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FIVE ANCIENT THEORIES OF HAPPINESS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1997

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

OCTOBER 23, 1996
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

October 21, 1996
Date

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude and to acknowledge my appreciation to those whose influence on my life have made this work possible and to those professionals whose contributions enabled it to happen. Special thanks thus goes to Orlando Fernandez without whom none of this would have happened; to Swami Shantanand for teaching me Vedanta; to Swami Vishnudevananda for providing the confirmation of the Vedantic hypothesis.

From The City University Graduate Center, a special token of thanks goes to Professor Charles Landesman and Professor Joan Stambaugh for their support and supervisory work in reading and commenting upon the manuscript. A very special thanks goes to my advisor Professor Steven M. Cahn whose professionalism, advice and sound direction enabled me to bring this project to a successful conclusion and without whom I do not believe it could have been done.

Finally, words cannot express the gratitude and appreciation I feel towards my wife Ann Kittrick Dunn whose support, encouragement and partnership throughout this project are far more significant than anything I have done here for the simple reason that without her it would have never happened.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1. The project's motivation

In their essay "Recent Works on the Concept of Happiness"[1] Douglas Den Uyl and Tibor R. Machan express a number of concerns which motivated the main theme of this work. The theme of this work is an examination of five ancient theories of happiness. The purpose of the work is to try to garner from these theories a possible answer to the question "What best explains 'happiness' from the ancient perspective?" The reason that I believe this approach is important is echoed by Uyl and Machon.

> If we were asked to make an overall general observation about the literature on happiness, we believe our response would come down to one basic point: contemporary theorists are struggling with much the same issues as their classical counterparts.[2]

They then go on to indicate that though much of the contemporary literature is thoughtful and interesting, this body of work is heavily influenced by earlier philosophers. From the ancient period they cite Aristotle's influence in particular as being quite strong. Since Aristotle's influence on the Western Tradition is unavoidable, it seemed to me that one would have to go beyond the bounds of Western thought in order to escape this influence. Aware of this possible problem, Uyl and Machon note their commitment to tradition and cite the omissions.

> It is important to notice what is being ignored here. First of all, we shall not examine

non-Western theories of happiness.[3]

This last point contains a footnote which cites the significant non-Western theories. Since many of the texts cited in this note represent philosophic traditions with which I have a strong interest, it seemed to me that this area presented a neglected and potentially fruitful field of investigation. By bringing non-Western theories into classical Western conversations on the topic of happiness, one might be able to open new vistas of exploration. If happiness is significant and if the questions the Ancient Western thinkers tried to answer are still questions with which we are wrestling, then answering these questions becomes important. And unless happiness is a "tradition relative" phenomenon, hearing and exploring what other traditions have to say on this topic can only enhance the possibility of finding an answer.

2. The direction and its objective

Each of the theories I will examine offers a prescription for happiness. The prescription comes fully packaged and labeled with a magical word intended to designate that condition which best fulfills what we might call the "best kind of human life". The words are Aristotle's 'eudaimonia', Epicurus' 'ataraxia', Stoic 'apatheia', Vedantic 'ananda' and Buddhist 'Nirvana'. All ancient words, all from approximately the same time period, and all prescriptive remedies meant to provide the aspriant for happiness with a means to finding the best kind of life a human being could find. In other words, each theory will claim that a life animated by the presence of the condition designated

by what its "special" term represents will best exemplify the Happy Human life.

We will thus need to explicate and examine the conditions represented by these characterizing terms. We will need to explore the criteria needed to bring about the condition. We will need to see how each view handles a cluster of core "happiness" issues. And finally we will need to examine objections to the views and see if the objections can be overcome.

I will present both an on-going and final assessment of the views and offer a defense of what I take to be the most plausible account of 'happiness'. One main objective of this work will be to demonstrate why the Eastern views may have a superior approach to some of the problems which arise. The project is not intended to claim that any one position is clearly superior to the others; they all have flaws. But I do hope to show how some contemporary concerns are better explained by certain aspects of the Eastern approach than they are in the Western views. Finally, I do hope to add some fresh material to this conversation by offering a relevant and probing examination of Eastern views which the mainstream Western Tradition has not fully explored and show a cogent side to Eastern thinking which has, in my view, been somewhat ignored.

NOTES

1. Douglas Den Uyl and Tibor R. Machan, "Recent Works on the Concept of Happiness", American Philosophic Review 20 no. 2. (April 1983), 115-134.

2. Ibid., 131.

3. Ibid., 116.

Chapter 2. 'EUDAIMONIA': Perfected Living

1. Eudaimonia

When we discuss Aristotle on happiness, one of the first problems which arises is whether or not 'eudaimonia', as Aristotle uses the term, is the same as our concept 'happiness'. When Aristotle analyzes the concept of happiness at the early stages of Book 1 in Nichomachean Ethics, it seems that 'eudaimonia' is not the same as our 'happiness'. He tells us that 'eudaimonia' is the end which all of us ultimately pursue. Anthony Kenny uses this claim to demonstrate that Aristotle must be wrong in his (Aristotle) conception of happiness. Kenny[1] points out that we are often willing to sacrifice our happiness for the sake of other things. And Kenny is surely right if we treat 'happiness' in a purely personal manner. People do often selflessly sacrifice their own happiness for other reasons. And to counter those who might claim that happiness is still at stake even in the apparent selfless sacrifice case Kenny offers the following defense.

> But selflessness is not always like this: people may be trained from childhood to pursue an ideal such as the service of the party, or obedience to God, without this necessarily being presented to them as a means to their own happiness in this life or another.[2]

One might object to the plausibility of this option. For example, I am unaware of any religion which presents obedience to God as an objective for anything besides eternal happiness. There could also be motivation problems here regarding why I would be motivated to serve in the party

unless something was presented to me as furthering "my good" even in the weak sense of someone or something about which I care. However, this issue is beyond my present concerns. Kenny believes 'happiness' to be a proper translation of 'eudaimonia', and that is where his argument comes to the fore. For Kenny, a critical flaw in Aristotle's conception of 'eudaimonia' is that 'happiness' is not the end which we all seek. Thus it is either the case that Aristotle commits an early and obvious blunder, or we take the more charitable route and read 'eudaimonia' as something not quite the same as our 'happiness'.

This charitable position is taken by J.L. Ackrill who states that, "Nearly everything Kenny says about happiness goes to show that the word "happiness" is not a proper translation of the word 'eudaimonia'."[3] On Ackrill's interpretation Aristotle is engaged in two projects in Book 1 of Nichomachean Ethics. The first project is an attempt to explain the logic involved in the proper use of 'eudaimonia', i.e. the meaning of the concept. The second project is to try to discover what kind of life instantiates the concept. It is certainly true that Aristotle does indicate that he makes such a distinction when he says that "[t]o say that 'eudaimonia' is the supreme good seems a platitude, and some more distinctive account of it is still required."[4] And Aristotle also reminds us, "We must examine our principle not only as reached logically, from a conclusion and premises, but also in the light of what is commonly said about it..."[5]. I understand Ackrill to be claiming that logically 'eudaimonia' simply functions as a place holder for something like "best possible life", and that it is a fallacious move to substitute a

possible instantiating concept like 'happiness' for 'eudaimonia' and then criticize Aristotle because the instantiating concept does not meet the logical requirements which 'best possible life' meets. The spirit of Ackrill's position is simply that if 'happiness' creates criteria problems for Aristotle, e.g. Kenny's objection, then 'happiness' probably does not constitute everything at which Aristotle is aiming when he uses 'eudaimonia'.

Richard Kraut disagrees with Ackrill on this point. In his essay "Two Conceptions of Happiness"[4], Kraut argues that Aristotle is talking about the concept of happiness when he, Aristotle, uses 'eudaimonia', but simply has a different conception of how this concept gets instantiated. Kraut uses a simple analogy to make his point. If we use the concept "good recording" we do not mean something different from what someone living back in the sixties meant by "good recording", but we do have a different conception of what constitutes such a thing. In the same way Kraut claims that the life that is a "happy life" may be something quite different from what Aristotle envisioned a happy life to be, but this does not entitle us to claim that Aristotle had a different concept of happy life. Kraut also points out that the usual substitutions which are used in the "different meaning" positions have many of the same problems which critics of the 'happiness' translation find disturbing. For example, if we use 'well-being' or 'human flourishing', we still have to acknowledge that apparently children cannot flourish or be well-off which, at least on the surface, seems just as wrong.

There seems to be a legitimate argument on both sides of this

issue. Perhaps the fault does rest with Aristotle for not being quite clear enough despite his claim that this is not an exact science. I find myself agreeing with Ackrill against Kenny and then agreeing with Kraut against Ackrill despite the fact that sympathy with Akrill? seems to be the more accepted position.

My sense on this issue is that though Aristotle clearly makes the concept/conception distinction, he does seem to assume that the empirical criteria which he uses to fill-in his conception of 'eudaimonia' will automatically acquire the same properties which the logic of the concept reveals. He says, "So 'eudaimonia' is the best, the finest, the most pleasurable thing of all..."[8]. Clearly from the early sections of Book 1, the logical connection between 'eudaimonia' and 'best' and 'finest' is a platitude as Aristotle has already told us. But the move to the empirical generalization from the pleasure argument in Book 1-7 above where 'eudaimonia' is also equated with "most pleasurable thing of all" is something of a different sort which will lead to problems if we then expect 'eudaimonia' as "most pleasurable thing of all" to behave with the logical smoothness that the obvious platitudes possess. It would certainly be correct to claim that all men seek the best life. But it would also be objectionable to claim that all men seek the most pleasureable life.

In a certain sense the problem is not whether we ought to translate 'eudaimonia' as 'happiness'. The problem is how we will subsequently define 'happiness'. For the instant we go beyond the minimal logical platitudes given in the early stages of Book 1, we are no longer talking about the concept of 'eudaimonia' but have instead

begun discussing our conception of it. And, of course, when Aristotle finally fills-out his conception of 'eudaimonia' in Book 10 as contemplation, 'theoria', and we go back to Book 1 to plug-in this conception to some of the logical platitudes, we find problems. All men do not seek 'theoria' as the final end of all their actions.

My view here is that no conception of 'eudaimonia' can possibly succeed if one expects the conception to satisfy the logical rigor which the early platitudes meet. Perhaps, one could charitably attribute this reading to Aristotle by using the above alluded to warning about not expecting exactness. But we still have a sense that Aristotle is cheating when he chooses in Book 10-7 the platitudinal criteria which will work with contemplation, e.g. self-sufficiency and finality, while ignoring the ones that might fail, e.g. the end that all men seek and the measure of a full lifetime, because obviously if the conception is going to give us an instantiation of the concept then all the platitudinal criteria which demarcate the concept must be met.

My position here is that there is no real harm done in using 'happiness' as an interpretation for 'eudaimonia' as long as one is careful in how one explicates and uses one's conception of 'happiness'. In simplest terms, a conception cannot be used as if it possessed all the platitudinal criteria until it has been conclusively shown to be able to do so. Certain Aristotelian intuitions will work with 'happiness' quite nicely. It is something everybody wants. And it is something that people want for no other reason. It is a final end[9] and Aristotle does acknowledge that there might be more than one such end[10]. And it does possess non-instrumental value. However one

fills-out their conception of happiness, it would be difficult to give the conception instrumental value, e.g. to want happiness as a means to something else.

Of course, if Aristotle's project is to ultimately succeed, he will eventually have to demonstrate that his conception of 'eudaimonia' will survive the test of meeting all the platitudinal stipulations unless one wants to take the "lack of exactness warning" very seriously. From a purely philosophic perspective this tactic would seem to run counter to the whole enterprize. However, in a more charitable vein, one could argue that Aristotle's intent is only to produce the best explanation among the available competitors and not necessarily a perfect one per se; i.e. this explains the lack of exactness warning.

From my perspective, there are three central issues at stake in reading Aristotle on 'eudaimonia'. These three issues are (1.) the logical analysis of the concept; (2.) the defense of the life which best exemplifies that concept; and (3.) the relationship between 1 and 2. If we prioritize #1 and read the platitudinal criteria as conjunctive logical conditions, the Ackrill type of view will probably seem most attractive because many of our contemporary notions about 'happiness' do not fulfill the platitudinal criteria. We thus could take the charitable position of claiming that since the platitudinal criteria do not apply to 'happiness', Aristotle must be talking about something slightly different; 'eudaimonia' simply ought not to be translated by 'happiness'.

