the perplexities of this discussion.

Soc: Now there is something you should understand about these constituents of our nature.

Prot: What is it?

Soc: That the portion of each of these elements in us is small, mundane and not at all pure, and does not possess the vigour worthy of its nature. Let's take a single example, but it is the same for them all. For instance, there is fire in us, and it is also in the universe.

⁷ Socrates' contestant is reason (*nous*) which is competing against pleasure.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: ^{29C} Now the portion in us is small, weak and insignificant, while the fire in the universe is wondrous in extent, in beauty and all the power associated with fire.

Prot: Yes, what you say is very true.

Soc: Well then, is the universal fire sustained, given existence and augmented by the fire within us; or is it the other way around, that the fire in you and in me and in the other creatures derives everything from the universal?

Prot: This question is not even worthy of a reply.

Soc: ^{29D} Correct; and I imagine you will say the same thing about the earth which is here in the creatures and the earth in the universe, and will answer likewise in the case of all of the other elements I asked you about a little earlier. Would you reply in this way?

Prot: Well, could anyone answer differently and still appear sane?

Soc: Hardly anyone at all. But follow this next point: when we see all the elements we mentioned combined into one, don't we call it a body?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: ^{29E} Now understand that the same applies to what we call the universal order⁸ which is composed of the same elements and would therefore, I suppose, be a body on the same basis.

Prot: Absolutely correct.

Soc: And are our bodies sustained by this body, or is it sustained by ours, and has it acquired and does it possess whatever qualities we ascribed to them just now?

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

Soc: ^{30A} Well then, is this next question worth asking? What do you think?

Prot: What is the question?

Soc: Wouldn't we say that our body has a soul?

Prot: Obviously we would.

Soc: But where did it get it, unless the body of the universe, a body which has the same qualities as our body but in far greater beauty, is also ensouled?

Prot: Obviously there is nowhere else it could come from, Socrates.

Soc: Now Protarchus, in the case of the four categories: limit, limitless, their combination and the causal category, I presume we realise that this fourth factor, present in ^{30B} everything, furnishing us with soul, producing regimen and exercise for the body when it falls ill, is called extensive and multifaceted wisdom when we hear of it in other instances. But do we believe that when these same factors are present in the whole universe on a large scale and in greater beauty and purity, this wisdom would fail to generate a beautiful and hallowed nature among them?

⁸ Plato uses the word κόσμος (cosmos) here which just means 'order' but is a common synonym for the universe.

Prot: ^{30C} That would not be at all reasonable.

Soc: Well, if that is invalid, we had better go with the other account which suggests, as we have often said, that there is extensive limitlessness in the universe, sufficient limit and a remarkable cause which governs them, ordering and arranging the years, seasons and months, which may rightly be referred to as wisdom and reason.

Prot: Rightly so indeed.

Soc: But there could never be wisdom and reason without soul.

Prot: There could not.

Soc: ^{30D} Then you will say that there is a lordly soul in the nature of Zeus, and lordly reason is engendered through the power of the cause⁹, while in the other gods there are other glories and each of them likes to be described accordingly.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: Now Protarchus, do not imagine that this statement we have made is some trifle; no, it lends support to those ancient sources which say that reason always rules the universe.

Prot: Yes, it does indeed.

Soc: And in fact, it has provided an answer to my query by saying that of the four categories, reason belongs ^{30E} to the one which we referred to as the cause of the universe. I presume that you have got our answer to the question at this stage.¹⁰

Prot: Yes, I have and it is most satisfactory, though I did not realise you were answering me.

Soc: Indeed Protarchus, playfulness sometimes brings relief from seriousness.

Prot: Well put.

Soc: ^{31A} Surely, my friend, we have now explained quite adequately the category to which reason belongs and the power it possesses.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: And indeed the category to which pleasure belongs was evident in like manner some time ago.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: So let us also recall some facts about both: reason was akin to cause and fitted that category quite well, while pleasure itself was limitless and belonged in the category which does not possess beginning, middle or end within itself, from itself, nor will ever do so.

Prot: ^{31B} We shall remember; indeed how could we forget?

Soc: Now, the next thing we need to do is see what both of them reside in, and what condition causes them to arise when they do arise. Let's take pleasure first, since we

⁹ The cause is the fourth category equated above with reason and wisdom.

¹⁰ Bury comments that the enquiry announced at 28c ends here. The original subject (pleasure vs. reason) now resumes following this digression.

examined its category first; let's do the same with these questions. However, we could never examine pleasure adequately in isolation from pain.

Prot: Well, if it is necessary to proceed in that way, let's proceed in that way.

Soc: Does the generation of pleasure and pain appear to you as it does to me?

Prot: ^{31C} How is that?

Soc: It appears to me that, by nature, pleasure and pain both arise at the same time in the combined category.

Prot: But Socrates, my friend, please remind us which of the four categories, from our earlier discussion, you wish to designate as "combined".

Soc: Well, you're a wonder! I'll do the best I can.

Prot: Well said.

Soc: Well, we should regard the "combined" as the third of the categories we mentioned.

Prot: Is it the one you listed after the limitless and limit and in which, I think, you placed health and harmony?

Soc: Excellent, now give me your closest attention.

Prot: Speak on.

Soc: ^{31D} Then, I claim that when harmony is disrupted in us living creatures, then disruption of our natural state and generation of pain arise at the same time.

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: But if harmony is again restored and it returns to its own nature, we should say that pleasure arises, if we must speak on a vast subject briefly and most hastily.

Prot: ^{31E} I do think that what you are saying is correct, Socrates, but let's try to describe these particular issues more clearly.

Soc: Aren't the common-place and obvious instances somehow easiest to understand?

Prot: What instances?

Soc: Is hunger, in a sense, a disruption and pain?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: And is eating, and being filled once more, a pleasure?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: Thirst, for its part, is disturbance and pain, while pleasure is the ability of a ^{32A} liquid to replenish what has dried out. Again, the unnatural dispersal and dissolution which are the effects of heat, is pain, while the natural restoration and cooling is pleasure.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Also the unnatural congealing of the fluids in a creature due to cold, is pain, whereas their dispersal and return to their former state, the natural course, is pleasure. And in short, consider whether it would be reasonable for someone to say that when the

natural form of limit ^{32B} and limitless which, as we said earlier, constitutes an ensouled being, is disrupted, this disruption is pain, while the restoration of them all, once more, back to the course of their own being, is pleasure.

Prot: Good, that sounds to me like a fair summary.

Soc: Then may we propose that either of these experiences constitute one form of pleasure and of pain?

Prot: We may.

Soc: Also propose that there is expectation of these experiences ^{32C} by the soul itself, the sweet and confident anticipation prior to the pleasures and the fear and anxiety prior to the pains.

Prot: Yes, and this is a different form of pleasure and pain which arises in the soul itself, independently of the body, through anticipation.

Soc: Your understanding is correct. For in these instances, in my opinion, I believe that each arises in a pure form and, seemingly, are not mixtures of pleasure and pain. So it will be evident, in the case of pleasure, ^{32D} whether the entire category is desirable, or whether we should say this about one of the other categories we mentioned rather than about pleasure and pain. In which case, pleasure and pain, just like hot and cold and everything of that sort, should sometimes be desired and sometimes not, as they are not actually good, though some of them, on occasion, assume the nature of things that are good.

Prot: You are quite right to say that we should work through the difficulty we are now pursuing in this sort of manner.

Soc: Well, let's agree on something first: that, if what was said is indeed the case ^{32E} and pain is disruptive, while pleasure is restorative, we should also reflect upon the absence of disruption and restoration, and the precise state of each living creature under such circumstances. Think hard about this, and then respond. Isn't it inescapable that the creature, at that particular time, experiences neither pleasure nor pain in any degree?

Prot: Yes, it must be so.

Soc: Isn't such a condition a third option for us besides those ^{33A} of pleasure and pain?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Well, try to remember this as we proceed, for it is quite significant for our decision about pleasure whether we remember this or not. And we should say a little more about it, if you have no objection.

Prot: Tell me how.

Soc: Note that there is nothing to prevent someone who has chosen the life of understanding from living in this manner.

Prot: ^{33B} Do you mean living without either pleasure or pain?

Soc: Yes, for it was stated, I believe, in the comparison of lives,¹¹ that the person who chooses the life of reason and understanding must not experience pleasure in any degree.

¹¹ This comparison will be found at 20e and 21d/e.

Prot: Yes, that is certainly what was said.

Soc: Therefore, he would live like this and it would not be surprising if it proved to be the most divine of the lives.

Prot: Yes, as it is quite unlikely that the gods experience either pleasure or its opposite.

Soc: Most unlikely, indeed, as it would be quite unbecoming for them to experience either. However, we shall consider this again later, ^{33C} if it is relevant to our discussion, and we shall add it to the evidence that reason should have second place, if we cannot do so for first place.

Prot: A very appropriate suggestion.

Soc: And indeed, the other form of pleasure, which we said belongs to the soul, itself, comes into being entirely through memory.

Prot: How?

Soc: It seems we must first understand what precisely memory is, and may even have to understand perception before memory, if all of these related issues are to become clearer to us, in an appropriate manner.

Prot: ^{33D} In what way do you mean?

Soc: Take the case of the experiences of our body: some of these are quenched within the body before they arrive at the soul thus leaving soul unaffected, while others proceed through both body and soul engendering a sort of vibration which is particular to each but common to both.

Prot: Very well.

Soc: Now in the case where the experiences do not proceed through both body and soul, would we say that the soul is unaware, but on the other hand, when they do involve both, shall we be quite right to say that it is not unaware?

Prot: ^{33E} This must be so.

Soc: However, you should certainly not assume that I am saying that the unawareness somehow produces forgetfulness in this case. Indeed forgetfulness is the departure of a memory, which in the case we are describing has not yet arisen, and it would be strange to speak of the loss of something which is not and has not yet come into existence. Is that so?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Then you should just change the names.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: Rather than saying that the soul is “unaware” when it is not affected by the vibrations associated with the body, let’s use the term ^{34A} “insensible” for what we now call forgetting.¹²

Prot: I understand.

¹² The Greek words carry a stronger implication that unawareness is related to forgetting than do the corresponding English words.

