

## 1. Introduction

At *Eudemian Ethics* 6.11 (= *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.11) Aristotle introduces several views that others hold regarding pleasure's value. In particular I draw your attention to the following one. Aristotle writes that some believe that:

A. No pleasure is a good thing, either in itself or incidentally.

οὐδεμία ἡδονὴ εἶναι ἀγαθόν, οὔτε καθ' αὐτὸ οὔτε κατὰ συμβεβηκός. (1152b8-9)

Aristotle proceeds to give several reasons for this position. One is that:

R. Every pleasure is a perceived genesis toward a nature, but no genesis is of the same kind as its ends, for example no building of a house is of the same kind as a house. (1152b13-15)

πᾶσα ἡδονὴ γένεσις ἐστὶν εἰς φύσιν αἰσθητή, οὐδεμία δὲ γένεσις συγγενῆς τοῖς τέλεσιν, οἷον οὐδεμία οἰκοδόμησις οἰκία.

Who are the believers of A and R that Aristotle is reporting? I suggest that the evidence leads us back to Plato's *Philebus*. There a view very similar to R is developed, and a view very similar to A is argued to depend on it.

That the views Aristotle here reports can be traced back to Plato does not confirm that Plato himself held them. An argument is always necessary when inferring from a thesis stated or advanced in some Platonic text to a thesis maintained by Plato himself. But— setting that problem aside— I also said that A and R are "very similar to," I did not say that they were identical to the views expressed in Plato's *Philebus*. Accordingly what we find in the *Eudemian Ethics* passage is a case of Aristotle presenting a philosophical view of one of his predecessors in terms that are as much Aristotelian as that predecessor's. In other words, while Aristotle perspicuously and succinctly draws attention to an anti-hedonist argument in Plato, he does so in a way that is expressive of some of his particular conceptual and theoretical commitments.

My aim in this paper is to clarify the anti-hedonist position, both the Platonic expression of it in *Philebus* and Aristotle's presentation of it in *Eudemian Ethics*. I will argue that while the Platonic position is consistent with the Aristotelian presentation of it, there are also aspects of the Aristotelian presentation that are unfaithful to Plato and quite misleading.

## 2. Plato's Conception of Pleasure

In several dialogues, including *Philebus*, Plato has his main philosophical protagonists advance the thesis that pleasure is a genesis. More precisely, pleasure, conceived as such, is a process occurring in a living thing, through which that

thing or an organic part of it transitions from some defective or incomplete state toward a state of completion, wholeness, or integrity. A simple, but paradigmatic example is drinking when thirsty. The hydrating process consists in a transition from a defective state, a lack of hydration, toward a non-defective state, a state in which the organism has been adequately hydrated and therefore has restored that defective portion or aspect of itself.<sup>1</sup>

This genetic process, central though it is, is but one constituent of pleasure. In addition, Plato maintains – as we would expect – that pleasure has a psychological component. For pleasure to occur the genetic process must register in the psyche. The psychological registering of the genetic process is an experiential state. That is, when pleasure occurs, the living being experiences the genetic process. Qua experience the psychological state has a certain phenomenal character. Plato occasionally calls it a "φαινόμενον" (an appearance) and occasionally uses the verb "φαίνεσθαι" (to appear) to characterize it. The phenomenal character is, I take it, pleasantness. But the pleasant experience is also a form of perception and so awareness; Plato occasionally calls it an "αἴσθησις." Recall Aristotle's claim in R that pleasure is a *perceived* genesis (γένεσις ... αἰσθητή). Consequently the experience that is pleasantness is the perceptual awareness of the genetic process.

So pleasure is a process, but – we may now add – not merely a genetic process. Since pleasure consists both of the psychological state, the pleasant awareness, and the genetic process that causes and is the object of this awareness, pleasure is a genetic-cum-psychological process whereby the genesis registers psychologically and in a particular way.<sup>2</sup>

In light of this account, it may be helpful to think of Plato's conception of pleasure as having some points of contact with some contemporary representational theories of pain, where pain is the experience, the phenomenally painful awareness of bodily or tissue damage. Note however that Plato places primary emphasis on the genetic component of pleasure. So in terms more congenial to his account, we should say that Plato takes pleasure to be a genesis occurring in an individual, of which that individual is experientially aware.

