

# Ancient and Contemporary Philosophical Conceptions of Pleasure

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## Preamble

The material I'm going to be discussing in this paper relates to a book I've recently completed: *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (CUP, 2012). Broadly speaking, the book has two parts. The first examines conceptions of pleasure in ancient Greek philosophy. It begins with some pre-Platonic thinkers, then moves through Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Cyrenaics, and concludes with the Old Stoics. The second part examines contemporary conceptions, beginning with Gilbert Ryle's works of the 40s and 50s and continuing to the present. I divide contemporary treatments into two phases, early (late 40s to mid 70s) and recent (late 90s to present). In the conclusion of the book, I discuss the relation between the ancient and contemporary treatments.

My aim in this paper is to examine select, significant points pertaining to the relation between ancient and contemporary philosophical conceptions of pleasure. To do that, I'll need to sketch the ancients' and contemporaries' views.<sup>1</sup> But before I do this, I want to say something about the sort of approach to ancient philosophical material in which I'm engaged in the book and here.

Approaches to ancient philosophy of course vary greatly. But many may crudely be conceived as oriented about two poles. One pole leans in a historical direction. Here the task is to clarify, in a historically responsible way, some ancient philosophical thought. The other pole leans in a non-historical direction. Here the task is to advance philosophical understanding, using the ancients as auxiliaries. The two approaches are not exclusive, and perhaps necessarily interrelated. However, there can be tensions between them. The historical approach can leave non-historically minded folk asking: How is this ancient treatment relevant to my or our philosophical concerns? But the non-historical approach can also leave historically minded folk asking: If your aim is to advance philosophical understanding today, then why take a circuitous route through the ancients? Why not just attack the problem directly?

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<sup>1</sup> I emphasize *sketch*. The paper has a big-picture agenda. Consequently, a lot of particular things will be stated and assumed, not elaborately explained and defended. I've added footnotes to alleviate some of the dissatisfaction the reader might experience. But the problem cannot really be remedied in a paper of this nature.

Having come up into philosophy through classics, I've felt these tensions acutely. I don't have nor do I think there is a general solution to them. Instead, I think there are many and various local and broad responses. My recent book on pleasure and the present paper that develops from it constitute one response.

There are two basic questions concerning pleasure that I pursue in the book and that I'm going to engage in this paper. The first might be called the Socratic question: What is pleasure? In the book and here, I call it the *identity question*. The second I call the *kinds question*: What kinds of pleasure are there? It may be useful to distinguish these questions from the fundamental questions in two neighboring arenas: ethical hedonism and psychological hedonism. The former inquires into the value of pleasure, the latter into the relation between pleasure and motivation. I assume that satisfactory answers to questions in these neighboring arenas depend on answers to the identity and kinds questions. That is one reason to pursue the identity and kinds questions.<sup>2</sup>

So much for background and preamble. The precise topic, to which we now turn, is the relation between ancient Greek and contemporary Anglophone responses to the identity and kinds questions. I'll start with the contemporary situation.

## Contemporary Conceptions of Pleasure

Philosophers began a concerted examination of the identity and kinds questions only in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Gilbert Ryle was the original spark. In three works published in the late 40s and 50s, Ryle challenged the commonsensical view that pleasure is a feeling or sensation.<sup>4</sup> Instead, he

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<sup>2</sup> Compare the remarks of William P. Alston in his 1967 article on pleasure from the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: "from the time of Plato much of the discussion of the topics of motivation and value has consisted in arguments for and against the doctrines of psychological hedonism ... and ethical hedonism. One can make an intelligent judgment on these doctrines only to the extent that he has a well-worked-out view as to the nature of pleasure. Otherwise, he will be unable to settle such questions as whether a putative counterexample, for instance, a desire for the welfare of one's children, is or is not a genuine example of desiring something other than pleasure for its own sake." (341)

<sup>3</sup> Contrast the work of psychologists who had been examining the nature of pleasure extensively since the end of the nineteenth century. Those interested in this work should consult J. G. Beebe-Center, *The Psychology of Pleasantness and Unpleasantness*, Van Nostrand, 1932, which summarizes much of the work up to 1932, in addition to developing the discussion; and Magda Arnold, *Emotion and Personality*, Columbia University, 1960, vol. 1, chapters 1-3, which summarizes the work up to 1960.

<sup>4</sup> *The Concept of Mind*, 1949, 107-109; "Symposium: Pleasure," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. 28 (1954) 135-46; "Pleasure" in *Dilemmas*, Cambridge University Press, 1954, 54-67. In "Symposium: Pleasure," Ryle gives three reasons for the view that pleasure is not a feeling in the sense of "(bodily) sensation." First, one can ask whether one likes or dislikes a certain sensation, but not whether one likes— let alone dislikes— a pleasure. Second, sensations are amenable to certain sorts of description inappropriate to pleasure. Ryle does not generalize about the sorts of description that are inappropriate to pleasure. Rather, he cites several examples. It is intelligible to ask of a tingle whether it is "like an electric shock" or whether "it mounts and subsides like

argued that pleasure is a mode of engagement in activity. This mode of engagement he struggled to clarify, suggesting that it was a member of the "polymorphous" genus of attending. He proposed that the hedonic species of attending is like being absorbed, as ink by blotting paper, or like being occupied, as a town by a fraternal military corps. Professedly, he was unable to transcend these picturesque similes.<sup>5</sup>

Ryle's account of mental entities is often viewed as behavioristic. But the preceding sketch lacks a behavioristic ring. The missing link is that Ryle construes attending and hence the hedonic mode of engagement in activity in dispositional terms. Consequently, for Ryle, pleasure is not only not a sensation or feeling, it is not even an occurrent state or, as thinkers of the time put it, an episode.<sup>6</sup>

Between the late 50s and mid 70s, a number of philosophers debated the question whether pleasure is dispositional or episodic.<sup>7</sup> The debate then ceased. Possibly, the withering of behaviorism itself was the cause. In any case, there has not since been a defense of a dispositional conception of pleasure. Recent contemporary treatments assume that pleasure — whatever it is — is an occurrence.

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The disposition/episode debate was not the only contribution to hedonic theorizing in the early phase of the contemporary period. In the 60s, Terence Penelhum and David Perry made significant contributions to both the identity and kinds questions, independently of the disposition/episode debate. Each proposed that there are two fundamental kinds of pleasure: enjoyment and being

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waves"; however, it is not intelligible to ask such things of enjoyment. Third, whereas sensations can be objects of critical attention, enjoyment cannot. That is, one cannot focus one's attention on one's enjoyment of something without the enjoyment ceasing.

<sup>5</sup> PAS (1954) 143-5.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Murat Aydede's remarks in "An Analysis of Pleasure vis-à-vis Pain," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000) 537-70, at 537: "In 1949, Gilbert Ryle launched an attack on the then popular conception of pleasure as a *feeling episode* or as a kind of *sensation*, and argued in its stead for a purely *dispositional* account of pleasure. This was in accordance with his behaviorist program. Subsequently, the following two decades witnessed a very lively discussion of whether pleasure was a disposition or a sensation."

<sup>7</sup> W. B. Gallie, "Symposium: Pleasure," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. 28 (1954) 147-64; U. T. Place, "The Concept of Heed," *British Journal of Psychology* 45 (1954) 243-55; Terence Penelhum, "The Logic of Pleasure," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 17 (1957) 488-503; Gerald E. Myers, "Ryle on Pleasure," *Journal of Philosophy* 54 (1957) 181-188; Anthony Kenny, "Pleasure," in *Action, Emotion, and Will*, 1963, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 127-50; Terence Penelhum, "Pleasure and Falsity," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964) 81-91; R. J. O'Shaughnessy, "Enjoying and Suffering," *Analysis* 26 (1966) 153-60; W. P. Alston, "Pleasure," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 1967, 341-47; Warren S. Quinn, "Pleasure — Disposition or Episode?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 28 (1968) 578-86; Roland Puccetti, "The Sensation of Pleasure," *British Journal of Psychology* 20 (1969) 239-45; J. C. B. Gosling, *Pleasure and Desire*, Clarendon Press, 1969; Mary A. McClosky, "Pleasure," *Mind* 80 (1971) 542-51; Richard M. Momeyer, "Is Pleasure a Sensation?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 36 (1975) 113-121.

pleased that.<sup>8</sup> Here is Penelhum's account of the distinction. Enjoyment and being pleased that are distinct in at least three respects:

- (1) nature of objects: being pleased that typically has facts or propositions as objects; enjoyment typically has actions or events.
- (2) nature of awareness: being pleased that requires knowing or thinking one knows about the fact; enjoyment requires active engagement or "paying fairly close attention to [the action or event], or rather [having one's] attention drawn by it or [being] absorbed in it."
- (3) temporal relation to object: being pleased that can perdure for a considerable period of time following the thing that pleased one; "it is a (mild) emotion that can effect one's actions over a considerable period of time"; but enjoyment ceases when its object ceases.<sup>9</sup>

For example, compare enjoying an ice-cream with being pleased that one has made the winning move in a chess game. When one enjoys an ice-cream, one enjoys eating the ice-cream; such enjoyment does not entail any knowledge or belief. For example, an infant or animal might enjoy eating something. But clearly one must be aware of the object of enjoyment in a certain way. Finally, the enjoyment must be contemporaneous with activity of eating the ice-cream. One might get pleasure from anticipating eating the ice-cream or from recollecting eating the ice-cream, but in such cases the anticipation or recollection is the activity with which the enjoyment is contemporaneous. In the case of being pleased that one has made the winning move in chess, the object is the fact or proposition that one has made the winning move. And given that the object is a fact or proposition, one's awareness of it must be of a relatively high cognitive order. Finally, at least according to Penelhum, the pleasure can outlast the fact; for example, one may still be glowing from the win, although one has now moved on to another activity.<sup>10</sup>

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For about 25 years following the early phase of the contemporary period, there was relatively little philosophical discussion of the identity or kinds questions.<sup>11</sup> Since the late 90s, there have been several contributions to the

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<sup>8</sup> Terence Penelhum, "Pleasure and Falsity," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964) 81-91; David Barton Perry, *The Concept of Pleasure*, Mouton, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> Penelhum (1967) 82.

<sup>10</sup> I say "at least according to Penelhum," since the temporal relation between being pleased and the fact or proposition is a tricky issue.

<sup>11</sup> A curious exception is the 1980-87 debate between Richard Warner and Wayne Davis over the nature of enjoyment: Richard Warner, "Enjoyment," *Philosophical Review* 89 (1980) 507-26; Wayne Davis, "Pleasure and Happiness," *Philosophical Studies* 39 (1981) 305-17; Wayne A. Davis, "A Causal Theory of Enjoyment," *Mind* 91 (1982) 240-56; Richard Warner, "Davis on Enjoyment: A

identity question.<sup>12</sup> Within this recent phase of the contemporary period, the debate has turned on whether pleasure is a feeling or whether pleasure is a pro-attitude. Note that these options are not exclusive; some pro-attitudes have a feeling aspect or phenomenal character.<sup>13</sup> However, most contributors have treated the options exclusively. Note also that in the recent phase there have also been some attitudinal, but not pro-attitudinal, theories of pleasure.<sup>14</sup>

Both pro-attitude and feeling theories take various forms, which I will discuss below.

