

**True Virtue and Illusory Virtue in Plato's *Phaedo***

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#### Introduction

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates offers a detailed account of the punishments and rewards in the afterlife journey.<sup>1</sup> After death, inferior, impure souls face punishments for their wrongdoings and are again imprisoned in a body through reincarnation (*Phaedo* 81c6-e4, 113d1-114b6). On the other hand, good, pure souls—souls which have practiced philosophy in the right way—make their way to the invisible realm of the divine, immortal, and wise, where these souls can be happy and spend the rest of time with the gods (80e1-81a8, 114c1-9). It seems that purifying the soul and consequently attaining the most desirable fate after death requires that one practice philosophy in the right way. Also, seeing as Socrates seems to equate the “souls of good men” with pure souls, it becomes clear that a pure soul is in good ethical condition.

We also see that Socrates himself is cheerful about his imminent death, believing that his soul is pure and that he will consequently get to dwell with the gods in Hades, where he will acquire pure wisdom (80d4-81a2, 115d4-6). Because he has practiced philosophy in the right way, Socrates believes that his soul is in good ethical condition. Socrates' friends also think very highly of him.<sup>2</sup> They “all felt as if we had lost a father and would be orphaned for the rest of our lives” (116a6-7). Similarly, after describing Socrates' death to Echecrates, *Phaedo* concludes, “Such was the end of our comrade, Echecrates, a man who, we would say, was of all those we have known the best, and also the wisest and the most upright” (118a11-13). Socrates' friends characterize him as a wise, virtuous mentor. So Socrates' soul has evidently become pure and good through practicing philosophy in the right way, and thus is prepared for an easy death. Socrates appears to identify the philosophers as the possessors of true virtue (69b1-d3), so it seems that, as a philosopher, Socrates likely possesses true virtue. Yet, a problem arises: since Socrates does not offer an explicit, detailed account of what true virtue is, referring to Socrates as “truly virtuous” is largely uninformative. What Socrates' virtue consists of will remain unclear until we understand his conception of true virtue. Thus, we need a coherent account of virtue to make sense of Socrates' virtue.

Moreover, Socrates' entire defense of philosophy seems to hinge on his view of how one's soul comes to be in good ethical condition, and thus prepared for death:

I want to make my argument before you, my judges, as to why I think that a man who has truly spent his life in philosophy is probably right to be of good cheer in the face of death and to be very hopeful that after death he will attain the greatest blessings yonder...I am afraid that other people do not realize that the one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death (63e7-64a4).

Thus, in order for Socrates' defense of philosophy to succeed, and for us to make sense of how Socrates is characterized in the *Phaedo*, a coherent account of virtue is necessary.

Unfortunately, as his initial defense of philosophy concludes, Socrates only offers a brief explanation of true virtue and illusory virtue.<sup>3</sup> His distinction between these two types of virtue invites many questions, such as: Do both illusory virtue and true virtue result in the same action in the same situation? How does one become virtuous in each sense? These questions and others do not seem to have clear, explicit answers in the dialogue.

In this paper, I will offer a comprehensive account of true virtue and illusory virtue in the *Phaedo*. I will begin by briefly examining relevant epistemological aspects of the dialogue. Then I will examine the “exchange passage,” in which Socrates establishes the distinction between true virtue and illusory virtue. I will first use the

<sup>1</sup> See Doug Reed's “Bodily Desires and Afterlife Punishment in the *Phaedo*” for a thorough analysis of Socrates' discussion on the soul's afterlife journey, including the myth at 107d2-114c8.

<sup>2</sup> Even the officer of the Eleven views Socrates in a positive light, and he weeps for Socrates: “I shall not reproach you as I do the others, Socrates. They are angry with me and curse me when, obeying the orders of my superiors, I tell them to drink the poison. During the time you have been here I have come to know you in other ways as the noblest, the gentlest and the best man who has ever come here...Fare you well, and try to endure what you must as easily as possible.” The officer was weeping as he turned away and went out” (*Phaedo* 116c1-d2).

<sup>3</sup> After vaguely establishing the distinction between true virtue and illusory virtue, as well as the corresponding afterlife fates of each, Socrates says, “This is my defense, Simmias and Cebes, that I am likely to be right to leave you and my masters here without resentment or complaint, believing that there [the underworld], as here, I shall find good masters and good friends. If my defense is more convincing to you than the Athenian jury, it will be well” (*Phaedo* 69d8-e3).

exchange passage to work out an account of true virtue, and then I will return to this passage during my investigation of illusory virtue. Lastly, my analysis of true virtue and illusory virtue will ultimately allow us to verify the success of Socrates' defense of philosophy, as well as make sense of the dialogue's characterization of Socrates.

### 1. The Epistemology of the *Phaedo*

Before detailing an account of true virtue and illusory virtue, I must first consider the epistemology of the *Phaedo*, because these ethical conditions appear to be inextricably tied to the dialogue's epistemic conditions. For instance, in the exchange passage at 69a5-c1, Socrates claims that the exchange for illusory virtue consists of the exchange of pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, and fears for fears, in separation from wisdom. Here Socrates also claims that true virtue is with wisdom. Note as well that the Forms are at play in the *Phaedo*, meaning that there exist the Form of Virtue and its parts, including Justice, Moderation, Courage, and so on. Thus, it is crucial to detail wisdom and its objects, as well as identify epistemological statuses that can have the Forms as their objects.

Moreover, there is debate over whether the Two Worlds Theory, by which there can be knowledge but not belief about Forms, and belief but not knowledge about sensibles, is at work in the *Phaedo*.<sup>4</sup> This renders an examination of the epistemology of the *Phaedo* even more critical for my purposes; there is no consensus view to rely on as a starting point for an account of true virtue and illusory virtue. However, for the sake of brevity, I will only consider aspects of the dialogue's epistemology that are relevant to my account.

#### 1.1 Wisdom

At 65a9-66a10, Socrates discusses how, if at all, we can acquire wisdom.<sup>5</sup> Socrates claims that "the body [is] an obstacle when one associates with it in the search for knowledge," as the soul is deceived by the body whenever it examines anything with the body. He then suggests that if the soul is able to grasp truth, then it must be through reasoning. And the soul reasons best "when it is most by itself, taking leave of the body and as far as possible having no contact or association with it in its search for reality." Socrates goes on to describe how a person can most perfectly grasp "Bigness, Health, Strength and, in a word, the reality of all other things, that which each of them essentially is":

Then he will do this most perfectly who approaches the object with thought alone, without associating any sight with his thought, or dragging in any sense perception with his reasoning, but who, using pure thought alone, tries to track down each reality pure and by it itself, freeing himself as far as possible from eyes and ears and, in a word, from the whole body, because the body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom whenever it is associated with it. Will that man not reach reality, Simmias, if anyone does?

Socrates' explanation reveals that the Forms are objects of wisdom. Socrates also makes clear that wisdom cannot be acquired through the body. Rather, in order to acquire wisdom, one must free herself as far as possible from the body and use pure thought alone. Although this passage might be interpreted as suggesting that the Two Worlds Theory is at work in the *Phaedo*, as Fine notes, this passage does not eliminate the possibility that we can have wisdom about sensibles if we understand them in light of Forms (Fine 561). In other words, we can have wisdom about a sensible thing that comes from our grasp of a Form. So for instance, if someone possessed wisdom of what Virtue is, she may be able to have wisdom that a certain action is virtuous.

When considered alongside claims about the philosophers, the passage above also suggests that wisdom can be acquired while we are embodied. Simmias and Socrates' earlier statements about the philosophers suggest that the philosophers are like the hypothetical man Socrates has in mind: Simmias says, "our people in Thebes would thoroughly agree that the philosophers are nearly dead and that the majority of men is well aware that they deserve to be." [Socrates replies,] "And they would be telling the truth, Simmias, except for their being aware. They

<sup>4</sup> As Gail Fine notes in "Two Worlds Theory in the *Phaedo*," this is just one of various formulations of the Two Worlds Theory. In her paper, she argues that the *Phaedo* rejects the Two Worlds Theory and argues that it is possible to have knowledge while incarnate.

<sup>5</sup> See Gail Fine's "The 'Two Worlds' Theory in the *Phaedo*" for a more thorough discussion of this passage, as well as other passages in the *Phaedo*. Fine examines key passages that may be considered to support Two Worlds Theory.

are not aware of the way true philosophers are nearly dead” (64b3-6). Socrates then asserts that death is nothing other than the separation of the soul from the body (64c5-8), and that the philosopher “train[s] himself in life to live in a state as close to death as possible” (67d12). Thus, it is plausible that the soul of the philosopher is separated as far from her body as it can be while embodied. Seeing as acquiring wisdom would require one to free herself from the body and its senses as far as possible, the degree of separation of the philosopher’s soul from her body puts her in the perfect position to acquire wisdom. It seems that the philosopher is thus capable of acquiring wisdom of the Forms while incarnate.

However, one might object that Socrates’ later statements pose a problem for my interpretation. Socrates says,

[A]s long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we desire, which we affirm to be the truth...It really has been shown to us that, if we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself. It seems likely that we shall, only then, when we are dead, attain that which we desire and of which we claim to be lovers, namely, wisdom, as our argument shows, not while we live (66b3-5, 66d6-e4).

Although this passage at first appears to contradict my interpretation that the philosopher is capable of acquiring wisdom of the Forms while incarnate, close attention to Socrates’ word choice reveals that this is not the case. Rather, this passage reveals that there are two types of wisdom at work in the *Phaedo*: pure and impure. Note that Socrates is claiming that philosophers can acquire *pure* knowledge or wisdom only after death. Furthermore, the idea that philosophers will never adequately attain wisdom while incarnate does not rule out the possibility that they can acquire wisdom to some extent while incarnate. In fact, Socrates’ choice of the word “adequately” suggests that philosophers do acquire wisdom while incarnate, just not to a satisfactory degree. Thus, it seems that the philosophers are capable of acquiring impure wisdom, but not pure wisdom, while incarnate.

Before moving on, I will consider how we are to understand the distinction between pure and impure wisdom. Seeing as Socrates believes that we can only attain pure wisdom when we are dead, it is clear that acquiring pure wisdom requires that the soul is completely separate from the body. Furthermore, it seems that attaining pure wisdom consists of the soul coming into direct contact with the Forms:

[W]hen the soul investigates by itself it passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and begin akin to this it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so; it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch with things of the same kind, and its experience then is what is called wisdom (79d1-5).