Soc: On the other hand, the coming together of body and soul in a single experience where they are also moved together, is a movement which, for its part, could appropriately be referred to by the name “perception”.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: So do we now understand what we mean when we use the term perception?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: So anyone who says that memory is the preservation of perception would, in my view, be quite correct.

Prot: ^{34B} Yes, correct indeed.

Soc: And don't we say that recollection is different from memory?

Prot: Perhaps.

Soc: Are they not different in the following way?

Prot: Will you tell me how?

Soc: When the soul herself, without use of the body, retrieves within herself as best she can, whatever she once experienced along with the body, presumably we say that she is then recollecting. Is this so?

Prot: It certainly is.

Soc: And indeed, when memory of either a perception or piece of knowledge has been lost, and the soul itself ^{34C} digs it up again within herself, all these occurrences are also called recollections, I presume.

Prot: You are right.

Soc: Now the reason we have said all this is as follows.

Prot: Tell me.

Soc: So that we may understand the pleasure of the soul in the absence of body as comprehensively and clearly as we can, and also its desire at the same time. Indeed through these two it seems that both will be clarified.

Prot: In that case, Socrates, we should discuss them next.

Soc: It seems that our investigation must involve a lot of discussion about the origin of pleasure and every form it has, ^{34D} and indeed it appears the first thing we must understand is what desire is and where it arises.

Prot: Then let's investigate it, for we have nothing to lose.

Soc: We do have something to lose, Protarchus. If we find what we are now looking for, we lose our perplexity about these matters.

Prot: You are right to remind us, but now let's try to address the next issues.

Soc: Didn't we say just now that hunger and thirst and numerous other things of that ^{34E} sort were desires?

Prot: Most definitely.

Soc: So what precisely is the sameness we look to, whereby we call them by one name though they differ so much?

Prot: By Zeus, Socrates, that question may not be easy to answer, but it deserves a response nonetheless.

Soc: Then let's resume the discussion again from there based on the same examples.

Prot: From where?

Soc: We say, do we not, that someone is thirsty?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: And does this mean that he is empty of something?

Prot: Indeed.

Soc: Now is thirst a desire?

Prot: Yes, a desire for drink.

Soc: ^{35A} For drink or satisfaction through drink?

Prot: I think it is for satisfaction.

Soc: So when one of us is empty, it seems that he desires the opposite of whatever he experiences, for being empty he desires satisfaction.

Prot: Obviously.

Soc: What about this? When we are empty for the first time, is there any way we can apprehend satisfaction either through perception or through memory, when we have no present experience of satisfaction and have never experienced it before?

Prot: No, how could we?

Soc: ^{35B} And yet we say that whoever is desiring, desires something.

Prot: It must be so.

Soc: So he does not desire that which he is experiencing, for he is thirsty and this is an emptiness, but his desire is for satisfaction.

Prot: Yes.

Soc: Therefore, some aspect of the thirsty person would somehow have contact with satisfaction.

Prot: It must.

Soc: However, it cannot be the body, for it is presumably empty.

Prot: Yes.

Soc: The only other option is that the soul would have contact with satisfaction, obviously through memory, ^{35C} for how else could she have contact with it?

Prot: There is hardly any alternative.

Soc: Do we understand what consequences these propositions have for us?

Prot: What are they?

Soc: This argument is telling us that desire belonging to the body does not arise.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: Because it reveals that every creature consistently strives for the opposite of what it is experiencing.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: But the urge leading towards the opposite of what is being experienced would presumably demonstrate that there is memory of those opposite experiences.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: ^{35D} So having shown that memory is what impels us towards objects of desire, the argument has demonstrated that every urge and desire and the first principle of the entire creature belongs to soul.

Prot: Correct.

Soc: Therefore, the argument will not accept that our body experiences thirst or hunger or anything of that sort.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: Now there is something else we should observe about these same examples. Indeed the argument seems to me to be indicating to us that a certain mode of life is implied in these particular cases.

Prot: ^{35E} In what cases and to what mode of life are you referring?

Soc: I mean cases where there is satisfaction and deficiency and whatever else is associated with the preservation or destruction of living beings. When one of us encounters either process he experiences either pain or pleasure depending on the transformation.

Prot: Yes, that is what happens.

Soc: And what happens if we are in between the two conditions?

Prot: In between in what way?

Soc: When someone is pained by an experience, and remembers the pleasures which would stop the pain but is not yet satisfied, what about that? Would we say that ^{36A} he is in between the two conditions or would we not?

Prot: Let's say that he is.

Soc: Is he experiencing complete pleasure or complete pain?

Prot: Not pleasure, by Zeus; instead, he is afflicted by a twofold pain: one based upon what the body is experiencing; the other based upon the soul's anticipation and longing.

Soc: Protarchus, how can you say that the pain is twofold? Is it not the case that sometimes when we lack something we stand in evident hope of being satisfied, ^{36B} while at other times, on the contrary, we have no hope?

Prot: Yes, very much so.

Soc: Don't you think that we are pleased by the memory when there is hope of being satisfied, even though there is also deficiency and we are in pain at that time?

Prot: This must be so.

Soc: On such an occasion man and other creatures experience both pleasure and pain simultaneously.

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: But what if he is empty with no hope of attaining satisfaction? Isn't that when the twofold affliction would arise over the painful experience which you considered just now, when you expressed the view that the pain is always twofold? ^{36C}

Prot: That is very true, Socrates.

Soc: Now let's make some use of this investigation into these experiences.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: Should we declare that these pains and pleasures are true, or that they are false? Or are some true and others not?

Prot: But Socrates, how could pleasures or pains be false?

Soc: But Protarchus, how could there be true or false fears, or expectations which are true or untrue, or true and false opinions?

Prot: ^{36D} Well, I would agree with you about the opinions, but not the others.

Soc: Do you realise what you are saying? It is very likely that we are initiating a significant discussion.

Prot: That's true.

Soc: Son of a great man! Then, if it is relevant to what has been said before, we should consider this.

Prot: Yes, in this case anyway.

Soc: Then we must forgo any lengthy digression or irrelevant discussions.

Prot: Correct.

Soc: ^{36E} So discuss this with me, for the very perplexities we presented just now are a source of constant wonder to me. What have you to say? Are there not false as well as true pleasures?

Prot: How could there be?

Soc: In that case, you are saying that no one in a dream or awake, in madness or mental disorder ever presumes that he is experiencing pleasure when he is not experiencing pleasure or, on the other hand, presumes that he is experiencing pain when he is not experiencing pain.

Prot: Socrates, everyone presumes that all these things do happen.

Soc: But are they right to say so, or should we consider whether this is correct or incorrect?

Prot: I'd say we should consider this.

Soc: ^{37A} Then let's be more precise and clear in discussing pleasure and opinion. Indeed we do have the power to form opinions, I presume?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: And to experience pleasure?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: And indeed, is there also an object of opinion?

Prot: How could there not be?

Soc: And is there something by which the enjoyer is pleased?

Prot: Again, there must be.

Soc: Now, whether the one who forms opinions forms them correctly or incorrectly, the actual opinion forming is never lost.

Prot: ^{37B} No, how could he?

Soc: And again, whether the enjoyer enjoys correctly or incorrectly, obviously he will never lose the actual enjoying.

Prot: Yes, that is also the case.

Soc: Therefore, we must consider how it comes about that opinion can be either true or false; pleasure is only true; and yet, the opinion forming and the enjoying are both alike designated as actual.¹³

Prot: We should consider this.

Soc: ^{37C} True and false are applied to opinion and on that account it becomes not just opinion but opinion with one of these qualities. Is this what you say we should consider?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: But besides this we also need to agree whether, in general, there are things which have qualities, while, on the other hand, pleasure and pain are just as they are and do not take on any qualities.

Prot: Obviously.

Soc: But it is not hard to see that these two have qualities, for we said a while ago that pleasures and pains can become great or small in varying degrees of intensity.

Prot: ^{37D} We certainly did.

Soc: And yet, Protarchus, if some badness attaches to any of these, shall we say that the opinion becomes bad in this way and the pleasure also becomes bad?

Prot: But of course, Socrates.

Soc: And what if correctness or the opposite of correctness attaches to any of these? Won't we say that the opinion is correct if it possesses correctness, and that the same goes for pleasure?

Prot: We must.

¹³ Bury summarises the issue: "If opinions and pleasure are on a par as regards being (actuality), they should be on a par as regards truth, but opinion is inconstant as regards truth, therefore, pleasure should also vary."

Soc: ^{37E} But if the formation of the opinion involves an error, then the opinion involves an error, and we must agree that it is not correct and is not being correctly formed.

Prot: Yes, how could it be?

Soc: Then again, if we discern that pain or pleasure involve an error about the object which pains or pleases, should we refer to them as correct or useful or apply any other term of praise?

Prot: No, we should not, if pleasure can actually be in error.

Soc: And indeed it seems anyway that pleasure often arises in us in conjunction with false opinion rather than correct opinion.

Prot: ^{38A} Yes, of course, Socrates, but in that case it is the opinion which we then call false, but no one would ever refer to the pleasure itself as false.

Soc: Protarchus, you are putting up a brave defence with your current statement about pleasure.

Prot: Not really, I'm just reporting what I hear.

Soc: But my friend, is there no difference, for us, between the pleasure accompanied by correct opinion and knowledge, and the pleasure accompanied by false opinion and ignorance which frequently arises in each of us?

Prot: ^{38B} There is probably a significant difference.

Soc: Then let's proceed to contemplate the difference between them.

Prot: Proceed as you see fit.

Soc: Then I shall proceed in a particular way.

Prot: What way?

Soc: Do we say that our opinion is sometimes true, sometimes false?

Prot: It is.

Soc: And, as we said, pleasure and pain often follow these; follow true and false opinion, I mean.

Prot: Certainly.

Soc: Don't opinion and the attempt to form definite opinions always arise in us from memory and perception?

Prot: ^{38C} Very much so.

Soc: Now do we believe that the following example must be relevant in these cases?

Prot: What example?

Soc: Would you agree that when someone happens to see things from a distance, not very clearly, he will often want to decide what the objects he is looking at actually are?

