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THE AFFECTS OF PLEASURE AND DISPLEASURE IN PLATO'S *PHILEBUS* REGARDING SPINOZA

Abstract

The aim of this research is to show how, from his dialogue *Philebus*, Plato's understanding of pleasure and displeasure is connected with Spinoza's theory of affects. Both thinkers understand that the affect of pleasure is related to value judgments and the character of a person. I argue that Plato and Spinoza equally state that there is a difference in individuals' choices of pleasurable objects, depending on the definition and determination of the good and the ideal of individuals, and thus also depending on the cause of pleasure. Both philosophers agree that the pleasure of a reasonable, wise person is different from the pleasure of an unreasonable one, since their judgment of good and bad is different too. I conclude that Plato's and Spinoza's image of a reasonable person coincide in the context of the affects of pleasure and displeasure because it is a holistic image of a person who experiences affects only in accordance with his nature or essence.

Keywords: pleasure; displeasure; judgment; opinion; theory of affects; Plato; Spinoza; cause; nature

DIE AFFEKTE VON LUST UND UNLUST IN PLATONS *PHILEBUS* IN BEZUG ZU SPINOZA

Zusammenfassung

Ziel dieser Untersuchung ist es zu zeigen, wie Platons Verständnis von Lust und Unlust in seinem Dialog *Philebus* mit Spinozas Theorie der Affekte zusammenhängt. Beide Denker verstehen den Affekt der Lust in Relation zu Werturteilen und dem Charakter einer Person. Ich behaupte, dass Platon und Spinoza gleichermaßen feststellen, dass die Wahl des Individuums für lustvolle Objekte von der Definition und

Bestimmung des Guten und des Ideals des Individuums selbst abhängt, und somit auch von der Ursache der Lust. Beide Philosophen stimmen darin überein, dass sich das Vergnügen eines vernünftigen Menschen von dem eines unvernünftigen unterscheidet, da auch ihr Urteil über Gut und Böse jeweils unterschiedlich ist. Ich schließe, dass Platons und Spinozas Bild eines vernünftigen Menschen im Zusammenhang mit den Affekten der Lust und des Unlustempfindens übereinstimmt, weil es hierbei um ein ganzheitliches Bild vom Menschen geht, der Affekte nur entsprechend seiner Natur oder seines Wesens erlebt.

Schlüsselwörter: Lust; Unlust; Urteil; Meinung; Affektenlehre; Platon; Spinoza; Ursache; Natur

The possible influence of Plato's philosophy and Platonism on Spinoza's thought is, for many reasons, questionable and a complex area of research. One of the initial problems lies in the attempt to reconstruct Spinoza's home library. This task is difficult, still unfinished, and Spinoza's society, which has been trying to find an inventory of the philosopher's books since its foundation, was mainly devoted to it. Since Spinoza's property and small library were sold at a public auction shortly after his death, original books were difficult to find at the very beginning of the library's reconstruction. From some lists, we can certainly know that Spinoza owned works by Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, Augustine, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas, Judas Abravanel, Thomas More, but the list is probably not complete. Surely Spinoza could have had access to other books and authors in different ways, borrowing from friends or private libraries, and this, of course, leaves room for platonic influence on his ideas. Several authors successfully consider this issue and offer arguments for the very high probability of platonic influence on Spinoza through his education and knowledge of authors such as Proclus, Augustine, Aquinas, some scholastics, Stoics and Neo-Stoics, and Platonists such as A. C. Herrera and J. Abravanel (M. E. Zovko 2014, 140-171, Sears 1952, 215).

Although he wrote about pleasure elsewhere (*Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Phaedo*), in *Philebus*, Plato extensively devotes the entire conversation to the question of affects such as pleasures, their types, the possible hierarchy of pleasure and its relationship to knowledge and the concept of good. At the very beginning of the dialogue, Protarchus and Socrates both accept that there are many different affects of pleasure (*Philebus* 14a5-7) but they cannot agree on their possible division into true (pure), and false.