After death, when the philosopher’s pure soul is completely separate from the body, her soul will be in touch with the Forms and thus experience wisdom. This wisdom will be pure because there is no body present to inhibit the soul from coming into full contact with reality. Thus, pure wisdom consists of the discarnate, pure soul coming into direct contact with the Forms.

On the other hand, impure wisdom is acquired when the soul is incarnate. Socrates explains how the body inhibits the soul from acquiring pure wisdom: “Worst of all, if we do get some respite from it [the body and its desires] and turn to some investigation, everywhere in our investigations the body is present and makes for confusion and fear, so that it prevents us from seeing the truth (66d3-5). In other words, when the incarnate soul investigates by itself, it is still hindered by the body because it is fused with it. Even when the incarnate soul manages to come into direct contact with the Forms, the body prevents the soul from clearly seeing the Forms and thus from fully accessing the truth.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the wisdom the soul experiences is impure.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In the *Symposium*, we see further evidence that one is able to come into direct contact with the Forms while incarnate. In his relaying of Diotima’s teachings about Love, Socrates depicts how someone works their way up from loving beautiful things to eventually catching sight of, or beholding, the Beautiful and coming “to know just what it is to be beautiful” (*Symposium* 210d4-211d3). This passage reveals that it is possible to come into direct contact with the Forms and experience wisdom while incarnate.

<sup>7</sup> Seeing as the philosopher lives as close to death as possible, one might suggest that the incarnate soul experiences pure wisdom while contemplating the Forms but that this wisdom becomes impure when the soul is forced to continue attending to the body. However, since the soul can only be completely separate from the body at and after death, and pure wisdom can only be acquired in the underworld once the philosopher has died, it is clear that the philosopher cannot experience pure wisdom while alive.

Furthermore, while Socrates does not explicitly set out the content of impure wisdom, his recollection argument suggests that impure wisdom of a Form does consist of knowledge of what the Form is. His argument also reveals that another way in which the soul can acquire impure wisdom is recollection. Consider Socrates' discussion of the Equal in his recollection argument: "Whenever someone, on seeing something, realizes that that which he now sees wants to be like some other reality but falls short and cannot be like that other since it is inferior, do we agree that the one who thinks this must have prior knowledge of that to which he says it is like, but deficiently so?" (74d8-e4). In order to determine that equal things are deficient to the Equal, it would seem that the required knowledge Socrates is referring to is impure wisdom of what the Equal is. Otherwise, it is unclear how it would be possible to recognize that the equal things are deficient to the Equal. Mere knowledge that the Equal exists would be insufficient for one to determine that equal sticks are deficient to the Equal. Rather, knowledge of the Equal's quality of always being Equal would be necessary to determine that equal sticks are inferior to the Equal in that they sometimes appear unequal.<sup>8</sup> Since one cannot know the qualities something has unless she knows what it is (*Meno* 71b2-3),<sup>9</sup> it seems that, for the recollection argument to work, Socrates must permit impure wisdom of what the Forms are while we are embodied.<sup>10</sup>

There is also another way in which we can determine that the success of the recollection argument requires that people can possess knowledge while embodied. For Socrates to prove that the soul is immortal, it must be possible for people to recollect. And since learning, i.e., accessing knowledge, is recollection (*Phaedo* 76a6), it becomes clear that Socrates must accept that people can possess knowledge while embodied. Thus, it becomes clear it is possible to possess impure wisdom while embodied.

### 1.2 *The Forms*

Next, I will briefly consider what epistemic conditions can have the Forms as their objects. As we have seen, there can be pure and impure wisdom of the Forms. But the question remains as to whether one can have true or false opinions of the Forms. Luckily, Socrates provides a straightforward answer: in juxtaposing the philosophers with the non-philosophers, Socrates says that the soul of the philosopher "follows reason and ever stays with it contemplating the true, the divine, which is not the object of opinion" (*Phaedo* 84a5-7). In other words, the Forms are not the object of opinion, so one cannot have any opinions of the Forms themselves.<sup>11</sup> So, for instance, while it is possible for an incarnate soul to have impure wisdom of what Virtue is, it is not possible for her to have a true or false opinion of such. In sum, the Forms are the objects of pure and impure wisdom but not of opinion.

## 2. True Virtue

Now that I have detailed relevant aspects of the epistemology of the *Phaedo*, we are in a better position to work out Socrates' account of true virtue. Socrates compares true virtue with illusory virtue in what I will call the "exchange passage":

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When contemplating the Forms while incarnate, the philosopher can only experience impure wisdom. (Nor is it possible that the soul becomes temporarily discarnate while contemplating the Forms. Since the soul gives life to the body when present in it (*Phaedo* 105c8-9), the philosopher's body would die if the soul became discarnate while contemplating the Forms.)

<sup>8</sup> As we will see shortly in section 1.2, since one cannot have a true opinion about the Forms, she cannot have the true opinion that the Equal is always equal. So she needs knowledge that the Equal is always equal to be able to determine that the equal sticks are inferior to the Equal in that they sometimes appear unequal.

<sup>9</sup> We see Socrates assert his priority of definition in several dialogues, such as in the *Meno*. Socrates says, "If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses?" (*Meno* 71b2-3).

<sup>10</sup> The "we" Socrates refers to in his recollection argument appears to be embodied philosophers. First, "we" must refer to embodied souls because the act of perceiving two sticks to be equal would require use of the bodily senses, meaning that the soul must be incarnate. Second, "we" must refer to philosophers because the Form of the Equal is recollected, and only philosophers are attuned to the invisible realm. The soul of the non-philosopher is "bewitched by physical desires and pleasures to the point at which nothing seems to exist for it but the physical" (*Phaedo* 81b2-4), meaning that non-philosophers do not recognize the existence of the Forms. It would be contradictory for Socrates to suggest that embodied non-philosophers recollect the Form of the Equal from observing equal sticks. So Socrates' example of recollecting the Form of the Equal applies only to embodied philosophers. Only embodied philosophers can recollect impure wisdom of the Equal.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Gallop 146.

My good Simmias, I fear this is not the right exchange to attain virtue, to exchange pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fears for fears, the greater for the less like coins; rather, the only valid currency for which all these things should be exchanged is wisdom; and everything being bought and sold for this, or rather in the company of this, really is, perhaps courage and moderation and justice and, in a word, true virtue, with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and all such things be present or absent. When these are exchanged for one another in separation from wisdom, such virtue is only an illusory appearance of virtue; it is in fact fit for slaves, without soundness or truth, whereas, in truth, moderation and courage and justice are a purging away of all such things, and wisdom itself is a kind of cleansing or purification. It is likely that those who established the mystic rites for us were not inferior persons but were speaking in riddles long ago when they said that whoever arrives in the underworld uninitiated and unsanctified will wallow in the mire, whereas he who arrives there purified and initiated will dwell with the gods. There are indeed, as those concerned with the mysteries says, many who carry the thyrsus but the Bacchants are few.<sup>12</sup> These latter are, in my opinion, no other than those who have practiced philosophy in the right way (*Phaedo* 69b1-d3).<sup>13</sup>

This passage reveals key elements of true virtue. First, it becomes clear that all philosophers, and only philosophers, have true virtue. By comparing those who have practiced philosophy in the right way to the Bacchants out of the many who carry the Thyrsus, Socrates implies that out of all virtuous people, only the philosophers are truly virtuous. This is because, in Socrates' view, if and only if one practices philosophy in the right way, she is a philosopher.<sup>14</sup> All philosophers are truly virtuous.

Second, the exchange passage reveals that the exchange one engages in must aim at wisdom for its own sake.<sup>15</sup> Any pleasures that the philosopher gives up or pains and fears that the philosopher chooses to endure must be exchanged for wisdom, rather than other pleasures, pains, or fears.<sup>16</sup> Although this passage alone does not make clear what type of wisdom the exchange is for, other parts of the discussion suggest that Socrates is referring to pure wisdom. Recall that the philosophers desire pure wisdom, which can only be attained in the underworld after death, when the soul is by itself, free from the body (*Phaedo* 68a8-b2). And here Socrates notes that those with true virtue, whose souls have been purified and initiated, will dwell with the gods upon arriving at the underworld. Thus, since "in truth, moderation and courage and justice are a purging away of all such things [pleasures, pains, and fears]," it would seem that acting truly virtuously would purify the soul, enabling it to be completely free of body after death so that the philosopher could then acquire pure wisdom in the underworld. In other words, the exchanges the

<sup>12</sup> The Bacchants are the true worshippers of Dionysus, while the others only carry the external symbols of worship.

<sup>13</sup> This translation is a modified version of the translation of the *Phaedo* from G.M.A. Grube (transl.) and J.M. Cooper (rev.) in *Plato: Complete Works*.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout the *Phaedo*, Socrates appears to equate those who practice philosophy in the right way with (true or genuine) philosophers. He also explains that "This is how the soul of the philosopher would reason: it would not think that while philosophy must free it, it should while being freed surrender itself to pleasures and pains and imprison itself again thus laboring in vain like Penelope at her web. The soul of the philosopher achieves a calm from such emotions; it follows reason and ever stays with it contemplating the true, the divine, which is not the object of opinion. Nurtured by this, it believes that one should live in this manner as long as one is alive and, after death, arrive at what is akin and of the same kind, and escape from human evils" (*Phaedo* 84a2-b3). Socrates appears to assume that all philosophers (and only philosophers) practice philosophy in the right way, and that practicing philosophy in the right way involves avoiding bodily pleasures and pains as far as possible, contemplating the Forms whenever possible, and always following reasoning. In other words, practicing philosophy in the right way is what makes philosophers philosophers, or genuine lovers of learning.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 1, "Philosophers and Non-Philosopher in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*," of Christopher Bobonich's *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics* for another discussion of true virtue and illusory virtue. Regarding true virtue, I agree with Bobonich's view that "genuine virtue requires both being guided by wisdom and taking wisdom as an ultimate end" (Bobonich 18).

<sup>16</sup> There appear to be no exceptions to this. Later on in the dialogue, Socrates says, "This is how the soul of a philosopher would reason: it would not think that while philosophy must free it, it should while being freed surrender itself to pleasures and pains and imprison itself again, thus laboring in vain like Penelope at her web. The soul of the philosopher achieves calm from such emotions; it follows reason and ever stays with it contemplating the true, the divine, which is not the object of opinion. Nurtured by this, it believes that one should live this manner as long as one is alive" (*Phaedo* 84a2-b2). So, it is clear that no philosopher exchanges pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, or fears for fears.

philosophers engage in aim at pure wisdom as an ultimate end. The philosophers properly recognize wisdom as what is truly valuable. True virtue requires that one aim at pure wisdom for its own sake.