Prot: I would agree.

Soc: And wouldn't he go on to a particular question?

Prot: Such as?

Soc: What exactly is it that appears ^{38D} to be situated beside that rock under a tree? Do you think he might say that to himself, when presented with appearances of that nature?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: And after this, as an answer to such a question, might he say that it is a man and be correct in his assertion?

Prot: Absolutely.

Soc: And if he makes a mistake, he might say instead that he is looking at a statue, the work of some shepherds.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: And if someone was with him, he might repeat once more, out loud to his companion, the very words he had spoken to himself; and in this way, what we previously called an opinion would then become a statement.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: ^{38E} However, if he is alone, he thinks the same thing to himself, and sometimes proceeds for a considerable time with that idea in mind.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Well, I wonder if your view of these situations is like mine.

Prot: What is yours like?

Soc: It seems to me that in this situation our soul is like a book.

Prot: How so?

Soc: ^{39A} When memory coincides with the perceptions and the experiences which are associated with them, they almost seem to me, in a way, to write words in our souls on that occasion. And when the truth is written, it results in the generation of true opinion and true formulations within us. However, when our so-called internal scribe writes what is false, it results in the opposite of true opinions and formulations.

Prot: ^{39B} Yes, that is how it seems to me, and I accept this manner of describing it.

Soc: Then you should also accept that another craftsman arises in our souls at the same time.

Prot: Who is he?

Soc: A painter, who is beside the writer of the verbal formulations, drawing images of them in the soul.

Prot: Yes, but how do we say he does this and when?

Soc: It occurs when a person has derived opinions and verbal formulations from sight or some other sense perception, and then somehow beholds images of the opinions ^{39C} and formulations within himself. Doesn't this happen to us?

Prot: It certainly does.

Soc: And aren't the images of the true opinions and formulations true, while the images of the false opinions are false?

Prot: Entirely so.

Soc: Now, if we have described this correctly, there is an additional point we must consider.

Prot: What is it?

Soc: Whether this is how we must experience the present or the past events but not, however, the future events.

Prot: Surely it applies to all divisions of time.

Soc: ^{39D} Wasn't it stated earlier that pleasures and pains arising from the soul herself may come into being before pleasures and pains arising from the body? As a consequence, anticipated pleasures and pains about the future arise in us.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: Now we proposed a little earlier that writings and drawings are produced within us, but do these relate only to past ^{39E} and present time, and not to the future?

Prot: They definitely relate to the future.

Soc: So are you stating, emphatically, that all these are hopes for the future and that we, for our part, are always full of hopes throughout our entire life?

Prot: Entirely so.

Soc: Come now, I have a question which follows from what we have just said.

Prot: What is it?

Soc: Isn't a just and holy and entirely good man also divinely favoured?

Prot: Of course.

Soc: And what about an unjust and utterly bad man, isn't he in the opposite case? ^{40A}

Prot: He must be.

Soc: Now every man, as we said earlier, is full of many hopes.

Prot: How could he avoid it?

Soc: Then there are formulations in each of us which we call hopes.

Prot: Yes.

Soc: And what's more, there are the painted images, and a person may often see himself acquiring a huge quantity of gold and a great deal of pleasure on that account. And in this picture he sees himself absolutely delighted with himself.

Prot: ^{40B} Inevitably.

Soc: Now should we say that the pictures presented to the good people are generally true, due to the divine favour, while the opposite sort are generally presented to the bad people: should we say this or not?

Prot: We certainly should say this.

Soc: Therefore, the bad people also have just as many pleasures depicted within, but presumably the pleasures are false.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: ^{40C} So the bad people delight, for the most part, in false pleasures, while the good people delight in the true.

Prot: What you say is most compelling.

Soc: Then, based upon the present argument, there are false pleasures in people's souls, though they imitate the true pleasures in a ridiculous manner, and the same also applies to pains.

Prot: There are.

Soc: Now it was shown that it is always possible for someone who forms any opinion actually to form that opinion even though it is sometimes based neither upon the present, the past or the future.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: ^{40D} And in that circumstance, I believe, these productions constitute false opinion and forming opinions falsely, is this so?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: Well now, shouldn't we also assign to pleasure and pain a circumstance corresponding to these?

Prot: In what way?

Soc: In the sense that it is always possible for someone who enjoys any pleasure, however unreasonable, to have actual enjoyment, even though it sometimes has no basis in the present or the past; and often, yes, perhaps most often, has no basis in anything that will ever happen.

Prot: ^{40E} Yes, Socrates, that's also the way it must be.

Soc: Wouldn't the same argument apply to fear and anger and everything of that sort, that all such responses are sometimes false?

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: What about this? Can we say whether opinions are bad or good unless we refer to their falsehood?

Prot: There is no other way.

Soc: And we realise, I presume, that there is no other way for pleasures to be bad except by being false.

Prot: ^{41A} No, Socrates, the precise opposite is the case. Indeed hardly anyone would suggest that pleasures and pains are bad on account of falsity; no, it is due to the occurrence of a different badness which is extensive and varied.

Soc: Well, we shall discuss bad pleasures and those which are as they are through badness, a little later, if we both see fit. But we should now discuss, in a different way, the numerous false pleasures which are so often present and ^{41B} arising within us; for perhaps we may find this useful in making our decision.

Prot: Yes, it must be helpful; but only if there are, in fact, pleasures like this.

Soc: But, Protarchus, in my opinion anyway there are such pleasures; and now that we have raised the issue, this view cannot be left unexamined.

Prot: Very well.

Soc: Then just like athletes, let's take up our positions in relation to this additional argument.

Prot: Let's proceed.

Soc: Well, we said a little earlier, ^{41C} if my memory serves me well, that whenever there are so-called desires in us, the body and the soul are then separated and divided in relation to their experiences.

Prot: I do remember and that is what was said.

Soc: Wasn't it soul that desired conditions opposite to the condition of the body, while the body, for its part, through its experience, furnished the pain or some pleasure?

Prot: Yes, that's how it was described.

Soc: Now work out what is happening in these circumstances.

Prot: Please tell me.

Soc: ^{41D} What happens is this: in this situation, pleasure and pain are present at the same time and although they are opposite to one another, the perception of them occurs simultaneously, as we have shown just now.

Prot: Yes, we did.

Soc: Now there was a point mentioned earlier and we came to an agreement.

Prot: Of what kind?

Soc: That both pleasure and pain admit of greater and lesser, and both are in the category of the limitless.

Prot: We did say that. What of it?

Soc: What means are there of judging them correctly?

Prot: ^{41E} What sort of judgement; about what?

Soc: The aim of our judgement about them in such situations is to decide on any occasion if one is greater or less than the other, or more numerous or more intense, by comparing pain to pleasure, pain to pain and pleasure to pleasure.

Prot: Yes, this is so, and these are the sort of things our judgement aims at.

Soc: What about this? In the case of sight, seeing objects ^{42A} from afar and from close up misrepresents the truth and gives rise to false opinion. However, does the same thing happen in the case of pain and pleasure?¹⁴

Prot: Yes, to an even greater extent, Socrates.

Soc: Well, this conclusion turns out to be the opposite of the earlier one.

¹⁴ This argument is elaborated in the *Protagoras*: distant (i.e. future) pains or pleasures seem smaller while closer (i.e. immediate) pleasures seem larger. The same goes for pain. Hence our judgement is distorted and we pay insufficient regard to future pain or pleasure. (*Prot.* 355e-356a).

Prot: In what way do you mean?

Soc: In the previous case, the opinions themselves were true or false, and they simultaneously infected the pleasures and pains with their own characteristic.

Prot: ^{42B} Very true.

Soc: But now they change because they are viewed from near or far, as the case may be, and once they are compared with one another, the pleasures appear greater and more intense compared to the pains, and the pains, in turn, seem smaller in comparison with the pleasures.

Prot: This sort of thing must occur under these circumstances.

Soc: Now each appears greater or less than it actually is, and if you sever this “appearing but not being” ^{42C} from either of them, you will never propose that its appearance is correct, neither would you ever dare to assert that anything associated with this portion of pleasure and pain is ever correct and true.

Prot: Not at all.

Soc: Then, in addition to these, we shall see whether there is a way in which we may find even more false pleasures and pains than these in living creatures, both actually and apparently.

Prot: But what are they like, and how shall we find them?

Soc: It has been said quite often that when the nature of any creature is disrupted by agglomerations, separations, ^{42D} replenishments, depletions and certain growths and withering, what follows is pain, suffering, distress and whatever else goes under such names.

Prot: Yes, that has often been said.

Soc: However, once it is restored to its own nature, we agreed among ourselves that this restoration is pleasure.

Prot: Correct.

Soc: But what about the situation where neither of these processes are happening to our bodies?

Prot: But when would that ever happen, Socrates?

Soc: ^{42E} The question you just asked is not to the point, Protarchus.

Prot: Why is that?

Soc: Because there is nothing to prevent me putting my original question to you once more.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: I shall say, Protarchus, if something like this may not happen, what must the consequences of this be for ourselves?

Prot: Are you referring to the consequences of the body being moved by neither process?

Soc: Just so.

Prot: Well, one thing is obvious anyway, Socrates; in such a situation neither pleasure nor any pain would ever arise.

Soc: ^{43A} Well said. And yet I think you mean that we are always experiencing one or other of these processes, for as the wise say, everything is constantly flowing back and forth.

Prot: Yes, that is what they say; and it seems quite important.

Soc: Well it would be, wouldn't it, since the men themselves are quite important? However, I wish to evade this impending argument; so I intend to get away from it, and you should escape with me.

Prot: Tell me how.

Soc: We should tell them that we accept what they say. However, ^{43B} you should tell me whether all living beings always notice everything that happens to them, so that we are not unaware even that we ourselves are growing or being affected in that sort of way. Is that the case, or is it the very opposite?

Prot: Obviously it is the very opposite, for we are hardly aware of that sort of thing at all.

Soc: Then what we said just now was not valid, that the occurrence of changes "back and forth" brings about pleasure and pain.

Prot: Of course not.

Soc: ^{43C} There is a better formulation, which will be less open to criticism.

Prot: How is it formulated?