### **3. Plato's Conception of the Good**

I turn now to goodness or rather the good, as Plato speaks of it. Plato is notoriously much more reticent with respect to this subject. Even so, in *Philebus* he has Socrates expressly introduce several properties of the good. Since we are in the realm of Platonism, it needs to be emphasized that at certain points in the dialogue Socrates is speaking of the good itself (τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό), whereas at others he is speaking simply of the good. In the latter cases the good is discussed as a property of things like human life and its constituents such as pleasure and knowledge. In such cases the good must of course have properties akin to the good itself; nonetheless the two must be distinguished.

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When, rather early in the dialogue, Socrates first introduces properties of the good, he is concerned with the value of human lives. The good he is speaking of there is not the good itself, and he introduces three properties of this— let us call it— non-fundamental good. One property is psychological. Socrates says that everything that has some cognition of the good desires and pursues it. I will not dwell on this psychological property, save to note here that the property does not require that the good must be an object of pro-motivation. The description only states that the good is such an object for those entities that have some cognition of it. In other words, it is compatible with this description that the good is, in some way, attainable for certain entities that lack cognitive and motivational capacities entirely. Plato does seem to embrace this position.

Within the same passage Socrates elicits his interlocutor Protarchus' agreement to the view that the good, again the non-fundamental good, has two other properties. We might speak of these as *metaphysical* as opposed to psychological properties. Socrates and Protarchus agree that the good is both complete (τέλειον) and sufficient (ικανόν).<sup>3</sup> It is not easy to tell how Plato understands the distinction between completeness and sufficiency here. My guess is that he understands them as aspectually distinct in the following way. Completeness characterizes an entity internally. Sufficiency characterizes that entity in relation to other entities external to it, upon which it may be ontologically dependent. Accordingly something might internally be complete, yet by its nature be a part of a greater whole and as such by itself insufficient.<sup>4</sup> In view of these metaphysical properties I infer that according to Plato the good lacks nothing. As such it appears that the good is wholeness.

Compare the view that the good is wholeness with the view that the good is unity. I invite the comparison here precisely because the latter is the view that Aristotle attributes to Plato. Consider his following remarks from *Eudemian Ethics* 1.8, where he also provides some indication of how Plato argued for the position:

"It is from things not agreed to possess the good that [Plato and his adherents] argue for the things agreed to be good. For example they argue from numbers that justice and health are good, on the grounds that justice and health are arrangements (τάξεις) and numbers— and assuming that good belongs to numbers and units because unity (τὸ ἓν) is the good itself (αὐτὸ τἀγαθόν)." (1218a16-21)

Compare this passage with a very similar one in Aristotle's student Aristoxenus' *Elements of Harmony*. There Aristoxenus describes Plato's public lecture on the good, and expressly derives his description from Aristotle:

"As Aristotle was accustomed to report, this is what happened to the majority of the people who heard Plato's lecture on the good. Each person came expecting to learn something about the things that are generally agreed to be good for human beings, for example wealth, health, physical

strength, and in a word a kind of wonderful happiness. But when the mathematical demonstrations came, including numbers and geometrical figures, and finally the statement that the good is unity, it all seemed to them, I imagine, utterly unexpected and strange; and so some belittled the matter and others dismissed it." (Aristoxenus, *Elements of Harmony*, 2.30-31)

In these passages Aristotle and Aristoxenus are identifying the good itself. Still, if the identification is sound, it should follow that the good in other things, the non-fundamental good, is the unity in those things. So we must distinguish unity and unity itself, just as we distinguish the good and the good itself. Compare Aristotle's precise articulation in *Metaphysics* N where he speaks of those who "identify unity itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν) with the good itself (τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ)."5,6

Recall that I appealed to the Peripatetic testimonies regarding Plato's view of the good as unity, following the conclusion, based on Socrates' claims in *Philebus*, that the good lacks nothing and as such may be conceived as wholeness. I believe that evidence from *Philebus* itself could be adduced to support the view that even Plato suggests a view of the good as unity. But given space constraints, I will leave the matter here. It suffices to note that, on this particular occasion, with respect to this very special and signal feature of Plato's philosophy, I take the Peripatetic testimonies to provide more clear and compelling evidence than the Platonic corpus itself.

