

Malice and the Ridiculous as Self-ignorance: A Dialectical Argument in *Philebus* 47d-50e

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In the *Philebus*, Protarchus shows signs of self-awareness and easily admits when he is baffled and needs help. This type of awareness is associated with self-knowledge (*sōphrosunē*) and is expressed through Protarchus' character in two ways. First, he seems to have self-knowledge, in the conventional sense of the term, where *sōphrosunē* means knowing one's own limitations. This level of self-awareness is in conformity with the Delphic maxim, "Know yourself" (48c10).¹ Second, in a moral context, *sōphrosunē* refers to the virtue of moderation or self-control, associated with the Delphic maxim, "Nothing in excess" (45e1). Protarchus thinks of himself as moderate and recognizes the value of self-restraint with regard to pleasure.² In this respect, he contrasts sharply with Philebus who has a reputation for excess which Protarchus thinks of as a personal deficiency and a moral vice. He gradually separates himself from Philebus and by means of his agreement with Socrates, he espouses a view of pleasure that puts him in direct opposition to Philebus' hedonism (65b-e, 67b).³

Protarchus' image of himself as someone who knows his own place and is moderate in his pursuit of pleasure is very much at odds with the portrayal of his character and conduct in the dialogue. Plato brings this discrepancy to our attention through the dramatic exchanges between Protarchus and Philebus and, in particular, through the dialectical argument Socrates gives on malice and comedy (47d-50e).⁴ In this paper, I examine the malice argument in which Socrates purports to explain why the pleasure that spectators feel when watching comedy is a mixed pleasure and pain. My thesis is that Socrates implicitly challenges Protarchus' beliefs about himself as moderate and self-knowing. There are two reasons to think that more is at stake in the argument than the mixed pleasure and pain of comic malice. First, Socrates' moral views are incorporated into the argument in conjunction with the conventional values to which Protarchus adheres. Second, Socrates does little to explain how the pain-pleasure mixture works in terms of comedy. I suggest that to understand Plato's dialogues in terms of context and character is to discover to what extent a particular argument is designed to fit the exact needs required to educate the interlocutor about himself.

I.

Philebus is an advocate of extreme hedonism who holds that pleasure is the good and for all beings the only value in life worth pursuing. He associates himself and his cause with the goddess of love whom he calls Aphrodite (12b-c).⁵ Protarchus starts out as a moderate hedonist who holds the position that pleasure is one and the same and all pleasures are good (12a-13d). The debate that originated between Socrates and Philebus is described by Protarchus in terms of what it is that Socrates denies: “You denied Philebus’ assertion that pleasure, delight, enjoyment and so on are the greatest good” (19c9-10). By contrast, what Socrates claims is that the “good which should properly be called better than pleasure is intellect, knowledge, understanding and science, not to mention all their cognates” (19d3-5).

Philebus opts out of the discussion and hands things over to Protarchus who accepts the role as a matter of obligation since “our fine friend Philebus has backed down” (11c8).⁶ While the positions are being set up, Socrates asks Philebus for his view and he claims that pleasure is the winner no matter what happens. Protarchus admonishes him: “you should no longer take it upon yourself to agree or disagree with Socrates” (12a9-10). Philebus formally withdraws from the activities, calling upon his personal goddess as a witness to his resignation (12b1-3). At a later point, Protarchus suggests that they not worry anymore about Philebus and “let sleeping dogs lie” (15c10).

After the preliminary skirmishes, Socrates and Protarchus face the problem of the one and the many, as it applies to both pleasure and knowledge, by means of the method of division which Socrates calls a “divine method” (16c-17a). They are about ready for the task of dividing pleasure and knowledge into kinds but due to Socrates’ manner of questioning the project appears too daunting. Protarchus is bewildered and asks Philebus how he thinks Socrates’ challenge should be answered. Protarchus recognizes that by calling for Philebus’ assistance after taking over the argument, he may be “making a fool” of himself and yet he says “it would be far more absurd, however, if neither of us were able to answer” (19a10-b1). He is clearly aware of his role in the inquiry and contrasts himself with those who are wise, remarking that “although it’d be nice for the wise man to know everything, I think the next best thing for him is to have a proper estimation of himself” (19c1-3).