Third, the exchange passage reveals that the exchange is governed by wisdom. In other words, one must “choose and act on the basis of wisdom” (Bobonich 16). Although Socrates does not explicitly say what type of wisdom governs the exchange or what this wisdom is of, our previous discussion on the epistemology of the *Phaedo*, as well as claims Socrates makes throughout the dialogue, offer insight into what he means. Seeing as pure wisdom is only attainable after death, and true virtue is something which can be attained while incarnate, it becomes clear that impure wisdom must govern the exchange. Moreover, Socrates' claims about the philosophers and their souls suggest that this impure wisdom is attainable by embodied philosophers. Recall Socrates' assertion that the philosopher has “trained himself in life to live in a state as close to death as possible” and has “had no willing association with the body in life, but avoided it and gathered itself together by itself and always practiced this” (*Phaedo* 67d12, 80e3-81a1). While incarnate, the philosopher's soul is nearly separate from the body and is consequently capable of engaging in reasoning and investigation without the body and its senses.<sup>17</sup> The philosopher's soul can come into direct contact with the Forms and thus acquire impure wisdom. Socrates' explanation reveals that the philosopher can attain impure wisdom of the Forms while alive; her soul contemplates the Forms whenever it can do so, and her soul experiences impure wisdom when it is in touch with the Forms.<sup>18</sup>

Now, to answer the question of what this impure wisdom is of, I will first detail how wisdom functions and what it consists of. In the *Meno*, Socrates claims that knowledge always guides action rightly. He gives the example of the road to Larissa: if one knows or has a true opinion of the way to Larissa, she will always guide others correctly when telling them how to get there (*Meno* 97a2-c9). Socrates also claims that one's true opinions become knowledge and remain in place when she ties them down by giving an account of the reason why (*Meno* 97e2-98a6).<sup>19</sup> In the *Phaedo*, Socrates shows signs of agreeing with these claims. He says, “A man who has knowledge would be able to give an account of what he knows” (*Phaedo* 76b4-5). Similarly, when Simmias asks Cebes to remind him of the proofs of the theory of recollection, Cebes offers a proof that parallels Socrates' questioning of the enslaved boy in the *Meno*:

[W]hen men are interrogated in the right manner, they always give the right answer of their own accord, and they could not do this if they did not possess the knowledge and the right explanation inside of them. Then if one shows them a diagram or something else of that kind, this will show most clearly that such is the case (*Phaedo* 73a6-b3).

Socrates also says that “If, having acquired knowledge in each case [of the Forms, i.e., everything we identify as “what it is”], we have not forgotten it, we remain knowing and have knowledge throughout our life, for to know is to acquire knowledge, keep it and not lose it” (*Phaedo* 75d1-8).

All these claims from the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* reveal that wisdom always guides action rightly and that wisdom remains in place because it involves having an account of the reason why. Recall also that, as we have seen with Socrates' example of recollecting the Equal, impure wisdom can consist of what a Form is. Impure wisdom of what a Form is entails having impure wisdom of all the Form's qualities and parts. With these aspects of wisdom confirmed, it becomes plausible that the wisdom that governs the exchange for true virtue is impure wisdom of the Form of Virtue. And possessing impure wisdom of Virtue entails possessing impure wisdom of all of its parts, including Justice, Courage, Moderation, and so on. In other words, it becomes clear that true virtue is a unity, in the sense having one true virtue entails having all the other true virtues. Thus, all philosophers have all true virtues. All philosophers are just, moderate, courageous, and so on. I will now consider the plausibility of this interpretation in the context of Plato's other works.

<sup>17</sup> However, the soul is still fused with the body and consequently cannot spend all its time contemplating the Forms.

<sup>18</sup> Evidence from the *Symposium* also suggests that (impure) wisdom is required for true virtue: “[W]hen he looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen—only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he's in touch with no images), but to true virtue (because he's in touch with the true Beauty)” (*Symposium* 212a4-7). Although, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates does not seem to suggest that true virtue requires specifically having been in touch with the Beautiful, this passage does offer further support that true virtue requires having been in touch with the Forms.

<sup>19</sup> I am using “account of the reason why” as the translation of *aitias logismos*.

The proposition that virtue requires having wisdom is not novel for Plato. Throughout the early and early-middle dialogues in which Socrates and his interlocutors search for definitions of the virtues, Socrates and his interlocutors frequently attempt to define the given virtue as a kind of wisdom. For instance, in the *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Euthyphro*, Socrates' interlocutor suggests that the virtue at hand is a kind of knowledge or wisdom. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates argues that courage is wisdom of what is and is not to be feared. Similarly, in the *Meno*, Socrates and Meno initially agree that virtue is a kind of wisdom. Thus, the proposition that true virtue requires wisdom fits in well with the discussions of virtue in other dialogues.

Now I will consider how impure wisdom of Virtue would allow the philosopher to do the virtuous thing. According to Socrates' priority of definition, by which one can only know the examples of a thing if she knows what that thing is,<sup>20</sup> impure wisdom of what Virtue is would allow the philosopher to know what the virtuous action is in every situation, meaning that she would be able to correctly identify the virtuous action and understand why that action would be the virtuous thing to do. Furthermore, since impure wisdom of Virtue would result in one knowing the qualities of Virtue, it would allow one to know that virtue is intrinsically valuable and that the virtuous action is always the best action. In sum, the philosopher's impure wisdom of what Virtue is that governs the exchange for true virtue guarantees that she has the following: (1) knowledge of what the virtuous action is in every situation, (2) knowledge that virtue is intrinsically valuable, and (3) knowledge that the virtuous action is always the best action.

The philosopher's knowledge that virtue is intrinsically valuable, coupled with the fact that she aims at pure wisdom for its own sake, reveals that she correctly recognizes wisdom and virtue as what is truly valuable. She ultimately values virtue both intrinsically and instrumentally.<sup>21</sup> She does the virtuous thing for its own sake and for the sake of acquiring pure wisdom after death.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, since knowledge always guides rightly and people always do what seems best to them, knowledge that the virtuous action is always the best action will ensure that the philosopher always aims to do the virtuous thing.<sup>23</sup> Knowledge of what the virtuous action is in every situation will then allow the philosopher to always correctly follow through on her aim to do the virtuous thing. In other words, if the philosopher knows that doing the virtuous thing is always what is best, and she always knows what the virtuous action is, she will always do the virtuous thing. Thus, since wisdom of what Virtue is guarantees that the philosopher has these two pieces of knowledge, the philosopher always acts virtuously.

An analysis of the exchange passage has revealed the requirements of true virtue, the possessors of true virtue, and the frequency with which someone with true virtue acts virtuously. In order to attain true virtue, one must (1) aim at pure wisdom for its own sake and (2) have impure wisdom of what Virtue is. As lovers of wisdom, all philosophers meet the first requirement. They desire pure wisdom and are convinced that they will only be able to attain it after death. And since all philosophers' souls contemplate the Forms whenever possible, it is plausible that all philosophers have impure wisdom of what Virtue is. Based on their meeting of these requirements, as well as Socrates' comparison of the philosophers to the Bacchantes, it is clear that all philosophers, and only philosophers,

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<sup>20</sup> Socrates' priority of definition applies to more than just the qualities of a thing. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates says, "And so a man who does not know what knowledge is will not understand 'knowledge of shoes' either?—No, he won't —Then a man who is ignorant of what knowledge is will not understand what cobbling is, or any other craft?—That is so.—So when the question raised is 'What is knowledge?', to reply by naming one of the crafts is an absurd answer; because it points out something that knowledge is of when this is not what the question was about" (*Theaetetus* 147b5-c3). To know examples of a thing requires that one knows what the thing is. If one knows what a thing is, she will always be able to correctly identify examples of it, and she will have *knowledge* that these examples are in fact examples of the thing. So, in the case of Virtue, if one knows what Virtue is, she will be able to correctly identify which action in a given situation is the virtuous thing to do, and she will understand why that action is virtuous. In short, knowledge of what Virtue is enables one to know what the virtuous action is in every situation.

<sup>21</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Recall that true virtue purifies the soul. By purifying the philosopher's soul, true virtue will enable the philosopher to dwell with the gods in the underworld after death, so that she may finally acquire pure wisdom.

<sup>23</sup> In the *Protagoras*, Socrates claims that "no one who knows or believes there is something else better than what he is doing, something possible, will go on doing what he had been when he could be doing what is better" (*Protagoras* 358c1-4). In other words, people always do what they know or believe to be best.



have true virtue.<sup>24</sup> Lastly, as we have seen, there is a unity of true virtue, and the truly virtuous person *always* does the virtuous thing.

### 3. Illusory Virtue

Recall that in the exchange passage, Socrates briefly contrasts true virtue with a virtue that “is only an illusory appearance of virtue.” Unlike true virtue, this illusory virtue “is in fact fit for slaves, without soundness or truth.” But despite distinguishing between true virtue and illusory virtue, Socrates neglects to elaborate on what illusory virtue consists of. The vague conception of illusory virtue Socrates presents in the *Phaedo* invites many questions, such as: who has illusory virtue? What is the epistemic status of someone with illusory virtue when she does the right thing? When one has illusory virtue, does she always do the right thing, or are there times when she misses the mark?

Similarly, in discussing the afterlife fate of impure souls, Socrates states that the happiest of these souls will be those “who have practiced popular and social virtue, which they call moderation and justice and which was developed by habit and practice, without philosophy or understanding” (*Phaedo* 82a10-b3). The introduction of this social virtue is puzzling given Socrates' earlier distinction between true virtue and illusory virtue. Unfortunately, Socrates does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the relationship between social virtue, true virtue, and illusory virtue. Consequently, commentators disagree over how to understand the relationship between them. While some commentators argue that social virtue is a species of illusory virtue,<sup>25</sup> others assert that social virtue is distinct from illusory virtue.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it remains unclear as to how we are to understand social virtue. Fortunately, a close reading of the *Phaedo* alongside other dialogues may help us make sense of both illusory virtue and social virtue.

#### 3.1 The public conception of virtue

First, I must briefly consider how we are to understand “what is called” virtue.<sup>27</sup> In distinguishing between the virtue of the philosopher and the virtue of the lover of the body, Socrates refers to “the quality of moderation which even the majority call by that name, that is, not to get swept off one's feet by one's passions, but to treat them with disdain and orderliness,” and which is suited only to those who live the life of philosophy (*Phaedo* 68c7-d1). He also describes “what is called courage,” which belongs especially to the philosophers and involves willingly facing death (*Phaedo* 68c4-5, d9). Notably, both philosophers and non-philosophers are able to have “what is called” virtue, even though “what is called” virtue is most suited to the philosophers.