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Finally, a couple points regarding the kinds question in the recent contemporary phase are worth mentioning. Generally speaking, there has been limited examination of the kinds question in the recent phase. Furthermore, contributors to the identity question have largely focused on what they call "sensory" pleasure. Sensory pleasure is, often explicitly, understood distinctly from enjoyment and being pleased that. It is either a hedonic quality or feeling (as certain feeling theorists hold) or a pro-attitude toward a sensory experience (as pro-attitude theorists hold). For example, the pleasant sensory experience of

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Reply," *Mind* 92 (1983) 568-72; Wayne A. Davis, "Warner on Enjoyment: A Rejoinder," *Philosophy Research Archives* 12 (1986-87) 553-55.

<sup>12</sup> D. Sobel, "Pleasure as a Mental State," *Utilitas* 11 (1999) 230-34; Stuart Rachels, "Is Unpleasantness Intrinsic to Unpleasant Experiences?" *Philosophical Studies* 99 (2000) 187-210; Murat Aydede, "An Analysis of Pleasure vis-à-vis Pain," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000) 537-61; Fred Feldman, "Hedonism," *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, L. C. Becker and C. B. Becker, eds., 2001, 662-69; Timothy Schroeder, "Pleasure, Displeasure, and Representation," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2001) 507-30; Bennett W. Helm, "Felt Evaluations: A Theory of Pleasure and Pain," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39 (2002) 13-30; Stuart Rachels, "Six Theses about Pleasure," *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004) 247-67; Fred Feldman, *Pleasure and the Good Life*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Timothy Schroeder, "Pleasure and Displeasure," in *Three Faces of Desire*, Oxford University Press, 2004, 71-106 ; Timothy Schroeder, "An Unexpected Pleasure," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 36 (2006) 255-72; William S. Robinson, "What is It Like to Like?" *Philosophical Psychology* 19 (2006) 743-56; Christopher Heathwood, "The Reduction of Sensory Pleasure to Desire," *Philosophical Studies* 133 (2007) 23-44; Aaron Smuts, "The Feels Good Theory of Pleasure," *Philosophical Studies* 136 (2011) 241-65; Ben Bramble, "The Distinctive Feeling Theory of Pleasure," *Philosophical Studies*, available online. One paper from the late 80s should also be noted: Fred Feldman, "Two Questions about Pleasure," in *Philosophical Analysis*, D. F. Austin, ed., Kluwer, 1988, 59-81 (reprinted in F. Feldman, *Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and Desert*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 79-105). Note also that there is a sizeable neurobiological literature on pleasure in the recent contemporary phase. I ignore this literature here. However, for those interested, some good places to start are: J. Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, Oxford University Press, 144-86; J. Burgdorf and J. Panksepp, "The Neurobiology of Positive Emotions," *Neuroscience and Behavioral Reviews* 30 (2006) 173-87; M. Kringelbach and K. Berridge, eds., *Pleasures of the Brain*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Aydede (2000), which I discuss below, argues for such a position.

<sup>14</sup> Note also that the recent feeling/pro-attitude debate bears some resemblance to the early phase disposition/episode or disposition/sensation debate. In the early phase, the term "sensation" was generally used in a manner equivalent to "feeling." (Cp. Aydede 2000, 537-8) Furthermore, a pro-attitude might be conceived in dispositional or occurrent terms. I repeat, however, that contributors in the recent contemporary phase, and so proponents of pro-attitude theories, have all viewed pleasure as occurrent.

the scent of lavender may be construed as a pro-attitude toward the lavender scent or a hedonic feeling that accompanies the experience of lavender.

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So much for a sketch of our contemporaries.

## Ancient Conceptions of Pleasure

### Plato

In antiquity, Plato, perhaps under the influence of the Socratic "What is F?" question, seems to have been the first to broach the identity question. Plato viewed pleasure in eating and drinking as paradigmatic. He thought that in both cases, the physiological restoration or replenishment was constitutive of the pleasure. I emphasize here that for Plato restoration is not the cause of pleasure, but its core constituent. Accordingly, I call this the *core aspect*. Additionally, Plato holds that pleasure involves, what I call, a *phenomenal* or *appearance aspect*. The phenomenal aspect is the way the restoration registers psychologically and is experienced. Plato here uses the language of appearance (φαινόμενον, *phaenomenon*).

I emphasize that for Plato both aspects are necessary constituents of pleasure. For example, some restorations are too subtle or slow to register psychologically; consequently, pleasure does not occur.<sup>15</sup> Conversely, if, through some deviant causal process, a psychological state occurs whose character is identical to the appearance aspect of pleasure, yet no restoration occurs, then, again, pleasure does not occur. In this latter case, Plato speaks of pseudo-pleasure.<sup>16</sup> In short, pleasure requires both core and appearance aspects. The relation between the two is causal; and the appearance aspect is a sensing or perceiving of the restoration.

Plato generalizes this restoration conception of pleasure beyond the paradigm cases of eating and drinking. For example, in *Republic* 9 he suggests that there are spirited and rational as well as appetitive or nutritional pleasures. The former involve restorations of other parts of the individual, including parts of the soul. Likewise, Plato explains sense-perceptual pleasures in *Timaeus*. In this way, among others, Plato contributes to the kinds question.<sup>17</sup>

### Aristotle

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<sup>15</sup> Cp. *Ti.* 65a-b.

<sup>16</sup> Cp. *R.* 584a.

<sup>17</sup> *R.* 586d-e; *Ti.* 64a-65b. Cp. *Phlb.* 31b-52d.

Arguably, Aristotle originally endorsed Plato's restoration theory of pleasure.<sup>18</sup> However, in later work he rejects it and advances his own view. At the heart of Aristotle's theory is the concept of ἐνέργεια (*energeia*). "Ἐνέργεια" is standardly translated as "actuality." At least within the present context, I prefer the term "activation." Consider the condition of a computer in sleep mode. The computer is inactive, but on stand-by and ready to be used. When the user engages it, the computer is activated; it becomes active. I understand ἐνέργεια, in the context of Aristotle's hedonic theorizing, accordingly, as the activation of a standing capacity.

In *Eudemian Ethics* 6,<sup>19</sup> Aristotle suggests that pleasure is a kind of activation, precisely, an unimpeded activation of a psychological disposition in its natural state. The psychological disposition is either sense-perceptual, characterological, or intellectual. The disposition is in its natural state when it is in good order, be it healthy, properly habituated, or educated. Its activation is unimpeded when the disposition is in good order, but also when the object(s) on which it operates and the environmental conditions in which it operates are conducive to its full realization.<sup>20</sup> As far as the concept of unimpededness is concerned, consider, for example, the characterological disposition of justness; this cannot be fully exercised unless environmental conditions of a certain sort present themselves, say, unjust conditions. Likewise, seeing cannot occur unless there is a visible object and the environment is adequately lighted.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* 10, which I take to be Aristotle's final view on the subject, he qualifies his *Eudemian Ethics* position. Instead of identifying pleasure with fully realized activation, he identifies it with an aspect of such activation. He says that pleasure *completes* the activation. In considering this completion-relation, have a look at the following passage from 2.3 in which Aristotle characterizes the relation between pleasure and characterological dispositions:

We should treat the pleasure or pain that is added to a person's actions as an indicator of his [characterological] dispositions. For one who holds back from [certain bodily sensations]<sup>21</sup> and enjoys doing so is a moderate person, while one who is upset at doing so is self-indulgent.

The idea here is that pleasure is the attitude taken toward a condition or the attitude with which an activation is engaged. Accordingly, when activation is fully realized, it is engaged in a hedonic way. Precisely how this should be

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<sup>18</sup> *Rhet.* 1369b34-1370a6.

<sup>19</sup> I assume that *Eudemian Ethics* was composed prior to *Nicomachean Ethics*. More precisely, I assume the treatment of pleasure at *Eudemian Ethics* 6.11-14 was composed prior to the treatment of pleasure at *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.1-5. Hence I refer here to *Eudemian Ethics* 6, not *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.

<sup>20</sup> Being in good order and being fully realized are of course normative or evaluative notions and hence problematic. I note, but will not discuss this problem.

<sup>21</sup> I have altered the text here to simplify and facilitate the discussion.

understood is debatable; and Aristotle says little on the matter. But consider his description of sense-perceptual pleasure in *On the Soul*:

Sense-perceiving, then, is like bare asserting or thinking; but when the object is pleasant ... the soul does something like affirm (καταφᾶσα, *kataphasa*) ... the object, and then it pursues ... it.<sup>22</sup>

Here at least Aristotle appears to conceive of pleasure as or as involving a pro-attitude.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, in *Nicomachean Ethics* he may take the pleasure completing an activation to be a pro-attitude toward the activation.

Finally, in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.5, Aristotle claims that there are as many kinds of pleasure as there are activations of the sense-perceptual, characterological, and intellectual faculties. The justification for this claim is interesting. It has to do with the intimate and organic – Aristotle calls it "congenial" (οἰκεῖον, *oikeion*) – connection between the pleasure and activation. For example, a musician who takes pleasure in playing the lyre cannot *simply* re-apply that hedonic attitude to some other activity, say, painting. The pleasure and the activity of playing the lyre have an organic connection that derives from the musician's cultivation of this particular skill and his history of experience with the instrument and its music. Analogously, a cat that takes pleasure in eating salmon cannot simply re-orient its hedonic attitude to, say, eating carrots. In this case, there is a deep physiological and psychological connection between what the animal likes to eat and its liking of that food-stuff.

## Epicurus

Epicurus maintains that there are two basic kinds of pleasure. In the doxographical tradition, these are described as "katastematic" and "kinetic." Epicurus himself uses these terms in one surviving fragment and apparently in several other lost ethical works.<sup>24</sup> Both katastematic and kinetic pleasures have

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<sup>22</sup> DA 431a.