Ackrill says, "The word 'eudaimonia' has a force not at all like "happiness," "comfort," or "pleasure," but more like "best

possible life" (when "best" has not a narrowly moral sense)."[11] There is an interesting issue here. It certainly does make sense to read `eudaimonia' as "best possible life" within the context of the logical platitiudes. 'Eudaimonia' is simply "that which fulfills the conditions set down by the platitudes." But there seems to me to be no reason at this point, i.e. the early states of NE Book 1, not to allow 'happiness' the same role. There is little problem in saying that "the best possible life is the happy life" before we have substantially filled-out what constitutes 'a happy life'[12]. The problems arise after we fill-out a conception of `happiness', but the same problems arise for Aristotle after he fills-out his conception of `eudaimonia'. After all, why do we object to Aristotle's characterization of `eudaimonia' as contemplation? We do not object because `contemplation' does not mean the same thing as 'best possible life'. We object because the life of contemplation does not seem to be a good instantiation of what we would expect to fulfill such a role.

From another perspective, on the Ackrill reading of Aristotle why does one object to the `happiness' translation? `Happiness' does not give us the kind of logical neutrality that `eudaimonia' as `best possible life' gives us. But once Aristotle fills-in his conception of `eudaimonia', we also lose the logical neutrality. Once `eudaimonia' is filled-in by contemplation, it is no longer a platitude to say that all humans seek `eudaimonia', and this is why we object to Aristotle's depiction of the `eudaimon' individual as one necessarily engaged in the activity of contemplation. I think the problem here is that terms like `eudaimonia' and `happiness' play multiple roles. We intuitively

recognize this flexibility when it comes to 'happiness'. But we also tend to be enticed by Aristotle's early platitudes to read 'eudaimonia' as being a term with a single use. And the single use notion is certainly reasonable after the platitudes are given and prior to any conceptual filling-in of the term. In fact, I take the rather famous "One swallow does not make a summer..." passage and its full lifetime criteria at NE 1098a19-21 to clearly demonstrate that 'eudaimonia' probably did have multiple uses. Why else would Aristotle make the clarification? However, there is also no cogent reason why we could not treat 'happiness' in the same manner. After all, the first appearance of the term in Nichomechean Ethics is simply a report about what people say. And it is certainly not stretching matters to reply, "Happiness!" to Aristotle's posed question.

> Since all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what do we take to be the end of political science - what is the highest of all practical goods? Well, so far as the name goes there is pretty general agreement. 'It is happiness' say both the ordinary and the cultured people; and they identify happiness with living well and doing well. But when it comes to saying in what happiness consists opinions differ...[13](my underline)

I take the above to be a sufficient negative thesis against the position that 'happiness' ought not to be used to translate 'eudaimonia'. At this point nothing turns on this issue. Before we are shown the kind of life which instantiates 'happiness' the use of the term will not affect the early platitudes assuming that 'happiness' is a cogent reply to Aristotle's question and I do believe that it is.

Having, I hope, given an adequate negative reason why the Ackrill position on the translation is not necessary, I want to offer a

positive reason why we do better to take `happiness' as the translation and work with it. Kraut makes the critical point when he says,

> [W]hen we say that a person is leading a happy life, and Aristotle says that the same person is not eudaimon, do we have anything to argue about? I think we do.[14]

Kraut hits the heart of the matter here. It is Aristotle's conception of the "best possible life" with which we want to object. Regardless of their specific meanings, both `happiness' and `eudaimonia' are possible ways to instantiate "best possible life". When I talk about `happiness' and Aristotle talks about `eudaimonia', we are both talking about the same thing in the sense that we want to discuss "what is the best possible life". If we eschew `happiness' as a possible interpretation for `eudaimonia', we face the following dilemma. I say that a friend, who had suffered many of the misfortunes Aristotle insists exclude `eudaimonia', died last week claiming to have had a happy life. Aristotle says, "That is quite nice, but I assure you his life could not have been `eudaimon'." Now, I want to claim, as Kraut notes, that we are about to have an argument because `happiness' and `eudaimonia' in the context that matters most here mean the same thing. And in fact, if they did not have some common threads, we have nothing more to discuss. But we do, and that is the point.

I do think there are replies that could be made here. For example, we could turn Kraut's argument around on him. We simply note that Aristotle certainly did have a concept of weapon and he thought that a bow was the best instantiation of this concept. We too have a concept of weapon, but we think a nuclear bomb is probably the best

instantiation of this weapon. Are we now to conclude that 'nuclear bomb' and 'bow' mean the same thing? I do not mean to imply here that Kraut commits this kind of silly mistake as he does offer a generic definition of happiness[15] and tries to show how this definition does meet Aristotle's standards. But he also places much weight on the "good recording" argument and a similar argument about "being tall". And when he does give the definition of 'happiness' one gets the distinct sense that we are no longer talking about a thin non-specific rough outline of an ordinary answer to the question, "What is the end that all men seek?"[16]

What we probably need at this point is a bit of Wittgensteinian therapy. The best we are going to find is a family resemblance. One reason to believe that there must be a strong family resemblance between 'happiness' and 'eudaimonia' is the fact that Aristotle does not offer any alternative view which might represent a 'happiness' view. If 'eudaimonia' is not holding a place in Greek philosophic discourse similar to 'happiness', what is? There is also the point that in the non-specific, platitudinal stage Aristotle tells us that most people identify 'eudaimonia' with doing well and living well. And this seems pretty close to a non-specific explanation of 'happiness'. And to further the case, one might wonder why someone as astute as Aristotle would use an alleged meaning of the term 'eudaimonia' to explicate it? I mean if 'eudaimonia' meant 'doing well and living well', then Aristotle, in my view, would not use the latter terms to identify the former as he would be in essence telling us that most identify a square with being square. Following the analogy, if

this contention is right, then "doing well and living well" probably are better viewed as being more like 'four-sidedness', e.g. attributes, rather than strict identity claims.

My intuition is that the dispute has no genuine solution, but the probative value of using 'happiness' for 'eudaimonia' has significant merit to what matters most to me here. Both Aristotle and myself want to know what kind of life exemplifies "successful" living for the person whose life is being lived. I call this target 'happiness' and want to claim that Aristotle's conception of happiness does not measure up. The way I fill-out the concept is better than the way Aristotle did. If Aristotle is not talking about 'happiness' then we have nothing to say to each other, but I think we do. Nonetheless, it is not overly imperative that this issue be agreed upon by the reader because we can still ask the question, "What makes life go best?" And if Aristotle's answer is 'eudaimonia' and mine is 'happiness', we still need to talk. One way to set this clear is that if I am right the discussion is analogous to asking the question, "What kind of fruit is best?" If the different translation position is correct, then we are talking "apples and oranges". If my sense is correct, we are both talking about fruit. Both discussions will get us to our goal, but the former seems the more fruitful way to go.

2. Sealing the issue

In this section I want to complete the 'eudaimonia'/happiness issue and the outline the direction for the rest of this chapter. If one stands back from the details of Aristotle's intricate explication of

'eudaimonia' and focuses instead on the thematic perspective, I believe one will find many of the issues of paramount importance for any theory of happiness dominating Aristotle's scheme. On my view it is ultimately these major issues of inquiry which are of most importance for any theory of happiness. The problem of "what happiness is" may not be satisfactorily resolved, but the issues which any theory of happiness needs to address are quite clear. There are certain questions to which any theory of happiness must give reasonable answers. And though we may, probably with some justification, question whether Aristotle is discussing 'happiness', there seems no doubt that he does address these major issues, gives them central priority, and uses much of the minutia about meaning as springboards to solving these problems. Thus, our inquiry, as I have noted, need not be bogged down by 'eudaimonia' and its meaning, but can instead do what any inquiry must: examine how Aristotle addresses these issues.

I take these grander thematic questions to be:

1. the external/internal problem - is happiness an internal subjective condition of a person, or do external goods matter? If they do, how much? And if we do admit that external goods matter can we stop the slide to more is better? As far as Aristotle is concerned, this issue is certainly a major point of concern. When he tells us that 'eudaimonia' is self-sufficient and that nothing can take it away[17], we sense what might be an internalist position. But when he turns to the issue of external goods and claims that at least a minimal supply of external goods is necessary for 'eudaimonia' and that it is foolish to believe that the man on the rack could be a suitable

candidate for 'eudaimonia', we find him wrestling with a problems which any view of happiness must confront.

2. morality and happiness - does morality matter for happiness? Here again our intuitions are divided, but surely the topic needs addressing by any theory of happiness. Again Aristotle devotes huge sections of his work to dealing with this problem. Why do others matter? Why is virtue necessary but not sufficient for happiness? And if virtue is important to happiness, then we will need to grapple with "good actions" and "weakness of will", both critical topics for Aristotle.

3. pleasure, pain and hedonism - what role and place does pleasure play in the happy life? Once more this is a pertinent issue for any view of happiness in the sense that any theory must give us an answer to the question to be a reasonable theory. And again we find this to be a major issue for Aristotle.

4. the best chance for success - what kind of life, mode of living, offers the best opportunity to attain a happy life? This topic also represents a major issue for our theme and is also a major point of concern for Aristotle.

I want to know "what makes life go best?" Aristotle tells us that it is 'eudaimonia'. I think it is happiness. If we say these are two different concepts, then we need to try to find a way to determine which one is better. If we say that they are the same, then we need to

determine who has the richer and more tenable conception of happiness. Either way we need to do the same work which is, of course, find out how Aristotle answers the main thematic questions and determine if his answers are correct. Since I take Aristotle to be asking all the right questions, he sets the table quite nicely for all that follows. It is to this task of analyzing Aristotle's answers to the critical thematic questions to which we must now turn.

3. The External/Internal Polarity: the role of external goods

One polarizing issue which arises in any discussion of happiness is the significance of external, objective goods and circumstances in the determination of whether or not someone is happy. In order to address certain issues across views, I want to introduce some terms which will be used throughout this work. An "externalist position" would claim that there is some element of external dependency involved in attaining the condition of happiness. An "internalist position" is a view which denied any such relationship. Either view seems to leave the door wide-open for counter-intuitive results. Contra the internalist, it just seems wrong to claim that someone starving and in poverty is not right should they claim to need certain externals in order to be happy. And against the externalist, it seems equally wrong to tell anyone claiming to be quite happy that they are not because their life is deficient as far as externals are concerned. Mindful of the problematic intuitions in the extreme positions, many theorists try to negotiate the middle path and build a healthy respect for the strong points in each extreme while at the same time acknowledging the "obvious" errors

in the extreme positions. Aristotle tries to negotiate this middle path by trying to find a mean between the two extremes. For example, though the possession of certain external goods is necessary for happiness, the mere possession of these goods is not sufficient; one must also use the goods correctly and have a proper attitude towards the value of these goods.

In her work The Morality of Happiness [18] Julia Annas frames the issue which concerns us in this section quite nicely. There is a tension in Aristotle's view which pulls us in different directions. One direction she calls the "theoretical pull" and the other the "intuitive requirement". If one moves in the direction of the "theoretical pull", one is tempted to eschew the importance of externals, i.e. objects, objective conditions and states of affairs, and emphasize Aristotelian criteria for happiness like self-sufficiency, security, and independence from externals. On the other hand, if one is drawn in the direction of the "intuitive requirement", one cites Aristotle's claims that happiness normally does involve some supply of external goods, some luck and, of course, his disdain for views which posit that even the wise man on the rack can be happy. The tension is emphatically brought out when Aristotle claims at NE 1099a32-b8 that happiness needs external goods and later in the same section lists some critical mitigating circumstances, e.g. ugliness, low birth, childlessness, bad children, etc. However, when he later at NE 1101a7 claims that no blessed person could become miserable, the tension in the view leads Annas to call Aristotle's view "unstable".

> Aristotle wants to hold two theses that sort ill together. Loss of external goods matters to the

> virtuous person, because they are required for happiness. But loss of external goods cannot, it appears, actually make the virtuous person unhappy.[19]

Prior to reaching this conclusion and her subsequent determination that Aristotle's view is unstable because he does not resolve the problem and that, in fact, the problem cannot be resolved within the Aristotelian framework, she examines the role of external goods in Aristotle's position and two types of defenses which are used to save Aristotle's view from the instability charge. I believe that these issues are a good place to start the inquiry. We need to see what role external goods play in Aristotle's view, i.e. his respect for externalism, how there is more to happiness than just the possession of external goods, i.e. his respect for internalism, and finally how he puts the two positions together, or as Annas claims why he cannot put them together.