Socrates claims that pleasures can be false and true in some sense. Protarchus opposes this by stating that pleasure consists only of pleasantness and nothing more. Plato, through Socrates in the dialogue, states that just as we can have false judgments or assessments, we can also experience false pleasures. Just as our judgments are always judgments about something, so also are our affects of pleasure always caused by something (some object, event, person, memory...). So, when we feel pleasure, we always feel that way in regard to surrounding conditions, our affect has its cause. Plato proposes that, just as we can have a false judgment, we can also experience a false pleasure. It is possible, Socrates' interlocutor admits, that pleasure can be caused by a false judgment, but it cannot be false itself (*Philebus* 38a-b). For him, pleasure is just pleasant without assignment of truth or falsity and thus contrasts with Plato's view of affect. It is important to recognize where the separation lies. It lies in the very clear connection of the affect with its cause. According to Protarchus, the cause of pleasure or displeasure cannot influence the determination of the affect as true or false. Even if some false judgment is the cause or source of pleasure, this cannot be the reason for the statement about the affect and its falsity. Plato, on the other hand, believes that if the so-called intentional object of the affect is some wrong judgment, then the affect itself is false. In stating this, Plato is not claiming that the cause is false in the direct sense of the word. The cause cannot be false, it is what it is. But our judgment of the cause as one which will certainly produce pleasure in us may be correct or incorrect. The analogy of judgments and affect of pleasure is very useful in interpreting *Philebus* and in understanding Plato's conclusions in this dialogue. It is clear that the faculty of judgment is central to the experience of pleasure, meaning judgments (as causes of affects) can influence and shape that experience. This faculty is also in the connection with moral values and virtues – we question and judge what a virtue is and our judgment is reciprocally formed following our definitions of virtues and ideals. The role of judgment is crucial further on in the text of *Philebus*.

The question of the intrinsic and instrumental value of pleasure and displeasure is certainly a question of the context in which these affects arise. If the context and consequences related to the affects of pleasure/displeasure were ignored, one affect of pleasure would not be significantly different from another one. They would have a quality of (un)pleasantness, but it could not be more precisely defined or qualified. It seems that experientially we can still distinguish one pleasant affect from another. Therefore, in this sense, it is necessary to examine the bond of value judgments with

the aforementioned affects. Is there any additional component to pleasure besides the pleasantness itself? This question is the distinctive question between Protarch's and Socrates' viewpoints. The assumptions that are made in *Philebus* are: is there an influence of moral judgments and knowledge on the affects of pleasure and displeasure, and if there is, how is it reflected, and can it transform our idea and concept of these affects. If it is possible to prove that pleasures are false on the account of false judgments or opinions as their causes, then false pleasures cannot be a part of a wise man's good life.

For Plato, the importance of the context and the situation in which a person feels pleasure are undeniable, especially in this dialogue. As M. Erler states, unlike in some of Plato's other earlier dialogues, in *Philebus* affects are discussed from a new perspective: "The cause and content of the affects become criteria for a differentiated evaluation of affects." (Erler 2010, p. 152). The context and condition in which the pleasure appears will determine our interpretation of the affect itself, through the analysis of the person who feels (1) and the consequences of the feeling, that is, the reflection of that affect on the outside world (2) through the actions and emotional bodily states and changes the affected person undergoes.

"For Plato, to divorce any feeling from its context is an abstraction. Every fear, pleasure, or pain occurs in a context, and this context cannot be disregarded in evaluating the feeling. And evaluating feelings is the whole point of Plato's discussion in this part of the dialogue." (McLaughlin 1969, p. 58).

Concerning the division of false pleasures, there are three kinds in *Philebus*. The first kind of false pleasures are those pleasures described earlier – the ones that arise or are accompanied by false judgments and false beliefs. These pleasures are also tied to the affects of displeasure and pain because it is exactly the fulfillment of the deficiency that brings about the feeling of contentment (*Philebus* 31d3 – e). Pleasure is the psycho-physical harmony of the organism (Garner 2017, p.77). What connects Plato's and Spinoza's thoughts in regard to the concept of pleasure is already noticeable in the description of the first kind of false pleasures in *Philebus*. The link and similarity between Plato and Spinoza are the position and the role of the soul in pleasure. Not only is the importance of the soul in the experience of pleasure common both to Plato and Spinoza, but additionally the concept of the natural state of being or its true nature is too. Plato writes the following about the origin of pleasure and displeasure:

"I say that when the harmony in animals is dissolved, there is also a dissolution of nature and a generation of pain (...) And the restoration of harmony and return to nature is the source of pleasure..." (*Philebus* 31d3 – 8).