Soc: That significant changes cause pleasure and pain in us, while, on the other hand, minor and measured changes produce neither of them at all.

Prot: That is a more correct formulation than the other one, Socrates.

Soc: Well, if that is the case, then the life we were discussing earlier is making a re-appearance.

Prot: What sort of life?

Soc: The one which we said was devoid of pain and without enjoyment.

Prot: Yes, that is very true.

Soc: So, on this basis, we may propose three lives, one ^{43D} pleasant, another painful and one which is neither. Or what would you say about them?

Prot: I would not say anything different: there are three lives.

Soc: In that case, not experiencing pain could never be the same as experiencing enjoyment.

Prot: No, how could it?

Soc: So when you hear someone say that to live one's entire life painlessly is the most pleasant thing of all, what do you suppose that he means?

Prot: It seems to me that he is saying that pleasure consists in not experiencing pain.

Soc: ^{43E} Now select any three entities you wish, say gold and silver and a third which is neither, just to give them more attractive titles.

Prot: Done.

Soc: Well, is there any way that the one which is neither of these could become either gold or silver?

Prot: No, how could it?

Soc: So based upon a proper account, the middle life may never be correctly regarded as pleasant or painful, and if someone were to think so, it would not be right to think so, and if someone were to say so, it would not be right to say so.

Prot: It would not.

Soc: ^{44A} And yet, my friend, we are aware that people think this and say this.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: In that case, do they think they are experiencing pleasure when they experience no pain?

Prot: So they say, anyway.

Soc: Then, they believe they are experiencing pleasure at that time, or else they would not have said so, I presume.

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: Well then, they are forming a false opinion about pleasure if, in fact, experiencing no pain is, by nature, distinct from experiencing pleasure.

Prot: And they certainly are distinct.

Soc: Now, we should decide for ourselves whether there are three ^{44B} lives, as we said before, or only two, pain which is bad for people, and freedom from pain which in itself is good and should be called pleasure.

Prot: But why are we asking ourselves this question now, Socrates? I don't really understand.

Soc: Then Protarchus, you do not really understand who Philebus' enemies are.

Prot: To what enemies are you referring?

Soc: Men who give very brilliant accounts of natural phenomena, and who deny that pleasures have any being at all.¹⁵

Prot: In what way?

Soc: ^{44C} They say that whatever Philebus here, and his circle, now call pleasures, are all escapes from pains.

Prot: And do you recommend that we believe them, or what do you suggest, Socrates?

Soc: No, but we should make use of them as if they were prophets prophesying without skill, but with a certain harshness of nature which is not devoid of nobility. They have developed a strong hatred of the power of pleasure, and have come to regard it as

¹⁵ This is referred to again at 54d. They deny being, in the true sense, to pleasures.

unsound to such an extent that even its very attractiveness is beguilement, not pleasure.
^{44D} Now you may make use of these doctrines on these issues, once you have also given further consideration to their other harsh judgements. Then after that, you will hear what pleasures seem to me to be true, so that having considered both arguments we may come to a decision about the power of pleasure.

Prot: That is well expressed.

Soc: Well, let's follow them just as if they were allies, relying on the footprints of their harshness. For I believe they say something like this, beginning with a basic question: if we wished to discern the nature of any form ^{44E} at all, such as the nature of hardness, for instance, would we recognise it better by referring to the very hardest things or those with the most minute degrees of hardness? Now Protarchus, you must reply to these harsh fellows just as you reply to me.

Prot: Yes, certainly, I say to them that we should refer to the highest standard.

Soc: Therefore, if we wish to discern the precise nature which belongs to the category of pleasure, we must not refer ^{45A} to degrees of pleasure but to those regarded as most extreme and intense.

Prot: Everyone nowadays would agree with you on that point.

Soc: Now, do we usually say that the commonest, and indeed greatest pleasures, are those associated with the body?

Prot: Yes, of course.

Soc: Now, are the pleasures greater and do they become greater in the case of people suffering diseases, or in the case of the healthy people? And let's be careful lest we trip ourselves up by answering in haste. Indeed we might perhaps say ^{45B} that it is in the case of the healthy people.

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: What about this? Aren't the most overpowering of pleasures those which are preceded by the greatest desires?

Prot: Yes, that's true.

Soc: But don't people with fever and who have similar diseases experience thirst and cold, and everything else which they normally suffer through the body, to a greater extent? And as they are more acquainted with deprivation, won't they derive greater pleasure from the replenishment? Or shall we deny that this is true?

Prot: Well, now that you have said it, it certainly appears to be true.

Soc: ^{45C} What about this? Are we actually right in saying that someone who wishes to see the pleasures that are greatest must turn his consideration not to health but to disease? And take care not to assume that my intention is to ask you if extremely sick people experience more pleasure than the healthy; no, assume that I am interested in the magnitude of pleasure and the occasions where the extreme of such magnitude arises. For we are saying that it is necessary to understand its nature and what those people mean when they state that pleasure does not have any being.

Prot: ^{45D} I am following your argument fairly well.

Soc: And you will actually prove that quite soon, Protarchus, for you are going to answer a question. Can you recognise greater pleasures in a wanton life than in a self-controlled one? Now I do not mean a greater number of pleasures, but a greater intensity and extent. Think about this and answer me.

Prot: Yes, I understand what you are asking, and I see a significant distinction. The proverbial maxim “Nothing in excess” constantly restrains ^{45E} the self-controlled, and they believe in it. However, the intense pleasure possesses the uncontrolled and wanton people to the point of insanity, and renders them notorious.

Soc: Very good; and if this is the case, it is obvious that the greatest pleasures, and indeed the greatest pains, arise from a certain degeneracy of soul and body, but not from their excellence.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Then we should select some of these pleasures, and consider what precise characteristic they possess which made us say they are the greatest.

Prot: ^{46A} We must.

Soc: Then let’s consider pleasure associated with diseases of a certain sort, and what precise characteristic they possess.

Prot: Diseases of what sort?

Soc: Of an unseemly sort, which the men we called harsh utterly detest.

Prot: Such as?

Soc: Like the relief of an itch and other such ailments by scratching, as they require no other remedy. By the gods, whatever should we call this condition when it arises in us? Is it pleasure, or pain?

Prot: Well Socrates, it seems to constitute a mixture – something bad.

Soc: ^{46B} Now I wasn’t actually thinking of Philebus when I offered that example; yet we would not really be able ever to come to a decision on the current issue, Protarchus, without reviewing these pleasures and those that follow them.

Prot: In that case, we should proceed to the pleasures which are related to these.

Soc: You mean the pleasures which involve admixture?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Well, there are mixtures which are physical residing in the bodies themselves, ^{46C} while others belong to the soul itself and are in the soul. Then again, we shall find pains of the body and of the soul which are mixed with pleasures, and the combinations are sometimes called pleasures and sometimes pains.

Prot: How so?

Soc: Whenever a condition is being established or is abating and the person experiences the opposite effect, and is warmed as he is cooling down or cooled whilst warming up, I believe he will try to attain the one condition and be free of the other, while if this so-called bitter-sweet mixture is ^{46D} persistent, it produces irritation and leads on to a violent state.

Prot: Yes, what you say is very true.

Soc: Don't these mixtures sometimes have a balance of pleasure and pain, and sometimes more of one than the other?

Prot: Yes, they must.

Soc: Now say that more pain than pleasure arises in the case of a tickle or the itch we just mentioned. When the seething and inflammation is internal and one does not reach it by scratching and rubbing, only the superficial ^{46E} symptom is dissipated. In such circumstances, the application of fire to the external parts changes the pain to the opposite place¹⁶ by means of the externally applied heat, and sometimes produces enormous pleasure. At other times, however, the opposition of internal to external combines pleasure with pain, either of which may be dominant. The outcome is a violent dispersal of what has been accumulated, and an aggregation of what has been dispersed, yielding pleasure ^{47A} and pain alike.¹⁷

Prot: Very true.

Soc: When more pleasure is included in such mixtures, the reduced admixture of pain causes tickling and a mild irritation, while a much greater influx of pleasure, for its part, brings tension and sometimes makes the heart jump. Producing all sorts of complexions and a variety of physical distortions and irregularities of breath, it induces complete insanity and mindless ranting.

Prot: ^{47B} That's exactly what happens.

Soc: Yes, my friend, and this condition makes others and the man himself say that he is almost dying of enjoyment of these pleasures. Indeed the more intemperate and mindless he becomes, the more comprehensively does he pursue them and he actually calls these the greatest pleasures, and he accounts the man who lives as much as possible in their enjoyment the happiest of all.

Prot: Socrates, you have described adequately the entire predicament of most of the human race.

Soc: ^{47C} Yes, at least in relation to the pleasures from the common experiences of the body itself when internal and external are combined. However, when the soul's contribution is the opposite of the body's, pain is concurrent with pleasure or pleasure with pain, and the pair constitutes a single combination. We described these situations earlier, that when the body is depleted the soul desires satisfaction and is pleased by the expectation but pained by being depleted. But at the time we did not explain ^{47D} this aspect, but now we are stating that in all these countless diverse experiences, where soul differs from body, a single mixture of both pain and pleasure is the result.

Prot: I suspect you are absolutely right.

Soc: But there is one of the mixtures of pleasure and pain still left.

Prot: Will you tell me what it is?

Soc: A combination which we said the soul often apprehends within herself.

Prot: Yes, but what do we actually mean by this?

¹⁶ The inflammation switches from internal to external due to the externally applied heat.

¹⁷ This paragraph is notoriously difficult and perhaps corrupt. Taking "πυρίαις"[external heat(s)] as per Burnet (at E2), and following Hackforth and Taylor, yields the version which is above.

Soc: ^{47E} Don't you include anger, fear, longing, sadness, love, ambition, envy and the like among the pains of the soul herself?

Prot: Yes, I do.

Soc: Won't we find them full of extraordinary pleasures, or need we be reminded about desire and anger?

“Wrath that spurs on the wisest man to rage
Sweeter by far than stream of flowing honey”.¹⁸

And ^{48A} of the pleasures which are mixed with the pains in the case of sadness and longing?

Prot: No, this is what happens in these cases.