The roles which external goods play for Aristotle seem to be of two kinds. External goods are instrumental in the production of virtuous actions, and they seem to have an "intrinsic" value. External goods are instrumental to happiness because "happiness is an activity in accordance with virtue"[20] and we cannot do virtuous actions without them. They also have intrinsic value because our ordinary intuitions will not allow us to call those of low birth, the ugly, the childless and the man on the rack happy. The problem for Aristotle with these two types of value for external goods is that within his teleological framework it seems difficult to give anything besides happiness intrinsic value. If the question, "But why do you want that?"

has no non-instrumental answer, then the matter at issue does have intrinsic value. And since Aristotle spends a considerable amount of effort and time trying to show us that external goods like wealth, friends, children, etc, cannot be on a par with his primary intrinsic good, happiness, one has to wonder about the cogency in attributing intrinsic value to external goods by making some of their absences apparent critical mitigating conditions for a happy life.

I take the problem to be as follows.

1. An object, situation, or condition has intrinsic value if its loss is a bad thing to have happen.

2. An object, situation, or condition has instrumental value if its loss causes something bad to happen.

Annas claims that Aristotle at times seems committed to 1 for some external goods, but that his view must subsume all external goods under 2 and thus the tension or instability in the view. This commitment comes about because Aristotle must ultimately advocate the position that what makes a loss bad is that without the given object, situation, or condition someone could not be happy.

One type of defense for Aristotle here is to reduce, as John Cooper[21] does, the value of external goods to instrumental value. Ultimately, the reason why low birth, ugliness, childlessness and being on the rack are bad is because they impede our ability to perform virtuous actions. I suppose we are to imagine that being of low birth and ugly will mean that we will be subject to certain prejudices which will hinder our ability to function in a fully virtuous manner within the community. Being childless means we are limited in the scope of our

virtuous actions; we cannot spread our goodness around as much as someone with many children, nor enjoy the virtues of being a good parent. And, of course, the man on the rack cannot do anything virtuous. The rationale behind the proposed reduction is straightforward. External goods have "intrinsic" value only in the very weak sense that one could not fulfill the happiness definition as "a lifetime of virtuous activity" if one were not supplied with some measure of external goods. The "intrinsic" value stems not from what the goods are, but rather from the necessary role they perform in the formulation of happiness. I think the view is cogent and defensible. Food, water, air, etc. are necessary conditions for happiness, at least in the minimal sense that one would have no life without them, and thus a lifetime of virtuous activity would be impossible. And it is simply "as necessary conditions" that the goods have "intrinsic" value.

Nonetheless, the view still leaves us with some counter intuitive problems. Annas cites the following passage from Cooper.

> Aristotle does not count the failure of the virtuous man to have good children who grow to maturity as disfiguring his happiness because it frustrates plans conceived and acted on precisely 'as' a virtuous man. The failure to have good children only affects his happiness insofar as it prevents the subsequent activites he might have engaged in together with them; it does not affect it by rendering his earlier actions aimed at producing and educating his children ineffective.[22]

Annas finds this passage both "intuitively outrageous" and flawed as a legitimate interpretation of Aristotle's position. The "outrageous intuition" is her contention that the interpretation gets the value-loss of these kinds of occurrences backwards. It would

certainly make some sense to claim that losing a child or being broken on the rack mars our happiness because these things are bad. But it seems to make no sense to claim that because I will not be able to accomplish certain things in the future these events, e.g. being childless or broken on the rack, which would overwise be neutral, turn out to be bad. The intuition is that even if my children are scoundrels who will never do a single good thing, or if I myself am one who will also never do a single virtuous act, the death of a child or my being broken on the rack are bad things to have happen. And that has to be the reason why their occurrence spoils my happiness.

The interpretation problem which Annas cites stems from the following passage where Aristotle says,

> There are also certain advantages, such as good ancestry or good children, or personal beauty, the lack of which mars our felicity; for a man is scarcely happy if he is ugly to look at, or of low birth, or solitary and childless; and presumably even less so if he has children or friends who are quite worthless, or if he has had good ones who are now dead.[23]

The problem here is that if we reduce the value of external goods to instrumental value for performing virtuous action, then it has to be worse to have no children and/or no friends than to have some who die or turn out bad because in the latter case we can still exercise our virtuous dispositions trying to remedy the situation while in the former case we are denied from the start any such opportunity. And since Aristotle seems to opt for the latter as the above passage states, he cannot hold the reductive view. If losing a child is worse than not having one, then the child has more than mere instrumental

value.

Annas draws three conclusions from this situation. The first conclusion is that the reductive view cannot be right because it is "intuitively outrageous" and secondly it cannot be Aristotle's view. Her conclusion is that because Aristotle does not adequately, if at all, address the dilemma, his view becomes unstable in the sense that Aristotle claims that external goods are valuable for two reasons and then fails to show how the two reasons can peacefully co-exist. If friends and children have intrinsic value, then their loss cannot be bad solely because it impedes my instrumental means to attaining happiness. But if it is not solely because of their instrumental value that the loss is bad, then the whole teleological framework is threatened because there would be substantial incommensurable answers to the question, "What do all men desire?" And thus on Annas' view the instrumental reduction fails.

A second way of defending Aristotle's position on the role of external goods is what Annas calls the "external-use view". On this type of defense, the attempt is made to synthesize the two types of values by representing them as two different elements which combine to form a single component. The instrumental role does not change from the way it is represented in the reductive model; in order to perform certain virtuous actions we need some external goods. However, rather than reduce all value of external goods to instrumental value and face the dilemmas cited above, these views emphasize Aristotle's claim that the mere possession of certain external goods "adorns" happiness and certain external goods when lost "ruin" it.

The notion of deriving intrinsic value from the 'adorning' and 'ruining' features of certain external goods has plausibility within the framework of Aristotle's conception of happiness. And this issue is probably one place where Aristotle's conception of happiness is probably much closer to what we would call 'well-being'.[24] It just does not make sense to Aristotle that the ugly person could be happy. The physical reality, one's appearance and what other good virtuous people think of us, is probably much more important to Aristotle than it is to us, - witness his portrait of the Great Souled Man and this man's dependency upon conforming to a certain socially admired pattern.(cf NE 4-3) Some examples of the adorning function would be wealth, or health which Annas uses. Functionally speaking, it is better to be wealthy than poor even if one never does any virtuous deeds with one's wealth. The same goes for health. It is certainly better, no matter how unvirtuous one may be, to be healthy than to be ill.

However, even granting this superficial plausibility, there may be problems here for Aristotle. Annas believes that this "external-use" view fails because it is still internally inconsistent. The first criticism which Annas makes about this position is that Aristotle seems to have a problem here about the mimimum level of external goods necessary to fulfill the adorning function. She quotes the passage at NE 1097b9-14 where Aristotle acknowledges the problem and promises to return to it, and then states:

> But Aristotle never does(return to the problem); and we are left with the unhappy result that happiness on his view presupposes quite a high level of external goods, but no obvious means of setting any minimum level.[25] (Note that the parenthetical remark in the quote is my addition.)

I believe that she is wrong in this. First he does later address the issue directly in NE 9-10 when dealing with the amount of friends one needs. Secondly, and more important philosophically, I would interpret the entire spirit of the mean argument as a clear attempt to cope with just this issue - Aristotle gives no minimum because there cannot be one. It is different for everyone. The internal error would be for Aristotle to try to set a minimum.

She then says that even if we suppose that Aristotle could deliver her alleged "needed minimum", there is still an internal inconsistency for the obvious reason that more has to be better.

> If, for example, good health is required to make me happy, surely excellent health will make me even happier. If I need wealth to exercise virtues such as generosity, surely more wealth will make me able to exercise even larger-scale virtues, such as paying for public festivals?[24]

There are two important points here. The first point is that given the tenor of her example she is quite correct that the criteria of self-sufficiency and completeness are in trouble if this type of rebuttal could be attributed to Aristotle. However, the second point is that the examples are not examples which fit Aristotle's scheme. Judging the value of goods quantitatively, e.g. more is better, is just not Aristotle. It is the mean, the perfected individual balance, which determines how much of something is best for us. And this value will actually decrease if we have more than we need to be happy. Also the health example is just wrong. Setting the minimum at "mere" good when excellent is still available as something "better" would entail that

one had not attained one's perfected mean and thus could not be happy. Remember the mean is an extreme in terms of value.

Finally she seals the issue when she states:

> It looks as if Aristotle is faced with an awkward choice. Either he has to say that external goods are required to make a person happy, but cannot make him happier by being increased. But this is deeply mysterious. Or he has to say that happiness is not complete, since it can be increased by the addition of further goods. But this would go back on a fundamental point of his ethical structure.[27]

Since I do not think he has to say the first thing, then there is no need for him to take the second option. The theory may have problems, and I think it does with the role of external goods in the happy life, but it is not Annas' internal problem.

The final dilemma which Annas cites for Aristotle on this issue of reconciling the roles which external goods play in the life of the happy man is the troubling passages cited above where Aristotle claims that loss of external goods is a genuine loss, but that the happy man cannot ever become miserable. She claims that there are only two ways to make these theses sit well together and that neither way will succeed. The first is to make happiness not directly dependent upon the mere possession or loss of external goods and posit some other condition which is so dependent. The other would be to postulate kinds or levels of happiness. The virtuous person is always happy, but the virtuous person with an adequate, or even abundant, supply of external goods is happier. Perhaps one even claims that this is the work which Aristotle intends 'blessed', i.e. 'makarios', to do. And Annas correctly cites the flaws in both attempts. Neither will work and

neither comports with what Aristotle says. The loss of certain critical externals does spoil one's happiness and there ultimately cannot be anything better than happiness despite Aristotle's claim at NE1178a9-10 that non-contemplative virtuous activity is "happiness in a secondary sense". From this situation she concludes that when Aristotle makes the two critical comments cited above where he claims that loss of externals spoils one's happiness and also that the happy person cannot ever become miserable he is "[...] struggling with the problem rather than finding a solution."[28] And because he cannot find a solution she concludes that the these arguments again show us that Aristotle's view is internally unstable.

Again, I believe she is wrong here and the two conflicting passages can be reconciled. The issue, which Annas believes Aristotle never satisfactorily resolves, emphasizes his assertion to three seemingly irreconcilable claims - 1 the loss of critical externals spoils one's happiness; 2 the happy person could never be miserable; 3 nobody who met Priam's fate could be happy. The passage which I believe will save Aristotle here is curiously ommitted by Annas. I say "curiously" because she spends so much of her argument, as I have noted, being critical of Aristotle for either not setting the minimum, i.e. not giving us the conceptual resources to do so, or forcing us to make the flawed 'ad hoc' distinctions which marred the saving arguments of the last few paragraphs. This important passage is as follows.

> Now goods have been classified under three heads, as (a) external, (b) of the soul, and (c) of the body. Of these we say that goods of the soul are good in the strictest and fullest sense, and we rank actions and activites of the soul as goods of the soul; so that according to this view, which is

> of long standing and accepted by philosophers, our definition will be correct. We are right, too, in saying that the end consists in certain actions and activities, because this puts it among goods of the soul and not among external goods.[29]

I would interpret this passage as a clear attempt to solve Annas' problem. The happy person has the full repertoir of virtues, all the goods of the soul needed to qualify for a happy life. By using these virtues on my adequate mean supply of external goods, I can tune my life to perfection. However, to tune my life perfectly, some external goods are needed. Losing some of these causes the tuning to become unharmonized. But since I have all the necessary virtues, there is still activity I can perform to re-establish the harmony. The loss does not make me miserable although it does push me off my mean and I cannot be happy until I am re-tuned to my mean. Now the proper measure of my successful re-tuning if prioritized correctly will not be determined by the re-establishing of the previous condition in relation to the external goods. The priority is to re-establish happiness which is in fact the virtuous activity of my soul and as a person possessing the full repertoire of virtues I can still do this. The loss disfigures my happiness but my virtuous abilities trump the disfigurement. My bow string has broken. I can get a new one or take up a sword, stick or rock and still fight perfectly. Even if the replacement is far inferior to the loss, this situation will not prevent the virtuous person from performing perfectly in the new situation and that is all Aristotle needs to mend the problem created from 1 and 2.

Does this not return us to the instrumental reduction? I believe that it does unless someone could find a non-instrumental way

to fulfill the "adorning" function which I believe cannot be done. And if it does return us the reductive view, are there not the problems of the loss of the child being worse than no child at all? This is a bit stickier, but the answer fits better with the next problem as its answer needs some prior clarification of the next dilemma.

How about reconciling 2 and 3? Of course, there are losses like Priam's which will prevent all further virtuous actions. But on the other hand from Priam's perspective though his life may in the end not be a viable candidate for being considered a happy life, he would not, technically speaking, be miserable. And this is really all Aristotle says. "[...] the happy person could never become miserable - but he is not blessed either, if he meets an end like Priam's."[30] Even granting Annas the point she makes that 'blessed', 'makarios', and 'happiness', 'eudaimonia', are basically referring to the same condition and are only stylistically different[31], the point still holds.