A change in the natural harmony in a person causes pleasure or displeasure. However, pleasure and displeasure are not the same as the dissolution of harmony (disharmony) and its restoration (harmony). They are more than just that. According to Plato, these affects must also include an awareness of bodily changes or states - "perception of the soul" (*Philebus* 33d). The awareness of affect is precisely that element that connects the sensibility of the body with the knowledge of that sensation, i.e. in Plato's words, the soul. A great similarity with this description is also found in Spinoza's definition of the same affects in *Ethics*:

"We thus see that the mind (*mens*) can suffer great changes, and can pass now to a greater and now to a lesser perfection (*perfectio*); these passive states (*passiones*) explaining to us the emotions (*affectiones*) of joy and sorrow. By 'joy', therefore, in what follows, I shall understand the passive states through which the mind passes to a greater perfection; by 'sorrow', on the other hand, the passive states through which the mind passes to a less perfection. The emotion of joy, related at the same time both to the mind and the body, I call 'pleasurable excitement' (*titillatio*) or 'cheerfulness; that of sorrow I call 'pain' or 'melancholy'." (Spinoza, EIIIP11S).

Although we can question the congruence of the concepts *mens* in Spinoza and *psyche* in Plato, since it is debatable in what way mind and body exist in one substance in Spinoza's ontology, and how soul and body function in Plato's philosophy, for the moment it is only permissible to state that the domain of mind and soul is somehow different than the domain of the body. Also, the mind and the soul possess ideas or thoughts which point to mind/soul activity. The activity of the mind and the soul depends on the affections and perceptions of senses, but some universal ideas in them are not directly attached to any state of the body. Plato's account of passive and active states of being concurs with Spinoza's in the sense that they manifest themselves as affects of joy and sorrow. Joy and sorrow are emotional indicators of the soul's awareness of the passivity of the body. It is strange to claim that joy and pleasure demonstrate our passivity because usually we look at these affects as positive. But, as stated earlier in comments from *Philebus*, there are false pleasures and they point to:

“being emptied and replenished, and of all that relates to the preservation and destruction of living beings, as well as of the pain which is felt in one of these states and of the pleasure which succeeds to it.” (*Philebus* 35e1 – 4).

For Plato, pleasures are false in this case because they are fulfillments of some deficiency or lack in the body. When there is some emptiness in the body, a being experiences pain or displeasure. Whenever the pleasure is connected to the displeasure, Plato states that it cannot be pure.

The concept of perfection, that is, a greater or lesser approximation to it, can be compared to Plato’s understanding of the harmony of being as explained in the *Philebus*. Any disruption of such harmony results in displeasure, while the return to a harmonious state is reflected in pleasure. In all of this, the awareness of the soul and the transition of the mind to greater or lesser perfection is an indisputably essential part of the affects. Ideas about these changes emerge in the mind/soul, and even more, according to Plato and Spinoza, we wouldn’t even feel pleasure or pain in most cases if the intellectual part of ourselves is not aware or conscious of them. This concept of possession of the ideas in the mind seems like Plato’s term soul awareness. Body and soul are, in some sense, united through the emotional experience. Spinoza states that in this affective state, ideas of the mind always appear and he goes even further, claiming that emotions are:

“the modifications of the body by which the power of acting of the body itself is increased, diminished, helped, or hindered, together with the idea of these modifications.” (Spinoza, EIII D3).

Indeed, Spinoza affirms that the mind knows the outside world through the ideas of its bodily changes (Spinoza, EIIP23) and that knowledge is of a first kind. Although it is false or inadequate knowledge, it is still the inevitable and necessary level of cognition. Besides perceiving the modifications of the body as ideas of these states, the mind has also ideas of ideas of these modifications, that is, ideas of ideas. This is parallel to Plato’s *soul awareness*. Whether or not there is a difference between Spinoza’s and Plato’s views on ideas is a question of the interpretation of Spinoza’s epistemology and ontology and Plato’s theory of ideas. However, the interpretation of Plato’s theory of ideas as universal, as unchangeable, and as the origin of particular things can be taken into account with Spinoza’s description of the nature of the mind. This link opens itself in viewing ideas as a display of truth, or that which is permanent and in contrast with the flux of sensible things and their affections on the body. As Spinoza says, it is the true nature

of reason to consider things not as contingent but necessary (EIIP54) and under a certain form of eternity (EIIP54C2). This inquiry is not the topic of the paper directly, but it is worth mentioning the similarity between Spinoza and Plato, and as stated earlier, the possible platonic influence on Spinoza in this sense too.

