

University of Dayton Review

Volume 16
Number 1 *Proceedings of the 10th Annual
Philosophy Colloquium*

Article 11

December 1982

Happiness and Function in Plato's *Republic*

Richard Mohr
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/udr>

Recommended Citation

Mohr, Richard (1982) "Happiness and Function in Plato's *Republic*," *University of Dayton Review*. Vol. 16:
No. 1, Article 11.
Available at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/udr/vol16/iss1/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Dayton Review by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

HAPPINESS AND FUNCTION IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

by Richard Mohr

The casual reader of the *Republic* may not notice that the primary purpose of the whole dialogue is to discuss happiness rather than virtue; more precisely the purpose is to discuss what consequences various conceptions of justice or manners of life have for our understanding of what happiness is. This purpose is explicitly stated in Book V just prior to the introduction of the philosopher-king at 472c: "Our purpose was, with these models (of justice and injustice) before us, to see how they turned out as regards happiness and its opposite."¹

In this paper I wish to challenge an orthodoxy of Platonic scholarship regarding happiness. The orthodoxy is that in the *Republic* what Plato means by happiness is either psychic harmony or something sufficiently caused by psychic harmony.² Against this view I will argue rather that Plato views happiness as being sufficiently caused by one's fulfilling one's social function, that Plato is viewing happiness as something quite close to what we would call job satisfaction, or a sense of our realizing ourselves through our work. I shall argue (section I) that this view of happiness is stated in the opening two pages of Book IV (419a-421d), and that it is restated in the discussion of pleasure in Book IX (585d-586e). These passages are the only passages in the dialogue where happiness is introduced as a subject of analysis (419a, 576d-e). I will draw some political consequences of Plato's view of happiness (section II) and show how the view bears on the structure and purpose of the dialogue (section III).

I

Plato's analysis of happiness is chiefly to be found in the opening two pages of Book IV (419a-421d). The third Book ends with the guardians leading a Spartan existence, living in barracks and divested of private property (416d-417b). In the first lines of Book IV, Adeimantus, in controlled dismay, asks Socrates how he would answer the charge that he is not making the guardians very happy, and that through their own fault (419a). Socrates, undaunted, claims that there are different kinds of happiness (*toiautēn eudaimonian*, 420d5-6) and different ways of being happy (*toiousō tropō*, 420e6). It turns out that the external goods of power, repute and property (which constituted happiness for Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus) not only are not appropriate to the guardians but also positively corrupt that class (420d). Further it is not even clear that such external goods constitute the happiness of any of the classes (420e).³ However, the corrupting influence of such goods is less extreme in the cases of the lower classes (421a). The point here is that on the model of justice which Socrates is advancing these external goods, which constitute happiness on Glaucon's model of justice as (enlightened) self-interest (358e-359b), are not after all really constitutive of happiness. Socrates calls the equation of happiness with such external goods "a silly and youthful idea of happiness" (466b).

We are not, I suggest, therefore on Socrates' account of happiness looking for the external goods which happen to be appropriate to each class. For we are not looking for external goods at all. Rather we are looking for a different model of

Now the nature of the corruptions wrought by such external goods is that they keep each class from having the sort of role which it properly holds in the composite state (*oute allos oudeis ouden exōn schēma ex hōn polis gignetai*, 421a1-2).⁴ I wish to suggest, though, that Plato goes further than merely claiming that the performance by each person of his role in the state is a necessary condition for his happiness. For while Plato claims that to assure the greatest happiness we must compel (*anagkasteon poiein*) each class to act in such a way that each class will perform its own function or task to the best of its ability (*hoti aristoi dēmiourgoi tou heautōn epgou*, 421c1-2), he also crucially claims that as a result of these conditions obtaining⁵ “we must leave it to nature to provide each class its participation in happiness” (421c4-6, after Grube). I suggest that Plato does not here mean by “nature” something like fate or chance (for which he had a complex vocabulary available), such that the sentence would mean that we ought to perform our functions, come what may, and happiness might or might not come to us. Rather, I suggest that Plato is claiming that happiness just is to be found in the fulfillment of one’s function, or more precisely that happiness supervenes upon the performance of one’s function. The fulfillment of one’s function (which of course takes into account the material conditions of one’s craft [see n. 3]) is a sufficient condition for happiness. By “supervenient property” I mean a consequential but temporally coincidental property. The awkward phrasing “nature provides the participation” is, I suggest, the best Plato can do in the absence of a technical vocabulary for stating what is entailed by supervenience. Just as Plato’s cosmological vocabulary lacks any technical expressions for the metaphysical concepts of universal, individual, or property, so too, I suggest, his ethics lacks any technical expression for the metaphysical concept of supervenient property.⁶