Socrates changes directions and posits a third alternative to resolve the standoff between pleasure and knowledge. He suggests that they accept three conditions for what makes something good: completeness, sufficiency, and desirability (20d). At a key moment, Protarchus is asked

to choose between two extremes: the life of greatest pleasures without intelligence or the life of intelligence without pleasure. He unreflectively chooses the former position which holds that if one's life is full of pleasure, and pleasure is guaranteed, there would be nothing more for a person to seek. His choice is easily overturned when Socrates points out that the life of pleasure without the mind is the life of a mollusk (21c10-d1). When he realizes his mistake, Protarchus admits to being speechless. He embraces Socrates' proposal of the mixed life as the best life. He says the mixed life "will certainly be chosen by everyone...without exception" (22a6-7). Socrates shows his approval, stating that "to choose otherwise" would be a sign of "ignorance or some unfortunate compulsion" (22a8-9). The mixed life has won first prize and Philebus' pleasure-goddess must step down. Convinced that pleasure has been demoted, along with knowledge and wisdom, Protarchus says that if pleasure does not win second place and is shown to be inferior to reason, then Philebus' goddess, "would be altogether dishonoured in the eyes of [her] admirers: [she] would no longer seem so attractive, even to them" (23a6-7).⁷ Clearly, Protarchus exhibits amused pleasure at the defeat of Philebus' view and Socrates wonders momentarily if they should continue in their "paining" of pleasure (23a5). Moving forward, Socrates proceeds to show why reason or intellect deserves to take second place whereby he introduces the four categories of being.⁸

These interactions show that Protarchus has a friendly rivalry with Philebus. He also has an ambivalent attitude toward Philebus' pursuit of physical pleasures. In a subsequent discussion, Socrates appeals to the "dour thinkers" who are anti-hedonists and the "real enemies" of Philebus (44b5). He describes people ill with fever who experience the strongest degree of pain before they get the pleasure of relief. He places emphasis on the size and intensity rather than the number of pleasures and asks Protarchus to say whether the greater pleasures are those found in the unrestrained or restrained lifestyle. Protarchus interprets the question with the maxim, "Nothing in excess," and marks the "great difference" between those who follow the maxim and "fools and those who are unbalanced to the point of insanity." Such people are the "pawns of intense pleasure which drives them to scandalous behavior" (45e1-4).⁹

They are now ready to consider the mixed pleasures of the soul, by itself, which are anger, fear, longing, grieving, love, jealousy, and malice or envy (*phthonos*, 47e1-4).¹⁰ Protarchus grasps how pains and pleasures are mixed with respect to anger and in tragedy but he wonders about comic pleasure. Comedy is the hardest case to prove and if proved, it should make the other cases easier to understand. Socrates pursues the inquiry

using the example of comic malice. For purposes of analysis, I separate the argument in two parts.¹¹

II.

Part I (48b-49c). The argument begins with (1) malice is a “painful condition of the soul” and (2) the malicious person is described as someone who “is *pleased* at his neighbours’ misfortunes” (48b9-10). Further, (3) there is a kind of ignorance which takes the form of misfortune or evil (*kakon*). Ignorant people are in a “worthless condition” (*ponēria*) and are best described as conforming to the opposite of the Delphic maxim. Protarchus chimes in, “[D]o you mean ‘know yourself?’” (48c10). Socrates affirms this, adding that the more suitable way to put it is: “not to know ourselves at all” (48d2). The negative use of the maxim serves to connect the ridiculous with self-ignorance which Socrates divides into three kinds. He offers the following account.

People who are ridiculous due to self-ignorance think of themselves as rich, beautiful, or virtuous and wise (49a-b). The latter group are the most common and suffer the worst of evils, especially those who think they are wise. In a crucial move, the self-ignorant are divided into those who are strong and fearsome and those who are weak and harmless. The latter are the most laughable since they cannot retaliate against those who ridicule them. The combination of qualities, self-ignorant, weak, and harmless, is what makes for a truly comical situation. So, (4) ignorance (including self-ignorance) in those who are weak is, by nature, the most ridiculous of all (49b8-9). Protarchus follows so far but doesn’t quite see “the connection with a fusion of pleasure and pain” (49c6).

Protarchus’ response is unsurprising since the emphasis is placed entirely on malicious pleasure to the neglect of malicious pain and on the object of ridicule rather than on the comic spectators. Socrates started the argument with a partial definition of malice. The object of pain is *another’s good fortune* but it is never specified. He brings in malicious pleasure by referring to the person who takes pleasure *at another’s misfortune*. This approach shows that Socrates is not interested in a definition of malice as painful or explaining its object or what it entails. He directs attention to the pleasure of malice completely in terms of a disposition of character which allows for greater conceptual flexibility since the malicious person can admit of opposing states of mind.

