
Plato's Hedonism

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III.—PLATO'S HEDONISM.¹

I.

The doctrine of hedonism is in bad odor. It is a little strange, however, that any of that bad odor should attach to Plato, from whom we get our first clear statement of a doctrine to which one might apply that name. Even people who read Plato himself, and not a translation or betrayal of him, have read him carelessly. That is indeed easy to do. Although most of his pages are clear as daylight, and notably so the great and inspiring pages that ring like an anticipation of Christianity—which are at least in harmony with the highest ethics of Christianity—yet sometimes, at critical points, he delights in an unexpected turn which the unwary or the unsympathetic might mistake. And on this one point even good Platonists have gone astray, attributing to him at an early stage of his philosophic life a doctrine which they agree that he soon rose above. But in fact he never held any doctrine that we nowadays call hedonism. Only a superficial reader can find it in the Protagoras, where alone any hint of it is found. Whatever later hedonism may be, Plato's brand of it is a fine declaration, in the peculiar manner of the Platonic Sokrates—probably of the historic Sokrates as well—of Plato's faith in the high origin and high destiny of man. It is worth while to make this clear. Those who have really understood Plato have had no doubt about it.

First we have to examine those passages of the Protagoras that equate the pleasant with the good. The starting-point is the place (351c) where Sokrates asks, "In so far as things are pleasant (*ῥῆδέα*), are they not in so far good, unless something else results from them? In like manner, conversely, painful things—are they not bad in so far as they are painful?" To which Protagoras makes the fine reply which shows that Plato was well aware how open to misunderstanding the doctrine is, "I do not know, Sokrates, whether I can venture to assert in that unqualified manner that the pleasant is good and the painful

¹ Owing to the author's untimely death, this paper did not have the benefit of his final revision.—Ed.

evil. Having regard not only to my present answer but also to my whole life, I shall be safer, if I am not mistaken, in saying that there are some pleasant things which are not good, and some painful things which are not evil, and that there are some which are neither good nor evil." The Platonic Protagoras, no less than the Platonic Sokrates, is the mouthpiece of Plato. He is here warning us to observe accurately his distinctions and qualifications and exact use of terms. This is emphasized in what follows. Pleasure in itself, he explains, is not evil, but good. When pleasant things are evil, they are so because they are found to result in pain of one kind or another, like disease or poverty, or to deprive of pleasure. So also when painful things are good, like military campaigns or the cutting and cautery of the surgeon, they are so because they result in pleasure that surpasses the pain, or because they at least remove or lessen the pain.

If now the analysis went no farther than this it would be superficial enough. But this is only the beginning. And before taking up the farther and more penetrating steps in the analysis we must remind ourselves that the Protagoras is an early composition. Not only the *Philebus* is many years in the future, and its keen discussion of pleasure undreamt of, but the *Republic* and the *Gorgias* are unwritten. We shall have to consider later whether the doctrines there developed invalidate or withdraw positions taken in the Protagoras. But for the present those dialogues are non-existent; we are concerned with the Protagoras alone. And we must farther note in what sense Plato is employing here the terms pleasure and pain, especially the former.

To come at once to the point, the context makes it quite clear that he is using these terms in their widest possible application, expressly including the highest kind of pleasure and purely spiritual pain. This is placed beyond question by the synonyms and the illustrations employed. Prodikos, it is true, is made (in 337c) to insist on distinguishing *ἡδεσθαι* from *εὐφραίνεσθαι*, applying the latter to the mental and moral pleasures, restricting the former to pleasures of the senses. And this falls in with an unmistakable tendency of usage. Only, like other pedants, Prodikos would make a hard and fast rule of what is in fact only a tendency, that never submits to restriction. Sokrates treats Prodikos with great formal respect, here and in allusions to him in other dialogues, in spite of his good-natured irony and

his little traps for the famous teacher's foibles. There was indeed a basis for his repeated claims that he was a grateful pupil of Prodikos, who laid great stress on the accurate distinction of synonyms. That this easily ran into pedantry, as it does nowadays, does not alter the fact that it was right in line with the Sokratic insistence on definition. Discrimination in the use of terms is one phase of the same principle. But it is a superficial phase, touching only words, the conventional signs. Plato and Sokrates went below the outward signs to realities. To emphasize this, to make manifest that what they care for is the thought, Plato is fond of using in close connection many synonyms, all that are available, to put his meaning in all its breadth beyond dispute. Any of these terms will serve, he intimates, and often says: I am not insisting on a word, but on the thing itself which we designate, according to circumstances, by all these terms.