Soc: Remember too that the audiences at tragedies are experiencing pleasure and are weeping at the same time.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: And do you realise that the condition of our souls at a comedy would also involve a mixture of pleasure and pain?

Prot: I don't really understand.

Soc: ^{48B} Indeed Protarchus, it is not at all easy to recognise this sort of experience in that situation.

Prot: It doesn't seem easy for me, anyway.

Soc: All the more reason to take this example as it is more obscure, and will enable us to appreciate this mixing of pleasure and pain more easily in other instances.

Prot: Please explain.

Soc: Would you count envy, which we mentioned just now, as a pain of the soul or not?

Prot: I would.

Soc: And indeed an envious person will be manifestly pleased by the misfortunes of his neighbours.

Prot: ^{48C} Very much so.

Soc: Now ignorance is a misfortune which constitutes what we call a stupid disposition.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Well on this basis, behold what the nature of the comical is.

Prot: Please explain.

¹⁸ The lines are from Homer's *Iliad*, XVIII, 109: translation by Hackforth.

Soc: It is, in short, a degeneracy named after a particular disposition and what's more, this degeneracy more than any other has characteristics opposed to what is enjoined by the Delphic inscriptions.

Prot: Do you mean "Know thyself", Socrates?

Soc: ^{48D} I do, and the opposite of this would obviously be, not to know yourself at all, as enjoined by the inscription.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Now Protarchus, try to make a threefold division of this.

Prot: In what way? I am unable to do this.

Soc: Are you saying that I have to make this division now?

Prot: I am saying so, and what's more, I am asking you to do this.

Soc: Mustn't anyone who does not know himself experience this condition in one of three ways?

Prot: How so?

Soc: ^{48E} Well the first is financial, when they think they are wealthier than they actually are.

Prot: Yes, there are many people in that sort of situation.

Soc: But there are even more who believe that they are greater and fairer, and superior in all such physical qualities than, in truth, they are.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: But I think the greatest number by far have made a serious error about the third category, at the level of soul, by thinking themselves superior in excellence when they are not.

Prot: Most definitely.

Soc: ^{49A} And when it comes to excellence, don't most people lay unreserved claim to wisdom, being full of contentiousness and false imagined wisdom?

Prot: Certainly.

Soc: And indeed it would be right to refer to every such condition as bad.

Prot: Definitely.

Soc: Then we must make a further twofold division, Protarchus, if we are to appreciate this strange mixture of pleasure and pain which we discern in playful envy. How do we make the twofold split, you may ask? ^{49B} All those who, unreasonably, hold this false opinion about themselves really must be categorised just like all other human beings: some are strong and powerful, while others are in the opposite case.

Prot: They must.

Soc: Then divide them like that and you may, in truth, refer to those among them as comical who are unable to retaliate when they are laughed at, due to their weakness, while you will provide yourself with the most accurate description of those who are able to retaliate by referring ^{49C} to them as powerful, frightening and hostile. Indeed in the

case of powerful men, ignorance is hostile and base, for it is harmful to anyone close at hand whether in fictional representations or in actuality. However, in the case of the weak, ignorance has been allotted the nature and status of comedy.

Prot: What you say is absolutely correct, but the admixture of pleasure and pain in these cases is not yet obvious to me.

Soc: Well, first take the power of envy.

Prot: Please explain.

Soc: ^{49D} Is it somehow an unjust pain and also a pleasure?

Prot: Yes, it must be.

Soc: Now, delight in the misfortunes of enemies is neither injustice nor envy, is it?

Prot: Of course not.

Soc: But is it just to be pleased rather than pained if you ever see the misfortunes of your friends?

Prot: No, how could it be?

Soc: And didn't we say that ignorance is a misfortune for anyone?

Prot: Correct.

Soc: Now take the imagined wisdom of friends, or their imagined beauty, and any other fancies described ^{49E} just now, saying there were three forms which were comical in the case of the weak but detestable in the case of the strong. Shouldn't we repeat what we said earlier, that this condition is comical when it is evidenced by one of our friends and is harmless to others?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: But did we not agree that this condition constitutes ignorance and is a misfortune?

Prot: Definitely.

Soc: But are we pleased or pained whenever we are amused by it?

Prot: ^{50A} Obviously we are pleased.

Soc: And did we not say that envy is what produces this pleasure at the misfortunes of friends?

Prot: It must be.

Soc: So the argument states that, when we are amused at the ridiculousness of friends, by mixing pleasure with envy, we are combining pleasure with pain. For we agreed some time ago that envy was a pain of the soul, but amusement was a pleasure, yet both arise at the same time in such situations as these.

Prot: True.

Soc: ^{50B} Indeed our current argument indicates that in laments, tragedies and comedies, not only on stage but in the entire tragedy and comedy of life, pains and pleasures are also mixed together on countless occasions.

Prot: It is impossible to disagree with that, Socrates, even if someone had a great passion for winning arguments against others.

Soc: Indeed we proposed anger, longing, sadness, fear, love, ^{50C} ambition and envy,¹⁹ and the like, as cases where we shall encounter these mixtures which we keep referring to now; is this so?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: Now, do we appreciate that everything we have just concluded applies to sadness, envy and anger?

Prot: Yes, how could we fail to appreciate that?

Soc: So are there many cases still left?

Prot: Yes, very many.

Soc: Well, why exactly do you think I showed you this admixture in the case of comedy? Wasn't I trying to persuade you that the mixing is easier to demonstrate in fear ^{50D} and love and those other instances? I was hoping that, once you had accepted this for yourself, you would release me from the obligation to make the discussion even longer by dealing with the other cases. I thought you would simply accept that the experiences of body without soul, soul without body or their communion with one another, are full of pleasure combined with pain. So tell me now whether you will release me or keep us here 'till midnight.

I think you are going to release me if I say a little more. Indeed I am prepared ^{50E} to give you an account of all the instances tomorrow, but now I want to turn to the remaining matters involved in deciding the issue raised by Philebus.

Prot: Well said, Socrates, work through the remaining matters in any way you please.

Soc: It is natural, then, to move on to the unmixed pleasures in turn after the mixed ones. In fact, it is essential and there is some need to do so.

Prot: ^{51A} Excellent.

Soc: Then I shall turn to these and try to point them out to us. For some reason, I am not entirely persuaded by those who assert that all pleasures are the cessation of pain, but, as I said, they do bear witness to the fact that some pleasures are imagined and not genuine at all; others give the appearance of being numerous and extensive but, in fact, they are compounded with pains and with the cessation of extreme suffering involved in distress of both body and soul.

Prot: ^{51B} Socrates, which pleasures may properly be regarded as true?

Soc: Those which involve colours which we call beautiful, also shapes, most smells, pleasant sounds and any pleasures where the deficiency is painless and unnoticed, while the replenishment they provide is perceptible, pleasant and devoid of pain.

Prot: Socrates, how do these examples relate to what we are discussing?

Soc: Well the point I am making is certainly not immediately obvious, so I should try ^{51C} to clarify it. Indeed I am not now trying to discuss the beauty of the shapes which most people may understand, belonging either to living beings or drawings of them. No,

¹⁹ This very list is also at 47e in a different sequence.

what I mean, says the argument, is something straight or round and the flat or solid shapes produced from these by means of the lathe, ruler and set-square, if you understand me. For I mean that these are not beautiful relative to something else, as other objects are. Instead, they are always naturally beautiful by themselves and they possess certain intrinsic pleasures ^{51D} which bear no comparison with the pleasures of scratching. Now colours also possess this type of beauty and pleasure. Do you follow? What do you say?

Prot: Well, I am trying, Socrates; so you should also try to explain this a bit more clearly.

Soc: Yes, I mean that sounds which are smooth and clear and send out a single pure note, are not beautiful relative to something else, but are beautiful just by themselves, and the pleasures which follow are natural to them.

Prot: Yes, this is so.

Soc: ^{51E} But the category of pleasures based upon scents is less divine than that of sounds. Yet because they do not have pain inevitably mixed in with them, and due to their location and the way that they arise within us, I regard them as a total counterpart to the previous pleasures. Then, if you can follow, these are two forms of the pleasures we are discussing.

Prot: I follow.

Soc: Well then, we should also include the pleasures associated with learning ^{52A} among these, if they seem to us not to involve a longing for learning and no pains owe their origin to such longing.

Prot: Well, I agree with that.

Soc: What about this? If someone who has been filled with knowledge loses it later through forgetfulness, can you envisage any pain at the loss?

Prot: No, not naturally anyway, but in reflecting on what has happened ^{52B} someone who has been deprived of the knowledge may be pained by its absence.

Soc: Well, bless you! And yet, at the moment, we are describing only the natural responses themselves, devoid of any reflection upon them.

Prot: Then what you say is true, and in the case of learning we experience no pain when forgetfulness sets in.

Soc: Then we should state that these pleasures of learning are not mixed with pain, and that they are not in the possession of humanity in general but of a select few.

Prot: Yes, what else could we say?

Soc: ^{52C} Well, since we have now made a measured distinction between the pure pleasures and those which may properly be described as somewhat impure, we should add the further statement that the intense pleasures are unmeasured, while those which are not intense are, by contrast, are measured. And those which involve intensity and strength, whether such pleasure arises frequently or seldom, we may include ^{52D} in that limitless category, the more and the less, which pervades both body and soul. However, those which do not involve intensity and strength belong to the category of things which are measured.

Prot: You are perfectly right, Socrates.

Soc: Then there is one further aspect of them we must examine.

Prot: What is that?

Soc: We should state precisely how they relate to truth. How do we rank the pure and simple, the intense and extreme or the strong and vigorous?

Prot: What exactly do you have in mind, Socrates, when you ask that question?

Soc: Protarchus, I want to omit nothing as I scrutinise both pleasure and knowledge, ^{52E} and if there is a pure form of either of them and an impure form too, I want to make the decision easier for you and me and everyone here by making the decision about that pure form.

Prot: Very appropriate.

Soc: Come on then, let's think about these so-called pure categories in this way. We could select one of them first and consider it.

Prot: ^{53A} Which should we select?

Soc: We could look at whiteness first, if you wish.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Now, can we have purity of whiteness and what would that purity be? Does it consist in its extreme magnitude and extent, or in the total absence of admixture of any other colours at all?

