

HEDONISM AS METAPHYSICS OF MIND AND VALUE

Leonard David Katz

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ABSTRACT

I develop and defend a hedonistic view of the constitution of human subjectivity, agency and value, while disassociating it from utilitarian accounts of morality and from the view that only pleasure is desired. Chapter One motivates the general question, "What really is of value in human living?", and introduces evaluative hedonism as an answer to this question. Chapter Two argues against preference satisfaction accounts of pleasure and of welfare, and begins the explication and defense of the hedonist's conception of pleasure as immediate experiencing liked for its own sake in its experiential moment, and which obtains or not in an experiential moment regardless of what obtains at other times. Chapter Three begins the task of finding a motivational theory that will support, or at least cohere with, evaluative hedonism. I here work toward my own position by discussing, criticizing and distinguishing some aspects of the views of earlier hedonistic writers, both ancient and modern. Chapter Four further explains the hedonist's conception of pleasure, and treats some contextualist objections to its tenability suggested by Plato, Moore and Anscombe. In the course of answering these objections, the view of consciousness belonging to the hedonist's view of mind is contrasted with that which the objections presuppose. Chapter Five first outlines the general kind of hedonistic view resulting from the work of the earlier sections, and then develops a specific view of this kind,

drawing on contemporary work in philosophy, psychology and psychobiology. The result is an account of action, and of the kind of attention and consciousness connected with it, in which pleasure has a central organizing role. Such an account, if sustained and filled out by ongoing scientific work, would further motivate, and cohere with, evaluative hedonism and the related contention that the dimension of subjectivity in which human value consists is in the lives of human beings and other higher vertebrates much the same.

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My work has been facilitated by the work space and books made available by libraries. Besides those on which I have had a direct institutional claim, I have used Memorial Library of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Speer Library of Princeton Theological Seminary and Alexander Library of Rutgers University, and also at times the collections of Montclair State College, Trenton State College, The New York Public Library and the Library of Congress. All these are to be thanked and commended for allowing the free public access to the interested public that Princeton University, to its shame, no longer affords.

I also have other debts, both greater and less than these, that I lack either the memory or the wit or the words to properly acknowledge here.

These firstfruits of my reflection on being human are dedicated to my parents, who gave me this gift.

NOTE ON TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The translations are my own, except where credit is given to others. But I have always checked those from the Greek and Latin against other translations, and always (for convenience) against those from the *Loeb Classical Library*. My translations have benefitted from my reading of these translations.

The Greek and Latin texts I supply in footnotes for the convenience of readers are as in the *Loebs* referenced in my List of Works Cited, except where other credits are given. But in the current state of support for laser printing at the Princeton University Computer Center, the Greek texts must go unaccented, and the following changes also have been necessary: The apostrophe has been forced to do double service to mark the rough breathing as well. I do not mark the smooth breathing or subscript iota. The English colon in the Greek texts should always be read as the raised period. And the sigma as it usually appears in initial and intermediate positions will be used in terminal position as well.

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PREFACE

¶ This essay is about what feeling has to do with action in two ways. First: about the claim that the pleasure-pain dimension of feeling has a central role in the constitution of human (and kindred animal) mentality and action. And second: about the claim that the presence of pleasure immediately makes life good, as the presence of pain makes it bad, in ways that ground reasons for action. The defense of these two claims will be closely connected. It will amount to showing that, besides the well-known (and obviously false) theses of 'psychological hedonism'¹ and 'ethical hedonism',² there remains a more plausible way of constructing hedonistic thought about human nature, action and value. I call this way "*philosophical hedonism*". Since Sidgwick, philosophers have usually treated of pleasure's place in the good separately from its role in action. This I believe to be wrong. For the plausibility of any version of hedonism lies largely in its prospects of providing a unified account of what we are, how we are agents and wherein lies our good. I shall do my best to lay out such an account here.

¹ Roughly: that all actions and desires have pleasure as their intended goal. The phrase was coined by Henry Sidgwick, for "the view that volition is always determined by pleasures or pains actual or prospective." *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907; 1st ed., 1874), p. 40.

² Roughly, with some (but not all) of the variation within this family of theses indicated by the optional phrases: that an act is *moral* just insofar as it [is thought by the agent that it] [is of such an appropriately specific *moral*(?) kind as generally] produces an increment of pleasure on the whole.

§ By "*hedonism*" (and similarly for "hedonist", etc.) I shall mean: minimally, *evaluative hedonism*, the view that a person's welfare—what makes his life good to live—is just a matter of how much pleasure (and, what for the sake of brevity I shall often leave out as understood: of how little of its opposite, 'pain') he experiences; but also, more broadly and vaguely, the *hedonistic thinking* about human nature and action within which evaluative hedonism has made its theoretical home. My principal aim is to understand the hedonist[ic thinker]'s view of what pleasure is, and of its place in human (and kindred animal) nature. Recent literature on utilitarianism has concentrated on questions concerning consequentialist³ construals of morality and rationality. The neglected hedonistic value theory that was joined with consequentialism in classical utilitarianism is my subject here.

For brevity's sake, I shall often put things in terms of pleasure (or the pursuit of pleasure) where I intend to include pain (or the shunning of pain) as well; and that interpretation should generally be assumed. And, although the views officially treated count both pleasure (positively) and pain (negatively) as determinants of human value, what I say will usually apply to related views that consider, for example, pleasure's value to be illusory but pain's (dis)value to be real.⁴ Also, while hedonistic views, on which pleasure (and pain) exhaust human value, are my official subject, most of what I say will apply equally to the hedonistic component of accounts that hold pleasure (and pain) to constitute only *part* of human value. Lastly, "pain" here

³ This term is explained in Chapter One, n. 8, p. 15, below.

⁴ Some Buddhist views, for example, appear to be of this kind.

means *affective* (or 'psychological') pain, including suffering and sadness in all their varieties and degrees—and *not* the sensations we might (following the ancients) call "bodily pain";⁵ just as "pleasure" here means ecstasy, enjoyment and the like—but not activities and sensations that can be more or less enjoyed, or not enjoyed at all.

§ I intend the *philosophical hedonism* I develop here to be very much what the historical hedonistic thinkers *should* have maintained, given my understanding of what is most central and compelling in their views. But that is not to say that any of them clearly distinguished the claim about the constitutive role of pleasure in human nature, action and value I defend here from psychological and ethical hedonism. My project, although historically motivated, is not itself historical. I concentrate my energies instead on reconstructing that kind of hedonism I find most tenable and interesting, on defending it against objections and on developing the specific version that seems most promising today. But where I believe myself to be expounding historically important

⁵ "Pain" may, in its primary use, mean pain *sensations*; but it seems to be the normal connection of these diverse sensations with *affect* (see §§2.3 and 5.3, below) that makes them of one kind. Sensation (e.g., 'a stabbing feeling in the forearm') and negative affect (the suffering or 'hurt') occur together in standard cases of 'physical pain'; but are dissociable by psychological, pharmacological and surgical means. See R. Melzack and K.L. Casey, "The Affective Dimension of Pain", in Magda B. Arnold, ed., *Feelings and Emotions* (New York: Academic Press, 1970), pp. 55-68; and their "Sensory, Motivational and Central Control Determinants of Pain: A New Conceptual Model", in Dan R. Kenshalo, ed., *The Skin Senses* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1968), pp. 423-43. See also Daniel C. Dennett, "Why You Can't Make a Computer that Feels Pain", *Synthese* 38,3 (July 1985): 415-49. Reprinted in *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Montgomery, Vt.: Bradford, 1978), pp. 190-229, at pp. 214-15. I believe that these sensory and affective aspects of pain experience have each the functional and neurological reality that Dennett denies *pain* has.

themes, I say so, illustrating by quotation and reference where I can. My belief that I am, in constructing a view that makes *the momentary experiencing of pleasure* central to our valuing and desiring, keeping faith with historical hedonism rests less on the close study of any single text or thinker than on the understanding this picture seems to give; for example, of the repeated association of hedonistic thinking about value and action with empiricist epistemology and atomistic theories of time, in different periods and cultures.⁶ But even in some final historical accounting, the best argument for interpreting any historical hedonist along the lines suggested here will likely remain the coherence, plausibility and philosophical motivation of the resulting view. And that should make the philosophical hedonist of this essay of independent interest—even if he should turn out to be a more original philosopher than I have supposed.

⁶ The parallels between Epicurus and Hume in these areas are especially close. Their similarity in the earlier respects requires no special citation. On time, see David Furley's *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), Study 1: "Indivisible Magnitudes", pp. 3-158, Chapter 10: "Epicurus and David Hume", pp. 136-47; and compare with the summary of his conclusions on Epicurus' view, pp. 127-9. Furley's exposition there is mainly of Hume on space; but Hume explicitly intends his arguments and view (in *A Treatise of Human Nature I*, ii) to apply to time as well. More recently the attribution of the 'time atom' view to Epicurus has been defended by Richard Sorabji in *Time, Creation, and the Continuum* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 375-77.

A similar constellation of thought seems to occur in the heterodox materialist or naturalist tradition of ancient Indian philosophy; but doxographical accounts and substantial extant texts seem to date only from much later, and the literature on the subject is not good. But see *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, ed. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), Chapter 7, "Carvaka", pp. 227-49, for some texts and an entry to the literature. The *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy*, ed. Karl H. Potter, Vol. 1, *Bibliography*, 2d. ed. (Delhi: Benarsidass, 1983) gives a comprehensive bibliography of the secondary literature in Western European languages at pp. 605-7.

IN SEARCH OF THE HUMAN GOOD

1.1 Human life, feeling, and action admit of both good and evil. Some live well, but others badly. There are good times—and bad. Some actions we admire, respect or condone; others, we hate, scorn or blame. How we humans fare, how we feel, and what we accomplish or attempt *matter* to us. This mattering to us seems, as much as any appearance does, to point to something behind it that is real.

We are able to say something more about what this good and evil that matters in its own right is. It cannot be the mere existence and survival of things like me; for life can be bad, and even worse than having died or never having existed would have been. Human value is a matter of *how* life is lived, of *what* we do or experience, for better or for ill.

We should further like to be able to say just what this good and evil of life, experience or action could be, consonant with our emerging scientific conception of our place in a world existing independently of our conceiving. But this may seem misplaced hope. For, if color seems to be relative to us insofar as we have the perceptual organization of men, and not of bees; morals seem to be relative to us insofar as we are Greeks, Persians, or Jews, as the case may be. And, further: the manner of life that suits Socrates may not suit Alcibiades. Still, many questions about the comparative value of

different possible human lives seem to have determinate answers. Some people clearly have better lives than do some others. And it further appears that two people may be unequally well off without either 'valuing' or 'preferring' their own lots in life unequally. If this is possible, then the goodness of one's life does not consist just in thinking it is well with one, or in 'choosing' the life one actually has.

On the other hand, it is said that the value of a person's life lies in nothing he finds in the world, but in *how* he takes it. And this seems to be saying something true. But this 'taking', then, seems to be *something*—something that, although very different things are liked, itself is always the same. The good things in life (such as walks, poetry, and strawberries) are brought together into a unity only by their relation to *our* good. But this human value (unlike the derivative value of these things) appears to be a real property of human life, possessing *its own* intrinsic unity—a unity not deriving from any unity of external things, and also not constituted by any accidental direction of our conception or will.

1.2 We should like to have some unified account of this value beyond the mere goodness of good things, the better to guide and understand our lives and actions and the regard in which we hold them. It may seem natural to pursue this goal by pressing further along preexisting commonsense lines: "Food is to eat, and spoons are to eat with." "Chairs are to sit in." "There are races to run." Every child comes to understand, in this way, what the good things are; and, in a way, why they are desired or done. Good things seem to be made for us,

and we for them. May we not go further, and say that a good life for a man would be a life which fits the natural human function, human nature's purpose and goal? *But what could that natural human function be?* We can say (as John Rawls does, echoing Aristotle) "that the correct regulative principle for anything depends on the nature of that thing" ¹ But what (consonant with our own, non-teleological science) could an ethically useful theory of human nature and purpose, that did not beg important ethical questions, be?

What is my good? The good of *something*, it seems—and, in particular, the well-being of whatever thing I am. But what can the good of things such as we are be? Some things—for example, automobiles and government agencies—appear to have fixed essential functions or goals, and a good deriving from these. But when something is truly said to be 'for the good of' such things, this seems to be said differently than it would be about ourselves. Such things are essentially purposive because they *are* artifacts or institutions, and as such have essentially just whatever functions they are essentially

¹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 29. But Rawls now explicitly intends his work on justice to be independent of any controversial metaphysical, epistemological or moral claim about personhood or human nature, contrary to what this passage suggests. This is explicit in his "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, 3 (Summer 1985): 223-51, and also in his "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory: The Dewey Lectures 1980", *The Journal of Philosophy* 77,9 (September 1980): 515-72. I agree with Rawls that it is useful to divorce (1) his search for "a basic charter for our social world" (p. 519) "reasonable for us, given our conception of persons as free and equal and fully cooperating members of a democratic society" (p. 554) from (2) "the search for moral truth interpreted as fixed by a prior and independent order . . . distinct from how we conceive of ourselves." (p. 519) But we, unlike Rawls, shall be engaged in this second search, and with a view according to which human value *is* 'prior' to, and 'independent' of, our conceptions about it.

conceived (or constitutively intended) to have. Whatever maintains or furthers the automobile's or government agency's capacity to perform its essential function well is for its good. Replacing the Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator was for its good; and lubrication was for the automobile's. But such a thing's good seems not to be a good *to the thing itself* in the way that ours seems to be. The meaning of life seems to be unlike the essential purpose of a government agency or of a machine. And this is because our capacity for faring well or ill seems to be unlike any capacity we believe artifacts or institutions to have.

The case of animals is closer to our own. Indeed, it seems we *are* animals. And animals are not artifacts: cows and trout and men are not conceptualized in terms of essential functions in the way that knives and typewriters are. But animals may differ from artifacts in more than their conceptualization, complexity, natural growth and in their not being designed by man. Some, at least, have (as we do) purposes and a good of their own—purposes and a good not analyzable in terms of their survival, ecological adaptedness or evolutionary 'design'. That the organism continues to function need not be for the subject's good. Similarly, the health, the good functioning, of such an organism is distinguishable from the good or interest of the animal—the use its life is to its own self.² Certainly, *our own* overall good health is (at least over the short run) only a normal, but not invariable, condition of the

² Suppose that tigers are such animals, and that the longest and healthiest life practically attainable for a tiger is one lived in captivity, protected from injury, malnutrition and monsoons, and under veterinary care. It remains an open question whether this is the best life *for the tiger*—a life the tiger (or its trustees) should choose.

good we say is of the soul. That is why the good that even the good physician or hospital knows and serves seems to be not quite the good that is our own. For the health they seek seems to be only a condition (and a metaphor) of our good, and not the thing itself. If this is right, then our good is not our organisms' flourishing, as that might be conceived by the biologist or physician without special regard for the life, needs, and goals that are most our own.

1.3 It is often said that the variety of views about our nature and our good suggests that there is no single human nature or value to inquire into; but only brute disagreement, in attitude or form of life, as to what should be done. But, in fact, these questions do not present themselves to us as isolated questions that we may decide (or ignore) at will; but rather as bound up with other questions about our situation. Platonic ethics goes with Platonic conceptions of knowledge and objects of knowledge; Christian ethics with a Christian conception of the historical relations of God and man. And just as there can be no divine commandment without a god; so, if there is no such thing as pleasure, there can be no factual basis for hedonism. The undermining of a factual claim may—without specifically ethical argumentation—subvert the ethical view that presupposes it. Argument between apparently incommensurable moral positions often proceeds in this way, by appeal to shared beliefs and standards of plausibility that may tell for or against more inclusive views to which the ethical views belong.

Moral matters, however, may be thought immune to the sort of open-ended change that we now think of as built into the process of

scientific inquiry. And in this thought there seems something true. We naturally start out taking persons simply as persons—as animate centers of action, desire, and interest bearing faces and names; with whom we stand in moral relations and toward whom we feel respect, affront, guilt, and shame. Morality takes as its raw material our often-competing susceptibilities for feeling and action based on our natural reactions to persons as such. These are one part of human nature in which particular moralities are rooted and from which they cannot float free. Not just anything can be a morality, as not just anything can be a natural language. Morality is a phenomenon rooted in human nature. Any new morality that is to be a morality must be so motivated and so constrained. (The capacity for morality is *part* of human nature. Its limits are narrower than human nature's. If our thought is constrained by the bounds of human thought, morality is constrained more narrowly still—within bounds we can think from the outside as well as from within. We can experience morality as constraint because that which is *morally* unthinkable need not be either unthinkable or undoable *simpliciter*.) But although morality is conservative (compared with science) in its capacity for admitting change, the same need not be true of our thinking *about* morality. For, in general, our thinking about the human good, and our scientific and philosophical theories about morality, do not belong to morality (thus strictly conceived); and are not constrained as morality is.

1.4 There formerly flourished a tradition of writing in English 'on moral subjects'—at once on human nature and the human good. From

Hobbes through Hume and the Mills this tradition lived close by the heart of literary, political, and philosophical culture—so long as the culture *had* a core. This tradition entered the academy with Green and Sidgwick; its last voice to be heard outside was the early Moore's. In the course of the past century its former territory was claimed by the emerging behavioral and social sciences. But its former office—that of serving as a public space in which people might rationally argue and decide, on the broadest possible grounds, how life both in public and in private should be lived—was not thereby filled. For these sciences aimed at a 'value-free' objectivity. Value-free science was to be the arbiter of all fact. Value, then, seemed to be only the adventitious coloring in which we first clothe and then see whatever our social or individual goals happen to be. Lately, however, philosophers and scientists are again interested in finding grounds for ethics in rationality or in human nature. Some philosophers, for example, seek to argue from supposed constraints on rational human action or entitlement to theories of justice and altruistic motivation, respect for persons, and absolute human rights. I aim to recover and reconstruct a different strand in our inherited thinking 'on moral subjects' here.

Once upon a time there was a way of thinking about human life and how it should be lived called the philosophy of pleasure—and, later, hedonism. This way of thinking had its ups and downs over the centuries—as even ways of thinking that come naturally do. It attracted a large following in antiquity. Later, it suffered relative eclipse; only to be revived (with atomism and skepticism) in the seventeenth century. By the second half of the next century, in

philosophical psychology and in ethics, and even in theology, the doctrine that pleasure is the human good seemed to have won the day, at least among writers in English. Then—in the aftermath of the Enlightenment—it became caught up in the rationalizing movement of social, political and legal reform called Utilitarianism.

When economics and psychology emerged from moral philosophy in the course of the nineteenth century, pleasure, as presumptive human good and goal of human action, took its place in the academic discourse of the new sciences. But as these became separate disciplines, distinct families of ethical and motivational theses were precipitated out of the inherited mixture of normative and psychological thought in which they had been theoretically associated and often also confused.³ With the further weakening of connections between the subjects hedonism had formerly helped to unify, the very notion of pleasure came to seem dispensable from them. In psychology, learning theorists sought to reformulate the enduring effects of past reward and punishment on action in behavioristic terms.⁴ In economics, difficulties with

³ Psychological hedonism was canonically distinguished from views of what one ought to do by Henry Sidgwick in *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th edition (London: Macmillan, 1907; first edition, 1874), pp. 40 ff. (For his formulation, see my Preface, n. 1, p. 1, above.) Later, and necessarily lesser, landmarks in the disambiguation of hedonistic theses include: F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2d edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927; 1st. ed., 1876), Study VII: "Selfishness and Self-Sacrifice", pp. 258-61; Moritz Schlick, *Fragen der Ethik* (Vienna: Springer, 1930; trans. by David Rynin as *Problems of Ethics* [New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939]); Leonard T. Troland, *The Fundamentals of Motivation* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1928), pp. 276 ff.; and J.C.B. Gosling, *Pleasure and Desire: The Case for Hedonism Reviewed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁴ See Edward L. Thorndike, *Animal Intelligence* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), pp. 244-245; and B.F. Skinner, *The Behavior of Organisms* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1938), pp. 65 ff.

interpersonal comparisons of welfare, when combined with an awareness of their explanatory dispensability from the discipline's central predictive concerns, led to the abandonment of experiential notions of utility. In the economics (as in the psychology) of the early twentieth century, pleasure was progressively displaced by what had once been thought of as mere methods by means of which it might be measured or observed. 'Utility' became the mere fulfillment of preference, and 'preference' something that behavior completely revealed.⁵

⁵ I simplify. For less cursory (but still highly selective) treatments see the introductory sections of a book in the field such as I.M.D. Little's *A Critique of Welfare Economics*, 2d edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958); or a review article such as Kenneth A. Arrow, "Formal Theories of Social Welfare", *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip Wiener (New York: Scribner, 1973), Vol. 4, pp. 276-84. Relevant historical and methodological remarks are to be found in Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 2d edition (London: Macmillan, 1940 [1st edition, 1932]; p. 56, n. 2 and pp. 75-76. Robbins took an intermediate tack, holding that a subjective and introspectionist view of individual ordinal preference is foundational to positive economic science, but that interpersonal comparison "falls outside the scope of positive science" and "is essentially normative" (p.139).

The classic paper of J.R. Hicks and R.G.D. Allen, "A Reconsideration of the Theory of Value", *Economica* n.s. 1:52-73 (February 1934) and 2:196-219 (May 1934) contains a useful capsule account of late nineteenth and early twentieth century developments in the first section of Part I (by Hicks), pp. 52-55. For an account of the views prevailing among contemporary economists, see Alan Coddington, "Utilitarianism Today", *Political Theory* 4,2 (May 1976): 213-226. Such views are criticized by Amartya Sen in his and Bernard Williams' Introduction to their jointly edited *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and, earlier, in his "Rational Fools, A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6,4 (1977): 317-344, in which see especially pp. 316-24, and the references to the literature in the notes on p. 324. See also Sen's "Well-being, Agency and Freedom: The John Dewey Lectures 1984", *The Journal of Philosophy* 82, 4 (April 1985): 169-221, especially pp. 187-92.

Among philosophers writing in English, the separation of the good-maximizing conception of morality from its hedonistic roots was due mainly to the influence of Moore.⁶ Utilitarians had expressed their incomprehension of what *else* might be made of ethics in loose, polemical talk that failed to distinguish between the claims (1) that good and pleasure *are* the same, (2) that "good" and "pleasure" *mean* the same, and (3 and [4]) that (1 or [2]) *had better be true in future usage* if ethical terms are to *acquire* determinate and precise meaning in the only way they can (compatibly with our past intentions and the facts)—as they *must* if ethics is to make real progress. Moore argued—correctly, only against (2)—that *any* claim to have found an interesting synonym or analytic definition for "good" must be on its face false—since "good", after all, means just *good*, and nothing *else*. Moore (mistakenly) thought this (perfectly generalizable) point to assure the essential independence of ethics from other fields—and thus to support his view that goodness is a special ('non-natural') quality sensed directly by intuition; about the intrinsic nature of which theoretical knowledge, or knowledge of other things, could tell us nothing at all.⁷

⁶ G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1903). Moore's criticism of the 'naturalistic fallacy' is found in Section B of Chapter 1, "The Subject-Matter of Ethics", pp. 5-21.

⁷ Moore thus complains that in hedonists prior to Sidgwick "we find no clear and consistent recognition of the fact that their fundamental proposition involves the assumption that a certain unique predicate can be directly seen to belong to pleasure alone among existents: they do not emphasize, as they could hardly have failed to have done had they perceived it, how utterly independent of all other truths this truth must be." (*Principia Ethica*, pp. 60-1.) Ethics, then, would be very unlike science; where our ideas of what facts there are, and of what are their mutual dependences, may change radically as we make progress, and find connections between the things that our preexisting concepts pick out. For my own (unMoorelike) view on how vagueness in our ethical concepts and intentions is compatible

But if ethical intuition is the sole foundation of ethics, why not, then, consider directly our more robust intuitions about *what to do*? The upshot was a revival in England of deontological ethics based on intuitions of moral obligation. There followed a skeptical and noncognitivist reaction.

When interest in normative theories, and among them utilitarianism, at length revived, preference interpretations of utility remained dominant. And interest anyhow centered on general problems arising for any consequentialist⁸ account of morality, rather than on the

with our making progress on fundamental questions in ethics, in ways analogous to those in which we make progress on fundamental questions in science, see the next section, especially pp. 24-26, and also §4.2, below. I comment on the connection of Sidgwick's and Moore's view of ethics (which I reject) with late nineteenth century introspectionist psychology in §§3.22 and 4.3, below.

- ⁸ Consequentialism is that feature shared by all ethical theories that make the rightness of an action just a matter of its producing a [maximally] good state of affairs [in a perhaps only partial ordering of possible outcomes by their goodness]. Or so the contemporary formulations generally go. The term was officially coined by Anscombe for the view "that 'the [morally] right action' means the one which produces the best possible consequences" (in "Modern Moral Philosophy", *Philosophy* 33, 1 [January 1958]: 1-19; reprinted in *The Collected Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Volume 3: *Ethics, Religion and Politics* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981], pp. 26-42, at pp. 33-36 there). But Anscombe seems, rather, to mean "best possible *foreseen* consequences". For she blames Sidgwick's defining of "intention in such a way that one must be said to intend any foreseen consequences of one's voluntary action" (pp. 34-35) for "a startling change . . . between Mill and Moore" (p. 33), which she believes sets off "old-fashioned Utilitarianism" (p. 36) from consequentialism. But the doctrine about intention, like consequentialism (in one form or the other of those I have mentioned) was the common property of the Utilitarian movement from Bentham through John Stuart Mill. The doctrine about intention is to be found in James Mill's chapter of that name in his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, 2d ed., John Stuart Mill, ed. (London: Longmans Green Reader and Dyer, 1869), Vol. 2, Chapter 25. And both it and the consequentialist connection of that view with ethics are endorsed by John Stuart Mill in his editorial notes there: "Intention, and motive, are two very different things. But it is intention, that is, the foresight of consequences, which constitutes

underlying conceptions of what makes an outcome good. "Utilitarianism" came to signify the general approach that combined an apparatus for somehow putting together and comparing values (a 'utility theory') with

the moral rightness or wrongness of the act."(pp. 401-2, n. 69)

Anscombe charges that Sidgwick's "denial of *any* distinction between foreseen and intended consequences, as far as responsibility is concerned, was not made by Sidgwick in developing any one 'method of ethics'; he made this important move on behalf of everybody and just on its own account; and I think it plausible to suggest that *this* move on the part of Sidgwick explains the difference between old-fashioned Utilitarianism and that *consequentialism*, as I name it, which marks him and every English academic moral philosopher since him."(p. 36) But Sidgwick is only following Mill, who Anscombe in her article seems to take for the very paradigm of an 'old-fashioned Utilitarian'. And it is Mill who in his mature appraisal of Bentham praises him for his consequentialism, before going on to note his differences with him—and who further asserts, "That the morality of action depends on the consequences that they tend to produce, is the doctrine of rational persons of all schools; that the good or evil of those consequences is measured solely by pleasure or pain, is all of the doctrine of the school of utility, which is peculiar to it." ("Bentham", in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, F.E.L. Priestley, general ed., Vol. 10, *Essays on Ethics, Religions and Society*, J.M. Robson, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 77-115, p. 111. So Anscombe's complaint against Sidgwick—and mine against Moore's and her obscuring of the differences between hedonistic utilitarianism and formally analogous modern views by the broadening of the Benthamite notion of 'consequences' (like that of 'utility' in economics)—might with more justice be lodged against Mill.

Here I shall mean by "consequentialism" the view that is concerned with *expected* consequences. ("Expected" seems clearer than "foreseen".) This view may, perhaps, be expressed by modifying the formulation with which I began this note by substituting "being expected to produce" for "producing". The distinction seems important. To put forward the other view, that the morality of an action is solely a matter of its actual consequences, would be to give a most implausible account of the moral appraisal of action as we know it—or else to substitute for it something quite different (which was perhaps, at times, Bentham's intention).

Later writers count as consequentialist not only theories whose rankings of goodness are not based exclusively on welfare, but also theories which define the value of a whole otherwise than by taking the arithmetical sum of the values of its parts; e.g., Amartya Sen, "Utilitarianism and Welfarism," *Journal of Philosophy* 76,9 (September 1979): 463-489.

a consequentialist account of the right. Hedonistic content had succumbed to utilitarian form.

Recently, a larger question has been raised by attacks on the whole consequentialist approach to moral theory, as well as on the related theses that values are commensurable, and that ethics should be viewed as a single theoretical study.⁹ Anscombe drove home, once again, the *prima facie* conflict of utilitarianism with intuitive moral constraints—such as (using her example) that it is always wrong to kill the innocent.¹⁰ Sen exploited broad interpretations of "consequences" and of "utility"¹¹ to push the use of the apparatus to its formal limits.

⁹ Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy"; Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism", in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Thomas Nagel, "The Fragmentation of Value", in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 128-142; Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Charles Taylor, "The Diversity of Goods", in Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 129-44.

¹⁰ Anscombe's example. Indeed, the point of her broad definition of "consequentialism" seems to have been to lump together *all* those 'modern moral philosophers' (explicitly including 'Oxford Objectivists' such as W.D. Ross who allow for 'intrinsic values' distinct from 'consequences', p. 33n) who do not hold actions such as these to be *always* morally forbidden, *whatever* the consequences—and to distinguish their views in this respect from her version of 'the Hebrew-Christian ethic' (p. 34).

¹¹ In "Rights and Agency," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11, 1 (Winter 1982): 3-39. See also Sen's replies to remarks somewhat similar to my own following by Donald Regan (in "Against Evaluator Relativity: A Response to Sen", in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12,2 [Spring 1983]: 93-112) and Charles Taylor (in "The Diversity of Goods", p. 144) in Sen's "Evaluator Relativity and Consequential Evaluation", in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12,2 (Spring 1983): 113-32. And see also Sen's qualifying remarks in "Well-being, Agency and Freedom: The John Dewey Lectures 1984", pp. 215-16.

Sen's procedure is to confront an already liberalized and generalized consequentialism with moral intuitions about what should

Pleasure, good deeds, equality, and rights could all be put together in various ways in which the *form* of consequentialism, or at least a formally consequentialist component, is retained. Rather than aiming to *account for* morality in terms of non-moral consequences, which was the project of Bentham's successors, Sen would thus simply build moral demands into the valued 'consequences'—although not necessarily as the absolute constraints for which Anscombe pleads. Williams had pointed out that a commitment or obligation (for example, to keep a promise) has a force quite different from that of an undertaking to minimize the total amount of promise-breaking.¹² Sen accordingly allows his formalism

be done in cases. This motivates counting violations of rights, for example, as 'consequences'—so that the casuistry will come out right. But it was just such considerations as those based on natural and inviolable rights that consequentialist reasoning was introduced into ethics to exclude. (Intuitively, the consequences were to be concrete, 'ground-level' states of affairs—of the sort one might see or feel; and not what the nominalist Bentham [who I take to be consequentialism's founder] would regard as 'fictions' of discourse, or worse. And Bentham regarded the unreconstructed notions of obligation and right, in particular, as empty notions.)

Sen's work shows the extent to which formal methods inspired by Utilitarianism can be of use in various *other* projects. But the notion of 'consequence' has in the process undergone radical change: from one requiring acts to be appraised in terms of the resulting value of some intuitively natural and concrete magnitude, to one which can represent *any* morally relevant consideration at all.

Perhaps this is how, in that part of ethics concerned with representing decision making, and correctness in decision making, things should be done—although it would seem to be important to mark the distinctions between the *overall* correctness of an action and (the various kinds of) *moral* rightness even there. But my project here is anyhow a different one: to understand the original hedonistic conception, and to let both the plausibility and the implausibility that it has show through. The formal structure of such an intuitive conception cannot of itself show forth its intended interpretation, or the limits of that interpretation's intelligible application. These must be independently understood.

¹² The point that moral obligations are not reducible to duties to bring about even *morally good consequences* was made by Williams ("A

Critique of Utilitarianism", pp. 87-89). An obligation (using his example) to keep a promise does not derive from a duty to minimize the total amount of promise-breaking. My moral duty of *promise-keeping*, as such, involves no equal duty to ensure that you keep your promises. If it did, and if I knew that you would break more promises of your own, of as great moral seriousness as mine, unless I broke mine; then, it seems, *breaking my promise* would be something my moral duty of *promise-keeping* (in this case) permits, or even demands. But that would be absurd. (Besides Williams, see Robert Nozick's discussion of his closely related distinction between 'moral constraints and moral goods', *Anarchy, State and Utopia* [New York: Basic Books, 1974], pp. 28-30.)

We can go further. Williams' point about moral obligation extends to oneself, and therefore makes no point essentially concerned with the difference between one's own actions and others'. The discharge of a particular moral obligation, like the payment of a debt, is owing when it falls due. I am thereby bound to do what I ought, to pay what is owing, *then*. I am not *thereby* bound to act so as to maximize even *my* overall discharge of moral obligations (even of ones of the same kind). So far as *a particular obligation to keep a promise* goes, I should not break my promise in order to prevent the future breaking of several promises of similar (or greater) moral stringency by *you*, but neither should I do so in order to prevent future promise-breaking by *myself*.

Such is the phenomenology of moral obligation at the ground level. *Further* moral duties may bear on this case—for example, duties to act so as to pay my debts, or to discharge my moral obligations, *on the whole*, to the extent I can; or to develop and preserve my moral character as a keeper of promises, or as a payer of debts, or more generally, *over the long run*. And it may therefore be reasonable to say that what one is under obligation to do *now*, on the face of the moral phenomenology of the particular case, is yet not what one should (all [moral] things considered) do. But, even in a case where (we shall suppose) this is not only reasonable to say, but is also true, it would be wrong to think that the particular obligation's force derives wholly from that of the more general duty. Rather, their conflicts may be real conflicts of moral claims (and not merely of *prima facie* moral claims)—in which the force of the particular obligation, even if it should be outweighed, is not thereby annulled. Rather, the obligation and the failure to discharge it remain matters of moral fact, even then.

People stand in moral relations. The psychological and normative reality of these are *not exhausted by their figuring in reasons for action*. Even where there is a clear and determinate answer to the question what the agent should do in a moral conflict situation, there may still be no way to act that is morally cost-free—even where the agent's coming into the conflict situation is no one's fault. The acquiring of loyalties, duties and responsibilities that may come into conflict is inseparable from the human condition; and living a full and rich moral and social life may increase these risks. Difficult or 'morally impossible' circumstances may *mitigate* moral failure, and

to be relativized (for example, by introducing a new ordering of alternative outcomes for each evaluator's point of view) so that the central assumption of a single underlying value domain, there alike for all, is no longer made.