So here. The ordinary word for pleasure in the broadest sense is *ἡδονή*, for 'pleasant' is *ἡδύς*; the verb is *ἡδεσθαι*, 'be pleased.' But *χαίρειν* 'rejoice' is a synonym in 354cd:—"Since even *τὸ χαίρειν* you call evil when it deprives of greater pleasure than it affords, or causes greater pains than its own pleasures. If you call *τὸ χαίρειν* itself evil on any other standard and with a view to any other end, you could point out that standard; but that you cannot do." But *χαίρειν*, like our equivalent 'rejoice,' though very broad in its range, distinctly suggests an emotional or mental state, not one of the body. Again in 358a *χαρτόν* 'joyful' and *τερπνόν* 'delightful' are synonyms for *ἡδύς*: "You agree then that the pleasant is good, the painful (*ἀναπόν*) bad. And I beg our friend Prodikos not to make here his distinctions of words; whether you call it *ἡδύς* or *τερπνόν* or *χαρτόν*, or however you are pleased (*χαίρεις*) to name such things, most excellent Prodikos, please answer in my sense of the words." Nothing could more clearly indicate refusal to allow any narrowing of that wide range of meaning which the words accept and his doctrine demands. Nor need we go beyond the same composition for uses of the suspected root *ἡδ-* in the wider sense. When Sokrates and his young friend arrived at the house of Kallias, Sokrates says: "It was delightful to see (*ἡσθην ἰδών*) this band, how beautifully they took care, like a trained chorus, never to get in front of

Protagoras." In 347b occurs the ordinary polite formula, "I leave to Protagoras whichever is more agreeable to him (*ἥδιον*); and two lines below, "I should like to finish (*ἡδέως ἂν ἐπὶ τέλος ἔλθοιμι*) the investigation along with you." This is of course ordinary Greek usage.

And we may recall here the striking passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1151 b 18 ff.) where Aristotle also employs *ἡδονή* in its best sense. "Some people," he says, "fail to abide by a resolution for other reasons than lack of moral force (*οὐ δι' ἀκρασίαν*), as Neoptolemos in the *Philoktetes* of Sophokles. Yet it was pleasure that led him to change (*δι' ἡδονὴν οὐκ ἐνέμεινεν*), but a noble pleasure (*ἀλλὰ καλήν*). His sense of honor bade him remain true; he had been persuaded by Odysseus to be false. Not every one who is impelled by pleasure to an action is either wanton or bad or lacking in self-control, but he who is impelled by an unseemly pleasure." The phrasing is of Aristotelian conciseness. Neoptolemos, he means, could not endure the spiritual pain involved in retaining the bow of Herakles, obtained from the trusting Philoktetes by lies, and in violating his promise to take the sufferer home. He chose rather to break his previous resolution, restore the bow, keep his promise to take Philoktetes home, brave the anger of Odysseus and the whole Greek army, resign all ambition and the hope of rivaling the fame of his father Achilles, and return quietly to an inglorious life in his little island. The pleasure of remaining true, of keeping his honor clean, outweighed all else. That was a kind of pleasure that Plato expressly included under *ἡδονή*. The Aristotelian author of the seventh book of the *Ethics* even uses *ἡδονή* of God. "Wherefore," he says, "God ever enjoys a *ἡδονή* that is one and simple (*μίαν καὶ ἀπλήν*, VII, 14, 8).