Some commentators appear to equate “what is called” virtue with illusory virtue,<sup>28</sup> but Socrates' discussion of “what is called” virtue conflicts with this interpretation. Seeing as all philosophers have true virtue, and philosophers are considered to have “what is called” virtue, it becomes clear that “what is called virtue” cannot be the same thing as illusory virtue. Rather, Socrates' careful phrasing suggests that there is a public conception of virtue<sup>29</sup> that may differ from how the philosopher conceives of virtue. So what does the public conception of virtue consist of?

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<sup>24</sup> For a view contrary to this claim, see “From the *Phaedo* to the *Republic*: Plato's Tripartite Soul and the Possibility of Non-Philosophical Virtue” in *Plato and the Divided Self*. Iakovos Vasiliou denies the philosopher true virtue during her life, reasoning that she must die to possess wisdom and she needs wisdom to have true virtue. He then assigns social virtue to the philosophers, and he believes that social virtue is an ethical condition between illusory virtue and true virtue. Vasiliou has reached this conclusion because he does not establish a distinction between pure and impure wisdom. However, as we have seen, there is good evidence that Socrates implicitly distinguishes between pure and impure wisdom. This distinction between pure and impure wisdom is crucial for making sense of Socrates' apparently contradictory claims about the philosophers having and not having wisdom throughout the *Phaedo*.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Doug Reed's “Deficient Virtue in the *Phaedo*”

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Vasiliou

<sup>27</sup> See Doug Reed's “Deficient Virtue in the *Phaedo*” for a more thorough analysis of “what is called” virtue.

<sup>28</sup> See David Gallop's *Plato: Phaedo*, page 99. Also see Richard Kraut's “Ordinary Virtue from the *Phaedo* to the *Laws*,” page 54.

<sup>29</sup> By “public conception of virtue,” I mean a conception of virtue that a majority of people agree with. In other words, there is a consensus regarding what actions are virtuous.

Socrates' characterization of the virtue of non-philosophers may help answer this question. Socrates explains that the courage and moderation of non-philosophers as "strange," "illogical," and "simple-minded," in comparison to the courage and moderation of the philosophers (*Phaedo* 68d4-5, 12-13, e4). As Socrates explains, non-philosophers are "brave through fear and cowardice," and it is "licentiousness of a kind that makes them moderate" (*Phaedo* 68d12-e3). The virtues of non-philosophers seem to come from vice. So, in Socrates' eyes, while their actions are admirable, the cognitive conditions behind their actions are not.

Socrates' description of the virtue of non-philosophers reveals that "what is called" virtue is superficial. The philosophers and non-philosophers appear to conceive of the same actions as virtuous,<sup>30</sup> and "what is called" virtue refers only to one's actions in isolation from any cognitive conditions that have led to her taking those actions. In this way, philosophers and non-philosophers are both capable of having "what is called" virtue. In other words, in the same exact situation, it would seem that the virtuous philosopher and the virtuous non-philosopher would choose to do the same action, that is, the virtuous action.<sup>31</sup> Both are capable of doing the virtuous thing, even if their cognitive conditions differ when acting.

Moreover, note that since all philosophers have true virtue, only non-philosophers can have illusory virtue. And some, but not all non-philosophers have illusory virtue: Socrates explicitly refers to "the moderate among them" and "the brave among them" (*Phaedo* 68d9, e2). Since both the philosopher and non-philosopher are capable of having "what is called" virtue, but the virtuous philosopher has true virtue while the virtuous non-philosopher has illusory virtue, it becomes clear that true virtue and illusory virtue can both result in the virtuous action.

I will now consult other dialogues to demonstrate the plausibility of the proposition that the public conception of virtue is unable to offer a coherent account of what Virtue is. The early dialogues on the virtues end in aporia, as Socrates' interlocutor is incapable of producing a satisfactory definition of the virtue at hand. These dialogues include the *Euthyphro* (piety), *Laches* (courage), and *Charmides* (temperance). We also see in the *Meno* and the *Protagoras* that Socrates' interlocutors do not have a coherent view of what virtue is. Meno is unable to say what it is despite giving many fine speeches on virtue. Protagoras, who claims to teach virtue, does not initially consider courage to be wisdom, which shows that he does not have a coherent view of what virtue is.<sup>32</sup> Socrates' interlocutors, even those who claim to know what virtue is, are ignorant of what Virtue is. Thus, within the context of other dialogues, it is plausible that the public conception of virtue is unable to offer a coherent account of what virtue is.

Now I will consider whether it is plausible that the public conception of virtue is able to correctly identify virtuous actions despite lacking a coherent account of what Virtue is. An examination of other dialogues reveals that the ability to correctly identify examples of something without a coherent account of what that thing is is nothing novel for Plato. In the *Theaetetus*, Theaetetus is able to correctly identify examples of fields of knowledge although he and Socrates ultimately fail to define knowledge (*Theaetetus* 146c-147c). Similarly, in the *Laches*, Laches first defines courage as a willingness to remain at one's post during battle and defend herself against the enemy without running away. Socrates then tells Laches that he does not want to know only what constitutes courage for a hoplite, but what constitutes courage for every type of warrior (*Laches* 190e-192a). Laches has provided a single correct example of a courageous act. But this dialogue also ends in aporia, so it seems that Laches is able to correctly identify courageous behavior without possessing a coherent account of what courage is. Moreover, despite lacking wisdom, the prisoners of the cave in the *Republic* are capable of correctly identifying shadows and predicting which will come next. Some prisoners are given honors for being the best at guessing (*Republic* 516c7-d3). For these prisoners to be recognized and receive these honors, it is clear that there must be sufficient consensus about what

<sup>30</sup> Philosophers and non-philosophers both conceive of moderation as not getting "swept off one's feet by one's passions, but to treat them with disdain and orderliness. Similarly, both philosophers and non-philosophers view willingly facing death as courageous. Consequently, they seemingly agree on which actions are moderate and which actions are courageous. This appears to be generalizable to all of virtue.

<sup>31</sup> I will consider whether this is always the case later on.

<sup>32</sup> Given the priority of definition, if Protagoras knew what virtue was, he would consequently know all its parts and the qualities of those parts. So he would know that courage is kind of wisdom. But he does not know that courage is a kind of wisdom, so it is clear that he does not know what virtue is. The same applies if we replace "know" with "have a true opinion (of)." Protagoras does not even have a true opinion of what virtue is.

each shadow is. In other words, because they lack wisdom, the prisoners must appeal to a public conception that can confirm which guesses are correct. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the public conception of virtue lacks a coherent view of what virtue is but still involves correct identification of virtuous actions.

Lastly, since the public conception of virtue lacks a coherent view of what virtue is, it becomes clear that being able to act virtuously by referencing the public conception of virtue is inferior to being able to act virtuously through impure wisdom of Virtue. First, since the public conception of virtue lacks a coherent view of what Virtue is, the public conception fails to involve a grasp of reality. Rather, the public conception is only incidentally able to identify the virtuous action and does not offer an understanding of *why* the action is virtuous. On the other hand, when one acts virtuously through her impure wisdom of Virtue, she has a grasp of reality and is able to correctly identify the virtuous action with an understanding of why the action is virtuous.

Second, in lacking a coherent view of what Virtue is, it is likely that the public conception of virtue will fail to offer correct guidance in uncommon or extreme cases. Let us consider justice as an example. Among the public, there are various definitions of justice that have gained traction. For instance, it would seem that “[unconditionally] speaking the truth and paying whatever debts one has incurred” (*Republic* 331c1-2) is a commonly held definition of justice. Cephalus and Polemarchus both initially agree with the definition, which comes from Simonides of Ceos, an influential poet (331d4-e2). Seeing as this definition of justice comes from an influential poet, it is likely that many people agree with it. Yet, as Socrates objects, speaking the truth and repaying what one has borrowed are sometimes just, and sometimes unjust. He gives the counterexample of how it would not be just to return the weapons one has borrowed from her friend if her friend has gone mad, nor would it be just to tell the whole truth to someone who has gone mad (331c2-7). Thus it would seem that this common definition of justice is capable of correctly identifying the just action but is not guaranteed to do so. Socrates’ attempts to define justice with Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus in *Republic* Book I reveal that there are various (flawed) conceptions of justice that have gained traction among the public. It is not unreasonable to suggest that many conceptions of justice agree on the just action in common situations but disagree in tricky, rare, or extreme cases. This is also the case among contemporary moral theories. For instance, Kantianism and Utilitarianism will both agree in most cases that it is wrong to lie, but will disagree in complicated cases. Thus, when referring to the public conception of justice to determine the virtuous action, the non-philosopher is likely to be able to correctly identify the just action in common situations but not rare situations. On the other hand, a grasp of Justice allows the philosopher to *always* correctly identify the just action. So referring to the public conception of virtue is inferior to grasping Virtue because referring to the public conception will not guarantee a correct identification of the virtuous action, while a grasp of Virtue will *always* lead to a correct identification.

### 3.2 *The requirements of illusory virtue*

Now the question arises of what causes the non-philosopher with illusory virtue to do the right thing. I will first examine the exchange involved in illusory virtue. Socrates notes that the non-philosopher exchanges “pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fears for fears, the greater for the less like coins...in separation from wisdom, [and that] such virtue is only an illusory appearance of virtue; it is in fact fit for slaves, without soundness or truth” (*Phaedo* 69a6-c1). This description of the exchange involved in illusory virtue resembles the hedonic calculus which Socrates appears to advocate for in the *Protagoras*:

Weighing is a good analogy; you put the pleasures together and the pains together, both the near and the remote, on the balance scale, and then say which of the two is more. For if you weigh pleasant things against pleasant, the greater and the more must always be taken; if painful things against painful, the fewer and the smaller. And if you weigh pleasant things against painful, and the painful is exceeded by the pleasant—whether the near by the remote or the remote by the near—you have to perform that action in which the pleasant prevails; on the other hand, if the pleasant is exceeded by the painful, you have to refrain from doing that (*Protagoras* 356b2-c2).