After an explanation of the first kind of false pleasures, Plato continues to explore the possibility of other kinds. The second kind of false or mixed pleasures are, contrary to the first kind, in a way disconnected from the body. This separation from the body is not entirely a separation from past perceptions of bodily states. It is the seclusion from the 'present' influence of the body, that is, from experience in the present moment. The soul experiences pleasure exclusively by itself. These pleasures are independent of the body and its present changes. How do these pleasures then occur? The soul reflects upon past changes in the harmony of the body. J. Garner calls this occurrence "memorial access" of the soul:

"...the idea that soul can access and experience the psycho-bodily kind of fulfillment as anticipated, regardless of whether the fulfillment (i.e., the bodily motion) is now occurring for the body." (Garner, p. 87).

This reflection of the soul on past experiences which can bring about pleasures and displeasures can simply be described as the faculty of memory or preservation of consciousness. The soul's memory of the events can evoke hope (anticipatory enjoyment), disappointment, or even fear in the person's present state. At their core, these feelings are pleasure or displeasure. Gadamer quite successfully illustrates the second kind of pleasure with an everyday example:

"If one sits down to a meal hungry, one does not simultaneously suffer from hunger and look forward to the meal; rather, one has a *pleasant* hunger. But the same bodily state of hunger can also have the character of displeasure if one knows that there is nothing to eat, so that, instead of being absorbed in one's being toward what one desires, one is abandoned to the present pain of the hunger. So in both cases the hunger, as pain or pleasure, is not simply defined as the sensation of something present, of a bodily state, but is determined by a being toward something that is not present: toward a meal." (Gadamer 1991, 157-158).

Not only can a human being put their present bodily state in the background and somehow ignore it by focusing on anticipation and future events, but they can also change the affective experience of the same bodily

change. For example, hunger can be both pleasurable and unpleasurable, as Gadamer shows.

In *Philebus* 36b-c, Plato begins investigating the second kind of pleasure by showing how these states are false. He starts, as Gadamer does, by introducing the affect of hope as an example of the second kind of pleasure. Hope is a complex affect: at the same moment when the body suffers in its present condition, the soul hopes for a change and future improvement so it can rejoice and feel pleasure. Opposite to this, if one loses hope, this unpleasant state redoubles. Hope is an example of the second kind of pleasure or anticipatory feeling. According to Plato, this hopeful pleasure is false since it is a 'mixture', it consists of unpleasant 'emptiness' or pain and anticipatory pleasure.

In the catalog of affects, Spinoza also places hope on the side of passive affects, meaning hope is not a consequence or a mirror of the mind or body's activity. It is also a passion because its cause is impermanent – it is only a possibility of some future outcome, not the reality, it may or may not happen. What we can detect as similar in defining hope as a false pleasure, both in Plato and Spinoza, is the agreement that hope is a mixed pleasure. "There is no hope without fear" (EIII DA15 Exp.), also "anticipatory pleasures and pains have to do with the future" (*Philebus*, 39d1 – 4).

Davidson, in his book *Plato's Philebus*, makes interesting comments about anticipatory pleasures and pains by stating that the desire that a person feels cannot be discovered in a present bodily passion of emptiness, but "in the soul, through the action of memory (35b)" (Davidson 2012, p. 344). This is quite a remark on the body and soul's complex cooperation in which a joyous desire in the feeling of hope is related to the bodily needs in the present moment but actually uses as its source something non-bodily at all, ideas of past pleasurable fulfilments, i.e. emotional memory.

Let us return now to the presumption from the beginning of the article: false pleasures are false on account of their causes, and their causes are false judgments or false beliefs. Davidson makes this presumption sort of a conclusion, claiming that:

"...reality does not correspond to our opinion. Now, if a pleasure depends on such a false opinion, we may say that the pleasure does not correspond to reality in the sense that if we had a true opinion (i.e. if we knew the thing did not exist) we would have no pleasure." (Davidson 2012, p. 349).