The illustrations of Plato's argument point the same way. Surgical operations, before anesthetics were known, were the readiest examples of pains endured, and chosen as good, because they were expected to restore health, or at least relieve pain and avert suffering. In such cases we have to do primarily with pains and pleasure of a bodily nature. Gymnastic training in general is largely in the same class, but not altogether. It looks also, in Greek practise especially, toward efficient service in war, where the pains and deprivations are bodily and the satisfactions and pleasures mainly of another sort. In the passage where

these are grouped with medical treatment and surgery and hunger-cures (354ab) the compensating pleasures include not only health, but also, from war, the safety of states, rule over others, and wealth. Now, however we may look upon wealth—individual or national—and rule over others as examples of satisfactions resulting from painful military service, the defense of one's country cannot be classed as ignoble. The satisfaction of knowing that one's efforts and deprivations have contributed to its safety is recognized as one of the purest. When Plato includes that as one of the pleasures that make pain a good, no one can fancy that his notion of pleasure is low. When taken with the context, it is clear that—though self-sacrifice became a common term only under Christianity—Plato includes also the high moral pleasure of feeling that life is sacrificed for others, even if life is lost in an attempt that fails. So Demosthenes two generations later carried his Athenian jury with him, when he declared that Athens could not have done otherwise had they all known beforehand that in the struggle for freedom they would be defeated. The satisfaction of having made the struggle outweighed even the pains of defeat.

Finally we reach, near the close of the discussion (in 360a) a broad generalization. It has been agreed that what is honorable or beautiful (*καλόν*) is also good, that *καλαὶ πράξεις* are all good. It is now further agreed that whatever is honorable and good is also pleasant (*ἡδύ*). That is a seemingly easy step in the argument, but one which carries with it an assertion of profound significance. If whatever is morally good is intrinsically pleasant to normal human nature, then that nature is intrinsically good. Plato holds firmly from beginning to end that the human soul is by nature good and greets all good as akin to itself. The immediate application at this point of the dialogue is this: The brave man going into war, when that is an honorable and good action, knows that he is going to what is fairer and better and also pleasanter. The pleasure involved can be only of the highest and finest moral kind, the satisfaction of what we call doing one's duty—enduring hardship, risking and losing life, for one's country. To complete the argument here we must take up another side of the matter. At the present moment this, however, is clear, that whatever Plato's hedonism may be, it does not involve any low conception of *ἡδονή*.

II.

During much of the composition Sokrates is maintaining that the virtues reduce mainly to an intellectual principle, to different applications of knowledge. We are not concerned for the moment to defend that thesis in its full extent, but only to show its relation to Platonic hedonism, that we may better understand the latter. It is a fact of life, Sokrates maintains, that men in general pursue pleasure as good—pleasure undefined and unanalyzed, but taken in the broadest sense—and shun pain, equally undefined and unanalyzed, but taken not less broadly, as evil. Men estimate actions by their results in pleasures and pains of all sorts. According to the preponderance of one or the other, actions are classed as good or bad, that is, treated as normal or unsound. In the Republic also Sokrates argues (357b) that anything is good which we should choose for its own sake and not out of desire for results to flow from it, as τὸ χαίρειν and pleasures that are harmless and give rise to nothing else in the future except χαίρειν. Again (Rep. 505b) Sokrates says, “But surely you know this, that most people regard pleasure, the more pretentious regard intelligence (φρόνησις), as the good.” Here we have a plain suggestion of the dispute which is the starting-point of the Philebus, but we have also a reiteration of the statement that pleasure, to the mass of mankind, is the standard of the good. As a practical rule of life, therefore, we may say Sokrates admits, at least does not treat as unreasonable, that popular standard.

One application of it is political utilitarianism, the greatest good of the greatest number as a standard of political action. This is an application, however, which Plato nowhere makes. What we now call egoistic hedonism, enlightened choice of what will in the end be for one’s own advantage, is another application, which again Plato does not make, and which involves a subtle distortion of Plato’s meaning. For both of these applications, as they have been adopted and advocated, inevitably lay the main stress on material advantages, on the good of the body. The name utilitarianism distinctly implies that. As a principle of political action, if we confine the sphere of the state to this life, as most of us do, utilitarianism may be defended as a good

practical rule. It is only as a standard of morality that the bad repute of hedonism attaches to it. Now when we admit that Sokrates accepts pleasure and pain as the measure of good and evil in morals, we must, if we would avoid gross injustice, attend carefully to the farther development of what Plato means in the Protagoras by pleasure and pain. Nowhere more than in Plato do we need to observe the exact form and setting of words.