<sup>23</sup> This suggestion is by no means uncontroversial. In Aristotle, "κατάφημι" standardly means *assert* or *assent* and takes a propositional entity for an object. This explains why Aristotle writes that the "soul does something *like* (οἶον) affirm [the hedonic object]." I am not aware of any other use of "κατάφημι" in Aristotle taking a non-propositional object. Cp. David Charles' discussion of this passage: "[Being aware of (and responding to) a pleasant feature of an object] is not an assertion as it does not contain the required complexity of judgment. It is an *as it were* assertion only in the sense that the subject is aware of a pleasure feature which belongs to an object and responds favorably to that feature and to the object which possesses it." ("Aristotle's Desire," in *Mind and Modality*, V. Hirvonen et al., Brill, 2006, 19-40, at 22)

<sup>24</sup> DL 10.136. The fragment is from *On Choice and Avoidance*. Diogenes Laertius claims that Epicurus also draws the distinction in *On Lives*, *On the Goal*, and the *Letter to the Philosophers in Mytilene*. Epicurus' language concerning a basic dichotomy among types of pleasure is in fact more flexible. For example, in the *Letter to Menoeceus* he speaks of pleasure that constitutes the goal of life, in contrast to other pleasures. Accordingly, we might talk of telic and non-telic pleasures. But I will continue to use the terms "katastematic" and "kinetic."



somatic and psychological forms. Hence, Epicurus recognizes a fourfold division of pleasure.<sup>25</sup>

There is no surviving occurrence of the word "κατάστημα" (*katastema*) before Epicurus.<sup>26</sup> I believe Epicurus coined and applied the word within the context of hedonic theorizing, in place of the more familiar "κατάστασις" (*katastasis*). Morphologically, the -σις (-*sis*) ending typically conveys the sense of process or operation, while -μα (-*ma*) conveys the sense of a product or state. Notably, Plato uses "κατάστασις" to refer to the restoration that constitutes the core aspect of pleasure.<sup>27</sup> Epicurus uses "κατάστημα" to refer to the state or rather constitution of the body or soul. His view is that certain bodily and psychological constitutions are themselves constitutive of certain pleasures (katastematic ones). For example, a passage from Epicurus' *On the Goal*, much cited in antiquity, states:

For the stable constitution (κατάστημα) of the flesh and the reliable expectation concerning this contain the highest and most secure joy for those able to reason it out.<sup>28</sup>

Among Epicurus' writings and fragments, the bodily and psychological constitutions constitutive of katastematic pleasure are variously described, notably both in positive and, more commonly, negative terms. For example, in this *On the Goal* fragment, the bodily constitution is characterized in positive terms as "a stable constitution of the flesh," in other words, as bodily health. Elsewhere it is characterized as "absence of bodily pain" (ἀπονία, *aponia*). The constitution of the soul or mind is typically characterized as "freedom from disturbance" (ἀταραξία, *ataraxia*). But in the present fragment it is described as a "reliable expectation concerning [bodily health]."

Epicurus' critics, especially the Cyrenaics, fixated on the negative descriptions of katastematic pleasure and ridiculed his position:

[The Cyrenaics hold that] the removal of pain is not pleasure, as Epicurus claims ... For [pleasure consists] in stimulation (ἐν κινήσει, *en kinesei*),

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<sup>25</sup> The distinction between the somatic and the psychological here needs clarification. Insofar as all pleasure requires consciousness, all pleasure is psychological. However, according to Epicurean psychology, there are two parts of the soul: rational and irrational. The irrational part is responsible for sense-perception and, more broadly, bodily perception. The rational part is responsible for belief, reasoning, and also a special kind of perception called *dianoetic*. Somatic or bodily pleasure is, thus, sense-perceptual or bodily-perceptual pleasure. Psychological pleasure is intellectual or higher cognitive pleasure.

<sup>26</sup> Diocles of Craystus contains instances, but these are from testimonies, not fragments strictly speaking. See Philip J. van der Eijk, *Diocles of Carystus*, vol. 1, Brill, 2000, 104-7.

<sup>27</sup> *Phlb.* 42d, 46c; *Ti.* 64e-65a.

<sup>28</sup> fr. 68 (apud Plutarch, *non posse*, 1098d).

whereas absence of pleasure like absence of pain is not κίνησις (*kinesis*); for painlessness is the condition of one who is, as it were, asleep.<sup>29</sup>

These Cyrenaics [namely, the Annicerians] reject Epicurus' definition of pleasure, that is, the removal of what causes pain, stigmatizing it as the condition of a corpse.<sup>30</sup>

The criticism is hyperbolic since Epicurus obviously requires consciousness as a condition of pleasure. Still, is mere awareness of painlessness pleasure? In fact, Epicurus' conception of katastematic pleasure, in particular the psychological component, entails more. Observe the phrase in the fragment from *On the Goal* "for those able to reason it out" (τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι δυναμένοις, *tois epilogizesthai dunamenois*). Epicurus holds that katastematic pleasure is achieved by reasoning. Hence it is a state available only to adult humans.<sup>31</sup> The reasoning engenders wisdom. In a word, this wisdom consists of Epicurus' physical and epistemological doctrines, which securely allay fear and, in conjunction with his ethical-psychological doctrines, govern motivation in a natural way. This psychological state brings a well-founded sense of security, confidence, and self-sufficiency. It is also pervaded with a sense of gratitude for the means available, both in the past and present, to achieve the end. For example, Epicurus enjoins gratitude to nature for the fact that it readily offers all that is needed to live well. In short, the psychological state engendered by wisdom produces a sense of subjective wellbeing. Epicurus' answer to the Cyrenaic criticism is that such wellbeing is a hedonic state.

With the Cyrenaics, Epicurus recognizes kinetic pleasures. In other words, he recognizes pleasures that, as the Cyrenaics say, involve stimulation. Indeed, in *On the Goal* he makes the epistemological claim that he would be unable to understand the goal of life if he lacked the evidence of kinetic pleasures:

For I cannot conceive of the good if I take away the pleasures due to tastes, the pleasures due to sex, the pleasures due to sounds, and the pleasant visual κινήσεις due to shape.<sup>32</sup>

Kinetic pleasure, at least kinetic bodily pleasure, is accessible to irrational animals and infants. It involves the stimulation, hence κίνησις, of bodily, including sense-perceptual, faculties. Accordingly, Epicurus says that pleasure is both "the beginning and the end of a blessed life" (ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν, *archen kai telos tou makarios zen*).<sup>33</sup> That is, we are drawn to basic kinetic

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<sup>29</sup> DL 2.89.

<sup>30</sup> Clem. *strom.* 2.21.130.8.

<sup>31</sup> And gods, if they exist as rational beings.

<sup>32</sup> Athen. 546e.

<sup>33</sup> *Ep. Men.* 128-9.

bodily pleasures at the inception of our lives; and, if we cultivate wisdom, we will be drawn to katastematic pleasures as the ultimate goal.<sup>34</sup>

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Epicurus' conception of pleasure is attitudinal. But like most of the ancients, he focuses on hedonic objects. At least among the surviving material, he does not clarify his conception of the hedonic attitude. In a recent contribution to Epicurus' psychology, Elizabeth Asmis considers the idea that, according to Epicurus, pleasure and pain involve cognitive conditions. In other words, they are kinds of perception or awareness, more precisely, kinds of proprioception or self-awareness. As such, Epicurus' position resembles Plato's. However, Asmis suggests that, for Epicurus, pleasure and pain do not merely indicate our somatic and psychological conditions. Additionally, they involve pro- and con- attitudes:

[Pleasure and pain] comprise an attitude, pro or con, concerning the object of awareness. To attend to something pleasant is to be attracted to it; to attend to something painful is to have an aversion to it.<sup>35</sup>

Influenced by Asmis's view, I suggest that for Epicurus the hedonic attitude is a complex of cognitive and pro-attitudinal components. Indeed, Epicurus speaks of pleasure and pain as both epistemological and practical standards.<sup>36</sup>

### The Stoics

By "Stoics" here I mean "Old Stoics," above all the first and third heads of the school: Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus of Soli. Zeno and Chrysippus' conceptions of pleasure are slightly different. I will focus on Zeno's conception and note Chrysippus' modifications.

For Zeno, pleasure is one of four principal kinds of passion (πάθος, *pathos*). A passion is a kind of impulse (ὁρμή, *horme*). The impulse relates to an assent (συγκατάθεσις, *sunkatathesis*). Assent is to a proposition.<sup>37</sup> Hence, an assent is a judgment. But it is a condition of all passions that the assent is irrational in one of two ways. Either the proposition assented to is simply false (as Zeno seems to hold) or, in case the proposition is true, the subject lacks the cognitive resources to adequately justify his assent (as Chrysippus seems to hold). In either case, the propositional content of the assent is complex. One aspect is evaluative, that something present or in the future is good or bad. In the case of pleasure, the

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<sup>34</sup> Precisely how Epicurus views the relation between kinetic and katastematic pleasures is controversial. For example, some interpreters maintain that kinetic pleasures supervene on katastematic pleasures. Others maintain that Epicurus recognizes kinetic pleasures independently of katastematic pleasures. A recent discussion of this controversy can be found in David Wolfsdorf, "Epicurus on Ἐυφροσύνη and Ἐνέργεια," *Apeiron* 42 (2009) 221-57.

<sup>35</sup> Note that I am citing here from a draft of Asmis's chapter "Epicurean Psychology," forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook of Epicureanism*.

<sup>36</sup> DL 10.34, *Ep. Men.* 128-129 (as cited by Asmis).

<sup>37</sup> Precisely, the assent is to an appearance (φαντασία) that has propositional content.

evaluative aspect of the proposition is that something good is present. The other aspect of the proposition is practical, namely, that it is fitting (καθῆκον, *kathekon*) for the subject to φ. In the case of pleasure, φ-ing amounts to swelling or dilation of the soul. So in this case, φ-ing is merely a mental act. The impulse that accompanies assent has a sub-propositional content derived from the practical content of the assent. Precisely, the sub-propositional content of the impulse employs the predicate in the practical proposition. So, the impulse is: to φ. In the case of pleasure, then, the impulse is, for the soul, to swell or dilate. Note that the dilation of the soul is conceived as an effect of the assent. It is not taken to be constitutive of the pleasure. Finally, the assent is, as the Stoics say, "πρόσφατος" (*prosphtos*). This term is standardly rendered as "fresh." By this is meant that assent entails that the perceived value of the situation— in this case, the present good— is such as to warrant the reaction in question. In other words, the evaluative judgment has a perceived significance (or vitality) that warrants a practical response. Compare the following, slightly garbled description in pseudo-Andronicus' *On Passions*:

Pleasure is an irrational swelling, or a fresh belief that a good thing is present, at which they think one ought to swell.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Zeno appears to have viewed the relation between assent and impulse causally, and, as I have said, to have identified passion with a kind of impulse, Chrysippus seems to have viewed assent and impulse as coterminous, in other words, as parallel psychological processes. This at least partly explains Chrysippus' identification of pleasure (and passion in general) as a form of assent or judgment (κρίσις, *krisis*).

Finally, it is worth noting that Chrysippus recognized conditions correlative to passions, called "good passions" (εὐπαθείαι, *eupatheiai*), in which the assents are rational, that is, true and completely justified.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, correlative to pleasure (ἡδονή, *hedone*), Chrysippus recognizes the condition of joy (χαρά, *chara*), where one rationally assents to the proposition that something good is present at which one ought to swell. Given that complete justification is only available to the sage, εὐπαθείαι are rare psychological states, if in fact they are humanly possible at all.

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So much for a sketch of the main Greek philosophical responses to the identity and kinds questions.

## Comparison of Ancient and Contemporary Treatments of Pleasure

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<sup>38</sup> SVF 3.391.

<sup>39</sup> It is not clear whether Chrysippus himself introduced the concept of εὐπαθείαι or whether Zeno or Cleanthes did.

In considering the relation between ancient and contemporary treatments of pleasure, I will focus on three topics: hedonic attitude, hedonic kinds, and hedonic feeling.