This quote is a part of Davidson's interpretation of the term *opinion*, in this case, a false opinion, which he extensively elaborates on. The concept of opinion or kind of hypothetical judgment has more in common with emotion than we would normally assume (Davidson 2012, p. 353). Statements can exist independent of the subject's belief or opinion, they can be said, written down, or even non-verbally expressed without being attached to feelings. As soon as a person forms an opinion, Davidson affirms there is always an emotion connected to it. Our desire to know the future outcome moves us to shape opinions. Our present state of expectation is unsustainable in the sense that it is usually unpleasant. Hence, the cause of our hasty tendency to form opinions about the future is tied to our feelings of displeasure (e.g. fear), or even feelings of pleasure (e.g. hope, curiosity), and because of that it often does not correspond to reality. The problem lies in our incapacity to withhold our opinion for a while until future events unfold. We want answers and solutions in the present moment, even though it is about the future, really. This does not mean that we can never assume or predict; our faculty of memory is not always misleading, the point is to be aware of its inconstancy because the preservation of (conscious) sensations is subject to doubt. Memories as 'stored' ideas can be half-forgotten, these ideas can be confused, and therefore memories, with accompanying feelings, cannot stand as firm, accurate, and exclusive ground for judgment and opinions. Sometimes even our memories are false in the sense that we memorize some events by thinking of them as consequences of some assumed causes, even though these assumed causes are actually not their causes at all. So, whenever in the future we come across similar events, we will search for their causes based on incorrect past causal connections. Spinoza also acknowledges this fact when he writes about the nature of the mind in the second part of his *Ethics*. The mind makes connections between things, determining them as causes and effects, and it is "determined to the contemplation of this or that *externally* – namely, by a chance coincidence" (EIIIP29S). Since this mind's activity of contemplation and connection of events is based only on the affections of our body, it is not adequate knowledge. It is confused and mutilated knowledge since it shows only how external things affect our body, but not how external things are really and truly; it actually displays only our *corporis constitution* (EIIIP16C2).

Additionally, some things or events and their causes and effects in the past may not be connected in the same way in the future. There is always a possibility that in the chain of causes of some future events, some new cause

emerges and hence changes that event. So our opinion of the future is relative, we have to be conscious of that in order not to err. Admitting that our opinions can be false and our expectations incorrect, we are accepting that they are not true knowledge. It is obvious that desires affect opinions and that opinions, as expectations grounded in memories (preservation of sensations), can produce all kinds of feelings, from fear to hope. Therefore, it is safe to claim that feelings of pleasure and displeasure modify our opinions and anticipations in a complicated manner. Since it is already accepted that our opinions can be false, our pleasures, connected with those opinions, can also be false. While Davidson questions the correctness of the expression *false* for both opinions and pleasures (Davidson 2012, p. 356 – 360), and prefers to use the term *unfounded*, he agrees with Plato that:

“when we imagine something which we believe to have happened, or to be happening, or which we expect to happen, we feel a certain pleasure or pain in the contemplation of the event. We may very well, in such a situation, thing that we did, or would, or shall, feel a similar pleasure or pain when actually experiencing the event. In this case, the present pleasure can account for error (...) because it causes us to believe that a certain event did (or does, or will) have a certain hedonic character. The error results here not from the possibility that the event does not happen, but from the possibility that the event is not as pleasant or unpleasant as it is believed to be.” (Davidson 2012, p. 359).

To conclude and repeat shortly, anticipatory pleasures are false or unfounded, since ideas of pleasant past experiences cannot be firm and accurate grounds for future pleasures. It is possible to make a hypothesis according to past experiences of pleasure, but it is quite another thing to state that one *knows* which event will cause pleasure or displeasure in the future. For Plato, the falsity of anticipatory pleasures lies not only in the above-mentioned conclusions but also in the fact that anticipatory pleasures are always mixed with some present emptiness and discontent.

For pleasure to be true, it is argued in *Philebus*, pleasure cannot be a mixture, but must be pure (*Philebus* 51a). This implies that these pleasures are not connected with any bodily change. Although pure pleasure is a fulfillment of some sort, it is not derived from some ‘emptiness’ or lack. Pure or true pleasures do not lead a person who feels them to any kind of falsity, whether it is a false opinion, false judgment, or wrong acting:

“The pure pleasures are not deceptive, either in the sense of being capable of causing us to make false predictions (like the pleasures or anticipation), or in

the sense of presenting an appearance which does not correspond to the reality." (Davidson 2012, p. 376).