Prot: Obviously it is the total purity.

Soc: Correct. And Protarchus, ^{53B} won't we also suggest that this, and not the most extensive and numerous, is the truest and also, of course, the most beautiful of white colours?

Prot: Yes, that is perfectly right.

Soc: So a little pure white is whiter, and also more beautiful and truer than a great deal of mixed white: if we were to say this, would we be entirely correct in saying so?

Prot: Yes, perfectly correct.

Soc: Well now, we do not really need many examples of this kind for our discussion about pleasure. It is sufficient that we realise from this instance that any small, insignificant pleasure, which has been purified of pain, would be more pleasant, true and beautiful than a great ^{53C} and extensive pleasure.

Prot: Very much so, yes, this example is sufficient.

Soc: But what about the following point? Haven't we heard that pleasure is always a process of becoming, and that there is no being whatsoever of pleasure? Yes indeed, some subtle thinkers try to explain this argument to us and we should be grateful to them.

Prot: What do you mean?

Soc: Protarchus, my friend, I shall explain this particular point to you by asking more questions. ^{53D}

Prot: Explain it then; ask the questions.

Soc: Well, there is a duality, and one aspect is just what it is, while the other is always aiming at something else.

Prot: How are there two? What do you mean?

Soc: One is, by nature, always utterly sacred, while the other is deficient in that respect.

Prot: Please explain even more clearly.

Soc: Presumably we have observed handsome and excellent young men and also their courageous lovers.

Prot: Definitely.

Soc: Search throughout everything that we say there is, for ^{53E} another pair which resembles these two.

Prot: I ask you for the third time, Socrates, please explain what you are saying more clearly.

Soc: It is not anything complicated, Protarchus; no, the argument is teasing us by saying that things that are, in one case, are always for the sake of something else, but in the other case, are that on account of which that which arises for the sake of something else always arises when it does arise.

Prot: I am understanding you gradually, because of the constant repetition.

Soc: And, my boy, it is quite likely that we shall understand more as the argument unfolds. ^{54A}

Prot: Undoubtedly.

Soc: Now let's take another pair.

Prot: Of what sort?

Soc: One is the becoming of all things, and the other one is their being.

Prot: I agree with you, there are these two, being and becoming.

Soc: Quite right. Now which of them occurs for the sake of which? Should we say that becoming is for the sake of being, or being is for the sake of becoming?

Prot: Do you want to know if that which is called being is what it is for the sake of becoming?

Soc: Apparently.

Prot: ^{54B} By the gods, this is like asking me: "Protarchus, tell me whether you would say that ship-building arises for the sake of ships rather than ships for the sake of ship-building?" and other questions like that.

Soc: I mean just that, Protarchus.

Prot: Then why not answer the question yourself, Socrates?

Soc: There is no reason why not, except that you should also participate in the discussion.

Prot: Very good.

Soc: ^{54C} Now, I am saying that medicine and all tools and raw materials are applied to anything for the sake of becoming, but that each process of becoming, for its part, arises for the sake of some particular being, and that becoming in general arises for the sake of being in general.

Prot: Yes, that could not be clearer.

Soc: Therefore, if in fact pleasure is a process of becoming, it would necessarily arise for the sake of some being.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Well, that for the sake of which anything which comes to be for the sake of something else always arises, that belongs to the rank of the good. However, my excellent friend, anything which arises for the sake of something else should be assigned a different rank.

Prot: That is also absolutely inevitable.

Soc: ^{54D} Now, if pleasure is, in fact, a process of becoming, would we be assigning it correctly if we allocated it a rank other than the rank of the good?

Prot: Yes, that would be perfectly correct.

Soc: Therefore, as I actually said at the beginning of this discussion, we should be grateful to whoever declared that pleasure is a process of becoming which has no being whatsoever. For it is obvious that this person makes a laughing stock of those who assert that pleasure is good.

Prot: Definitely.

Soc: ^{54E} And indeed this same person will also make a laughing stock of those whose objective consists in processes of becoming.

Prot: In what way, and what sort of people are you referring to?

Soc: I am referring to all who obtain relief from hunger and thirst or anything of that sort which may be relieved by a process of becoming²⁰, and are delighted by the process as it is, itself, pleasure. They say that life would be unbearable without the experiences of thirst and hunger and all the others which may be said to follow upon such conditions.

Prot: ^{55A} Well, they seem to believe that anyway.

Soc: Now, I presume we would all agree that perishing is the opposite of coming into being.

Prot: It must be.

Soc: If someone were to choose a life based upon coming into being and perishing, he would not be choosing that third kind of life, in which there is neither pleasure nor pain but only the purest possible understanding.

Prot: It seems, Socrates, that a lot of unreasonable consequences follow, once anyone proposes to us that pleasure is good.

Soc: A lot, and there is even more to be said.

²⁰ This picks up the statement made at 44b.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: ^{55B} How can it be reasonable that there is nothing good or fair in body or in anything else except the soul? And that the good in the soul should be pleasure alone; while courage and self-control and reason and the other goods which the soul contains, are neither good nor fair? What's more, must we refer to a man who is not experiencing pleasure but is in pain as bad, once he is in pain, even if he is the most excellent of men? And what's more, must we refer to the man who experiences pleasure, as distinguished in excellence to the extent that he experiences more pleasure on ^{55C} an occasion of pleasure?

Prot: All these conclusions are as unreasonable as can be, Socrates.

Soc: Then, we should not be trying our utmost to conduct a comprehensive review of pleasure, whilst showing scant regard for reason and knowledge. Let us make bold and test these thoroughly for any unsoundness, so that we may discern what is naturally purest in them, and then make our joint decision by referring to what is truest in these two and in pleasure.

Prot: Right.

Soc: ^{55D} Well then, I believe that the knowledge involved in learning relates either to a skill, or to education and nurture. Is this so?

Prot: It is so.

Soc: Now, in the case of manual skills, let's consider firstly whether some of them involve more knowledge, while others involve less, and whether we should regard the former as entirely pure and the latter as less pure.

Prot: Yes, we must do this.

Soc: Then, should we deal with the chief skills separately in each case?

Prot: What are they, and how should we deal with them?

Soc: ^{55E} For instance, if someone were to remove counting, measuring and weighing from all of the skills, what was left of each would, so to speak, be worthless.

Prot: Yes, worthless indeed.

Soc: Anyway, after that, what is left would be guess-work and the exercise of the senses through experience and habit and recourse to the powers of inference, which many call skills, ^{56A} since this ability is developed through study and hard work.

Prot: What you are saying is undeniable.

Soc: Now, in the first place, music is presumably full of this, as it harmonises the sounds, not through measurement but by inference based on experience. Flute playing, in general, seeks out the measure of each note by inference, and so, to a large extent, it involves an absence of clarity combined with little certainty.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: ^{56B} And we shall find that the same applies to medicine, farming, navigation and military strategy.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: But building, I believe, uses far more measurements and instruments, and these provide it with extreme precision and render it the most skilful of the various branches of knowledge.

Prot: In what way?

Soc: On the basis that both ship-building and house-building along with numerous other skills involve wood-working. For this skill, I believe, uses the ruler, the compass, lathe, ^{56C} chalk-line and an ingenious kind of set-square.

Prot: Very much so, Socrates, what you are saying is correct.

Soc: Then let's place these so-called skills into two categories; one corresponding to music, which involves less precision in its activities, and the other which corresponds to building and is more precise.

Prot: Let's do that.

Soc: And the most precise of these, are the skills which we just said are primary.

Prot: You appear to me to be referring to arithmetic and whatever skills you mentioned along with it a moment ago.

Soc: ^{56D} Yes, certainly, Protarchus, but should we also say that these subjects in turn are also twofold? What do you think?

Prot: What two aspects are you referring to?

Soc: Shouldn't we point out, first, that the arithmetic of the multitude is one thing, while the arithmetic of those who engage in philosophy is something else again?

Prot: How could anyone ever propose a distinction between one kind of arithmetic and another?

Soc: This is no minor distinction, Protarchus. Indeed there are people who enumerate units which are somehow unequal, such as two armies or oxen or two of the smallest or ^{56E} largest possible entities. But there are others who would never go along with this, unless someone was to propose that each of the units does not differ at all from any of the myriad other units.

Prot: Then you are quite right to say that the difference between people who deal with numbers is not minor, so it makes sense that there are two types.

Soc: What about calculation and measurement used in building or trading compared to the geometry and calculation ^{57A} associated with philosophy? Should we say that each subject is one or should we propose that there are two?

Prot: Following what was said before, according to my vote, there would be two types of each subject.

Soc: Correct, but do you appreciate why we have introduced these issues into the discussion?

Prot: Possibly, but I would like you to reply to the question which has just been asked.

Soc: Well, it seems to me anyway that this discussion, no less than when we first commenced it, in looking for a counterpart to pleasures, has gone on from there to enquire whether one kind of knowledge is purer ^{57B} than another kind of knowledge, just as one pleasure was purer than another.

Prot: Yes, and it is quite clear that that is the reason why these topics were introduced.

Soc: What now? Did we not discover previously that there is a skill applicable to various subjects, which may be more definite or less definite in one case than another?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: Yet in these cases, did we not refer to a particular skill with a single name, giving the impression that it was one thing? Then again, are we now behaving as if this definite and pure skill is itself two ^{57C} things, when we ask whether the skill of the philosophic or the non-philosophic people is more precise?

Prot: Yes, it certainly seems to me that this question does arise.

Soc: Well, what answer do we give, Protarchus?

Prot: Well Socrates, we have arrived at an amazingly significant distinction in relation to the clarity of various types of knowledge.

Soc: Doesn't that make it easier for us to reply?

Prot: Of course, and we should state that these pure skills are far superior to the others, and any of them which are concerned with the endeavour of genuinely ^{57D} philosophic people are immeasurably superior in precision and truth in relation both to measure and to number.

Soc: Let's accept what you say, and placing our trust in you, we can reply boldly to those men who are so clever at dragging words about.

Prot: What sort of reply should we give?

Soc: That there are two arithmetical and two metrical skills, and there are countless other similar skills associated with them, which possess this twofold aspect though they share one common name.