Finally if the argument in the preceding paragraph seems a bit weak, the following is offered to strengthen the point. We know that goods of the soul are ranked as superior to externals and even health. Now the primary good of the soul is happiness which was defined as "an activity in accordance with virtue". We also know that the problematic passage occurs right after the instrumental necessity of some external goods is announced at NE 1099a32-b6 when Aristotle claims that "the loss of some things mars our felicity". Annas translates this passage with "ruins our happiness"[32], but the more common translation is the former. I think the reply here is still fairly obvious. Surely, if

happiness is an activity in accordance with excellence or virtue, then one's happiness would certainly be marred or ruined if the activity required certain external goods which were now lost. And Priam has most definitely, permanently lost an irreplacible external good for the performance of any virtuous activity. For most other losses, it would certainly be true that if our excellent activity was dependent upon some external good, our happiness would be marred by the loss. But given the announced prioritizing, there is no reason to conclude any permanent ruining here short of the "bad" death which might be right.

The final point on this issue is to make sense of the claim that losing the child is worse than not having one because this situation does seem to hinder the pure instrumental reading. What I would claim is that this situation is not as strange as Annas makes it out to be. There certainly is a sense in which it does, for example, seem to be true that being born blind is not as bad as being blinded say at age fifteen. In the latter case, no performance of excellent sight-seeing activity would have been developed upon which our present excellent performances would be based. In the latter case we lose something; while in the former we just never have it. Neither condition is optimal. And in Aristotle's teleological and perfectionist universe neither situation is very good, but we can still understand how one might be inclined to view the loss as worse than the "never having". As far as Annas' claim that the loss should be better than the "not having" because the loss enables us to engage in virtuous reparations, the point is rather hollow. Unless one wants to attribute to Aristotle the position that it would be good to deprive oneself of things in

order to be able to engage in the virtuous activity of fixing the deprivation, there is only a temporal difference between the two cases. In the loss case you do the virtuous fixing later than you do in the "never having" case. As far as the loss of the child being worse than never having one, I think a reply can still be made. Since 'happiness' is an activity in accordance with virtue having a child and being happy would require a dependency relation between my happiness and my parenting activites. Losing the child disrupts this relationship. A significant fully developed virtuous disposition can no longer be actively engaged while in the "not having" case no such dependency relation would be developed.

I hope this is sufficient to lay claim to my position that Aristotle's view of the role of external goods as far as happiness is concerned is instrumental. It is surely true that he has problems when it comes to friends and children and their sole value being instrumental. But I suspect the problem lies in the egoism and not in any internal instability. Perhaps, Aristotle needs some addition to his system to soften the blows which the egoism thrust upon us. But ultimately there is no place for any such thing in Aristotle's universe, just as given his prioritizing there is no place for external goods having value beyond the minimal "necessary conditions" for happiness.

> The answer to our question is also evident from our account [of happiness]. For we have said it is a certain sort of activity of the soul expressing virtue, [and hence not a product of fortune]; and some of the other goods are necessary conditions [of happiness], others are naturally useful and cooperative as instruments [but are not parts of it].[33]

According to Annas the following is the dilemma. If X's loss is bad because it mars my happiness, then X has instrumental value, but in order for X's loss to mar my happiness X must have intrinsic value, i.e. its loss must be bad because X is a good thing and losing good things is bad. Thus X must have intrinsic value but Aristotle cannot give it any. In the spirit of the last cited passage I offer the folowing defense of the instrumental view. Annas is claiming that it cannot be explained how a loss could mar happiness unless the loss had some value independent of it instrumental role. Being broken on the rack must be bad and that is why it disturbs my happiness. However I think we can still explain this situation in Aristotle's framework. Happiness is an activity. Anything which disrupts this activity is bad. Thus it is the "loss" as a disruption of my virtuous activity which causes the judgment that this loss is bad.

4. Morality and Happiness

The place of morality in Aristotle's view of happiness is quite clear. Morality is a necessary condition for happiness, but not a sufficient one. By a 'necessary condition', it is meant that for Aristotle the immoral[34] person could not be happy. And by 'not sufficient' it is meant that morality as the mere possession of the virtues will not make one a candidate for happiness. We need more than just moral virtues; we need to show and use them.

My inclination on this issue is to avoid as much moral theory as is reasonably possible. My objective here is to examine 'happiness' as this idea is used in these ancient theories. The content of the

moral theory thus becomes secondary and would move the project beyond my intended scope. What is important is the function which morality fulfills and not morality per se. In this way I think I can respect the moral, cultural distance which separates us from Aristotle while still determining whether his insights into the role of morality in the happy life harmonize with our ordinary intuitions about the role morality ought to play in an explanation of 'happiness'.

One glaring difference between us and Aristotle is contained in the questions, "Is Bob a good man?" and "Is Bob a happy man?". For Aristotle, if the answer to the first question is "No", then the answer to the second question cannot be "Yes". For many of us, this situation is not necessarily the case. We can clearly understand how the syndicate crime-lord could still be a happy man despite his lack of moral goodness. Perhaps, we could specify why this could not be the case. But on the surface any such move would seem to require a major tightening of the ordinary notion of 'happiness' that would demand strong premises which would in turn need substantial arguments to establish them.

What drives Aristotle to adopt this view? It is most likely the teleological background from which he operates. If happiness is the end which all persons seek, then the theorist needs to make moral action harmonize with happiness. Otherwise, the possibility of getting the "pay-off" by the most expedient, but perhaps rather immoral, means becomes a genuine viable option. The tactic of building moral goodness into happiness may be admirable, but there is a confusion between 'justified in being happy' and simply 'being happy'. This is one of the

places where we may find the ordinary conception of happiness pulling away from Aristotle's view.

The bad man gets great pleasure from doing the bad thing, feels no remorse, thoroughly enjoys what he is doing, but clearly by Aristotle's standards is not a happy person. By contrast the weak-willed man gets pleasure from doing the bad thing, feels remorse, does not thoroughly enjoy the activity, and is also not a happy man. The latter case is clear and we would fully agree with Aristotle that this kind of life is not a viable candidate for happiness. But in the former case, we are perplexed to find something wrong. After all, what makes Aristotle's bad man so difficult to deal with is that it is the bad thing that is making him happy. What Aristotle needs to claim here is that the bad man is wrong. But it seems hard to make that assessment since by Aristotle's view, the bad man can never be brought to realize this. Even in our more sophisticated contemporary literature, the critical linchpin in these kinds of situations is that the addition of missing information would cause the person to alter their assessment,[35] but this option is not open to Aristotle. On his view, nothing can help the bad man change his perspective. And we are left having to tell him he is wrong, but there is no way he can ever come to see this. The bad man is simply not happy no matter how his life seems to him.

Now, of course, Aristotle has a sound rationale for his position on this issue. He defines 'happiness' as "an activity in accordance with virtue". And obviously since the bad man is not engaged in virtuous activity, his condition cannot be one of happiness. And if

we add to this situation the fact that the bad man's dispositions are so miserably distorted by his poorly developed responses to the right kinds of pleasure, it is no wonder that Aristotle views him as such a hopeless case.

Hence there is a chasm between the way Aristotle views this issue and the way common sense might be inclined to operate. And there may be no way to bridge this chasm. For Aristotle it makes no sense to attribute success to the bad man. The bad man is simply not a viable candidate for successful living. There can be no doubt that Aristotle's conception of happiness includes the thread that "a happy life is a successful life." He tells us that "... the happy man lives and fares well; because what we have described is virtually a kind of good life or prosperity."[24] But the success analogy will only take us so far. Though Aristotle takes great pains to demonstrate that there is no good way in which to commit certain inherently bad actions(cf NE 2-6), the success metaphor may break down. A thief may not be a morally admirable person. However, as long as the thief is not caught, it does seem that the thief is a success. There may be no way to be a good (morally good) thief, but this does not preclude that one could be a good (successful) thief.

What Aristotle would want us to show is that though one might be a successful thief, this kind of life, animated as it is by unvirtuous dispositions, is not a suitable example for successful living. Successful Aristotelian activity must be virtuous activity. But the functional definition of the virtues as excellent dispositions(cf NE 2-4), which enable us to perform our activities well, only keeps

immoral successes from counting as excellences by the stipulation that the success makes one a "good man"[27]. However, this move undermines the spirit of the functional argument which is intended to gain our assent by its descriptive backbone while the normative claim about the "good man" is a judgment which the functional argument cannot make if it is to remain purely functional. Describing a success is one thing while evaluating the success's moral worth is something else. Aristotle could be accused of wanting the best of both worlds - the empirical power of functional explanation and the prescriptive direction of the ethical claim. However, it seems clear that the functional definition will only establish that the happy man is the successful man, but it cannot tell us anything about the moral quality of the activity.

Another way to see this issue is that Aristotle defines 'happiness' in terms of the virtues. In order to avoid a vicious circle, he must then define 'virtues' independent of happiness. Otherwise he is merely saying that virtuous actions are what give us happiness and happiness is what we get from doing virtuous actions. Breaking out of the circle is clearly the intent of the functional argument. By bringing in the notions of excellence and success, Aristotle is defining the virtues independent of happiness. "Let us assert, then, that any kind of excellence renders that of which it is the excellence 'good', and makes it perform its function 'well'."[28] However, by this argument the best we are entitled to infer is the weaker interpretation which renders the happiness definition as "happiness is an activity in accordance with excellence". And we still have no clear way to keep out immoral successes unless we simply

stipulate.

If one is inclined at this point to claim that this situation only shows us that 'happiness' is not the best definition of 'eudaimonia' and we are better served by using 'well-being' or 'human flourishing', the problem remains. The intuition which supports this move is that it seems pretty clear that we ought to be able to claim that the morally depraved are not well-off. But we still need to claim that the lavishly successful crime-lord is not "well-off" and this situation strains our intuitions just as much. The crime-lord may not be a good person, but he is doing well at what he does; he is in his way flourishing and probably, if we asked, him quite happy.

My conclusion here is to keep morality and happiness separate until we are forced to connect them. This "forcing the connection", I contend Aristotle does not succeed in accomplishing. His definition of 'happiness' in the weakened form as "an activity in accordance with excellence" may still have great value. But the human excellence which Aristotle is pursuing would only be incompatible with immorality if the immoral action functionally prevented happiness. Sometimes it certainly does, but it does not always seem to have this effect unless we stipulate the connection between moral behaviour and happiness which seems to assume what needs to be proven.

One final problem here seems to be that the only way to make the needed connection between 'happiness' and morality is to use some version of the instrumental argument found in the prior section. However, the cost of making the connection in this manner may be too steep as it seems to relegate the value of others to mere instrumental

means for attaining my happiness. What happens with this type of move is that we get the needed connection but at the cost of devaluing morality. Others count as moral objects only in the sense that their well-being enhances mine. The egoism which arises from this type of move offends more than it helps, but it is part of Aristotle's view. Some thinkers believe that Aristotle is not necessarily committed to this strong form of egoism. Bernard Williams epitomizes the non-egoistic interpretation.