It should be noted that Grube’s rendering of this crucial passage (421c) represents a minority opinion on how it should be translated. With him I take the datives *ekastois tois ethnesin* (421c4-5) as the indirect object of *apodidōsi* (c5) rather than possessively with *physis* (c5). The usual translation of the passage has quite a different effect. Cornford and Shorey, who take the datives possessively, translate our sentence to the effect that it is the nature of each class which provides (determines for ?) (each class) its share of happiness. Thus the sentence bears no metaphysical freight and is simply the claim that each class has some sort of happiness appropriate to it, leaving it a completely open question what that happiness is for each.⁷ For Cornford and Shorey, the different modes of happiness at 420d&e are going to be differences *within* the Socratic model of the well-ordered state rather than differences *between* the kind of happiness afforded by the Socratic model and that afforded by other models. But, as I have suggested, the latter rather than the former view of the differences in modes of happiness is the view advanced in the passage (421a) and so weighs against the usual rendering. Remember that the passage as a whole is claiming that external goods corrupt all classes and constitute the end of happiness for none.

Further the Cornford-Shorey reading makes the argument of the passage unintelligible. For the reading can hardly serve as a *conclusion* drawn from the

claim that we can assure the greatest happiness by compelling each class to perform its own function. For this to be the case, we would have to have already known what types of happiness were appropriate to each class and this is decidedly not the case. If, however, happiness supervenes upon everyone's fulfilling his particular function, we know why the greatest happiness is assured.⁸

It should be noted that if Plato is here (421c) tacitly assuming that happiness is or is caused by psychic harmony, it also remains completely obscure why he claims that by compelling each class to perform its task the greatest happiness can be assured.

The analysis of happiness which I claim is advanced in Book IV (421c) is reproduced specifically in terms of pleasure in the argument about pure pleasure in Book IX (585d-586e). For Plato, *all* pleasures are supervenient properties: impure pleasures supervene on actions of (bodily) repletions (583c-e, 584d-585a & see esp. *Timaeus* 64a-65a) and pure pleasures supervene upon activities which do not involve depletions and repletions (586a-b).⁹ The *activities* upon which pure pleasures supervene are those which *everyone* performs when participating in the real things (namely, Ideas, 585c) which are appropriate to each (585d11). Two points are especially noteworthy here.

First, it is upon *activities* rather than upon states or conditions that pure pleasures supervene. Plato is quite explicit that "calmness of the soul" and the absence of activity are not the loci of pure pleasure, though they may appear to be so, when compared to the motions of depletion, which produce pain (584a).

Second, the analysis of pure pleasures at 585c-e is wholly general with regard to who it is who has pure pleasures. "Participation" here (585d3, e2) does not mean "contemplate" but means "correctly instantiate." *All* classes, not just the philosopher-guardians, have access to these pure pleasures (586c-d). With this metaphysical equipment in tow, Plato concludes "each part will be able to fulfill its own task...and especially (*kai dē kai*) will reap its own (pure) pleasures" (586e5-587a1, cf. *Philebus* 63e). Stated in terms of the metaphysics of the central Books, if one participates properly in the Idea of which one is an instance, then one also participates in the Idea of happiness, in much the same way that an instance of fire will bring with it an instance of heat (cf. *Phaedo* 103d-e, 104e-105a). One properly partakes in the Idea appropriate to one's own class by fulfilling one's function. So it turns out that happiness for Plato is a kind of pure pleasure that supervenes upon the proper working out of a function.