Part II (49c-50e). Protarchus asked for more details about the mixture and Socrates responds by examining the power or nature of malice. Malice is not only painful, (5) it is a kind of unjust pain and pleasure

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(49d1). This premise is linked to the supposition that malice must be directed towards friends rather than enemies since taking pleasure at the misfortune of enemies is justified. Strictly speaking, then, it would not be called malice at all (49d3-4). Premise (6) reads: it is not unjust to rejoice in one's enemies' misfortunes. It is quickly agreed that (7) it is unjust to rejoice in the misfortunes of one's friends. Socrates recalls the claim that ignorance is a misfortune or evil for "whoever suffers from it" (49d8). He restates the three-fold classification of self-ignorance and the strong-weak opposition from Part I which is formulated as (8): one's friends who are self-ignorant and weak are ridiculous. It should be noted that the comic context has been dropped and the real-life context is substituted. Then he asks, "Didn't we say that what makes us feel pleasure at friends' misfortunes is spite (malice)?" (50a1-2).¹² I take this as premise (9): what makes (*apergazomenon*) one laugh at and rejoice in one's friends' misfortunes is malice which is painful. Protarchus agrees. To conclude, Socrates says:

Therefore the argument claims that when we laugh at what is comical in friends – when, that is, we mix pleasure with spite – then we are tempering our pleasure with pain. For we agreed some time ago that spite is a painful condition of the soul; but we also agreed that amusement is pleasant, and on these occasions they both occur simultaneously. (50a4-9)

I read the conclusion as: (10) to laugh at and rejoice in one's friends' misfortunes is to mix pleasure with pain and on such occasions these feelings occur simultaneously.¹³ Finally, Socrates comes back to the tragic-comic framework and pronounces:

[S]o now we can be sure that in grief, tragedy and comedy – not just when they are portrayed on stage, but also in all the tragedy and comedy of life – pains and pleasures are mixed. And the same goes for thousands of other cases. (50b1-4)

Protarchus' final response has a tone of unconditional acceptance. He says that it would not be possible even for someone who loves victory (*ei kai tis philoneikoi*) to maintain the contrary of this position (50b5-6).¹⁴

III.

I have two critical concerns. The first is that Socrates' use of "kakon" has a wider and narrower sense. In premise (2), the word refers to

misfortunes as bad things that happen to people in the realm of external affairs or physical states, such as wealth, reputation, and health and how one fares with regard to them. In premise (3), “*kakon*” is used to refer to the evils or vices of a man’s character. The first usage prompts Protarchus to agree that the misfortunes of others are that in which the malicious person delights (48b9) and the second prompts him to agree that self-ignorance, a worthless condition of the soul (*ponēria* 48c8), is an evil and misfortune (*kakon* 49a5, e7, 50a2). It is typical for commentators to allow for the wider extension of misfortunes to accommodate Socrates’ meaning.¹⁵ Granting this point, however, overlooks a crucial issue which is that Socrates’ input is intentionally revisionary. A dialectical argument is best interpreted as conveying two levels of meaning of a key phrase or concept, one is Socratic and the other is conventional. The malice argument is not conducted as a refutation of Protarchus, but as a dialectical argument it works within a specific context, derives its premises explicitly or implicitly, from his beliefs, and aims at a conclusion from the agreed-upon premises which have implications for his moral character.

The argument depends on conventional values and uses a strategy that divides a pair of contraries into extreme opposites which appear to have no intermediate. The strong-weak and friend-enemy dichotomies are false dichotomies. Moreover, when Socrates says self-ignorance is a misfortune, it is clearly not with respect to external goods. The narrow usage is made clear when Socrates says that self-ignorance with regard to knowledge cause dissension and strife among people who are in conversation. Such ignorance is shameful and, by implication, if anything is deserving of comic ridicule, it is this case.¹⁶ Plato’s *Philebus* exhibits what Ruby Blondell refers to as “reflexive relevance” which means that the dialogue dramatizes an issue to which the argumentation refers.¹⁷ Contrary to what Socrates says about self-ignorance being harmless to others and its popular association with those who are weak, Socrates holds that self-ignorance with regard to knowledge is harmful to oneself *and* to others. In the comic context, a self-ignorant person being “harmless” acquires a conventional meaning: the ridiculed cannot get back at the ridiculer. But this way of thinking is a concession to the argument’s context and does not represent Socrates’ moral viewpoint.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the comic context facilitates the transition to the second part of the argument in which Socrates challenges Protarchus’ beliefs about friendship.¹⁹