But the crucial questions for any *substantive* consequentialist account of morality or rationality must be: first, "*What* is measured?", and, then; "*Why should it be maximized?*" But if it would be wrong "to assume that behind such arrangements lie magnitudes which themselves can be compared"¹³ even in principle, then these questions have no

demand understanding and forgiveness. But moral failure is moral failure all the same, and is perceived and reacted to by human persons as such. One apologizes, or atones, for moral failure; one does not think or say *only*: "I was completely right to leave him on the battlefield—or, to have abandoned you as a child; or, to have failed to pay up—because something else (incompatible) was the more morally important thing to do." Even where it *was*, the matter is not thus *completely* laid to rest.

Even if some version of consequentialism yielded materially adequate directions for moral *action*, it might fail to represent these further facts. But even if it could somehow represent these further moral facts, it must still fail to *account for* them, and for the distinctive psychological and normative force of morality, in terms of the production of non-moral value. Just such a reduction, or reconstruction, of morality is what the *project* of consequentialism was supposed to accomplish. *This project falls*, because it goes against what morality essentially is. (See §1.3, pp. 9-10, above.)

¹³ Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 2d edition (London: Macmillan, 1940; 1st edition, 1932), p. 138: "[I]t is one thing to assume that scales can be drawn up showing the *order* in which an individual will prefer a series of alternatives, and to compare the arrangement of one such individual scale with another. It is quite a different thing to assume that behind such arrangements lie magnitudes which themselves can be compared. This is not an assumption which need anywhere be made in modern economic analysis, and it is an assumption which is of an entirely different kind from the assumption of individual scales of relative valuation." This 'difference in kind' is supposed to be a difference between factual matters, on the one hand, and conventional, normative and political questions, on the other. Compare Robbins' treatment of interpersonal utilities, Ch. 6, §2, pp. 136-142, with his treatment of prices and incomes, pp. 56-57.

simple, realistic answers. The consequentialist system, then, will seem merely to report *results* of deliberation that *just happen to be* susceptible to summary in consequentialist form, rather than to purport to represent any metaphysically actual magnitude that could give the operation of aggregating the values of consequences substantive content. *Why, then, when in the face of refractory moral intuitions* (such as those remarked by Anscombe and Williams) *we have given up consequentialism's motivating content, should we give much weight to retaining consequentialism's form?* Yet one finds, even among those few contemporary utilitarians who construe pleasure in the traditional hedonistic way (i.e., as experience, rather than as the mere satisfaction of preference), the "belief [that] it is the consequentialism of classical utilitarianism and not its hedonism which is of the utmost importance."¹⁴ But since the idea of producing the most good always depends for its concrete content and plausibility on some notion of the good, the shoe would appear to be on the other foot.

Consequentialism is an inadequate approach to *accounting for moral obligation*.¹⁵ It fails to account for what is distinctive in morality and

¹⁴ J.J.C. Smart, "Hedonistic and Ideal Utilitarianism", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 3(1978): 240-251; p. 240.

¹⁵ But it is not so obviously inadequate for representing what we should (all things considered) *do*. One can consistently concede that there are cases in which there is nothing *morally permissible* to do, while asserting that there is nevertheless always something one *should* do. ("Something one should do" ranges equally over 'acts' of omission and commission here.) This practical reasoning might, then, be represented by a consequentialist system, using an ordering of outcomes that is non-morally supplied. Similarly, one might in general, while eschewing consequentialist accounts of *morality*, give moral demands as such no practical weight, and be an outright consequentialist concerning *what one ought to do*. A simple example would be that of a 'rational action' utilitarian who, conceding *morality* to the opposition, maintains that we *should*, nevertheless,

moral obligation—the existence of distinctively moral relations and moral facts—in terms of non-moral consequences, while *hedonism seems to be a plausible way of thinking about human nature and value in its own right*. But we can scarcely hope to see whether evaluative hedonism's plausibility is sustained on reflection, or to understand how hedonism may fit together with a juster view of morality than utilitarianism, until hedonistic thinking, and the conception of pleasure on which it is based, is understood. A simple conception, plausible on its face, should not be unduly complicated and weakened before it is understood on its own ground. Else we may lose the forest for the trees, and then the tree trunks among the leaves, until we will have lost all sense

always maximize utility—although this is *not* something *morality* permits or demands. *This* position may be free at least from *non-moral error*, whereas any consequentialist account of morality would seem to be simply false of its subject matter. Similarly, a Marxist may acknowledge bourgeois morality as the only *morality* extant in a revolutionary situation, while denying that this gives the revolutionary vanguard reason to respect this morality's demands. (In fact, I think it useful, and probably historically informative, to understand Bentham and Marx in such ways. The distinction between such interpretations, and those that view Bentham and Marx as moral reformers or proponents of 'revisionary moral theories', is not, I think, a *merely* verbal one.)

Sen (in contrast) provides an expanded framework within which the various demands of moral deontology are given *some* (but only finite) weight as against each other and as against utilitarian considerations. I have nothing against this proposal as such. But I wish to mark clearly the difference from classical consequentialisms. (Similarly on the deontological side: even if all practical [including moral] decision *could* always be represented by a calculation of consequentialist form, it would be wrong to conclude *just from that fact* that all moral—let alone moral and non-moral!—considerations were actually more alike than one would otherwise have supposed.) Sen's framework seems aimed at representing only the results of 'practical reasoning'—and not at (1) representing also some *further* facts about the world by which the goodness of a choice might be constrained and (2) accounting for the nature and content of morality by appealing to such facts—both of which classical utilitarianism, in the hands, for example, of John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick, purports to do.

of the starting point of the project we are about, and of where, without losing all touch with the original source of the project's plausibility, it makes theoretical sense for that project to go. The plausibility of hedonism, as a view of the value of human life, antedated the rise of Utilitarianism and its (mis)interpretation as a 'moral theory'. Hedonism's interest, and the importance of understanding its plausibility, should survive utilitarianism's fall.

The main task I set myself here is to provide an account of the hedonist's distinctive conception of pleasure and of its place in our good, and also of our reasons for and against thinking that pleasure *may* be and do what on a hedonistic theory of human nature and value it *must*. Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams have observed that contemporary "[u]tilitarianism . . . lacks a psychology Utilitarianism was born of a distinctive psychological theory It is a strange but very striking fact that in its more recent existence as contributing to moral and economic theory, it has lost those connections with psychological and political reality."¹⁶ It is strange, indeed. In the context of the late Victorian flowering of British ethics F.H. Bradley observed "that ethical theories rest in the end on preconceptions metaphysical and psychological."¹⁷ Perhaps it is not in all parts of ethics, or in all ways of doing ethics, that this is so. But certainly this seems the case here.

¹⁶ Sen and Williams, *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, Introduction, p. 21.

¹⁷ *Ethical Studies*, 2d edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927; 1st edition, 1876), Author's Preface to the First Edition, p. viii.

1.5 Ethics is concerned with what is good in human life, action and character, and therefore with what we should aim at in life, with what we should do and with what we should try to become. But ethical views differ about what it is that makes a life worth living, actions worth doing and character worth having—and also about how these questions are related. We have a notion of *intrinsic value*—of what is just on its own account good, so that there is at least some reason it ought to be or be done. Hedonists identify intrinsic value—as they do welfare—with pleasure. But it at least makes sense to say that someone has passed a pleasant vacation, or a pleasant lifetime, without having been well off in so living. Further, it at least makes sense to say that things other than pleasure or individual human welfare are for their own sake good. For example, it at least makes sense to say that knowledge, beauty, excellence of action or skill or character, and the continued existence of a family, nation, tribe or of the species are for their own sake good—regardless of their contribution to anyone's pleasure or welfare.

How can we even try to make progress with questions about the relations of pleasure, the good of the individual human person and the overall intrinsic value of human life on earth? In the same ways, I believe, as we try to make questions couched in other vague concepts more clear. For example, we have an intuitive concept of matter—of the tangible and persisting material that things are made of, that fully fills the space it occupies, and that resists external pushes and pulls. This, like our notions of welfare and of intrinsic value, seems to mark out something real. But, in the end, we have given up tangibility,

and even the requirement that matter must occupy space homogeneously, in order to get invariants that satisfy conservation laws, and thus satisfy the intuitive constraint that matter be something that persists through change. In doing physics, we have come to adopt many other strange and unintuitive views about matter, as the price of keeping and developing what we have come to regard as more essential ones. We say that our physics gives us a theory of the solid state, and a theory of matter. We also say that certain Presocratic philosophers had views about the nature of matter. It may be that the question whether we still mean the same is one that admits neither of all-or-nothing, nor yet of interesting, answers. Still, the common human abilities and beliefs by which we make our way among the enduring objects of our everyday world are preserved. And so is at least one of our vague prior intentions. This is our intention, in thinking and talking about matter, to refer to something responsible for (at least much of) a certain range of (sometimes intuitively 'given') phenomena, that is real, and about which we hope in the continuing process of inquiring to become more clear.

And similarly in ethics. But here, although we may be in approximate agreement about which people, how circumstanced socially and materially, are well off, we still have vague and competing conceptions of intrinsic human value—of just what it is about these human lives that makes them ultimately worthwhile. Here, as in other areas, we derive our earliest notions from those of the people about us. But whereas in technical fields we soon learn that there are experts beyond our family circle to whom laymen defer, in ethics (outside

traditional and religious communities) this is seldom so. Some of us say that meaning and value must be conferred on human life by a divine creator, legislator or lover—so that if there is no god, then nothing can really matter. Others of us value some achievements or social status, and think that lives are constituted as good by success of these kinds. Then there are those who, taking their start from the fact that we are said to help, benefit and respect others by furthering their desires, think that it is just getting whatever we want that makes life good. Weighing the comparative merits of these views—and of any others that present themselves—is what this part of ethics consists in. Maybe one candidate wins decisively; maybe there will be something of a tie; maybe nothing at all satisfactory emerges. But most likely a bit of all of these occurs, in various areas, so that disagreement continues, at least for quite some time—but perhaps not quite so much disagreement, or disagreement on quite the same range of weighted alternatives, as before.

I don't undertake to consider all possible competitors—or even all the competitors that I have just mentioned—here. That is a job for all of us in ethics—perhaps I should say, "for all of us", without qualification—over the long haul. I undertake here only to introduce my candidate, which is a version of hedonism, and to defend its coherence and plausibility. The defense will be principally against those objections, deriving from opposed conceptions of mind and value, that seem to me most productive of insight into the nature of hedonistic thinking, and into what is at issue in becoming committed to it.

The unreflectively perceived world is an unproblematically moral world: we naturally see our social world in its moral colors. Once, I suppose, there were only *different* human communities, none of which could see another's way of life as a live option for itself—but only as a fact (as it were) of another kind's natural history. But when (at least in the emerging West) traditional political culture and cosmological myth came to be subject to external comparison, rational criticism and rejection in a search for *objective* knowledge, particular prereflective moralities also came to be measured by this standard—and were found wanting.

Metaphysical ethics is a response to this situation—an attempt to reconstruct or justify moral beliefs so as to meet objectivity's demands. We want to make sense of our lives and of what we value in them in a way in which we have made sense of *some* things, and in which we now want to try to make sense of *everything*. Human action and life seem to make sense only if there is some point or value to them. We want this point or value to be *something*. We may now come to feel that it should be *something* in the way that making store inventories and doing natural history lead us to think of *something* as something of a kind with the things we can touch, feel or see. Hedonism is an expression of the natural (and, in this case, as I hope to show, *partially* justified) temptation to ground purpose and norms in what exists simply and in its own right among the contents of the world.

We have interests, purposes, and moral attitudes. Metaphysical ethics attempts to supply for these some *further* object—such as The Good Itself, God's Will or the philosophical hedonist's 'pleasure and

pain'. Philosophical hedonism is an expression of this tendency in thinking about the point or value of human life and action, as utilitarianism is in thinking about the morality of action as well. Both these ideas are in a way odd ones; but the latter more so than the former. For, if we *are* natural beings, then for our well-being to be a matter of natural fact may seem scarcely surprising; whereas the distinctive normative character of morality seems a most unlikely thing to find simply *there*, as just another feature present in the world. Philosophical hedonism finds in this difference a middle ground between naive realism and skepticism about morality; according to which morality has a derivative, but still metaphysically founded, point—a point that derives from the more basic facts about our lives' value.¹⁸

But both more and less thorough skeptics will reject this 'moderate' metaphysician's compromise: the more thorough skeptics preferring to abandon (or else epistemically downgrade) value along with morality proper, but the self-styled anti-skeptics denying that either moral or evaluative truth requires any such real foundation. This last persuasion has, I think, been gaining in acceptance recently, probably owing to the belated influence of Wittgenstein. It may (on reading Wittgenstein) seem that, at least in ethics (if not so obviously elsewhere) we really are dealing with autonomous 'language games' or 'forms of life'—so that any view that would import into ethics a mode of legitimation that admits metaphysical or psychological considerations must be wrong. (And Wittgenstein, indeed, held such a view about the autonomy of ethics even before he was, in his later philosophy,

¹⁸ As the distinctive normative force of morality does not.

attracted by similar views elsewhere.) I have already (in §1.3 above) said something about the more restricted kind of autonomy I believe morality to have. But the view that life, knowledge, or discourse can be known a priori to be permanently separable into mutually irrelevant domains (such as 'science', 'religion', and 'ethics') seems to me a wrong view—and also a culturally provincial one.

We rightly use *all* that we believe ourselves to know *wherever we can*. And we rightly resort again to the strategies we believe already to have proved successful—even where the old and new areas of application seem to be related only by a tenuous analogy, but even more where the areas of application seem more substantively related. It is part of what we mean by "rationality" that the success of a way of thinking in one area provides reason to believe it may prove successful also in others—and that a second success causes us to treat the two areas less as separate ones than we did before. We cannot know in advance that a particular 'boundary crossing' will be a fruitful one. But neither can the possibility be ruled out in advance. In particular, the possibility of integrating the thinking we do about pleasure when doing ethics with what else we think about pleasure (for example, in the metaphysics of mind, or in psychology) seems worth looking into. And this may be so even if the good that belongs to our experience of pleasure be only part of our good—and even if (as I suppose) concern for the human good is only *one* among many concerns and constraints constituting morality.

II

PLEASURE VS. PREFERENCE

2.1 TWO PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

One perspective on ethics starts from the necessity we, as social animals, live under of coordinating our actions and avoiding damaging conflict if we are to thrive and endure. This approach takes the disparate desires and needs of individual human persons (or groups) as given, and morality as a means by which inner harmony (or cooperation) may be assured or restored, and conflict avoided or resolved. Ethics, on this view, is wholly concerned with guiding practice: with finding and applying methods of decision that will yield stable arrangements agreeable to the interests (or parties) concerned. But the question *why* these human persons or groups (and the reconciling of their potentially conflicting desires and interests, and therefore morality) *should* be of any concern to us is not a question with which this approach is concerned.¹

Another approach, that of most Western philosophical ethics, asks this question. Theories of this sort do not aim *only* at guiding practice by generating decisions and general policies that will resolve or prevent conflict. They aim, rather, at finding decisions and policies that have

¹ But *who* asks this question? We do; in those moments of well-nigh total detachment in which we step back from any personal or vicarious engagement, and ask what the good of it all is—even what is the good of human living at all.

a deeper ground—and at finding this deeper justification or rationale. An ultimate appeal is made to something (whether the good or right or virtue or God or whatever) beyond the specific claims and reasons (about, for example, entitlements or fairness or special obligations and desert) that most obviously carry weight in concrete problem situations.

The first approach regards the validity belonging to ethics as wholly immanent in problems of human practice. The second, metaphysical approach regards ethical validity as deriving from some deeper ground. An ethics of this second kind need not aim at a direct derivation of what is right from this deeper ground, as certain of its variants (such as classical utilitarianism) do. It may, minimally, presuppose only that there is *some* deeper ground or other, perhaps unknown to us. Or it may provide, in addition, some (perhaps sketchy) indication of where this deeper ground lies, and of the (perhaps indirect and non-reducing) relation to practical norms in which it stands. In this latter task it may draw on considerations appealed to also in ethics of the first, pragmatic kind. But what it cannot do is leave practical questions to be settled completely by the give-and-take of competing individual and social preferences and demands, unconstrained by their connection with such a deeper ground. For that would be to weigh metaphysical anchor and let ethics float free.²

² Perhaps Rawls' ethics (at least in the recent papers cited in Chapter One, n. 1) and Dewey's may serve as examples of the first, *pragmatic* approach; and Plato's ethics in the *Republic*, and also philosophical hedonism as developed here, as examples of the second, *metaphysical* approach. The distinction is closely analogous to that between pragmatism or idealism and metaphysical realism in contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of science. And analogously: whether Kant or Hegel or Dewey point the way to either

2.2 WHAT WELFARE ISN'T

Classical utilitarianism, although it was a view of the second, metaphysical kind,³ may be regarded from either point of view. Taking the first, it is natural to regard its consequentialist aspect as more important than its hedonism, because this seems to express the essential idea of a simple system by which one might guide or understand all practical decisions, whereas exactly what (if anything) the underlying ranking of states of affairs represents will be of lesser concern. (It may represent only the resultant of all the competing motivational or normative pulls and pushes, rather than measure any intuitive or natural magnitude.) Further, on this *pragmatic* view of things, it may seem reasonable to reinterpret utility as just the fulfillment of desire, since desires, in the problematic situations in which actions are actually decided upon, seem to be what is given. The pragmatic approach takes the surface features of such situations (often involving human conflict) as given, and takes us into the problem of their resolution *in medias res*. Often, it will be especially concerned with justifying its solution to the parties concerned. But on the second, *metaphysical* point of

a genuine middle course between these extremes—or to a way to undermine the distinction between them—, or else simply collapse into anti-realism, will be similarly controversial. But in ethics pragmatic views are both more plausible and more prevalent—and, as it were, on their home ground.

³ Even this has been controversial—although it should not be. On Bentham, see H.L.A Hart, "Bentham", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48(1962): 297-320, p. 303n for relevant quotations from, and references to, Bentham which Hart uses to make his case that Bentham's view is based on an experiential interpretation of pleasure. (Hart's paper is reprinted in *Bentham: Ten Critical Essays*, Bhikhu Parekh, ed. [London: Frank Cass, 1974], pp. 73-95; p. 93, n. 13.) See also my discussions of Bentham in Chapter Five, and of Mill in Chapter Three.

view, a further, objective justification may be sought. For ethics is to be founded on real, experiential value that need not correspond simply to any presumptive value that enters the actual fray emblazoned on the banner of this or that one of the contending parties—such as their subjective wants or believed interests or their claims to justice and right. We should then be faced with the task of finding out what this real value—pleasure—is. In accord with this second, metaphysical approach to ethics, I shall be foremost concerned here with the *value theory* which was joined with consequentialism in classical utilitarianism—with evaluative hedonism.

Similarly influenced by behaviorist and verificationist methodology, contemporary welfare economists and philosophers have adopted preference or choice interpretations of utility.⁴ In the theory of price and demand⁵ such notions clearly have their place. And the presumption that a person is *generally* the best judge of his own interest has figured at least since Bentham and Mill among the foundations of liberal democratic theory. We respect others by respecting their expressed preferences. And we *ordinarily* benefit them when we enable them to get what they want. Further, our sense of having and pursuing our own goals partly constitutes *our awareness of*

⁴ For general discussions of preference interpretations of utility, see Richard B. Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) and "Two Concepts of Utility", in *The Limits of Utilitarianism*, ed. Harlan B. Miller and William H. Williams (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 169-185; and Amartya Sen, "Rational Fools, A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6,4 (1977): pp. 317-344 and "Plural Utility," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, n.s. 81(1980-81): 193-215, esp. pp. 198-207.

⁵ E.g., Paul A. Samuelson, "A Note on the Pure Theory of Consumers' Behavior," *Economica* 5(1938): 67-71.

having interests, and living lives, of our own. But to *analyze* either pleasure or welfare as the satisfaction of preference or choice seems downright silly on our usual understanding of things. To say that *a person is satisfied* is to say something about his state of mind, but to say that *preferences of his are satisfied* is not. It is not to say anything (nonrelational) about the person, but only to say that a state of affairs he preferred to others (or, what is not the same thing, a state of affairs he wanted or preferred absolutely; i.e., preferred to nothing's existing at all) is, or comes to be, the case. *But its being the case need not have any real effect on the person!*⁶ In contrast, a hedonistic view makes a person's good wholly a matter of what (as we ordinarily think) is nonrelationally the case with *him*; and, more specifically, with his immediate experience.

Why have contemporary philosophers been tempted to identify either pleasure or welfare with the satisfaction of preference? Originally, perhaps, this was because of the influence of developments in economics we have already mentioned, themselves originally motivated by the discovery of ordinal utility's sufficiency for the study of prices and markets.⁷ And the same behaviorist and verificationist methodology that inspired the spread of this ordinal preference approach into welfare economics had also its direct effect on philosophy. Today, there is perhaps another factor at work as well: the tendency to

⁶ We do not ordinarily think of a person's plans and preferences as so intimately connected with him, or of their fulfillment as so intimately related to his, that what effects their satisfaction automatically counts as affecting him, even in causal isolation from the man and after he is dead.

⁷ Chapter One; p. 13 and p. 20, n. 13.

account for psychological states as relations to sentences or propositions. We are anyway pursuing a philosophical understanding of language. One may be tempted to try to exploit our understanding of semantics in the philosophy of mind and in ethics—by first analyzing desire as some relation of persons to sentences (or propositions or the like), and then analyzing the person's claim to either well-being or satisfaction as his claim to be thus related to sentences that are actually 'satisfied' or true.

We *interpret* behavior in linguistic terms. And rightly so! For how else, if not by sentences, can we characterize people's information and purposes, and the inferential and reason-giving relations of these? But this interpretation is at most the beginning of our understanding of mind, and not the whole game. However that game is to go, it should be amply clear, even before any real argument, that, when we take a subject's pleasure or welfare to amount to just the satisfaction of sentences expressing his preferences, we have gone wrong. We have confused the good or evil belonging to a human life with the manner of success or failure belonging to a Five Year Plan.⁸

There are preference satisfaction accounts of pleasure, and also preference satisfaction accounts of welfare. (Evaluative hedonism, of course, collapses this distinction by equating an animal's welfare with the pleasure it experiences—its being well off with its feeling good.)

⁸ Compare John Rawls: "The rational plan for a person determines his good. Here I adapt Royce's thought that a person may be regarded as a human life lived according to a plan. . . . Indeed, with certain qualifications we can think of a person as being happy when he is in the way of a successful execution (more or less) of a rational plan of life drawn up under (more or less) favorable conditions, and he is reasonably confident that his plan can be carried through." *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 408-9.

Theories of both types, insofar as they are competitors of hedonism, are my targets here. I shall raise some objections that apply specifically to the preference accounts of pleasure first. Then I shall raise a more general problem that really applies equally to preference accounts of pleasure and of welfare, although I shall pose it in terms of welfare.

Usually one is pleased by something one wants coming to pass. But not necessarily or even always, as everyday experience, dramatized by the folk stories about wishes that turn out badly, suffices to show. In self-inflicted misery or disaster, it need not even be the case that the unpleasant consequences of the preference's satisfaction only *outweigh* the pleasure of the preference's being satisfied. Sometimes the unhappy chooser seems to get *no* pleasure (and no lessening of anguish) from the fact that he is, in a way, getting what he wanted. It may even be that he derives only the added pain of regret on this account, instead. Thus it is not always the case even that *knowing* one's preference to be satisfied is pleasant. Further, even where this is the case, it seems that a similar *believing* would also have sufficed, irrespective of its truth. The view that the satisfaction of preference itself (once this has been distinguished from the knowledge or belief that one's preference has been satisfied) is a sufficient condition for the experiencing of pleasure seems devoid of plausibility or merit.

Satisfaction of preferences fails as an analysis of pleasure not only on this ground of its failing to be even a sufficient condition. It fails to be necessary in the right way, as well. For one can be surprised by the pleasure one finds in something one never wanted. Of course,

one may *then* be glad that one *was* thus surprised and pleased. But that retrospective preference would not be what caused the surprise to be pleasant. Neither would it be what its pleasantness consisted in—which is what saving the analysis of pleasure in terms of the satisfaction of desire would, strictly, demand.⁹

The general difficulty facing (the more naive and intuitive) preference theories of welfare is as follows. There seems always to be a fact about how well life goes for someone—about his welfare or well-being—even when judgments and comparisons of how well off he is come to us only with difficulty, or not at all. There is thus a strongly intuitive constraint on any conception of a person's welfare (or, at least, of any single material component of it) that welfare (or, the component) should not be a matter for the theorist's arbitrary decision and that it should always be *at least somewhat* definite and determinate in degree.¹⁰ But many preferences that people have will be

⁹ Many of the points of this, and also of the preceding, paragraph have been anticipated by E.J. Bond in the course of his criticism of the view that value is constituted by desire. *Reason and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 44-47.

¹⁰ This claim about the limits of indeterminacy (and vagueness) is itself vague. And the complicating qualifications introduced to allow views more sophisticated than, for example, naive hedonism make the resulting weaker claim appear *less* intuitive than the unqualified claim would. The intuition taken simply and at its face value would really demand precise and completely determinate facts about human value—such as a naive hedonism, for example, promises. But how unintuitive is it to allow these facts to be *somewhat* indefinite? Only *somewhat* unintuitive.

The qualification added in parenthesis (in the text) allows that welfare may include contributions from several components, with incommensurability between components. For example, one might think that, while zero and units may be fixed for pleasure and pain scales independently, our concept of welfare leaves it quite vague how to make tradeoffs between pleasure and pain—so that there are many legitimate ways of ranking the lives of people. Or the

'ungrounded',¹¹ so that this constraint cannot be satisfied. Such cases are quite usual, and present the preference theorist with a problem that cannot be denied. Consider, for example, the everyday case of people with strong reciprocal preferences for each other's welfare. There is no impossibility, certainly, in one of them having such an altruistic preference. Neither, then, should there be for two. But the overall satisfaction of each one's preferences cannot be decided independently of whether the preferences of the other are satisfied, if each one's welfare is (or even includes a component based upon!) the satisfaction of all his preferences, including his preference for the other's welfare. But that would involve, in turn, the satisfaction of the other's preference for the first man's preferences to be satisfied

This problem may be dramatized by imagining two mutually devoted but selfless people whose only preferences are for each other's welfare—which would (on this view of welfare) be just preferences for

incommensurability could come between pleasure and some excellence of mind or character or skill or body, or between kinds of pleasure or kinds of human excellence. But such vagueness or indeterminacy would have a source—in the putting together of the various types of value which, on such an account, would *separately* constitute the real bases for our intuitive notion of welfare. Other types of vagueness might also be theoretically motivated. What I claim is *too* unintuitive is *unbounded* vagueness or indeterminacy *within one component of welfare*—or in the welfare of a person on a unitary account of welfare.

¹¹ Intuitively, that is: there will be nothing that makes them satisfied (or unsatisfied), rather than not. (This will be made concrete in the following example.) My use of "ungrounded" parallels its use in work on the theory of truth, where formally analogous difficulties in avoiding arbitrariness and paradox arise. See Saul Kripke, "Outline of a Theory of Truth", *The Journal of Philosophy* 72, 19 (November 1975): 690-716. Kripke provides both an informal exposition and a formal development of 'groundedness'. On the earlier use of the term in this connection, see Kripke's n. 8, p. 694.

the satisfaction of each other's corresponding preference—and so on! That preferences and desires can, in this way, be empty is in itself no paradox. *But what are we to say (on the preference view) about the person's welfare?* The preference theorist owes us an answer. He should not treat these cases as 'don't cares' in which welfare is simply left undefined, or else assigned either a very great or a very small value (or even an intermediate value) arbitrarily. For while there may be *no proposition preferred* in these cases, *there are real people here nevertheless*. The question how it goes with them deserves a real answer—and not an arbitrary or a boundlessly vague one. (Treating human satisfaction like the 'satisfaction' of sentences, besides failing to produce evaluatively acceptable results, does not even let us avoid messy problems. It only leads away from problems appropriate to our subject, and into other problems—in this case, into problems belonging to the theory of truth.) Such a view of human welfare may *appear* to have the advantages of simplicity, clarity and precision.¹² But this

¹² Phillip Bricker proposes a precise formulation of such a view in "Prudence", *Journal of Philosophy* 77,7 (July 1980): 381-401. "Prudence directs the agent: Act so as to be maximally satisfied with your world! or, more precisely: Actualize a world for which [the lifetime average of the Lebesgue integral of your (often temporary) preferences' timeless satisfaction] is a maximum!" (p. 401) The idea is that someone's life is good just to the extent that his *preferences* (averaged over his lifetime) are satisfied. (I refer the reader interested in the details and their motivation to Bricker's article, which is relevant here more as an example of the preference satisfaction approach than for its distinctive features.)

The counterintuitiveness of always weighting equally the satisfaction (at a time) of past and present preferences is argued persuasively by Brandt in his writings mentioned above. Further, it seems that on Bricker's view my best strategy would be for me to have my preferences changed so that I come to prefer (as strongly as possible!) only what is known with certainty. Bricker avoids such consequences only by adopting the view that radical change of my preferences may make me a different person, so that I would not

appearance is, in part, misleading; and the preference view of welfare seems anyway to be wrong.¹³

survive the change, and no satisfaction of these new preferences would be *mine*. But, even if we grant this odd view, Bricker remains committed to the counterintuitive consequence that someone whose conative life were thus truncated (*whoever he would be!*) would, in virtue of having such a truncated conative existence, have a very good, and perhaps the best of all, lives! Further, is it plausible to think that someone whose only weighty preference is a strong (but timeless) one for something (e.g., the downfall of the Soviet system) may have the best or worst of lives, depending on whether or not this preference is satisfied at a very distant future time? Or that someone whose only weighty desire is a strong one for Goldbach's conjecture to be true has the best or worst of lives depending on the necessary truth or falsity of this number-theoretic conjecture? This would seem very odd.

- ¹³ But the approach may avoid this difficulty by moving on to more complicated forms. The best motivated ways to do this seem to involve going substantively psychological—and not trying to get one's philosophy of language to do double service as one's psychology. Then one might, for example, claim that everyone must, by psychological necessity, have some grounded preferences—perhaps biologically based desires for food, drink, air or pleasure. These, then, would ground the welfares of the people in my example. Moreover, the formerly ungrounded altruistic preferences (for each other's welfare, i.e., preference satisfaction) would now, due to the introduction of the new preferences, be grounded at the next level.

But the new theory is importantly different. It must deny what appears to be a psychological possibility—and what would certainly be possible if the 'propositional attitudes' preference and desire *were* relations that could hold (or fail to hold) between any person and any set of propositions (or the like). Either the theory will be falsifiable (and, it seems, empirically false), or else it admits preferences beyond what can be inferred analytically from choice behavior or verbal avowal of preferences. In that case it will have lost much of the supposed advantage of the preference approach over full-blooded hedonism. Its evaluations of welfare would not be logically decided by any amount of behavioral evidence (plus information about the satisfaction conditions of sentential preferences that might be ascribed on a behavioral basis). The new theory (like my candidate, experientially-based hedonism) gives hostages to psychological fact and theory. But that is just what the original move from experiential hedonism to the preference satisfaction approach was supposed to avoid.

I conclude in the text only that the original preference satisfaction view "*seems . . . wrong*", advisedly. For even if the

Men desire many things for their own sake—to name a few, long life, children, victory and fame. So much no one, not even a hedonist, should deny.¹⁴ Hedonism agrees with common sense in denying that desire satisfaction (at least if conceived in the same way as preference satisfaction above) is the whole of human welfare. Perhaps some versions of common sense count getting what one wants as part of one's good (although not as the only thing that makes one's life good in itself). But it would seem more commonsensical to count the objective satisfaction of one's preferences only insofar as this led to one's actually feeling satisfied, or to something that otherwise improved one's life. Indeed, the possession of some 'good things' external to the self may seem intrinsically good for the person possessing them—even where he does not desire them and fails otherwise to benefit *from* them. The thought is that, even should their possession fail to yield enjoyment, or to lead to any *other* good, possessing things such as wealth and children and social position still make someone's life a better one than it would otherwise have been. Such is, perhaps, the common sense of peasants, heroes, and men of affairs. It is a common sense that the hedonist denies.

view is not further complicated as I have just now suggested, the intuition about the definiteness of welfare can be bucked, for a price. But, why, then, bother having any notion of welfare? (The counterintuitiveness of a preference theory of *pleasure* would, on similar grounds, be even greater, since there the intuitive pull toward definiteness is stronger still.)

¹⁴ Although many in the two centuries beginning with Hobbes did, thus denying the commonsense distinctions between self-seeking and altruistic, and between pleasure-seeking and otherwise motivated, actions. Hence, another source of the confusion of pleasure with desire satisfaction—if it is thought that every desire is a desire for pleasure, the two seem to come down to the same thing.

Still, the commonsense view that external goods may make a direct difference for welfare provides little support for the preference view. Indeed, it points the way to explain more parsimoniously further evidence that might otherwise appear to support the preference view. For people do weigh their achievement of their goals, as well as their experiential pleasure, in appraising how well their lives go.¹⁵ But a more likely explanation (than that people value their overall preference satisfaction for its own sake) would be that people pursue things they think good to have, the attaining of which they think would make their lives better—perhaps by the mere attaining of them. This, then, would be why they weigh the achievement of their goals, beyond their apparent contribution to their pleasure, in evaluating their lives. (And further, finding themselves pursuing things the reasons for which are absent or forgotten, they suppose that they must have the standard sort of reason for pursuing them: that these things are good to have, and that attaining them would make their lives better—and if not more pleasant, then *anyhow* better.)

A further motive for taking the preference view of welfare is akin to a motive for adopting hedonism: the hope to have a theory of value that fits in nicely with an explanatory theory of behavior. Now, if we sought only pleasure, as some hedonists believed, that fact might be used to support evaluative hedonism.¹⁶ But since it seems we may seek all sorts of things, should not this tend in the same way to support the

¹⁵ Ruut Veenhoven, *Conditions of Happiness* (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel), 1984, especially §2.3, pp. 25-32. This work reviews and synthesizes the empirical literature.