The concept of mixture with regard to an affect of pleasure has to be understood in the context of Plato's viewpoint on the soul ruling over the body. The charioteer in *Phaedrus*, as an image of the rational part of the soul, struggles with a wild (left) horse as an image of the hungering part of the soul, and the chariot which represents a body (*Phaedrus* 246a–254e). The charioteer has problems with driving a chariot which is also an allegory of the soul trying to control impulses, irrational drives, and passions. All these difficulties that it encounters are actually connected with bodily appetites, with material wants, and passionate urges. Pureness of the soul in that sense means its liberation from the body, hence pure pleasure accordingly has to be free from pain, from drifts, and the alternations of a body. Therefore, mixed pleasures, as a mixture of pleasure and pain or anticipatory pleasures that result from past sensations and future anticipations, cannot be true pleasures.

Things that evoke such true pleasures are of an aesthetic type. They appear in the judging and contemplation of objects and beautiful forms (*Philebus* 51b). It can be some geometrical shape or even some tool, like a ruler or compass. Pure sounds are also among the group of things that affect a body to experience pure pleasure (*Philebus* 51d). Pleasant smells are also affects of pure pleasure (*Philebus* 51e).

From 52a in the dialogue, it can be discerned that pure pleasure arising from knowledge is maybe the most important. This pleasure is not mixed since it emerges while we are learning and not because we feel some displeasure at not knowing. In the process of acquiring (new) knowledge, there is a certain fulfillment of the soul for that knowledge. Such fulfillment causes a pleasure that is pure and independent of discomfort - we do not previously feel the lack of learned facts or things. Plato calls this lack of unconsciousness and the desire or want for those objects painless (*Philebus* 51b – c).

There is a striking similarity between Plato and Spinoza concerning the affect of pleasure that comes out of acquiring true knowledge, i. e. in the process of true cognition. There are, Spinoza claims, affects of pleasure and joy "which are related to us in so far as we act" (EIIIP58). This action is the mind's action or thinking and "when the mind conceives itself and its power of acting, it rejoices." (EIIIP58S). According to Spinoza, every action is the transition from a lesser state of perfection to a higher one. Every such transition is accompanied by pleasure and joy. In the tradition of

Platonism, and also for Aristotle, ideas themselves are actions in a higher sense because thinking is the highest action in itself. Hence, for Spinoza too, adequate thinking as the highest action of human beings in total results in the highest pleasure possible. One of the pure pleasurable affects connected with the pleasure of attaining knowledge is the active affect which Spinoza calls the strength of mind (*fortitudo*). Strength of mind is, in fact, the desire for the preservation of human beings “from the dictates of reason alone” (EIIIP59S). To preserve one’s being according to the command or dictate of reason means to develop and improve one’s understanding, increasing the mind and body activity. According to Spinoza, this is done by having adequate ideas. And he who is guided only by his reason and has adequate ideas is a free man (EIVP68D). A free person lives virtuously, for him the concepts of good and evil, although at the same time personally useful, are based on rational thinking, and his judgments are based only on adequate reason. A free person with the strength of mind, while at the same time experiencing high pure pleasure, is therefore a virtuous and reasonable man.

There is another resemblance between Plato’s and Spinoza’s account of affects of pleasure – the excess. Excessiveness as the quality (*Philebus* 52c – d), or rather the ‘quantity’ of pleasures indicates that these pleasures could overwhelm the rational part of the soul to a large degree. A person then is not guided by reason anymore, but pulled by different passions and appetites. Therefore, excessiveness is not something to seek after when discerning pleasures as true or pure. Plato, after an example of white color, concludes that:

“a small pleasure or a small amount of pleasure, if pure or unalloyed with pain, is always pleasanter and truer and fairer than a great pleasure or a great amount of pleasure of another kind.” (*Philebus* 53c – d).