What do men mean when they say that one does evil knowingly, because overcome by a desire for pleasure? It is in analyzing this case that Sokrates develops his idea that the virtues are forms of knowledge. Admitting that the preliminaries of his analysis are long and repetitious he says (354e and following): "Pardon me; in the first place, it isn't easy to show just what that is which you call being overcome by pleasure, and, secondly, all my demonstration rests on that. If you accept pleasure and pain as good and evil respectively, then I say it is ridiculous to assert that often, while recognizing evils as evils, one nevertheless does them, when it is in one's power to refrain, because impelled by pleasure; and again, that while recognizing the good the man is unwilling to do it because overcome by the immediate pleasure." To make this plain he substitutes good for pleasure in the one formula and painful for bad in the other. The former then becomes: One does evil, while recognizing the evil, because overcome by good. That can have no meaning but this, that one chooses evil, recognizing the evil, because of good connected with it, quite oblivious of the fact that the good which attracted is less than the evil which was recognized. Similarly the other formula becomes: One does painful things, recognizing that they are painful, because overcome by the pleasant things therewith connected, not recognizing that the pleasures are outweighed by the pains. Parenthetically it should be noted that the word I render "while recognizing" is *γινώσκων*, the present participle, in the place of greatest emphasis. That lays stress on the contemporaneousness of intellectual perception with the act of choice; this has a bearing on the Sokratic doctrine of virtue as a form of knowledge.

Now when the formulas are put in these terms it becomes clear that the wrong choice is made because one misjudges amounts and degrees of pleasures and pains. What one needs therefore is the ability to measure such things rightly. The

metaphor ignores differences of kind; the whole discussion leaves those differences unnamed. This can only be intentional; no one was more conscious of those differences than Plato, and the immeasurable difference in kind between pleasures of the body and the moral and spiritual satisfaction is plainly in his mind all the while, not a whit less than in the *Gorgias*. But for the moment he seems to reduce all sorts of pleasures and pains to a purely quantitative standard. His art of measuring (*μετρητική*), on which depends all our safety and happiness, is the power of recognizing, under all disguises and all illusions of sense, the true and permanent values in the realm of pleasures and pains. To one who has this art in perfection a pleasure near at hand will not, because it is near and therefore looks larger, be taken as larger, a pain or pleasure that is far in the future will not therefore be deemed less.

Why, one asks, did Plato here ignore those differences of kind which were as plain to him as to us? The answer, I think, is twofold, and has been partly suggested. First, the unity of class implied in the common class-names, is a reality of human feeling, in which language is rooted. Beauty offers a parallel case. We speak of a beautiful face or a beautiful landscape, and also of beautiful music and beautiful character. We recognize a fundamental likeness in spite of the differences in kind of beauty, which are in fact as wide as the differences in the kinds of pleasure. Language was made by ordinary people and corresponds to popular psychology. Plato is for the moment accepting the ordinary view as embodied in common speech. The word pleasure designates the feeling with which human nature, body or soul or both combined, welcomes what satisfies a need or desire. The range of the word is wide because body and soul are unlike and each has many needs and desires. Besides, both are liable to aberrations. We may say truly enough that the aberrations are themselves natural, disturbances to which our infinitely complex nature is prone; but we still regard them as aberrations, departures from a condition that we recognize as more fundamentally natural and normal—a condition of health, bodily or spiritual. Pleasures that correspond to conditions of health are alone good, and are by themselves of endless variety.