¹⁶ This strategy is discussed, and elaborated on, in Chapters Three and Five, below.

view that welfare is the satisfaction of desire (where this is just the satisfaction of whatever it is inferred from verbal avowal or choice behavior that we prefer)? Not if the motive is to tie value to an explanatory psychological theory. For satisfaction of preference is nothing psychologically real. It is no natural kind such as could figure in an explanatory theory. Nor is preference satisfaction the goal of some highest order desire that each of us has. Rather, it is in many particular cases the tautological object of psychologically real desire, but in the general case only an artifact of describing behavior in 'belief and desire', or in utility and subjective probability, terms. But such interpretation of behavior may be possible even where, to the utility assignment, no real desires—or other psychologically real states—uniformly correspond.¹⁷

There are other uses of "desire" and of "satisfaction of desire" that *are* apposite to discussions of human well-being. But these involve reference to real psychological or experiential states. *This* satisfaction would be no mere logical consequence of something desired coming to pass, as satisfaction of preference, on the view we rejected, would be.¹⁸ And any views that make welfare a matter of this satisfaction-of-desire (which is supposed to be something psychologically or experientially real) will not be preferred to hedonism on the old behaviorist or positivist grounds. And (unless such views collapse into hedonism) their intuitive motivation seems less clear.

¹⁷ I am indebted here to some remarks of Richard Jeffrey in a 1984 Princeton seminar, in which the difference between drive-driven desires and von Neumann-Morgenstern utilities was emphasized.

¹⁸ This point has been made by Bond, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

There remains, however, a more general reason why philosophers have been inclined to adopt preference views of pleasure and welfare than we have considered so far. It is the belief that no full-blooded hedonistic conception of pleasure, and thus of welfare, can get off the ground, so that the preference conception must be the only game in town. My main task in this essay will be to show, by producing an acceptable version of hedonism, that this is not so.

2.3 WHAT PLEASURE IS

What is pleasure? What is its place in human nature? And how should its role in action and the human good be understood? These related questions shared a long and lively history before psychology separated from philosophy, and ethics was misguidedly severed from both psychology and metaphysics. The separation of these questions in this century has barred the way to their understanding just as surely as their confusion did in centuries past. Philosophers, psychologists, and economists have written as if doubts about introspection were sufficient warrant to believe that pleasure is (1) nothing at all; or (2) nothing of which we have any usable conception; ¹⁹ or (3) nothing

¹⁹ G.E.M. Anscombe (in *Intention*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963 [1st ed., 1957]), §40, p. 77) takes this second position on what she takes to be Wittgensteinian grounds. This passage is quoted and endorsed by John Rawls in his influential book *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 559, n. 27. I shall return to Anscombe's claim and its basis later in this section, and again at greater length in Chapter Four.

The first (of the four) anti-hedonistic positions cited in the text might be attributed to Wittgenstein on the basis of remarks taken out of context. (E.g., "'Freude' bezeichnet gar nichts." *Zettel*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H von Wright, tr. Anscombe [Oxford: Blackwell, 1967], §487.) But this attribution would be wrong, as the very next section (488) of that text should suffice to show:

that takes place at determinate times in human experience;²⁰ and certainly (4) nothing that can exist in different times, lives, and circumstances in determinately different degrees, as utilitarian thinking about welfare and its promotion had supposed.²¹ In short, they ruled out of order, on the basis of skeptical considerations themselves eminently questionable, judgments that in everyday life, as much as in philosophy, seem both natural and plausible—and to run into as little trouble as one might reasonably (with a non-technical concept) demand.

Anscombe asserts that

problems exist in connection with 'wanting' and 'good'. . . .

The cause of blindness to these problems seems to have been the epistemology characteristic of Locke, and also of Hume. . . . What ought to rule that [utilitarian] philosophy out of consideration at once is the fact that it always proceeds as if 'pleasure' were a quite unproblematic concept. No doubt it was possible to have this assumption because the notion that pleasure was a particular internal impression was uncritically inherited from the British empiricists. But it shows surprising superficiality both to accept this notion and to treat pleasure as quite generally the point of doing

"Gemuetsbewegungen. Ihnen gemeinsam echte Dauer, ein Verlauf. (Zorn flammt auf, laesst nach, verschwindet; ebenso: Freude, Depression, Furcht.)" Despite his use of polemical language in combating behaviorist, empiricist and materialist theories of the meaning and denotation of mental terms, it seems clear from this latter text, and consistent with the related published writings, that Wittgenstein held none of the first three (of the four) anti-hedonistic positions I cite here.

²⁰ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), p. 109: ". . . [J]oy and grief are not episodes . . ." See also *Dilemmas* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1954), especially p. 59; and "Pleasure", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. 28 (1954): 135-146.

²¹ Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1940 [1st ed., 1932]). Robbins believes that, while individual ordinal preferences belong to the subject matter of 'pure' value-free science, interpersonal comparisons are 'essentially normative' and 'conventional' because 'untestable' (p. 139). See Chapter One, notes 5 and 13, for further citations and references.

anything. We might adapt a remark of Wittgenstein's about meaning and say 'Pleasure cannot be an impression; for no impression could have the consequences of pleasure'. They were saying that something which they thought of as like a particular tickle or itch was quite obviously the point of doing anything whatsoever.²²

But if, on the other hand, we give up this (supposedly) incoherent view of pleasure, then we "leave the concept of 'pleasure' in its obscurity."²³ It is then devoid of clear content, and so useless for the hedonist's theoretical purposes, whether in ethics or in motivational psychology. Hedonism in either area should therefore (in Anscombe's view) be dismissed out of hand.

It is unlikely that anyone ever thought pleasure to be quite "like a particular tickle or itch". Locke did class both pleasure and pain as "simple ideas"—albeit as ones that could "join themselves to almost all our *ideas* both of sensation and reflection".²⁴ And Hume wrote "that under the term *pleasure* we comprehend sensations, which are very different from each other, and which have only such distant resemblance, as is requisite to make them be express'd by the same abstract term."²⁵ It seems unfair to impute to these authors, without qualification and in the absence of extended discussion, the attribution of *all* characteristics of their theoretical model to their theories' subject matter—especially since they seem to show at least *some* awareness of the differences between pleasure and sensations proper (such as those of sight and taste, and bodily sensations such as tingles and tickles) in

²² G.E.M. Anscombe, *Intention*, p. 77.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* II,7.

²⁵ *A Treatise of Human Nature* III,i,2.

the passages I have just quoted. And, points of interpretation aside, the real danger of being misled by talk of the 'similarity of sensations' does not seem in itself enough to make *any and all* theories that employ such resources confused.

Sometimes we feel good and sometimes we feel bad; and sometimes we feel somewhere in between. These facts about *how good someone feels* at a time are facts about his *pleasure*. We are as certain that there are particular facts of this sort, and that we often have knowledge of them, as we are about anything. And we are also confident that the difference between feeling good and feeling bad marks a distinction that is real. The hedonist needs "pleasure" and "pain" to mark out no special tickles or tingles, but rather to mark the real distinction between feeling good and feeling bad. Or, to be at once theoretically bolder and more precise: to mark a dimension of experience. Specifically: a *nonsensory dimension ('of feeling')* salient in appetitive and aversive motivation and action; partitioning affect (that is, feelings, emotions, enjoyments, sufferings, moods, and the like) into positive affect immediately appreciated or liked for its own sake, having which we feel good; and negative affect immediately disliked for its own sake, having which we feel bad. This difference is easily remarked in our own experience, and also in our observation of others. It should be no more problematic in philosophy than it is in everyday life or in psychology. Hume's 'distant resemblance' of experiences of pleasure may be only that resemblance all experiencings immediately appreciated or liked in their moment of experiencing have just in virtue of this fact—where the immediate appreciation is intrinsic

to the immediate momentary experiencing itself.²⁶

Now, while Anscombe would be right in saying that nothing "like [the *sensory* quale of] a particular tickle or itch" could give action its point, it seems that whatever gives human sufferings and enjoyments *their* point might well give human life and action their point, too. The hedonist's contention that it is just their pleasure and pain that give particular sufferings and enjoyments *their* point is not absurd. But, then, neither is the claim that pleasure gives point and value to human living—and thus gives us an ultimate reason for living and acting—absurd. So we should not, *pace* Anscombe, rule hedonism out of court on her grounds—at least to the extent that we have penetrated them so far.²⁷ But what manner of beings should we have to be for pleasure, as the hedonist conceives it, to give us reasons for action, or to constitute our good? And what reasons do we have for and against believing that we may be such beings, and that pleasure (as the hedonist conceives it) may be all—or even an important part—of the human value we know? I turn to these questions in the following chapters.

²⁶ This (at least so far as the dash) is at least close to Sidgwick's considered view, in *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), II,ii,2 (pp. 125-30) and III,xiv,4 and 5 (pp. 398-403). I speak of experiencings here *not* in order to distinguish them from experiences, or from the pleasure that is in them immediately experienced, but rather to deny any distinction between such immediate experiencings and experiences, or between them and what is in having them immediately experienced. And I intend the 'momentary experiencings' here to take some finite time. See §4.1, notes 1 and 2, below.

²⁷ But we shall find more in, or behind, her argument in Chapter Four.

III

FEELING AND ACTION

3.1 FROM EVALUATIVE HEDONISM TO PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Experiences of pleasure are those experiencings that are immediately appreciated or liked in their experiential moment—experiencings in which we feel good. The hedonist holds that what makes a life good for someone is just the pleasure that it contains in this way, and that what makes life bad is just its pain—whatever internal to our experiencing is immediately *disliked* in a similar way. Even if pleasure and pain are not susceptible to measurement along a single dimensional scale, and even if different kinds of pleasure or different kinds of pain were similarly incommensurable, or even totally incomparable, this thesis would still have content and make a point. It would exclude some considerations (such as having posthumous progeny and fame) from our appraisals of the goodness of someone's life, and include others. And in doing so it would give direction to our concerns for welfare.

Hedonistic philosophers go further, since they wish not merely to proclaim their view of human value or to picture it as it appears from within, but also to provide a reasoned defense of their view by connecting it with other things. They have done this principally by appealing to arguments and evidence and theories about human nature, and especially about the relation of pleasure to action.

A satisfactory reconstruction of hedonistic philosophical thought should explain the plausibility of these arguments. And, ideally, it should itself derive support from some such argument, and not just explain the plausibility of these arguments away. But it must in the course respect the truism that there are many things besides pleasure that men desire for their own sakes, for to deny this would be to forfeit its own claim to be believed. This sets the task before us now.

Only the convinced intuitive hedonist who sees no need for further theoretical motivation or elaboration of his view should be satisfied with what we have said so far. And he will be unable to respond, at this pretheoretical level, to skeptics about the hedonist's conception of pleasure—who deny that there is anything in experiential or psychological reality to which this conception corresponds. The intuitive hedonist, who left to himself would see no need for going further into metaphysics and psychology than we have already, may in this way be dragged into our further project by his philosophical critics—unless, like Philebus in the Platonic dialogue of that name, he refuses to argue or defend his case at all.

There, it is Protarchus who consents to carry on the argument, and who faces the onslaught of Plato's 'Socrates':

. . . I know pleasure to be various For although it is named simply, like some single thing, it clearly has many forms that are somehow unlike each other. For example, we say that the person who indulges himself enjoys himself—but also that someone self-controlled enjoys himself by being self-controlled; and that someone foolish, and full of foolish opinions and hopes, enjoys himself—but also that the right-thinking person enjoys himself in thinking aright. Now, if someone said these kinds of pleasures were like each other, wouldn't we think him foolish—and be right [in

thinking so]?¹

Even without appeal to such normatively loaded examples, we might well wonder what the pleasures of listening to a recitation of Homer, of running, of drinking wine and of philosophical insight might have in common. And this leads to doubt that our usual distinction between feeling good and feeling bad is a single real distinction founded in the nature of things.

When Protarchus doubts that his case has been hurt by these considerations, Plato's 'Socrates' challenges him:

What one thing, then, is the same in the bad and good pleasures alike, that you call all pleasures good?²

The hedonistic claim under consideration is not merely that all pleasure is good, but *that pleasure is what makes life good*—that all things in life are good just insofar as, and because, they are pleasant.³ The anti-hedonistic challenge posed by 'Socrates' may be constructed as follows:

The hedonist infers that pleasure is a good-making characteristic as an *explanation* of the acknowledged fact that *some* pleasure is

¹ *Philebus* 12CD: . . . την δε ἡδονὴν οἶδα ὡς ἐστὶ ποικίλον, . . . ἐστὶ γὰρ, ἀκουεῖν μὲν οὕτως ἀπλῶς, ἐν τῇ, μορφᾷ δὲ δήπου παντοίας εἰληφέ και τῖνα τροπὸν ἀνομοίους ἀλλήλαις. ἰδε γὰρ: ἡδεσθαὶ μὲν φάμεν τὸν ἀκολασταίνοντα ἀνθρώπων, ἡδεσθαὶ δὲ και τὸν σωφρονούντα αὐτῷ τῷ σωφρονεῖν: ἡδεσθαὶ δ' αὐ και τὸν ἀνοηταίνοντα και ἀνοητῶν δοξῶν και ἐλπίδων μέστον, ἡδεσθαὶ δ' αὐ και τὸν φρονούντα αὐτῷ τῷ φρονεῖν: και τούτων τῶν ἡδονῶν ἑκατέρας πῶς ἀν τῖς ὁμοίας ἀλλήλαις εἶναι λέξων οὐκ ἀνοητὸς φαίνοντο εὐδίκως;

² *Philebus* 13B: τί οὐν δή ταῦτον ἐν ταῖς κακαῖς ὁμοίαις και ἐν ἀγαθαῖς ἐνὸν πάσας ἡδονὰς ἀγαθὸν εἶναι προσᾶζορευεῖς;

³ So much is apparent from the statement of the issue at the opening of the dialogue and later.

good.⁴ But if being characterized by pleasure makes things good, then it seems that *all* pleasure will thereby be good, just because and insofar as it is pleasure. We may suppose both the hedonist and his opponent to be agreed that neither explanatory nor inductive inference can be based on just any arbitrary predicate or heterogeneous class of things—but only on ones that correspond to real properties of things, such as can figure in scientific explanations. Then the line of thought that proceeds from the acknowledged goodness of *some* pleasure to the goodness of *all* pleasure (and onward to pleasure's being *the* good for man) depends crucially on pleasure's being such a property. But this the skeptic about the hedonistic conception of pleasure denies. He argues that pleasant experiences are heterogeneous in such a way that pleasure is no real property they have in common. He charges the hedonist with failing to consider the diversity of the things that people take pleasure in. This skeptic seems to assume (contrary to the hedonist) that the pleasantness of experience is essentially an aspect of the subject's doing, or interaction with, what he takes pleasure in. Then the diversity of the objects of pleasure suggests that pleasure is no real property of experience, just as it is no real property of external things. But, then, pleasure would not be such a property as can figure in scientific or philosophical explanations. In particular, it could not play its intended role in the hedonist's account of human value.

⁴ The hedonist's argument will involve what has been called "inference to the best explanation". Gilbert Harman, "The Inference to the Best Explanation", *Philosophical Review* 74,1 (January 1965): 88-95.

Further yet, there are many pleasures that common sense will regard as evil or foolish or base, and unworthy of a good human life. A more balanced diet of examples will include cases of foolish amusement and shameful or base self-indulgence. Taking note of these cases, we should reject the thesis that pleasure is always good. And we should also have reason to doubt any explanatory claims to the effect that pleasure on its own makes anything good. We should do better to look to whatever it is that *differentiates* good from bad pleasure, if we are looking for something to account for the good we find in human life.

These considerations support Anscombe's challenge to hedonism: Why should we suppose that the hedonist's conception of pleasure gives us anything that is even a candidate for being what makes living good? Why should we grant the hedonist that "pleasure" names anything at all determinate, let alone something that might bear the weight of his argument or be our good?⁵ Putting the hedonistic conception of pleasure to explanatory work would be the best response to this skeptical challenge. It seems that explanatory role is a mark of a property's reality. And it further seems that psychology is that area of inquiry to which explanations appealing to pleasure are most likely to belong. Then psychology—and, in particular, the theory of motivated action—seems the natural direction for the hedonistic theorist to turn.

⁵ Similarly, one might skeptically challenge the contemporary utilitarian: *What* is it you want to maximize? (This is a question that, when I was a beginning graduate student at Princeton, Professor Thomas Scanlon asked me.)

3.2 PLEASURE AND MOTIVATION IN HEDONISTIC THINKING

Pleasure-and-pain is the putative dimension of feeling salient in appetitive and aversive motivation and action, effecting a partition of affective states and processes into positive and negative ones.

Hedonistic thinking is theoretical thinking based on a picture of human (and kindred animal) nature according to which action and value are essentially constituted by, and organized around, a functionally central capacity for feeling pleasure and pain. This, or a similar, picture's general applicability to human and animal action has often been taken for granted. Plato and Kant argued (in different ways) (1) that human motivation has (in addition to a hedonistic component) a distinct (and potentially dominating) rational inner source, our Intellect or Reason, (2) that this part of human nature is more than any other the human self, and (3) that living and acting well consist in cultivating and being ruled by this. The hedonistic thinkers with whom we are concerned deny not only this last, normative claim, but also the prior claims for autonomous rational motivation and for our Reason being our true self. They differ in their view of our nature, as well as in their view of our good.

Both Plato and Kant regard the hedonistic explanation of human action as a real threat to their views of the human good. The threat is that a hedonistic explanation of action, such as they take to be adequate for lower animals, might be the whole (and only real) explanatory story for human action as well. This would be incompatible with the independent motivating role of Reason that figures in their related ethical and psychological views. For Kant there is an added

twist, one connected with the problem of free will: the 'can do' presupposed by the moral 'ought to do' may fail to obtain, since the ability of the agent to do better than he actually does might be excluded by the determinism involved in a system of exceptionless (hedonistic) natural law. This does not seem to have been one of Plato's worries, and seems to depend on a view of laws of nature that was at most a minority view in his day.⁶

Plato's and Aristotle's theories of nature do not tell how any particular terrestrial thing must behave if a law of nature is to hold, but only how a particular must behave if it is to be a good instance of its kind. Any particular enmattered individual (although perhaps not all of a kind) may fail to follow nature in a particular respect (although not in all respects), on their views. Such theories of nature are less predictive than modern formulations of 'laws of nature'. They admit of the possibility of failing to follow nature—of the possibility of 'perversion'.⁷ This is why the exhortation 'to follow nature' had a

⁶ The problem of free will seems to date from Epicurus. (I draw here on David Sedley's unpublished paper, "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism".) The idea of exceptionless natural law may be present among the early atomists, but does not seem to achieve philosophical prominence until the Stoa, and seems to have become dominant only in the course of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. I am influenced here by Daniel Garber's "Mind, Body and the Laws of Nature in Descartes and Leibniz", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy 8: Contemporary Perspectives on the History of Philosophy* (1983): 105-33. Garber argues that Leibniz, but not Descartes, believed in the [natural] exceptionlessness of laws of nature. For a discussion of the contrast between the Stoics and their predecessors on this point, see Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), Chapters Three and Four, pp. 45-88.

⁷ See, for example, Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1227a28-31, Rackham translation, p. 298: [B]y nature good is the object of wish, but evil is also its object in contravention to nature; by nature one wishes good, against nature and by perversion one even wishes evil. (ἢ

practical point among the ancients—since one might better or worse express the human nature that was nevertheless one's own. And this difference was supposed to depend, in some measure, upon one's own actions. The ethicist, then, by teaching people what human nature, and hence human excellence, is, could actually help them to become better—given the wish to 'do well' that all were thought to share.

The greatest wrong turn in the history of hedonism resulted from the mismatch between the prevailing classical and modern conceptions of nature and natural law. Philosophers, especially of the two centuries beginning with Hobbes, (mis)reading Stoic-influenced reports of Epicureanism in terms of their own (or the related Stoic) conception of exceptionless natural law, came up with 'psychological hedonism',⁸ a doctrine which seems to have been unknown among hedonists of repute in antiquity. In doing so, they fell into inconsistency with common sense (and often with themselves as well), and often also into the practical absurdities of exhorting people to pursue the private good they were (on that theory) anyhow determined to pursue, or of exhorting them to pursue the general good they would (on that same theory) be unable to pursue for its own sake. I hope to indicate the more correct views of the ancient hedonists, and of the better moderns, in this chapter. My own views will partly emerge in the course of this chapter's discussion, and that of the next. But they will not be all on

βουλησις φυσει μεν του αγαθου εστι, παρα φυσιν δε και του κακου, και βουλευται φυσει μεν το αγαθον, παρα φυσιν δε και κατα διαστροφην και το κακον.) I quote parallel reports of ancient hedonists in the text and in notes 22 and 23, below.

⁸ Roughly: the thesis that all actions have pleasure as their intended goal.

the table until Chapter Five. The caveats of Preface §3 apply here. I aim to give credit where credit is due, and to indicate the mutual relevance of the interpretation of historical hedonism and my project. But my interpretative comments should be taken mainly as indicating likely readings useful for my present purposes of motivating, understanding and criticizing various hedonistic views as stations on the way to my own version of hedonism, and not as the product of thorough historical research on the *oeuvres* of the thinkers in question. It is appropriation more than interpretation that I aim at here.

The arguments with which I am concerned have their place in a strategy that works toward evaluative hedonism by arguing that pleasure is the only normal or unperverted intrinsic goal of human (and similar animal) behavior. We *might* try to divide such arguments neatly into psychological and ethical components. But to make this distinction would seem to be already to deny that the psychological arguments can contribute directly to the establishment of evaluative hedonism in the manner intended. Natural and ethical norms are not distinguished in ancient thought in the way they generally are in our own. And it may well be that the ancients' difference from ourselves in this matter is owing to no mistake of theirs. But that is not a matter I shall argue here.

Rather, I shall, in this chapter follow Sidgwick (and most of modern ethics) in distinguishing sharply between psychology and discourse about value. I shall, then, bring psychological considerations into ethics less directly, as bearing on ethical approaches' (and especially hedonism's) psychological presuppositions, and also as

interacting with ethics in a more holistic way. For, in general, the plausibility of any deployment of a concept increases with the believed success of analogous moves, especially in related areas, because this makes it more reasonable to believe that integration of our view of the world will result from moves of such a kind.⁹ These seem to me the more perspicuous ways to connect ethics with other fields, on the order of reasons as we see them now. (But I do not mean to deny that a systematic hedonistic metaphysician in the Aristotelian mold might proceed differently, proceeding by deduction from normatively-loaded first principles to views of life, mind and value that might largely coincide in their ethical and psychological conclusions—although not in their argumentative development—with the more restricted views I develop here.)

What is shared by the 'motivational arguments' for hedonism discussed in this chapter is so simple that to call it an argument is almost too great a courtesy. The basic idea is that, in pursuing pleasure, men (and other animals) *decisively* evidence pleasure's being good. But, even granting this, hedonists then face the further task of making out that *only* pleasure derives evidence of its goodness that is decisive under sustained examination—so that pleasure is not only good, but is *the* good.

⁹ What may be characterized as the mere influence of coherence, or of 'entrenchment' in our past thinking (Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 4th. ed. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983], p. 94 f.), is often better characterized as the effect of our developing intuitions about what is real, and of our changing degrees of confidence that concepts of specific kinds have a basis in reality.

Here it becomes tempting to misdescribe the manifest goals of ordinary human pursuits, to fit one's theory—to say that one's theoretically preferred goals are the *only* goals people have. This is a temptation to which ancient and modern authors on both sides of the hedonism debate succumbed, and for which modern hedonism became deservedly notorious. There is, however, a better way to defend evaluative hedonism on motivational grounds than by denying that we seek things other than pleasure for their own sake. But this better way would involve taking out promisory notes on psychological theory. And this is something that some modern hedonists, because of their introspectionist view of psychological method, could not see their way to do—or at least to do with their eyes open to what they were doing. Instead, we shall see John Stuart Mill claiming a spurious obviousness for the hedonistic claim of the primacy of pleasure-seeking in the organization of motivated action—claiming that we can introspect ourselves really to be pursuing pleasure even when we seem quite plainly, both to others and ourselves, to be pursuing other goals instead. The joint aim of this and the following chapters is to show how, by distinguishing theoretical claims about the deep constitution of mind and action from commonplace truths about the intended goals of action, the hedonist may yet be able to make his case about the nature of the self and its good in a way that will allow him to downgrade the ends of non-hedonic pursuits, as he wishes—while remaining on speaking terms with common sense still.

3.21 Motivational arguments for hedonism in antiquity

Ancient hedonistic thinkers held pleasure to be the good alike for humans and other animals. We might have known this only from the statement of the hedonist's contention at the opening of Plato's *Philebus* (11B) and from ancient reports of appeals to the behavior of babies and animals in hedonistic argumentation.¹⁰ Fortunately, we have reports that tell us more about the role such appeals had in some ancient hedonistic thinkers' arguments.

Eudoxus thought pleasure was the good because he saw all things, both rational and irrational, aiming at it, and because in all things that which is the object of choice is what is excellent, and that which is most the object of choice the greatest good; thus the fact that all things moved towards the same object indicated that this was for all things the chief good (for each thing, he argued, finds its own good, as it finds its own nourishment); and that which is good for all things and at which all aim was *the* good. . . . He believed that the same conclusion followed no less plainly from a study of the contrary of pleasure; pain was in itself an object of aversion to all things, and therefore its contrary must be similarly an object of choice. And again that is most an object of choice which we choose not because or for the sake of something else, and pleasure is admittedly of this nature; for no one asks to what end he is pleased, thus implying that pleasure is in itself an object of choice.¹¹

¹⁰ See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* II,87-88 on the Cyrenaics; and Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* II,32 on Epicurus.

¹¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* X,2,1172b9-23; in Ross translation, in *The Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925).
Bywater text: Ευδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ὡς εἶναι διὰ τὸ πανθ' ὅραν ἐπιεικέα, καὶ ἐλλοθα καὶ ἀλοθα, ἐν πασι δ' εἶναι τὸ ἀρετὸν ἐπιεικέα, καὶ τὸ μάλιστα κρατίστον: τὸ δὲ παντ' ἐπὶ ταῦτο φερεσθαι μὴνυειν ὡς πασι τοῦτο ἀριστόν ον (ἐκαστόν γὰρ τὸ αὐτῷ ἀγαθὸν εὐρίσκειν, ὡς περ καὶ τροφήν), τὸ δὲ πασὶν ἀγαθὸν, καὶ οὐ παντ' ἐπιεικὴ, τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι. . . . οὐχ ἥτιον δ' ὡς εἶναι φανερόν ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου: τὴν γὰρ λύπην καθ' αὐτὸ πασι φευκτόν εἶναι, ὁμοίως δὲ τὸν ἀντιπῶν ἀρετὸν: μάλιστα δ' εἶναι ἀρετὸν ὅ μὴ δι' ἕτερον μὴδ' ἕτερου χάριν ἀιρουμένα: τοιοῦτον δ' ὁμολογούμενον εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν: οὐδὲνα γὰρ ἐπερωτᾶν τίνος ἕνεκα ἡδέεται, ὡς καθ' αὐτὴν οὐσαν ἀρετὴν τὴν ἡδονὴν.

Aristotle apparently accepts these three arguments as showing that pleasure is good (although not as showing that it is *the* good), and defends the first of them as follows:

Those who object that that at which all things aim is not necessarily good are, we may surmise, talking nonsense. For we say that that which every one thinks really is so; and the man who attacks this conviction will hardly have anything more convincing to maintain instead. If it were irrational creatures that desired the things in question, there might be something in what they say; but if intelligent creatures do so as well, how can there be anything in it? But perhaps even in inferior creatures there is some natural good stronger than themselves which aims at their proper good.¹²

This last remark places the hedonistic arguments within the larger context of Aristotle's metaphysics,¹³ which is intended to inherit the plausibility of hedonism, even while going beyond it. We are to understand hedonistic motivation as seeking the good for an organism (of a kind); but as ultimately 'seeking' the best life, which is God's. For God is the ultimate 'final' cause that moves everything as the object of thought and desire—which everything, in being what it is, and

Just what, and how much, support I take such arguments to give evaluative hedonism will emerge partly in the course, and especially at the end, of this chapter. I consider objections in §4.2. But my positive account will be complete only with Chapter Five.

¹² 1172b35-1173a4, in Ross translation, as modified by J.L. Ackrill in *The Aristotelian Ethics* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973).
Bywater text: 'οι δ' ενισταμενοι 'ωσ ουκ αζαθον 'ου παντ' εφιεται, μη ουθεν λεζουσιν. 'α ζαρ πασι δοκει, ταυτ ειναι φαμεν: 'ο δ' αναιρων ταυτην την πιστιν ου πανυ πιστοτερα ερει. ει μεν ζαρ τα ανοητα ορεζεται αυτων, ην αν τι λεζομενον, ει δε και τα φρονημα, πως λεζοιεν αν τι; ισως δε και εν τοις φαυλοις εστι τι φυσικον αζαθον κρειπτον η καθ' αυτα, 'ο εφιεται του οικειου αζαθου.

¹³ This the opening remark of the quotation does less obviously, by appealing to natural (and hence, for Aristotle, necessarily instantiated) tendencies to seek the good and believe the true. I follow here the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics, ad loc.*, where he explains that the argumentative force of *all* and *every* depends on the view that nature cannot *always* fail.

seeking its good, 'strives' to be like as best it can.¹⁴ Although all doings might be explicable as the pursuit of *some* pleasure or other, that pleasure and the animal's view of it would not *wholly* explain the good of the consummatory activity that the animal seeks. This is good because it tends to the fullest activity of living, and that is the life of Thought and God. That, and not pleasure, is the standard of value—although goodness in life and degree of pleasure may necessarily coincide.

While Aristotle himself is thus no hedonist,¹⁵ his theory of the kind of motion characteristic of animals remains very close to a hedonistic one. It bears the marks of its partially hedonistic origins, and admits almost trivially of hedonistic revision once it is removed from the larger context of Aristotelian views—as it was by the hedonistic thinkers who came after him. Aristotle made the explanation of the sort of motion characteristic and distinctive of animals one of his central psychological concerns.¹⁶ He regarded pleasure-and-pain, desire and

¹⁴ *Metaphysics XII*.

¹⁵ I cannot give a full account of Aristotle's views on pleasure, and of their connection with his metaphysical views, here. For a discussion of Aristotle's relation to hedonism (and for further references to the literature), see Michie Irene Hunt, *Aristotle on Pleasure: A Study of the Consistency of the Accounts in the Nicomachean Ethics* (Princeton University Doctoral Dissertation, June 1979), Chapter 6, "Aristotle and the Hedonists", pp. 285-299. See also Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Pleasure and Goodness", in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 285-302; and Taylor and Gosling, *The Greeks on Pleasure*.

¹⁶ Most notably in *De Anima II*, 2 and 3; and *III*, 7-13; and *De Motu Animalium* 8. But these must, of course, be read in the context of the rest of the corpus, and especially of those parts of it giving his biological, 'physical' and metaphysical views. That these and the principal ethical writings (and also passages of the *Topics*, *Rhetoric* and *Protrepticus* fragments) are mutually relevant is obvious;

perception as necessary parts of any animal's nature. Aristotle seems also to have thought that *all* motion characteristic of animals was due to desire based on pleasure-and-pain—although not *totally* explicable short of appeal to the First Mover. Appeals to hedonistic, rational and these larger teleological considerations would, on his view, be simultaneously necessary in the human case, and non-competing.

Aristotle sometimes writes *as if* he accepts a naive version of Eudoxus' hedonistic account of motivation that would identify actions of approach and seeking with actions in which pleasure predominates in one's feeling, and actions of escape and avoidance with those in which one feels more pain. But this is only appearance; for even in works generally regarded as early, Aristotle considers what seems to be a decisive objection to that view in its naive form.¹⁷ The point is raised by an observation concerning anger made by Homer's Achilles. Achilles calls anger "much sweeter than dripping honey",¹⁸ in the course of describing its power to seize, and keep its hold on, otherwise reasonable men. I think the problem behind Aristotle's treatment, to which it constitutes a solution, is as follows. Anger, on a straightforward partition of the emotions by pleasure-and-pain, would

although exactly how to relate works across Aristotle's divisions between theoretical, practical and productive disciplines is a delicate question.

¹⁷ *Rhetoric II*, 2:1378a31-b9. The first third of *Rhetoric I*, 11 (most directly, 1370a27-b32) and *Topics* 127b26-32 and 151a14-19 are also relevant. Aristotle builds on Plato's discussion of 'mixed (with pain) pleasures' in the *Philebus*; see, e.g. 47CE. This has been noted and discussed by W.W. Fortenbaugh, most recently in *Aristotle on Emotion* (London: Duckworth, 1975), in which see especially Chapter 1, §1, pp. 9-12.

¹⁸ *Iliad XVIII*:109, which is also quoted in Plato's discussion, *Philebus* 47E.

be not a kind of pleasure, but a kind of *pain*—for it is, on the whole, unpleasant to be angry. But how, then, can we explain the attraction of anger for an angry man, and its power to put him into well-directed action toward a positive goal—as hedonically *positive* emotion, involving pleasure, does? And why does the angry man *approach* the target of his anger, rather than just run away—as the man who is merely afraid will, and as a naive reading of the Eudoxan view (that animals are 'attracted' by pleasure and 'repelled' by pain) suggests the angry (and thus 'pained') man will, too?

A tenable but liberal interpretation of Aristotle's brief treatment and its contribution to the hedonistic explanation of action might go as follows. Aristotle's solution involves two moves. First, he lets *representations* of past or future states of affairs immediately cause affective states, and mediate their intentionality. Second, he posits a *pleasure* amidst the predominantly painful complex affective phenomenon of anger. The angry man, we are told, is angry (and 'pained') because (he thinks that) he has been slighted, and treated as of no account. But he *also* experiences *the anticipatory pleasure of revenge* in thinking of how he will show that he is not to be trifled with, and thus command and deserve respect. It is the pleasure of entertaining this prospect that draws him on to avenge himself, and accounts (so to speak, by positive reinforcement) for the intoxicating hold that angry ideation (and, hence, the tendency to angry action) comes to have on someone like Achilles. It might even seem that Achilles' behavior can be explained using these resources alone—that he leaves off from his grudge against Agamemnon only because his new desire to avenge

Patroclus' death on Hector is now stronger than his old desire to avenge a lesser injury. It is the anticipatory pleasure of thinking about a hoped-for revenge, and not merely the pain predominant in present angry feeling, that (1) in each case draws the angry warrior on, when he is acting out of anger, and (2) causes him to persist in his anger against Agamemnon, and not let himself be talked over it—as he would were anger *only* a painful emotion from which he wished to escape.¹⁹

¹⁹ I do not mean to suggest that Achilles could be said, on Aristotle's or on any other plausible account, to be pursuing pleasure or escaping pain *as opposed to seeking honor* in either case. Rather, the view suggested here is along the lines developed at the end of this chapter, according to which the pursuit of *various* goals for their own sake may be explicable by a hedonistic motivational theory. Such a hedonistic motivational theory may be *one* component of Aristotle's theory of human motivation and action.