Prot: ^{57E} Let's give this answer, Socrates, along with our best wishes to these men whom you say are clever.

Soc: Are we saying then that these kinds of knowledge are the most precise?

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: But Protarchus, the power of dialectic would disown us should we decide that some other skill is preferable to her.

Prot: Should we explain again what dialectic is?

Soc: ^{58A} Obviously it is the skill which understands every skill we are now discussing, at least.²¹ For I believe that anyone who is endowed with even a little reason regards the understanding of being and actuality and that which is always entirely the same by nature, as the truest knowledge by far. But what about you, how would you decide the issue?

Prot: Well, Socrates, I heard consistently and repeatedly from Gorgias that skill in persuasion is greatly superior to all other skills, ^{58B} for everyone is enslaved by it, not by force, but willingly, so it is far the best skill of all. And now I do not wish to take up a position opposed either to you or to him.

²¹ This translation follows Bury's text rather than the Oxford version. Gosling also follows Bury here.

Soc: I think you wanted to say “take up arms”, but you dropped that wording out of politeness.

Prot: Let it be so then, if you think it so.

Soc: Well in that case, am I responsible for your inadequate understanding?

Prot: In what way?

Soc: Friend Protarchus, I was not yet asking what ^{58C} skill or knowledge exceeds all in magnitude, excellence, and the extent of its benefit to us. No, the skill which pursues what is clear and precise and perfectly true, even if it is minor and of little benefit, this is what we are searching for now.

But look, you will not become an enemy of Gorgias if you grant that his own skill is supreme in relation to its benefit to humanity, while this process we are discussing is the very truest. It is just like the example of whiteness I gave earlier, where even a little pure colour is superior to a lot of colour which is not pure. ^{58D} And now, after intense thought and proper discussion, we should look neither to the benefits of any branch of knowledge nor to its reputation, but only to whether there is a certain power innate in our souls to love the truth and perform all actions for its sake. We should declare that this power deserves close attention, and we should state whether this is most likely to possess pure reason and understanding, or whether we should look for something else which is better.

Prot: ^{58E} Well, I am considering this, and I think it is hard to accept that any other skill or knowledge adheres more closely to truth than this power.

Soc: Now, are you saying what you have just said because you realise that the various skills and those who engage in them, in the first ^{59A} place make use of opinions and are earnestly investigating matters of opinion? And do you also think that someone who believes he is inquiring into nature spends his life investigating the phenomena of this universe, how it has arisen, what happens to it and how it behaves? Is this what we would say, or how would we express it?

Prot: In this way.

Soc: So a person like this is not taking on the task of inquiring into things that always are, but into things that are becoming, will become or have become.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: Now would we say, in strictest truth, ^{59B} that anything clear arises from these when they never ever possess it at present and will never have it?

Prot: No, how could we?

Soc: Well, how could we ever achieve any certainty at all about matters which have never attained any certainty whatsoever?

Prot: I do not think it is possible at all.

Soc: So there is no reasoning or any knowledge about them which is perfectly true.

Prot: No, that is not likely.

Soc: Well then, we should bid a final farewell to you and me, Gorgias and Philebus, and instead, use the argument to make the following case.

Prot: ^{59C} What case?

Soc: That we shall attain the certain, the pure, the true and what we call absolute, among what is ever the same, unchanging and unmixed, or among whatever is most akin to these. All else should be declared to be secondary or worse.

Prot: What you say is very true.

Soc: And wouldn't it be most appropriate to assign the most beautiful names for such entities to whatever is most beautiful?

Prot: That sounds reasonable anyway.

Soc: ^{59D} Are not reason and understanding the names which would be most revered?

Prot: Yes.

Soc: So these terms are properly applicable in their most precise sense to reflections upon what actually is.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: And these are the very terms I presented for our adjudication earlier.

Prot: Of course, Socrates.

Soc: Very well. Now, if someone were to say that this process of mixing understanding with ^{59E} pleasure turns us into craftsmen with the materials for manufacturing something spread before us, he would be making a very good analogy.

Prot: Very much so.

Soc: Then the next thing we should do is set about mixing them.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Well, would it be appropriate to set out some principles and reminders for ourselves?

Prot: Of what kind?

Soc: We were also reminded of these before, but I think the ^{60A} proverb puts it nicely that "a good point may be repeated twice or even thrice in a speech".

Prot: Of course.

Soc: Then, by Zeus, let's proceed, for I believe that what has just been said amounts to something like this.

Prot: Something like what?

Soc: Philebus says that pleasure is the right objective for every creature and they should all aim for this, and this in itself constitutes the good for all of them. And these two names, good and pleasant, have been correctly assigned ^{60B} to one entity which possesses a single nature.

But Socrates denies that these two are one: they are two, just as the names imply, and the good and pleasant have different natures from one another, and that understanding involves a greater portion of good than pleasure does.

Is that how things stand, Protarchus, and is that what was said before?

Prot: Yes, definitely.

Soc: Isn't there a point we agreed about before and could still agree about now?

Prot: What is it?

Soc: That the nature of the good differs from everything else in a particular way.

Prot: ^{60C} Which is....?

Soc: Any creature which possessed it permanently, entirely and in every way, would not ever stand in need of anything else and would be completely self-sufficient. Is this so?

Prot: It is so indeed.

Soc: Didn't we attempt in the discussion to assign a distinct life to each of them, one a life of pleasure unmixed with understanding and the other, in like manner, a life of understanding without the least portion of pleasure?

Prot: That was it.

Soc: Now, did we think at the time that either of these lives was adequate for anyone?

Prot: ^{60D} No, how could we?

Soc: And yet, if we went somewhat astray just now, anyone may now revise it and state it more correctly. He should assign memory, understanding, knowledge and right opinion to the same category, and consider whether anyone would agree to possess or acquire anything whatsoever in the absence of these. Would he accept the most extensive and intense pleasure without the true opinion that he was enjoying it, without any knowledge at all of the experience he was undergoing or any memory ^{60E} of the experience, for any period of time? And he should also ask the same question about understanding. Would anyone accept the possession of understanding without any pleasure, even the slightest, rather than having it along with some pleasures? Or would he accept all the pleasure without any understanding rather than having it, in turn, along with some understanding?

Prot: No one would accept it, Socrates, and there is no need to repeat the question so often.

Soc: ^{61A} In that case, would the perfect, the supreme good which everyone desires, be either of these two?

Prot: How could it be?

Soc: Then we need to understand the good either in its clarity or in outline, so that, as we said, we may decide how to award second place.

Prot: Correct.

Soc: Well haven't we found a sort of pathway towards the good?

Prot: What is it?

Soc: It is as if you were looking for a particular person, and you first ^{61B} found out exactly where he lived. Surely that would be a significant step in the search for the person.

Prot: Of course.

Soc: And indeed a certain argument has now advised us, as it did at the start of our discussion, not to seek the good in the unmixed life but in the mixed life.

Prot: Certainly.

Soc: In that case, is there greater hope that the good will be more evident in a life which has been beautifully mixed, than in a life which has not?

Prot: Much greater.

Soc: Then let us set about mixing them and pray to the gods, either Dionysos ^{61C} or Hephaistos, or whichever god has been given superintendence over the process of blending.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: And indeed we have fountains set before us just as if we were wine-bearers. The fountain of pleasure may be likened to honey, while the sobering, un-intoxicating fountain of understanding is like un-sweetened healthy water, and we must endeavour to mix these two as beautifully as we can.

Prot: So we must.

Soc: ^{61D} Now the first question is: would we best achieve a beautiful mixture by combining all pleasure with all understanding?

Prot: Perhaps.

Soc: But this is not safe. I think I have an idea which would enable us to carry out the mixing with less risk.

Prot: Tell me what it is.

Soc: Did we find, so we thought, that one pleasure was more truly a pleasure than another, and indeed that one skill was also more precise than another skill?

Prot: They must be.

Soc: And knowledge actually excels over knowledge, as in one case, it was concerned with whatever comes into being ^{61E} and perishes, and in the other with things that neither come to be nor perish, but are always exactly the same as they are. Reflecting on these, on the basis of truth, we regarded the second as truer than the first.

Prot: Yes, and rightly so.

Soc: Now, if we were to look at the truest portions of these two and mix them together first, would these mixtures be sufficient to provide us with the most desirable life, or would we still need portions which are not like these?

Prot: ^{62A} It seems to me anyway that we should do as you suggest.

Soc: Let's suppose that there is a man with an understanding about what justice is, who can give an account accordant with reason, and who also appreciates everything else there is in the very same way.

Prot: Very well, let's do that.

Soc: Now then, will such a man have sufficient knowledge, if he can give an account of the sphere itself and circle itself which are divine, but is ignorant of this sphere and that

circle of the human realm, even when ^{62B} using straight edges and circles in house building and other similar activities?²²

Prot: If knowledge consists of only divine knowledge, Socrates, then we are in a ridiculous predicament.

Soc: Are you saying that we should put the uncertain and impure skill associated with the false straight edge and circle into the mixture with the others?

Prot: Yes, we must, if any of us is even going to find his own way home every day.

Soc: ^{62C} And what about music? We said a little earlier that it is full of conjecture and imitation and therefore lacks purity, so should we add this to the mixture?

Prot: It appears to me that we must, if we are to have a life which is any kind of life at all.

Soc: In that case, do you want me to surrender, like a doorkeeper, who is pushed and pressed by a crowd, and let the doors fly open so that every kind of knowledge floods in, and the pure mixes alike with the deficient?

Prot: ^{62D} Socrates, I do not know what harm it would do to admit all the other kinds of knowledge once we had the first primary kinds.

Soc: So shall I let all of them flood into the receptacle, the valley which Homer so poetically describes?

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: They have all been admitted; and now we must go once more to the fountain of pleasures. Indeed we have not carried out our intention of mixing the true portions of the pleasures first. Instead, due to our indiscriminate desire for all knowledge, we have allowed it all in at once even ^{62E} before the pleasures.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: Then it is time for us to decide also whether all these pleasures should be allowed in together, or we should first admit only those which are true.

Prot: It makes a significant difference in terms of safety to let the true pleasures in first.