> But neither Plato nor Aristotle thought of the ethical life as a device that increased selfish satisfactions. Their outlook is formally egoistic, in the sense that they suppose that they have to show each person that he has good reason to live ethically; and the reason has to appeal to that person in terms of something about himself, how and what he will be if he is a person with that sort of character. But their outlook is not egoistic in the sense that they try to show that the ethical life serves some set of individual satisfactions which is well-defined before ethical considerations appear. Their aim is not, given an account of the self and its satisfaction, to show how the ethical (luckily) fits them. It is to give an account of the self into which that life fits.[39]

I think Williams is partially right in his claim. Aristotle certainly does want his project to emerge in the kind of 'harmless' egoism for which Williams wants to make a case. However, I also believe that Aristotle is well-aware of the problems lurking here. Witness his machinations about friendship.(cf NE 8 & 9) To generate a truly non-egoistic morality, we have to give intrinsic value to persons, i.e. other persons. But if we give intrinsic value to persons, the telos of happiness is threatened because I then have a genuine reason for doing things which do not aim solely at my happiness. To opt at this point

for the so-called 'inclusive' type of position where we subsume components, e.g. external goods, morality, etc., into one final grand end may palliate the problem, but sooner or later we will have to make the hard choice. Despite Ackrill's claim that:

> If I find it necessary to undergo privation or suffering in order to do my duty I shall have to recognize that my life will fall short of 'eudaimonia'. But what I 'renounce' is comfort in favor of right action, not 'eudaimonia' in favor of right action... Comfort and prosperity may be goals to be secured by action, but 'eudaimonia' is precisely not such a goal. It is doing well, not the result of doing well, a life, not the reward of a life.[40]

It just seems wrong to me that if I 'renounce' a necessary condition for a type of life, I am not tacitly renouncing that kind of life. If I recognize that doing my duty will cause my life to fall short of 'eudaimonia', then doing my duty is more important than 'eudaimonia'. Some thinkers would certainly agree with Ackrill here, but it just seems wrong to think Aristotle would. It would be like claiming that the person who commits adultery is not choosing pleasure over the 'best possible marriage', but pleasure over fidelity. 'Eudaimonia' may be the activity of successfully hitting certain targets and not technically a target, but suitable targets are necessary. And it seems hard to deny that Aristotle's suitability test does not include highly significant reference to my well-being, my happiness, or my best possible life. It is certainly true that Aristotle tells us (cf 1173b25-27) that we ought to renounce wealth over betrayal and health were it to require gluttony. But the context here concerns pleasure not happiness. In fact the way I would read Aristotle in the Ackrill case is that if I do not

undergo the privation or suffering, then I would be falling short of 'eudaimonia' because I would not be acting correctly, and it is precisely because of this fact, e.g. the possibility of falling short of 'eudaimonia', that I would undergo them.

The spirit of the Williams/Ackrill position is certainly admirable, but it just does not seem to me to be Aristotle. Even if we charitably use the 'well-being' or 'best possible life' interpretations, as each would respectively prefer, the only reason anyone would take on Aristotelian training in the first place is not because they have an account of the self into which the moral life fits, but instead because they are aiming at 'happiness', 'well-being', or the 'best possible life' and have an inkling that behaving morally might be a judicious adjunct towards hitting that target. It is important to always keep in mind that Aristotle goads us with a reward, i.e. 'eudaimonia', and ultimately on his view the only reason why one would engage in the training is because it was going to be good for 'Me'.

It seems to me that the problem here is priorities. If one prioritizes as Aristotle does and places 'happiness' at the top of the scale, then morality has to be accounted for within the framework of being conducive to that end. If one then wants to avoid the 'problem' of having immoral actions pay-off in 'happiness', then self-interest seems the simplest way to achieve that end. Excellent living, happiness, requires excellent behavior, virtues. Some of these virtues are social virtues which concern the well-being of others. The argument is rather simple. Excellent moral behavior is necessary for happiness.

Social virtues are forms of excellent behavior, therefore, perform them when necessary. Is the argument sound? Obviously, I do not believe so as I contend that the first premise is false. Is this Arisotle's view? In my opinion the answer is "yes". On Aristotle's view, performing virtuously is necessary for happiness; virtuous, i.e. moral, behavior bears an instrumental relationship to happiness.

5. Pleasure

Aristotle's view on the relationship between pleasure and happiness is rather conservative. He takes a common-sensical stance which is pliable and generic enough not to need very much analysis. The most complex part of the doctrine concerns 'akrasia', weakness of will, and as such is somewhat beyond the scope of my main theme. The concern here is the role that pleasure plays in Aristotle's conception of happiness, not the role that pleasure plays in Aristotle's psychological analysis of why we fail or succeed in attaining or leading happy lives. In my view, the positions of both Epicurus and the Stoics are the better places to explore the more interesting aspects of the relationship between pleasure and happiness. Hence, Aristotle's view on this issue will not occupy us for long.

As is often his policy Aristotle will tread the fine line on this issue. He rejects views which claim that pleasure is not good, but he is also cautious and wary of pleasure's power to lead us astray. Pleasure is both the benevolent teacher and the stern task-master. It is both the means by which we cultivate the virtues and the temptress which undermines their full and proper development. Pleasure is like a

tuning fork by which we perfect our activities. However, it is also a tuning fork which requires a highly trained ear. It resonates sweetly on multiple levels, and the untrained ear is easily led astay.

> [Pleasures and pains are appropriately taken as signs] because virtue of character is concerned with pleasures and pains. For it is pleasure that causes us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from fine ones. Hence we need to have had appropriate unbringing - right from early youth, as Plato says - to make us find enjoyment or pain in the right things, for this is correct education.[41]

The intuition which is molding Aristotle's position on this issue is the belief that the happy life would be a pleasant life. The good life does not equal the most pleasant life, but the good life has the attribute of being pleasant. Aristotle's intent is fairly clear. Since neither extreme view is intellectually satisfying and since neither extreme sits well with our common sense, some middle ground must be found. Aristotle refutes the extreme views a number of times with numerous arguments.(cf NE Bks 7 & 10) What Aristotle does in these arguments is demonstrate that neither extreme view succeeds. The arguments need not detain us. What is of importance for Aristotle is that a place for pleasure be found in a satisfactory account of happiness or the best possible life.

Aristotle is sometimes criticized for his account of pleasure because it is alleged that he gives pleasure two different definitions. In NE Bk 7 he identifies pleasure with "an unimpeded activity of our natural state"[42]. And in NE Bk 10, he claims that pleasure is that which completes and perfects our activities.[43] However, I do not view the positions as problematic. I take the Bk 7 position as

descriptive and the Bk 10 position as giving the descriptive content a functional place in Aristotle's teleological universe. Pleasure results from engaging in unimpeded activity and its function is to teach us how to know when we have succeeded. Of course, things are not always this simple. The problem is that because pleasure is not a process, but instead the result of successfully completing a process, we can inappropriately "succeed" at getting pleasure, and thus the importance of Plato's warning. We need to come to see that though pleasure is a necessary condition for successful living, for happiness, pleasure per se is not sufficient. Pleasure needs assessing and the whole sphere of pleasure is fraught with danger. Though he does acknowledge the dangers and seems to be inclined to near aversion when at NE 1109b8-11 he states the following, he is too much a man of common sense to eschew pleasure totally.

> And in everything we must beware above all of pleasure and its sources; for we are already biased in its favor when we come to judge it. Hence we must react to it as the elders reacted to Helen, and on each occasion repeat what they said; for if we do this, and send it off, we shall be less in error.[44]

From my perspective, it is really the "bias" and hence the magnitude of the danger with which he is concerned. We will certainly make fewer errors by going the way of the elders, but ultimately the happy life will be a life upon which the bloom of pleasure supervenes. It is in my view that many of Aristotle's greatest insights into human nature lie in his handling of this issue. Too much a common-sense man to deny pleasure a place in the happy life, and too much the pragmatist to fully embrace it unchecked, he acknowledges the need for its presence

while wisely warning about the charms and deception attached to its lure. Living the right kind of life will bring us pleasure, but the life of pleasure seeking is not the right kind of life. Living the right kind of life is not something to be sought because it is pleasurable; rather one of the signs that we are living the right kind of life is that the well-trained person will find this kind of life highly pleasing. Perhaps, this is merely a fantasy. Perhaps it is more than we ought to expect and simple decency serves us much better, but it is Aristotle's conception of how we account for the role of pleasure in the life of the good person. The good life is pleasurable to the good person, a vacuous claim for sure. Yet the deeper insight may still be Aristotle's insight. Expecting decency for decency's sake may ultimately be expecting more of us than we are really capable of doing.

6. Contemplation and Perfection

No issue rankles readers of Aristotle more than the Book 10 conclusion that the best life, the most happy life, is the life of contemplation. If the end which we all ultimately seek is merely to sit in contemplation of eternal truths, why the moral training? What was the point of the first nine books? Some writers, e.g. Ackrill[45], A.O. Rorty[46], have tried to defend Aristotle by showing that the two apparently diverse projects could be synthesized into a coherent whole, e.g. Rorty, or could at least be made to avoid outright incoherence, e.g. Ackrill. Other writers, e.g. B. Williams[47], T. Nagel[48], have seen Aristotle as clearly wrong in presuming that he could

reasonably mesh the two projects together. The principle objection is that Aristotle simply cannot deliver the needed essential description of persons which Williams views as a flawed "psychological essentialism" and Nagel as an inability to justify the dominant role given to 'theoria' over other possible final ends.

For my purposes the substance of this debate is secondary. I take Aristotle's conception of happiness as the perfection of the activity of human living to be the most pertinent issue for my project. Aristotle's functional teleology forces him to locate and select a crowning excellence. I charitably assume that he must have believed that he could deliver the needed instrumental justification for the role of the other virtues within the grander overall scheme. I take the role of 'theoria', as contemplation of eternal truths, to be the perfection of the final excellence. 'Theoria' is not the same thing as 'happiness', but a life animated by contemplation is clearly the best possible instantiation of the concept of happiness. 'Theoria' is the culmination of a gradual assent by which we progressively master the sundry activities that are involved in human living. Success in the process is determined by developing the necessary dispositions which will enable us to perform the activities perfectly. Clearly some activities cannot be perfected until others have been perfected. We cannot be couragous warriors until we have learned the physical art of warfare. And from Aristotle's viewpoint, we cannot be successful statesmen until we master the art of ruling. We cannot master the art of human living unless and until we have mastered the art of contemplation which cannot be done until we have mastered all of the

other virtues.

It may be true that once we get to Book 10 it appears that we no longer need everything that has gone before; i.e. the virtues we have cultivated. However, I think we can give some rationale for this appearance. One explanation might be that once we get to where we are going we no longer need the road that took us there, but we still had to travel that road to get there. Another explanation, perhaps even better, might be that we do need all the work that went before. The rationale here would be that one could not engage in the arduous activity of successfully contemplating "eternal truths" without a considerable cache of reference material.

Ackrill cites as primary to Aristotle's project the question, "What is the best life for a man to lead?" He then addresses the issue which is the primary concern here.

> The difficulty with the second question(this question) is not that he fails to discuss it - it is after all the center of his target - or that he fails to answer it, but that he seems to give two answers. Most of the _Ethics_ implies that good action is - or is a major element in - man's best life, but eventually in Book 10 purely contemplative activity is said to be perfect 'eudaimonia'; and Aristotle does not tell us how to combine or relate these two ideas.[49] (the parenthetical remark is my addition)

As we have also seen in section 2 above Annas makes a similar claim in her dissatisfaction with the notion of "kinds of happiness". And in general the literature tends to support the view that reconciling the two positions does present Aristotle's view with an unresolved dilemma. As stated I am not terribly pressed by any need to solve this problem. For my concerns the problem is not a major issue. The major issue for

me is Aristotle's final explication of what constitutes the best kind of life, the best example of happy living. Noting the dilemma and having offered my own solution, I will leave this issue by giving Aristotle the last word.

> The life expressing the other kind of virtue(i.e. the kind concerned with action) is (happiest) in a secondary way because the activites expressing this virtue are human.[50]

On my view the most interesting point about Aristotle's view of 'happiness' is that the primary identification of 'happiness' consists in its being an activity. 'Happiness' is not a state of mind, not a condition solely dependent upon belief content. It is a synthesized condition in which belief, action, excellence and success all mesh together to produce the highest quality of human lived experience. We might use the analogy of playing a perfectly tuned instrument. 'Happiness' as `eudaimonia' simply designates the perfect performance along with the conditions necessary to bring it about. Of course, unlike the musical performance, the scope of the temporal dimensions which the happy life encompasses are quite wide. And very much like the musical performance, the sour note at the wrong time can have the effect of ruining the whole performance. Finally, the training, the condition of the instrument, the instrument's tuning and the state of mind of the player all must be in perfect harmony.

Something in this description harmonizes and resonates with lived experience. Whenever we are enaged in successfully doing something we consider to be important and significant, there is a certain charm in our lives. It is like riding the bike of life. The

distance between the experience and the performer is lost and only the performance remains. These are the genuine magical moments of life. And I believe that it is these magical moments which Aristotle believes ought to be strung along the thread which we will call the happy life. This depiction captures much of what Aristotle wanted to capture. It merges the inner and outer. Success and significance blend with performance, the excellence of our dispositions and an attentive inner ear to synthesize objective condition with subjective viewpoint. The need for morality arises from the need for a harmonious environment without which the focused attention and concentration needed for excellence would distract and impede the performance. Finally, there is the need for the inner mover to be as well equipped as possible - excellence of performance depends upon the intellectual skills and know how of the performer.

The view is enticing and its charm has had a resiliency which keeps it still viable. One point which especially charms is that the successful Aristotelian person would meet most descriptions of a happy person. The view may be too stringent, as I will argue below, but it is not inaccurate in the sense that the view does seem to capture most of the ordinary intuitions about successful living. If someone actually concluded the Aristotelian project by thoroughly enjoying their success at excellence, one would be hard pressed to honestly claim that they were not happy.