Von Arnim is of opinion (Platos *Jugenddialoge*, pp. 13 f.)

that the entire hedonistic theory as here set forth is taken from some other philosopher, and the "art of measurement" is Plato's addition, made with a satirical aim, to reveal the hollowness of the theory. But von Arnim cannot name the philosopher, even by conjecture; and he overlooks the passage from the Republic (505b) before cited, which attributes the theory to the general public, "most people," not to a philosopher or a school. Does it not satisfy all the conditions better to suppose that Plato here accepts the popular view for the express purpose of giving it an unexpected turn? A certain irony, of the genuine Sokratic kind, is unmistakable; to speak of it as satirical, aimed at an opposing philosopher, is beyond the mark. Secondly, the unity of class embodied in the class-name, pleasure, corresponds, I venture to believe, to the facts of our ordinary life. We do not, in making the choice we call moral, consciously say to ourselves, "This pleasure is of a higher kind than that, and therefore I choose it." Surely in all but extraordinary cases what one feels is simply, "This pleasure is the one I prefer," or, "This pain is the greater; better the other." To speak even of magnitude or number is figurative; preference is all one thinks of. The art of measurement is a purely figurative expression; it is the art of making the right choice; there is no real weighing or counting or measuring. States of feeling—acts regarded as leading to states of feeling—are the sole objects of moral choice. Whether these be bodily sensations, whatever those are, or psychic states, whatever those are, we cannot literally weigh or measure or count them. I cannot believe that Plato thought we do. But the figure is accurate enough for the purpose, fairly descriptive of what we actually do—choose, with little or no reference to differences of kind.

Similarly Aristotle (Ethics 1105a 3 ff.) says *κανονίζομεν δὲ καὶ τὰς πράξεις, οἱ μὲν μᾶλλον, οἱ δ' ἧττον, ἡδονῇ καὶ λύπῃ*, 'We regulate our actions, some of us more and some less, by pleasure and pain.' This cool and dispassionate observer of life agrees with Plato, the philosophical enthusiast, in representing this as the ordinary practise of humanity. That is why, he says, his whole treatise is concerned with pleasures and pains. People need to be habituated from childhood to make good choices; then gradually they may come to understand why the choices

prescribed are good, and may find their pleasure there. Nor is it in essence untrue to fact to describe making a wrong choice in Plato's terms. At the moment of choosing one estimates wrongly in pleasures and pains the consequences of the act. No one, says Sokrates, while recognizing (*γινώσκων*) the truth, chooses evil—that is, pain—when he may choose pleasure—that is the good. The wrong choice proceeds from a failure to recognize, at the moment of choosing, the facts. That is assuredly a form of ignorance or *ἀμαθία*. At best it is forgetting, under the influence of emotion, what one had previously learned. It is like the schoolboy, who knows it, but has forgotten. And to forget is to lose, for the moment at least, what one previously knew. As Plato puts it in the *Phædo* (75d), "To know is this, to get knowledge of something and then hold it and not have lost it. Isn't what we call forgetting loss of knowledge?" What is needed is the power to hold, without an instant's failure of perception, what one clearly perceived before this present disturbance of mental vision came on.

Now we all recognize that this form of moral ignorance or forgetting has something peculiar about it, something that differentiates it from purely intellectual, unemotional ignorance or forgetting. The Sokratic description of it is paradoxical—contrary to our common feeling and common use of the words. Therein lies the piquancy of it, the Sokratic sting, that stimulates thought. And Plato clearly recognizes that the knowledge needed for right choice, this art of measurement, is a peculiar art and knowledge. "What this art is and this knowledge," he says in 357b, "we will examine another time." He thus admits that farther elucidation is needed; the method of learning and teaching this kind of knowledge is not so simple as for geometry. Later in life, in the discussion of education in the *Laws*, he recognizes, as clearly as Aristotle after him, the importance of habituation for this purpose. In the *Timæus* too (86de) he speaks of incontinence in sensual pleasures as a disease of the soul arising from a condition of the body. "No one is willingly wicked, but it is owing to a bad condition of the body and unenlightened nurture that the wicked man becomes wicked, and these are always unwelcome and imposed against his will." After a few words about other ways in which the soul derives

evil from the body, with the farther influence of bad government and bad public example and the lack of curative studies in early life, he adds (87b): "The blame must lie rather with the progenitors than with the progeny, with the educator rather than the educated; however, we must use our utmost zeal by nurture, by pursuits, and by studies, to shun vice and embrace the opposite. This subject belongs, however, to a different branch of inquiry." In the Protagoras itself, however, we find nothing distinct on this point, beyond the admission that farther analysis is needed.