Note that the discussion of pure pleasures seems to rule out the view that Plato is claiming psychic harmony as sufficient for pleasure or happiness. Plato does claim that internal dissension (*stasiāzousēs*, 586e5) cannot be present in the soul, if it is to experience pure pleasures. But lack of dissension is a far cry from positive integration into a harmony. Dissension must be absent so that *each part* can fulfill its function. But it is to parts *severally* not collectively (*hekaston*), as each fulfilling its function, that pure pleasures are said to accrue (586e5-587a1). So lack of dissension does not have to entail psychic harmony here. Moreover, it does not do so, since harmony is a condition of parts collectively and the pure pleasures supervene upon the parts of the soul severally. Lack of internal dissension then is a necessary condition for the pure pleasures,

function fulfillment is a sufficient condition for pure pleasures, and psychic harmony is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for pure pleasure. Moreover, by explicitly claiming that pleasure and happiness supervene upon activities rather than upon states or conditions Plato seems to be ruling out the possibility that harmony is even a candidate to be considered as a host for pleasure, since for a harmony to be the basis of the activity of tune-playing, it must itself not be an activity but rather must be a stable structure, state or condition. The only change of which a harmony is a party is its own coming into being and perishing (the instrument going out of tune), but a harmony *qua* harmony is unchanging and so not a subject for happiness and pleasure.

II

The view that happiness is the kind of pure pleasure which supervenes upon the fulfilling of our functions is meant as an analysis or real definition, but it is also meant to have a prescriptive force. It is meant to be taken as an exhortation for us to examine our lives to see whether in moments of self-candor we indeed are happiest when we do our work well, whether our sense of our self-realization through our work is not generally grossly underrated in our ranking of rational preferences, crowded out of its rightful position by the clutter of external goods and pleasures of repletion.

It would seem though that not just any function will do to produce happiness even if the person assigned to the task is capable of completing it. This goes somewhat beyond Plato; the problem of roles being satisfying does not really arise for Plato, for he believes not only that our needs are from nature (369b-d) but also, mistakenly; that the functions which fulfill these needs are also given from nature, and so, we are to suppose, satisfying in their fulfillment (370a-b). Note that Glaucon's objection to the city of pigs is in terms of goods and services provided and not in terms of the possible drudgery of certain functions (372d-e). In our own age, largely through the wedding of technology and libertarian ideology, most practical and productive arts have been rendered unsatisfying. Tom Hartman screwing in a courtesy light every thirty seconds on an auto assembly line, despite the fact that he is doing a job and is compensated for it, is not happy, for the job itself is not potentially satisfying. Whatever other boons and banes technology may entail, I suggest, it will always be misguided when its claim of increased efficiency is the claim that it liberates us to or gives us time to do more important things. Technology is not the only culprit. Societal attitudes have a great deal to do with determining whether one is satisfied in one's work. Many domestic and menial jobs have been rendered unsatisfying by societal attitude, even though it is not at all clear that they are not in themselves potentially satisfying.

Is Plato committed to the false claim that doing just any job is going to be conducive to happiness? It seems so, for as I have pointed out he is committed to the equally false view that functions are given from nature. But I think we can help him out. Note that at the end of the first Book functions are not merely fulfilled to assure a good life, but they must be fulfilled *well* to assure living well (353b-c.e). Now it is an aesthetic principle of mine that a bad play cannot be performed well. One cannot act well a bad role. There has never been a good perfor-