Still, for me, a problem remains. The perfection and stringency turn a good idea sour. The external grounding of the perfectionist requirement erects an edifice that becomes insurmountable

as well as highly unrealistic. If we assume the tuning metaphor has reasonable cogency, and I believe that it does, something breaks down. Why does the instrument have to be perfect in order for it, the instrument, to sound its own perfect note? If happiness is just "an activity in accordance with excellence", why would it not be possible for the plumber to plumb perfectly, live morally, and thus be happy because of his excellent performances? To perform one's activities excellently and have one's internal dispositions mesh perfectly with the excellence of the performance is certainly a viable, insightful and reasonable explanation of happiness. However, in his attempt to incorporate the externalist intuition and the morality requirement, Aristotle is forced to demand perfection of the instrument which leads ultimately to the inclusion of the "ruining losses", the intellectual elitism and a good idea has gone badly astray. Perhaps, what Aristotle should have done is to have gone back to the doctrine of the mean and remembered the lesson he had tried to impart.

> If, e.g., ten are many and two are few, we take six as intermediate in the object since it exceeds [two] and is exceeded [by ten] by an equal amount, [four]; this is what is intermediate by numerical proportion. But that is not how we must take the intermediate relative to us. For if, e.g., ten pounds [of food] are a lot for someone to eat, and two pounds a little, it does not follow that the trainer will prescribe six, since this might also be either a little or a lot for the person who is to take it - for Milo [the athlete] a little,, but for the beginner in gymnastics a lot; and the same is true for running and wrestling. In this way every scientific expert avoids excess and deficiency and seeks and chooses what is intermediate - but <u>intermediate relative to us,</u> not in the object.[51] (my underlining)

It, thus, seems that Aristotle had the resources to say what needed to

be said, but was driven by the intellectual and perfectionist penchant in his thought to push the view to excess. The happy life might be appropriately described as a life lived and animated by excellent performances. External considerations and virtuous criteria could be brought into play. But the objective criteria by which the excellence of the performances at issue are judged have to be determined from the perspective of the performer. This claim does not mean that more information about what constitutes an "excellent performance" might not make someone change their assessment, but it does mean that this assessment must be made by the person performing. It may be objectively true that the performance could have been better given a superior instrument or better training. However, in his attempt to objectify his "happiness" criteria via the functional argument Aristotle deflates the critical value of the participant perspective and devalues the legitimacy of the subjective perspective. And on the "happiness" issue how life seems to the participant has to have far deeper significance than Aristotle's objectivism is willing to give it. Whether the participant viewpoint is all that matters is, of course, another story, but it has to be a major part of the story. Thus we turn to Epicurus who will try to show exactly how much of the story it ought to be.

Notes

1. Anthony Kenny, "Happiness" in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society New Series LXVI (London: Aristotelian Society by Harrision & Sons, LTD, 1966)

2. Ibid., 99.

3. J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on 'Eudaimonia'" in Essays on Aristotle's

Ethics,
ed. Amelie Okensberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 15.

4. Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, ed. Hugh Tredennick, trans. J.A.K. Thomson (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), 1097b25.

5. Aristotle, NE 1098b10.

6. Richard Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness" in The Philosophic Review no. 88 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

7. cf. Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia".

8. Aristotle, NE 1099a26.

9. The issue of whether or not Aristotle's view ought to be considered in the inclusive or dominant sense will be touched upon later, though I consider this issue not truly relevant to my main project.

10. Aristotle, NE 1097a31-32.

11. J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia", 24.

12. One problem which I would note here is that we come to read Aristotle with a definition of 'happiness' looking for a defintion of 'eudaimonia' and then when we find that what Aristotle calls 'eudaimonia' is not quite the same as our definition of 'happiness', we assume it must mean something else.

13. Aristotle, NE 1095a15-20.

14. Richard Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness", 169.

15. Ibid., 170.

16. Kraut says in "Two Conceptions of Happiness" that the following conditions are vital for what we mean when we call someone happy. The person has a certain attitude towards his life which includes: 1. glad to be alive, 2. on balance his deepest desires are being fulfilled, 3. the circumstances of his life are turning out well. I see at least 2 and 3 as questionable and stipulative in a significant manner. For example most Eastern Views would find this kind of dependency on desire fulfillment highly objectionable as we will see.

17. cf. Aristotle, NE 1100b34-35.

18. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 381.

19. Ibid., 383.

20. Aristotle, NE 1098a16-17.

21. John Cooper, "Aristotle and The Goods of Fortune" in The Philosophic Review no. 94, 173-197.

22. Ibid., 189.

23. Aristotle, NE 1099b1-6.

24. I would suggest that there is probably a certain amount of cultural vanity, egoism, manifesting itself in Aristotle's thought here, and that from our perspective it may just be too difficult to get beyond. This issue will be addressed fully in section 4.

25. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 381.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 383.

29. Aristotle, NE 1098b12-19.

30. Aristotle, NE 1101a7-8.

31. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 383.

32. Ibid., 378.

33. Aristotle, NE 1099b27-29.

34. Perhaps, 'non-ethical' is better here, but the spirit of the argument is the critical point and though 'moral' may have not technically been a Greek concept at the time of Aristotle, "morality" is used in much of the literature and on my view captures what needs to be captured.

35. cf. Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine" in Anarchy, State and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974). James Griffin, Well-Being (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)

36. Aristotle, NE 1098b21-22.

37. Aristotle, NE 1106a23.

38. Aristotle, NE 1106a18-19.

39. Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, 32.

40. J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia", 24.

41. Aristotle, NE 1104b8-13.

42. Aristotle, NE 1153a12.

43. Aristotle, NE 1174b20-30.

44. Aristotle, NE 1109b8-11.

45. cf. J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia".

46. cf. A. O. Rorty, "The Place of Contemplation in Aristotle's Ethics" in Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, ed. A.O. Rorty, 377.

47. cf. Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Chpt. 3.

48. cf. Thomas Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia" in Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, ed. A.O. Rorty.

49. J.L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia", 15.

50. Aristotle, NE 1178a9-10.

51. Aristotle, NE 1106a34-b7.

Chapter 3 'Ataraxia': Epicurean Tranquillity of Mind

1. 'Ataraxia'

One possible reaction to the Aristotelian project and its necessary training might be simply to leave Aristotle's lecture hall. Bewildered, confused, and perhaps overwhelmed, the happiness aspirant might wonder how it would ever be possible to synthesize the entire edifice into a coherent and viable life plan. It seems like a huge undertaking and one could certainly, honestly, question whether one had the "stuff" of which Aristotelian success is made. One cannot even be quite certain what one is pursuing given the problems of deciphering 'eudaimonia'. The lengths to which Aristotle goes to specify what we need to do, the necessity of the culminating virtue, i.e. intellectual excellence, and the general tenor of the perfectionist rigor might incline those of more modest stock to seek a less taxing, more "user friendly", approach. And for those inclined in this direction, Epicurus offers a reasonable alternative.

If one wanted to know what kind of life has the best chance to be a happy life and if the complexity of Aristotle's 'eudaimonia' seemed more than one could handle, Epicurean 'ataraxia', usually translated as tranquillity of mind, might be just what such a person needs. From the perspective of my central question, i.e. whose conception of a happy life is best, the Epicurean option certainly does offer a reasonable alternative to the most pressing objection in Aristotle. This objection I take to be the elitism - the need to have a perfect instrument. Given the more modest nature of what most people

have with which to work, the scope of possible candidates for genuine Aristotelian success ranges over a very limted field. Even if one were to take the weaker position defended in the previous chapter, cite Aristotle's stated priorities, and work only to perfect the "goods of one's soul", it still seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that a person lacking the necessary intellectual acumen to perfect their contemplatory skills has, on Aristotle's view, an insurmountable problem.

In its basics, the Epicurean project is rather simple. Pain is bad, pleasure is good. Anyone who can get their life in order as far as pleasure and pain are concerned will find tranquillity of mind and this just is happiness. However, to actually find Epicurus clearly stating his position is another story. At times it seems that pleasure is simply an instrumental means to tranquillity and at other times pleasure is clearly identified with tranquillity. In places tranquillity is designated as a kind of pleasure and in other places is appears that tranquillity causes pleasure. At times it seems that having no pain is the final goal which seems to make happiness the absence of pain. While in other places, even when one has no pain disturbing states of mind can still be generated which undermine happiness. The desire management program is designed to minimize physical pain. But a crucial point of the management project is directed at quelling desires which are unnatural, unnecessary or both, and these desires, i.e. unnatural and/or unnecessary, are identified as those desires which do not lead to a feeling of pain if not fulfilled.

There is a perpetual tension in the view in which it is

difficult for the reader to be certain whether the end to be achieved is a state of mind or a condition of the body. The body clearly has the power to disturb our state of mind while the death-bed recomendation to recall past pleasures in order to avoid the painful physical condition appears to push the view towards a state of mind account.

In order to solve these problems a number of options seem to be available. The first would be to reduce tranquillity of mind to a form of pleasure; thus making the end goal pleasure. The more sophisticated version of the reductive view collapses the body/mind distinction, cites pleasure as the end objective, tempers the view by noting that there are different kinds of pleasure, and then presents 'ataraxia' as the specific kind of pleasure to be sought. A third option would be to claim that there is a conjunctive end to the Epicurean project which includes both pleasure and tranquillity; the goal becomes physical pleasure and mental tranquillity. Finally there is the possibility of viewing tranquillity of mind as the goal, using pleasure as an instrumental means to tranquillity, and acknowledging that pain can be a tranquillity mitigating condition. In this section I want to try to examine this problem by attempting to decipher how best to understand the goal towards which the Epicurean project is directed. In order words, exactly what is the Epicurean person who properly understands Epicurus supposed to be pursuing?

The first difficulty one finds is that even in the contemporary literture consensus on this issue is hard to find. Gisela Striker makes the following assessment of Greek theories of happiness:

> For Plato and Aristotle(and in fact for the Hellenistic philosophers too, including the

> hedonist Epicurus) the happy life certainly had to be pleasant or enjoyable, but they did not think that happiness itself consisted in being pleased with one's life... Greek theories of happiness from Plato to Epicurus were attempts to spell out what sort of life one would have to lead in order to have good reasons for feeling tranquil or contented: they were not recipes for reaching a certain state of mind.[1]

Thus if Striker is correct one would read Epicurus as claiming that the attainment of the right kind of pleasure gives one sufficient reasons to be happy, and it is these reasons and not the state of mind they produce which makes one happy. 'Happiness' is a pleasurable life in which the "pleasurable feeling" comes about for the right reasons.

Martha Nussbaum views the problem differently. She sees the goal of Epicurean living as "[t]he continued undisturbed and unimpeded functioning of the whole creature."[2] And she defines 'ataraxia' and explains Epicurean success in the following manner.

> 'Ataraxia' (freedom from disturbance and anxiety) in the soul and freedom from pain in the body: these are the uncorrupted creature's goals. We should not, however, conceive these goals in a purely negative way. What the healthy creature goes for, according to the texts, appears to be not a zero state, a state of stagnant inactivity, such a state would, indeed, be death to the organism.[3]

On this depiction we find a dual objective. 'Ataraxia' and 'aponia', the absence of pain in the body, are posited as the goals and the mark of success, in contrast to Striker, is not a judgment but the condition of unimpeded, uncorrupted functioning of the healthy creature.

Finally Julia Annas cites the Epicurean end as "[a]chieving the state that results from fulfilling only the right kind of desires."[4] 'Ataraxia' is thus the kind of pleasure which results

from living by Epicurean standards. Yet on Annas' view, there is a paradoxical sense about the final end in that what ultimately matters is not what one does but one's attitude towards those "doings". Thus in constrast to Striker, Annas views the culmination of the Epicurean project as the attainment of a particular state of mind.

> So happiness is, on reflection, radically internalized. It depends on what one does - one cannot achieve Epicurean happiness by engaging in any old course of action - but happiness itself is not consistituted by one's activities, but by what could be called one's attitude to or point of view on those activites.[5]

From this perspective, Epicurean success amounts to having a tranquil attitude towards one's life. 'Happiness' consists in having the tranquil attitude and not having good reason for having this tranquil attitude. It might seem that this view is not really that different from Striker, but I view Annas' intepretation as quite different. On Striker's view happiness is not a matter of being pleased with one's life, but instead having a life about which good reasoning would be pleased. On Annas' view, being pleased with one's life makes that life a good life. In value terms, Striker could be read as claiming that for Epicurus having the right kind of life, i.e. a life based upon good reasons; gives one the right kind of pleasure; while Annas is saying that the presence of the right kind of pleasure makes the right kind of life.