In both dialogues, Socrates refers to a hedonic exchange which the non-philosopher engages in when deciding what action to take.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in both dialogues Socrates seems to believe that the hedonic exchange can result in virtuous action. Thus, it is plausible that the same view is at play in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedo*.<sup>34</sup> Further analysis of the *Protagoras*'s hedonic calculus may offer insight into what the exchange involved in illusory virtue may (or may not) consist of.<sup>35</sup>

Although pleasure is the standard of virtue in the *Protagoras*, meaning that the action that maximizes one's overall pleasure is the most virtuous action in any given situation, we must be careful not to assume that Socrates endorses this view in the *Phaedo*. In fact, we find that pleasure is anything but a standard of virtue in the *Phaedo*. In referring to the hedonic exchange non-philosophers engage in, Socrates tells Simmias, "I fear this is not the right exchange to attain virtue" (*Phaedo* 69a5). Furthermore, throughout the *Phaedo*, Socrates emphasizes the importance of avoiding bodily pleasures and pains as far as possible, because partaking in these beyond what is necessary for or facilitates doing philosophy contributes to the corruption of the soul and a "distorted perception of reality," as Weiss puts it.<sup>36</sup> Seeing as Socrates stresses the importance of possessing (true) virtue for the sake of purifying the soul and claims that pleasure corrupts the soul, it becomes clear that pleasure cannot be a standard of virtue in the *Phaedo*. Rather, as I have suggested, the virtue Forms are what make actions virtuous, regardless of the resulting pleasure or pain.

As lovers of the body, all non-philosophers value bodily goods and wish to acquire them. However, as we have seen, in the *Phaedo* the decision that maximizes pleasure does not (typically) coincide with the virtuous action. Thus, merely correctly identifying the virtuous action in a given situation is not enough to make the non-philosopher act virtuously.<sup>37</sup> So the puzzle arises of what prevents the non-philosopher with illusory virtue from opting to do the

<sup>33</sup> The exchange Socrates refers to in the *Protagoras* seems to pertain to non-philosophers. Socrates is responding to the majority's experience of being overcome by pleasure.

<sup>34</sup> Note that Socrates condemns the hedonic exchange for attaining (true) virtue in the *Phaedo* and endorses it for attaining virtue in the *Protagoras*. Although Socrates' attitudes towards the hedonic exchange differ, it is still plausible that in the *Phaedo* Socrates is referring to the same exchange he sets out in the *Protagoras*. See Roslyn Weiss's "The Hedonic Calculus in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedo*" for an in-depth discussion of the differing treatment of the hedonic calculus in each dialogue.

<sup>35</sup> The hedonic calculus discussed in the *Protagoras* must be considered within its greater context in the dialogue: it is part of an ad hominem argument directed at Protagoras within a debate about whether courage is wisdom. Socrates has just argued that wisdom is courage. Protagoras takes issue with Socrates' argument and does not accept the conclusion. Socrates then shifts the discussion to the opinion of ordinary people, who say that it is possible to be overcome by pleasure. Socrates claims that investigating this issue will ultimately help them find out about courage and how it relates to the other parts of virtue. Once he sets out the art of measurement and the hedonic calculus, he uses these two things to ultimately argue that courage is wisdom. Protagoras and people like him agree that the pleasant is equivalent to the good and that the painful is equivalent to the bad. Socrates is appealing to Protagoras' conception of what is good—a conception with which Socrates himself does not seem to agree, seeing as Socrates consistently values the condition of one's soul in Plato's dialogues over the condition of the body (*Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Charmides*, etc.). So perhaps we should not take the hedonic calculus Socrates' sets out at face value—although Socrates appears to endorse it, perhaps Socrates merely intends to get Protagoras to agree that courage, like the other virtues, is wisdom. Notably, "Socrates asks no fewer than five times (353d, 354b-c, 354c-d, 354d-e, 355a) whether anyone can point to or name any standard other than pleasure and is assured each time that no one can" (Weiss 524). Socrates also says, "What exactly this art, this knowledge is, we can inquire into later; that it is knowledge of some sort is enough for the demonstration which Protagoras and I have to give to answer the question you asked us [about what the experience of being overcome by pleasure is]" (*Protagoras* 357b9-12). Furthermore, at the end of the discussion with Protagoras, since both Socrates' and Protagoras' sets of views on virtue seem to be internally contradictory, Socrates says, "Now, Protagoras, seeing that we have gotten this topsy-turvy and terribly confused, I am most eager to clear it all up, and I would like us, having come this far, to continue until we come through to what virtue is in itself, and then return to inquire about whether it can or cannot be taught" (*Protagoras* 361c4-d4). All of these aspects of the discussion make clear that perhaps the hedonic calculus and art of measurement Socrates sets out are not to be taken seriously as what goes into determining the best, most virtuous action to take in a given situation.

<sup>36</sup> See Roslyn Weiss's "The Hedonic Calculus in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedo*." Also see Travis Butler's "A Riveting Argument in Favor of Asceticism in the *Phaedo*."

<sup>37</sup> There are people like Thrasymachus, who goes into his discussion with Socrates wrongly believing that injustice is more profitable and advantageous for oneself than justice (*Republic* 343b-344d). So even if people like Thrasymachus are able to correctly identify the just action according to the public conception of virtue, they will instead act on a false belief of what is best and thus act unjustly. This shows that merely correctly identifying the virtuous action in a given situation is insufficient for acting virtuously.

action that maximizes pleasure (according to her correct or incorrect hedonic calculation) instead of the virtuous action. I argue that a true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action, which virtuous non-philosophers manage to hold on to at the moment of action, is what allows them to opt for the virtuous action once they have correctly identified the virtuous action.

Evidence from the *Meno* and the *Protagoras* suggests that if the virtuous non-philosopher holds a true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action when making her decision, she will choose the virtuous action (as long as she correctly identifies what the virtuous action is). In the *Meno*, Socrates asserts that both knowledge and true opinion (as long as we have it) always guide action rightly (*Meno* 97a-98b). Moreover, in the *Protagoras*, Socrates claims that “no one who knows or believes there is something else better than what he is doing, something possible, will go on doing what he had been when he could be doing what is better” (*Protagoras* 358c1-4). In other words, people always do what seems best to them. So if the virtuous non-philosopher is able to correctly identify the virtuous action by referring to the public conception of virtue *and* hold on to the true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action, she will act virtuously.<sup>38, 39</sup>

Before moving on I must address a crucial question: if the virtuous action does not (typically) coincide with the action that maximizes pleasure, what leads to the lover of the body correctly identifying the virtuous action as the best action? It would seem that the virtuous lover of the body must (1) recognize the intrinsic value of virtue, (2) value virtue instrumentally, or (3) both.

Option (1) is unlikely. As a lover of the body, the non-philosopher wrongly values bodily goods over wisdom. Furthermore, as Socrates notes, the non-philosopher wrongly engages in a hedonic exchange to attain virtue, which is one of the reasons why the non-philosopher is only capable of attaining illusory virtue rather than true virtue—she seemingly does not value virtue for its own sake. The non-philosopher with illusory virtue instead acts virtuously because she is motivated by a desire to acquire bodily goods.

Evidence from the *Apology* and the *Republic* also suggests that non-philosophers do not recognize the intrinsic value of virtue. In the *Apology*, Socrates describes his service to the god:

I go around doing nothing but persuading both young and old among you not to care for your body or your wealth in preference to or as strongly as for the best possible state of your soul, as I say to you: Wealth does not ring about excellence, but excellence makes wealth and everything else good for men, both individually and collectively...I was always concerned with you, approaching each one of you like a father or an elder brother to persuade you to care for virtue (*Apology* 30a6-b4, 31b3-5).

Socrates seems to believe that most people (non-philosophers) value bodily goods over virtue and the condition of their souls, meaning that they would not be inclined to identify the virtuous action as the best action based on the intrinsic value of virtue. Rather, they would likely identify the action that maximizes their bodily goods as the best action. Similarly, in the *Republic*, Socrates and Glaucon agree that most people would “say that justice belongs to the onerous kind, and is to be practiced for the sake of the rewards and popularity that come from a reputation for justice, but is to be avoided because of itself as something burdensome” (*Republic* 358a4-7). In other words, non-philosophers do not recognize the intrinsic value of virtue, meaning that (1) and (3) are false. So (2) must be true, namely that virtuous lovers of the body must merely value virtue instrumentally. The textual evidence I have just offered from the *Apology* and *Republic* support this proposition. And as we see in the exchange passage, the

<sup>38</sup> A true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action by itself is not enough for the non-philosopher to do the right thing. She needs to correctly identify the virtuous action so that she can take it. A true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action combined with a false belief of what the virtuous action is will result in the non-philosopher acting wrongly.

<sup>39</sup> According to the *Meno*, knowledge requires an account of the reason why. The *Phaedo* also seems to endorse this view. Recall that when discussing the theory of recollection, Cebes refers back the Socrates' questioning of the enslaved boy in the *Meno*: “when men are interrogated in the right manner, they always give the right answer of their own accord, and they could not do this if they did not possess the *knowledge and the right explanation* inside of them. Then if one shows them a diagram or something else of that kind, this will show most clearly that such is the case” (*Phaedo* 73a6-b3, emphasis added). But, as we will see, the non-philosopher lacks the proper account of the reason why doing the virtuous action is what is best. We will see that since pleasure is not the standard of virtue in the *Phaedo*, the non-philosopher's hedonic reasoning that has led her to the true opinion that doing the virtuous action is what is best is not the correct reason why the opinion is true. So, at most, she can have the true opinion that doing the virtuous action is what is best. Similarly, the non-philosopher cannot *know* what the virtuous action is because, with a lack of access to the virtue Forms, she is unable to correctly understand *why* the action is virtuous.

non-philosophers take the true coin to be pleasure, so they exchange pleasures, pains, and fears. The virtuous lover of the body merely values virtue as a means to acquire bodily goods, namely honor and wealth. So the lover of the body is able to adopt the true opinion that virtuous action is the best action because she believes that acting virtuously will allow her to acquire wealth and honor.

In order to make sense of this point, I must detail several key aspects of illusory virtue and its rewards. First, it is crucial to recognize that simply doing the virtuous action once or a few times will likely be insufficient for reaping the bodily rewards of being virtuous. Rather, it will take consistently virtuous behavior to reap the rewards. This is because in order for someone to acquire wealth and honor from virtue, it would seem that other people must regard her as virtuous,<sup>40</sup> which would likely require consistently virtuous behavior. This is especially true for honor, something which is dependent on others' perception of her. One or a few virtuous actions among many vicious actions is unlikely to lead to others viewing her as virtuous, so she must consistently do the virtuous thing to reap the rewards of virtue. As a result, the acquisition of honor and wealth is a long-term goal for the virtuous non-philosopher. She is aware that she must consistently do the virtuous thing in order to acquire wealth and honor from being virtuous.