Mohr: Happiness and Function in Plato's *Republic*
 mance of Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* or Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus*. For these breakback affairs are incapable of coherent interpretation and so directors and performers must perforce stand over and against them incapable of giving a coherent execution of the works. Similarly, I suggest that a function which is not potentially satisfying cannot be performed well. When a job is not potentially satisfying and the worker stands over and against it, he is incapable of giving it a satisfactory execution, even when the task is simple. Some industries are gradually discovering that the unsatisfied worker is an unsatisfactory worker. To fulfill one's function and so to be happy then entails that the function shall be potentially satisfying. Plato gets this entailment simply and unsatisfactorily by definition. He claims that a function is by definition that which an instrument does uniquely or *does best* (352e) so that if one is not doing one's function well, one is not doing one's function *at all*. And so, since fulfilling one's function is productive of happiness, all functions are for Plato potentially satisfying. While Plato's stipulative definition does capture the reality of natural instruments (like eyes) and artificial instruments (like pruning shears), it fails miserably with people viewed as instruments,¹⁰ since it is not clear until we are *assigned* a function in the workings of society what our functions are and whether they are tasks which we do best. And so we may very well be doing a job and yet not doing it well when we do it. However, since social functions need to be created in such a way that they are satisfying and integrated in such a way that societal needs are fulfilled, Plato is warranted in viewing statesmanship as a craft, much more so than if there indeed were a natural division of labor.

III

The view of happiness as a supervenient property helps in unravelling the project and structure of the main sequence of Books in the *Republic* (II-IV, VIII-IX). At the start of Book II Socrates is required to show that justice is good in every sense, and two senses of good are distinguished. Some things are desired for the after-effects which arise from them (variously: *tōn apobainontōn ap'autōn*, 367c6, 357b5-6; *ta gignomena ap'autōn* 358a2,b6). Call these A-goods. Other goods are welcomed on account of or in virtue of themselves (*hautou heneka*; *charin*, 357b6,c1). Call these B-goods.

The critical tradition has usually taken A-goods as having their value reside in their being instrumental to something else which is an obvious good. They are good in that they *produce* something which is good as an end. B-goods are traditionally taken as goods which are good without regard to any consequences they have. Their good is both ultimate and inherent; they are not good because they are productive of anything. Thus, Plato's distinction of goods is usually construed as a distinction, drawn along modern lines, between deontological goodness and consequential or utilitarian goodness. B-goods are viewed either under a Kantian gloss as those acts which one would perform out of a sense of duty or moral obligation without regard to benefits which might accrue to oneself or others (*Annas*)¹¹ or more neutrally as constituents or components of whatever is taken to be good (Irwin).¹² When the two kinds of goods are taken in this way, Socrates' project is then to show that one ought to be moral or just where the "ought" is construed as a moral ought. Socrates admittedly

never fulfills this (probably impossible) task and the *Republic* has therefore sometimes been accused of failing *even on its own terms*.

I suggest though that the traditional interpretation of the distinction of kinds of goods is mistaken. Both classes of goods are good as being *productive* of certain desired or welcomed conditions. Even B-goods are called “powers” (358b5)¹³ and are activities (*ti dra* 366e6) which have products (*gonima* 367d2) in which their value resides. The distinction that Plato is drawing is between things which a just act will produce “just on its own” (*auto kath’hauto*, 358b5), “on account of or in consequence of itself” (*dia* + acc., causal, 367b4,e3) or “by means of its own nature” (*tē hautōn phusei*, 367d2). B-goods then are good in that they in isolation are productive of conditions of value. A-goods are good in that they produce conditions of value as the result of their conjunction with something else extrinsic to the acts themselves. This interpretation of the distinction explains Plato’s choice of examples. Examples of B-goods are things joyful and pleasant. Plato is obviously not claiming that to perform joyous and pleasant acts is a moral obligation or duty independent of any benefit which accrues to the agent or others. Examples of A-goods which are not also B-goods are physical training and undergoing surgery. Plato is not claiming these acts are immoral, but only that just by themselves they are unpleasant, painful and are desired only as the result of their relations to other things external to the acts themselves. Knowledge, sight, and health, are both A-goods and B-goods in that they are useful and also in that the actions which make them up are pleasant to perform just by themselves. Plato is not claiming here that these mixed goods have some intrinsic, possibly aesthetic merit which makes them good in themselves. Indeed Plato in his distinction of goods is simply making the distinction which Aristotle makes in the first lines of the *Metaphysics*: “All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness, they are loved for themselves” (980a 21-23). Note that delight, though a supervenient or consequential property of the senses, is given as a *reason* why the senses on which it supervenes are good in themselves independently of their useful consequences. If I enjoy viewing, say, Picasso’s *Guernica* because it is a delight to view, my viewing the picture counts for Plato and Aristotle as being good in itself; but if as a result of viewing the painting, I should be inspired to become a political pacifist and subsequently win the Nobel Peace Prize, then viewing the picture will also count as being good for its consequences.