#### **4. Aristotle on the anti-hedonist position in Plato's *Philebus***

With these Platonic views of pleasure and the good in mind, let us return now to the claims in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* 6.11. Once again, since:

R. Every pleasure is a perceived genesis toward a nature, but no genesis is of the same kind as its ends, for example no building of a house is of the same kind as a house;

therefore:

A. No pleasure is a good thing, either in itself or incidentally.

I will now discuss the adverbial phrases "in itself" and "incidentally" in A. Prima facie these phrases might be read in at least two ways. On one reading they might be taken to qualify the manner in which the predicate "good" is related to the subject "pleasure." As such A might be rendered as:

A<sub>man</sub>. No pleasure in itself is a good thing;  
no pleasure incidentally is a good thing.

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Alternatively, the phrases might be taken to qualify the predicate "good." As such A might be rendered as:

A<sub>pred.</sub> No pleasure is a thing that is good in itself;  
no pleasure is a thing that is good incidentally.

Our familiar distinctions between final and instrumental goods or between intrinsic and extrinsic goods might encourage this second reading of A. Aristotle himself also recognizes a kindred distinction, at least in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6. There he distinguishes between things that are good in themselves (καθ' αὐτά) and things that are good because of the former (διὰ ταῦτα). The latter set comprises various sub-kinds, including things productive (ποιητικά) of things good in themselves, but interestingly also preservative (φυλακτικά) of things good in themselves as well as preventive (κωλυτικά) of things bad in themselves.<sup>7</sup>

In drawing the distinction between these two sets of goods, Aristotle says that the adjective "good," that is, "ἀγαθόν," is here spoken of in two ways. This provides some further support for reading A as A<sub>pred.</sub> But note that while Aristotle uses the expression "καθ' αὐτά" to refer to the members of the one set of goods, he does not use the expression "κατὰ συμβεβηκός" or the like to refer to the members of the other set. That should at least make us wary of accepting A<sub>pred.</sub>

There is moreover a much stronger reason to reject A<sub>pred.</sub> and to plump for A<sub>man.</sub> The reason derives simply from consideration of Aristotle's widespread and explicit use of the phrases "καθ' αὐτό" and "κατὰ συμβεβηκός" in opposition to one another and in particular such usage in *Eudemian Ethics* itself. For instance, at the beginning of book 8 Aristotle introduces the distinction between using an object καθ' αὐτό and using it κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Aristotle exemplifies this distinction with an eye. The use of an eye for seeing derives from the essence of the eye. Such use is καθ' αὐτό. But one can sell or eat an eye, and in doing so use the eye in a way that is compatible with its essence, but not derivative of its essence. In other words, it is possible to sell or eat an eye, although that it not essentially what an eye is for. Such use is κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

As I will make clearer momentarily, this is generally how Aristotle understands predications καθ' αὐτό and κατὰ συμβεβηκός; and in view of such usage I suggest that A<sub>man.</sub> must be Aristotle's intended meaning. Accordingly the thesis that Aristotle is reporting is, once again:

A<sub>man.</sub> No pleasure in itself is a good thing;  
no pleasure incidentally is a good thing.

For convenience I will hereafter simply refer to A<sub>man.</sub> as A.

Let's focus on each clause of A individually, starting with the first:

A<sub>1:</sub> No pleasure in itself is a good thing.