In general, Aristotle gives motivational force to both pleasure and pain; and that is the form of hedonistic psychology with which we shall be concerned here. There have been attempts, both ancient and modern, to ascribe to only one of pleasure and pain the motivational work that common sense ascribes to both—if not denying experiential reality to the other, then at least denying it motivational force. Such accounts seem inadequate to even the commonplace facts of life. But it does seem that pleasure is more important than pain in the organization of complex action—perhaps because anxiety is typically invoked by all negative affect, and anxiety interferes with the organization of behavior and with learning. Compare B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1953), Chapters 11 and 12, pp. 171-93, especially p. 191. Introspectionist experimental literature is reported in J.G. Beebe-Center, *The Psychology of Pleasantness and Unpleasantness* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1932), pp. 356-72. Compare also with Aristotle's account the less cognitive 'consummatory stimulus-reward' theory of aversive behavior (based on a reinterpretation of the animal avoidance learning literature) in Fred A. Masterson and Mary Crawford, "The defense motivation system: a theory of avoidance behavior", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 5,4 (December 1982): 661-75. On their view, the animal might be said to seek stimuli (e.g., a safe place) that have become *rewarding* in the mildly 'painful' state it is in when competently avoiding threatened harm. The nineteenth century hedonistic psychologist Alexander Bain goes further in *The Emotions and the Will*, 3d ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1876): "Thus Anger, in its human type, is the

By explaining instrumental actions as sustained by the pleasure of envisioning their end, Aristotle points the way to explaining future-oriented hedonistic action on the explanatory model of an animal's spontaneously sustaining the activity that gives it pleasure in the same moment. Neither this in itself, nor Aristotle's account of imagination, nor yet anything else I can provide here, is really sufficient. But that is equally the case with all our sketchy accounts of the nature of mental representation and of its entering into the intentionality of real-world phenomena of thought and action. What is noteworthy is that the hedonist need not (as is sometimes said) simply confuse motivation by present and future pleasure to have a hope of accounting for both on a unitary model. Present pleasure may represent future pleasure, and our capacities both for present enjoyment and for motivation by pleasant envisioning of future prospects may depend on pleasures experienced in the past, without there being any need for past or future pleasures to enter into ultimate hedonistic explanations except through the representational content of experiences that direct action each in its own present time. From Epicurus²⁰ through the British empiricists and nineteenth and twentieth century psychology, theorists of human action have exploited these and others of Aristotle's explanatory devices²¹ without accepting his evaluatively motivated

pleasure of inflicting pain on sentient beings that may have been the occasion of pain to us."(p. 173) "There seems little doubt that the primary fact in the pleasure of Anger is the *fascination for the sight of bodily infliction of suffering*."(p. 178, italics in the original)

²⁰ See David Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists*, Study II, "Aristotle and Epicurus on Voluntary Action", Chapter 4, "Psychology of Action, Epicurus and Aristotle", pp. 210-26.

²¹ Among them: associationism and the decaying sense view of ideation.

discriminations among 'pleasures', his metaphysical interpretation of pleasure and his special views concerning intellect, teleology and intellectually-based action.

Perhaps the most important difference between Aristotle and his hedonistic successors lies in their view of knowledge. Aristotle, who was less concerned than his successors with questions of certainty and justification, saw human inquiry as progressing from starting points 'better known to us' to first principles 'more knowable by nature', the natural axioms of deductive systems that are the end product of successful inquiry. He likely regarded the common belief that pleasure is good as one of the dialectical starting points of his ethics, rather than as one of its precise conclusions. Its final confirmation, then, and its precise interpretation, would come only in the course of the inquiry—as we discover what pleasure is, and how its pursuit really is part of our nature, and of nature in general—and not with the mere having of received opinions and quasi-perceptual beliefs that are our inquiry's beginning. Eudoxus' hedonistic insights could, then, be accepted and incorporated, without being finally accepted at face value.

Empiricists, to the contrary, locate superior warrant and evidence in what is directly sensed or perceived, and seek to derive from this foundation knowledge of everything else. So when Epicurus exploits the Aristotelian point that there is no demonstration of first principles, it is with this difference: the proposition that pleasure is good is now supposed to have *at once* the certainty that would belong to Aristotelian axioms known directly by reason, and *also* the immediacy belonging to sense perception. Otherwise, Epicurus' appeal to spontaneous approach and avoidance behavior seems much the same:

Let us inquire, then, what is the final and ultimate good, such as all philosophers are agreed is to be the end to which all other things should stand as means, while it itself needs no [such grounding]. This Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the chief good, pain the chief evil. He sets out to show this as follows: Every animal right from birth seeks pleasure and delights in it as the chief good; and recoils from pain and regards it as the chief evil, and so far as possible avoids it. And thus it does so long as it remains unperverted, in keeping with nature's own unbiased and honest verdict. Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to *prove* that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided. These facts, he thinks, are perceived by the senses, as that fire is hot, snow white, honey sweet, none of which things need to be proved by elaborate argument: it is enough merely to draw attention to them. (For there is a difference, he holds, between an argument with conclusion and premises and an ordinary notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.) Strip mankind of sensation, and nothing remains; it follows that it is up to nature to judge what is in accord with nature and what contrary to it. What does nature perceive or judge of, [in judging] either to seek or avoid anything, beyond pleasure and pain?²²

²² Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum I*, 29-30; modified from H. Rackham translation (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press [*Loeb Classical Library*], 2d ed., 1931), p. 33. Quaerimus igitur quid sit extremum et ultimum bonorum, quod omnium philosophorum sententia tale debet esse ut ad id omnia referri oporteat, ipsum atque nusquam. Hoc Epicurus in voluptate ponit, quod summum bonum esse vult summumque malum dolorem, idque instituit docere sic: Omne animal simul atque natum sit voluptatem appetere eaque gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem aspernari ut summum malum et quantum possit a se repellere; idque facere nondum depreatum, ipsa natura incorrupta atque integre iudicante. Itaque negat opus esse ratione neque disputatione quamobrem voluptas expetenda, fugienda dolor sit. Sentiri haec putat, ut calere ignem, nivem esse albam, mel dulce, quorum nihil oportere exquisitis rationibus confirmare, tantum satis esse admonere. (Interesse enim inter argumentum conclusionemque rationis et inter mediocrem animadversionem atque admonitionem: altera occulta quaedum et quasi involuta aperiri, altera prompta et aperta indicari.) Etenim quoniam detractis de homine sensibus reliqui nihil est, necesse est quid aut ad naturam aut contra sit a natura ipsa iudicari. Ea quid percipit aut quid iudicat, quo aut petat aut fugiat aliquid, praeter voluptatem et dolorem?

Epicurus, like Eudoxus, adopts a hedonistic interpretation of spontaneous approach and avoidance behavior, and then proceeds from pleasure's being a natural goal of animal desire to its being good. And, like Aristotle, he allows the possibility of 'perversion'.²³ But, since Epicurus would have it that pleasure is not only good, but is *the* good, and has no reason to accept Aristotle's necessary correspondence of activity and pleasure, we might expect him to characterize as perversions a rather different range of cases than Aristotle would.

3.22 The argument in Mill

John Stuart Mill inherited Aristotle's theory of 'animal motion' (in its empiricist version) and the intimately connected hedonistic value theory from his British predecessors, among whom are numbered Hobbes, Locke and Hume, and most immediately from his father and

²³ "If you don't at every opportunity direct each doing toward nature's goal, but turn aside in act of flight or of pursuit toward some other, your actions will not accord with your reasons." Ει μη παραπαντα καιρον επαινοισεις εκαστον των πραττωμενων επι το τελος της φυσεως, αλλα προκαταστρεψεις ει τε φυζην ει τε διωξιν ποιουμενος, εις αλλο τι, ουκ εσουνται σοι τοις λογοις 'αι πραξεις ακολουθοι. Epicurus, Κυριαι Δοξαι (*Chief Teachings*), No. 25 (Diogenes Laertius X, 148) thus presupposes that people may seek non-hedonic goals. We also have the account of Epicurus in Cicero, *De finibus I*, 23: "In this [pleasure and pain] what we *should* pursue and what we *should* flee in every case has its ground." [Emphasis added] (Ad haec [voluptatem et dolorem] et quae sequamur et quae fugiamus refert omnia.) I am indebted to John Cooper for calling my attention to these texts and their bearing for Epicurus' doctrine, and also for pointing out the force of the subjunctives "sequamur" and "fugiamus" (missed in the Rackham translation) in *De finibus I*, 23, in his lecture course on Greek Ethics, Princeton University, Spring term 1984.

The Cyrenaics also are said to have admitted the possibility of 'perversion' from pleasure-seeking. "They say it may happen through perversion that some do not choose pleasure." (δυνασθαι δε φασι και την 'ηδονην τινασ μη 'αιρεισθαι κατα διαστροφην.) Diogenes Laertius, II, 89.

educator, the Benthamite philosopher-psychologist James Mill. We are concerned here not with his theory of morality proper,²⁴ but with

the theory of life on which this morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous on the utilitarian as on any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.²⁵

In laying the foundations of his ethics, as often elsewhere in his philosophy, Mill—like Hobbes before him—appropriates and revises received Aristotelian materials to fit his empiricist conception of knowledge and of mind.²⁶ He begins his well-known 'proof' by using (in the manner of Epicurus) Aristotle's point

that questions of ultimate ends do not admit of proof, in the ordinary acceptance of the term. To be incapable of proof by reasoning is common to all first principles. . . .²⁷

²⁴ ~~I shall say something about Mill's view of morality in Chapter Six.~~

²⁵ *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, 4th ed. (London: Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1871) text; reprinted in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, F.E.L. Priestley, general ed., Vol. 10, *Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society*, J.M. Robson, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 203-259; p. 210.

²⁶ Hobbes' transposing of Aristotle's theory of animal motion into a Galilean mode is especially evident in the early *Human Nature*, vii, available in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, William Molesworth, ed., Vol. 4 (London: John Bohn, 1840), pp. 31-34; and in the late *De Homine*, xi, "De Appetitu et Fugo, Jucundo et Molesto, et eorum Causis", available in *The Latin Works of Thomas Hobbes*, William Molesworth, ed., Vol. 2 (London: John Bohn, 1839), pp. 94-103, especially §4 and §15. The latter has been translated into English by Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Craig Scott, and Bernard Gert in *Man and Citizen* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1972); pp. 45-54.

²⁷ *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 4; *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 234. Compare Bentham: Is it [i.e., the principle of utility] susceptible of any direct proof? it should seem not: for that which is used to prove every thing else, cannot itself be proved: a chain of proofs must have their commencement somewhere. To give such proof is as

Questions about ends are, in other words, questions what things are desirable. The utilitarian doctrine is, that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end. What ought to be required of this doctrine—what conditions is it requisite that the doctrine should fulfill—to make good its claim to be believed?

. . . . the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it. . . . This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good²⁸.

Mill, like Epicurus, wants us to understand the first Eudoxan argument not as a deductive proof, but rather as a reminder of what we already 'know' when in consequence of our experience of pleasure we spontaneously seek to continue or else to renew it. Ethical theory is not needed to *support* the testimony of consciousness—which needs no support—but to direct us back to it: to the self-evident facts about the experiential value of which we may, self-evident though they be, partially lose sight through socialization and enculturation. Aristotle's epistemic priorities and procedure are reversed, as in Epicurus; the argument is only to prepare or remind us to accept our immediate experiencing of human value for what it is. Reflective thought about the good leads us back in the end to the immediate experiencing and spontaneous liking and doing with which our lives as prereflective infants (like the lives of other animals) began.

impossible as it is needless. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), §11, p. 13.

²⁸ Ibid.

But to show that something is *the good*—that it *alone* is intrinsically desirable—we should need more than a case for its desirability (assuming this has been made). The hedonist needs to explain away the appearance that desired things other than pleasure are desirable for their own sakes. He needs a hedonic theory of motivation that will make pursuits of non-hedonic goals derivative in a way that can be used to discredit any presumption that these also aim at things of intrinsic value.

But it has not, by this alone, proved itself to be the sole criterion. To do that, it would seem, by the same rule, necessary to show, not only that people desire happiness, but that they never desire anything else. Now it is palpable that they do desire things which, in common language, are decidedly distinguished from happiness. *They desire, for example, virtue, and the absence of vice, no less really than pleasure and the absence of pain. The desire of virtue is not as universal, but it is as authentic a fact as the desire of happiness. . . .*

[V]irtue is not the only thing, originally a means, and which if it were not a means to anything else, would be and remain indifferent, but which by association with what it is a means to, comes to be desired for itself, and that too with the utmost intensity. What, for example, shall we say of the love of money? . . . The same may be said of the majority of the great objects of human life—power, for example, or fame

Virtue, according to the utilitarian conception, is a good of this description. There was no original desire of it, or motive to it, save its conduciveness to pleasure, and especially to protection from pain. But through the association thus formed, it may be felt a good in itself, and desired as such with as great intensity as any other good . . .

It results from the preceding considerations, that *there is in reality nothing desired except happiness*. Whatever is desired otherwise than as a means to some end beyond itself, and ultimately to happiness, is desired as itself a part of happiness, and is not desired for itself until it has become so. Those who desire virtue for its own sake desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both

reasons united²⁹
 [italic emphases added]

"Happiness" here appears to come down to just a matter of getting enough pleasure. And this gives the hedonist's motivational theory the appearance of an ordinary language paradox—that only pleasure is desired.³⁰ Further, the two passages I have italicized present the appearance of a contradiction in terms. We are first told that people "really" "desire" "things which, in common language, are decidedly distinguished from happiness", but later we are told "that there is in reality nothing desired except happiness".

Consistency, however, can be saved: by reading the earlier "really" as having merely ordinary language emphatic force, while the latter "in reality" introduces phenomena taken as primitive in an explanatory theory. The theory would involve the claim that only the desire for pleasure is original in the conative architecture of the human mind, while desire for things other than pleasure is to be explained as derivative from it. Thus, desire that is (at a more fundamental level of explanation) explained on a hedonistic model could still (in the ordinary language in which we express the intentionality of desire) be not at all desire for pleasure, but desire for other things instead. Then the "because the consciousness of it is a pleasure" in the last-quoted

²⁹ *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 4; *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 234-7.

³⁰ For example: "Properly speaking, it is not to the food, or the drug, that we have the aversion, but to the disagreeable taste. . . . In like manner, it is not the water we desire, but the pleasure of drinking; not the fire we desire, but the pleasure of warmth. The illusion is merely that of a very close association." James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, 2d ed., John Stuart Mill, ed. (London: Longmans Green Reader and Dyer, 1869), Vol. 2, p. 192.

paragraph will carry no implication that the desiring subject consciously intends what he does only as a means to get pleasure.

Mill's thought is that 'ideas' of other things are in themselves motivationally neutral—and can motivate only by capturing the motivational force of pleasure-and-pain. First, the other things are desired as means to pleasure. But when the associative process has run its course the exercise of virtue (in Mill's example) has become what Mill calls a "part of happiness": it is because "the consciousness of it is [now] a pleasure" that it is now desired for its own sake. Hedonistic motivational theory, it is claimed, rather than being incompatible with the phenomenon of moral virtue, explains it: that theory is confirmed by an Aristotelian understanding of the formation of stable moral character (consisting of habits of feeling pleasure and pain toward the right objects) through practice.

Mill fails, however, to distinguish between theoretical and commonsense psychology: between the way in which he acknowledges that the virtuous man desires to act virtuously for its own sake, and the way in which it is supposed to be nonetheless true that only pleasure is desired. The hedonist needs such a distinction to square (1) the commonsense diversity of objects of desire with (2) the motivational primacy the hedonistic thinker wants to claim for pleasure and pain. Mill's failure to adequately make the distinctions he needs to formulate his position consistently is, perhaps, owing to the Baconian, observationalist view of psychological method to which he (following James Mill) officially subscribes. He supposes that the only data for psychology are given in introspection. So Mill has to support his

motivational theory by appeal to introspection. But we normally can introspect not the causal histories of our desire, but what it is that we desire.

And now to decide whether this is really so, whether mankind do desire nothing for itself but that which is a pleasure to them, or of which the absence is a pain, we have evidently arrived at a question of fact and experience, dependent, like all similar questions, upon evidence. It can only be determined by practised self-consciousness and self-observation, assisted by observation of others. I believe that these sources of evidence, impartially consulted, will declare that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and finding it painful, are phenomena entirely inseparable, or rather two parts of the same phenomenon; in strictness of language, two different modes of naming the same psychological fact: that to think of an object as desirable (unless for the sake of its consequences), and to think of it as pleasant, are one and the same thing; and that to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility.³¹
[bold emphasis added]

In the foregoing assimilation of "desiring a thing", "think[ing] of an object as desirable", "think[ing] of it as pleasant", and "finding it pleasant" we seem to have a particularly unfortunate example of the empiricist assimilation of mental acts involving intentional content and immediate experiences, under the rubric of 'having an idea'. If ideas are supposed to be resembling copies of their originals, and to represent them in virtue of this fact, then it may seem that having the thought that something is pleasant must itself be pleasant, so that any thinking that something is pleasant must itself be an experiencing of pleasure. Then such an 'idea' in the present seems at once to represent the future pleasure that is envisioned, and to be a psychological occurrence on the scene at the right time to play the role of an efficient cause in directing present action—which is what desire,

³¹ *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 4; *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 237-8.

on such a view, is supposed to be. But certainly this identification is wrong, at least in the general case. Not every thought that something is pleasant is (or even involves) either an experience of pleasure or a desire, or vice versa. Moritz Schlick, in defending hedonism in the footsteps of Mill, makes the needed distinction and choice.

[W]hether the idea itself is joyful or painful does not at all depend on whether the imagined things, when they are actually present, have pleasant or unpleasant consequences. . . . Our law is concerned only with whether an idea is pleasant, and not with whether it is the idea of something pleasant.³²

The modern hedonistic theorist such as Mill or Schlick is in search of an exceptionless and general theory of motivated behavior in which pleasure is to have some central role—of a psychological theory capable of cohering with or supporting a central place for pleasure in our nature and in our good. One model that might be used in constructing such a theory is that drawn from cases of *deliberate* pleasure seeking in which the agent aims at obtaining some future pleasure that he foresees. A second is drawn from cases of *spontaneous* activity—eating with appetite, running and jumping for the sheer joy of it, or thinking with relish upon some subject. But the two sorts of case, and the two models, are very different. The first starts from things done with the intention of getting pleasure, and so seems to take the framework of intentional action (if only to get pleasure) for granted. Then it faces the task of assimilating action done for other ends to this. The second model invokes the spontaneous direction of our action, imagination and thought by pleasure in a way that need involve no unanalyzed intention to get anything. Indeed, this approach to a general theory of action

³² Schlick, *Problems of Ethics*, Rynin translation, p. 50.

will try to construct intentional trying-to-get from more primitive psychological phenomena—among them the experiencing of pleasure in its moment and the spontaneous direction of our attention by pleasure. It is only on the second model that the experiencing of pleasure seems a candidate for the role of efficient cause. The modern hedonist, then, who wants to develop an exceptionless theory of motivated action, should begin with the cases of spontaneous behavior sustained by pleasure, rather than with rational pleasure-seeking based on the expectation of pleasant consequences; and he should hope eventually to extend the sort of explanation suggested by the first kind of case to cover also cases of the second kind.

On either sorting out of Mill's hedonistic account of the mechanics of desire, however, Sidgwick would still reject the argument that non-hedonistic ends can be dismissed as perverse because they are genetically posterior:

To say . . . that all men *once* desired pleasure is, from an ethical point of view, irrelevant; except on the assumption that there is an original type of man's appetitive nature, to which, as such, it is right or best for him to conform. But probably no Hedonist would expressly maintain this³³

Indeed, the author of the essay "Nature"³⁴ (which expressly attacks such views) was scarcely in a position to have maintained, like Aristotle and other ancients, that what is natural is *ipso facto* good. But how, then, is Mill's hedonistic psychology supposed to make a case for pleasure alone being desirable, as against the other objects of desire? What is the justification for Mill's assertion that—in contrast with the

³³ *Methods*, p. 53.

³⁴ Mill, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 373-402.

goals of spontaneous hedonistic behavior—"That which is the result of habit affords no presumption of being intrinsically good"?³⁵

³⁵ *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 4; *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 237-9. But in 1869 Mill writes that "there is [i.e., "need be"?] nothing at variance with reason in the associations which make us value for themselves, things which we at first cared for only as means to other ends" Editorial note by John Stuart Mill to James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, 2d ed., Vol. 2, pp. 295-6, n. 54. This view, which seems true to the spirit of James Mill's approach, is that the theory *accounts for* the rationality of what we ordinarily conceive of as non-hedonic ends, rather than discrediting their rationality. The ultimate rational explicability of a motive or action, on this view, depends on its being explicable as the outcome of association working on primitive motivational materials—that is, for the Mills, on its being motivationally grounded ultimately in pleasure-and-pain. This, on the Mills' view, is the only kind of motivated action of which we are capable. But full normative rationality of action or motive, it may seem, should (on their view) involve the *further* possibility of (in principle) rationally reconstructing the particular associative process in such a way as to show its practical conclusion to be a *reasonable* way of producing pleasure. For if what is intended is a reduction of human normative rationality to having only motives formed by association with pleasure, and if all human motivation is necessarily caused in this way, how could any actual motive be held to be irrational? The distinction between action and motivation that is merely psychologically possible, and that which is rational in that it is (or could be) based on good reasons, would collapse. But this is a distinction that the Mills, in their Utilitarian criticisms of moral common sense and traditional institutions, need.

Alexander Bain is perhaps a clearer example of a Utilitarian psychologist caught between his inclination to criticize non-hedonic motivation as irrational, and his explanatory commitment to making a version of psychological hedonism serve as an exceptionless psychological law. More straightforwardly than Mill, he is willing to call hedonistically caused, but presently autonomous, motives irrational. And more clearly than Mill, he moves toward a recognition that the hedonistic aspect of desire may sometimes be introspectively inaccessible, appealing either to the limited capacity of attention, or to an incompatibility between two modes of attentional processing, to account for this. Still, it is not quite clear how this theory is to be consistent with his own supposedly exceptionless hedonistic 'law of the Will':

"In this straining, we seem occasionally oblivious of the pleasure we are to reap; our whole mind is engrossed with the sensible appearance of the viands. . . . we cannot be occupied objectively and subjectively at the same instant"

"There is nothing in all this to interfere with the law of the Will, nor to destroy the strict proportion between our strength of desire

For Mill, the intellectual leader of the Philosophical Radical movement for political reform, to base the title of pleasure, the ground of all his

or energy of pursuit and the pleasure expected from it; in short, nothing to destroy our character as rational beings, which is to desire everything exactly according to its pleasure value. A man has a desire for food The food is a means to an end, and is looked at with a view to the end; there being a certain disposition in the mind occasionally to set the means above the end, which, so far as it goes, produces irrationality of conduct." Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will*, 3d ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1876), pp. 437-8. (These quotations are from a note in response to the first edition of Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, of 1874.)

Sidgwick distinguishes between (1) experiencing, or thinking of, something as pleasant, (2) desiring that thing and (3) having the ethical intuition that the thing is desirable. The Mills attempt to do without any (3) autonomous from (1) and (2). James Mill also equates (1) and (2). John Stuart Mill seems to do the same in our *Utilitarianism* passage. But in 1869 his view seems to be that both a logical or metaphysical, and also a psychological, distinction hold between (1) and (2). "Even if we consent to admit [to James Mill, what J.S. Mill himself does not] that the desire of a pleasure is one and the same thing with the idea of a pleasure, and aversion to a pain the same thing with the idea of a pain—it remains true that the difference which we passively feel, between the consciousness of a pleasure and that of a pain, is one fact, and our being stirred to seek the one and avoid the other is another fact; and it is just this second fact that distinguishes a mere idea of something as future, from a desire or aversion. It is this conscious or unconscious reference to action, which distinguishes the desire of a pleasure from the idea of it. Desire, in short, is the initiatory stage of volition." J.S. Mill editorial note to James Mill's *Analysis*, p. 381. This seems at odds with the *Utilitarianism* passage just quoted.

If Mill was aware his view had changed between the first appearance of *Utilitarianism* in 1861, and his last revised edition of 1871, he took no notice of this in his very minor revisions. Perhaps he saw no need to correct what he regarded as a popular polemic, rather than as a technical work. But, then, he may *originally* have seen no need for psychological precision—even if he held his mature view in 1861. More likely, Mill is himself unclear on the point, or at least on how to express his claim without misleading. The result in *Utilitarianism* seems to be the alternation between verbally contradictory commonsense and theoretical claims we have observed. Mill presumably felt that his hedonistic claim about motivation could be borne out. Yet he did not, in part for the methodological reasons I have indicated, see his way clear to a statement of the psychological case for evaluative hedonism that could reconcile his respect for common sense with the explanatory project seemingly at odds with it in the earlier hedonistic psychology of James Mill.

criticism of political custom, on the sort of argument from precedent that his faction decried would also be a most peculiar thing. Whence, then, the "presumption of being intrinsically good"—that we are told is lacking where the action is habitual, but holds in cases of spontaneous hedonistic desire? Presumably from such desire's direct experiential grounding in the immediate appreciation of pleasure in its moment.

We can construct a plausible and consistent line of reasoning by separating some strands in Mill's thinking from others with which they are entangled, and developing these. (Mill seems to have had greater difficulty in doing this in *Utilitarianism* than elsewhere, where he often seems to run together what he distinguishes elsewhere.) First we should reject the claim that we can introspect that we desire only pleasure. What seems to lie behind this is the more plausible claim that we generally do (and can, on reflection, see that we would) cease to enjoy the pursuit of, and cease to desire, any goal that we cease to regard with pleasure. This seems to be what goes on, for example, in Mill's self-report of his thoughts at the beginning of a late adolescent depression.

In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.³⁶

³⁶ *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), p. 94.

"The end [that] had ceased to charm" was not Mill's experiencing of pleasure, but the success of the utilitarian project of social reform directed toward the end of the greatest happiness. If his private pleasure had been his goal, Mill's 'crisis' might have been less severe; he could have just abandoned his political projects and looked about for some better way of getting himself some pleasure. But Mill was not that sort of hedonist. Like most of us, his pleasures were mainly pleasures of pursuit—of pursuits enlivened by his interest in their outcomes. That is where his happiness lay. But people whose happiness lies in their pursuit of goals are liable to depression when they lose interest in a goal.³⁷

How does pleasure fit into Mill's case history, which he seems to tell in such a way as to be of a piece with at least some of his associationist motivational theorizing? The way pleasure would do motivational work in Mill's story is not by being the end toward which all desire is directed, 'except as a means'. Rather, it figures as that which makes our ends attractive. As Schlick puts the view,

[A]ny end can be desired, but this does not mean that it has nothing to do with the pleasure tone of the end-in-view, but only that any end can become pleasant. It is as if one said, "Whoever is not blind can see any visible thing." Of course, but only if it is illuminated!

The will can no more direct itself toward an end, the idea of which is simply unpleasant and has absolutely nothing attractive, alluring, or noble in it, than the eye can see an object clothed in utter darkness. . . .³⁸

³⁷ Eric Klinger, *Meaning and Loss* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

³⁸ Schlick, *Problems of Ethics*, Rynin translation, p. 48. Presumably Schlick takes motivation to do what is noble to be owing to the pleasure with which what is noble is regarded on account of its being noble.

Mill and Schlick do not take the mere temporal priority of infantile pleasure-seeking to be evaluative hedonism's psychological ground. Rather, this ground is the continuing role of pleasure in organizing our desires. Pleasure (to use Schlick's and Plato's metaphor) need not be desired, any more than light need be seen, for it to cast its spell over us. But it is through its influence, direct or indirect, that anything is desired; just as it is through the action of light that anything is seen. Ends, on the strain in Mill's thought elaborated by Schlick, are like directly illuminated objects, and means like ones that are lit up by their reflection. The view is very similar to the psychological theory of secondary reinforcement on which the secondary reinforcer loses its motivating power when the primary reinforcer with which it has been paired loses its. Mill, however, allows for the persistence of habits after the force of (affect-laden) desire has waned. (And Mill himself, when he kept working in his usual way during his depression, was a case in point.)

The charge may be raised that the Mill-Schlick view is vacuous, because any original motivator may be called by them a form of pleasure. This is, in a way, to raise the charge of the skeptic of the beginning of Chapter Three again. But in fact we can perfectly well imagine purposive behavior that does not arise from pleasure or from affectively-laden desire, but that was from the start mechanical tropism or habit. (And the neuroscientific tack we take in the next chapter will provide confirmation that this distinction of 'commonsense psychology' and of introspection is no mistake—that pleasure and affectively-based desire are natural kinds.) Surely, it seems possible

to imagine beings some, or even all, of whose conscious purposes are like that. Mill's conjecture is that we are beings of neither of these two kinds. But this needs the support of substantive scientific work, and not just Mill's introspection in his favorite theory's terms.

Sidgwick rightly blew the whistle on the strategy of misdescribing the ordinary intentional goals of action to fit one's moral or motivational theory. But instead of distinguishing the correct use of the ordinary notion of desire (or of what is for its own sake desired) from theoretical projects in motivational psychology, he rejected the very possibility of any such theory.

[I]f we seriously set ourselves to consider human action on its unconscious side, we can only conceive it as a combination of movements of the parts of a material organism In fact, the doctrine that pleasure (or the absence of pain) is the end of all human action can neither be supported by the results of introspection, nor by the results of external observation or inference: it rather seems to be reached by an arbitrary and illegitimate combination of the two.³⁹

The first claim (as Sidgwick sees) goes far beyond the conclusion. More consistent than the Mills (who were theoretical psychologists despite their official methodology),⁴⁰ Sidgwick rejected not only the conflation of commonsense and theoretical levels of discourse, but also

³⁹ *Methods*, 7th ed., pp. 52-3.

⁴⁰ This is most evident in the text and editorial notes (by John Stuart Mill) to James Mill's *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, 2d ed. There, James Mill exercises considerable ingenuity in associationist construction, and John Stuart Mill in criticism and reconstruction. The tension between James Mill's introspectionist methodology and his theoretical practice is well discussed, and placed in its historical context, by Elie Halevy, *La Formation du Radicalisme philosophique* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901-4), Vol. 3, *Le Radicalisme philosophique* (1904), pp. 264-71. This is available in a single-volume translation (that omits some material from the notes): *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, Mary Morris, tr. (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), pp. 451-54. There are various reprint editions of this translation.

the very possibility of motivational explanation using other than the ordinary introspectively-applicable psychological categories. Here Sidgwick, following out the implications of introspectionist methodology, stands farther from the earlier tradition of hedonistic psychology than either Mill or we do. In his famous clear-sightedness and thoroughness, he saw clearly the need to choose between the inherited motivational theory and the increasingly self-conscious introspectionist methodology—and chose the methodology.

Let us, now, grant Sidgwick and common sense what Mill seems anyway to admit—that we can desire (in the ordinary usage) ends other than pleasure. But let us, having done this try to give an unabashedly theoretical account, in the spirit of Mill, aimed at showing the nonhedonic goals of desire to have a psychologically second-class status. Could such a project show that the pursuit of non-hedonic goals fails to evidence their being intrinsically good, as Mill claims?

Such a project would be no short work, certainly. And the most it could give us, it seems, would be confirmation of what we would already have reason to believe without it. Our kind of natural science, unlike Aristotle's, will not tell us that what is natural is better. But it can help us answer the skeptic of the beginning of this chapter who denies that pleasure has the sort of status that ~~something that~~ a candidate for being what makes life good must have. If pleasure has importance in scientific studies concerning our nature, that should make it more plausible that pleasure is important more generally. In this way, a motivational theory might support pleasure's "presumption of being intrinsically good", without supporting a similar presumption for

other objects of pursuit—such as things pursued out of mere habit, when the pleasure is gone out of them. But without an original and irreducible ethical plausibility that might be increased in this way, it would be hard to see how scientific argument about motivation could ever get the hedonist home.

The hedonist's goal in the end will be the standpoint of the experiential moment with which he began. The psychology is of use insofar as it may be plausibly claimed that it confirms hedonistic intuitions or discredits non-hedonistic ones (for example, as mere results of our being socialized to take a longer view of things than we would spontaneously and correctly). We learn to 'live in the future', and to correct our short-term appetites and aversions in a prospective light. But the hedonist teaches that the shortest-term perspective of all, the momentary experience's spontaneous point of view on its own intrinsic value, is the only incorrigible one, and that a reflective view on human value is correct to the extent that it coincides with these immediate momentary views.⁴¹ Any other standard would be in error—the result of nature and culture leading us on toward other

⁴¹ Compare Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2,21,58: "Things in their present enjoyment are what they seem; the apparent and real good are, in this case, always the same. For the Pain or Pleasure being just so great, and no greater, than it is felt, the present Good or Evil is really so much as it appears. And therefore were every Action of ours concluded within it self, and drew no Consequences after it, we should undoubtedly never err in our choice of good; we should always infallibly prefer the best. Were the pains of honest Injury and of starving with Hunger and Cold set together before us, no Body would be in doubt which to chuse: were the satisfaction of a Lust, and the Joys of Heaven offered at once to any one's present possession, he would not balance, or err in the determination of his choice." §63: "Therefore, as to present Pleasure and Pain the Mind, as has been said, never mistakes that which is really good or evil; that which is the greater Pleasure, or the lesser Pain, is really as it appears."

goals, and thus to an acquired disregard for the intrinsic quality of the passing moments of our lives, in which our real good resides.

We have returned, then, to the point we reached at the end of Chapter Two—and also to Sidgwick's probable view. The motivational argument, if taken as an independent argument (without a normative premise) for a normative conclusion, fails. For it is plausible only if it is already 'presumed' that what matters in life is a matter of the value intrinsic to the immediate experience of the moment. (And even then, a further, if relatively uncontroversial, evaluative appeal, in favor of pleasure to the exclusion of other immediate states—such as those of sensation and pain—would still be required.) The step that is crucial—the presumption in favor of the evidence of immediate experiential states such as the experiencing of pleasure, and against the value-making or value-indicating status of (for example) anger or desire, or of social standards of the morality of action or of success in life—would already have been made. The basis of this presumption, one might say, following Sidgwick, can only be an irreducibly ethical intuition. Certainly, no value-free psychological theory will tell us that it is the immediate experiencing of pleasure—rather than the desire for revenge, or passionless reflection on socialized values—that points to our *true* good.