### Hedonic Attitude

Let's begin by distinguishing between attitudinal and non-attitudinal conceptions of pleasure. Contemporary philosophers use the term "attitude" to designate any mental state that is intentional, in the philosophical sense of "intentional," that is, any mental state that is about something or directed toward something. Arguably, all mental states are intentional (intentionalism) and hence attitudinal. Mental states that are not intentional or attitudinal, if any exist, are called "*qualia*." Common candidates for *qualia* are feelings and sensations, in one sense of "feeling" and "sensation." I say "in one sense of 'feeling' and 'sensation'" because there are uses of "feeling" and "sensation" – independent of the *qualia* debate – according to which feelings and sensations are intentional states. For instance, sensations may be sensings of things, in other words, information-gathering states; likewise, feelings. But note that sensations and feelings even so construed leave room for *qualia*; there may be aspects or properties of sensations and feelings – where, again, "sensation" or "feeling" is construed intentionally – that are *qualia*. The point is just that, strictly, a non-attitudinal conception of pleasure holds not merely that pleasure is a feeling or sensation, but that pleasure is a feeling or sensation in a non-attitudinal or non-intentional sense, in short, that pleasure is a *quale*. Accordingly, it should also be noted that the basic thesis of feeling theories of pleasure, namely, that pleasure is a feeling, does not entail that pleasure is a *quale*.

Now, all of the ancient conceptions of pleasure, as I have interpreted them, take pleasure to be attitudinal. But they construe the hedonic attitude variously. In Plato, the hedonic attitude is perceptual. In Aristotle, it appears to be some kind of pro-attitude. In Epicurus, it appears to be a complex of perceptual and pro-attitudinal aspects. In the Stoics, it is a pro-attitude (Zeno) or involves both a pro-attitude and a cognitive state, an evaluative and practical judgment (Chrysippus). In sum, ancient conceptions of the hedonic attitude are divisible into two broad classes: cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive conceptions themselves divide into perceptual and judgmental forms. And non-cognitive conceptions are pro-attitudinal.

While ancient philosophers variously construe the hedonic attitude, it is noteworthy that they spend little time, within the context of hedonic theorizing, trying to clarify what this attitude is.<sup>40</sup> I will return to this point in the next

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<sup>40</sup> Plato is very much interested in what he conceives to be hedonic illusions and hallucinations. Hence, he is interested in the cognitive and epistemological aspects of pleasure. But he is not interested, say, as a philosophical psychologist, in clarifying what hedonic awareness or

subsection. In sharp contrast, contemporary philosophers have been preoccupied with the nature of the hedonic attitude. This focus is evident from the beginning of the contemporary period. Recall that for Ryle pleasure is a species of attending, namely, some kind of absorption or occupation.<sup>41</sup> Ryle's first commentator, W.B. Gallie, also distinguishes different kinds of attention, and he argues that pleasure (specifically, enjoyment) is a kind of appraisive attention, more precisely, positive and non-comparative.<sup>42</sup> In his 1957 article, "The Logic of Pleasure," Penelhum rejects the view that pleasure is a kind of attention. He suggests that attention is a species of heed; but whereas attention is voluntary, pleasure is a passive condition. Pleasure, he suggests, is an effortless form of heed whereby one's awareness is drawn by something rather than, as in the case of attention, directed toward it.<sup>43</sup>

As with the ancient contributions, the array of views of the hedonic attitude in the contemporary period can be divided into cognitive and non-cognitive forms.<sup>44</sup> Non-cognitive theories have dominated. However – it is worth noting – some positions include both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects, while others do not clearly distinguish the two. An example of the former is Perry's view that being pleased that entails both belief and a non-cognitive pro-attitude.<sup>45</sup> An example of the latter is Gallie's view that pleasure is positive and non-comparative appraisive attention. Gallie does not clarify whether the kind of appraisal in question is cognitive.<sup>46</sup>

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perception itself is. Even in *Timaeus* where he examines the physiology of sense-perceptual pleasure quite closely, Plato does not examine the psychological of this kind of pleasure much.

<sup>41</sup> Note that throughout this discussion I ignore the fact that Ryle and some other early phase contemporaries conceive of the hedonic attitude in dispositional rather than occurrent terms.

<sup>42</sup> (1954) 160-61.

<sup>43</sup> Cp. A. R. Manser, "Pleasure," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 61 (1960-61) 223-38, who also maintains that pleasure requires awareness, but not attention.

<sup>44</sup> Cp. Stuart Rachels, "Is Unpleasantness Intrinsic to Unpleasant Experiences?" *Philosophical Studies* 99 (2000) 187-210. Cp. also Rachels, "Six Theses about Pleasure," *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004) 247-67. Rachels defends a feeling theory, but in the process he canvasses and rejects various attitudinal conceptions. Among these, he distinguishes three kinds: one representational, two pro-attitudinal. The pro-attitudinal kinds he calls "liking" and "pro-motivation." This trichotomy well captures the main kinds of attitudinal theory that have been offered in the contemporary period.

<sup>45</sup> Throughout this discussion of conceptions of the hedonic attitude in the contemporary period, for the most part I ignore the fact that different conceptions of the hedonic attitude are or may be given for different hedonic kinds. For example, Perry maintains that enjoyment and being pleased that both entail cognitive components, but different ones.

<sup>46</sup> For example, in his 1988 paper, "Two Questions about Pleasure," in *Philosophical Analysis*, D. F. Austin, ed., Kluwer, 1988, 59-81; reprinted in F. Feldman, *Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and Desert*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 79-105. Feldman characterizes propositional pleasure as a pro-attitude, belonging to the same family as, but distinct from wanting and favorably evaluating (where favorably evaluating is assumed to be a belief-state, for example, believing *x* to be good). In his paper "What Is It Like to Like?" *Philosophical Psychology* 19 (2006) 743-56, Howard Robinson assumes that pleasure is equivalent to liking. Further, he maintains that liking is a form of positive evaluation. But Robinson is a non-cognitivist about such evaluation. In other words, he

Non-cognitive conceptions of the hedonic attitude in the contemporary period are all pro-attitudinal.<sup>47</sup> These views are divisible into two classes: conative and non-conative.<sup>48</sup> However, here too, some theorists do not clearly draw this distinction. For example, in his 1967 *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article, William Alston advocates what he calls a "motivational" theory of pleasure. To get pleasure, he claims, "is to have an experience [that], as of the moment, one would rather have, on the basis of its felt quality, apart from any further considerations regarding consequences."<sup>49</sup> The motivational aspect here is expressed in the phrase "one would rather have [the experience]," in other words, by the reference to preference. Indeed, Alston comments: "This account makes pleasure a function not of a pre-existing desire but a preference one has at the moment of experience."<sup>50</sup> It is not clear, however, that preferring is a conative attitude. More generally, it is unclear how the category of motivation that Alston uses is delineated. Compare the position of Murat Aydede in his 2000 article, "An Analysis of Pleasure vis-à-vis Pain."<sup>51</sup> Aydede speaks of pleasure as subserved by a neural system that he calls "motivational-affective." The hyphen here is significant, as Aydede leaves indeterminate what sort of pro-attitude pleasure is.

Related to conative conceptions of the hedonic attitude are desire-satisfaction theories. Richard Warner and Wayne Davis both defend desire-satisfaction theories.<sup>52</sup> Warner argues that enjoyment is of an experience or activity that causes or causally sustains a desire that it also simultaneously subjectively satisfies, where the desire is an "intrinsic" or for-its-own-sake desire, of an experience or activity, that it be an experience or activity of such-and-such a sort.<sup>53</sup> Davis argues that pleasure is the positive sum of the product of each occurrent thought believed and desired.<sup>54</sup> More precisely, Warner's and Davis's positions may be characterized as non-cognitive desire-satisfaction theories. This is because they hold that pleasure or enjoyment is constituted by a state of (subjective) desire-satisfaction. In contrast, a cognitive desire-satisfaction theory holds that pleasure represents desire-satisfaction.

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maintains that although such evaluations may be expressed in terms such as "x is good," they are not judgments or thoughts. (754)

<sup>47</sup> Perry (1967, 204-14) was the first to explicitly use this term in hedonic theorizing. The term "pro-attitude" apparently goes back to Ross. It appears in A. C. Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, Routledge, 1947. I believe P. H. Nowell-Smith, *Ethics*, Penguin, 1954, 112-13, popularized the term, at least among philosophers. Alternatively, it was Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons and Causes," *Journal of Philosophy* 60 (1963) 685-99.

<sup>48</sup> These classes have not always been treated as "non-exclusive."

<sup>49</sup> (1967) 345. I note in passing that Alston is a dispositionalist.

<sup>50</sup> (1967) 345.

<sup>51</sup> *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, 537-70.

<sup>52</sup> These theories involve cognition that a desire is satisfied, but the hedonic attitude toward desire-satisfaction is not representational; it is pro-attitudinal.

<sup>53</sup> (1980) 518.

<sup>54</sup> (1982) 253.

Conative conceptions of the hedonic attitude, which have been a minority view,<sup>55</sup> face several problems. Some desires are unpleasant. Moreover, increase in intensity of desire does not correlate with increase in intensity of pleasure. Likewise, subjective desire-satisfaction is not always pleasant. One can get what one wants or at least believe one is getting what one wants, but find oneself disappointed. Furthermore, one can, apparently, be pleased without a preceding desire. In response to these cases, advocates of conative or desire-satisfaction theories must, implausibly, posit pre-existing, but non-apparent desires with relevant content.<sup>56</sup>

Non-conative pro-attitudinal or non-cognitivist conceptions of the hedonic attitude are the most prevalent positions in the contemporary period. But advocates have struggled to clarify just what kind of non-conative pro-attitude the hedonic attitude is. Perry, who first introduced the term "pro-attitude" into hedonic theorizing, professedly is incapable. Fred Feldman, whose 1988 paper "Two Questions about Pleasure" focuses on sensory and propositional pleasures,<sup>57</sup> maintains that the hedonic attitude is a pro-attitude that belongs to the same family as wanting and favorably evaluating (where favorably evaluating is assumed to be a belief-state, for example, believing *x* to be good). But he argues, merely negatively, that the hedonic attitude is not identical to wanting or desiring or to favorably evaluating. In his 2006 paper, "What is it like to like?" Howard Robinson maintains that pleasure is a positively evaluative conscious occurrent. But he maintains, again negatively, that the evaluation at issue is not itself a judgment or thought.<sup>58</sup> In light of this, it is noteworthy that the concept of evaluation reoccurs among non-cognitivist pro-attitudinal theories. A clearer account of the sort of non-cognitive evaluation that the hedonic attitude involves would be welcome.

As I mentioned, cognitivist (that is, purely cognitivist) views of the hedonic attitude have been in the minority. They have also been confined to the recent phase of the contemporary period. In considering cognitivist theories, it is interesting to reflect on Aydede's account of the distinction between pleasure and pain. Aydede argues, on the basis of neuroscientific evidence, that pain in human beings is a complex state subserved by two fundamentally distinct neural systems: somatosensory and motivational-affective.<sup>59</sup> That is, pain is both a form

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<sup>55</sup> E.g., see Christopher Heathwood, "The Reduction of Sensory Pleasure to Desire," *Philosophical Studies* 133 (2007) 23-44. For criticisms, see Aaron Smuts, "The Feels Good Theory of Pleasure," *Philosophical Studies* 136 (2010).