As I suggested above, for Aristotle a predication καθ' αὐτό is a predication derived from the essence of the subject. For example a human being καθ' αὐτό is an animal. In other words, it is in virtue of its essence that a human being is an animal. Accordingly I interpret the first clause of A to mean:

A<sub>1</sub><sup>i</sup>. Being a good thing cannot be derived from the essence of pleasure.

I turn now to the second clause of A—

A<sub>2</sub>. No pleasure incidentally is a good thing.

A predication κατὰ συμβεβηκός is a predication not derived from the essence of the subject, but nonetheless compatible with the essence of the subject. For example a human being can be knowledgeable-in-grammar. So it is compatible with the essence of a human being, although not derivative of the essence of a human being, that he or she is knowledgeable-in-grammar. Accordingly I interpret the second clause of A to mean:

A<sub>2</sub><sup>i</sup>. The essence of pleasure is not compatible with a pleasure being a good thing.

In other words, given the essence of pleasure, it is not possible for any pleasure to be a good thing. The second clause of A therefore makes a much stronger anti-hedonist claim than the first clause.

In light of the Platonic views of pleasure and the good presented above, here now is why, I take it, Aristotle would attribute the first clause of A to Plato. If pleasure is essentially a genesis, a process of coming-to-be, then being a *telos*, that is, an end or a completion, cannot be derived from the essence of pleasure. But since being good entails being an end or completion, being good cannot be derived from the essence of pleasure. So no pleasure in itself is a good thing.

Turning now to the second clause of A, I presume Aristotle's grounds for asserting this claim are as follows. If the essence of a kind excludes a given property, then instances of that kind cannot, even incidentally, have that property. Assume then that pleasure essentially is a genesis. Being a genesis excludes being an end or completion. So being an end or completion is incompatible with being a pleasure. But since being good entails being an end or completion, being a pleasure is incompatible with being good.

## **5. The anti-hedonist position in *Philebus***

Given these results, I now turn to the passage in *Philebus* that seems to be Aristotle's primary source for his presentation of the anti-hedonist position:

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"(So:) Let us consider these other two things ... One is a genesis (γένεσις) of all things; the other is a being (οὐσία) ... And which of these is for the sake of the other? Is genesis for the sake of being, or is being for the sake of genesis? (Pr:) ... By the gods, is this the kind of question you keep asking me ... whether shipbuilding is for the sake of ships, or ships for the sake of shipbuilding – and everything of that sort? (So:) Yes, I mean that very thing, Protarchus. (Pr:) Then why don't you answer the question yourself? (So:) There is no reason why I shouldn't ... I claim that ... each genesis (γένεσις) is for the sake of each being (οὐσία) ... Then pleasure, if in fact it is a genesis (γένεσις), necessarily would come to be for the sake of some being (οὐσία) ... Now that for the sake of which anything that comes to be comes to be would be in the lot of the good ... Then if pleasure is in fact a genesis, we will be correct in placing it in a different lot from the lot of the good? (Pr:) Most correct. (So:) Then ... we ought to be grateful to him who observed that in the case of pleasure there is genesis and no being whatsoever. For clearly he is deriding those who say that pleasure is a good thing ... And he will also surely deride each of those who pursue their ends (ἀποτελουμένων) in geneses." (*Phlb.* 54a-e)

Here I draw your attention to two features of this passage that are distinct from Aristotle's presentation in *Eudemian Ethics*. One is Socrates' use of the term "οὐσία" in opposition to "γένεσις." Socrates expressly uses "οὐσία" to denote that for the sake of which genesis occurs. So in the *Philebus* passage οὐσία plays a role analogous to the roles of both φύσις (nature) and τέλος (end or completion) as Aristotle uses these terms in R. Recall that in R it is said that pleasure is a genesis toward a nature, and it is said that no genesis is of the same kind as its ends.