I shall, in Chapter Five, further develop a view in which psychological and evaluative considerations *work together*, to take their place in a larger scheme of hedonistic argument. This method, perhaps, differs less, on the true order of reasons, both from Mill's and Sidgwick's introspection and from Sidgwick's primitive ethical

intuition, than they would believe. For how can we decide whether a purported introspection or intuition is a really trustworthy guide? It is by integrating our intuitive ideas and would-be first principles about mind and value into our larger schemes of things, that we give them the indirect validation of which they are capable. In the same way, it is by giving the hedonistic notion of pleasure explanatory and systematic work to do that we may hope to vindicate (against the skeptic about the hedonist's conception of pleasure) the view that pleasure is a real unity, a genuine kind, something real—and something, moreover, that might reasonably be held to be our good. Believing, as we do, in theoretical psychology—and even in its possible relevance for our learning more about even what seems introspectively closest to us—we should be more sanguine than Sidgwick about the prospects for joint work in ethics and psychology. But we should also, then, be less sanguine about the prospects of the independent discipline of ethics to which Sidgwick (and, even more, the ethicists who have followed him and Moore) aspired. It is to such joint work that we now turn, to see whether evaluative hedonism may be better supported by taking a longer way through metaphysics and psychology.

IV

HEDONISTIC METAPHYSICS

4.1 HOW TO START THINKING AS THE HEDONIST DOES

Many of the things we see seem to be things that, although they stand in spatiotemporal and other relations to other things, are what they inwardly are, whatever *else* may or may not be the case with *other* things. A bat, or a ball, or a man can each be fixated singly by the eye and occupy our conscious attention completely, to the exclusion of everything else. And each can similarly be imagined or remembered without our imagining or remembering the rest. This seems very much like our being able to *conceive* the thing's existing in the absence of everything else. And what we think we can conceive existing separately, we are led to think really could exist causally isolated from everything else, although it actually coexists with other things. Although such a thing's actual existence may causally depend on the obtaining of other things at other times, it still seems to have a being separate from everything else. With the sticks and stones (if not with the ball games) of our daily world, these appearances of the mutual independence of things have served us fairly well.

Similarly, when I look inward: the attraction of solipsism seems to derive from the similar intuition that *I* could still be as *I* just now am, even should everything *else* fail to be as it just now is—or even should everything else fail to exist at all. My transactions with my

environment are not, it seems, part of *me*. My life could be supported in some other, and even in a miraculous, way. Replace the external world, bit by bit. Even take it all away. Leave but me, and (even if but for a moment) *I* remain—whatever *else* may be the case with *other* things.

Some, at least, of the experiential moments¹ of my life seem to be lived in such splendid isolation, not only from everything other than myself, but also from my life's other moments. Suppose *this* to be such a moment. But my life can end at any time. Suppose, then, that this moment turns out to be my *last*.² That would be a *further* fact,

¹ I take 'experiential moments' to be the short finite durations (rather than durationless slices or points) in which momentary experiencings, such as those of pleasure that figured at the ends of Chapters Two and Three, occur. Think of them as temporally overlapping within our experience, with the times taken by different kinds of momentary experiencings possibly differing in characteristic duration.

Epicurus and Hume were hedonistic philosophers who actually believed in *minimum magnitudes of time*. (For references, see my Preface, n. 6, p. 14, above; and the third paragraph, in parenthesis, of n. 3, below.) But hedonism requires no such view.

² Suppose this moment is at the same time my first, too. Why does this seem harder? It *is* harder to motivate the independence of my present from my past than it is to motivate the independence of my present from my future, at least when we take something short of the radically subjective and present-bound view that the hedonist takes when motivating his metaphysics of value. For from the viewpoint of an old acquaintance, or from the viewpoint of my own past, it is by virtue of its connection with my past that any present or future will be mine. We normally make identifying reference to an object by making use of the fact that it has had a determinate history, and then go on to imagine alternative futures as possible *for it*. These practices give rise to, and embody, strong modal intuitions. We tend to use the same even in thinking about that most problematical of 'objects', the self. Clearly, I might have died young; whereas an adult life following upon an Adam-like creation may seem to be only doubtfully a life that *I* could have had. For there would be no prior history, the connection with which would make this possible future mine—that of the person who (actually) was already living at earlier times. (I shall here write as if identifying times 'across possible worlds' is unproblematic and uncontroversial.) So, then, it may seem

extrinsic to what occurs within this moment, because it involves a relation to *other* moments, and so goes beyond what is internal to 'my life in *this* moment'. My life in this moment is already what it just now is. As nothing external to its own existence could constitute *its* existence or *its* value, so nothing happening later (or, what some, as we have seen, will find more controversial: earlier) can take this existence or value away. What has (nonrelationally) happened at *one* time cannot later be made not to have happened at that time, or to have had a different intrinsic value at that time, by virtue of what happens somewhen *else*. For these matters are decided only by what happens *just then*. Now, on the hedonist's view, the occurrence or presence of pleasure, and its value, are matters such as these; matters completely decided by what happens in the pleasure's moment or time.³

that even God could not have created *me* for this moment alone; but only some momentary thing qualitatively identical to me-in-this-moment, but distinct from myself. (One might further motivate this view by denying that this momentary thing could be a person, which I clearly am.) But even if these temporally asymmetrical modal intuitions are taken at face value, so that a moment of *my* life is necessarily the future of at least some of those moments of my life that actually went before, the hedonist's claim about the bidirectional possible isolation of the experiential moment can still be made. Only one must avoid the use of the first person, and speak about the momentary experiencing in its own right.

³ In *its* time; and not in any old part of its time. For there may well be times too short for pleasure to occur totally within them. It could be, for example, that pleasure necessarily cannot be complete in any time shorter than that required for certain *complex* brain events to occur. Then any shorter temporal part of an experience of pleasure would be *only* that, and not an experience of pleasure in its own right; because if it existed in isolation no pleasure would be experienced, it being only in the longer time that a temporally minimal experience of pleasure occurs. (Thus the late nineteenth century hedonistic psychologist Alexander Bain: "To the mere fact of being conscious a certain duration is requisite; a tremor lasting only a fraction of a second would not be accompanied with consciousness." *The Emotions and the Will*, 3d ed. [New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1876], p. 42.)

This point requires no modern psychophysical motivation. The ancient Epicureans, who were atomists as well as hedonists, believed that pleasure is at least necessarily bound to a kind of *pattern* of 'atomic motions'. An 'individual motion' from one atomic time to the next (and even more clearly: anything contained in a single atomic time) could not itself have instanced smooth, as opposed to jerky, motion. But the opposition between smooth and jerky motions of soul atoms was supposed by them to move in step with the opposition between pleasure and pain. So pleasure would 'emerge' only at a larger scale.

(Ancient testimonia on 'smooth motion' are cited in J.C.B. Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982], p. 394. The principal ones are: Plutarch, *Against Colotes*, 1122e for Epicurus; and Diogenes Laertius, 2, 85 and 86 for the Cyrenaics. Epicurean 'time atomism' is discussed in David Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), Study 1: "Indivisible Magnitudes", pp. 3-158; Ch. 8: "Aristotle's Criticisms and Epicurus' Answers", pp. 111-30, summarized at pp. 127-29. The attribution of the view to Epicurus has been defended more recently (and references, including a new one to a Herculaneum papyrus, cited) by Richard Sorabji in *Time, Creation, and the Continuum* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982], pp. 375-77.)

More directly, the Epicurean view, that there are many smaller physical times within the 'single time' in which we perceive something, may be found in Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 4;794-6:

. . . quia tempore in uno,
cum sentimus id, et cum vox emittitur una,
tempora multa latent, ratio quae comperit esse

. . . because in one moment in which we
Experience this—and in which is pronounced one sound singly—,
Many moments are hidden, as is proven by reason.

(These features of Epicurus' view, combined with the weight he puts on pleasure in his ethics, show the antireductionist temper of his thought—in contrast to those modern materialist views that take all truths about the world to be in principle expressible in a physical vocabulary. It seems that Epicurus wanted to preserve, rather than to explain away, mental phenomena such as the direct experience and intrinsic value of pleasure, which would seem to disappear without remainder on the reductionist microphysical view Epicurus seems to have attributed to Democritus. David Sedley has remarked a similar tendency in Epicurus' thought on freedom of action in his paper, "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism", read at the 1981 Princeton Colloquium in Classical Philosophy, December 5, 1981, and in remarks during a Princeton University graduate seminar he gave that term. In this connection, Friedrich Solmsen's discussion of the argument for atoms' not possessing *sensus* in Book 2 of Lucretius, in "αἰσθησις in Aristotelian and Epicurean Thought", *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen afd. Letterkunde*, Nieuwe

Suppose I walk from Athens to the Piraeus—and suppose further that I enjoy myself every bit of the way. Now, the beginning of my walking might not have turned out to have been part of a walking to the Piraeus. For I might have been called back, or detained *en route*; or I might just have changed my mind midway. Or I might, in my high spirits at setting out, have carelessly placed my foot on a squashed date at the very first step, and slipped badly. Then this activity of mine (that, as things actually turned out, *was* the beginning of my walking to the Piraeus) would not have been part of any actual walking at all. Still, my enjoyment in that first moment of stepping out would have been actual enjoyment, just the same. And it would have been the *same* enjoyment, notwithstanding that there would not have been any actual *walking* that I enjoyed. For someone's experiencing pleasure in some moment seems to be already complete in *that* moment; and not to depend for its being on anything external to itself—or on anything spatiotemporally larger than itself, of which it is a part, coming fully to be. When pleasure or enjoyment⁴ is present it seems to be *wholly*

Reeks 24, 8 (1 Sept. 1961): 124-62, is also relevant.)

But atomistic physics (like any other physics) is as dispensable as neurophysiology, so far as making the main point of this note goes. This point might, perhaps, be motivated introspectively just as well; and is certainly *comprehensible* independently of any physical or physiological theorizing.

⁴ I have not so far distinguished these, but have in accordance with the broad hedonistic use of "pleasure" indicated in the Preface (and of "pleasure-and-pain" introduced at the end of Chapter Two) taken enjoyment to be subsumed under pleasure—either as a variety of pleasure, or (more plausibly) as just whatever pleasure one gets in those, usually active, ways which we characterize as enjoying *something*, or as enjoying *ourselves*. I shall not distinguish pleasure, enjoyment, and the like in this essay (as the view I am expounding does not); except when I discuss objections that turn on these distinctions—as I shall soon.

present in each of its experienced temporal parts—independently of any role that these may play or fail to play in the larger pattern of things.⁵ Pleasure may be *caused* in many different ways. But although the ways in which we get pleasure are various, what it is to be pleasure is always the same. What arouses a momentary pleasure may even take a long time. But the particular occurrence of pleasure, itself, is complete in its experiential moment. And any cause or object external to itself, and even the extension of pleasure beyond this experiential moment's time, seems to be a matter of logical indifference to the presence of this particular pleasure in its own time.

"The good and the goal is the particular pleasure, while happiness is the composite made up of the particular pleasures, among which both past and future pleasures are counted together. The particular pleasure is to be chosen on its own account, while happiness is not to be chosen on its own account, but on account of the particular pleasures."⁶ Thus the doctrine of the Cyrenaics—those who followed and developed the teaching of Aristippus, Socrates' companion. But the isolated moment, even if it can contain pleasure, cannot, it seems,

⁵ My discussion here is influenced by (but is no exposition of) Aristotle's account of pleasure, *Nicomachean Ethics X*, 4: especially 1174a13-b14. See also his related distinction between change or process (κίνησις) and activity (ἐνεργεία), on which see, e.g., *Metaphysics IX*, 6:1048b18-35. Indeed, the view that the pleasure is separable from the activity in which it is ordinarily said to be a pleasure is generally taken to be antithetical to Aristotle's own view in *Nicomachean Ethics X*; so the doctrine about pleasure that I put forward here may be very different from Aristotle's own.

⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 2, 87: τέλος μὲν ἅρα εἶναι τὴν κατὰ μέρος ἡδονὴν, εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ τὸ ἐκ τῶν μερικῶν ἡδονῶν σύστημα, αἷσιν συναριθμοῦνται καὶ αἷ παρῶχηκυῖαι καὶ αἷ μελλούσαι. Εἶναι τε τὴν μερικὴν ἡδονὴν δι' αὐτὴν αἰρετὴν. τὴν δ' εὐδαιμονίαν οὐ δι' αὐτὴν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰς κατὰ μέρος ἡδονὰς.

contain any cognition that is *essentially* of particular events existing in other times. But pleasure often goes together with such cognition of nonpresent objects. And such cognition (*as* cognition of such-and-such a thing) may seem to be partially constitutive of the particular occurrent pleasure itself and of its intrinsic value. For example, rejoicing in the birth of a grandchild may seem to be essentially taking pleasure in just that. But then the object of the cognition, which is outside the pleasure's experiential moment, will be involved in that pleasure's existing, contrary to the hedonist's view of pleasure. For if the cognition *as such* in part constitutes the pleasure, while the cognition involves an essential relation to the event taking place in another time, that pleasure's existing in its moment is not wholly a matter of what passes in that moment, as the hedonist supposed.

Neither memory, nor propositional knowledge in general, are matters contained wholly within an experiential moment. Yet both seem to belong to our good. But neither can, it seems, if pleasure of the moment is *the* good, as the hedonist holds.⁷ Already the Cyrenaics are said to have held that, while $\phi\rho\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (wisdom or thought or knowledge) is *generally* necessary for living pleasantly and well, it is not to be chosen for its own sake; but only for the sake of its consequences, the short-term pleasant states that in consequence of its

⁷ Plato, perhaps, hints at some of this in the argument of *Philebus* 20E-21C (discussed in my next section), which he reviews at 60DE. The notion of 'pleasure of the moment' also comes up at *Protagoras* 353D, 355B, and 356A. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 3,10; 433b7-10: For reason commands to resist on account of what is to be; but desire on account of what already is. For what is [only] just now pleasant seems to be both generally pleasant and generally good, because we fail to see what is to be. (Ὁ μὲν γὰρ νοῦς διὰ τὸ μέλλον ἀνθελεῖν κελεύει, ἡ δ' ἐπιθυμία διὰ τὸ ἤδη. φαίνεται γὰρ τὸ ἤδη ἡδὺ καὶ ἀπλῶς ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἀπλῶς, διὰ τὸ μὴ ὥραν τὸ μέλλον.)

exercise occur. So far as life's intrinsic value goes, "It is quite enough to encounter singly any pleasure that comes along."⁸ Thought and cognition are (on this view) related to our good only causally and externally; so that we would be none the worse off if the usual rewards of forethought and understanding were supplied by other instrumentalities instead. On this view of the good (or best) life for man, nothing cognitive—and, indeed, nothing characteristically human (in contrast with lower animals)—seems to be, for its own sake, required.⁹ So things have seemed to the hedonistic philosophers; who have held against their opposition, from Plato¹⁰ to Ryle¹¹ and Anscombe,¹² that the having of pleasure is only contingently linked to any source or object or content or activity or developed cognitive state—but is in the pleasures of sensation and activity, of fools and sages, of man and beast essentially the same.

⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 2,91: [Α]ρκει δε καν κατα μιαν τισ προσπιπτουσιν ἡδεωσ επαναζη.

⁹ Cf. Plato, *Philebus* 21C.

¹⁰ *Philebus* 12C-13C, 21A-C, 36Cf.

¹¹ *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), Chapter 4: "Emotion"; *Dilemmas* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1954), Chapter 4: "Pleasure"; and "Pleasure", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* supp. vol. 28(1954): 135-46.

¹² I discuss Anscombe in §2.3 above and §4.2 below.

4.2 SOME CONTEXTUALIST OBJECTIONS

Is this hedonist's conception of hedonic experience and value a tenable one? This has been denied. Plato in the *Philebus*, for example, seems to think that hedonism can be defeated on this ground.

Socrates. And is the good completely sufficient [such that, if we possessed it, nothing more would be left to be desired]?

Protarchus. How else could it be? Just in this it distinguishes itself from everything else.

Socrates. Let us, then, examine and judge the life of pleasure and the life of thought, inspecting them separately.

Protarchus. How?

Socrates. There should be no thought in the life of pleasure, and no pleasure in the life of thought. For, if one of these is the good, nothing more will be needed in this case. But if more is needed, we should say that this alternative is not yet our real good.

Protarchus. By no means.

Socrates. If you were without thought and memory and knowledge and true belief, then, first of all, you surely could not know even whether you were enjoying yourself or not, since you would be devoid of all thought.

Protarchus. Just so.

Socrates. And, similarly, you couldn't, without memory, remember whether you had enjoyed yourself; for of the pleasure encountered in a moment, no memory would remain behind. Without true belief, you couldn't believe you were enjoying yourself when you were; and without reasoning, it would be impossible for you to reckon that you'd enjoy yourself at a later time Is this so, or can we think otherwise?

Protarchus. How could we?

Socrates. And should we choose such a life?

Protarchus. Socrates, this argument has completely silenced me this moment.¹³

¹³ Plato, *Philebus* 20D4-21C6.

ΣΩ. Τι δε; ἴκανον ταχᾶθον;

ΠΡΩ. Πως γὰρ οὐ; καὶ παντῶν γε εἰς τοῦτο διαφέρειν τῶν ὄντων.

ΣΩ. Σκοπῶμεν δὴ καὶ κρινῶμεν τὸν τε ἡδονῆς καὶ τὸν φρονήσεως βίον ἰδόντες χωρὶς.

ΠΡΩ. Πως εἶπες;

ΣΩ. Μῆτε ἐν τῷ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἐνεστὼ φρονήσις μὴτ' ἐν τῷ τῆς φρονήσεως ἡδονῆ. δεῖ γὰρ, εἰπερ ποτερον αὐτῶν ἐστὶ ταχᾶθον, μὴδεν μὴδενος εἶτι προσδεῖσθαι: δεόμενον δ' ἂν φανῆ ποτερον, οὐκ ἐστὶ που τοῦτ' εἶτι τὸ ὄντως ἡμῖν ἀχᾶθον.

One might, putting weight on the final point, which concerns prediction, take Plato's conclusion here to be merely that the bare experience of pleasure, stripped of cognitive employment, would not carry with it either (1) the stability of pleasant experience that is ordinarily sustained by intelligent hedonistic planning,¹⁴ or (2) the confidence in the continuance of a pleasant state that would, arguably, be needed even for the unperturbed experiencing of pleasure at a time. Even in respect of pleasure, it would then be argued, we should not find sufficient a life of pleasure alone. But these points would seem out of place in the present comparison of whole lives;¹⁵ where one of the lives is presumed to be a life of *complete* pleasure, and this presumption is not later revised. Or one might put the main weight on Protarchus' ceasing to find the life of pleasure desirable once it has been divorced from thought and self-knowledge. For this not only affords an *ad hominem* victory over the hedonistic position Protarchus

ΠΡΩ. Πως ἄρα αν;

ΣΩ. Νουν δε ἔε και μνημην και επιστημην και δοξαν μη κεκτημηνοσ αληθη, πρωτον μεν τουτο αυτο, ει χαιρεισ η μη χαιρεισ, αναλκη δηπου σε αἴνοειν, κενον ἔε οντα πασησ φρονησεωσ;

ΠΡΩ. Αναλκη.

ΣΩ. Και μην ὡσαυτωσ μνημην μη κεκτημενον αναλκη δηπου μηδ' ὅτι ποτε εχαιρεσ μεμνησθαι, τησ τ' εν τῳ παραλρημα ἠδονησ προσπιπτουσησ μηδ' ἠντινουσ μνημην ὕπομενειν: δοξαν δ' αυ μη κεκτημενον αληθη μη δοξαζειν χαιρειν χαιροντα, λοδισμου δε στερομενον μηδ' εισ τον επειτα χρονον ὡσ χαιρησεισ δυνατον ειναι λοδίζεσθαι εστι ταυτα, η παρα ταυτα εχομεν αλλωσ πως διανοθηται;

ΠΡΩ. Και πως;

ΣΩ. Αρ' ουν ἄιρετοσ ἡμιν βιοσ ὁ τοιουτοσ;

ΠΡΩ. Εισ αφασιαν πανταπασι με, ω Σωκρατεσ, ὁυτοσ ὁ λοδοσ εμβεβληκε τα νυν.

¹⁴ Plato does—for example, in the *Republic*—regard stability or permanence as necessary for goodness.

¹⁵ That this is what is in question seems explicit at 21A8.

represents in the elenchus, but also presents a counterexample to the Eudoxan thesis that all animals will always choose pleasure. And Plato's argument seems to be directed against Eudoxus.¹⁶ But the claim that the argument has shown that the life of pleasure alone is not choiceworthy or desirable for *any* animal (22B1-2) shows that the argument against Eudoxus is intended to be still more pointed than that. It is not taken to apply only to the likes of Protarchus, for whom the life of pleasure alone might be unchoiceworthy only because they can choose a 'mixed life' of pleasure *and* knowledge still better than this, but to show that the life of an animal without thought or knowledge is not desirable even for animals such as shellfish (21C7) which lack these capacities.¹⁷ The following argument, while it is neither explicit in the text, nor attributable to Plato on other grounds known to me, at least fits these constraints. It also provides more by

¹⁶ That Eudoxus' position is Plato's target in the *Philebus* is the view of A.E. Taylor, in the Introduction to his translation of the *Philebus* in *Philebus and Epinomis* (London: Nelson, 1953), pp. 23-24. That Eudoxus or his influence is Plato's target is argued further by J.C.B. Gosling in *Plato's Philebus: Translation, Notes and Commentary, Clarendon Plato Series* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 166-77. See also Gosling and Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure*, especially pp. 157-64. Moreover, Aristotle (at *Nicomachean Ethics* 1172b26-34) apparently views our *Philebus* argument as a turning of the tables by Plato of Eudoxus' fourth argument (given at *N.E.* 1172b24-26), which is to the effect that pleasure must be the good because, when it is added to good things, it makes them better. This is further reason to believe that *this* argument of the *Philebus*, at least, was perceived as directed against Eudoxus. My interpretation in the next paragraph would provide still more reason for taking Plato's argument to have Eudoxus as its target.

¹⁷ This lack of knowledge is presumably inferred from a lack of desire, which is in turn inferred by the failure of these animals to actively and conspicuously move about in search of food. The animal, presumably, might feel pleasure when nourishment comes its way without having even the perceptual knowledge which active food-seeking would involve.

way of argument than would the more conservative interpretation that would take the worthlessness of the life without knowledge as an unsupported premise, introduced with no warrant beyond Protarchus' acceptance of it in the elenchus.

Eudoxus' first three arguments, as reported by Aristotle,¹⁸ take their start from the phenomena of choosing and pursuing goals. But when we imaginatively consider pleasure isolated in its pure form, we see that the cognitive and perceptual conditions for choosing and wanting cannot, by the force of this very hypothesis, obtain. What would be lacking is not only the rational decision and preference characteristic of man, but more generally the cognitive conditions of the very animal choosing and wanting to which Eudoxus appeals. The hedonist argues from the evidence of choosing and wanting to evaluative hedonism, and hence to the claims (1) that having momentary pleasure suffices for an animal's being well-off then, and (2) that having a whole life of nothing but such moments of pleasure suffices to make an animal's life a good one for the animal to have. But (the objection would go) the hedonist's arguments presuppose a wider cognitive context. Absent this, there can be no entertaining or representing of any end; and so choosing and wanting must fail to obtain. But, without choosing and wanting, the hedonist's arguments from pleasure being desired or chosen could not even get started. For the phenomena of choice and of wanting, which are the acknowledged indicators of choiceworthiness and desirability, would fail to obtain. So even the conclusion that pleasure is good (let alone that it is *the* good)

¹⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* 1172 b9-23, which I quote at the beginning of §3.21, p. 59, above.

will fail to be evidenced for pleasure, as the hedonist conceives it—as something isolable in the experiential moment; as we have seen by imaginatively isolating and considering pleasure in this pure case of the life of pleasure alone. Correct application of the hedonist's preferred test for goodness—that of choice and desire—has shown that pleasure pure and bare is not even desirable or choiceworthy, because the cognitive and perceptual conditions of choosing and wanting would be absent in a life of pleasure alone.¹⁹

Eudoxus' first three arguments, and this objection to them, all seem to involve something like the move from "desired" to "desirable" for which John Stuart Mill is commonly criticized in discussions of his 'proof' of evaluative hedonism.²⁰ Language would have made such a move less obvious in ancient Greek; and doctrine would have made it more acceptable. Unlike in modern English, where "desirable" and "choiceworthy" mean only what (rationally) *may* or *should* be desired, or chosen, ancient Greek here (as often) uses verbal adjectives that cover a wider semantic range. Specifically, Eudoxus' "αἰρετόν"—which Ross translates, neutrally, as "object of desire"—covers the whole range from "what *is* actually chosen" to "what *may* (rationally) be chosen" to "what *should* be chosen".²¹ Moreover, our distinction

¹⁹ But the life of knowledge alone is also rejected, and it would be a point in favor of an interpretation if it could make out the rejection to be on parallel grounds. Can this be the case here? If one could appeal to a view about the role of pleasure in motivation ~~such as that with which we ended in the last chapter~~, on which it is a precondition for desire (along with cognition), then this would be the case.

²⁰ For Mill's 'proof', see §3.22 above. For the criticism that later became standard, see Moore, *Principia Ethica*, §§39-40, pp. 64-67 and §§43-44, pp. 73-4. But see also Sidgwick, *Methods*, p. 388.

between natural (e.g., biological and psychological) and normative (e.g., ethical and prudential) modalities is not one which the ancient writers in question can be presumed to have. Further, this is a distinction that Plato and others of his contemporaries, would have little reason to make, for the doctrinal reasons we went into near the beginning of §3.2: They regard many failures of rational choice as failures of human nature—which they do not conceive in a value-neutral way, but rather as perversion from what is at once the standard of the best and the normal for man.

So it should not be surprising if Plato, instead of criticizing Eudoxus' arguments from choice to choiceworthiness as *non sequiturs*, instead seeks to turn the tables on Eudoxus by making a similar move—by claiming that, where cognition (and therefore choice and pursuit and desire) are absent, choiceworthiness and desirability must also fail to obtain. The hedonist, however, can maintain against Plato that it is enough for pleasure to be the kind of thing that *would* be desired and sought if the conditions for desiring and seeking the good obtained. The test of desire, he can maintain, can show *in general* that all pleasure is desirable, without the test being actually applied, or applicable, in every case. Our hypothetical desire, when we (as we actually are) imagine ourselves in the shellfish's place—and not its own desire (which is supposed always to be lacking)—, would then be all the conative material necessary for our thought-experiment. And, the hedonist will maintain against Plato, this thought-experiment correctly thought through will show this life of purified pleasure to be desirable.

²¹ I translate "αἰρετοσ" by "Should . . . choose" at the end of the long quotation from Plato above.

Whatever Plato's own argument may have been, Anscombe believes that an argument along lines very similar to these is "a fatal objection [to hedonism] from the very outset."²² This argument, it seems, is intended to support the anti-hedonistic polemic²³ that we considered briefly at the end of Chapter Two.

The wanting that interests us, however, is neither wishing nor hoping nor the feeling of desire, and cannot be said to exist in a man who does nothing toward getting what he wants.

The primitive sign of wanting is *trying to get*; which of course can only be ascribed to creatures endowed with sensation. Thus it is not mere movement or stretching out towards something, but this on the part of a creature that can be said to know the thing. On the other hand knowledge itself cannot be described independently of volition; the ascription of sensible knowledge and volition go together. . .

The primitive sign of wanting is *trying to get*: in saying this, we describe the movement of an animal in terms that reach beyond what the animal is now doing.²⁴

Anscombe's complaint against hedonism, again (but summarized less polemically than in the formulation quoted in §2.2), is that

Bentham and Mill do not notice the difficulty of the concept 'pleasure'. . . . [S]ince Locke, pleasure was taken to be some sort of internal impression. But it was superficial, if that was the right account of it, to make it the point of actions. One might adapt something Wittgenstein said about 'meaning' and say "Pleasure cannot be an internal impression, for no internal impression could have the consequences of pleasure".²⁵

²² G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy", in *The Collected Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Vol. 3: *Ethics, Religion and Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 26-42, p. 27; originally published in *Philosophy* 33, 1(January 1958): 1-19.

²³ From *Intention*, 2d edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963; 1st edition, 1957), p. 77.

²⁴ *Intention*, pp. 67-68.

²⁵ "Modern Moral Philosophy", Anscombe, *Collected Philosophical*

How are these considerations supposed to cut against hedonism? By attacking the hedonistic metaphysics of mind; and, specifically, the plausibility of holding simultaneously the hedonistic conception of pleasure and the view of the place of pleasure in motivation and in ethics to which the hedonistic thinker is also committed. The hedonist holds pleasure to be something that is immediately experienced in experiential moments, but also that pleasure gives reasons for action. But reasons for action involve thinking and reasoning that goes beyond anything that is internal to a moment; which pleasure, on the hedonist's view of it, would be. The analogy to Wittgenstein's criticism of empiricist notions of meaning and understanding would be as follows. Just as these cognitive states are what they are only given the larger context of human abilities in which their ascription is embedded, so reasons for action and intentions are such only given their role in explaining the "what for" of an action. In both cases, any immediate experience must, as such, be quite beside the point. For it is only as *mediated* by the larger context that talk about goal-directed action and reasons for action makes sense at all. The strategy, in Anthony Kenny's words, is to argue that "an internal impression could never be a reason for action, whereas pleasure is always a reason for action."²⁶ The argument suggested in these passages and their context²⁷ seems to be as follows.

Papers, Vol. 3, p. 27.

²⁶ *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul and New York: Humanities, 1963), p. 134.

²⁷ I have also been guided by my impression of Anscombe's intentions elsewhere, especially in the paper cited in n. 28, p. 107, below. I quote the most relevant passage at p. 103, below.

Argument A1: Against the View that Pleasure is an Immediate Experience

Premise 1. Experiencing pleasure necessarily involves having a reason for action.

Premise 2. A reason for action necessarily applies only under a description, which shows how the end at which the action would be aimed is (thought to be) good, and thus what the point of the action would be.

Premise 3. But no such description is given by the mere having or obtaining of any mere sensation or feeling, since these are supposed to be immediate experiences the having of which does not depend on anything being thought of under a description, which might show how it is (thought to be) good.

Lemma. No reason for action is given in any immediate experience as such. (From Premises 2 and 3)

Conclusion. The experience of pleasure is not an immediate experience (and therefore not a sensation or feeling), but necessarily involves the thought that something is good.

The kind of hedonist I am defending should reject Premise 1 of Argument A1, and also that argument's conclusion. Our conclusions of the preceding two chapters anticipate how his response to both Plato and Anscombe should go: Choice, pursuit, desire and our considered thoughts about the good only *indicate* (but do not *constitute*) the value of momentary pleasure—a value which could, in principle, be present just the same whether or not these larger psychological structures obtain. The final court of appeal is the immediate liking and disliking that takes place wholly within single experiential moments. Our confidence in its verdict may be supported by its coincidence with what people (and animals) actually choose and desire. But the authority of the verdict, detached from the motivational argument, can stand alone—absent the larger psychological context of actual or potential choice or desire, and characterization as desirable, which such

arguments involve. The case would, then, be analogous to the acceptance of evidence for a matter of fact in a court of law. Admission of the evidence takes place within a judicial context. But the evidence is reliable or not, and what it is evidence for is the case or not, independently of that context. Similarly, pleasure and the momentary liking that goes with it occurs (or not), and its value obtains (or not), independently of any judgment or context not implicated in these facts themselves.

The essential point may be made even without insisting upon the evidence or epistemic authority of anything momentary. One can say: The evidence is the phenomenon of choice. This is recognized as evidence of value in the context of the argument between the ancient hedonists and their opponents. But from the hedonist's own standpoint, this argumentative context, and even the phenomenon of choice, are not implicated in the mere immediate experiencing of pleasure in its moment. Rather, so far as the being and value of occurrent pleasure are concerned, the context is always essentially dispensable.

Immediately experienced pleasure can *ground* reasons for action without itself essentially belonging to the order of reasons. It is itself a reason only as it is something that can enter into reasons. It does this in two ways. One way is that pleasure's obtaining may figure in a reason properly so called in the way any matter of fact can stand as a reason. Certainly, there is no problem with pleasure counting as a consideration in the way that apples and money and prizes figure in considerations, without being reasons in the way in which only what

belongs essentially to the order of thought and reasons can be a reason.

What may remain problematical, however, is the further way that pleasure—unlike apples and money—is supposed to be not only an ultimate but also an *unconditional* reason for action; while the having and being of reasons to seek apples or money always depend on particular circumstances or tastes. How there could be such a thing as intrinsic value—and how, even if there were, any subject could have reason to pursue it—may seem problematical. The *general* doubt about these, which would equally affect any version of metaphysical ethics, will not be directly addressed here. (But any progress I make in developing the hedonistic version of metaphysical ethics may count as an indirect answer to this general doubt about what might, in Moore's broad usage, be called 'naturalist' approaches to a theory of value.) The *special* questions arising here are: How can something that is an immediate feeling of the moment give reasons, or motivate, *unconditionally* (given that the larger-than-momentary conditions of having reasons, or being motivated, obtain)?

These special questions, in effect, constitute a challenge that the hedonist show how a version of this 'empiricist' view of human value (or even of a similar view of any part of human value) can be coherently and plausibly developed. This possibility cannot be ruled out beforehand on the general grounds we have considered so far; nor can it be ruled out merely by raising the question how such an account would go. I shall make a beginning to meeting the challenge by showing how such a view of ethics and of mind might be developed, and how it might derive additional support, in the following chapters.

Anscombe's full case against this possibility seems to involve a further argument, which Argument A1 feeds into, by supplying a lemma.

Argument A2: The Circularity Charge²⁸

Premise 1. No successful explanation can essentially appeal to its explanandum.

Premise 2. Hedonism is (at least) an attempt to explain goodness in terms of the experiencing of pleasure.

Lemma. But experiencing pleasure necessarily involves the thought that something is good. (From the Conclusion of Argument A1)

Conclusion. There can be no explanation of the good in terms of the experiencing of pleasure, and hedonism fails.

The general form of this challenge is as follows. It may be impossible to give an account of pleasure and its place in our good that does not depend on an account of what is good (or moral, or rational) quite generally. (And especially if, as some writers—but not our hedonist—think, it would be impossible to give an account of pleasure independently of the features pleasure is taken in; and that the good or moral or rational as such are among these features.) But we must be able to characterize pleasure apart from such *further* questions if the hedonist's attempt to find the ultimate ground of (even part of) human value in immediate experience is to get off the ground.

Before going into what seems to be Anscombe's argument, I want to address a more a priori argument that would dispense with the lemma, which seems to depend on Argument A1 and which the hedonist

²⁸ My construction of this second argument of Anscombe's draws mainly on "Will and Emotion", *Collected Papers*, Vol. 1: *From Parmenides to Wittgenstein*, pp. 100-107, especially pp. 104-107. I quote the crucial passage below.

who rejects Argument A1 may likewise reject. Moore, in charging that utilitarianism commits the 'naturalistic fallacy',²⁹ held that any substantive account of the good *must* fail, by changing the subject. But otherwise, it may seem, the hedonist must run afoul of the other horn of the reductive or eliminative analyst's dilemma—of using in his analysis what he has set out to analyze.