But when he proceeds to describe courage as the knowledge of what is really to be feared and what is not, we see that he fully comprehends the complexity of his "art of measurement." What action in the face of danger really yields the greatest pleasure, the least pain? The coward thinks of death as the worst of evils, depriving one of all the pleasures of life; he fails to estimate at its true value the immeasurably greater happiness that a noble death may yield. The brave man knows that the moral satisfaction of fighting for one's country in a righteous cause is a pleasure that far outweighs the pains of war, including wounds and death, and even defeat of the righteous cause for which he dies. This "art of measurement turns out to be nothing less than acceptance into one's being, complete and unswerving acceptance, of one's place in the kosmos, as Plato conceived that kosmos." Plato's "art of measurement" therefore rests upon the tacit assumption of doctrines that are expressly developed in the Phædo, Republic, Phædrus, and Timæus. For him soul is immortal, the human soul a portion of the world-soul—"of no earthly, but of heavenly growth" (Tim. 90a). All nature is akin; the All is one, the self-evolution of Eternal Mind, who is absolute Good. Being thus divine by nature, the soul welcomes the good, the divine, as its native element, and by nature aspires to the best. "We must needs love the highest when we see it." It is indeed capable, through wrong choices, joined as it is with an earthly body, of falling to a lower scale, of "losing its wings" and ceasing to aspire. But that is unhappiness, is contrary to its nature, is its worst pain. Its greatest pleasure is in choosing the best, in likening itself to God, so far as it can, by becoming *δίκαιον καὶ ὄσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως* (Theæt. 176b). That "art of measurement" consists in recognizing constantly, in never forgetting, this fact of the soul's nature, and in living most fully

in accordance therewith. From beginning to end, as I said, this is the basis of Plato's ethical doctrine.

The hedonism of the Protagoras is unintelligible, self-contradictory, unless we assume this underlying belief. Taking a popular principle of action, a principle which may be applied ignobly, and is often so applied, by restricting the range of *ἡδονή* to lower meanings, Plato, by bringing forward that higher meaning and adding his doctrine of measurement, lifts the principle out of itself and transforms it. The Sokratic paradox, easily misunderstood by the careless, becomes to an alert mind a keen moral spur.

III.

What now shall we do with apparent contradictions, in the Gorgias and elsewhere? They are only apparent and vanish when we attend to the meaning of *ἡδονή*, and note for each passage the range to which it is restricted by the context.

The case is clearest in Tim. 69cd; I quote in Archer-Hind's translation substantially. "God wrought this universe, a single living creature containing within itself all living creatures, mortal and immortal, that exist. And of the divine he himself was the creator; but the creation of mortals he delivered over to his own children to work out. And they, in imitation of him, having received from him the immortal principle of soul (*ἀρχὴν ψυχῆς ἀθάνατον*), fashioned round about her a mortal body and gave her all the body to ride in (*ὄχημα*); and beside her they built in another kind of soul, even that which is mortal, having within itself dread and inevitable passions (*δεινὰ καὶ ἀναγκαῖα παθήματα*)—first pleasure, the strongest allurements of evil (*μέγιστον κακοῦ δέλεαρ*), next pains that scare good things away (*ἀγαθῶν φυγὰς*); confidence moreover and fear, a yoke of thoughtless counselors (*ἄφρονε ξυμβούλω*); wrath hard to assuage (*θυμὸν δυσπαραμύθητον*) and hope that lightly leads astray; and having mingled all these perforce with reasonless sensation and passion that ventures all things (*ἐπιχειρητῆ παντὸς ἔρωτι*), so they fashioned the mortal soul." That is, pleasure which is "the strongest bait of evil" is expressly regarded, along with *θυμός*, *θάρος*, *φόβος*, *ἐλπίς*, and *ἔρως*, as part of the animal soul, the life of the body, mortal like the body, and distinct from the immortal principle of soul, *ἀρχὴ ψυχῆς ἀθάνατος*; their very dwelling-places

in the body, as he goes on to explain, are distinct. This mortal *ἡδονή* of the body has nothing in common, except that analogy which justifies the common name, with the immortal *ἡδονή* which chooses death of the body rather than alienation from those realities that have charmed the soul in our earlier existence, before incarnation.