Soc: Let them in, then! And what is the next question? If there are some necessary pleasures, as in the other case, should we also add these to the mix?

Prot: Why not? Surely the necessary ones should be added.

Soc: ^{63A} And yet, we said it was useful and not harmful to have knowledge of all skills throughout our lives. Well, if we now say the same thing about pleasures, that it is of benefit to us and not harmful to anyone to enjoy all pleasures throughout life, they should all be included in the mix.

Prot: In that case, what should we say about the pleasures themselves and what procedure should we adopt?

²² He makes use of circle itself from the divine realm as he has no knowledge of the human counterpart. The impracticality of this may be the point here though the original Greek text is perhaps corrupt: see Bury for discussion.

Soc: It is not us who should be questioned, Protarchus, but there is a certain question we may put to the pleasures themselves, and to the instances of understanding, in relation to one another.

Prot: ^{63B} What sort of question?

Soc: “My friends, be ye called pleasures or any other name, would you prefer to live in the presence of all understanding or in the absence of understanding?” I believe there is a particular response which they must give here.

Prot: What sort of response?

Soc: Exactly what was said before: “It is not really possible or useful ^{63C} for any category to be single, solitary and absolute. Indeed we believe, comparing one with another, that in the case of all these categories it is best for us to live in the company of knowledge of all the others, and as complete a knowledge as possible of each one of us.”

Prot: “Yes, what you have just said is excellent”, will be our reply.

Soc: And rightly so. Now we must put our question once more; this time to understanding and reason: “Would you like to include any pleasures in the mixture?” Yes, that is what we would say in questioning reason and understanding. And they would probably reply: “Pleasures of what kind?”

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: ^{63D} Well anyway, our conversation continues as follows; we shall ask: “In addition to those true pleasures, do you still feel a need for the company of the greatest and most intense pleasures?” And they would probably say: “How could we, Socrates, when they present countless impediments to us, disturbing the souls in which we reside with insane pleasures and not allowing us to come into being in the first ^{63E} place. And they totally destroy whatever offspring we bring to birth, in most cases, by engendering forgetfulness through inattention. But please regard those true and pure pleasures you mentioned as our near kindred, along with any others which involve health and self-control, and indeed any pleasures which attend upon totality of excellence and follow that everywhere as if it were a god: these you may add to the mix.

“But surely it would be quite irrational for someone who wishes to see a mixture and blend ^{64A} which is as beautiful and as free from strife as possible, to put the pleasures which involve thoughtlessness and all sorts of depravity into the mix with reason; especially if he is trying to understand from this what precisely is good by nature in man and in the universe, and to divine its precise form.” Well, shall we not say that reason has responded sensibly, and in accord with itself, when it says all this on behalf of itself, memory and right opinion?

Prot: Entirely so.

Soc: Yes, but something else is needed; otherwise nothing at all would ever have come into being.

Prot: ^{64B} What is it?

Soc: Anything which we do not combine with truth, would not ever truly come into being, nor would it “be” once it had come into being.

Prot: No, how could it?

Soc: It simply could not. Now, if anything else is still lacking in this admixture, you and Philebus should say what it is. For it does appear to me that the present account is complete: it is a non-physical order which presides beautifully over an ensouled body.

Prot: Well, on that basis, Socrates, you may say that I accept the account.

Soc: ^{64C} And would we be right in saying that, in a sense, we are standing before the portals of the good and the dwelling place of its kindred?

Prot: So it seems to me, anyway.

Soc: What then would we say is most valuable in this admixture and, at the same time, most responsible for such an arrangement being attractive to everyone? For once we have seen this, we can go on to consider whether it stands in closer natural kinship with pleasure or with reason in the overall scheme.

Prot: ^{64D} And rightly so, for this is of the utmost significance for the decision before us.

Soc: And indeed it is not difficult to discern the cause whereby any mixture at all becomes either extremely valuable or entirely worthless.

Prot: What are you referring to?

Soc: I believe there is no man who is ignorant of this.

Prot: Of what?

Soc: That any mixture which does not somehow involve some measure and the nature of symmetry must destroy its own components and, first and foremost, itself. For something like this is not even a mixture, ^{64E} but is truly a jumble which has been thrown together, in fact, a constant affliction to those who have acquired it.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: And now we see that the power of the good has fled for refuge into the nature of the beautiful. For surely measure and symmetry always turn out to be beauty and excellence.

Prot: Yes, certainly.

Soc: And indeed, we said that truth is mixed with them in the blend.

Prot: Certainly.

Soc: ^{65A} Therefore, if we are unable to capture the good in a single form, we may comprehend it with these: beauty, symmetry and truth. Let us declare that the three may properly be regarded as a single element responsible for the condition of the mixture, and that the mixture becomes good because of this.

Prot: You are perfectly right.

Soc: Then at this point, Protarchus, anyone may be a satisfactory judge of whether it is pleasure or understanding that is more closely related to the supreme good ^{65B} and is more valuable among men and gods.

Prot: Yes, that is obvious, but it is best to complete the discussion, nevertheless.

Soc: In that case, we should judge each of the three individually in relation to pleasure and reason. For we need to decide which of the two should be assigned greater kinship with the three.

Prot: Are you referring to beauty, truth and measure?

Soc: Yes. But take truth first, Protarchus, and ^{65C} once you have taken it and considered the three, reason, truth and pleasure, take your time and answer for yourself whether pleasure or reason is more akin to truth.

Prot: What time do I need? Indeed I believe that they differ enormously. For pleasure is the most deceptive thing of all and by report, in the case of amorous pleasures which seem to be the most powerful, even the breaking of oaths is pardoned by the gods, as if ^{65D} the pleasures were just like children who have not attained even the smallest portion of reason. But reason, on the other hand, is either the very same as truth, or resembles it more closely than anything else and is truer than all else.

Soc: Now consider measure next in the same way, and ask whether pleasure has more than understanding or understanding has more than pleasure.

Prot: This question too is easy to deal with, for I do not believe that anyone would find anything at all which is more unmeasured than pleasure and excitement. And in contrast, nothing at all could ever be more measured than reason and knowledge.

Soc: ^{65E} That is very well expressed. Nevertheless, you should still answer the third question. Do we say that reason partakes of beauty to a greater extent than the category of pleasure so that reason is more beautiful than pleasure? Or is it the other way around?

Prot: Now, Socrates, no one either awake or in a dream has ever seen or conceived of understanding and reason as becoming ugly, or being ugly now or in the future in any way whatsoever.

Soc: Correct.

Prot: But somehow, when we see anyone enjoying pleasures, particularly if they are quite intense, and we behold the ridiculous or ^{66A} utterly base aspects associated with them, we ourselves are ashamed and remove them from view and hide them as best we can, consigning all such activities to the night because the light of day should not have sight of them.

Soc: Then you will proclaim to all, by sending forth messages and speaking to those who are present, that pleasure is not the first of possessions, nor indeed the second; no, the first somehow involves measure, moderation and appropriateness and all that must be regarded as similar to these.²³

Prot: That's how it appears from what we are now saying, anyway.

Soc: ^{66B} And the second is associated with symmetry, beauty, completeness, sufficiency and whatever, for its part, belongs to that category.

Prot: Quite likely.

Soc: And based upon my prophecy, if you assign third place to reason and understanding you would not have strayed far from the truth.

Prot: Perhaps.

Soc: Should fourth place go to knowledge, skill, and what are called right opinions, which we designated as belonging to the soul herself: do these ^{66C} come fourth after the other three, since they are more akin to the good than pleasure is?

²³ Omitting the last three words of this paragraph as corrupt; as per Frede (Hackett edition 1993).

Prot: Perhaps so.

Soc: Then are the pleasures which we defined as devoid of pain in fifth place? We called these the pure pleasures of the soul itself, associated with knowledge in some cases and with sense perception in others.²⁴

Prot: Perhaps.

Soc: “In the sixth generation end the well ordered song”, says Orpheus. Then it is likely that our argument is coming to rest in the sixth decision, and there is nothing left for us after this, ^{66D} except to provide a sort of summation of what has been said.

Prot: Yes, we need to do that.

Soc: Come on, with an offering to the saviour, let’s call the same argument to give evidence for the third time.

Prot: What sort of argument?

Soc: Philebus proposed that for us the good is pleasure, complete and entire.

Prot: Socrates, apparently when you said “for the third time” you meant that we must simply take up the argument again from the beginning.

Soc: ^{66E} Yes, but let’s hear what comes next. For once I had appreciated the accounts which have been given just now, and became disgusted by the principle which is stated, not only by Philebus but also a countless number of others, I asserted that reason is far superior to pleasure and also better for the life of humanity.

Prot: That is what was said.

Soc: And yet, suspecting that there were many other candidates, I said that if anything turned out to be better than these two, I would side with reason against pleasure in the struggle for second place, and that pleasure would be deprived even of second place.

Prot: ^{67A} Yes, you did say that.

Soc: And after that, it was shown very adequately that neither of these two is adequate.

Prot: Very true.

Soc: Therefore, on the basis of this argument, pleasure and reason set aside their claim that either of them is the good itself, as they are devoid of self-sufficiency and the capacity for adequacy and completeness.

Prot: Correct.

Soc: But when a third contestant turned out to be superior to either of these two, reason proved to be infinitely more akin, and by nature closer than pleasure, to the character of the victor.

Prot: It did indeed.

Soc: Therefore, on the basis of the judgment evinced by the current argument, the power of pleasure would get fifth place.

Prot: So it seems.

²⁴ For the pure and painless pleasures of sense see 51b and for those of knowledge see 52a.

Soc: ^{67B} But it would never get first place, not even if all the cattle and horses and all of the other wild beasts were to make this assertion through their pursuit of pleasure. Most people believe them, just as soothsayers believe birds, and adjudge pleasures to be the best means to a good life for us, and they regard the animal passions as authoritative witnesses rather than the ardent pronouncements constantly uttered under the inspiration of the Muse Philosophy.

Prot: Socrates, we all agree now that what you have said is perfectly true.

Soc: Will you also let me go then?

Prot: There is a small matter still outstanding, Socrates. Indeed I am sure you will not give up before we do, so I shall remind you of the remaining issues.

End