The second concern is that Socrates offers no account of the pain that grounds the malicious pleasure, whether taken by spectators laughing at a comedy or laughing at the display of a friend’s self-ignorance. Presumably, in the latter case, the pain would arise from one’s having

envy towards the putative virtue or wisdom of one's friend. Protarchus is familiar with *phthonos* and shows no uncertainty about what it means.²⁰ On the whole, the Greeks had a negative attitude towards *phthonos* as socially undesirable and a sign of bad character and yet it was a pervasive feature of their politics. *Phthonos* can be translated in English as malice or envy, depending on context, and both conditions belong to a family of emotions, including pity, indignation, and emulation.²¹ The conceptual boundaries between them are not clear-cut and translating "*phthonos*" into English as "malice," "spite," "ill will," or "envy" makes it no less so. These words capture the painful side of *phthonos* adequately as do terms such as "begrudging" or "resentment," but they fall short with regard to malicious pleasure. Malicious pleasure, when taken to its farthest extreme, is referred to as "*Schadenfreude*" or what Aristotle calls "*epichairekakia*" which is to rejoice in another's misfortunes without regard to just deserts.²²

The rivalrous emotions involve how one feels about the fortunes or misfortunes and merits or faults of others in comparison to oneself. The envious person may be of two types. "Covetous envy" describes someone who desires the good things of another. "Begrudging envy" describes someone who does not desire the good things for himself but wishes to see another deprived of them or is simply unwilling to share good things with another. Envious feelings are rooted in rivalry and directed primarily against those whom one thinks are his equals.²³ Given this understanding of the pain of malice, the pleasure is experienced whenever the victim whom the malicious person takes as his equal is perceived as suffering losses or defeat, or has his flaws publicly revealed.

In my interpretation of the dialogue, Protarchus is quick to move away from Philebus' hedonism and detach himself from what he perceives to be Philebus' bad fortune insofar as Philebus is shown to be wrong. Protarchus' lack of awareness about his *phthonos* is linked to the reason Socrates brings in the friends-enemies dichotomy. By means of the contrast between friends and enemies, Socrates suggests to Protarchus that if he is inclined to laugh at Philebus in a way that exhibits his malice or envy, then he ought not to consider himself a friend of Philebus.²⁴ Protarchus' relationship of friendly rivalry to Philebus is an issue raised as part of the dialectical argument. The feelings that are appropriate to have toward one's enemies are conceptually close to *phthonos* and it was agreed that to have such feelings toward one's friends is unjust.²⁵ The important lesson for Protarchus in this regard is that feeling malice or envy reflects negatively upon his character and reveals his lack of self-knowledge.²⁶

Notes

¹ See *Chrm.* 164d-165b, *Prt.* 343b1-4, *Alc I.* 130c. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains: “I can’t as yet ‘know myself,’ as the inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters” (230a1-3 [Hackforth (trans.)]).

² Protarchus’ admissions of ignorance vary in tone and forthrightness, for instance: “I have absolutely nothing to say at the moment, Socrates: the argument has overwhelmed me” (21d5-6). When Protarchus hesitates out of fear of giving the wrong answer and offending the gods, he turns to Philebus in the expectation that Philebus will come to his aid. Philebus reminds him that he had wished to speak for himself. Protarchus says, “Yes, I did, but at the moment I’m in a bit of a quandary. I wish you’d be our seer, Socrates...” (28b7-8).

³ It is generally agreed that Protarchus is won over to Socrates’ viewpoint by the end of the dialogue. See Hackforth (1972, p. 7); Benardete (1993, pp. 102, 109); Frede (1993, pp. lxxv-lxxvii); Bolotin (1985); Wood (2007); and Bartlett (2008).

⁴ Scholars who discuss this passage include Patterson (1982); Mills (1985); Gadamer (1991, pp. 181-187); Tuozzo (1996); Russell (2005, pp. 188-192); and Miller (2008).

⁵ The first summary of his view is “for all living creatures the good is enjoyment, pleasure, delight and whatever is compatible with them” (11b4-5). Philebus’ position is formulated differently in keeping with the dialectical context as it changes and develops (11b-c, 19c-d, 60a-b, 66d-67b).

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are taken from Waterfield (1982). The Greek text consulted is Bury (1897).

⁷ Protarchus reveals his priority of honor over pleasure when he suggests to Philebus that he should be dislodged from his devotion to his pleasure goddess if she is dishonored.

⁸ These are: (1) unlimited class, (2) limited class, (3) a mixture of both unlimited and limited, and (4) cause of the mixture (23c-27b, 30b).