In the *Gorgias* one arrives at the same result, only by a longer road—by following our word *ἡδονή* through several pages. And the starting-point is important, as every word gets its atmosphere, its range of meaning, from what has preceded. The dialogue begins with a discussion of the nature and power of rhetoric. This is found to lie in persuasion, wholly apart from instruction—wholly apart, that is, from knowledge, and without reference to right and wrong. Laudation of rhetoric is therefore laudation of power without reference to the moral nature of the means employed in acquiring or exerting power; it is praise of worldly success, though gained by injustice. Polos maintains that successful injustice which escapes punishment is happiness and true success. That leads Sokrates to prove that to commit injustice is worse, for him who does it, than to suffer injustice; that to be punished for injustice committed is better for him who is punished than to escape punishment; that the most wretched of men is he who has gained power wrongfully and escaped all punishment therefor. Being a wrongdoer is the great damage to the soul; taking due punishment for wrongdoing tends to free the soul from this hurt and restore the suffering soul to health. This unexpected conclusion, with its applications, excites the derision of Kallikles. In a long discourse he makes much of the distinction between nature and conventional law. Natural justice, in his view, dictates that the strong should rule; as to the strong man's ruling himself, he who is to live rightly should let his own desires (*ἐπιθυμίαι*) be as strong as possible and should be himself competent to satisfy them to the utmost (491e).

Here is the starting-point of a discussion of pleasure. It is because the mass of men are unable to procure satisfaction for their desires—that is, to procure pleasures—that they praise justice and self-control; entire freedom from self-control, if coupled with power, is by nature excellence (*ἀρετή*) and happi-

ness. There can be no doubt about the kind of ἡδοναί Kallikles is praising. These are the pleasures that henceforth are under discussion. When (in 495d) the position of Kallikles is summarized in the principle that pleasant (ἡδύ) and good are the same, while knowledge and bravery are different from the good and from each other, there can be no doubt that under the term pleasant is included precisely that "greatest bait of evil," wholly distinct from the ἡδονή of Plato's hedonism. Nothing has been said to elevate the tone of ἡδύς when a little later (499e, 500a) the principle is accepted that the aim of all action is the good, and that one should do, not the good for the sake of the pleasant, but the pleasant for the sake of the good. The contrast between the good and the pleasant is quite in place and has nothing to do with Plato's hedonism or that pleasure which in the Protagoras is made the measure of the good. And the sentences following fairly suggest the art of measurement. It is agreed that not every man is competent to decide what pleasant things are good and what are bad, but only the τεχνικός, one who has training and skill.

Considering now which arts make pleasure their aim and which make good their aim, Sokrates classes concert music and the art of tragedy with political oratory and fancy cooking as forms of flattery, aiming at pleasure rather than the good of body or soul. Here certainly are included higher kinds of pleasure than those we call sensual, but no suggestion of that highest pleasure of the immortal part of us, the kind of pleasure for which the brave man or the martyr is ready to sacrifice life. That is wholly included under the good. Nowhere in the Gorgias is ἡδονή employed in that inclusive sense, with prominence given ultimately to the noblest phase of it—to the pleasure of the immortal part of soul—which in the Protagoras is the foundation of Plato's hedonism. The myth that ends the Gorgias emphasizes the immortal destiny of man, the happiness of those souls who have kept themselves uncontaminated by the body.

Perhaps we need not follow out in detail the Phaedo, the Philebus, and the discussion of pleasure in the Republic. All lead to the same result. Every kind of pleasure is included under ἡδονή in one place or another, except precisely that which makes Plato's hedonism an elevated doctrine, wholly consistent with

the entire body of his ethical teaching. Demotic or popular virtue is in the *Phaedo* his term for that which rests on a calculation of pleasures and pains of the various lower kinds, philosophic virtue his term for that which chooses above all else the highest happiness of the soul.

Plato seems to have recognized that the paradoxical way of stating his principle of measurement, with the shift in significance of *ἡδονή* and ultimate exclusion of all its lower range, which is precisely its most usual range, led too inevitably to misunderstanding. That was reason enough why he never recurred to that mode of statement.

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