<sup>56</sup> Note that there is also neuroscientific evidence – not considered by advocates of conative theories – that pleasure and desire depend upon distinct neural substrates. See K. C. Berridge, "Food reward: Neural substrates of wanting and liking," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 20 (1996) 1-25; "Motivation concepts in behavioral neuroscience," *Physiology and Behavior* 81 (2004) 179-209.

<sup>57</sup> op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> (2006) 754.

<sup>59</sup> Cp. Richard Hall, "Are Pains Necessarily Unpleasant?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 49 (1989) 643-59.



of proprioception and a form of motivation or affect, in this case, aversion. Both processes contribute to the phenomenology of pain. In other words, the phenomenology of pain is complex. Support for this view derives from a neurological disorder, referred to as "reactive dissociation," in which patients are proprioceptively aware of pain, but do not mind it.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, pleasure is only subserved by a motivational-affective system. In other words, pleasure is merely a motivational-affective state, not a form of proprioception. Its phenomenology is, accordingly, simple.

Contrast Aydede's position with the views of Michael Tye and Timothy Schroeder, both of whom argue that pleasure, or at least certain forms of pleasure, is representational. For example, Tye argues that the hedonic experience of orgasm is representational;<sup>61</sup> and Schroeder argues that pleasure represents apparent net desire-satisfaction.<sup>62</sup> Thus, Schroeder defends what I call a "cognitive" desire-satisfaction theory. Such views are comparable to Plato's in particular. In fact, much like Plato, Schroeder argues that there are hedonic illusions and hallucinations.<sup>63</sup>

I will not attempt to adjudicate between cognitivist and non-cognitivist positions here, except to say the following two things. First, it would seem that any cognitivist position must show itself to be consistent with the neuroscientific evidence available. Second, cognitivist and non-cognitivist positions may in a certain way be reconcilable. At least, I wonder whether the two parties are speaking past one another. Is it not possible that awareness of pleasure is a perceptual or representational state, but that the pleasure of which one is aware is pro-attitudinal?<sup>64</sup>

In sum, contemporaries have proposed various attitudinal theories and focused on trying to clarify what kind of attitude pleasure is or requires. In light of this, we may ask why contemporaries, so much more than the ancients, have focused on trying to clarify the hedonic attitude? I will answer this question in the context of the discussion of the relation between ancient and contemporary treatments of hedonic kinds.

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<sup>60</sup> See Aydede (2000) 550-3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ten Problems of Consciousness*, MIT Press, 1995, 118.

<sup>62</sup> Timothy Schroeder, "Pleasure, Displeasure, and Representation," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2001) 507-30.

<sup>63</sup> Schroeder (2001) 525-29. (Unlike Plato, Tye and Schroeder identify pleasure with the hedonic attitude rather than the complex of attitude and object.)

<sup>64</sup> Kent Berridge and Morten Kringelbach seem committed to precisely this view in "Affective neuroscience of pleasure: reward in humans and animals," *Psychopharmacology* 199 (2008) 457-80. For example: "Pleasure is never merely a sensation ... Instead, it always requires the activity of hedonic brain systems to paint an additional 'hedonic gloss' onto a sensation to make it 'liked.' ... Pleasure is here defined as a 'liking' reaction to reward, whether explicitly felt in consciousness or not." (459) "In a similar way to how it is has [sic] proven useful to divide emotion into the non-conscious and conscious sub-components of emotions and feelings, we do suggest it might be more useful and meaningful to divide pleasure into both non-conscious (core 'liking') and conscious (subjective liking) sub-components of evaluative hedonic processing." (463)

## Hedonic Kinds

Contemporary philosophers have been little concerned with distinctions among hedonic kinds. The principal contemporary contribution to the kinds question came in the early phase with Perry's and Penelhum's distinctions between enjoyment and being pleased that. Recall that Penelhum distinguishes these hedonic kinds in three respects: according to the nature of their objects, the nature of awareness, and the temporal relation of the pleasure to its object.

Since Perry, there has been little discussion of being pleased that.<sup>65</sup> And since Richard Warner's and Wayne Davis's exchange over the nature of enjoyment in the 80s, there has been little discussion of enjoyment. Theorists of the recent phase of the contemporary period have largely focused on a hedonic kind not explicitly distinguished in the early phase, namely, sensory pleasure. Sensory pleasure is pleasure taken in or gotten from a sensory experience. While such pleasure is taken to be distinct from enjoyment, there has in fact been little discussion of just what the distinction entails. Nonetheless, consider that sensory pleasure is a hedonic attitude whose object is a mere sensation, feeling, or *quale*, whereas enjoyment requires an object that is, to a greater extent, temporally extended and perhaps one that is otherwise relatively complex. For example, one may like and hence derive pleasure from the sudden scent of a flower, but one enjoys watching a film or reading a novel. In short, enjoyment takes activities as objects, including sense-perceptual activities, whereas sensory pleasure merely requires a momentary sensory or sense-perceptual experience.<sup>66</sup>

In short, among the contributions of the contemporary period, three putative hedonic kinds have been distinguished: sensory pleasure, enjoyment, and being pleased that (alias propositional pleasure). However, for the most part, contemporary philosophers have had little *systematically* to say about the kinds question. This may leave one wondering whether the hedonic kinds that have been discussed are a function of contingent facts about the English language, that is, the facts that we have expressions and related concepts such as "enjoyment" and "being pleased that." Alternatively, the distinction of the hedonic kinds reflects something substantive about the psychological nature of animals. This paper is not the place to pursue this important question. However, given what I will be saying about the ancients' treatment of the kinds question, it is of some value to air one hypothesis here.

I incline to think that the distinct hedonic kinds considered in the contemporary discussion reflect genuine psychological distinctions. My thought here is influenced by Tyler Burge's recent philosophical psychology work, in which he argues for a trifold phylogenetic distinction between three kinds of

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<sup>65</sup> Feldman is an exception.

<sup>66</sup> The introduction of the phrase "sensory pleasure" into hedonic theorizing of the recent contemporary phase may be under the influence of the use of the phrase in affective neuroscience. For an early discussion, see M. Cabanac, "Sensory Pleasure," *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 54 (1979) 1-29.

cognitive state: sensation, sense-perception, and propositional cognition.<sup>67</sup> (For Burge, mere sensation, that is, non-perceptual sensation "merely [registers] information [that correlates] with environmental conditions and [functions] to do so."<sup>68</sup> In contrast, sense-perception involves the representation of objects, which requires distinct cognitive capacities, in particular, capacities for perceptual constancies.) The distinction between sensory pleasure, enjoyment, and propositional pleasure or being pleased that looks like it might map onto Burge's cognitive distinctions—<sup>69</sup> although I should emphasize that Burge himself does not discuss pleasure. Given this possibility, an explanatory scheme for the hedonic kinds discussed in the contemporary period would be phylogenetic and hence evolutionary psychological. Once again, however, contemporary theorists themselves have not attempted to articulate an explanatory framework within which to situate the distinct hedonic kinds that they have variously discussed.

In contrast to contemporaries, the ancients have had a lot to say about hedonic kinds. In fact, treatment of the kinds question predates treatment of the identity question. Prodicus of Ceos, Democritus, and Antisthenes seem to have drawn distinctions among hedonic kinds, without attempting to clarify what pleasure itself is.<sup>70</sup>

Among the ancients' treatments of pleasure, one can also observe that they variously discuss sensory pleasure, enjoyment, and being pleased that. For example, Plato's account of sense-perceptual pleasure in *Timaeus* is an account of sensory pleasure. Aristotle's account of pleasure as the completion of an activation in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10 is an account of enjoyment. And the Stoics' account of pleasure is intelligible as an account of being pleased that.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *The Origins of Objectivity*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> I am citing here from Tyler Burge, "Primitive Agency and Natural Norms," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79 (2009) 251-78, at 253.

<sup>69</sup> It is questionable whether creatures merely capable of sensation are also capable of sensory pleasure. The question where pleasure arises phylogenetically has received relatively little attention. M. Cabanac, "The Experience of Pleasure in Animals," in F. D. McMillan, *Mental Health and Well-Being in Animals*, Iowa State University Press, 2005, 29-46, argues that reptiles, but not amphibians can experience pleasure. John Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 183-206, criticizes Cabanac's position and, drawing on several studies, suggests that fish and even some invertebrates can experience pleasure. Cp. also Jaak Panskepp and Lucy Biven, "The Evolution of Affective Consciousness," in *The Archaeology of the Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions*, W. W. Norton & Co., 2012, 47-94. The question then remains: Where in phylogenesis does perception versus mere sensation, in Burge's sense, arise? And are any animals that experience pleasure incapable of perception?

<sup>70</sup> I discuss these distinctions in *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, chapter 2. On Prodicus' distinctions, see more fully David Wolfsdorf, "Prodicus on the Correctness of Names: The Case of Τέρψις, Χαρά, and Εὐφροσύνη," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 131 (2011) 131-45.

<sup>71</sup> In particular Chrysippus' conception of pleasure seems very close to being pleased that. Indeed, the Stoics' conception is close to the account that Perry (1967) develops. Both the Stoics and Perry hold that pleasure or being pleased that requires an evaluative judgment, precisely, the belief that *p* is good. In addition, the Stoics hold that a practical judgment is necessary, namely, that one ought to be elated that *p*. The Stoics' practical judgment and Perry's pro-attitude perhaps

But although these correspondences between ancient and contemporary treatments deserve consideration, the ancients do not *explicitly* distinguish hedonic kinds according to sensory pleasure, enjoyment, and being pleased that. Observe that the examples I have just given come from different philosophers or schools. For example, while Aristotle's treatment of pleasure in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10 can be seen as a treatment of enjoyment, Aristotle does not recognize enjoyment or the pleasure that he treats within *Nicomachean Ethics* 10 as one kind of pleasure.

In examining the ways in which the ancients respond to the kinds question, then, we must consider their responses on their own terms. From this perspective, we find that the ancients distinguish hedonic kinds in various ways, but that two categories of distinction are most widespread: psychological and evaluative. Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus each articulate psychologically informed hedonic distinctions. For example, Plato's distinction in *Republic* 9 between appetitive, spirited, and rational pleasures is informed by his tripartite conception of the structure of the human soul.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, Aristotle's distinction between sense-perceptual, characterological, and intellectual pleasures conforms to his distinction between parts and capacities of the soul. Again, Epicurus' distinction between somatic and psychological pleasures, to some extent, conforms to his distinction between irrational and rational parts of the soul.