I suggest then that when Plato uses “good in itself” he means “productive by itself of a valued condition” and that by “good for its consequences” Plato means “productive of a valued condition as a result of some relation the action holds to some external concern, person, thing, action, or condition.” Such A-goods in particular are going to be productive of things like wealth, fame, and power, as it is these desired products which actions produce as a result of their external relations. Nicholas White states the distinction correctly when he writes: “Briefly put, it comes to the distinction between saying that justice is welcomed for what results solely from *it*, apart from any surrounding circumstances, and that it is welcomed because of what results from it in conjunction with surrounding circumstances.”¹⁴

The formal plan of the *Republic* offers decisive evidence that this in fact is the

distinction Plato is drawing in his division of goods. For the question of whether justice is good for its consequences is only formally raised in Book X (612a-614a). Here Socrates claims (naively no doubt) that in fact, in the long run, all sorts of A-goods like fame, prizes, rewards, gifts, and power come to the just man but slip through the hands of the tyrant. These goods come to the just man in addition to those which justice itself provides to the just man, namely B-goods (614a1-2). This means though that heretofore in the *Republic* the discussion of justice has been conducted entirely in terms of justice being good in itself. And this discussion specifically includes the assignment of pleasure and happiness to the just man (Book IX). It is these desired conditions which attach to justice independently of the relations of just acts to anything outside themselves which are the other goods which justice provides to the just man and which make his actions good in themselves.

With this distinction of goods correctly understood, it is not difficult to see that Plato does accomplish what he sets out to do in the *Republic*. By having happiness and pure pleasure supervene upon just actions — each person's fulfilling his social function — Plato is able to explain why we would choose to be just, even if justice is isolated from external relations which produce wealth, repute and power. Thus in the requisite sense, Plato establishes justice as good in itself.

The correct understanding of the distinction of goods helps clarify the closing pages of Book IV (442eff). Notice that what it is about justice that makes it good in itself is not mentioned in the closing pages of Book IV. Rather these pages presuppose this as already having been established for justice. I suggest that this was established in the opening pages of Book IV as happiness. The closing pages of Book IV claim that happiness stands to justice as what is desirable about health, beauty, and vigor (*euexia*) stand, to health, beauty and vigor *not* in the respect that the former all supervene on the latter as the result of a positive integration or harmony of parts in the latter, but *in the respect* that happiness and that which is valued in health and beauty do not require that that on which they supervene be related to any external object, event or person. The closing pages of Book IV do not explicitly state or implicitly presuppose that happiness is or supervenes upon psychic harmony.

Further the comparison of justice to beauty, health and vigor is not to be construed as claiming that justice has some intrinsic value for the just man without reference to the man's happiness (contra Annas, pp. 153-169, esp. 168-9), where "intrinsic value" is construed as something like an objective aesthetic value (Annas suggests "spiritual value", p. 169) in the way that we might say that a world which consisted only of Henry Moore sculptures is a better world than one which consisted only of dirt clods, or that a world which consists of stably functioning physical states is better than a world of chaos. Assigning this sort of value to justice is not the point of Plato's comparison of justice to health, beauty and vigor. Rather the relevant point of comparison is that the healthy and vigorous individual has a positive sense of well-being — "the glow of health" — which his healthy, athletic condition produces and which is missed by diseased and infirmed individuals. The relevant point of comparison to

beauty is simply that beauty produces delight.