The second problem one encounters is that it seems from the small amount of first-hand material we have from Epicurus, any of the views could be supported and all of them could be refuted. Some examples might help to make this claim clear. Starting with the

pleasure thesis, one can cite numerous passages where Epicurus claims that the end to be sought is pleasure. There seems to be little doubt that Epicurus advocates the life of seeking pleasure. He tells us that "[p]leasure is the starting point and goal of living blessedly."[4] He also states that "[w]e recognize this as our first innate good..."[7] And we recognize this "innate goodness" by the criterion of feeling. However, he also tells us that beliefs cause great disturbances in the soul and we need to use good reasoning "[w]hich seaches out the reasons for every choice and avoidance and drives out the opinions which are the sources of the greatest turmoil for men's souls."[8] However when we note that the reason why death is nothing to us is because we will feel no pain when we are dead and that what causes no pain when present causes only unnecessary pain when not present, one is again swayed to the pleasure thesis. But then one reads 'Kuriai Doxai' X ("Principle Opinions", KD hereafter) and one is again unsure.

> If the things which produce the pleasures of profligate men dissolved the intellect's fears about the phenomena of the heavens and about death and pains and, moreover, if they taught us the limit of our desires, then we should not have reason to criticize them, since they would be filled with pleasures from every source and would contain no feeling of pain or distress from any source - and that is what is bad.[9]

If pleasure can and does produce disturbing states of mind, e.g. desires which go "beyond the limit", then pleasure seems not to be the only thing at stake in the Epicurean project. And this passage is not the only problematic one as we can also note KD XXX where the desire which does not produce a feeling of pain if unfulfilled leads to

disturbance.

> Among natural desires, those which do not lead to a feeling of pain if not fulfilled and about which there is an intense effort, these are produced by groundless opinion and they fail to be dissolved not because of their own nature but because of the groundless opinions of mankind.[10]

Again we have the same problem. Opinions seem to have a power which undermines the "innate goodness" of pleasure. Some readers might find the absence of direct reference to pleasure in this passage problematic, but we need to be aware that Epicurus equates the absence of pain with pleasure. The counter-intuitive nature of this equation will be fully explored in Section 4 below. Here we need only note the equation cited at KD III.

> The removal of all feeling of pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever a pleasurable feeling is present, for as long as it is present, there is neither a feeling of pain, nor a feeling of distress, nor both.[11]

There thus appears to be a conflict between how one ought to understand the final end towards which the Epicurean project is directed. And the conflict stems primarily from two competing interpretation of Epicurus. One interpretation is the pleasure thesis whereby one conceives the final end of the project as pleasure and the other is the state of mind account in which the final end is depicted in terms of tranquillity. One means of solving this dilemma is to reduce tranquillity of mind to form of pleasure. Annas offers a version of this tactic.

> 'Ataraxia' and 'aponia' are static pleasures (Diogenes X 136). The end of the blessed life is bodily health and 'ataraxia'(EpMen 128); a few

> lines later it is said that the beginning and end of the blessed life is pleasure, so unless we have a sudden switch of final ends, 'ataraxia' is just a specification of the kind of pleasure that can be our final end. This is what we find at 131, where Epicurus says when we call pleasure the end we mean not profligate pleasure but absence of bodily pain and mental 'tarachai' or troubles: this is, the kind of pleasure which is elsewhere said to be static rather than kinetic.[12]

The static/kinetic distinction and its justification will be covered in section 4. For my purposes here all we need note is that Epicurus makes a distinction between two kinds of pleasures; the static pleasures being the ones worthy of pursuit and the kinetic pleasures not so worthy. To keep things clear at this point, some definition of this distinction ought to be noted. 'Kinetic pleasure' is restorative; the pleasure one feels as pain is being removed. 'Static pleasure' is somewhat homeostatic; it is what one feels after pain has been removed, the pleasure of being in our "natural state". On Annas' interpretation 'ataraxia' becomes a candidate for the final end because it is a kind of static pleasure. Pleasure thus remains critical in determining the final end and 'ataraxia' thus becomes a legitimate goal because it is reducible to static pleasure.

I want to make one technical note before I move on to explain why I believe this interpretation of Epicurus is not correct. This technical point concerns the depiction of 'aponia', the absence of pain, and 'ataraxia' as static pleasures. I am aware that this characterization is quite common in the literature. However, it seems problematic to me. According to the KD III equation, "pleasure" and the "absence of pain" are the same thing. I assume that the pleasure of KD

III is static pleasure; I believe this assumption has to be correct since kinetic pleasure would make no sense in the context of KD III. Thus, it would appear to me that it is a mischaracterization to designate 'aponia' as a "kind" of static pleasure because KD III identifies 'aponia' as static pleasure. Perhaps a case could be made for 'aponia' having two uses - one being related to the absence of physical pain and thus representing a specific token in the class of static pleasures while the other use would be the general term to cover the entire rubric. However, Epicurus gives us little reason to believe this to be his intent although he does discuss mental pleasures and some support for such a distinction could be found, but the distinction should be made quite clear and it is generally not.

If one interpretes Epicurus using the thesis that static pleasure is the final end of the Epicurean project, then the presence of static pleasure ought to be necessary, sufficient or both for happiness. However according to the formal first-hand doctrine there are problems for all of these conditions. The first problem is that static pleasure as 'aponia', and this is what it is by definition, is not necessary for happiness. Neither Epicurus on his death-bed, nor the wise man on the rack "feel" no pain. What they are able to experience is a lack of troubledness by the presence of pain. Thus the presence of static pleasure is not a necessary condition for Epicurean happiness. As far as the sufficiency condition is concerned, there is no doubt that 'aponia' can be sufficient for happiness. However, notice how weak the claim becomes. 'Aponia' can only be sufficient for happiness when coupled with the presence of 'ataraxia' otherwise the troubling desires

of KD XXX, as we will see below, could not be problem. Finally since the weaker disjunctive designations fail, it is obvious that stronger conjunctive specification will not work either. If 'aponia' is not necessary and weakly sufficient for happiness, then it cannot possibly be necessary and sufficient.

Another point on this issue which deserves attention is Epicurus' notion of "empty desires". "Empty desires" are desires based upon false beliefs. The critical nature of these false beliefs is that implicit in their content is some allusion to one of two notions. The first notion is that if the desire is not fulfilled pain will result. The second notion is that since this desire is not at present fulfilled one is in pain. And the desires are called "empty" if one of these notions is false.

One, if not the, primary objective of the Epicurean project is to rid ourselves of pain. One of the identifying threads by which we recognize the 'empty desires' is that they "do not lead to a feeling of pain if not fulfilled."[12] If empty desires do not lead to pain, then static pleasure must be present[14]. However, if static pleasure is the end which the Epicurean is seeking, then empty desires cannot be a problem because static pleasure is present. But the empty desires are a huge problem in the Epicurean scheme of things and this is because they disturb our 'ataraxia'. It, thus, seems that the pleasure thesis has to be wrong and we ought to try another approach because the presence of even the right kind of pleasure is not sufficient for happiness.

One way to try to avoid this dilemma is to collapse the

body/mind distinction and claim that mental states have "feels". There is some support for this kind of position in the literature. Nussbaum offers the following explanation.

> Unlike Aristotle and the Stoics, he(Epicurus) does not make the distinction between emotions(fear, anger, love, grief, envey, gratitude, etc.) and appetities(hunger, thirst, sexual desire, desire for warmth and shelter) a central theoretical distinction; his own distinctions between "natural" and "empty" and between bodily and mental cut across it. For many appetites have a "mental" component, while many emotions have a close connection to a bodily condition. And many appetites are "empty", resting on false beliefs about items that are neither necessary nor even important for well-being; and at least some emotions may be based on beliefs that are not false but true.[15]

The defense of the pleasure thesis which would follow from this depiction would be to claim that mental states have accompanying bodily "feels" and that mental disturbances, e.g. `tarachai', are "painful". One might imagine here getting a stress migrain. However, this cannot be the proper explanation of Epicurus' view because the problems of KD XXX still remain. If I am troubled by my desire for a pay-raise and my obstinate boss's refusal to grant one, then I could have "pain" as the bodily correlate of my mental state. And, of course, Epicurus would have the perfect remedy by pointing out that I am causing myself unnecessary pain by my mental anguish over this issue. But this only solves half of the dilemma as the problem with the desires that do not lead to a feeling of pain remains. Perhaps, some defenders of the body/mind collapse might be inclined to claim that there cannot be any such things as "troubling desires which do not lead to a feeling of pain" and that the message of the passage is really about unnecessary

pain. However, this move would render critical parts of the doctrine vacuous as all unfulfilled desires would then lead to a feeling of pain. But clearly on Epicurus' view some do not and the result of pushing the body/mind collapse to the extreme makes it impossible to tell the difference.

The next approach would be to take the declared end in the "Letter to Menoeceus" seriously. While addressing Menoeceus about his desire management program Epicurus states his conception of the final goal.

> The unwavering contemplation of these (the kinds of desires) enables one to refer every choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the freedom of the soul from disturbance, since this is the goal of the blessed life.[16](Note bracketed phrase added for clarity and contextual setting)

Here we have a dual final end. "Health of the body" and "the freedom of soul from disturbance", pleasure and tranquillity of mind, are the cited ends. This is the passage to which Annas refers in the above quotation[17]. However, rather than read the passage in the reductive manner, the next line of explanation would be to take Epicurus at face value. Epicurus is offering a prescription for good living, a conception of happiness, which contains two threads both of which need to be present in order to attain the blessed end. The problem with this reading of Epicurus is that 'aponia', as we have seen, is not needed to achieve Epicurean happiness. A good use of reason has the power to overwhelm the presence of pain. Nussbaum puts the problematic point in perfect perspective. In her discussion of Epicurean therapy and Epicurus' desire management program she notes a significant consequence

of the entire project in regard to bodily pains.

> A tutored use of reason can help the adult to avoid these pains: by providing sources of food, drink, and shelter, by finding medical treatment, by forming friendships that provide further support, even by using happy memories to counteract bodily pain. [18](My underlining added.)

The claim here seems to be that reason has two powers. First, reason can instrumentally aid in the process of properly deciphering the correct kinds of pleasure-producing activites that we ought to pursue. But it also appears to have a second power which might undermine the dual ends thesis. If reason can "counteract" pain, one of two things must be happening. The first occurrence would be a sort of 'distracting' or palliative effect. I might "forget" my toothache while receiving an important telephone call. The occurrence is fairly common. Some readers might be inclined to suspect "unfelt" feelings lurking in the background here, but the happening is common enough to be somewhat cogent. And I just think it has to be wrong to argue that when the phone call ends and the pain returns that I now have a "different" pain.[19] However, I do not want to belabor this point as it does not really help the defender of the dual position either way. Whether the pain goes away or is suppressed, reasoning has shown itself to be more powerful than the pain. Unless one wants to claim that health is also restored in these types of cases, it seems pretty clear that only one of the two ends is satisfied and thus a dual perspective cannot be right. And, of course, we still have the previously noted dilemma where pain does not disturb tranquillity.

This will bring us to a final conception of Epicurus' vision

of happiness. Tranquillity of mind is the end of the pursuit. Tranquillity of mind is pleasurable. Pleasure is an attribute of tranquillity; specifically the kind of pleasure Epicurus called "static". But it is not tranquillity's status as a static pleasure which makes it special. What makes it special is the power that it bestows upon its possessor.

> As soon as the feeling of pain produced by want is removed, pleasure in the flesh will not increase but is only varied. But the limit of mental pleasures is produced by a reasoning out of these very pleasures[of the flesh] and of things related to these, which used to cause the greatest fear in the intellect.[20]

'Ataraxia' is the limit of mental pleasures. "Mental pleasure" is superior to

the pleasures of the flesh because it can manage, control and even usurp their ramifications. Thus it is my contention that the Epicurean end is a tranquil state of mind; not because the tranquil state of mind is pleasurable, which of course it is, but because tranquillity of mind best meets the criteria which Epicurus' view demands of a happy life. And, in fact, if one factors in the criteria for happiness as the final end which Epicurus shares with his competitors, e.g. self-sufficiency and completeness, 'ataraxia' would be the only form of pleasure that could fulfill the task as the other forms of static pleasure are dependent upon external, objective conditions beyond the autonomous control of the subject.