How can the hedonist avoid both horns? By giving something other than such an analysis. The explanation the hedonist gives should not change the subject, nor yet be a merely circular account, but should offer the kind of explication substantive answers to scientific questions often consist in.

Why isn't it an objection to, say, a theory of gravitation, or to a unified theory of all fundamental forces, that it uses an unanalyzed notion of force, which it purports to explain? The physicist uses, in his theory proper, only primitive notions of physics and mathematics. Our intuitive notion of force—and, if he is a contemporary fundamental theorist, even Newton's or Maxwell's concepts of force—are not among them. Similarly, the scientist studying materials does not use in his official theory our ordinary notion of matter. But the new theoretical accounts, if successful, explain what (if anything) answers to our earlier conceptions. The intuitive 'pretheoretical' terms are, typically, neither analyzed nor abandoned—but may go on being used, with their popular and engineering uses much unchanged, but now connected heuristically with terms and principles of the new theory. To *explain to someone* the phenomenon of the rainbow by means of optics you will

²⁹ For references and a brief comment, see Chapter One, p. 14, above.

typically have to mention the rainbow at some point—and not only water droplets and rays of light. But the rainbow is exhaustively explained, for all that; since it is nothing above what has already, in other terms, been characterized and explained.

Similarly, a substantive account of the good—such as hedonism, properly conceived—does not appeal to or analyze our idea of value or good. Rather, these inquiries aim at discovering what, among actual things, best answers to these conceptions. The general and vague conception (of matter, of force, of value or goodness, or of whatever) is, in a way, epistemically prior. It sets the question which the appropriate study, at its most fundamental level, tries to answer. But that is no conceptual barrier to our discovering (or to our having good reason to believe we have discovered) that there are few fundamental forces or kinds of value or of whatever, or that the actual things or kinds answering to the general conception reduce to one. And, indeed, that is what we should hold, in the case of the human good, if we come to believe that pleasure alone, among actual things, answers to the intuitive demands that our preexisting conception places on anything that is to be our good (or part of our good). When we have a unitary fundamental theory of matter (let us suppose, some 'string theory') we shall not say that what matter is, and what the nature of these strings is, are questions requiring different answers. Similarly, we should not (*pace* Moore), if we come to regard hedonism as a satisfactory theory of the good, count "What is the good?", "What things are good?" and "What is pleasure?" as quite different questions. For, by hypothesis, we should have come to regard the earlier questions as admitting the

same detailed answers as the latter, more precise, one. Neither science nor metaphysical ethics, would, in so doing, appeal to their vague, pretheoretical explananda in an objectionably circular way.

So much for these purely general considerations. Anscombe appeals to a substantively psychological lemma, and not only to such general considerations as we have just rejected, in making her circularity charge (Argument A2)—if I am correct in ascribing it to her largely on the basis of the following discussion of emotion.

. . . to distinguish between emotions and complex bodily sensations such as dizziness, nausea, thirst, itches, weariness, sleepiness, being on edge, feeling inert, feeling full. One doesn't want to call these "emotion". But why not? The answer is that these sensations don't involve reference to good and evil, that admixture of reasons and thoughts which is so characteristic of human emotion. Nausea, for example, is a feeling of *being liable to throw up soon*, it is not a feeling that it would be good or lovely to throw up. Nor even is thirst a feeling that it would be lovely to drink—even though one might give expression to it by saying so and thereby become emotional about it. . . . If we have to use them [viz., the ideas of good and evil] to differentiate emotions from psycho-somatic sensations, then they cannot be explained to us by pointing to the emotions. The genetic explanation by reference to familiar objects of experience: "You know what fear and hope, love and hate are, don't you? Well, the ideas that can be got from having all of these in your repertory are the ideas of good and evil"—this won't work because we will already have to mention good and evil in explaining what we meant by the words for the emotions.³⁰

Pace Anscombe, only *some* of what we call "emotions"—for example, moral indignation and gratitude—involve such beliefs about human benefit and harm, or about good and evil actions. Others, such as objectless depression and elation, do not. And, certainly, a mother who strikes out at her child in sudden rage or frustration need have no

³⁰ Anscombe *Collected Papers*, Vol. 1, "Will and Emotion", pp.100-107; p. 104.

"feeling that it would be good or lovely" for the child to be injured. Neither need there be any other description under which she aims in so acting at something she believes good, for this to be acting emotionally—as opposed to merely having a "psycho-somatic sensation", such as a *mere* tingle or hunger pang.

Most of what we call "emotions", however, do involve cognition and motivation in ways that the mere experiencing of pleasure (or pain) does not. But that does not defeat the hedonist's claim that the pleasure-and-pain dimension of experience has its being, and can be characterized, independently at least of any *particular* cognition or motivation—for example, concerning what is good. And even if we reserved the word "emotion" for Anscombe's preferred cases of attitudes involving reference to the good and bad belonging to human lives and actions, that would not destroy the obvious connection of these with the affective experience and reactions of infants and animals, who feel pleasure and pain and some basic affects, but lack the concepts of good and evil.

Anscombe, however, like others after her,³¹ would insist on the differences between: enjoyings and affectively toned experiences (including suffering from hunger or nausea or cold), on the one hand; and feeling pleased or pained (in ways that involve reasoned judgments about human action and well-being, or other forms of good), on the other. Differences exist, as these very characterizations may serve to

³¹ David L. Perry, *The Concept of Pleasure* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967). J.C.B. Gosling, *Pleasure and Desire: The Case for Hedonism Reviewed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). Alan Edward Fuchs, *Hedonism and the Concept of Pleasure*. Harvard Ph.D. thesis in Philosophy, December 1972.

show; but similarities do, too. The hedonist insists that these similarities point to a level of experience that, despite the (causal and contextual and cognitive-psychological) differences among these various cases, is nevertheless itself the same—a level at which these differences make no difference, and at which we experience the momentary presence of pleasure and pain.

4.3 TWO PERSPECTIVES ON MIND AND VALUE

Is this reply on the hedonist's behalf sufficient? How one answers will depend on one's view of mind—and, more precisely, on one's view of the antecedent relative plausibility of different conceptions of consciousness and cognition, and of their relations. One conception of mind has it (very roughly) that we—the subjects of experience who feel pleasure and pain, who also sense and perceive, have desires and plans and act on them, and who also master both botanical and mathematical facts—are essentially *knowers* at our core. If we have sensations or emotions or desires that are not judgments (or based on judgments), then—on such a view—our having these cannot be central to what we are or to our good. What matters, for the constitution of human action and human value, will be rather our considered judgments and the will based upon them; and these are fully developed cognitive, or cognitively-based, mental operations—and not things such as animals and young children do or feel.³² Mind and the mental, and even the

³² Socrates, perhaps, held a view of this kind—on the evidence, for example, of Plato's *Protagoras*. The Stoics did so later, and their influence passed on to Descartes and other modern 'rationalist' philosophers. The question of how developed cognition and reflective consciousness are related to the immediate consciousness of sensation or feeling becomes more explicit in later Greek philosophy,

nonbodily aspect of perception and emotion, will, on such a view, seem to be essentially cognitive.

The view of self as mind, of mind as knower, and of knowing as an essentially intellectual operation (with feeling and sensation to be understood as derivative, degenerate or confused forms) seems to lie behind Plato's intention in the passage we discussed in the preceding section, where Plato denies that pleasure (and, presumably, anything else that does not essentially involve full-fledged cognition) can suffice for a life worth living. It would be because we are essentially knowers that nothing separable from knowing could be our good. This, perhaps along with the view that the motivation that decisively evidences our good must be cognitively-based motivation, springing from a cognitively-based desire for the good, would lie behind the further interpretation we considered.

A simpler construction of that argument might be thought plausible: one proceeding directly from the premise that what you don't know can't (directly) hurt or benefit you, to the conclusion that pleasure, to be of any benefit, must be known. But "knowing" in English (like similar words in many other languages) covers quite different psychological phenomena. It takes as its grammatical direct object both terms referring to objects of discursive thought and terms referring to immediate experiences. Where one is affected by something by way of one's thoughts about it, the harm or benefit clearly depends on one's *representing it in one's thought*. But the having of pleasure, with which we were concerned in Plato's argument, is not a matter of

for example in Plotinus; and, later, in Kant and in the tradition of post-Kantian philosophical 'idealism'.

one's *thinking about pleasure*, but of one's *feeling it*.

Plato, however, in the long list of cognitive verbs and nouns used in the passage, avoids αισθανομαι (roughly: to sense, perceive or feel), αισθησις (the corresponding noun) and their cognates. But these are the natural terms for Plato to have used if he had wished to say that the pleasure of the shellfish was unconscious, in the way of being unfelt by it.³³ The distinction between thought and sensuous pleasure was no stranger to Plato's philosophy, or to his discussions of pleasure. Therefore, the rejected 'shellfish's life' of pleasure devoid of knowledge should not, *absent further reasons*, be assumed to be a life in which the pleasure is 'unconscious'—where this includes not being *felt*, as well as not being *thought of*.³⁴ Given that Plato avoided the language that would most naturally convey that broad meaning, it is reasonable to suppose that he did not wish to suggest it. For the notion of unfelt pleasure seems as paradoxical in the language and philosophy of classical Greece as it is in modern philosophy and modern English. In both alike it seems to go against common belief and speech, and to require special theoretical motivation. Leibniz and Epicurus may have had such motivation. This, so far as I know, was lacking in the case of Plato.

³³ But see Friedrich Solmsen's discussion of Plato's distinction between αισθησις and παθος in *Timaeus* 61C-68D at the opening of his anyway relevant "αισθησις in Aristotelian and Epicurean Thought", *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen afd. Letterkunde*, Nieuwe Reeks 24, 8 (1 Sept. 1961): 124-62.

³⁴ This seems to be Moore's interpretation in *Principia Ethica* §52, pp. 87-90, where Plato's argument is said to show that pleasure can be of no value where there is no 'consciousness of pleasure'.

But Moore may have had the theoretical motivation for such a move. First, from introspectionist psychology, which tended to count as conscious only what is discriminated as an object of introspective awareness. Thus Alexander Bain had written that pleasure is generally not noticed when one's consciousness is 'objectively' occupied; and that the pleasure then has no intrinsic value.³⁵ Second, because Moore had adopted from Brentano an act-object analysis of all mental acts. And third, because of his own view that acts of (e.g., visual) consciousness could have qualitatively identical consciousnesses as components although directed at qualitatively different (e.g., green and blue) objects.³⁶

I believe all these related views to be wrong. Conscious experiencing is not, *in general*, a 'consciousness' superadded to, contemplating or commenting upon *anything* distinct from itself. There are important differences among the states we call "conscious". Not every mental state of ourselves that we can reliably report is immediately experienced, as pleasure is. And: not everything that directly enters qualitatively into our conscious lives is discriminated and rehearsed in a way that lends itself to verbal report. Some experiences *simply are* immediate conscious qualitative experiences, regardless of whether or not they are remarked in the inner patter of verbal thought, or registered in long-term memory. Some of these are easily

³⁵ *The Emotions and the Will*, 3d. ed., p. 540. Compare p. 437, there; quoted at p. 75, above.

³⁶ "The Refutation of Idealism", *Mind* n.s. 12 (1903): 423-53, reprinted in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), pp. 1-30. Compare "The Subject-Matter of Psychology", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* n.s. 10 (1909-10): 36-62, p. 55 and *passim*.

discerned by our capacities for 'introspective' verbal thinking and reporting. But others are not. One can *experience* pleasure without thinking the thought that he is experiencing it. And someone's conscious life may be profoundly affected by depression without the *thought* that he is generally depressed, or occurrently sad, having occurred to him—even though occurrent sadness pervades his experience. Others may be able to tell more easily than he. Affect is, in these cases, *immediately experienced*, nevertheless. But the experience of, e.g., sadness, by itself gives no purchase on the application of the concept 'sad'. In fact, it seems that no immediate experience *automatically* carries with it the possession or use of a corresponding concept; nor need it carry with it the ability to apply, in every instance, an applicable concept one already has to the particular experience one is undergoing. The application of a concept of an experience to an immediate experience is not the mere having of that experience, but something more.

My principal concern in this essay is with immediate experience, such as pleasure is on the hedonist's view. And that is what I shall generally signify by "consciousness" and its cognates. I do not deny that we are also rightly said to be conscious of much that goes beyond immediate experience—for example, of bridges, theorems and macroeconomic trends. But experience of these is causally or representationally mediated in a way that immediate experiencings are not. On the view of mind I will be sketching here, it is immediate experience that is the core of my conscious subjectivity, and it is by virtue of its connection to this that anything else belongs to me. But

this core subjectivity belongs to me in its own right. Such views might be called *centered* conceptions of mind, because on such views the mind is characterized essentially by an *intrinsic* capacity for immediate consciousness, necessary for its having its own conscious point of view; and other aspects or powers of mentality (such as language competence and mathematical ability) belong to a mind only by way of their relation to this. Something like a 'functional analysis' of mind might accord with such a perspective. But it would turn inside-out the approach that takes its start from biological function in the environment, and proceeds to assign function to psychological states or capacities by interpreting 'from the outside (e.g., stimuli and responses) in'. For such a view would take its start from what it takes to be truly distinctive about mind—the subject's view, and proceed to characterize from the subject's, rather than from the environment's, point of view what the processors peripheral to the agent's central point of view do—how they enter into its action and experience of the world.

The hedonist's reply to Moore's question, whether pleasure or the consciousness of pleasure is valuable or desirable, was already anticipated at the end of Chapter Two. There I said that, with an immediate experience, such as pleasure, a distinction between the experiencing and what is experienced has no place. If by "consciousness of pleasure" Moore means "immediate experiencing of pleasure", then I reject his distinction between pleasure and the consciousness of pleasure. If, on the other hand, this 'consciousness' is *reflection upon* the immediate experience, then I accept Moore's distinction—but insist that the pleasure that is of intrinsic value can

and does obtain without such reflection, not only in lower animals and babies but also in ourselves. And I deny that intrinsic desirability or value belongs to the reflective thought as such. (It might *cause* pleasure, or it might, as in some empiricist philosophers, be that what represents the pleasure is itself pleasure; but even in this last case it would not have intrinsic value as a *representation* of pleasure, but only because it is *itself* pleasure and has this value in its own right.)

In discussing Moore, I have been implicitly rejecting what I have called the 'rationalist' view of mind, according to which *all* mental operations are to be understood on the model of fully developed cognitive operations involving richly interconnected systems of concepts such as typically require representation in language. And I have been suggesting a very different view of mind, favored by 'empiricists' and hedonists, such as Hume, that starts from the presence of immediate feeling and sensation, looked upon as 'original existence' in its own right. The picture behind this view seems to be that we, the conscious selves, live primarily in such immediate experiencings—so that human knowledge and action must be somehow connected to this basis to be knowledge or action of our own. On this 'empiricist' view, congenial to hedonism, any cause or object of the particular experiencing of pleasure will seem inessential to the immediate experiencing, and to its being an experiencing of pleasure. But on the 'rationalist' view, the cognitive content may make a crucial difference—so that 'animal enjoyment', and a person's experiencing of satisfaction with his life, may be very different sorts of thing.

We need both these partial views on mind, and ways of classifying mental phenomena; both the first which is cognitively and functionally oriented, and the second, concerned with more 'inner' levels, at which, for example, the hedonist's immediate experience of pleasure occurs. We need ways to characterize the often holistically mediated character of conceptual knowledge and linguistic meaning, and of their mental representations. But we also need means to characterize the way in which all pleasure is the same—the way in which, for example, the capacities for enjoyment and for being pleased by (one's beliefs about) things are alike thwarted by depression—and are alike restored, with normal mood, by antidepressant drugs. We do not find people made incapable of all enjoyment, but left normally capable of being pleased about things, or vice versa.³⁷

Empiricist epistemologists are wrong to reduce the representational content (the 'aboutness') of cognition to the immediacy of an inner state. But so are those who, seeing the inadequacy of this attempted reduction, see no motivation for talk about the inner life beyond its role in such a project. We *have* immediate experience—for example, in our affective experience qualified by pleasure-and-pain. Plato and Aristotle sought, in their metaphysical theories, to link this inner life

³⁷ Nor should we expect to find such. Those who make much of subtle (and sometimes dubious) ordinary language distinctions in criticizing hedonism (such as the writers mentioned in n. 31, above) would do well to ask themselves whether such distinctions really show that pleasure is not one kind of experience on a commonsense understanding of things. Would an ordinary man, fully competent in English but untutored in philosophy, think that some drug or disease might take all the enjoyment out of life, but preserve intact his capacity for 'being pleased'? Obviously not. But then the requisite unity of pleasure (at the appropriate level of description), and hence hedonism, are not really contraindicated by such ordinary language distinctions, as these writers suppose.

with cognitive function. It seems to me that the proper and relevant moral to be drawn from the later work of Wittgenstein, and from more recent work in the metaphysics and in the philosophy of language, is not that we should reject all talk of the 'inner', but rather that immediate experience has far less to do with the content of thought than the main tendency of the Western philosophical tradition had supposed.

Similarly, the related 'rationalist' tradition in metaphysical ethics teaches that we, the conscious human selves, are essentially *intellectual*, sharing an essence and a good with (as it was once thought) disembodied angelic intellects or (as one now hears) with the information-processing capacities of computing machines. The relevant kinships will be different on the philosophical hedonist's view. For whereas the rationalist tradition conceives our essence and our good in abstraction from our biologically older nature, the philosophical hedonist would abstract rather from those capacities of foresight and reasoning which seem to be most distinctively human, in contrast with the lower animals. The tradition of Plato and Aristotle may suggest that *the good for man* must be *a good distinctive of man* (and perhaps even of well-educated adult human beings) from other animals (if not from a purely intellectual god); while hedonists already in ancient times argued that pleasure is the good for man precisely on the evidence of its being by animals and babies spontaneously sought and preferred—the good for man and beast being supposed by them to be the same.³⁸

³⁸ For testimonia to the currency of this appeal to beasts and babies among the ancient hedonists, see the reports of Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Philosophers* II, 86-87) on Aristippus, of Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* X, 2:1172b8-15) on Eudoxus, and of Cicero (*De*

Which picture, if either, is correct? That which respects essential differences—while disregarding inessential ones. But which are the essential and which the inessential ones, either regarding our nature or our good? Having language, long-term reflective foresight, and the ability to turn one's means into ends, forgetting one's starting point? or the momentary experience of pleasure and pain? Who are the beings most relevantly like ourselves? angelic computers? or reptiles? We are capable of both immediate hedonic, and more malleable long-term means-end, perspectives. Neither kind of viewpoint possessed in isolation would seem quite human: but both together seem essential to human being. The hedonist, as we shall see, may be able to give further reasons for believing that, when we eat further from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of human good and evil, we shall find only a primitive chordate worm at our own core.

V

A HEDONISTIC ACCOUNT OF MIND AND VALUE

5.1 PHILOSOPHICAL HEDONISM

I characterize as "philosophical hedonism" what I believe myself and my predecessors in hedonistic thought to share—that in their thinking which I have accepted in earlier sections of this essay, and shall build upon in those to come. What I shall say in this section is by way of selective summary and further explanation of the kind of hedonism I have motivated in what has gone before, in preparation for the more specific version of this general kind that follows. The formulation of this section will be intentionally general and vague. The elaboration of a specific version will come in later sections. But even there I shall 'leave blanks' to be filled in with future developments in psychology and psychobiology.

I have a picture of human nature and value. How can I put the picture into words? Verbal communication of a picture is possible only among those who already share a space of pictorial possibilities. Given this, the intended picture may be sketched by following a few instructions—as it were, for the last few strokes of the brush. If we share less, what I say will be useless. But if the picture already stood clearly before us, there would be nothing to tell.

All I can do is give directions that, like signposts, help someone passing the ways I have to see them in the perspective I do now—as

leading to my destination. As the paths most traveled through this landscape change with time, so the directions most useful to travelers will change—even if the contours, long views and destination remain the same. This is how philosophy can change without being completely superseded. Some starting-points, landmarks and destinations, and some stretches of trail in between, remain the same.

Human concepts and beliefs develop and change. Yet there are problems firmly rooted in human living and thinking that remain much the same. Plato and Aristotle wanted to know how the life of the soul and the structure of completed knowledge fit together into the larger order of things. Plato's thesis in the *Meno* and *Phaedo* that learning is recollection of an earlier *perfect* experience of knowing belongs to a speculative attempt to answer these questions. And so does the related doctrine of Aristotle that actuality is prior to potentiality, which leads him to explain our incomplete insights into the order of things in terms of an eternal order of reasons and natures known perfectly in the intellectual life of God.

For the philosophical hedonist, also, the inner life belongs to the natural order of things. We learn through sense perception that there are things going on—and also through our immediate feeling of pleasure and pain. I take for granted that we learn in these ways about aspects of the *same* concrete reality—a connected whole in which things can make a causal difference for others—and also that among the things that sometimes make a causal difference are our own actions, and our feelings of pleasure and of pain. My long-term hope is that, if we do our psychology and psychobiology and philosophy right, we shall some

day be able to understand better what Plato and Aristotle also wanted to know—how knowledge and consciousness¹ belong together to the mind and soul, and what the place of these in nature is. My strategy in this chapter is built on the hope that behavioral studies, functional neuroscience and our verbal (and thus, in a way, second-hand) accounts of immediate experience will enrich each other, correct each other's errors—and eventually converge.

In keeping with hedonistic tradition, I shall take 'the mind-body problem' rather lightly here. But while what I say may *suggest* an 'identity view' of mind-body relations, I do not *assume* any such view. But I do generally suppose in my thinking that the existence of any particular mental thing necessarily involves the existence of some (not necessarily basic) physical thing or other, and that mental facts (whether about individuals or about kinds) necessarily supervene on physical facts² (at least for those mental phenomena that are mental in the way that immediate experiences—for example, of pleasure—are mental). Where I write so as to suggest that the relation (whether between particulars or kinds) is identity, this is only because it

¹ The reader whose eyebrows are raised at the use of "consciousness" in this context is welcome to substitute αἰσθησις. The two are often quite good translations of each other. (Perhaps, though, something like το αἰσθανεσθαι would often be better.) What we call "(immediate) consciousness" is certainly *part* of the life of the soul with which Plato and Aristotle were concerned.

² One fact supervenes on another fact if and only if the first fact is decided given the second fact. One set of facts supervenes on a second set of facts if and only if all facts of the first set are decided given all facts of the second set. Individuals (or kinds) of one sort supervene on individuals (or kinds) of a second sort if and only if the set of facts about what is intrinsic to those of the first sort supervenes on the set of facts about what is intrinsic to those of the second sort.

simplifies my exposition. The reader is free to substitute his preferred relation; or to leave just what the relation is unspecified, as is my official intention here. The assumption of necessary connection is also dispensable from my argument (provided at least invariable contingent correlation is assumed)—but at the cost of adding an *inherent* metaphysical mystery of correspondence to the partial duality of *our* knowing, thinking and imagining about mind and body which I freely acknowledge. (I suggest in the next paragraph that this epistemic duality may not be all that mysterious. But what mysteries, large or small, one finds more mysterious, or prefers to have in one's world-view, may be in large part a matter of intellectual taste.)

In adopting such a non-reductionistic naturalism I believe myself to be following hedonistic tradition,³ which, perhaps owing to the sensationalist and empiricist epistemology with which it was associated, has been fairly free of the metaphysical dualism of that tradition of philosophy that takes an immaterial faculty of reason to be responsible for human knowledge. On a rationalist view that takes mind's tendency to grasp the truth as a first principle, or on Descartes' distinctive view that God's goodness guarantees the inerrancy of careful thinking based on clear and distinct ideas, it *would* seem a great mystery how we could *mistakenly* conceive the independence of mind from body. But on a naturalistic conception of cognition that traces our different ways of thinking, as of remembering and imagining, to different biologically-based capacities (for example, for the different sensory

³ See the penultimate paragraph of Chapter Four, n. 3 on Epicurus, above. I take this attitude to be usual among hedonistic thinkers.

modalities),⁴ this may be explicable. For if thought is always the product of 'specialist' embodied cognitive systems, with different limitations on the generality of the representational capacity (or 'imagination') of each, one might expect these to be less perfectly integrated than a single all-purpose disembodied faculty of thought might be. It would, then, on this naturalistic view of thought and knowledge, not be so surprising (as it would be if we had a single God-given and not essentially embodied power of thinking and knowing truths) if even our clear 'intuitions' about real possibility did not always reflect real possibility. In imagining a real distinction between mind and body, we might, then, be aware of the contingency of our having two ways of knowing or imagining what is really one thing, and of the necessary discontinuity between some of those ways of knowing and imagining that we actually have—rather than of any real possibility of the existence of mind in separation from body.

As past hedonistic writers on pleasure appealed to the naturalistic speculation of their day, I shall appeal to the more developed psychology and brain science of our own. But first I shall formulate the general positions, and the underlying picture of mind, that historical hedonists and I in common hope to support by fitting into a plausible view of mind and its place in nature.

In a mature science, mutual understanding takes place against a background of agreement about problems and methods. Philosophical work lacks this determinate context. That is why I have had to work toward my position slowly, creating the context in which it might be

⁴ Compare Stephen Michael Kosslyn, *Image and Mind* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 479.

motivated and understood.

First, I motivated the question: What is the human good (i.e., that which makes human lives worth living), which we seem to be aware of in our lives, which also seems to be the ground of our rational concern for the welfare of ourselves and others, and the existence of which we seem to presuppose in our judgments of the comparative value of different human lives? And I indicated that the *evaluative hedonism* with which I am concerned answers this question in the spirit of what I called "metaphysical ethics", in that it gives this question an answer that is supposed to be decided prior to, and independent of, our particular pursuits and preferences, and our beliefs and conceptions of the good. Evaluative hedonism is the view that pleasure and pain are *in this way* the human good; that they jointly exhaust what is ultimately good and bad in the living of your or my individual human life, and in human existence on the whole.

I also emphasized (at the end of Chapter Two and, at greater length, in Chapter Four) that experiences of pleasure and pain are, in hedonistic thinking, *momentary* experiencings. Pleasure and pain occur within short periods of time. And facts about whether they occur or not are decided independently of facts about what occurs in times other than their own. Of course, a lifetime might be required to *prepare for* enjoying some particular thing; i.e., to get pleasure *caused* in a particular way. And affective states and moods may be *prolonged* in time. Yet the fact of the occurrence of each metaphysically self-contained temporal part⁵ does not essentially depend on the

⁵ But perhaps not of *any* old temporal part. See Chapter Four, n. 3, above.

happening of anything that is not (conservatively speaking) within a minute of the time of its occurrence. This emphasis gives, I believe, the shortest way into understanding what counts as 'immediate conscious experience' for the hedonist. And it discriminates between the way the hedonist believes that 'only consciousness has intrinsic value' and the way a (perhaps unorthodox) Platonist or Hegelian might say the same. The mediated knowledge with which these latter are concerned involves a larger context of thought (perhaps even going beyond the internal operations of the individual human mind) than does the immediate experience of the moment with which the hedonist is concerned. Hedonists often take for granted the restriction of the 'consciousness' with which we are concerned when discussing human value to immediate experience; as, for example, when Bentham polemicizes that those who reject the view that pleasure is the human good may (absurdly) believe that the human good is pain—for only on this assumption would such an interpretation of resistance to hedonism seem plausible.

Hedonists have sometimes given a consequentialist, whether egoistic or utilitarian, account of morality. I deliberately exclude this from my formulation here, although the thinkers most famous as hedonists seem to hold such a view (as Berkeley in *Passive Obedience*, and Hume, for example, do not)—because my aim is not to hit upon a common denominator between the views of Epicurus, Bentham and company, but between their views and the kind of hedonistic view I believe to be most likely true. Still, the hedonist who rejects consequentialism, having taken pleasure to be what gives a point to human life, can and should say that it gives point to human rationality, morality and action, too.

Finally, while I dissociate philosophical hedonism from what has been called 'psychological hedonism', a connection with motivational psychology still seems central to the hedonistic picture of mind. I have already, in Chapter Three, shown how a hedonistic theory of motivation and action can be divorced from 'psychological hedonism'. What I say here should be understood in the light of my option for the explanatory model of spontaneous hedonistic behavior over that of deliberate pleasure-seeking there. I shall, later in this chapter, show how such a revised view coheres with plausible claims about conscious experience and action and their embodiment in the brain. Such claims, if confirmed, would not only provide support for the hedonistic picture of mind, but would also suggest how it might be made more precise. In this way, determinate empirical content might come to be had by new versions of the old conjecture that the experience of pleasure-and-pain is central to our being as conscious subjects and agents, which belongs essentially to the philosophical hedonist's way of viewing the human mind and of arguing that pleasure is the human good.

Philosophical hedonism, the general position in ethics and the metaphysics of mind that I have sketched in this section, is intentionally vague and programmatic. Its interest lies in the ways it might be made more concrete and precise, in the course of our progress in understanding human nature—a progress to which the general position might contribute by suggesting more specific theories and interpretations. Such specific hedonistic views flourished in antiquity, and from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, when their plausibility and prospects of further development were sustained by the

naturalistic philosophy or science of their day. Whether this sort of view of human nature and value is of live interest today will depend on whether it can be similarly sustained by the philosophy and science of our own. I shall argue that case here by developing a version of philosophical hedonism that claims such support. I now turn to this constructive task: first proceeding at the highly general level of philosophy of mind; then more concretely at that of the philosophy of psychology and general psychology, but drawing extensively on evidence from physiological psychology and psychobiology as well. These matters of scientific fact or probability should be taken as confirmation and precisification of what goes earlier. But it is the case for the coherence, and overall plausibility, of the whole—and the resulting support for evaluative hedonism—that sets our goal in the end.

5.2 ACTION AS THE DOING OF A CONSCIOUS MIND

We feel. And we act. Momentary feeling and goal-directed action are different sorts of thing. But they must (on the philosophical hedonist's view) nevertheless be connected if action is to express what is deepest in us and so be fully action of our own, and if feeling is to be expressed in purposeful action. What can this connection be?

One way of trying to understand a complex phenomenon is to suppose that it is a composite of (in principle) isolable parts. Then one tries to understand these parts and their actions separately, and ultimately to explain the complex phenomenon as the sum or resultant of the separately understandable parts and actions and their relations.

This, roughly, is the explanatory strategy behind much of classical mechanics, associationist theories of behavior and empiricist epistemology. It is also the strategy that lies behind much of the tradition of historical hedonism, which seeks to account for what is special about value and motivated action and morality by appealing to the occurrence of momentary experiences of pleasure and pain. This, doubtless, is why these tendencies of thought have so often gone together. Their explanatory strategies, of explaining everyday phenomena by appeal to their smaller constituent parts, are much the same. For even in the absence of strong independent reasons, accepting a pattern of thought in one area often suggests, and gives some reason to attempt, applying it in another.

Aristotle, perhaps, thought that *all* motion characteristic of animals involved pleasure-and-pain. But we might eliminate from the domain of hedonic motivation theory those animal activities and changes and motions that modern psychology and physiology lead us to think of as automatic in a way that excludes affective experience—such as *some* of what we call "reflex responses". Similarly, what is done on mere hypnotic suggestion, or even what is done in a normal state *just* because you were asked to do it, might fail to fit any hedonistic mold, without this being of much concern to the hedonistic theorist of action. He may be able to restrict his claim to what remains an important class of actions—or he may be able to argue (given empirical support such as we shall consider later) that the refractory cases do not belong to action (considered as a natural kind). The crucial question, however, on which hangs even the minimally satisfactory outcome of the quest on

which we embarked in Chapter Three, is whether the role of pleasure-and-pain in human nature is important in *some* way that might argue more generally for its reality and for its importance for what we are, and for our good. For what seems important and real in one area we have reason to believe to be important more generally, and especially in areas that seem allied to the first on independent grounds.

But what could the relation of pleasure-and-pain be to those (appetitive and aversive) actions that fit the hedonistic scheme? A mere feeling is not in itself a motive or an action. It exists in an experiential moment, purely by virtue of what happens then; whereas an action seems to take longer—or at least to be an action, and such-and-such an action, by virtue of what happens in a longer time. But actions of this sort—if there *is* a sort of action for which the hedonistic picture of action is suited—are supposed to constitutively depend upon feelings of pleasure-and-pain. How can that be?

Bentham's statement is, perhaps, the clearest and most forthright in the tradition:

Pleasures and pains [are] the basis of all the springs of action. Pleasures and pains exist without the springs; not *vice versa*.⁶

§1. *Pleasures and Pains the basis of all the other [psychological] entities: these the only real ones; those, fictitious.*

Among all the several species of psychological entities . . . the two which are as it were the *roots*, the main pillars or *foundations* of all the rest, the *matter* of which all the rest are composed—or the *receptacles* of that matter, which soever may be the *physical image*, employed to give aid, if not *existence* to conception, will be . . . seen to be, *Pleasures*

⁶ *Deontology together with a Table of the Springs of Action and the Article on Utilitarianism*, ed. Amnon Goldworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), Marginals for Observations on Table . . . no. 69, p. 11.

and *Pain*. Of *these*, the existence is matter of universal and constant experience. Without any of the rest, *these* are susceptible of—and as often as they come *unlooked for*, do actually come into, *existence*: without these, no one of all those others ever had, or ever could have, existence.⁷

[Bentham's emphasis]

While Bentham may seem to say that desires and the like are wholly composed of feelings of pleasure and pain, this would be reading too much into his rhetoric. But he does hold that all psychological structure is the outcome of the mere association of sensations and feelings, and that the moving force of all 'ideas' other than pleasures and pains derives from the association of the other 'ideas' with pleasures and pains—and that larger psychological structures are 'fictions' constituted by the basic psychological entities, such as pleasures and pains. Such a view, elaborating the inheritance of earlier writers such as Hume and Hartley, is worked out in detail by Bentham's follower, James Mill, in his associationist *magnum opus*.⁸ The strategy seems to be to construct all mental features out of momentary introspectible features of experience.

Bentham and James Mill seem to think of motives to action as composed without remainder by the concatenation of sensations and feelings. But one can raise against this proposal an objection closely analogous to one that Hume may have raised against his own view of persons as collections of impressions and ideas.⁹ What is it that unites

⁷ "A Table of the Springs of Action", Observations, §1; *Deontology*, etc.; p. 98.

⁸ *An Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, Vol. 2, Ch. 22, §1, pp. 256-64.