This raises the question why Aristotle does not use "οὐσία" in R. The answer, I suggest, is that given Aristotle's heavy personal investment in the metaphysical idea that primary substances are particulars, not kinds, he prefers not to use the term "οὐσία" to denote a kind. I take this suggestion to be corroborated by the fact that the term "οὐσία," which occurs only three times in *Eudemian Ethics*, in each case precisely has the sense of primary substance.<sup>8</sup>

A second feature of the *Philebus* passage that is distinct from Aristotle's presentation in *Eudemian Ethics* is that Socrates is presenting an argument for a thesis simpler than A, namely:

P. No pleasure is a good thing.

As Socrates says, the defender of the argument in question is "deriding those who say that pleasure is a good thing." In short the Platonic argument lacks any distinction between pleasure in itself being a good thing and pleasure incidentally being a good thing.

Assuming – as I will continue to assume – that Aristotle's report is a report of the Platonic argument, it appears that Aristotle mischaracterizes the Platonic

position precisely by his addition of the adverbial phrases. Given this, I will now consider to what extent these distinctions are in fact applicable to the Platonic argument.

First, a general point— in the argument in *Philebus* the predicate "good" ("ἀγαθόν") must be read as I've suggested Aristotle does read it in A, namely as entailing completion both in the κατὰ συμβεβηκός clause and in the καθ' αὐτό clause. This is clear because the alternative reading, that is, the reading of  $A_{pred}$ , and more precisely still the reading of  $A_{pred}$  in the κατὰ συμβεβηκός clause entails that no pleasure could be productive of what is complete. But clearly pleasure qua genesis is productive of what is complete.

Granted this, again our present question is to what extent the adverbial modifiers in A are applicable to the Platonic argument. Here again it is useful to take the two clauses of A separately. I begin with the first, once again:

A<sub>1</sub>. No pleasure in itself is a good thing.

Insofar as the genus of a thing is a constituent of its Aristotelian essence, the Platonic argument is loosely consistent with this first clause of A. Precisely, if the essence of a thing is genesis, then that thing cannot, at least in virtue of its essence, belong to the kind end or completion. The consistency is however merely loose, for Plato is not committed to Aristotle's theory of essence in terms of genus and differentia.

To be sure, in *Philebus* Socrates does maintain that pleasure belongs to the γένος genesis.<sup>9</sup> But Socrates' use of γένος there is more vague than the sense in which Aristotle uses that term to denote a constituent of an essence. For Aristotle the genus that is a constituent of an essence is precisely a secondary substance relative to the *definiendum*, not a tertiary substance or some more abstract or vague kind. So again the Platonic argument is *loosely consistent* with the first clause of A. And the Aristotelian terms operative in the first clause of A are not terms that strictly speaking Plato recognizes.

I turn to the second clause of A, once again:

A<sub>2</sub>. No pleasure incidentally is a good thing.

Here too we have a problem of terminology and conceptualization. In particular if Plato does not recognize the Aristotelian essence of thing, he cannot recognize properties compatible with, though not derivative of that essence. Note also that the phrase "κατὰ συμβεβηκός" — which occurs only twice in the Platonic corpus, both instances in *Apology* — is never employed in the philosophical sense in which Aristotle employs it.

Granted this, the second clause of A presents a further and distinct problem. Textual evidence from elsewhere in *Philebus* seems at odds with the claim that the clause asserts. The textual evidence I have in mind derives especially from two passages late in the dialogue.<sup>10</sup> In one of the passages Socrates admits two kinds of



pleasure as constituents of the good life for humans. One kind consists of so-called necessary pleasures. These include such pleasures as those involved in eating and drinking, genetic processes without which human life would not be possible at all. The other kind consists of so-called pure pleasures. These include pleasures associated with beautiful sights and sounds as well as activities of learning. Evidently Socrates does not take these pleasures to be necessary for human life – although without them human existence would obviously be a pretty dull and rudimentary affair. At any rate, what makes the pleasures pure is that although, like all pleasures they remediate lacks, defects, or disintegrations, the lacks, defects, or disintegrations that they remediate are too slight or gradual to be felt as painful. Consequently pure pleasures are pure because they are not preceded by pain.