⁹ Protarchus’ reversed attitude toward pleasure is best shown when he says that “pleasure is the greatest of impostors” (*alazonistaton*, 65c4) and when he likens pleasure to children, “utterly devoid of all sense” (65c10). In the final analysis, it is Protarchus who says that sexual pleasures are “ridiculous, if not ultimately repulsive” (65e7-8). These are translations by Fowler (1939).

¹⁰ There is no exact equivalent of “*phthonos*” in English. The term may be translated as “malice,” “spite,” “ill-will,” “resentment,” “envy,” or “jealousy.” I use “malice,” following Hackforth, and prefer it over Waterfield’s “spite.” However, in my direct quotations from Waterfield’s text, I preserve his translation for *phthonos* as “spite.” The technical difficulty of trying to hold to a single English term in various contexts is relevant to the overall argument of my paper. For discussion, see Hackforth (1972, p. 92), Russell (2005, p. 189, note 67), and Mills (1985, p. 2, note 2). A recent study of all aspects of *phthonos* and *phthonos*-terms in Greek culture is given by Sanders (2014).

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¹¹ To make the structure clearer, a formal schema is presented below.

Part I

- (1) Malice is a painful condition in the soul.
- (2) The malicious person is one who takes pleasure at his neighbors' misfortunes.
- (3) Ignorance (self-ignorance) is a misfortune.
- (4) Ignorance (including self-ignorance) in those who are weak is, by nature, the most ridiculous of all.

Part II

- (5) Malice is a kind of unjust pain and unjust pleasure.
- (6) It is not unjust to rejoice in one's enemies' misfortunes and is not malice at all.
- (7) It is unjust to rejoice in one's friends' misfortunes.
- (8) One's friends who are self-ignorant, weak, and harmless are ridiculous.
- (9) What makes one laugh at and rejoice in one's friends' misfortunes is caused by malice which is painful.
- (10) So, to laugh at and rejoice in one's friends' misfortunes is to mix pleasure with pain and on such occasions these feelings occur simultaneously.

¹² Sanders (2014, p. 103, n. 15) points out that Plato's restriction of *phthonos* to friends, "goes too far: it would not have been normal, in Classical Athens any more than today, to take pleasure in the misfortunes of friends." Sommerstein (2009, pp. 108-109) notes a rare case of "those who should be friends behaving like enemies" in Aristophanes' *Wealth* 838 and with regard to *Knights* 320, he remarks that "one may *katagelan* a friend if one is confident that he will not think one is doing it out of ill-will."

¹³ Mills (1985, pp. 1-2) presents a similar analysis of the argument. His account is meticulous, however, he takes little notice of the dialectical context. For instance, he fills in Socrates' omission of the defining characteristic of *phthonos* in Premise (1) as pain taken at the "*agathoi* of neighbours and friends" (1985, p. 2).

¹⁴ Socrates ignores Protarchus' response and continues with a series of questions as to whether Protarchus grasps the gist of the discussion which he then proceeds to answer. He explains that it was all about dealing with the hard case of comedy to find a pattern for the rest of the psychic pleasures. It is difficult to say whether Socrates' words of advice to Protarchus are to be taken seriously since Socrates begs off discussing the topic and promises to deal with it the next day.

¹⁵ Hackforth (1972, p. 95, n. 1) speaks to the difficulty to be faced in translating *kakon* at 48c1-2 as an "ill thing." Though he doesn't say so explicitly, the concern is that the term must be used consistently if the argument is to be valid. He says, "Socrates uses the same word, *kakon*, for what we should naturally call a trouble (or misfortune) and a vice (or moral defect)." Hackforth thinks there is

no “real equivocation” in the Greek because *kakon* can refer to either concept as the context determines it. In English, however, we need to use different words to capture the correct sense. See also, Gosling (1975). His note at 48b11 highlights the term “misfortune” about which he says, “no English will catch the Greek, which covers defects of character, weakness, and misfortune indifferently” (1975, p. 120).

¹⁶ In *Republic V*, Socrates points out that in the past it was considered ridiculous for men to exercise in the nude until it was proved to be best. He takes this to show that “it is foolish to think anything ridiculous except what is bad, or to try to raise a laugh at any other spectacle than that of ignorance and evil as being ridiculous, as it is foolish to be in earnest about any other standard of beauty than that of the good” (452d7-e1 [Grube (trans.)]).