Furthermore, the virtuous non-philosopher must believe that the bodily rewards she will reap from being virtuous will in the long run be greater than the bodily goods she will reap from seeking to maximize pleasure from each individual action she takes.<sup>41</sup> (If this were not the case, because she values bodily goods as what is truly good<sup>42</sup> and is motivated by a desire to acquire bodily goods, she would not believe that doing what is virtuous is best, and thus she would not act virtuously.) This (true or false) belief is a premise in the non-philosopher's valid but unsound chain of reasoning that leads her to conclude that consistently acting virtuously is what is best:

1. Bodily goods are what is truly good. (assumption)
2. It is best to act in a way that maximizes for the agent what is truly good. (assumption)
3. It is best to act in a way that maximizes one's bodily goods. (from 1 and 2)
4. Consistently acting virtuously will maximize one's bodily goods (in the long run). (assumption)
5. Thus, it is best to consistently act virtuously. (from 3 and 4)

So rather than seeking to maximize the pleasure of each individual action on its own, the virtuous non-philosopher intends to maximize her pleasure long-term by consistently doing the virtuous thing. This point helps illuminate the virtuous non-philosopher's exchange. Recall Socrates' claim that the "simple-minded" moderation of non-philosophers comes from a kind of licentiousness. He explains, "they fear to be deprived of other pleasures which they desire, so they keep away from some pleasures because they are overcome by others. Now to be mastered by pleasure is what they call licentiousness, but what happens to them is that they master certain pleasures because they are mastered by others" (*Phaedo* 68e5-69a2). It now seems that pleasures that master the moderate non-philosopher are the honor and wealth she will acquire long-term by being virtuous. So when the moderate non-philosopher exchanges pleasures for pleasures, she refrains from partaking in immediate pleasures so that she may experience greater pleasure in the long run.<sup>43</sup> She believes that consistently doing the moderate thing is necessary for experiencing this greater pleasure in the long run, so she consistently acts moderately with this goal in mind. Similarly, the courageous non-philosopher is made brave by cowardice. Socrates notes that all

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<sup>40</sup> Recall that the majority believe that justice "is to be practiced for the sake of the rewards and popularity that come from a reputation for justice" (*Republic* 358a4-7, emphasis added). In order to reap the rewards of being virtuous, the agent must be viewed as virtuous by others.

<sup>41</sup> This belief may be true or false. But what matters is that she holds this belief, because it will ultimately result in her correctly believing that the virtuous action is the best action. The latter belief will guide her action rightly so that she does the virtuous thing.

<sup>42</sup> Non-philosophers view the physical, visible realm as what is most true and real. The non-philosopher's soul is "impure when it leaves the body, having always been associated with it and served it, bewitched by physical desires and pleasures to the point at which nothing seems to exist for it but the physical" (*Phaedo* 81b1-4). The non-philosopher is unattuned to the invisible realm, which consists of the true, divine, immortal and unchanging and "can be grasped only by the reasoning power of the mind," namely by philosophy (*Phaedo* 79a1-3, 81b6-7). As a result, she sees bodily goods as the ultimate good, as opposed to virtue and wisdom.

<sup>43</sup> She merely *believes* that consistently doing the virtuous thing will result in greater pleasure in the long run. This belief may be true or false.

non-philosophers “consider death a great evil...And the brave among them face death, when they do, for fear of greater evils” (*Phaedo* 68d7-10). The greater evils that the courageous non-philosopher may fear in this situation include missing out on the honor and wealth she could acquire by consistently doing the courageous action. These examples reveal that the virtuous non-philosopher looks beyond the isolated pleasure-pain consequences of each individual action to consider how her actions could collectively result in even greater pleasure than the pleasure she could acquire from seeking to maximize the pleasure from each individual action.

From all these considerations arises an important question: how is the virtuous non-philosopher able to *consistently* do the virtuous thing? In the *Protagoras*, Socrates offers an account of the majority's experience of being “overcome by pleasure.”<sup>44</sup> So, how is the virtuous non-philosopher able to consistently avoid being overcome by pleasure? Although Socrates' account of the hedonic calculus likely should not be taken seriously in full,<sup>45</sup> an important element of it is worth considering, namely Socrates' claim that being overcome by pleasure, or “giving in to oneself,” is ignorance, which “is to have a false belief and be deceived about matters of importance” (*Protagoras* 358c4-8). Recall that “no one who knows or believes there is something else better than what he is doing, something possible, will go on doing what he had been when he could be what is better” (*Protagoras* 358c1-4). Since one's belief (whether true or false) or knowledge of what is best guides her action, then a false opinion at the moment of action of what is best would guide her action incorrectly, resulting in her doing the wrong thing. So it seems that in order to consistently do the virtuous thing, the non-philosopher must hold on to her true opinion about what the best action is when she decides what to do. In other words, in order to consistently do the virtuous thing, the non-philosopher must avoid succumbing to temporary ignorance of what is best.<sup>46</sup> But how is the virtuous non-philosopher consistently able to hold on to her true opinion? After all, “true opinions, as long as they remain, are a fine thing and all they do is good, but they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man's mind” (*Meno* 97e5-98a2).

To begin, likely from experience and the testimony of others, the virtuous non-philosopher is aware of the power of appearance in terms of pleasures, pains, and fears, which “often makes us wander all over the place in confusion, often changing our minds about the same things and regretting our actions and choices with respect to things large and small” (*Protagoras* 356d5-7). Note that the virtuous non-philosopher *must* be aware of the power of appearance and its deceptive nature. If she were not aware of the deceptiveness of appearance, she likely would not find a reason to resist the temptation of nearby pleasures. After all, the non-philosopher is constantly seeking to do whatever will maximize her pleasure. So if she is not aware of the deceptive power of appearance and calculates that the vicious action would result in more pleasure than consistently acting virtuously, she will ultimately determine the vicious action to be what is best and consequently do the wrong thing. Consider an example of how this could occur: the non-philosopher is trying to decide whether to have a second piece of cake. It would be immoderate to have the second slice, but doing so would yield pleasure. Due to its close proximity, the nearby pleasure the non-philosopher would experience from the second piece appears to be incredibly great, even greater than the pleasure she believes she would yield from consistently doing the moderate thing, especially seeing as the pleasure from acting moderately is remote. Unaware of the power of appearance, the non-philosopher fails to realize that the close proximity or remoteness of a pleasure distorts the size or weight of the pleasure, so she considers the appearance at

<sup>44</sup> The majority of people believe that it is possible to act contrary to knowledge, so that someone can know what the right thing to do is but have this knowledge subverted by non-rational desires and passions.

<sup>45</sup> See footnote 35.

<sup>46</sup> I agree with Daniel Devereux's analysis of Socrates' response to the majority's experience of being overcome by pleasure, which Devereux details in “Socrates' Kantian Conception of Virtue.” What is important for this discussion is that “in the cases of apparent incontinence that Socrates has in mind, the false judgment or belief is a *temporary and passing* condition of the agent. The analogy with mistaken perceptual judgments clearly suggests this. Just as an object's being very close may make it appear larger than it is, so the fact that some pleasant (or painful) experience is immediately at hand can make it seem more important or valuable than it really is. This distortion will thus occur only as the time of decision draws near. When the time of decision is either not imminent or has receded into the past, there is no distortion and hence no false judgment” (Devereux 391-392). Furthermore, Socrates seems to think that people who are overcome by pleasure, despite how they describe their experience, do not actually *know* what the best action is. Rather, they merely have a *true belief* about what the best action is, and this true belief is temporarily replaced by a false belief at the moment of action because pleasures and pains distort their perception of what is best.

face value. In other words, she sees no reason to be skeptical of the size of the pleasure or to resist it. As a result, the non-philosopher's belief that consistently doing the moderate thing will maximize her pleasure is temporarily replaced by the (true or false) belief that having the second slice of cake will maximize her pleasure. Thus, because she believes it is best to do what maximizes her pleasure, the non-philosopher will believe that it is best for her to have the second piece of cake. Therefore, it seems that, to be able to hold on to her true opinion that consistently doing the virtuous thing is best, the non-philosopher must be cognizant of the deceptive power of appearance.

However, an awareness of the deceptive power of appearance on its own will be insufficient for allowing the non-philosopher to hold on to her true opinion, because the non-philosopher, despite this awareness, is still susceptible to being deceived into changing her opinion on what is best to do. In other words, mere awareness of something's deceptive power is not sufficient to avoid being deceived by it. So something else is also required to hold the non-philosopher's true opinion in place. I will now consider several possibilities.

Once she is aware of the power of appearance, perhaps the virtuous non-philosopher is able to hold on to her true opinion of what is best if she possesses the art of measurement. But a glaring problem immediately arises: Socrates' art of measurement in the *Protagoras* assumes that pleasure is the standard of virtue and the standard of value. Since in this case the standard of virtue and the standard of value coincide, the action that maximizes pleasure will also be the virtuous action. Thus, in the *Protagoras*, knowledge of the art of measurement would ensure that the non-philosopher does the virtuous thing. However, as we have seen, the *Phaedo* rejects pleasure as the standard of virtue, but the non-philosophers still view pleasure as the standard of value. This disconnect between the non-philosophers' standard of value and the standard of virtue means that knowing how to properly weigh pleasures and pains will not ensure that someone does the right thing, since the virtuous action does not (typically) coincide with the action that maximizes pleasure. Recall that in order to be motivated to act virtuously, the non-philosopher must believe that consistently acting virtuously will maximize her pleasure in the long run, but that this belief may be true or false. So knowledge of the art of measurement would not reliably result in the non-philosopher doing the right thing. Rather, it is more likely that knowledge of the art of measurement would actually lead to consistently vicious behavior, because in the *Phaedo* pleasure is not the standard of virtue. Thus, it seems that the art of measurement is not suitable for ensuring that the non-philosopher is able to hold on to her true opinion of what is best.

So what if the non-philosopher is merely ignorant of the art of measurement? Then we run into the problem of the non-philosopher still being influenced by the deceptive power of appearances, which leads to vicious action (regardless of whether the non-philosopher's calculations are correct or incorrect), as I have just demonstrated with the cake example. So ignorance of the art of measurement would be insufficient for allowing the non-philosopher to hold on to her true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action.