⁹ *A Treatise of Human Nature* ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2d ed., rev. by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), Appendix, pp. 633-36.

one collection of momentary experiences into a motive for action, while not similarly uniting a collection made up of qualitative duplicates of the experiences in the first collection—but including experiences of different persons (perhaps related by the Humean relations of temporal contiguity and qualitative similarity) in the same collection? The right solution, I think, both to this problem and to Hume's, should involve the introduction of *real causal relations*—and the abandonment of the project of construction based on momentary experiences (and Humean relations) alone. For persons can survive deep sleep, anesthesia and comas. Their motives and purposes also can outlast these—not to mention long waking periods when these are out of mind. Even if immediate hedonic consciousness is (as the philosophical hedonist supposes it to be) a matter of the experiential moment, a complex motive, or intention, or complete thought is more. Even on a view that counts only experiences as constituents of these, they will be patterns of *causally connected* experiences, united by causal relations (beyond temporal contiguity and qualitative similarity).

But it seems more plausible that motives and the like will include as constituents concrete causal processes that are not themselves experiences, as well. Then even being combined with the identity view (which would include in the experiences the momentary physical or physiological states on which these necessarily supervene) would seem not to make the experiences-plus-relations account satisfactory. For it seems that the sum of those parts of a causal—for example, physiological—process that belong to conscious experience will not itself be a causal process sustaining itself according to natural law, but only

a collection of bits and pieces of one, the conjoint obtaining of which would be a mystery if not for the obtaining of the connecting pieces or aspects or features (that would not belong to conscious experience). For a motive is, to use Bentham's phrase, a spring of action. It is typically a cause of action enduring in time—a causal process. And we have little reason to believe that any causal process is made up wholly of experiences, or of these plus the physical happenings on which these supervene. But, even without these last considerations: motivation, like action, is no *mere* collection of conscious experiences; therefore it is no *mere* collection of momentary feelings (or of feelings and sensations) alone.

But although the associationist *analysis* of motivation fails, the philosophical hedonist can still say what he *needs* to say. The modal claims that Bentham, and the hedonistic tradition, emphasize can still be made, while disclaiming the project of constructing all psychological reality from the materials provided by the 'theory of ideas'. Rather, the hedonist may maintain merely that any motivated action contains an affective process, (parts of which are) necessarily qualified in respect of pleasure-and-pain, *as a proper part*. Two essential features of hedonistic thinking prominent in Bentham's thinking;

- (1) the independent existence of each of the momentary feelings, and
- (2) the dependence upon them of actions;

can thus be simultaneously preserved. And this is accomplished without making action or motivation *just* a matter of momentary conscious episodes, or even of these plus whatever it is—presumably momentary physiological episodes—on which these necessarily supervene.

Often the momentary appreciation (which is not distinct from the experience of pleasure itself) will bring with it a spontaneous and (otherwise) cognitively unmediated impulse to action, and *sometimes* this, in turn, will enter into (for example) a cognitive wish or concerted desire that endures for much longer times than an appreciative experiential moment can span. But the relations constituting these larger psychological structures—and, in the general case, their cognitive relata—will be *external* to the momentary pleasure's being what it is. But these same relations (and the part played by the pleasure in them) will be *constitutive* of the larger psychological structure—and hence of any action that is constituted by essential relation to *that*. The momentary experience of pleasure when it figures in desire or action, will be related to the desire or to the action as a part necessary to the existence of a larger whole is to that whole. But the whole, in each case, would be more than that part.

And the intentional aim of the action cannot, in general, be the immediate experiencing of pleasure. Even the deliberate pursuit of pleasure is not a mere sum of momentary appreciations—but is (whatever its relation to impulses or appreciations) a very different, and more complex and larger, psychological kind of thing. Neither is the experiencing of pleasure the same as thinking something is pleasant, or doing something because it is pleasant, or desiring pleasure, or a spontaneous impulse to get or sustain pleasure now. All these are different things. But they all seem to depend on the experiencing of pleasure—although in different ways. One would not think about pleasure as such or do things for the sake of pleasure in

the way we normally do, if he had not already, by experiencing pleasure, come to have some notion of what pleasure is. On the hedonist's view it will also be the case that one cannot desire anything that he is not attracted to by viewing it with pleasure.

I shall argue the plausibility of such a hedonistic view here. Feeling on this view would play a necessary role in human action. And this, the philosophical hedonist can claim, is what makes the action of a man or other animal special (in a way that psychologically and ethically matters) and different (in these respects) from the action of crankshaft or engine or machine—or, we may suppose, from the action of a neurotransmitter receptor site or of a single cell. The hedonist can—as I shall—maintain that pleasure-and-pain is necessarily involved in the agency of a conscious mind.

An agent is a conscious subject. An action, to be without qualification his, must take place, in part, due to something that takes place *at some time* in his conscious life.¹⁰ More, of course, is required for the action to be an action. Other things, both in his body and in the external world, must (typically) occur. (But these are not my subject here. And how much of the consequences in the external world we would include in the action of the agent may be vague, and may

¹⁰ But this need not take place shortly before the action. We often act on longstanding intentions, or on earlier formed motives or desires or dispositions, without anything relevant passing in our conscious minds shortly before we find ourselves already in action—set in motion in the appropriate circumstances by perception. But it is because of an appropriate causal connection of the relevant continuant dispositions to act to what has passed in our conscious minds—however long before—that these actions are *owned* (and not just 'owned up to' by our confabulating motives that were not really operative then, as social psychologists tell us people asked to account for themselves often do). But to be at all an action in the way in question *is* to be an action that an agent owns.

vary with context as well.) But without the connection to the agent's subjective life there would be no action of an agent, and therefore, no action (in the requisite sense). His body, or unconscious memory store, or preattentive perceptual or information processors or motor cortex might act. But that (by itself) could not make anything they cause (failing any connection to his conscious life) an action of his. Things only his body does are not fully actions of his, even if these are, for some purposes, credited to him and called by his name.

When you snore, or lose your balance and fall, or sneeze or throw up in the usual ways, these are not your actions—although these are (in a way) things *you* do. We will, if asked, say that it was *you* who snored or sneezed or threw up, without qualification—but without any implicature that these are actions of yours in a way that not only your deliberate, but also your unstudied and expressive, actions are. Rather, these are (under *all* descriptions) 'accidents' (as children say), the ascription of which to an agent carries no implicature of the agent's purposeful action. Lacking the connection with motivational dispositions and purposes and the rest, these are not doings that we should attribute to the agent in the same way as we attribute his actions. For the required connection to some motivating feature of the subject's conscious mental life is lacking. Most obviously, a being failing ever to have been conscious would never be an agent, nor would its doings ever be human action. This is because the required connection to a conscious mind would always fail to obtain.

On the hedonistic view of mind that I shall develop in the next section, pleasure-and-pain is a necessary constituent of the kind of

consciousness that leads to action. The necessary connection of pleasure with action is not that of a necessary *object* of all our action or desire, as it would be on the 'psychological hedonism' I rejected in Chapter Three. Rather, it is that pleasure, in organizing attention and goal-directed thought, shapes action, too. Here I have said that action, to be action, must be the doing of a conscious mind. Later I shall, using both functional and psychobiological grounds, argue the plausibility of the view that this agency is organized by affect, and necessarily involves pleasure-and-pain. This will be arguing that pleasure has a quite prominent role in the constitution of mind. In so doing I shall at the same time be giving reasons for believing that pleasure is something real, and something the presence of which may reasonably be taken to account for the sense we have of value in our lives—both of which the skeptic at the beginning of Chapter Three denied.

It seems reasonable to demand of the study of human nature and of mind that, among its many tasks, it should have that of characterizing the organization that belongs to ourselves as subjects of experience—of finding and describing those functional organizations and operations, and the corresponding biological structures and processes, that constitute the point of view that is most immediately our own. It seems that such an account must be what I have called a *centered* one (in §4.3, above), because of the role in it of immediate experience—which seems always to be the immediate experience it is regardless of any more than a quite small psychological context. Certainly, any hedonistic account of the constitution of the conscious

mind, such as I shall present, will be a centered one; because pleasure, which will figure in the account, is immediate experience on a hedonistic view.

There is, however, a notion current among philosophers of psychology and others practicing what is nowadays called "cognitive science" that minds and specific mental states (including experiential states) are such *just* by virtue of their typically occupying a certain causal role in the functioning of an organism, or kind of organism,¹¹ in its environment. I am not concerned here with the view that takes a similar approach to 'fixing the reference'¹² of mental terms, analogously to that usually taken in physics or molecular biology—where we often characterize first in terms of observed effects what we aim ultimately to characterize essentially in terms of its intrinsic properties and structure. Rather, on the view I am considering, a scheme of psychological interpretation is supposed actually *to apply* to a system by virtue of a pattern of causes and effects holding among the psychological states and their environment.

¹¹ This qualification is intended to bring in the work of David Lewis: "How to Define Theoretical Terms", *The Journal of Philosophy* 67 (1970): 427-46, reprinted in Lewis, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 78-95; "An Argument for the Identity Theory", *The Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966): 17-25, reprinted in Lewis, *Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 99-107; and "Mad Pain and Martian Pain", in Ned Block, ed., *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 216-22, reprinted with a postscript in Lewis, *Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 122-32. Related views are anthologized, discussed, cited and criticized in Block, *Readings*, Vol. 1, Part Three: "Functionalism". For a useful introduction, see Block's "What Is Functionalism?", pp. 171-84 there, which introduces these readings.

¹² Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Such a scheme or pattern *must apply as a whole* to the individual or species for any of an individual organism's states to instance a mental or psychological kind, since these are such by virtue of roles in this larger pattern or scheme. Mental, including experiential, terms are, thus, supposed to have their meanings, *and the corresponding attributes their natures*, only as mediated by the applicability of this whole interpretative scheme—and regardless of anything a subject of experience might have independently of this. The process of psychological interpretation is typically supposed to proceed from environmental causes and effects on the outside, inwards. The interpretation is 'anchored' peripherally, in environmental effects and causes, and extends to what can be parsimoniously inferred from these—rather than being constrained instead by centering in a putative subjective point of view. Experiencing pleasure, on this view, if it is to be any mental state at all, will be the having of a state that actually or normally has *some* specific role in a large psychological scheme, applicable to the individual organism or to its kind; and must be instanced by just (and only) *whatever* realizes a state so specified, as mediated by the applicability of the whole interpretative scheme.

But an experience of pleasure seems to be something that can be had in an experiential moment, unmediated by so large a context. On the hedonist's view, it may seem to be something that can obtain, quite by itself and in its own right, regardless of anything else. And on any plausible view of experience, my experiencing pleasure would seem to be something the obtaining (or not) of which at a time is decided just by what happens close to then, and regardless of what obtains

except at very close times—and independently of its more remote etiology, or of that of states of its kind generally. If there is truth in this seeming, then the *global functionalist*¹³ picture of experiencing pleasure will be as wide of its mark as the analogous view that proceeds from the (false) assumption that the human essence is only man's standing in certain social, economic, or productive relations to the (absurd) conclusion that *whatever* actually replaces a man in these relations (and only this) would be a man, too. In neither case does fitting into the larger pattern seem sufficient. Or necessary. Just as we want to say that, although he may be stripped of social and institutional standing and function, and of his capacity for effective action, still "a man's a man for a' that", so pleasure, pain, appetite and aversion seem to be what they are irrespective of what large or remote contextual or environmental significance they may happen to have, either in a single case or generally. Such states may, perhaps, have 'internal relations'—for example, with each other. But it seems that they cannot float free from their *local* experiential, functional and biological natures, to be anchored instead only by their place in some larger scheme of things.

An analogy is sometimes drawn between states of a mathematically characterized ideal machine or features of its 'program', and mental states.¹⁴ But the analogy fails; perhaps most obviously in the case of

¹³ This coinage of mine should be taken to mean just so much as I have said in characterizing the view here. My exposition has been deliberately vague, since my intention is to allude to what is shared by a class of contemporary thinkers who differ among themselves, rather than to characterize with precision any of the differing views.

¹⁴ Hilary Putnam, "The Mental Life of Some Machines", and "Reply [to Plantinga]" in Hector-Neri Castaneda, ed., *Intentionality, Minds, and*

affective states, with which we are concerned here. Mathematical (including automata-theoretic) concepts apply *as parts* of a mathematical theory that applies to the structure in question. And they apply only by virtue of the realization of the *whole* structure, and without regard to any *further* structure or nature that the system that realizes this structure may *also* have. But affective concepts (like many other concepts of natural kinds) seem to require the right intrinsic experiential and biological natures, and no more than very small functional roles. These concepts; like 'mother', 'President of the United States' and 'electric current', *if* they pick out roles, do not pick out roles that *just anything* can play. Aristotle, who is sometimes mistaken by global functionalists for one of their own, seems to note this difference of the instantiation of natural kinds, such as affective kinds, from the application of mathematics.

For the form is the principle of the thing; but it must be in matter of such a kind, in such a way, if it is to be. . . . We were saying that the affections of the soul, insofar as they are such [as] passion and fear, are inseparable from the natural matter of animals—and not in the same way as a line or a plane.¹⁵

Perception: Discussions on Contemporary Philosophy, A Symposium (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 177-200 and 206-13, respectively. Reprinted together in Putnam, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 408-428.

¹⁵ *De Anima* 403b2-3 and 403b17-19, in a translation only slightly altered from that of D.W. Hamlyn, *Aristotle's De Anima* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 4-6, following Ross's text and emendation: 'ο μὲν γὰρ λόγος ὁδε τοῦ πράγματος, ἀνάγκη δ' εἶναι τοῦτον ἐν ὕλῃ τοιαυτῇ, εἰ ἐστὶν: ἐλέγομεν δὲ ὅτι τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς οὕτως ἀχωρίστα τῆς φυσικῆς ὕλης τῶν ζῶων, ἢ ὅτε τοιαυτὴ ὑπάρχει [ῥα] θυμὸς καὶ φόβος, καὶ οὐχ ὡς περὶ ἄραμμη καὶ ἐπιπέδου. For an introduction to objections to functionalism in contemporary philosophical literature, see the revised version of Ned Block's "Troubles with Functionalism", in Block, ed., Vol. 1, pp. 268-305. I believe that the contemporary controversies on this subject are

Aristotle's point seems to be that an animal body is necessary for the existence of such mental functions. Aristotle elsewhere acknowledges that such functions may be differently instantiated in different organisms, as he believes different organs may in different organisms have analogous functional roles. He believes that animals of different kinds may essentially differ in that they embody affect, and the other (shared) essentials of being an animal, in *different* ways essentially characteristic of each kind. But the case is unlike that in mathematics, where no specific kind of body is necessary for something to be a plane, or to approximate a plane. We are concerned here with the concrete mental life of animals; and this requires the right concrete material basis—*an animal body* (of some kind).

What functions are necessary for being an animal? Here, departing from Aristotle, I say that this depends on how one uses "animal"—in a scientific usage or as including only beings that have a conscious life like our own. For, unlike Aristotle, I doubt that all animals have an inner life at all like our own. While at the very general level of biological characterization (at which Aristotle often worked) there will be corresponding functions—for example, of perception and motor activity—; the operations of these seem^s, in some animals, never to involve an inner life of conscious experience such as is often involved in operations of the similarly named functions of our own. So the level of functional characterization appropriate for this

indecisive—as I do also the considerations I put forward briefly here. I do so because I do not see how such objections can be made more convincing to the opposition by expanding them—although that can show the relation of views in this area to related views in metaphysics, epistemology and the philosophy of language, which they presuppose or with which they cohere.

high-level theoretical biology seems not to be the right one for characterizing the viewpoint that we, the conscious selves having such-and-such experiences, essentially have. It seems that an account of this sort should account for the contingent and variable relation to consciousness, for example, of perceptions—which we can imagine our being totally without (as blind people, for example, are in part), without our being deprived of our essential subjectivity, and which also can occur without absorbing our conscious attention or being registered in memory.

It is well known that Bentham opened his best-known work by saying that

[n]ature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say¹⁶

The next words, "in all we think", are less often remembered.¹⁷

Bentham here and elsewhere hints at a hedonistic theory of attention, which, characteristically, seems to have been suggested to him by the etymology of the word "interest". The older Latin sense of something

¹⁶ *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p. 11.

¹⁷ Compare: "In the course of development, particular feelings and patterns of feelings become associated with particular classes of images, symbols and actions, resulting in the development of affective-cognitive structures and networks. In such networks, emotion feelings constitute the main organizing and motivating forces, influencing what we perceive, what we remember, and what we think and do." Carrol E. Izard, "Emotion-cognition relationships and human development", in Carroll E. Izard, Jerome Kagan, and Robert B. Zajonc, eds., *Emotions, cognition and behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 33.

making a difference (for someone) lies behind both the medieval legal use (in which someone's having an interest in an estate or business says nothing about anyone's state of mind) and the modern English use, in which something interests someone by attracting his attention. Bentham and his disciple James Mill¹⁸ call pleasures and pains "interesting sensations", while at the same time keeping the connection between interest and attention.

Attention is but another name for the interesting character of the idea.¹⁹

Uninteresting sensations are never for their own sakes, an object of attention. If ever they become objects of attention, it is when they are considered as causes, or signs, of interesting sensations.²⁰

Having a pleasurable or painful sensation, and attending to it, seem not to be two things, but one and the same thing. The feeling a pain is attending to it; and attending to it is feeling it. The feeling is not one thing, the attention another; the feeling and attention are the same thing.²¹

James Mill's thesis is at least that in experiencing pleasure and pain the pleasure or pain is necessarily attended to, while sensations proper are attended to only contingently and by virtue of their connection with pleasure and pain. But what kind of attention might be necessarily involved in feeling pleasure or pain? Not the kind that involves taking explicit notice in thought of our own state—for we typically do not do so in enjoying some activity or in taking pleasure in something. Pleasure is necessarily felt; but any sensation, one may

¹⁸ James Mill, *Analysis*, Vol. II, p. 363.

¹⁹ James Mill, *Analysis*, Vol. II, p. 368.

²⁰ James Mill, *Analysis*, Vol. II, p. 363.

²¹ James Mill, *Analysis*, Vol. II, p. 364.

say, is necessarily sensed. The difference seems rather to be that one must be engaged with what one enjoys or takes pleasure in, while one can ignore what one senses or perceives. But this would be only the thesis that pleasure and pain *organize* attention, rather than an account in which attention *spreads from them* to everything else. For clearly, in the way in which the things pleasure is taken in become the objects of our notice, the pleasure as such need not have been noticed at all. Taking pleasure in something may involve focally attending to the *thing*; but this is a very different matter from the way in which pleasure, to obtain, must needs be experienced—but need not be attended to as the things we take pleasure in typically are.

Further, Ryle²² seems right in insisting that there are forms of attention that do not fit the hedonist's model of pleasurable interest. Salient sensory stimulus qualities may, it seems, impinge on our consciousness without our enjoying or minding this then. The requisite kind of attention is a more active attention than that, something centrally driven rather than a reflexive response to a stimulus. The version of the claim I shall present in the next section is that it is only attention of the kind that is organized by pleasure-and-pain that makes one dwell on a thought or perception in a way that makes these possible controllers of motivation and action—which cold thought or perception or even excitement are not.

²² Ryle, "Pleasure".

5.3 THE CENTRALITY OF AFFECT IN THE MIND

We are conscious subjects and agents. And we are such at least from early childhood on. Like other mammals, we have conscious experience and act out of this kind of subjectivity. And we naturally perceive others and ourselves as so doing. Our animal kin have only rudimentary capacities for intention and especially for attribution²³ compared to our own. Still we are beings of one kind. Our capacity for a degree of mutual affective understanding and interaction with animals, and also the resulting capacity of some animals to live together with men, bear witness to this.

So much seems obvious, if vague; and it should be subject to live philosophical doubt only if the project of making it more precise runs into real trouble. This places a presumptive constraint on any account of our subjectivity: it should account for this commonality between men and related animals, and between human adults and young children. This constraint would rule out, for example, accounts that would make all human subjectivity depend on the possession of language, literature or philosophy.

On this natural understanding of ourselves and of other animals, the capacity for that conscious subjectivity by which we are subjects and agents has been preserved through the course of much of vertebrate evolution and also of individual human development. This is also what we should expect if (as it anyway seems) this basic subjectivity of ours importantly controls and guides the mental organization and behavior of animals of our kind. We should expect a

²³ David Premack and Ann James Premack, *The Mind of an Ape* (New York: Norton, 1983).

functionally central system to develop early alike in the history of the phylum and in the development of the individual, and we should not expect it to be easily replaced or changed in the course of evolution. Rather, if consciousness (or a kind of consciousness) belongs to a central control system necessary to the behavioral viability of beings of our kind, we should expect this system to remain basically the same, while different capacities structurally peripheral to it would differentiate conscious beings and adapt them to ecological niches of different kinds.

It seems reasonable to hope that this might be made more precise by relevant scientific inquiries. The ethological and physiological literatures seem to tell us that the embodied vertebrate mind is no homogeneous thing, but can be profitably viewed as a structure made up of systems and subsystems differing in their physiological and functional properties.²⁴ And a similar view can be motivated from within more cognitive studies. Noam Chomsky has generalized his view of the language faculty as a species-specific mental 'organ' to the view that "the mind is a modular structure, with separate and interacting components, each with its specific properties."²⁵ And Jerry Fodor has recently exploited a related modular conception of mind in characterizing

²⁴ See, for example, C. R. Gallistel, *The Organization of Behavior: A New Synthesis* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980) for an excellent overview and synthesis of the pertinent neuroethological and related literature by a physiological psychologist. For shorter versions, see his "From Muscles to Motivation", *American Scientist* 68 (1980): 398-409; and "A Precip of Gallistel's *The Organization of Behavior: A New Synthesis*", with a multiple book review, *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 4,4 (1981): 609-50.

²⁵ "A Naturalistic Approach to Language and Cognition", *Cognition and Brain Theory* 4, 1 (Winter 1981): 3-22, p. 20. Cf. *Rules and Representations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 89 and *passim*.

the class of 'input systems' (e.g., perceptual and linguistic processors),²⁶ and has suggested that his criteria of modularity²⁷ may apply to motor systems as well.²⁸ Fodor sees these modular systems as interacting with general-purpose central systems with access to *all* sorts of high-level processed information—in contrast to the domain-specific modules these 'interface' with, where information remains segregated within each module. Thus Fodor reconciles the advances of neurobiology and 'cognitive science' in studying specialist (e.g., visual) systems with the holistic perspective on belief change championed by Quine.²⁹

There *may* be such unspecialized reserve capacity that can be recruited and reorganized by more specialized mental modules, in keeping with shifting information-processing demands. Or there may not be. The idea that there *must* seems to derive (aside from Fodor's reasons) from "a too-literal reading of the computer metaphor . . . in mainline cognitive psychology," as Stephen Kosslyn observes.³⁰ "There is no reason to presuppose that the mind has anything like a 'central core' or that it represents information in only one 'language of

²⁶ *The Modularity of Mind: An Essay on Faculty Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), pp. 40-101.

²⁷ "Roughly, modular systems are domain specific, innately specified, hardwired, autonomous, and not assembled." P. 37.

²⁸ P. 42.

²⁹ W. V. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *Philosophical Review* 60, 1 (January 1951): 20-43. Reprinted in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 20-46. W. V. Quine and J. S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief*, 2d ed. (New York: Random House, 1980).

³⁰ *Image and Mind*, p. 479.

thought'.³¹ Kosslyn's alternative picture suggests that reasoning capacity, like memory, may always be the work of specialist modules, on the model of separate short-term buffer memories for the specific sensory modalities.

But even if reserves of flexible processing capacity exist, it does not seem that these would be functionally central to the mind, either in any functional analysis especially useful for psychology or biology, or in any which we might use in attempting to locate the central viewpoint of our own self. The illusion that they would be so central seems to derive from the computer metaphor, although now the analogy would be with control systems or executive programs, rather than with the computational capacity of the computer's central processing unit. The illusion is that brainy creatures should be built around some unified central representation of their goals capable of setting *overall priorities* for thought and action. But what would these ultimate goals be?

The biological perspectives involved in thinking of the organism as 'trying' to survive or to maximize its 'inclusive fitness' (roughly, the survival potential of genes type-identical to its own) are certainly not perspectives that we as subjects and agents naturally or necessarily have as our own. Indeed, the whole point of natural selection is that this need not be the case—but that adaptation may be explained as the result of selection by the environment, without any animal having to worry about what it should do for itself or for its genes to survive.

³¹ Ibid.

Moreover, the explicit representation of such an overall goal of survival by an organism would anyway be useless. For as Herbert Simon has emphasized, sufficient processing capacity to survive using a maximization strategy would not generally be available. It would be better for the organism to follow a strategy in which it alternates among various activities (e.g., exploring, eating, drinking, checking for the presence of predators)—unintelligently selected mixtures of which would yield *good enough* odds of survival.³² But for this, there is no need for the animal to have any overall goal 'programmed in'. Competing control systems, varying in relative strength with time, would do. This indeed, seems to be the way we, and other animals, are organized: with no overall 'executive program' setting for us any single goal in life, which all others must rationally subserve; but with a set of goals, the variably urgent pursuit of which, given our environment, satisfies our biological needs.

The competing control systems about which we and kindred animals are built seem to be reciprocally inhibiting neural systems for motivation and emotion, regulated by the readings of internal homeostats (for example, for metabolic and thermal needs), hormone levels, and also evoked and guided by environmental cues (e.g., food and sexual stimuli).³³ These systems seem to be truly central in the functional

³² Herbert A. Simon, "Rational Choice and the Structure of the Environment", *Psychological Review* 63 (1956): 129-38 and "Motivational and Emotional Controls of Cognition", *Psychological Review* 74 (1967): 29-39. These are reprinted in his *Models of Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), at pp. 20-28 and 29-38, respectively.

³³ Eliot Stellar, "The Physiology of Motivation", *Psychological Review* 61 (1954): 5-22. See also Gallistel, *The Organization of Behavior*, Chapter 10: "Central Motive States", pp. 320-34; and Dalbir Bindra,

organization of minds such as our own. And these same systems seem to be involved in affect as well as in action. While the study of the relevant central brain structures has lagged behind that of the more anatomically and functionally accessible parts of the sensory and motor systems, we at least know that such central motivation systems exist.³⁴

That the emotions are a system (with specific subsystems for the fundamental emotions) comparable to motor and perceptual systems has been asserted by workers in the field; for example, by Carroll Izard.³⁵ Izard further maintains that "[t]he emotions are . . . not only . . . the principal motivational system but even more fundamentally . . . [they are] the personality processes which give meaning to human existence."³⁶ I elaborate a similar view here. But by "affect" I mean something broader than Izard means by "the emotions" and "affect". I include, besides emotion systems, motivational systems for 'drives' (such as for sexual behavior and feeding) and elements traditionally

A Theory of Intelligent Behavior (New York: Wiley, 1976), Chapter 9: "Motivation", pp. 179-205.

³⁴ Two recent and good reviews that are entries to the recent literature are James R. Stellar and Eliot Stellar, *The Neurobiology of Motivation and Reward* (New York: Springer, 1985); and Bartley G. Hoebel, "Neuropsychology of Motivation: Peptides and Pathways that Define Motivational Systems", in *Stevens' Handbook of Motivational Psychology*, 2d ed., R.C. Atkinson, R.J. Herrnstein, G. Lindzey and R.D. Luce, eds. (New York: Wiley, forthcoming). For more on the hard-core neurobiology, see Ann E. Kelley and Louis Stinus, "Neuroanatomical and Neurochemical Substrates of Affective Behavior", in Nathan A. Fox and Richard J. Davidson, eds., *The Psychobiology of Affective Development* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1984), pp. 1-75.

³⁵ *The Face of Emotion* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts: 1971), pp. 182-87. See also the paper cited in n. 25, p. 143, below.

³⁶ Carroll E. Izard, *The Face of Emotion*, p. 183. Italics in the original.

thought of as belonging to the motor system.³⁷

Often the best experimental evidence we have for a neural system's belonging to affect is its implication in phenomena such as self-stimulation and stimulation escape.³⁸ In self-stimulation, an animal, given suitable opportunity and experience, spontaneously (or after free priming³⁹ or 'kindling' stimulation) learns to electrically stimulate an area of its own brain—typically by pressing a lever. (In stimulation escape, the animal works instead to turn off stimulation it doesn't like.) These methods, arising from James Olds' fortuitous observation that a free-moving rat returned to the place in a field at which its brain had been stimulated by an electrode,⁴⁰ gives us a way of 'asking' an animal how experience resulting from this intervention feels. The related experimental paradigm of self-administration of drugs (affecting specific chemical-coded neural systems) permits us to ask the rat if it feels good to have a specific neurotransmitter system activated. Clinical evidence both from brain-injured people and from some who have had

³⁷ Most notably, systems involving the basal ganglia of the extrapyramidal motor system. But brainstem systems seem involved, too.

³⁸ For a brief history, references and and a good critical review of the literature on self-stimulation, of problems with measurement techniques, and the state of the field today, see Stellar and Stellar, *The Neurobiology of Motivation*. C.R. Gallistel, "Self-stimulation", in J.A. Deutsch, ed., *The Physiological Basis of Memory* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), pp. 269-349.

³⁹ See Stellar and Stellar, *The Neurobiology of Motivation and Reward*, pp. 196-99; and C.R. Gallistel, "Self-stimulation".

⁴⁰ The first report of the resulting experiments is James Olds and Peter Milner, "Positive reinforcement produced by electrical stimulation of septal area and other regions of rat brain", *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology* 47, 6 (December 1954): 419-27.

their brains stimulated in the course of surgery,⁴¹ provides confirming evidence that the activity of specific brain systems is involved (although perhaps only causally) in the experiencing of pleasure or pain. It further seems that the class of systems picked out in this way are the same ones as are naturally active in pleasure and motivation resulting from environmental rewards (such as food and water), and are also necessary for the action of at least some euphoria-producing drugs of abuse.⁴²

Affect includes what is distinctive to emotion as against cognition, which is to say that it does not include everything involved in emotion. For if affect had on its own resources to account for all the intentional directedness and other cognitive features of human emotions, we should have to count virtually all cognition as belonging to affect. And the point of talking about affect is to distinguish one system from among other psychological (and neurally-embodied) systems, such as the perceptual, motor and cognitive systems. Pleasure-and-pain, again, is a dimension of affect. But it is not the only one. Excitement belongs to another dimension. In the course of the past century, psychologists have suggested still others that might be necessary for an adequate typology of the emotions, and which might have psychobiological reality as well. But besides the emotions proper, and whatever structure they

⁴¹ There is a paucity of clinical literature. But see, for example, C.W. Sem-Jacobsen, *Depth-Electrographic Stimulation of the Human Brain and Behavior* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1968).

⁴² Roy A. Wise, "Common Neural Basis for Brain Stimulation Reward, Drug Reward, and Food Reward", in Bartley G. Hoebel and Donald Novin, eds., *The Neural Basis of Feeding and Reward* (Brunswick, Me.: Haer Institute for Electrophysiological Research, 1982), pp. 445-454. The drugs are opiates and the 'psychomotor stimulants' cocaine and amphetamine.

and their interactions possess, there is more to affect; for example, most of what are called "drives", such as hunger, thirst and sexual arousal. These, along with the emotions, belong to the affective system, although they lack the rich cognitive connections that the emotions proper, such as fear and jealousy, often have. And some of our feelings and reactions to heat and cold seem to be at least closely connected to the affective system.⁴³ There are 'hot' and 'cold' emotions, and interactions between feeling hot and cold and emotion, just as there are interactions between drives such as hunger and the emotions. All these belong to affect, and all are normally qualified by pleasure-and-pain. The affective system seems to have a large measure of autonomy from other systems, and specifically the capacity to organize action without the mediation of at least the higher forms of cognition.⁴⁴

There seems a large area of commonality among all humans, and between humans and related animals, in the affective area. Facial expressions of fundamental emotions are recognizable as such cross-culturally,⁴⁵ and areas of commonality in expressive display exist

⁴³ Here Aristotle, e.g., *De Motu Animalium* 701b33-702a5 may anticipate contemporary psychobiology.

⁴⁴ R.B. Zajonc, "Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences", *American Psychologist* 35, 2 (1980): 151-75. "On Primacy of Affect", in Klaus R. Scherer and Paul Ekman, eds., *Approaches to Emotion* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1984), pp. 259-70.

⁴⁵ Paul Ekman, ed., *Emotion in the Human Face*, 2d ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Paul Ekman and Harriet Oster, "Facial Expressions of Emotion", *Annual Review of Psychology* 30 (1979): 527-54. The universality of the discrimination of facial display of positive vs. negative affect is best attested. But "anger, disgust . . . and combined fear-surprise" fare very well, too (p. 531). Paul Ekman, "Cross-Cultural Studies of Facial Expression", in Paul Ekman, ed., *Darwin and Facial Expression: A*

with other primates.⁴⁶ And the more generalized motor expression of affect permits understanding between us and many other mammals as well. It is a commonplace observation among brain scientists that the neural systems serving drives and emotion remain remarkably similar in different vertebrate species,⁴⁷ despite the large differences in more cognitive brain areas and in the behavior that adapts each species to its environment.

Further, it seems "that the outer parts of motivational systems, their sensory and motor interfaces with the environment, change more rapidly than does the inner part, the integrational portion that consists of motivational mechanisms."⁴⁸ Perceptual analyzers and motor patterns change, fitting animals with varied species-typical behavior (for example, for finding different kinds of food in different ecological niches), while the central, affectively-loaded systems behind these

Century of Research in Review (New York: Academic Press, 1973), pp. 169-222. Paul Ekman, E.R. Sorenson and W. V. Friesen. "Pan-cultural elements in facial displays of emotion", *Science* 164 (1969): 86-88.

- ⁴⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1972). Suzanne Chevalier-Skolnikoff, "Facial Expressions of Emotion in Nonhuman Primates", in Ekman, ed., *Darwin and Facial Expression*, pp. 11-89.
- ⁴⁷ For example: "[F]undamental patterns of emotional reaction and temperament types seem to have undergone little change in mammalian evolution." Karl S. Lashley, "Persistent problems in the evolution of mind", *Quarterly Review of Biology* 24 (1949): 28-42, reprinted in *The Neuropsychology of Lashley: Selected Papers of K.S. Lashley*, Frank A. Beach, Donald O. Hebb, Clifford T. Morgan and Henry W. Nissen, eds. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 455-78, p. 474.
- ⁴⁸ David B. Adams, "Motivational Systems of Social Behavior in Male Rats and Monkeys: Are They Homologous?", *Aggressive Behavior* 7 (1981): 5-18. See also his "Brain Mechanisms for Offense, Defense and Submission", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 2(1979): 201-41.

remain much the same. There is little adaptive reason for these central integrators to change much in evolution, given their comparative insulation from the environment, and their linkage with consummatory acts (such as swallowing) and hormonal controls which also remain much the same across vertebrate species. We find evidence of differentiation in dietary habits and courtship behavior, rather than sudden change in the neurally embodied central affects and motives of the higher vertebrate plan, on the integrity of which the survival of all higher vertebrate species depends. People differ in dietary and sexual preferences, and species do, too; only the sexual turn-ons of geese are far stranger to us than any human fetishism we are likely to see. Yet we seem to know, in a way, what the gander's behavior is about, because the central states organizing our very different sexual preferences and courtship behavior are much the same.