Now, insofar as necessary and pure pleasures are constituents of the good human life, this might provide a reason to think that Socrates views them as good things. In fact I think this inference is controversial. But in any case, Socrates explicitly does include at least pure pleasures within his final ranking of goods. Although pure pleasures are there awarded a distant fifth place, I take it that the award compels the conclusion that Socrates is committed to the following view:

D. Some pleasures are good things.

D therefore appears to contradict the second clause of A, again, the thesis that no pleasure incidentally is a good thing. So do pure pleasures in fact constitute a counter-example to that thesis? And is Socrates being inconsistent?

Here I want to suggest an alternative interpretation. I underscore that the following interpretation saddles Socrates with a more serious problem. Nonetheless I take the interpretation to accurately represent the commitments of the text. The suggestion is that Socrates' inclusion of pure pleasures within his final ranking of goods and thereby his commitment to the thesis that some pleasures are good (D) involves a conception of the good that differs from the conception of the good operative both in the thesis that no pleasure in itself or incidentally is good (A) and in its simpler Platonic version that no pleasure is good (P). As I will explain, the concept of the good in D and the concept of the good in A and P are both gradable concepts. However, they are gradable concepts of different kinds.

If pure pleasures are good, but less good than four other kinds of good things, then clearly the operative concept of the good is a gradable one. But consider the concept of the good entailing completion, which is the concept operative in both A and P. Something can be more or less complete. So it can fail to be complete, but still to varying degrees approximate completion. So completion is a gradable concept of a kind. But granted this, something that merely approximates completion does not belong in the category of things that are complete. Consequently, in including pure pleasures in his list of goods, albeit in fifth place, Socrates must – for better or worse – be employing a different conception of the good than the one he employed in his earlier anti-hedonist argument. In short, in the anti-hedonist argument Socrates denies that pleasure

can be good on the grounds that pleasure is not complete; but in the final ranking he includes pure pleasures as good, despite the fact that they are not complete. So again, I suggest, Socrates is operating with two conceptions of the good. And since Socrates operates with two conceptions of the good, his view that some pleasures are good (D) actually remains consistent with the view that no pleasure incidentally is good (A<sub>2</sub>). Granted that this second clause of A is consistent with the position advanced in *Philebus*, clearly it does not faithfully reflect the position advanced in *Philebus*.

## **6. Conclusion**

Aristotle's report at *Eudemian Ethics* 6.11 succinctly and perspicuously draws our attention to what I regard as a central anti-hedonist argument in Plato. The argument is a metaphysical one. As Aristotle reports it, pleasure belongs to one metaphysical kind, the kind genesis; the good belongs to a different metaphysical kind, the kind end or completion. So the anti-hedonist position boils down to the following metaphysical claim: hedonism involves a category mistake.<sup>11</sup> Recall Aristotle's statement in R: no genesis is of the same kind (συγγενής) as its ends.

I maintain that Aristotle's report derives from Plato's *Philebus*. But, as we have seen, while A and R are at least loosely consistent with the position advanced in Plato's *Philebus*, Aristotle's report includes terminology and concepts that are his own, that are not faithful to the Platonic position, and that in some respects are quite misleading.

There are many additional considerations pertaining to Plato's basic metaphysical argument against hedonism and Aristotle's presentation of it in *Eudemian Ethics* that could be pursued. I will conclude my discussion by raising three issues that have troubled me but that I have not had time to examine here.

First, I wonder why Plato regards pleasure as a genesis. To be sure, genesis is a necessary and in some sense central constituent of pleasure, as Plato conceives it. But the psychological component is a necessary constituent as well. My question then is: in virtue of what is Plato entitled regard pleasure as belonging to the kind genesis as opposed to, say, the kind psychological state? To appreciate this point, consider the following example: Is the visual perception of a genetic process itself a genetic process? That seems wrong.<sup>12</sup>

Second, recall the psychological property of the good that Socrates introduces: that it is desired and pursued by all things that have some cognition of it. Observe that this thesis seems to present a fundamental problem for the anti-hedonist argument. Precisely the desire and pursuit of pleasure seem to be very widespread among all creatures that have some cognition of it. Indeed Aristotle and others exploit this point in defense of hedonism. So Socrates will need to show that those creatures that desire and pursue pleasure do so only because they desire and pursue the completions toward which pleasures tend.