Another possibility is that there is another opinion that holds the non-philosopher's true opinion in place. Perhaps, with the cake example in mind, the non-philosopher has an opinion that it is best to disregard the pains, pleasures and fears in close proximity to an action, because they appear greater than they actually are. This belief would allow the non-philosopher to avoid succumbing to temporary ignorance of what is best because the bodily goods and evils in close proximity to potential actions would not be considered at all in the non-philosopher's hedonic calculations. However, there are two main problems with this opinion. First, holding this opinion would fail to account for the reality that the power of appearances pertains not just to nearby pains, pleasures, and fears, but also remote ones. Thus, the non-philosopher is still at risk of succumbing to temporary ignorance based on how the more remote pains, pleasures, and pains would be distorted. It is still possible for the non-philosopher to (correctly or incorrectly) identify a vicious action that will ultimately yield more pleasure than consistently doing the virtuous thing. And once the non-philosopher identifies such an action, her belief that doing the virtuous action is best will be replaced by the false belief that that vicious action is best. Consequently, the non-philosopher will do the wrong thing.

Second, it seems implausible that the non-philosopher would ever have, let alone be able to hold on to, this opinion. The non-philosopher would reason that disregarding the pains, pleasures, and fears in close proximity to the actions she is considering would likely prevent her from correctly calculating what she must do to maximize her bodily goods. A correct calculation, the non-philosopher would reason, would require taking into account *all* of the



pains, pleasures, and fears that might result from an action. Thus, the opinion that it is best to disregard the pains, pleasures and fears in close proximity to an action would not be what allows most virtuous non-philosophers to hold on to the true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action. The same reasoning applies to any opinion that it is best to disregard certain or all apparent pleasures, pains, and/or fears that could result from an action.

Another possibility to consider is that the non-philosopher's true opinion is held down by something non-cognitive or non-epistemic. Socrates asserts that "the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself" (*Phaedo* 80b1-2), which suggests that the Phaedonic soul is simple. In other words, the Phaedonic soul does not have parts like the tripartite soul in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*. In these latter dialogues, the soul has a rational part, spirited part, and appetitive part. This division of the soul explicitly reveals that the soul has non-cognitive functions and experiences. But it is less clear that the simple soul in the *Phaedo* has non-cognitive functions and experiences. So I will briefly provide evidence that the simple soul does have non-cognitive functions and experiences.

Socrates explains that after death the pure soul of the philosopher is able to make its way to the invisible, "and arriving there it can be happy, having rid itself of confusion, ignorance, fear, violent desires and the other human ills" (*Phaedo* 81a4-7). Similarly, Socrates explains that "the soul of the philosopher achieves calm from such emotions [pleasures and pains]; it follows reason" (*Phaedo* 84a5-6). Socrates' statements reveal that the soul is the subject of pleasures, pains, and fears, and that the soul has a desiderative function.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the soul has non-cognitive experiences and functions.

So it is consistent with Socrates' conception of the soul in the *Phaedo* that something non-cognitive could hold the non-philosopher's true opinion of what is best in place. And since, as we have seen, there appears to be no other opinion or knowledge that could hold the true opinion in place, it seems that a non-cognitive element is necessary to do so. It is important to note that Socrates does not detail a non-cognitive element of the simple soul that would be capable of holding down a true opinion. Yet, a non-cognitive element is needed to explain illusory virtue.<sup>48</sup> So I will attempt to fill in this gap by examining the possibility that self-control is what holds down the non-philosopher's true opinion. I will consider what this self-control may consist of and how it functions.

First, since it is non-epistemic, self-control does not consist of opinions or knowledge that would allow the non-philosopher to hold on to her true opinion. Rather, self-control is a non-cognitive ability which must be developed through habit and practice. It resembles the skill some of the prisoners in the cave seem to have developed. In the cave allegory, Socrates mentions rewarding the prisoner "who was sharpest at identifying the shadows as they passed by and who best remembered which usually came earlier, which later, and which simultaneously, and who could thus best divine the future" (*Republic* 516c8-d1). Socrates also notes that the prisoners "would in every way believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts" (*Republic* 515c1-2). Since the prisoners view the shadows as what is truly real and lack access to the intelligible realm, they lack access to truth, wisdom, and understanding. Thus, the prisoners who are able to consistently make correct identifications and predictions are not able to do so because of wisdom or understanding. At most, the prisoners could merely have true opinions (at the level of *eikasia*, since they are not aware of the fire,) about what the shadows are and which shadows are coming next. So it seems that being able to consistently accurately identify the shadows and predict which shadows are coming next stems from an ability which the prisoner can develop through habit and practice.

Socrates' statements about the prisoners also suggest that even the prisoner who is best at making correct identifications and predictions is not always correct; recall that Socrates only uses the phrases "sharpest" and "best" when referring to this prisoner's skills. Nowhere does he suggest that the prisoner *always* gets it right. So perhaps the same applies to self-control: as an ability developed by habit and practice, self-control allows the non-philosopher to consistently hold on to her true opinion, but not always. Sometimes, the virtuous

<sup>47</sup> See Doug Reed's "Bodily Desires and Afterlife Punishment in the *Phaedo*" for a more thorough discussion of these issues.

<sup>48</sup> Perhaps Plato established the tripartite soul in the *Republic* because he realized that there was a need to explicitly detail the non-cognitive elements of the soul.

non-philosopher's true opinion will still be temporarily replaced by a false opinion, and she will consequently do the wrong thing. In other words, the non-philosopher with illusory virtue does not always do the right thing.

So the virtuous non-philosopher has developed the non-cognitive ability of self-control, most likely through habit and practice. Her self-control allows her to resist the lure of immediate or remote pleasures, as well as the repulsion of immediate or remote pains and fears, that risk ultimately altering her true opinion of what the best action is.<sup>49</sup> For instance, if the moderate non-philosopher has a chance to have a second piece of cake, which would be the immoderate thing to do, her self-control will allow her overcome the lure of the pleasure she would experience from eating the second piece of cake. In other words, if, from an awareness of the power of appearance, the non-philosopher is already skeptical of the appearances of the pleasures, pains, and fears that might result from an action, she will be able to exercise self-control to avoid allowing any hedonic calculations she may engage in to alter her true opinion of what the best action is. Since she is already aware of the unreliable results of her calculations, she will exercise her self-control to avoid (correctly or incorrectly) adopting the belief that having the second piece will maximize her pleasure. Thus, her self-control will prevent her from succumbing to temporary ignorance and wrongly believing that eating the second piece of cake is the best action. So because her self-control will allow her to continue holding the true opinion that turning down the second piece of cake is what is best, she will do the moderate thing and turn down the second piece.

Thus, it seems that self-control coupled with an awareness of the deceptive power of appearance is necessary for the virtuous non-philosopher to hold on to her true opinion that the virtuous action is the best action. Without an awareness of the deceptive power of appearance, the non-philosopher would see no reason to exercise self-control. Since she views bodily goods as the ultimate good and seeks to maximize her bodily goods, the non-philosopher would instead opt for the action that appears to maximize bodily goods. An awareness of the deceptive power of appearances is thus what drives the philosopher to exercise self-control. Her awareness makes her skeptical of the face-value appearances of an action's resulting pleasures, pains, and fears, so she seeks to resist these appearances by exercising self-control. Ultimately, since the virtuous non-philosopher's true opinion of what is best is not tied down by an account of the reason why and is at risk of escaping her mind when she is confronted by pleasures, pains, and fears, she must exercise self-control to ensure that her true opinion remains in place when she makes decisions.

Self-control is also compatible with the possibility that a non-philosopher may possess some illusory virtues but not others. Although it seems possible for a non-philosopher to possess all of the illusory virtues, there is evidence that many non-philosophers may have some illusory virtues but not others. First, because illusory virtue is without wisdom of what Virtue is, nor even a true opinion about what Virtue or virtue is,<sup>50</sup> illusory virtue cannot be a unity in the following sense: if the non-philosopher has one illusory virtue, then she must have them all. Second, while warning Phaedo against becoming a misologue, Socrates asserts that "the very good and very wicked are both quite rare, and that most men are between those extremes," and compares the distribution of good and wicked men to the distribution of tall and short men, in which very few people are at the extremes (*Phaedo* 89e8-90b2). This distribution of good and wicked men may be explained by the possibility that some people have more or fewer illusory virtues than others. Someone with illusory moderation and justice may be more good than someone who just has illusory courage. Moreover, if we did assume that illusory virtue were a unity, then the distribution of good and wicked men would not parallel the distribution of tall and short men in the way Socrates says it does. Rather, each person would fall into one of three categories: (completely) truly virtuous, (completely) illusorily virtuous, and wicked. But this would not resemble the spectrum of short and tall men Socrates describes,<sup>51</sup> because no one would

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<sup>49</sup> See the valid but unsound argument I have set out in premise-conclusion format. If she believes any of the premises to be false, the non-philosopher will fail to believe the conclusion that consistently acting virtuously is what is best. The power of appearance threatens to dislodge the fourth premise, namely that consistently acting virtuously will maximize one's bodily goods in the long run.

<sup>50</sup> Recall Socrates' assertion that the soul of the philosopher "follows reason and ever stays with it contemplating the true, the divine, which is not the object of opinion" (*Phaedo* 84a6-7). The Forms are not the object of opinion.

<sup>51</sup> Nor would it resemble the distributions of the swift and slow, ugly and beautiful, or white and black (*Phaedo* 90a4-a9).

fall between the extreme of wickedness and illusory virtue. Thus, it is possible to have one illusory virtue without having the rest.

To sum up, our discussion of illusory virtue so far has revealed that to have an illusory virtue, the non-philosopher must consistently have (1) a true opinion of what the virtuous action is, (2) a true opinion that acting virtuously is best, (3) an awareness of the deceptive power of appearance, and (4) the ability of self-control. If the non-philosopher consistently lacks one or more of these, then she is likely to act wrongly. Since there are four requirements for the non-philosopher to have illusory virtue, it becomes clear that there are several ways in which the non-philosopher can fall short of an illusory virtue. Without (1), the non-philosopher will not be able to consistently choose the virtuous action because she will be unable to identify what the virtuous action is. Without (2), the non-philosopher will not do the virtuous thing—rather, she will instead do the (vicious) action she believes is best. Without (3), the non-philosopher will not have reason to exercise (4). Without having (4), the non-philosopher is at risk of having (2), her true opinion about what is best, being temporarily replaced by ignorance at the moment of her action, thus causing her to do the wrong thing.