In *Philebus*, pleasure is not being evaluated on the basis of its intensity or any quantitative measure. It is being evaluated in the sense of its ‘purity’, its distance from pains. Spinoza had something to say about the excessiveness of pleasures too. He emphasized the importance of harmony of the body and mind, i.e. the activity of both, and the increase, not the decrease of the mind and body’s actions. The increase or perfecting of the mind and body is being reflected through the emotional and pleasurable experience. But, Spinoza claims, excessive pleasures can actually be dangerous for the aforementioned harmonical state of being, they can be bad:

“Pleasurable excitement may be excessive and evil... Pleasurable excitement is joy which, in so far as it is related to the body, consists in this that one or some of the parts of the body are affected more than others. The power of this emotion may, therefore, be so great as to overcome the other actions of the body; it may cling obstinently to the body; it may impede the body in such a manner as to render it less capable of being affected in many ways...” (Spinoza, EIV, P43, P43D)

Although this joyous excitement is pleasurable, Spinoza directly defines it as evil. He immediately explains why this is so: a being always strives towards its good and towards survival. If there is no coordinated striving of the whole body and mind, if there is disharmony and some parts of the body are more affected, even with joy and pleasure, then this striving will end in passion and in bondage. The final result of the excessiveness of pleasure is the failure to preserve ourselves as a whole. As much as excitement can be desirable since it is a pleasure, in the end, it does not bring good to the whole human being simply because it interferes with the mind and body's activity.

Therefore, to return and encompass everything stated earlier in this comparison, let us try to answer the questions asked at the beginning. For Plato and Spinoza alike, there is something in pleasures apart from pleasantness itself. It is not solely pleasantness in joy, or in love, or in any contentment that a wise man should search after. It is its pureness, truth, and correctness. It is the connection between gaining true knowledge and experiencing true pleasure in the process. The criterion for pleasure lies in its connection with our opinions, beliefs, our value system, and our ethical ideal (the highest good). Pleasure is not something negative by itself, or something we should, according to Plato and Spinoza, always tend to avoid. We should rather constantly try to evaluate pleasures that we experience in accordance with what we hold as important, truthful, the highest, and the best. Pleasure and ethical norms or virtues are deeply intertwined; our acquired virtues will shape our experience of what is and what is not pleasurable for us, it is a sort of emotional cultivation. Our tendency for some kinds of pleasure in the long run will influence our moral character. Hence, it is up to us to pay attention to this significant influence in both directions. Moral judgment is extremely important in judging emotions of pleasure.

The criterion for pleasures indicates then that there must be some difference between pleasures. What causes pleasure in one person might not cause pleasure in another, primarily because of her judgment of the cause of that pleasure (Spinoza EIII P51S). Thus, in the anthropological sense, there

is no experiential universality in the wide scope of pleasurable emotions. This does not mean that there cannot be value judgment and veracity about each and every pleasure. According to Plato, there is no intrinsic value in pleasantness, its worth is in its link to true opinion and to its detachment from bodily changes and pains. For Spinoza, true pleasure arises from the adequate judgment of its cause and through *scientia intuitiva*, i.e., the highest form of knowledge (Spinoza EV P31, P32). Knowledge of *causa infinita* from which the natural order of things with its causal laws and order of intellectual ideas follows is exactly that kind of knowledge that is most valuable, this knowledge provides us only true judgment and true joy.

The importance of viewing a human being as a whole is undeniable in the interpretation of affects in *Philebus*. Virtue is connected with desire, desire with knowledge, knowledge with pleasure, et cetera. Mental holism, which Amber D. Carpenter considers adequate for Plato's theory of affects, is based on the observation of human beings as a whole:

“...there is a meaningful connection between the sort of person one is (one's character, say, or virtues), and the kinds of thing one finds pleasant.” (Carpenter 2006, p.17)

Equally, it seems that Spinoza's image of a wise man is a holistic image of a person who experiences pleasurable emotions only in accordance with his nature. If he insists on trying to free himself as much as possible from false pleasure, then his judgments will be more accurate and adequate. The more he is freed from passion, the more true his nature is, and the affects he experiences will be in harmony with his judgments, conclusions, and attitudes. This connection between judgment and pleasure is actually holistic. We notice hence that pleasure is relational, contextual, and always related to value judgments and the character of a person. What Plato and Spinoza equally state is this: depending on the determination of the good that the individual strives for, and thus also depending on the cause that causes pleasure, there will be differences in individuals' choices of objects of pleasure. They both conclude that there must be a criterion for pleasures, as there is for true opinion and knowledge.

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