These psychologically informed hedonic distinctions are invariably also conceived in terms of a psychological hierarchy. In other words, the hedonic kinds are ranked or evaluated, and the rankings correlate with conceived values of the various parts or capacities of the soul. For example, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus regard rational pleasures as being of greater value than appetitive ones.<sup>73</sup> Such evaluative distinctions among hedonic kinds reflect a broader theme in ancient hedonic theorizing. That is, many of the ancients' hedonic distinctions

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stand in some loose, analogous relation. But the Stoics view their practical judgment as stimulative of action, albeit in this case an act of psychological swelling, whereas Perry makes no such claim about the pro-attitude. Another point of contact between the Stoics and Perry concerns the Stoic view that pleasure requires a *fresh* belief. In his analysis of being pleased that, Perry maintains that the subject of being pleased that *p* must *recently* have come to believe (or know) that *p*: "The pleasure of one who is pleased about a thing is a non-conative, positively evaluative pro-attitude toward something which is *a matter of recent knowledge or belief ...*" (216) Perry suggests that it would be very odd for someone living now to come to be pleased that, for instance, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo or that Caesar crossed the Rubicon. (But psychological oddness is one thing, logical or conceptual impossibility is another.) In contrast, for the Stoics freshness does not require the recentness of the fact or alleged fact that pleases one. In an example Cicero uses in his discussion of the freshness condition, Artemisia, the long-grieving wife of the Persian satrap Mausolus has not recently come to the belief that *p* and that *p* has a certain value. Rather, she believes that *p* is or continues to be worthy of a certain reaction, regardless of when *p* occurred. In this respect, I think the Stoics' position is superior to Perry's.

<sup>72</sup> Even before Plato there was some discussion of whether plants were capable of pleasure and pain. See my "Empedocles and His Ancient Readers on Desire and Pleasure," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 36 (2009) 1-72, at 39-42.

<sup>73</sup> The Stoics' distinction between irrational ἡδονή and rational χαρά is not dissimilar.

are evaluatively and more specifically ethically oriented. Indeed, the ancients' psychologically informed hedonic distinctions are of secondary importance to their evaluatively informed hedonic distinctions. In short, the ancients' primary concern is ethically informed hedonic distinctions. For example, in his *Choice of Heracles* Prodicus distinguishes virtuous and vicious pleasures. In *Philebus* Plato distinguishes true and false pleasures and pure and impure pleasures in an effort to determine which among these are constitutive of the good life for humans. In the *Letter to Menoceus* Epicurus distinguishes pleasures that constitute the goal of human life, namely, katastematic pleasures, from the pleasures of prodigals.

In reviewing the ancients' and contemporaries' contributions to the topics of the hedonic attitude and hedonic kinds, then, we find an asymmetry: the ancients have a lot to say about hedonic kinds, but relatively little to say about the hedonic attitude; contemporaries have relatively little to say about hedonic kinds, but relatively much to say about the hedonic attitude. How is this asymmetry to be explained?

A basic explanation of the asymmetry can be given in terms of the broader contexts of ancient and contemporary hedonic theorizing. Ancient hedonic theorizing for the most part occurs within ethical contexts.<sup>74</sup> As we have seen, the ancients' distinctions among hedonic kinds are largely governed by ethical or evaluative considerations. This is true even for distinctions among hedonic kinds made in terms of psychological capacities. In short, the ancients' distinctions among hedonic kinds follow their ethical agendas.

In contrast, contemporary hedonic theorizing, at least as far as theorizing about the identity and kinds questions is concerned, largely occurs within the context of philosophy of mind or philosophical psychology. The disposition/episode debate of the early contemporary phase is emblematic of the behavioristic/anti-behaviorist debate of that period more broadly. Likewise, the distinction between cognitivist and non-cognitivist conceptions of pleasure in the recent contemporary phase can be seen as reflecting broader recent concerns over the nature of mind. For example, Timothy Schroeder's representationalist conception of pleasure is explicitly advanced as an attempt to bring unity to a representational theory of mind. Compare William Robinson's remark as he prepares to reject a representational account of pleasure: "In this age of the hegemony of representation, it would not be surprising if pleasure too were held to be a representation."<sup>75</sup> In short, the works of Plato and Ryle, the two fountainheads of their respective periods, are paradigmatic of the asymmetry. Ryle's hedonic theorizing first occurs within his book *The Concept of Mind*. Plato's occurs within *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Philebus*.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> There are, it may be noted, treatments of pleasure in ancient philosophy that occur in a biological or, more broadly, physiological context. However, these are limited. I discuss some of these in chapter 3 and in an appendix to chapter 6 of *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy*.

<sup>75</sup> (2006) 756.

<sup>76</sup> The treatment of sense-perceptual pleasure *Timaeus* is, thus, anomalous – just as the dialogue as a whole is compared to the other works of the corpus, relatively speaking.

I have said that appeal to the distinct contexts of ancient and contemporary hedonic theorizing provides a *basic* explanation of the asymmetry among the ancients' and contemporaries' treatments of the topics of the hedonic attitude and hedonic kinds. I do not want to overstate the reach of this explanation. That is, I do not think that appeal to the ethical context of ancient hedonic theorizing wholly explains the limitations of their examinations of hedonic attitudes. Take Plato first. Plato conceives of the hedonic attitude perceptually. In other words, the hedonic attitude, for Plato, is a kind of αἴσθησις (*aesthesis*). But Plato has a great deal to say about αἴσθησις, above all in *Theaetetus*. So it is not as if Plato neglects this genus of cognition. Rather, what Plato may be said to neglect in his perceptualist conception of the hedonic attitude is whether proprioception can simply be assimilated to exteroception and whether the hedonic attitude is indeed a form of proprioception.

But we should not press Plato too hard. After all, no one before him even tried to answer the identity question. Consider, then, the Stoics. Once again, it can hardly be said that the Stoics neglect to examine various mental attitudes involved in passions, and above all ὁρμή (*horme*). More generally, the Stoics worked hard to justify their rationalist conception of the adult mind and thus the cognitivism that underpins their conception of the passions. In the case of Epicurus, we simply lack his principal treatments of pleasure, namely, in *On the Goal* and *On Choice and Avoidance*, and perhaps *On Lives* and *On Nature*. So, in this case, lack of information regarding the hedonic attitude might be a function of our lack of primary texts.

The appearance of poverty of explanation seems best exemplified in the case of Aristotle. It is hard to understand why Aristotle has so little to say about the hedonic attitude. It is not as if Aristotle's theory of the soul is impoverished. But it is remarkable that in *On the Soul* Aristotle has almost nothing to say about pleasure (or pain).

### **Hedonic Feeling**

Recall that Ryle's dispositionalist account of pleasure (or rather enjoyment) was advanced against the then commonsensical and prevailing academic psychological view of pleasure as a sensation. At that time, the word "sensation" was used equivalently to "feeling" in one sense of this term. Although the disposition/episode debate that ensued in the early contemporary phase was not in fact equivalent to a debate between pleasure as disposition and pleasure as feeling, many participants construed the distinction in just these terms. That is, they assumed that if pleasure was occurrent or episodic, it was a feeling. In the recent phase of the contemporary period, as I have said, the dominant debate has been between pro-attitudinal and feelings theories. Both debates treat "feeling" in the broadest sense, namely, as a quality of consciousness of any kind. In other words, to claim that pleasure is or entails feeling is to claim that there is something it is like to have a hedonic occurrence. The fact that there are

opponents of feeling theories of pleasure indicates that this is a substantive claim. However, granting that pleasure entails a feeling aspect, I want to emphasize here that feeling theorists have done rather little to clarify the nature of this feeling.

The term "feeling" is variously ambiguous or at least polysemous. Consider the following range of uses. We speak of feeling with respect to tactile perception, that is, exteroceptively feeling temperature, texture, and pressure. We also speak of kinesthetic bodily feelings, feelings of moving, falling, and being moved, in general of causing various bodily movements and of passively being moved or manipulated in various ways. We speak of feeling cramps, twinges, stitches, and of feeling bloated. We speak of feeling the position of our limbs at rest or in an array of static poses. We also speak of a range of other proprioceptive bodily feelings, for example, feeling dizzy, hungry, itchy, nauseated, ticklish. We speak of feeling a range of psychological or psychophysical feelings, that is, feeling various emotions such as anger, sorrow, joy, and lust. We also speak of feeling playful, aroused, creeped-out, unhinged, stoned, drunk, and wired. We speak of feeling moods: lazy, restless, blue, ebullient, anxious. Some of our emotions and moods are more precisely spiritual feelings, for example, feeling at one with the universe, feeling awe or reverence, feeling a sense of the sublime. Finally, we speak of certain cognitive feelings: the feeling of security, of familiarity, of something on the tip of one's tongue, of understanding something, of grasping something as well as of incoherence or inconsistency.<sup>77</sup> This list is by no means intended to be exhaustive. I presume there are other kinds of feeling.<sup>78</sup>

Given this, if pleasure is a feeling or entails a feeling aspect, does this feeling aspect fall into one of the preceding categories? If not, is hedonic feeling *sui generis*? Relatedly, pleasure and pain or pleasure and displeasure have been described as feelings of a *kind*. Assume that pleasure and pain or pleasure and displeasure do belong to a common genus; call this the genus of "affect." Is there a category of affective feeling?

As I said, those who have claimed that there is something it is like to experience pleasure have not clarified what kind of feeling pleasure entails. For example, Aaron Smuts, one of the most recent defenders of a feeling theory,

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<sup>77</sup> For discussion of these "fringe" feelings, see Bruce Mangan, "Sensation's Ghost: The Non-Sensory 'Fringe' of Consciousness," *Psyche* (2001), available online at: <http://www.theassc.org/files/assc/2509.pdf>. Cp. also John Dunlosky and Janet Metcalfe, "Feelings of Knowing and Tip-of-the-Tongue States," in *Metacognition*, Sage Publications, 2009, 60-89.

<sup>78</sup> So far as I have gathered, there has been limited treatment of the concept(s) of feeling in Anglophone philosophy. Some exceptions include: Gilbert Ryle, "Feelings," *Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1951) 193-205; William Alston, "Feelings," *Philosophical Review* 78 (1969) 3-34; Michael Stoker, "Psychic Feelings," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1983) 5-26. Cp. also, G. Matthews, "Ritual and Religious Feelings," in *Explaining Emotions*, A. Rorty, ed., University of California Press, 1980, 339-53

maintains that pleasure simply "feels good."<sup>79</sup> This appears to reflect a commitment to what I just described as a category of affective feeling. Accordingly, pleasure is a good affect, pain bad. But the term "good" is just as vexed as the term "feeling" – although for very different reasons. For example, is hedonic feeling good because it answers to certain interests,<sup>80</sup> because it is a certain way of being good,<sup>81</sup> because it serves a particular role,<sup>82</sup> or because it promotes or raises the probability of some end?<sup>83</sup> Or is hedonic feeling, instead, good because it possesses a certain non-relational property, whether natural or non-natural? Smuts claims that the good feeling of pleasure is about as close to a primitive as one can get. I grant that in one sense all qualities of consciousness are ineffable. Nor do I seek a phenomenological analysis of hedonic feeling that explains hedonic feeling as a complex consisting of more elementary qualitative or phenomenal components.<sup>84</sup> However, a different kind of elucidation should be possible, namely, one that locates hedonic feeling in relation to other categories of feeling.