If justice is being viewed as good in itself because it in isolation produces conditions of value, then this conception of justice easily refutes Glaucon's three arguments which attempt to show that justice is in itself wearisome and is good only for its consequences. For, 1) Glaucon's conception of the origin of cities views justice as producing external rewards arising from relations of the just person to others (358e-359b), 2) he claims justice is never willingly chosen, but that one is just only because of external restraints (359b-360d) and 3) he claims one is just only for the sake of repute, which is again a good which accrues to the just man from his external relations (360e-361d). If justice is welcomed for some result which it by itself produces, all three charges that justice is good only for its consequences collapse.¹⁵

One of the standard criticisms of the *Republic* is that its view of justice is effete; the just state turns out to be ever so much like an art object, better accommodating aesthetic judgments than ethical ones. The philosopher of the starry cloudless night has, it is claimed, completely failed to incorporate human happiness into his state.¹⁶ If my interpretation of the relation between justice and happiness is correct, Plato might reasonably claim that these charges are very far from, at least, his intentions. There is nothing particularly effete or aesthetic about Plato's grounding both justice and happiness in the work place, justice by defining it as doing one's job and happiness by viewing it as a consequence of doing one's job well. Insofar as happiness is being viewed as super-vening upon justice, Plato is not trying to make us forget about human happiness but is trying to lead us towards it. And indeed since all members of the state have functions, happiness is equally possible for all.

Plato's errors with regard to happiness lie in another direction. In correctly showing the primacy of job satisfaction over external goods in the constitution of happiness, Plato needlessly denigrates sensuous pleasures as a separate source of happiness. I think Plato is clearly mistaken in his views 1) that sensuous pleasures are a) *prima facie* evil (558d-e, cf. 429c-430a), b) in themselves necessarily unsatisfying (578a, 586a) and c) to be rehabilitated and tolerated only as necessary material conditions for the operations of our various functions (559a-c), 2) that our appetites are insatiable (442a, 555b, 562b, 586b, 590b, 604d), always disruptive (577c-e, 579c-e cf. *Philebus* 63d-e) and, as a result, positively evil, 3) that the lowest part of the soul has no positive contributions to make to psychodynamics, but is best simply and totally repressed (442a-d, 589c-d; cf. *Phaedrus* 254b-e), 4) that we have no needs for sensuous pleasures which do not subserve some further end, and 5) that recreational sex is vulgar and in bad taste (403b-c, cf. *Philebus* 65e-66a). These errors of perception, taste, analysis and judgment, serious as they are, nevertheless, do not make false Plato's major claim about happiness, namely, that it is to be found in job satisfaction rather than external goods. They do show, though, that fulfilling our social functions does not constitute the whole of happiness, and they draw into doubt whether social function is even the ordering principle of that whole. It is my feeling that it is very likely that there is no such structuring principle to be found, that our job satisfactions and our sensuous pleasures, while both choice-worthy,

are different in kind and largely incommensurable.

Department of Philosophy and
Center for Advanced Study
The University of Illinois - Urbana

NOTES

¹For foreshadows and echoes of this purpose see 344e, 420b-c, 427d, 544a, 545a-b, 578c, and 580a-b.

²For a recent statement of the orthodox view, see Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 315-6.

³Now, the members of the lowest class in the Republic are called wage-earners (371e), and all of the non-guardian classes are allowed to possess money and property (417a). But it is nowhere suggested that such possessions constitute the ends of happiness for these classes. Rather such possessions are material sine qua non of the various crafts that make up the state (421d-422a). See Book VIII, 559a-c, where nutritious food, procreational sex, and money are treated respectively as necessary material conditions for life, civilization (cf. *Laws* VIII, 837c, 841d-e), and doing good work (561a). The pleasures attendant to such possessions then, though parts of the ends of happiness, are so only as instrumental to acquiring the materials of one's craft. On necessary pleasures see also *Philebus* 62e-64a, where such pleasures are called useful and not harmful.

⁴Herein lies the explanation of the extended metaphor of the painted statue (420c-d). The point of the metaphor is not that there is some external good which is appropriate to each class and which constitutes the happiness of the class, but rather that external goods tend to corrupt classes and keep them from the functions by which they are defined. The discussion of the corrupting influences of the unnecessary pleasures in Book VIII is mainly just an elaboration of this earlier point (558d-561d).