On the hedonistic view I propose here, a person's conscious life centers on affect: his active attention and motivations and actions are organized by his feelings of pleasure-and-pain. Recent studies of the neural systems involved in motion, and of their pathology, lend support to this conjecture. The traditional notion that complete actions are typically 'commanded' by the 'rational' neocortex through the cortico-spinal pyramidal tract seems to be a superstition of a piece with the notion that conscious experience is uniquely or especially human—and so must belong uniquely or especially to the 'organ of intellect' that is most developed in man. It seems that the motor cortex (the part of the neocortex that can directly control muscle movements) instead acts largely as an unconscious peripheral computing device for

handling the motor feedback involved in fine motor movements required to execute actions initiated in the brain's affective core.

The cerebral cortex is an analyzer for feature detection and for data reduction. In addition it is a synthesizer of patterns and a memory core, but it is not a function generator for spatiotemporal patterns of movement. There is no support from anatomy, physiology or clinical data for the hypothesis of a cortico-cortical reflex as the basis of voluntary movement.⁴⁹

The specialty of the motor cortex is not voluntary movement, but the sophisticated somatosensory regulation of those movements that need such a regulation."⁵⁰

The parts of the brain that now move to the fore in the initiation of action are ones that sustain self-stimulation and may be viewed as belonging to the affective system—unlike most of the neocortex.

Whereas the traditional view held that the cerebral motor cortex was at the highest level of motor integration and that the subcortical structures were at a lower level, that is, closer to the muscle, it now appears that the situation is quite the reverse. The inputs going into the cerebellum and into the basal ganglia may be encoded in a more abstract and complex manner than the outputs leaving the motor cortex.⁵¹

Evarts suggests that the motor cortex is involved with spinal motoneurons in reflexes controlling movements, while the subcortical structures set the goal that the animal pursues. This coheres with the hedonistic view that would give affect a controlling role in the organization of mind.

⁴⁹ H.H. Kornhuber, "Cerebral Cortex, Cerebellum and Basal Ganglia: An Introduction to their Motor Functions", in Francis O. Schmitt and Frederic G. Worden, eds., *The Neurosciences: Third Study Program* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974), pp. 267-91, p. 268.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁵¹ Edward J. Evarts, "Brain Mechanisms in Voluntary Movement", in *Neural Mechanisms in Behavior*, Dennis McFadden, ed. (New York: Springer, 1980), pp. 223-59.

Important neural systems supporting self-stimulation and self-administration of drugs course through the basal ganglia, which seem to show signs of impending action before the motor cortex, and which may represent the ends-in-view that we have in consciousness—as distinct from the movements specific which in consequence automatically come into play when we act. These systems seem at once to belong to affect and to organize motivated action. They seem to be the place in the brain where incentive signals from the environment are modulated by mood, emotion and central motive states and the 'decision' concerning action is made.⁵²

It has been suggested by Roy Wise that all systems for reward feed into a dopamine system in the basal ganglia.⁵³ Wise's article, which is mainly an argument for this view of reward, is officially concerned with Parkinsonian syndromes, which are variously caused, often by the administration of anti-schizophrenic 'neuroleptic' drugs. Parkinsonian patients suffer from depletion of dopamine in the forebrain, and the deficit that impedes action (and in profoundly affected patients can result in total immobility and muteness) seems to

⁵² Gordon J. Mogenson, Douglas L. Jones and Chi Yiu Yim, "From motivation to action: functional interface between the limbic system and the motor system", *Progress in Neurobiology* 14 (1980): 69-97. Gordon J. Mogenson, "Studies of the Nucleus Accumbens and Its Mesolimbic Dopamine Afferents in Relation to Ingestive Behaviors and Reward", in Bartley G. Hoebel and Donald Novin, *The Neural Basis of Feeding and Reward*, pp. 275-287. Gordon J. Mogenson and Michael Wu, "Electrophysiological and Behavioral Evidence of Interaction of Dopaminergic and Gustatory Afferents in the Amygdala", *Brain Research Bulletin* 8 (June 1982): 685-91.

⁵³ Roy A. Wise, "Neuroleptics and operant behavior: The anhedonia hypothesis", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 5, 1 (March 1982): 39-52. See also Wise, "The Dopamine Synapse and the Notion of 'Pleasure Centers' in the Brain", *Trends in Neuroscience* 3, 4 (1980): 91-5, for a more than usually unguarded statement.

be localized in the basal ganglia. Wise argues that these are motivational-cum-affective disorders, in which the patient is better thought of as depressed than as paralyzed.

The anhedonia hypothesis is so-named to call attention to the presumed subjective correlates of behavior motivated by positive reinforcement. Yet the subjective data on which the hypothesis is based are scant; only two of the cited references deal with the subjective reports of human subjects. . . . It is based largely on personal subjective experience; pleasure is a state which seems usually to accompany reward. . . . Strictly speaking, the anhedonia hypothesis is based on animal research regarding human subjective experience.⁵⁴

Wise has, however, failed to consider the sensitive case histories of Parkinsonian patients by Oliver Sacks.⁵⁵ So far as I can judge at second hand, Sacks' interviews and attempts to understand his patients' inner lives, and other work of this kind, may do much to support, and also to guide the further development of Wise's theory. Sacks agrees that Parkinsonism "is a conative [rather than a merely motor] disorder" (p. 24), in which the patients are not so much paralyzed as deprived of will, and the symptoms of depression are often present (pp. 26-7). Disorders of attention also prevail. This seems connected with "loss of intention" (p. 60n), and may profoundly affect perception. Patients may lose the ability to look at, or cease looking at, an object at will, but may have their eyes riveted on an object, or in some direction. Autonomous activity of thought as well as of perception and action, may be blocked, and depend for its initiation and continuance on external stimuli. Cognitive systems seem functional, in a way, but to be

⁵⁴ Roy A. Wise, "The anhedonia hypothesis: Mark III", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 8, 1 (March 1985): 178-86, p. 182.

⁵⁵ Oliver W. Sacks, *Awakenings*, rev. ed. (New York: Vantage, 1976).

deprived of the purposive direction and coherence normally given them by affect and will. In profoundly affected cases, "all aspects of being and behavior—perceptions, thoughts, appetites, and feelings, no less than movements—could also be brought to a standstill" (p. 33, Sacks' emphasis). Then the patients remain motionless, motiveless and speechless (p. 31).

Sacks, although he tells us that profoundly Parkinsonian patients later treated with the drug l-dopa show clearly that they have taken in and remember much that goes on about them, repeatedly calls them 'asleep' and says that they were not really living but held as if in suspended animation. And this seems somehow right. The consciousness of someone who shows no emotional reaction whatsoever when water has been thrown in her face by another patient, but who reacts violently much later after her dopamine deficiency is made good by l-dopa treatment (p. 133), seems to have been registering things in a dreamlike way in memory, but not really to have been living a waking life as we do. "She *felt* nothing, but she seemed to notice and remember everything." (p. 98) And perception may be distorted, too. This may be secondary to the deficit in motivated action—for it would seem that it is because the patients cannot see the world as a stage for possible actions that it looks to them not quite three-dimensional, but like some sort of tableau—and that motions are sometimes perceived not as motions, but as series of 'stills'. (Try this yourself: let yourself slip into an inattentive lethargy, with your eyes open but without actively looking at things. Do things look the same? Or do objects begin to look like abstractions in a flat or foreshortened picture space?)

I have selected above, with theoretical intent, and have perhaps painted a picture with which Sacks, whose patients these were, would disagree. And it should be understood that Parkinson's disease is by no means usually so severe. Moreover, there are no patients (and no experimental animals) whose behavior (or lack of it) may be studied with forebrain dopamine ~~is~~ down to zero, for an ideal test of Wise's theory—because coma and death would first ensue. So there are some difficulties with the theory's testability. Further, patients differ among themselves in many ways I have not indicated. Still, the seeming confirmation of Bentham's conjecture that pleasure and pain organize attention and action, and all mental activity, seems striking.

In Wise's view

The unconditioned responses to rewarding stimuli are motivational-arousal and forward-searching movements. . . . It is the approach response and the motivational arousal caused by rewards which I believe to be most clearly associated with pleasure. My current version of the anhedonia hypothesis is that neuroleptics attenuate the established approach and arousal responses to rewarding stimuli and that they do not interfere with response learning, except indirectly.⁵⁶

The complete list of reinforcers so affected is not yet known, but it clearly includes food, hypothalamic brain stimulation, and intravenous and intracranial stimulants; it probably also includes water and intracranial opiates. The current literature does not reveal any positive reinforcer that remains fully effective in neuroleptic-treated animals, though some may well be revealed by future research.⁵⁷

Some years ago it was suggested that the systems activating consummatory actions themselves 'reinforce' behavior, and that such systems, supporting self-stimulation, control action through the

⁵⁶ Roy A. Wise, "The anhedonia hypothesis: Mark III, p. 183.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 184.

non-pyramidal motor system, of which the basal ganglia are the leading part.⁵⁸ But the suggestion was that there were *many* reinforcing motivation-cum-motor systems. Wise's suggestion is that there may be one 'final common path' for motivated action and pleasure in the brain.

The controversy on this point continues.⁵⁹ But this is perhaps to go too finely into things for our purposes. Just as what are four systems for the neurochemist would be one at the level of functional neuroscience with which Wise's single circuit theory is concerned, so it might be that 'pleasure is one' in psychological explanation and in our experiencing, even if Wise is wrong about how many brain circuits for reward there are. So our thesis—that pleasure-and-pain, either altogether or at least to an important extent, constitutes our subjective standpoint by organizing action and the kind of attention that goes with action (and also the kind of integrated activity of thought and perception, bound up with intention, that enters into these) need not ride on the *detailed* outcome of this neuroscience controversy. For, after all, these systems will be somehow integrated—if not directly, then indirectly. For they somehow function together in a single human brain. (And there will anyway be lower levels at which these neural systems can be considered as the separate action of individual cells and

⁵⁸ S.E. Glickman and B.B. Schiff, "A Theory of Reinforcement", *Psychological Review* 74 (1967): 81-109.

⁵⁹ See Roy A. Wise and Michael A. Bozarth, "Brain Reward Circuitry: Four Circuit Elements 'Wired' in Apparent Series", *Brain Research Bulletin* 12, 2 (February 1984): 203-8, qualified pro; and Anthony G. Phillips, "Brain Reward Circuitry: A Case for Separate Systems", in the same issue, pp. 195-201, con, concerning a system in the prefrontal cortex which is supposed to be different from that studied by Wise. See also Gallistel, "Self-stimulation", for a claim, similar to Phillips', for a separate system in the medial frontal cortex.

parts of these.) Functional integration of the nervous system is, after all, a matter of degree.

Biology by itself underdetermines neuropsychology, as that by itself underdetermines psychology, and all of these together would underdetermine any consequence that one might want to draw in ethics. But what underdetermines may still have relevance in deciding the overall plausibility of competing views of value, when we look together at all that we believe as it relates to what is our nature and our good. Neural integration is a matter of degree. What we want to know is how this relates to the viewpoint that we most centrally have on things, and to the value that goes with this.

Sometimes our attention and our viewpoint on the world seem to be organized by one of our competing specific motivation or emotion systems. We attend to food stimuli, or to signs that tell us how to get to food, when we are hungry; to signs of affront when we are already angry; to sexual stimuli in a state of high sexual drive—and in each case want to engage in, and enjoy engaging in, the actions organized by the specific affective system that is aroused then. Experimental animals and humans with lesions in these brain systems show a striking neglect of what would otherwise be motivationally salient stimuli—which neglect may be limited to stimuli on one side of the animal if the brain damage is limited to one side.⁶⁰ But the picture on which the arousal of specific motivational systems exhausts human (or even lower animal) motivation, or the role of pleasure in it, would be a ridiculously

⁶⁰ John Marshall and Philip Teitelbaum, "The Neuropsychology of Motivated Behavior", in *Handbook of Psychopharmacology*, Leslie L. Iversen, Susan D. Iversen, and Solomon H. Snyder, eds., Vol. 7, *Principles of Behavioral Pharmacology*, pp. 201-29.

incomplete one.

Animals, to survive as a species, must eat and reproduce. But an animal must typically search its environment before it finds objects that satisfy its nutritional or reproductive appetite and the corresponding biological need. This search often requires approaching the object of pursuit in a manner responsive to variable environmental contingencies, and quite unlike the stereotyped and phylogenetically conserved act of ingestion or sex that terminates it. Great originality in these essential *consummatory* acts has not been favored in evolution; as differentiation between species and even conspecific individuals in the objects favored, and creativity in the manner of *appetitive* pursuit of consummatory objects, has been.⁶¹

Higher animals and man (and most obviously their young, and those whose basic needs are already met, and that are in a suitable environment, and are in a good mood) show a generalized curiosity and activity that seems independent of any particular drive state for food or sex or the like. They enjoy moving and acting and perceiving for their own sake, and learn in this way many things that are of use to them

⁶¹ Wallace Craig. "Appetites and Aversions as Constituents of Instincts", *Biological Bulletin* 34 (1918): 91-107. This distinction is an important one for the understanding of animal and human behavior, but one that neither I nor science seem yet to completely understand. Clearly the categories of means and end, used by hedonists such as Mill, are inappropriate for distinguishing the pleasures that put us into action from those that take us out of it (although these latter may put us in a good mood for pursuing other goals with renewed vigor.) One would like to know, specifically, how this distinction connects with the distinctions such as that between 'priming' and reinforcement in the self-stimulation literature. (For references see my n. 39, above.) That distinction is based on an experimental dissociation between the present vigor or drive of behavior and its role in determining later choice. What is done with greater force now need not be chosen later.

when satisfying biological needs that later arise. And much the same is true at times of the appetitive or seeking stage of their more directed behavior, which may switch its direction from one kind of consummatory object to another, depending on environmental opportunity.

That our enjoyment of some sensory and intellectual 'pleasures' is not driven by any specific drive based in a physiological deficit, or bound to any specific consummatory act, and seems to be 'unmixed with pain', was noticed and emphasized by Plato.⁶² Here we seem to be in the realm of hedonic freedom rather than in that of biological necessity, with the spontaneity of our interest uncontaminated by the urgency of a drive to consummation or of escape from pain. Philosophers such as Plato and Epicurus have recommended pleasures such as those of intellectual contemplation and friendly discussion over those of sex and feasting because they seem to be sustainable without prior want or later fatigue, and so to have a place in the best long-term strategy for a pleasant life.⁶³

The experience of proximate pursuits and consummations is not always (or perhaps even usually) pure pleasure—it can be at once less and more than that. And it may be 'mixed with pain'. Similarly, it has been suggested⁶⁴ that anger and fear are not simple negative

⁶² At greatest length at *Philebus* 42C-52E.

⁶³ A further consideration lying behind this preference is doubtless the ethical one that activities of perception and learning and play can often be shared, and thus may support human sociality (which being less deeply rooted than that of bees or buffalo needs this support)—rather than the selfishness and antisocial behavior to which drive states aimed at consummatory acts of individual appropriation often give rise.

⁶⁴ By Masterson and Crawford in "The Defense Motivation System", cited in § 3.22; and, for anger, also earlier by Aristotle and

affects, but have affectively positive appetites mixed in. People do find their attention drawn to violent and frightening images in an enjoyable way—as even a cursory look at contemporary television and films seems to show. This seems to be because they enjoy on the whole being first given the drive to escape or fight and in short order consummating it, either by vicariously identifying with (successful) violence in the story, or else by contrasting their own actual safety with the peril they have briefly imagined themselves to be in. Whether this arousal is productive of pleasure over the long run, however, would be another question again.⁶⁵

Nature is niggardly with pleasure. She would use pleasure-and-pain to pull and push us into action to achieve biological goals, and then have us promptly out of action again—either to conserve our energies or else to move on to the next survival-oriented task of her bidding. The consummatory pleasures of sex and feeding, which often satiate quickly, are prime examples of this. The pleasures of pursuit, however, can more often be prolonged. And these seem not always to involve the activation of some specific system for an emotion or drive, but sometimes to be based in an undifferentiated state of pleasurable activity and interest in things. This may be phylogenetically (and ontogenetically) older even than the specific

Alexander Bain, also cited there.

⁶⁵ Some pleasures seem to produce the same effects as opiate addiction due to opiates produced by one's own brain. They cease to be as pleasurable as at first, but withdrawal is painful. A general (probably too general) theoretical account of this sort of phenomenon has been developed by Richard Solomon; for example, in "Affect and Acquired Motives", in A.R. Morrison and P.L. Strick, eds., *Changing Concepts of the Nervous System* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 489-502.

emotional and motivational systems that cause us to attend, feel and act out of lust or anger or fear—an undifferentiated pleasure which, together with undifferentiated 'pain', these specific later-arising affective systems use to goad and restrain us, yoking our pleasure and pain to environmentally-appropriate objects and actions for each emotion and drive.⁶⁶

"In evolutionary perspective it seems reasonable to assume that early forms of life adapted on the basis of simple sensory-affective processes long before complex cognitive phenomena emerged. In early life forms, the function of emotion, or affect, was to motivate approach and avoidance behaviors . . ."⁶⁷ It seems reasonable to hypothesize that this dimension of affect is ancient: and that the partition of motivational and emotional states marked by pleasure-and-pain was preserved, once it emerged, in the later differentiation of more specific drives and affects—just as these latter tended to be preserved in the course of later evolution. The shared dimensions of affect (such as pleasure-and-pain), and affective interactions based on direct facilitating and inhibitory connections between specific affective systems, along with those mediated by the neurophysiologically-embodied dimensions (such as pleasure-and-pain) that these share, make affect itself one (larger) system.

⁶⁶ I have suggested this for the case of social affects in "Parting's Sweet Sorrow: A Pain Pathway for the Social Affects?", *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 5, 3 (September 1982): 435-36.

⁶⁷ Carrol E. Izard, "Emotion-cognition relationships and human development", in Carroll E. Izard, Jerome Kagan, and Robert B. Zajonc, eds., *Emotions, cognition and behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 17-37, p. 18.

Affect (in the broad way, including drive and motivational states, in which I am speaking here) seems a likely basis for the shared subjectivity and agency we believe ourselves to share with young children and with animals related to us, and for the value belonging to the lives of animals of our kind. It seems to emerge relatively early in ontogeny⁶⁸ and phylogeny,⁶⁹ as sophisticated forms of cognition do not; and to remain at the center of our continuing subjectivity and agency as we mature.

⁶⁸ There is a large recent literature on the differentiation of the emotions in normal early human development. See the paper by Izard for a review and further references. Izard proposes "[t]hat the core emotion feeling is invariant" "over the life-span" (p. 34). In general, discrete emotions emerge very early; and the distinction between positive and negative affect is manifest earlier still. Even more telling, however, is J. E. Steiner, "The human gustofacial response: observation on normal and anencephalic newborn infants", in J.F. Bosma, ed., *Fourth Symposium on Oral Sensation and Perception* (Bethesda, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973), pp. 254-78; cited in Grill and Norgren, for which reference see the next note. It may be that, for the basic affective distinction between experiencing—as for reacting facially to—something yummy as opposed to something yucky, little difference is made by the 'higher' parts of the brain.

⁶⁹ Harvey J. Grill, "Neural Controls of Energy Homeostasis in the Caudal Midbrain", in Jorg-Peter Ewert, Peter R. Capranica and David J. Ingle, eds., *Advances in Vertebrate Neurobiology* (New York and London: Plenum, 1983), pp. 1121-34. The forebrain-ablated rat, accepts sweet stimuli and rejects bitter stimuli with relatively normal affective display. This rat has so little brain left that the food must be placed in its mouth. It can, however, groom itself, and swallow or reject food. See also Grill and R. Norgren, "The taste reactivity taste, II. Mimetic responses to gustatory stimuli in chronic thalamic and chronic decerebrate rats", *Brain Research* 143 (1978): 281-97. See also Joseph P. Huston and Alexander A. Borbely, "Operant Conditioning in forebrain ablated rats by use of rewarding hypothalamic stimulation", *Brain Research* 50 (1973): 467-72. These results, like those of Steiner above, suggest that the pleasure-and-pain dimension of affect remains, with some of its motivational force, when only the ancient primitive core of the vertebrate brain remains.

Animals (in the requisite everyday usage: animals like us) and men are subjects and agents. Affect, and the capacity for affect, seem to be central to them subjectively, functionally, and psychobiologically. Perceptual, cognitive, and motor performance capacities and acts are, in the same ways, peripheral. Take away the specific capacities of these sorts that we have, and replace them with others; and we should seem to become, perhaps, animals of some different kind. Take them away completely and we should still seem to be there, seriously disabled, but with the core of our subjectivity and agency still there. Disrupting these systems, however, seems to disrupt the integration of the attention leading to action that importantly constitutes our conscious lives at their core. In claiming that affect is central to the mind, I intend to say that our capacity for feeling is essential to the constitution of the subjective viewpoint of animals and men.

5.4 HEDONISM, SELFHOOD AND MORALITY

If, then, we have reason to believe that inquiry into human nature shows pleasure to be something real and important in it (which the skeptic at the beginning of Chapter Three doubted), something that might plausibly be thought to make living such as ours good; then the hedonist will have achieved at least a measure of success in his argument. Evaluative hedonism would, then, be at least a tenable view in (metaphysical) ethics. Further, in combination with those philosophical and scientific considerations that I have mustered to support my version of philosophical hedonism, it might even be part of a plausible view of human nature and value. So it seems to me. And

it may become more plausible yet as work in neuroscience and psychobiology, and in the philosophical understanding of these as bearing on human concerns, proceeds.⁷⁰ The plausibility of any such view of mind and value, however, depends not only on the coherence of its components with each other and with what else we believe, but also on how well competing accounts of human nature and value fare when put to the same test. I do not elaborate opposing views of human value, or attempt to arbitrate the contest among alternatives, here.

So much I take to be warranted by what has gone before. In closing, I shall briefly sketch in a more speculative vein the outlines of a larger picture with which the views I have developed here seem to cohere, and which I hope to give the more detailed treatment it deserves at a later time.

So far, we have, perhaps, talked about the human good as if this were the good of a relatively long-lived continuant mind or self. But the immediate consciousness with which we were concerned in discussing the value of this self's living, such as the experience of pleasure,

⁷⁰ But, of course, this can go either way. And among the more interesting possibilities are that the notion of pleasure might come apart; not as our skeptic argued into a motley collection of intrinsic goals, but along lines suggested by the distinctions (such as those between 'pure' and 'driven', and instrumental and consummatory pleasures) that I mentioned in the preceding section. Physiological research may address these distinctions, and perhaps has begun to do so in discussions of the priming vs. reinforcement (n. 39, above) distinction. But better connections with clinical work will be necessary. One will want to know, for example why some patients of Sacks described in *Awakenings* seemed at first to experience pure bliss on l-dopa, but then fell into the (dose-related) grip of drives and compulsions (e.g., for sex, food or gnawing) we share with rats. One wants to understand these phenomena not only physiologically, but as a form of experience of animals of our kind. How are we to understand the relation between pleasurable interest and atavistic drives? Rats alone will not tell us.

seems to be a matter of the moment. This seems to create some tension in the philosophical hedonist's view. And this tension seems to be increased by embedding evaluative hedonism within a naturalistic context, as we and our predecessors did.

What is the whole physical life . . . but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? . . . That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Analysis goes a step further still, and assures us that those impressions of the individualized mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, . . . all that is actual in it being a single moment

Every moment . . . some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us,—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. . . .

To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. . . .
 . . . to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.⁷¹

⁷¹ This prose I have cut to its bare bones is the Conclusion of Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, The 1893 Text*, ed. with textual and explanatory notes by Donald L. Hill, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 186-90; and other reprint editions. The 1893 edition was the last published in Pater's lifetime.

Pater first published this, his essential message, as the final section of his early anonymous review, "Poems of William Morris", *Westminster Review* 31 n.s. (October 1868): 309-12. He then used it (with minor changes and omissions) in the first edition of *The Renaissance* in 1873; and further honed and polished it with each later edition—except the second, in which it seems not to have appeared because of the supposed danger to the morals of Oxford undergraduates posed by its appearance in the first.

Pater is little remembered among philosophers, although he taught the history of philosophy at Oxford. He has been claimed instead by literature, and remembered as the inspirer of a generation of 1890s 'aesthetic' poets who lived self-indulgent and unhappy lives and made (most of them) early, penitent and Catholic ends. The

The philosophical hedonist *can* say that the conscious self is such a continuant—whether the body or soul or the affect system of the brain, or some of these together, or something else—but that it is still in its momentary experiencings that the good of this continuant's living resides. The self, on this view, would be something persisting; but its good would be a matter of the pleasure experienced in each moment of its life—which is decided moment-by-moment, without regard to what happens at other times. This view seems to comport well with what we have said earlier—and also with Pater's closing exhortation. For he says "your moments", rather than "your moment". So it seems to be a continuing self that is addressed. But it may be that some of the (very many) authors of the aforementioned works knew better, and spoke in this way for the sake of convenience in communication, or for the beneficial effect produced by this rhetoric through our identification with 'our' future selves.⁷² However this may be, I-in-this-moment find this momentary view of myself very attractive—as I do also (not only in this moment) the downgrading of what is called "self-interest" which it suggests.

I do not see why the axiom of Prudence should not be questioned, when it conflicts with present inclination, on a ground similar to that on which Egoists refuse to admit the axiom of Rational Benevolence. If the Utilitarian has to answer the question, 'Why should I sacrifice my own happiness for the greater happiness of another?' it must

passages I have selected bring out nicely the momentary metaphysics of experience and value characteristic of philosophical hedonism, and also hint at the connection of this metaphysics with a view of human nature and of how life had best be lived.

⁷² This conjecture should not, however, be taken for the product of serious historical scholarship into the intentions of the many authors of these two works; the names of whom, even, are necessarily unknown to me.

surely be admissible to ask the Egoist, 'Why should I sacrifice a present pleasure for a greater one in the future? Why should I concern myself about my own future feelings any more than about the feeling of other persons?' It undoubtedly seems to Common Sense paradoxical to ask for a reason why one should seek one's own happiness on the whole; but I do not see how the demand can be repudiated as absurd by those who adopt the views of the extreme empirical school of psychologists, although those views are commonly supposed to have a close affinity with Egoistic Hedonism. Grant that the Ego is merely a system of coherent phenomena, that the persistent identical 'I' is not a fact but a fiction, as Hume and his followers maintain; why, then, should one part of the series of feelings into which the Ego is resolved be concerned with another part of the same series, any more than with any other series?⁷³

Further, on philosophical hedonism, if we are selves that live and pass away in an experiential moment, it seems that no considered action of ours can be of any benefit to our own selves—for the consideration itself would always take too long. Also, it seems to me that our *immediate* experience really is impersonal—and that our ideas of ourselves as long-lived continuants, and of our having long-term interests, are the product of longer-term cognitive operations assembled under the influence of culture; and that these ideas, although affecting the immediate experience of the moment in many ways (sometimes for the worse), and belonging to the content of our thoughts, are not (as Hume saw) any content which we immediately experience. If this is so, it seems as legitimate to regard our spontaneous seeking, and trying to sustain, pleasure (insofar as this deserves to be regarded as aiming beyond the present moment) as directed toward pleasure in general as to regard it as aiming at pleasure as one's own.⁷⁴ Altruism, rather than

⁷³ Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 418-19.

⁷⁴ But both these interpretations are, I suggest, optional (and, perhaps, tendentious) intentional icing on the essential cake of immediate experience, since they are radically underdetermined by

being derivative upon prudential self-interest,⁷⁵ might be as natural a projection as self-interest of the standpoint that is most immediately our own (insofar as it is in it that our good and evil, and our most basic appreciation of these, resides). I do not deny that our separate perspectives lead to self-seeking and callous behavior naturally and, to some extent, inevitably; but only that spontaneous self-seeking owes nothing to a considered egoistic view, of the sort that we learn when we are *taught* prudence by example and precept.

Sidgwick's line of thought⁷⁶ above seems not to depend essentially on any phenomenalist or epiphenomenalist view of the self, but to be as easily formulable in the context of the kinds of identity view I suggested toward the end of §5.2, for the reasons I suggested there. For it seems that only temporally scattered neural events belong to our conscious life—and not long, connected pieces of causal process. And a metaphysics that makes these particulars hang separately from each other in the manner of Humean momentary impressions would seem equally concordant with the metaphysical motivation of philosophical

momentary experience alone. Our intentional standpoint, insofar as it extends much beyond the moment, seems in general to depend on cognitive mediation that itself takes longer than an experiential moment, is not immediately experienced, and has its content decided only in much longer times than any experiential moment. It seems to me that the momentary experiential standpoint is one (at least some aspects of which) we, infants, fetuses and all animals related to us share; but that longer-term perspectives are ones we develop over time, as a result of the development of perceptual and cognitive skills and socialization.

⁷⁵ As the argument of Thomas Nagel, in *The Possibility of Altruism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), would seem to suggest.

⁷⁶ Which he seems to offer only as an *ad hominem* objection to empiricist critics of impartiality who think that utilitarianism is worse off than egoism on their view of mind—rather than to accept that philosophy of mind on his own behalf.

hedonism. These might even be regarded as connected by non-Humean causal relations (as I prefer), without their separate individuation as particulars being compromised. If I am a momentary conscious self, and might have (numerically) the same experience as I do now even if I were not causally connected to anything more remotely past or future than the before and after internal to my momentary experiencing (although I actually am so connected),⁷⁷ then it seems that my continuant personal identity⁷⁸ should not be of all that much *special* interest to me-now.⁷⁹ For if the way that I am a continuant is by being a collection of, say, segments of continuing physical processes coming together into integrated systems of neural events at one moment only to come apart the next, why should I identify with the future of some of these causal processes rather than with others? Why not care equally

⁷⁷ Similarly to what was said about the momentary experience of pleasure in §4.1, above.

⁷⁸ My problem here is different from the problem of personal identity, strictly speaking, in that I suppose that the persons we talk about in most everyday contexts *are* continuants that generally live for many years, but that there is a way in which the conscious self is a creature of the moment. Strictly speaking, even the momentary self, however, is a continuant, in that its experiencing seems always to take more than a mathematical instant, in one of which alone no experiencing would occur.

⁷⁹ The neologism is the coinage, I believe, of David Lewis. The view is somewhat similar to that championed by Derek Parfit, most recently in *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), Part 3. But Parfit's view of the self as a relatively long-lived continuant unified in important measure by intentional states such as belief, desire and intention (which may change too much to allow of the self's continuing identity) seems very unlike my view of the self as a creature of immediate experience living in one experiential moment. When I started out on this project, I thought that Parfit must hold a view very much like my own about immediate experience and its relation to human value. But better acquaintance with his views, in his teaching at Princeton and in his later published work (and in rereading the earlier), showed me that my early identificatory reading had been wrong.

about other momentary consciousnesses that I can causally affect, rather than just about that which bears my name? Why not about those that carry the effects of my deeds, or of my social interaction, equally? None of these will be the same momentary consciousness as I this moment am. All will be tied to my present consciousness by causal connections.⁸⁰

These considerations seem plausible to me. But, of course, they cannot really be used to foster the moral virtue of benevolence—which, like all of morality, essentially concerns our relations to persons as such. If this scene of thought undermines egoism and the egocentric fears (such as, perhaps especially, the fear of death),⁸¹ it might seem equally to undermine morality, too—by weakening the grip that our biologically- and socially-based perception and attitudes toward persons as such have. For it seems to be here that morality finds its natural ground—on which the existence of moral facts and motivation, and the application of the distinctive normative force of morality (irreducible to that of seeking pleasure or any other form of welfare or good) depends. But philosophical hedonism, while perhaps undermining morality and self-interest together in this way by suggesting the

⁸⁰ My thinking here has been influenced by Win-chiat Lee, who in conversation with me has similarly attacked claims for the superior rationality of selfish as opposed to communal concerns.

⁸¹ By telling us that our perishing the next moment is certain, and so giving us no time to fear it; or (if we do think of ourselves as the continuant, then) by telling us that death differs less than we had supposed from what we have suffered very many times before. There need be no worry that this will increase our fear—that which one is accustomed to and which no one around one regards as an evil will never be feared—; and, thinking as we generally do in emotional matters by contrast with the available alternatives, we shall never fear as a kind of death that which we after all call "being alive".

momentary view, could also provide some justification for self-interest and morality in those moments in which we wonder how it all matters, at a fundamental level, by showing a deeper ground and point to human living—a ground in the momentary experience of pleasure (no matter whose), a ground beyond self-interest and morality that lies deeper in the nature of things than does our perception of persons or of prudential and moral norms.

For the moral of this story would not be that we should reject self-interest or morality; but that we should see them instead, at appropriate times (for example, when they seem to tell us to do something hideous, or to come into grave conflict, or in moments of reflection or theory) for the mixture of biologically and culturally conditioned practices and beliefs (both true and false) that they are. But this need not, *on the whole*, give them less weight than they should have, or than they have now.⁸² Indeed; the proper conclusion might well be that we should seek to strengthen our susceptibility to moral considerations. For man is a social animal, and on any plausible view of the human good this will depend in large measure on our capacity for living a social life. And this, in turn, depends on our perceiving and reacting to each other as persons (rather than as collections of momentary experiencings)—and on our being susceptible to moral motivation not derived from deliberate pleasure-seeking, and to moral norms not reducible to those concerned with pursuit of our own

⁸² Although it would doubtless make some differences in the places at which they are likely to lose their grip on us. But this change (at least on the evaluative hedonist view) seems likely to be a *good* thing—as I suppose the abandonment or very substantial weakening of either self-interest or morality would not.

or of the general good. Some philosophers will doubt that we can master this relative 'dissociation' or 'compartmentalization' of our metaphysics from some of our practice, and of some areas of our practice from others. But people are very good at such things, as any man of religion or social psychologist or person of moral sensitivity soon learns—and only philosophers and children are surprised for long. The trick is easy for systems made up of competing subsystems—which, if our naturalistic perspective on human nature is right, seems to be (in the way in which it is true to say that we are continuants) what we are.

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