Although feeling theorists have not attempted to clarify hedonic feeling in the sort of categorical or quasi-categorical terms I sketched above, they have discussed a distinction among conceptions of hedonic feeling that has some bearing on this topic. Precisely, they have distinguished between so-called *hedonic tone* and *distinctive feeling* theories. According to the distinctive feeling theory, pleasure is a distinctive feeling "analogous to such feelings as the sensations of hot and cold."<sup>85</sup> In other words, hedonic feeling is a distinctive quality of consciousness. For example, the pleasant experience of drinking a cold lemonade is a phenomenal complex consisting of a gustatory character (the flavor), a tactile quality (the coldness), and pleasantness (the distinct hedonic feeling or quality of consciousness). Given a distinctive feeling theory, it should in principle be possible to relate hedonic feeling to one of the categories or quasi-categories considered above.<sup>86</sup>

Resistance to the distinctive feeling theory fundamentally comes from consideration of the so-called heterogeneity problem: a wide variety of

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<sup>79</sup> op. cit.

<sup>80</sup> Paul Ziff, *Semantic Analysis*, Cornell University Press, 1960.

<sup>81</sup> Judith Jarvis Thomson, "On Some Ways in Which a Thing Can Be Good," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 9 (1992) 96-117.

<sup>82</sup> Zoltán Gendler Szabó, "Adjectives in Context," from *Perspectives on Semantics, Pragmatics, and Discourse*, I. Kenesei and R. Harnish, eds., John Benjamins, 2001, 119-146, at 133-35.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen Finlay, "A Good Word to Start With," in *Confusion of Tongues: A Theory of Normativity*, ms. in progress.

<sup>84</sup> Compare the work of early introspective psychologists summarized in J. G. Beebe-Center, "The Relation of Hedonic Tone to Mental Elements," in *The Psychology of Pleasantness and Unpleasantness*, van Nostrand, 1932, at 58-112; and Magda Arnold, "Feeling as a Mental Element," in *Emotion and Personality*, Columbia University, 1960, vol 1., 19-35

<sup>85</sup> Fred Feldman, "Hedonism," in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, L. and C. Becker, eds., 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, 2001, 662-69, at 662.

<sup>86</sup> For a recent defense of the distinctive feeling theory, see Ben Bramble, "The Distinctive Feeling Theory of Pleasure," *Philosophical Studies* 138 (2011).



experiences or psychological occurrences are pleasant, and it does not seem that these various occurrences have a single distinctive quality in common. Accordingly, the hedonic tone theory asserts that there is no phenomenally distinct quality isolatable among various pleasant experiences. Instead, a range of hedonic experiences or qualities of different kinds share a characteristic, called a "hedonic tone," but not a distinctive hedonic quality.<sup>87</sup> This shared hedonic tone has been conceived in various ways. For example, Roger Crisp proposes to understand it in terms of the distinction between determinables and determinates. For instance, color is a determinable; a particular color is a determinate. Hedonic tone or quality is, then, analogous to color. Hence, various hedonic psychological occurrences may have various phenomenal characters, but share hedonic tone.<sup>88</sup> Shelly Kagan offers a different conception. He analogizes hedonic tone with volume of sound:

It is obvious that loudness or volume is not a *kind* of sound ... Rather, volume is a dimension along which sounds can vary ... Similarly, pleasure might well be a distinct dimension of mental states.<sup>89</sup>

Compare intensity, which may be a property of qualities across a range of sense-perceptual modalities; and observe, crucially, that intensity is not a distinct phenomenal property.

According to the hedonic tone theory, then, hedonic feeling clearly cannot belong to one of the feeling categories sketched above. In fact, on this view, it is questionable whether "feeling" is an appropriate term to characterize hedonic tone. Indeed, hedonic tone theorists owe an account of the broader metaphysical category to which hedonic tone belongs.

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I turn now to the ancients. Did they conceive of pleasure as a feeling? Or rather, since we have seen that no ancient philosopher or school conceived of pleasure merely as a feeling, did any of them conceive of pleasure as having a feeling aspect? The answer depends on what we take conceptualization here to require. Assume pleasure is a conscious occurrence. If conceptualization merely

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<sup>87</sup> Earlier advocates include C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1930, 229; and K. Dunker, "On Pleasure, Emotion, and Striving," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1 (1941) 391-430. Another more recent advocate is J. S. Feibleman, "A Philosophical Analysis of Pleasure," in *The Role of Pleasure in Behavior*, R. G. Heath, ed., Littlefield Adams, 1995, 250-78.

<sup>88</sup> "If the advocate of heterogeneity is seeking in enjoyable experiences something like a special sensation, such as sweetness, or a tingle or feeling located in a certain part of the body, such as an itch or pins and needles, or indeed something like a perceptual quality such as redness, he will fail. But there *is* a way that enjoyable experiences feel: they feel enjoyable ... Enjoyment, then, is best understood using the determinable-determinate distinction, and the mistake in the heterogeneity argument is that it considers only determinates." (*Reasons and the Good*, Oxford University Press, 2006, 109; cited from Ben Bramble, 2011.)

<sup>89</sup> "The Limits of Wellbeing," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 9 (1992) 169-89.

requires the capacity to subjectively discriminate the occurrence of pleasure from other psychological occurrences, then given that pleasure does have a feeling aspect, obviously the Greeks conceptualized pleasure as such. But this criterion for conceptualization is too weak to serve our purposes. A more effective criterion is the possession of a single lexical concept corresponding to a term equivalent to "feeling." According to this criterion, the Greeks did not and could not entertain the idea of pleasure having a feeling aspect, for they had no such term or concept. A third option, of middling strength between the first and third, is that conceptualization does not require a single lexical concept corresponding to "feeling" or the equivalent, but a set of lexical concepts that enable its possessor to cognize in propositional terms the thought of pleasure as having a feeling aspect. According to this criterion, the Greeks did have the capacity to conceive of pleasure as having a feeling aspect. However, although they had this capacity, there is little evidence that they exercised it as such.

I'll start with the claim that the Greeks lacked a single lexical concept of feeling. First, I know of no Greek term that could accurately be used to render "feeling" in the sense at issue. Consider some possibilities. The tactile sense or feeling of touch can be rendered as "ἅφῃ" (*haphe*), but clearly this is inadequate. Touch is a specific perceptual modality, but pleasure is not limited to a particular perceptual modality, let alone to perception. On the other hand "αἴσθησις" (*aesthesis*), the most general Greek word for consciousness or awareness, is too broad. The Greeks could have entertained the question whether pleasure requires awareness, but that is not the question at issue here.

The most plausible candidate is "πάθος" (*pathos*). But "πάθος" also will not do. It is inappropriate for Plato since Plato maintains that unless a πάθος is robust enough so that it impacts that soul and is perceived (αἰσθητόν, *aestheton*), no pleasure or pain occurs. In short, in the context of Plato's hedonic theorizing, πάθος does not entail consciousness.

Aristotle uses "πάθος" in various ways,<sup>90</sup> but none of these can satisfactorily be rendered as "feeling" in the appropriate sense. Of course, one Aristotelian use is as "emotion," and we commonly characterize emotions as "feelings." But the question here is not whether the ancients could have conceived of pleasure as an emotion. There are various kinds of feeling beside emotion, and to ask whether pleasure has a feeling aspect is not to ask whether it has an emotional aspect.

One might think that a better candidate is Epicurus' use of "πάθος," perhaps especially in the context of his distinction, common enough in the letters, between αἴσθησις and πάθος. Indeed, some scholars render the distinction as between "perceptions" and "feelings." But translations require justification. Elizabeth Asmis suggests that "Epicurus distinguishes between the perceptions (αἰσθήσεις) and the affections (πάθη) on the ground that the former consist in an awareness of objects external to ourselves and the latter in an awareness of an

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<sup>90</sup> For example, see *Metaph.* Δ, 1022b15-21.

inner condition."<sup>91</sup> In this case, "awareness," not "feeling," is the operative term. But, as we have said, awareness is much broader than feeling in the sense at issue.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, we have noted that there are numerous other kinds of proprioceptive feeling. My view is that in this context Epicurus uses "πάθος" to refer to the (putative) genus of which pleasure and pain are species, in other words, to mean "affect." But whether or not it is trivially true that pleasure belongs to the genus of affect, it is a different question whether all of the members of this genus have feeling aspects.

Finally, the Old Stoics' use of "πάθος" is clearly very different from "feeling" in the sense at issue. For Zeno, πάθος *qua* impulse (ὀρμή) is or is akin to an intention-in-action.<sup>93</sup> And, as I mentioned earlier, for Chrysippus a πάθος is a judgment or assent. Whether intentions or judgments have feeling aspects is a different question.

Although the Greeks lacked a single lexical concept corresponding to feeling in the sense in question, they did have sets of lexical concepts that they could have employed to consider whether pleasure has a feeling aspect. For example, I have spoken of Plato's conception of the phenomenal or appearance aspect of pleasure. Plato could have considered whether the φαινόμενον (*phaenomenon*) of pleasure is distinct in character from the φαινόμενον of all other psychological conditions that have φαινόμενα. Or rather, he could have entertained the idea that pleasure and pain share a kind of phenomenal character, distinct from the phenomenal character of all other psychological occurrences that have a phenomenal character; and he could have considered the hedonic species of this kind of phenomenal character.

Plato could have. But he didn't. Likewise, Aristotle could have, but he didn't. Epicurus and his followers too could have considered whether pleasure has a feeling aspect. Here, there is reason to think that they *should* have. Recall that Epicurus' Cyrenaic opponents criticized his view that katastematic pleasure is in fact a hedonic state:

These Cyrenaics (namely, the Annicerians) reject Epicurus' definition of pleasure, that is, the removal of what causes pain, stigmatizing it as the condition of a corpse ...<sup>94</sup>

I remarked that such criticism is rather tendentious since Epicurus clearly maintains that pleasure requires awareness or consciousness. Nonetheless, it is a substantive question whether mere absence of pain or katastematic pleasure as

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<sup>91</sup> *Epicurus' Scientific Method*, Cornell University Press, 1984, 167.

<sup>92</sup> As I mentioned above, the generic Greek word for "awareness" is "αἴσθησις"; and Epicurus uses this word in this way as well. For example: "Accustom yourself to believe that death is nothing to us. For all good and bad lies in awareness (ἐν αἰσθήσει), and death is the deprivation of awareness (αἰσθήσεως)." (*Ep. Men* 124)

<sup>93</sup> The phrase derives from John Searle, *Intentionality*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 84-5.

<sup>94</sup> Clem. *strom.* 2.21.130.8.

Epicurus conceives of it has a distinctive phenomenal character that is necessary for being a kind of pleasure. According to Epicurus' ontology, this phenomenal character would seem to be a kind of σύμπτωμα (*sumptomata*) (quality). For example, in the *Letter to Herodotus* Epicurus explains how sense-perceptual qualities (συμπτώματα αισθητικά, *sumptomata aesthetika*) are engendered.<sup>95</sup> Thus, hedonic and algesic qualities would be conceived as συμπτώματα παθητικά (*sumptomata pathetika*). But Epicurus never uses this phrase; and if he or his followers did use such terms to defend the hedonic character of katastematic pleasure, neither that discussion nor testimony regarding its occurrence survives.