⁵*Houtō*, plus genitive absolute quasi-causal, 421c3-4.

⁶By the time Plato wrote the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*, he had reconstructed the term *hepōmai* to mean supervene; in the *Republic* the term still retains the military double sense of obeying and following after. Contrast the three uses of *hepōmai* in the discussion of pure pleasures in Book IX (586d6, e1,4) with the uses describing pleasures in the *Philebus* at 51d9, 54e8, 63e8 (hopadoi, e6), 66c6, and *Timaeus* 64a5.

⁷I do not wish to deny that the point Shorey and Cornford's rendering entails is a point Plato believes in. It is true that there is a different kind of happiness for each class insofar as their tasks are all different. We are told for instance that each class has a different object of desire and different kind of pleasure (IX, 580d-583a). I wish only to deny that this view of kinds of happiness is the view expressed at 421c.

⁸Nicholas White, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979), pp. 107-108, has suggested that the argument of the passage can be salvaged on the traditional interpretation if we view the Platonic city as an "organic whole" which experiences happiness. This recurrent suggestion in Platonic scholarship that the Platonic *polis* can be viewed as a super-individual capable of experiencing things like happiness has been demolished by Gregory Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice in the *Polis* in Plato's

Republic,” *Interpretations of Plato*, Helen North (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 1977) = *Mnemosyne* supp. vol. 50 (1977), 13-18.

⁹There are for Plato three species of pure pleasures: 1) the pure pleasures that supervene upon the activity of contemplating the really real; 2) the pleasures that supervene upon proper functioning or upon virtuous action in general; and 3) the pleasures that supervene upon a small range of sensuous experiences like smelling. These three classes are articulated in the *Republic* at 584a-586e and in the *Philebus*, respectively, at 66c, 63e-64a, and 51b. In neither dialogue, though, does Plato say what the three classes positively have in common. He ranks them together only insofar as they do not involve depletions and repletions. Plato therefore leaves the three classes completely incommensurable. Since this incommensurability is left standing, it is not clear that the philosopher forced to return to the cave really is sacrificing interest for duty (519c ff). The pure pleasure attendant to his fulfilling the function of statesman could be viewed as compensating for his losses of pleasures of contemplation. I take it that 519c is cynical in tone.

¹⁰We do not have natural aptitudes that are specific enough to be counted as functions. Though we may have vague general aptitudes of strength or intelligence (incidentally, Plato’s only evidence for a natural division of labor, 371c-e), we have nowhere near the degree of determinacy of, say, the eye to do a specific task.

¹¹Annas, p. 61.

¹²T. Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), pp. 184, 188-9.

¹³“What effect it has upon the soul” (Grube) and similar translations which make it look like justice has the soul as the object of its crafting or activities, such that we are asked to evaluate the results of this activity or craft, are seriously misleading translations of *tina exei dunamin auto kath’auto enon en tē psuchē* (358b5-6), which is literally translated as “what power/effect it has, when it is present by itself in the soul” (similarly at 366e6). The soul is not the *object* of justice’s effects. The sentence simply invites us to evaluate justice in isolation from its surroundings. The power which justice is is not a mere potentiality; it is an actual doing (*tē hautou dunamei ti dra* 366e5-6).

¹⁴White, p. 29.

¹⁵It is only in this global way that Glaucon’s objections are countered. Plato has no answer to the specific charge that the just man on the rack is unhappy (361e-362a). Plato does not claim, for instance, that the just man on the rack is nonetheless happy because he has psychic harmony and stoical perseverance. Indeed in both the *Republic* (584a) and *Philebus* (43d ff.) Plato denies the proto-stoical assertion that there is pleasure to be had simply from the avoidance of or the failure to register mentally physical pains. Rather when finally in Book X Plato gets around to showing that justice is good for its consequences, he claims that in fact it is the unjust man rather than the just who ends up upon the rack (613e).

¹⁶See for example White, pp. 58-60.