Third and finally, recall Aristotle's claim in R: pleasure belongs to the kind genesis, but genesis is not the same kind of thing as its ends. My question here concerns the relation between goods and ends. In R it seems that the relation is understood as of goods belonging to the kind end. But in Plato it seems that, if anything, the reverse is true. Generally speaking, the good is the superordinate kind. If so, the difference seems to reflect a deep division between Plato and Aristotle. Granted this, but focusing more narrowly on the anti-hedonist position, what bearing does the division have on Aristotle's presentation of the Platonic argument?

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<sup>1</sup> Here are two passages from *Philebus* that illustrative of these claims: "Have we not heard it said that pleasure is always a genesis (γένεσις), and that there is no being (οὐσία) of pleasure whatsoever? For there are certain clever people who endeavor to disclose this position to us, and we ought to be grateful to them." (*Phlb.* 53c4-6) "We have agreed that when we undergo constitution (καθιστῆται) toward our nature (εἰς τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν), this constituting process (κατάστασιν) is pleasure." (*Phlb.* 42d5-7) Cp. the following passage from *Timaeus*: "pleasures [occur] when [bodies alienated from their positions] undergo constitution (καθιστάμενα) back to the same condition (εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ πάλιν)." (64e6-65a1)

<sup>2</sup> The relation between the genetic process and the experiential event is contingent. Certain properties must obtain for the process and psychological event to co-occur. For example the genetic process must have a certain rapidity and a certain magnitude. A genetic process that is too gradual or too slight will not register psychologically; and so in such cases pleasure does not occur. Hereafter I will ignore these additional considerations, although I underscore that Plato spends considerable time exploring them.

<sup>3</sup> "(So:) Is it necessarily the lot of the good to be perfect (τέλειον) or not perfect? (Pr:) I suppose it is the most perfect (τελεώτατον) thing of all. (So:) What about this – is the good sufficient? (Pr:) How could it be otherwise? In fact it surpasses all beings in this respect." (*Phlb* 20c-d)

<sup>4</sup> For example later in the dialogue Socrates conjoins these metaphysical properties when he claims that the good is "most completely sufficient" (ικανον τελεώτατον). (*Phlb.* 60c)

<sup>5</sup> *Metaph.* 1091b14.

<sup>6</sup> Compare now Socrates' remark in *Philebus*, where toward the end of the dialogue he is expressly describing the good itself. He says that "neither [mind nor pleasure] is the good itself (τάγαθὸν αὐτὸ) since each lacks self-determination (αὐταρκεία), sufficiency, and completion." (67a) The addition of self-determination here seems to me crucially to distinguish the good itself from the good in other things, insofar as the good in other things is not self-determined, but dependent on the good itself. I acknowledge that this claim also raises a question about the sense in which a non-fundamental good is sufficient. But for convenience I ignore this point here. Perhaps the solution is that there are different kinds of dependency. In the case of

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sufficiency, the dependence is on entities that are, so to speak, metaphysically on a par. For example mind requires cognitive content.

<sup>7</sup> *EN* 1096b?

<sup>8</sup> *EE* 1217b30, 1219b36, 1222b16.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. *Phlb.* 31a5, 44e7.

<sup>10</sup> Although cp. also *Phlb.* 32d.

<sup>11</sup> To be sure, hedonism requires a stronger thesis than that pleasure is a good thing. It requires something like: pleasure is the only good thing. But anti-hedonism follows from the thesis that no pleasure is a good thing.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the explanation is that in the case of pleasure, the genetic process belongs to the perceiver. In other words, it is precisely the difference between proprioception and exteroception that supports Plato's identification of pleasure as a genesis. But visual perception of one's arm flailing does not thereby entail that one's visual perception belongs to the kind flailing.