Finally, the Stoics could have conceived of pleasure as having a feeling aspect. Here, it is worth drawing special attention to the Stoic concept of προπάθεια (*propathēia*) (preliminary passion). All πάθη (*pathe*) are or depend on judgments, and as such the Stoics regard them as voluntary. But the Stoics concede that even humans, that is, animals that possess reason, can have involuntary psychological reactions to events. Whether and how this admission is consistent with their other psychological commitments, I ignore. But granting the concession, there must be a προπάθεια analogous to pleasure in which the soul swells or dilates in response to some appearance, but which occurs independently of hedonic evaluative and practical judgments and correlative impulse. Such psychological events seem like good candidates at least for bearers of some kind of feeling. And here the Stoics could provide some explanation of the distinctiveness of the phenomenal character of the psychological occurrence by referring to the swelling or dilation of the soul. Compare Margaret Graver's remark:

As [an account of προπάθεια] must not include the crucial item of assent, it is said either that they are caused directly by impressions (φαντασίαι, *phantasiai*), or that they are simply part of the impressions themselves, what it 'feels like,' as it were, to entertain a certain impression.<sup>96</sup>

Since there are numerous species of προπάθεια, again, analogous to the variety of πάθη, the Stoics had the conceptual resources to entertain the question whether hedonic προπάθεια in particular has a distinct phenomenal character. In this case, "phenomenal character" corresponds to the Stoic "φαντασία." Hence, the Stoics would be asking whether the φαντασία (impression) of the προπάθεια (preliminary passion) analogous to ἡδονή (*hedone*) is distinctive in kind or

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<sup>95</sup> *Ep. Hdt.* 64.

<sup>96</sup> "Philo of Alexandria and the Origins of Stoic Προπάθειαι," *Phronesis* 44 (1999) 300-25, at 319. Cp. also Graver's following remark: "As part of an effort to clarify what is and is not covered by Stoic claims about the psychology of the passions, some [Stoic] author concedes the existence, even in the normative human, of involuntary psychological responses or 'feelings,' but denies that these should be called ['πάθη'], arguing that as these feelings have no practical consequences, they do not pose any problem for Stoics wishing to treat [πάθος] as a type of (voluntary) action. A causal explanation is provided for [these] responses." (*ibid.*)

character from other φαντασῖαι (impressions). Once again, I am not aware that Stoics ever did pursue this question.

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It remains to reflect on why the ancients did not scrutinize the nature of hedonic feeling, even though they had the conceptual resources to do so. A facile gesture directed at answering this question might run like this. The Christian culture that developed in the wake of antiquity cultivated practices of psychological inwardness and bestowed the results upon modernity.<sup>97</sup> The topic of subjectivity, central to modern philosophy, is in turn a development of this inheritance. Various, related, more recent philosophical and psychological developments build on these grounds: the phenomenological tradition, experimental introspective psychology, contemporary philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, consciousness studies, and philosophy of emotion.

This seems to me a facile and misguided gesture for many reasons. But it suffices to cast doubt on the alleged root cause. Heraclitus claimed: "you will not find out the limits of the soul when you go, traveling on every road, so deep a *logos* does it have."<sup>98</sup> Generally speaking, scrutiny of the soul became central to ancient philosophy at least from the time of Socrates.

To be sure, the ancients' explorations or constructions of the soul proceeded by some distinctive routes. For instance, the Greeks were more concerned with generic psychological features such as character than particular ones such as the self. But the psychological item at issue here lies, so to speak, on the surface of experience.

In considering why the ancients did not pursue the question whether pleasure is or entails a special feeling, we should emphasize that modern philosophers never pursued the question either. Consequently, we might focus on why attention to hedonic feeling arose in the contemporary period. Here the answer is clear enough: the question whether pleasure is a feeling arose in response to Ryle's criticism of the commonsensical view that pleasure is a sensation or feeling. Broadly speaking, Ryle's view arose within the behaviorist milieu of the mid-twentieth century and its attendant worries about the epistemology of inner mental entities. Whether or not Ryle himself was a behaviorist, his dispositional analysis of enjoyment is of a piece with that trend in philosophical psychology. Furthermore, as we have seen, when Ryle rejected

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<sup>97</sup> For one expression of this idea, consider the remarks of Aaron Gurevich: "There seems to have been no awareness of individuality in ancient times ... The inner psychological essence of the human being in the Greek world was not the object of tenacious quests and investigations ... In the person of St. Augustine ... Christianity had a major advance towards penetrating the individual's 'inner space' and in achieving a more profound understanding of the individual. The human ego underwent re-interpretation and came to be viewed as the combination of substance endowed with awareness and a will and a personality capable of reasoning and of emotion." (*The Origins of European Individualism*, K. Judelson, trans., Blackwell, 1995, 91; cp. J. -P. Vernant, "Aspects de la personne dans la religion grecque," in *Problèmes de la Personne*, I. Meyerson, ed., La-Haye, 1973, 23ff.)

<sup>98</sup> B45 DK.

the view that pleasure is a sensation or feeling, by "feeling" or "sensation" he merely meant to reject the view that pleasure is a conscious occurrent. Consequently, contemporary philosophers who engaged in the debate in the wake of Ryle's contributions were concerned to maintain or reject the view that pleasure is a conscious occurrent, not to elucidate the nature of hedonic feeling.

Debate over distinctive feeling and hedonic tone theories of hedonic feeling is a genuine development in philosophical psychology beyond the disposition/episode debate. But, among philosophers, it is a debate that is very recent and that has not advanced very far.

Granted this, we have still not satisfactorily explained why the ancients ignored the feeling question. The answer cannot be that there were no behaviorists around to provoke them. I suggest that the right answer follows the one I gave to the question why the ancients focus on hedonic objects rather than attitudes. For the most part, ancient hedonic theorizing occurred within the context of ethical theorizing, not within the context of psychology, and certainly not within the context of the metaphysics of mind or soul. The ancients – most significantly, Aristotle – had important things to say about the metaphysics of the soul. But the topic of pleasure and precisely its phenomenal character are absent from those discussions. As I mentioned above, Aristotle has almost nothing to say about pleasure (or pain) in *On the Soul*.

Granted this, one might ask: Couldn't the ancients have wondered whether hedonic feeling or the phenomenal component of pleasure has ethical value? After all, precisely this seems to be the question of ethical hedonism. More generally, couldn't the ancients have asked: Are there certain states of mind, including feeling states, that have intrinsic value? Certainly the Greeks did engage questions of *this ilk*. Indeed, moderns have continuously done so. But moderns have continuously done so *without* attempting to distinguish hedonic feeling from other kinds of feeling. Likewise, the Greeks could accept that pleasure has a phenomenal component and that this component, the appearance of pleasure, draws one toward pleasure. But such commitments fall far short of engagement with the question whether the phenomenal component of pleasure is a distinctive kind of feeling and how that distinctive kind is related to other kinds.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, I raised the question of how to approach ancient philosophical material, and I referred to two broad responses, one more historical, the other less so. It would be wrong to claim that this study aims to answer the identity and kinds questions using the ancients as auxiliaries. The approach here is clearly historical. But it is not historical in the general way proposed in the preamble. It does not simply aim to clarify the ancient picture. This study has presented both the ancient and the contemporary pictures,

recognizing the historicity of each; and it has been concerned with the relation between their various contributions to the identity and kind questions. This is the first such study of pleasure.

What does this study show? What questions does it leave?

Contemporary contributions can be used to constitute a perspective from which to reflect on ancient contributions, and this can be done without using the contemporary contributions merely as a standard of truth against which to evaluate the success or failure of the past.<sup>99</sup> Assume that pleasure is attitudinal, whether or not it possesses a feeling aspect. The fact that the ancients focus on hedonic objects, while contemporaries focus on hedonic attitudes, is, then, partly explicable in view of the metaphysical complexity of pleasure. Moreover, I have suggested explanations for why the ancients and contemporaries focus on the distinct aspects of this complex that they do. It is an obvious point that different periods may pursue and illuminate different aspects of a single subject. The value of this study does not lie in making this point, but in the nuanced application of it to the particular case.

Another obvious point is that contributions to philosophical psychology are embedded in theoretical (and pre-theoretical conceptual) frameworks. This study has intimated this point, but not focused on it. Clearly, the ancients' frameworks differ from contemporaries'. Moreover, the ancients' contributions are more greatly different from one another than the contemporary contributions, certainly within each phase of the contemporary period. In other words, contemporaries are, to a greater extent, engaged in discussions and debates in common terms. Compare the history of psychological contributions to the nature of pleasure, from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1950s. On the one hand, there are relatively major differences between the contributions of the various psychological movements and schools, from structuralism to functionalism to psychoanalysis to behaviorism.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, there are relatively minor, albeit important, differences between the contributions within individual movements or schools, for example, among the structuralists, between Wilhelm Wundt, Edward Titchener, Bernard Koch, and J. P. Nafe, to name but a few.<sup>101</sup> For convenience, let us refer to these distinctions as "intra-mural" and "extra-mural." The general point here is basically analytic. If one speaks of the contributions of different schools or movements versus differences within a school or movement, one is, in most cases, talking about differences of greater and lesser degrees respectively. Still, it is a substantive empirical fact that there are relatively major differences among the ancient contributions and relatively

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<sup>99</sup> Judging from the array of contemporary contributions, no such standard is readily available.

<sup>100</sup> A discussion of these contributions to the topics of feeling and emotion can be found in J. G. Beebe-Center, "Feeling and Emotion," in *Theoretical Foundations of Psychology*, Harry Helson, ed., van Nostrand, 1951, 254-317.

<sup>101</sup> For a discussion of competing views of pleasure and hedonic tone among these figures and others of the structuralist movement, see J. G. Beebe-Center, "The Relation of Hedonic Tone to Mental Elements," in *The Psychology of Pleasantness and Unpleasantness*, van Nostrand, 1932, 58-112.

minor differences among contemporary contributions, which are explicable in terms of this extra-/intra-mural distinction. Platonic, Aristotelian, Epicurean, and Stoic theories of pleasure are theories of different philosophical schools. Thus, they are more like theoretical distinctions among the early psychological movements. Perhaps some of the reason for the similarity is the same: both constitute early, exploratory stages in the history of a discipline.

When our study of pleasure is viewed from this perspective, it appears as a meta-theoretical investigation. As such, much more could be done. For example, the various theoretical assumptions and presuppositions could be more clearly distinguished and highlighted. The grounds for these distinctions could be clarified. Furthermore, as it happens, our focus has been on relations among philosophical theories. It may be questioned whether there is reason to limit the focus in this way. In the case of the ancients, there is reason: in antiquity, there was basically no theoretical alternative to philosophy. In the contemporary period, psychology may be a genuine alternative. Consequently, there remains much to say about the relation between various psychological and philosophical theories of pleasure over the last century or so.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Finally, the study has not only been limited to philosophical theories, but to philosophical theories of two periods. In one intuitive sense, this limitation is justified. We wish to reflect on the ancients' contributions to hedonic theorizing by considering these in relation to the contributions of the present. But it may be wondered whether further justification for this limitation is needed or available.