From this general conception of illusory virtue, we can now explain how a non-philosopher could have one illusory virtue without having the others. This possibility can be explained in several ways. First, in terms of (1), that is, having a true opinion of what the virtuous action is, the non-philosopher might be able to correctly identify moderate actions according to the public conception but fail to correctly identify courageous actions. Perhaps the non-philosopher is only attuned to the public conception of moderation, because she has heard many discussions and speeches about moderation but not courage. As a result, the non-philosopher would be capable of consistently correctly identifying moderate actions but fail to consistently correctly identify courageous actions. So the non-philosopher might be moderate but not courageous. Second, in terms of (2), that is, having a true opinion that acting virtuously is best, the non-philosopher might hold the true opinion that acting moderately is best but not the true opinion that acting courageously is best. The non-philosopher might have determined that consistently acting moderately would maximize her bodily goods and would thus be best. At the same time, she might have determined that consistently acting courageously would not maximize her bodily goods and thus not be best. So the non-philosopher might be moderate but not courageous for this reason. Third, in terms of (4), that is, having the ability of self-control, the non-philosopher might have the self-control that pertains to moderation but not to courage. There are likely different types of self-control that correlate with each of the virtues. Consider: giving up some pleasures would seem to require a different kind of self-control than conquering fears. A non-philosopher may have the self-control necessary to be able to easily refrain from having a second piece of cake but she may lack the self-control necessary to willingly face death during battle. So there is self-control that is necessary for moderation, self-control that is necessary for courage, and so on. Lastly, any combination of these three ways could result in the non-philosopher consistently acting moderately but not courageously.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, since self-control is an ability which one must develop through habit and practice, it would seem that because self-control is necessary for attaining illusory virtue, the non-philosopher is ultimately able to attain illusory virtue through habit and practice. The attainment of illusory virtue through habit and practice is consistent with Socrates' claim that illusory virtue without wisdom and "is in fact fit for slaves, without soundness or truth" (*Phaedo* 69b5-7). Recall that the philosopher values virtue and wisdom as what is truly good, and that she grasps the Form of Virtue to acquire impure wisdom of what the virtuous action is to always be able to do the virtuous thing. But the non-philosopher's virtue is illusory and slavish because she arrives at the virtuous action improperly. Unlike the philosopher, the non-philosopher is wrongly motivated by a desire to acquire bodily goods, and she consistently does the virtuous thing because she (correctly or incorrectly) believes that consistently virtuous behavior will

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<sup>52</sup> Why aren't there four main ways to have one virtue but not another? Requirement (3), that is, an awareness of the power of appearance, seems as though it *always* pertains to pleasures, pains, and fears. In other words, Socrates' characterization of the power of appearances and the art of measurement in the *Protagoras* does not seem to suggest that this awareness (or the knowledge of the art of measurement) can be broken up into parts. It would seem that one would either have this awareness or not have it. So, for instance, it would not be possible for someone to be aware of the deceptive power of appearance of pleasures but not of fears. So if someone has one illusory virtue, they must have an awareness of the deceptive power of appearances of pleasures, pains, and fears.

maximize her pleasure in the long run. She has no understanding of *why* an action is virtuous, nor does she value virtue for its own sake. Thus, her virtue is an "illusory appearance of virtue" and lacks soundness and truth.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.3 *Social virtue as a species of illusory virtue*

There is debate among commentators regarding whether social virtue is a part of or something distinct from illusory virtue.<sup>54</sup> However, in light of our examination of illusory virtue, there is good reason to identify social virtue as a species of illusory virtue. I will begin by examining the passage in which Socrates mentions social virtue.

In his discussion of the reincarnation of impure souls, Socrates explains, "The happiest of these, who will have the best destination, are those who have practiced popular and social virtue, which they call moderation and justice and which was developed by habit and practice, without philosophy or understanding" (*Phaedo* 82a10-b3). As we have seen, illusory virtue is attained through habit and practice and is only suited to non-philosophers. So both social virtue and illusory virtue have the same origin: both are developed by habit and practice, and both are without philosophy or understanding.

Furthermore, the souls of people with illusory virtue and the souls of people with social virtue are impure at death and are reincarnated, because these souls have always been associated with the body and served it to the point at which nothing seems to exist for them but the physical realm (*Phaedo* 81b1-c1). Although all non-philosophers will be unhappy when they are reincarnated, those with social virtue will be the happiest of all non-philosophers "because it is likely that they will again join a social and gentle group, either of bees or wasps or ants" (*Phaedo* 82b5-6). Also recall that only the philosopher's soul is pure and will spend the rest of time with the gods after death, where it can be happy. The philosopher has trained to die easily by avoiding association with the body as far as possible and acquiring (impure) wisdom and true virtue, which purify the soul (*Phaedo* 80d4-81a9, 69b7-9). Since only the philosopher has a pure soul and is able to spend the rest of time with the gods, it becomes clear that all non-philosophers, including those with illusory virtue and social virtue, are reincarnated.

The shared origins of illusory virtue and social virtue, as well as the shared afterlife fates of the possessors of social virtue and illusory virtue, offer good reason to identify social virtue as a species of illusory virtue. Social virtue is a species of illusory virtue that can be attributed to a non-philosopher when she has illusory moderation and justice.

## Conclusion

Now that I have detailed a plausible account of true virtue and illusory virtue, we can examine its implications regarding Socrates' defense of philosophy. First, my account of true virtue supports the success of Socrates' defense of philosophy. Recall that all philosophers have true virtue, that true virtue aims at pure wisdom, and that true virtue is governed by impure wisdom of Virtue. As the possessors of true virtue, all embodied philosophers aim at the experience of pure wisdom after death. The impure wisdom and true virtue the philosophers have attained purify their souls. Thus, as truly virtuous people, embodied philosophers are successfully training for an easy death and preparing themselves to receive many blessings in the afterlife. As Socrates claims, the philosophers are right to be in good cheer in the face of death.

My account of true virtue has also highlighted the robustness of Socrates' defense of philosophy. Socrates' defense goes beyond just demonstrating that the philosophers are right to be in good cheer in the face of death: it also reveals that the *only* way to attain these great blessings in the afterlife is to live the philosophical life. Since *only* philosophers have true virtue, and true virtue is required to attain these great blessings, the desirable afterlife fate of the philosophers is not available to non-philosophers. In other words, only the philosophers will get to dwell with the gods for the rest of time and enjoy the greatest blessings in the underworld. Therefore, not only are Socrates and all other philosophers right to be of good cheer in the face of death, but *only* philosophers are right to be in good

<sup>53</sup> Even though the non-philosopher's virtue is in part the result of her possession of true opinion, the non-philosopher's virtue lacks truth and soundness because it is not rooted in a grasp of what is true and real.

<sup>54</sup> See Doug Reed's "Deficient Virtue in the *Phaedo*" for a thorough examination of illusory virtue and social virtue. Reed examines common reasons for and against identifying social virtue as a species of illusory virtue. He ultimately argues that social virtue is a species of illusory virtue.

cheer in the face of death. Thus, in his defense, Socrates has demonstrated the unique value and afterlife outcome of practicing philosophy.

Moreover, in revisiting the *Phaedo*'s characterization of Socrates as virtuous, it becomes clear that, as a philosopher, Socrates has true virtue. His actions aim at pure wisdom for its own sake, and he possesses impure wisdom of what Virtue is. He has grasped Virtue while incarnate. Thus, Socrates' friends are right in calling him wise and virtuous. As their mentor, Socrates has served as an exemplar of how to live the philosophical life, and by following in his footsteps, Socrates' friends will also be able to purify their souls and ultimately dwell with the gods in the underworld for eternity, where they will finally attain pure wisdom.

Even more provocatively, my account of true virtue and illusory virtue in the *Phaedo* has shown that the ethical condition(s) one can have is (are) ultimately determined by her conception of reality, because her conception of reality is the source of her values and motives. The philosophers are ultimately truly virtuous because they correctly identify the invisible realm as what is most true and real, and they value wisdom as a result. The possibility of acquiring true virtue requires attunement to the invisible realm, because otherwise it would be impossible to meet the requirements of true virtue: the agent would neither aim at pure wisdom for its own sake nor possess wisdom of Virtue. Thus, it is impossible for non-philosophers, who are only attuned to the visible realm, to attain true virtue. Instead, non-philosophers are at best able to attain illusory virtue. As we have seen, the possession of illusory virtue is ultimately the result of ignorance of what is most true and real. The non-philosophers wrongly believe that the physical realm is most true and real, and this false belief is what causes them to value bodily goods as an ultimate end. And this valuing of bodily goods as an ultimate end precludes attaining true virtue. Instead, it can only lead to vicious action or superficially virtuous action.

In Socrates' view, it thus becomes paramount that we practice philosophy. When philosophy gets hold of our soul, we become aware of the fact that it is imprisoned in our body, and that it "wallows in every kind of ignorance" (*Phaedo* 82d8-e3). Philosophy persuades the soul to withdraw from the body as far as possible and to only trust itself and the invisible realm. In other words, philosophy turns the soul away from the physical realm and toward reality (*Phaedo* 83a1-b4). The soul will only become attuned to what is most true and real through philosophy. Thus, since the ethical condition(s) we are capable of having is (are) determined by our conception of reality, practicing philosophy is necessary for attaining the best ethical condition (true virtue) and thus the best afterlife fate. In Socrates' view, it is only through philosophy that we will be able to attain true virtue and happiness.

In light of these considerations, I would like to consider how Socrates' account of virtue in the *Phaedo* is relevant to us today. Although we may reject the dialogue's ethics, finding Plato's Theory of Forms and the afterlife myths he recounts in the dialogue objectionable, there are still relevant questions we can draw from the dialogue. Socrates emphasizes the distinction between lovers of wisdom (i.e., philosophers,) and lovers of the body (i.e., non-philosophers), of which there are lovers of wealth and lovers of honor. Their respective ethical conditions in part come down to what they view as truly valuable.<sup>55</sup> In this way, Plato rightfully draws attention to our values, because our values guide our actions. Plato inspires us to ask, "What, if anything, is truly valuable?" and to reflect on what we currently value. Although Plato mainly recognizes wisdom, virtue, wealth, and honor as things that people value, there are various other possibilities to consider as well, such as interpersonal relationships and the conservation of nature. The *Phaedo*'s emphasis on the ethical significance of what we value ultimately encourages self-reflection today as we continue to grapple with the question of how we should live.

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<sup>55</sup> Also recall that what one views as truly valuable amounts to what she believes is most true and real.

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