¹⁷ Blondell (2002, p. 374) uses the *Statesman* (283b-287b) which is lengthy and tedious in its account of due measure, as her prime example.

¹⁸ Socratic moral thinking on justice, harm, and the friends-enemies dichotomy occurs at *Rep.* 335a-d; *Crito* 49a-e, and *Grg.* 469a-c. See Blondell (2002, p. 194) for her remarks about friendship as a part of the dialectic between Socrates and Thrasymachus (*Rep.* 498c-d). She makes a point about the “slipperiness” with which Socrates uses language when it comes to friends and enemies.

¹⁹ Xenophon’s Socrates is presented as dealing with conventional wisdom about *phthonos* in an unconventional way (*Memorabilia*, III.9.8). Xenophon writes that it is a “species of distress, but not the sort that arises over the misfortunes of friends or the good fortune of enemies; he said that only those people were envious who were distressed at the success of their friends.” The context provides help; continuing:

When some people expressed surprise that anyone who cared for a person should be vexed at his success, he reminded them that many people are so disposed towards certain others that they cannot ignore their troubles, but go to their help when they are unfortunate, and yet are annoyed when they are fortunate. This, he said, could not indeed happen to a sensible person, but was the constant experience of the foolish. (p. 162 [Waterfield (trans.)])

²⁰ For various occurrences of “*phthonos*” and the specific contexts in which the term is used by Plato, see *Ap.* 18d, 28a; *Eu.* 3c-d; *Grg.* 457d2; *Laches* 184b10, 200b5-7; *Lysis* 215d2-3; *Prt.* 316d2-3, 320c1-2; *Rep.* 460b2-3, 500a3-5, 500b10-c1; *Phdr.* 247a7, d3-4; *Sym.* 209d2, 210d8, 213d2-3; and *Tim.* 27d, 29e1-2. A useful discussion of Plato’s concern with *phthonos* and *aphthonos* is given by Herrmann (2003).

²¹ Cairns (2003) shows the difficulty of marking off the boundaries between envy and indignation (*nemesis*). He points out that due to its negative connotations people tend to “transmute” their malicious feelings “into something more acceptable” (2003, p. 238). Further, to accuse another of envy is a common political tactic and this makes “for a degree of conceptual inexactitude: to

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reformulate indignation as envy or vice versa may be to allow some of the attributes of the one to count as attributes of the other” (2003, p. 238). He notes, also, that envy and jealousy are similar in that both contain “an element of ‘begrudging’” which shows that “envy is one aspect of a wider spectrum of attitudes” (2003, p. 238). David Konstan (2006, pp. 111-128) also discusses the relation between envy and other rivalrous emotions.

²² Aristotle, *Rh.* II.9.1387a1, *N.E.* II.8.1108b1-5. For detailed remarks on *epichairekakia* in relation to *phthonos*, see Stevens (1948) and Halliwell (1991).

²³ Aristotle’s discussion of *phthonos* in *Rhetoric* II.10 emphasizes this point. He says “we compete with those who follow the same ends as ourselves: we compete with our rivals in sport or in love, and generally with those who are after the same things; and it is therefore these whom we are bound to envy beyond all others” (1388a12-16 [W. Rhys Roberts (trans.)]). Translations of Aristotle are taken from J. Barnes (1984). Socrates cites Hesiod in this regard in Plato’s *Lysis* 215c-d.

²⁴ See Halliwell (2008). He makes the point that emotional ambivalence is particularly noticeable in the way the young behave toward each other, e.g. it seems playful and fun but this may cover over feelings of envy or resentment.

²⁵ In Greek tragedy, laughing at one’s enemies and the fear of being laughed at by one’s enemies are common motivations for conduct, e.g. Euripides’ *Medea* 380, 404, 797, 1049, 1355, 1362 and *Children of Heracles* 939-40. With regard to divine *nemesis* or *phthonos*, Athena’s punishment of Ajax in Sophocles’ *Ajax* is extremely harsh and Odysseus shows pity rather than malice at the sight of it (120-133). In *Philoctetes*, Philoctetes worries about divine *phthonos* as he hands the bow of Heracles to Neoptolemus (775-778). Benardete (1993, p. 203) calls attention to divine jealousy as “prompted by hubris” in light of the meaning of self-knowledge. In the *Philebus*, the theme of divine *phthonos* or *nemesis* is presented dramatically when Socrates expresses trepidation about the proper way to address the gods and goddesses (12c-d, cf. 28a-b).

²⁶ I wish to thank Scott Aikin for his comments which were insightful and delivered in the fine spirit of comedy.

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