2. Desires and the External World

The role which external goods play in Epicuruean theory is weaker than that of Aristotle. The externalism in Aristotle is mild while in

Epicurus it is weak. By mild externalism I mean that for Aristotle the absence of certain external goods spoils one happiness, but the mere presence of certain external goods is not sufficient for happiness. Strong externalism is any view which maintains that the presence of certain external goods is sufficient for happiness, as some "objective list" accounts maintain. On the strong externalist view, the happiness of a person is determined independent of their mind state. Thus, Aristotle would be a mild externalist because his view maintains that though certain external goods are necessary for happiness, their presence is not sufficient. The person must also be in possession of the full complement of virtues and these do require animation by certain internal conditions. The weak externalist would temper the dependence even further. On the weak externalist view, objective conditions play only a causal role and the significant causal effect is only the manner in which the presence or absence of the relevant external goods affects the internal condition of the person. In simple terms, for Epicurus if the absence does not cause pain and disturb tranquillity, then the absence cannot be bad.

On Epicurus' view it is a fact of nature that pain is something which we all instinctively avoid and dislike while pleasure is the natural opposite of pain being something we instinctively pursue. However, we also find that this instinct if always followed will lead us to problems.

> So every pleasure is a good thing, since it has a nature congenial [to us], but not every one is to be chosen. Just as every pain too is a bad thing, but not every one is such as to always be avoided. It is, however, appropriate to make all these decisions by comparative measurement and an

> examination of the advantages and disadvantages. For at some times we treat the good things as bad and conversely, the bad things as good.[21]

Epicurus should not be confused with any kind of Utilitarian quantification of pleasure over pain. On Epicurus' view the absence of pain is pleasure. An Epicurean does not go jogging because five measures of pain will translate into eight measures of pleasure. The Epicurean goes jogging because if she does not she is inviting future pain which may in turn disturb her tranquillity. Neither "static pleasure" nor tranquillity are the kinds of things which can be quantified, a person either has them or does not. This point will be elaborated upon in section 4. The Epicurean "comparative measurement" is essentially a type of "what if" pragmatic question: "What if I live a long life as my austere Epicurean lifestyle will probably, given good fortune, cause to happen?" Then, I would certainly take the appropriate "measures" concerning my future existence. There is possibly a temporal problem for Epicurus regarding the nature of pleasure which will be examined in Section 4, but at this point it is only the role of external goods which concerns us.

External goods are thus purely instrumental in the Epicurean scheme of things. We eat, drink and need shelter only to avoid the possibility of the pain which their deprivation would bring. The goods have no value in themselves. They are good or bad because of the pleasure or pain which they bring us. Epicurus is an external minimalist. One ought to pursue only those goods that are necessary to avoid pain and pursue these only if the pain will disturb tranquillity. Any positive pursuit of pleasure is a misreading of Epicurus' message.

I take this message to be: if one has no pain, then pleasure is present, and if one has no pain, there can be no sound, e.g. "non-empty", reason to have one's tranquillity disturbed. The relationship which Epicurus tries to explain in the desire management program is between pain, tranquillity and external goods. Since the disturbance of tranquillity is the primary concern for Epicurus and since pain is sole legitimate reason to have one's tranquillity disturbed, the only external goods with which we ought to be concerned are those whose absence produces pain which disturbs tranquillity. These goods are represented in the theory as the desires which are "natural and necessary". And the critical feature which identifies these goods is that the desire to pursue them is based upon a "non-empty", e.g. true, belief. Without food, water and shelter, I most likely will experience tranquillity-disturbing pain.

There are two other types of desires which need special attention that are classified as negative - desires to be avoided because they will unnecessarily disturb our tranquillity. The first of the negative desires are those that are "natural but not necessary", and they are defined in KD XXX as those desires "which do not lead to a feeling of pain if not fulfilled".[22]

The most common desires subsumed under this rubric are appetites for specific objects. The appetite is natural but there is no need to have the specific object. If one is hungry and thirsty, bread and water will suffice. But if the person believes that only steak and champagne will do the trick, then though the appetite is natural the demand is unnecessary in the sense that the pain could be eliminated by the bread

and water. Though there may be definitional problems with 'natural' here, the spirit of the distinction I would maintain is best understood in the ordinary sense that basic survival appetites are "natural" while specific appetite-satisfying tokens are not necessary. One critical manner to identify these desires is that they contained an element of truth and an element of falsehood. If the appetite is not fulfilled pain will result, but the specific object desired if not necessary makes the belief partially false. The thing to keep in mind here is that expedient elimination of pain is the central objective and falling prey to restrictions on the means of alleviation by limiting oneself to a specific object or type of object is subjecting oneself to unnecessary pain.

The second type of negative desires are those that are 'neither natural nor necessary". These are the desires for "objects" whose absence produces no pain but disturbs our tranquillity. These desires essentially represent what we might call the "social desires". They occur as a result of the "[g]roundless opinons of mankind".[23] Unlike the "natural but not necessary desires", there is no truth involved in the beliefs from which these desires are derived. They are based completely on "empty beliefs". An "empty beliefs" is a belief which unjustifiably disturbs tranquillity. And an "unjustified disturbance" of tranquillity is a disturbance that is not caused by pain. An example here might be someone who thought they could not be happy unless they had a favorable public reputation. Since the absence of public respect causes no necessary pain, the belief is "empty" and any disturbance it causes is not necessary.

Though these desires, i.e. neither natural nor necessary, tend to be social in nature, I believe that it is wrong to construe Epicurus as placing all social desires in this category. The thing to note about these desires is that the designation is conjunctive. The tendency is to read Epicurus as having no conceptual tool in his system to advocate any kind of political/social concerns.[24] However, given that Epicurus does advocate certain social concerns when a "natural good", e.g security, is at stake, there does seem to be some room in the system for social/political action. Epicurus thinks that certain emotional reactions are natural and call for appropriate responses. There is, for Epicurus, a "natural anger". Epicureans can react and take social contingencies into consideration if they have the right kind of reasons for doing so. And Epicurus makes this quite clear at KD VII.

> Some men want to become famous and respected, believing that this is the way to acquire security against [other] men. Thus, if the life of such men is secure, they acquire the natural good; but if it is not secure, they do not have that for the sake of which they strove from the beginning according to what is naturally congenial.[25]

I think this passage does give one the conceptual resources to see how Epicurus can, within his prioritized scheme, socially react. One either reads the reaction as a natural emotional response for the sake of what is naturally genial to us. Or one views the reaction as a purely pragmatic necessity in order to avoid potential future pain. What makes a social desire "neither natural nor necessary" is not its social status, but what is at stake. And if pain is at stake, then the belief which animates the desire is not empty in the Epicurean sense. Thus

though technically a social desire may not be natural, if a natural good is at stake the desire would not be "not necessary" and thus would not fall into the negative category.

What comes out of this picture of Epicurean desire management is the view that for Epicurus external goods possess only instrumental value. He does not in Stoic fashion shun the world. He has great respect for the world's power to cause us pain. Any apparent hedonic tenor is toned down by the specification that "pleasure simply is the absence of pain". There is only one reason an Epicurean would seek pleasure and that reason is because of pain. In fact, if one takes Epicurus to the radical extreme even pain has only an instrumental value.

> For we do everything for the sake of being neither in pain nor in terror. As soon as we achieve this state every storm in the soul is dispelled, since the animal is not in a passion to go after some need nor to seek anything else to complete the good of the body and the soul. For we are in need of pleasure only when we are in pain because of the absence of pleasure, and when we are not in pain, then we no longer need pleasure.[24]

"As soon as we achieve this state every storm in the soul is dispelled." It thus seems clear to me that what Epicurus proposes is an account which elevates tranquillity of mind to the highest point. The primary source of motivation is the attainment of this state. Pain can be a legitimate impediment to this state and thus our only interest in pain and pleasure is instrumental. The external world is significant only in the weak sense that it can cause us pain. Managing matters to minimize tranquillity mitigating conditions means approaching the world in a cautious, concerned manner in which facts and information are

sythesized to motivate one to produce a life of tranquillity.

3. Epicurus' Ethical Problem

The Epicurean morality dilemma is rather simple in form: How can a theory which advocates the kind of self-directed pursuit, be it for pleasure or tranquillity, that Epicurus endorses find a legitimate place for morality in the sense of genuine other concern? Where Aristotle tried to tread the fine line and at times even vacillates[27], Epicurus seems to maintain conceptual integrity at all cost as he claims that exercising the virtues is fully compatible with the Epicurean end. And though he tries, as in the following passage at KD V, to alleviate the problem by subsuming virtuous behavior under the pleasure rubric, it remains hard to understand how in actuality such could be the case.

> It is impossible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably and justly and impossible to live prudently, honorably and justly without living pleasantly. And whoever lacks this cannot live pleasantly.[28]

The problem is not only that the passage is counter-intuitive, but it does not even appear to be internally consistent with the general tenor of Epicurus' project. It seems very difficult to understand how pleasure connects with justice and honor given that the 'pleasure' worth Epicurean pursuit is just the absense of pain. The mention of honor in particular seems totally inappropriate given the Epicurean "fact" that the only way the absence of honor could cause me pain would be if I had some empty desire animating my mind state, i.e. I cared what people thought about me. Justice might be somewhat more feasible,

but the kind of justice at stake would not solve the self-interest problem. Acting to secure justice might prompt someone to help eradicate an unjust civic environment, but then surely possible personal pain would have to be at issue since the only reason an Epicurean would act against an unjust government would be because it might eventually victimize her. But behaving justly for justice sake could run seriously counter to my deeper Epicurean concerns. Taxes on my Garden for the good of the poor could cause me to forfeit my Garden. Of the three declared virtues only prudence seems to present no internal problem as long as one reads "prudence" in the self-interested spirit advocated by the desire management project. This reading of prudence is in the general spirit of the period, but it still leaves, as we saw with Aristotle, a certain basic form of egoism which is very difficult to wed to any kind of genuine benevolent interests in the well-being of others.

In the "Letter to Meneoceus", Epicurus offers the same advice given in KD V and adds, "For the virtues are natural adjuncts of the pleasant life and the pleasant life is inseparable from them."[29] Assuming a dispositional depiction of the virtues, it is understandable how the virtues might produce pleasure. The problem is getting them to produce the right kind of pleasure without redefining the basic content of what we normally take certain virtues to be. Even accepting Epicurus' conception of justice as mere "reciprocal usefulness", it would seem that no good Epicurean would be willing to engage in an unnecessary pain-producing quest in the name of justice. Yet this is exactly what we would normally expect the advocate of justice to do. It

is true that Epicurus does tell us that sometimes we should be willing to undergo pains when as a result we will get pleasure from them. But in the sacrifice case, one has to wonder about this. Perhaps, this might be a case where Nussbaum's claim of the collapse of the emotional/physical distinction might come into play. If emotional states can be literally "painful", then my emotional attachment to the well-being of others might cause me severe pain. Yet problems remain. Any emotional attachment to the well-being of others would fall into the second negative category of desires. Also, it is not that we cannot get the virtues to produce emotive pleasure; it is that this seems to depict the virtues as an instrumental means to the agent's pleasure/tranquillity and this methodology will only save the theory at the cost of devaluing the virtues. If the real reason someone makes a charitable contribution is because it pleases her, we would be less inclined to praise the person's virtuous spirit.

Perhaps, Epicurus could use some type of aid at this point. We might point out the famous "Paradox of Hedonism"[30]. Someone cannot get pleasure from altruistic actions unless they really do care about the welfare of others. Someone like Mandeville[31] might claim that the only reason the mother saves the child from falling into the fire was because it would have disturbed her tranquillity to see it fall into the fire and burn. The astute defender of the "Paradox" would then point out that this position has to be wrong. The mother must really care about the child because otherwise she could not have had her tranquillity disturbed in the first place. This kind of explanation might help Epicurus. He could claim that in order to experience certain

normative human "pleasures" and emotions, a real genuine affection for others must be present. And since Epicurus does place great stock in friendship as he clearly states at KD XXVII, there might be some merit in this approach. "Of the things which wisdom provides for the blessedness of one's whole life, by far the greatest is the possession of friendship."[32] Of course, Epicurus nowhere advocates a defense of his view based upon the ramifications of the alleged "Paradox of Hedonism", and such a defense does still seem to conflict with other things he does directly say.

> If you do not, on every occasion, refer each of your actions to the goal of nature, but instead turn prematurely to some other [criterion] in avoiding or pursuing [things], your actions will not be consistent with your reasoning.[33]

Thus, since the goal of nature is simply to avoid pain, the mother ought to let the child fall as otherwise her reasoning, e.g. avoid pain, would be in conflict with her action, e.g. possibly burning her in hands in the fire. The problem seems difficult to solve. Saving passages can be found only later to conflict with other passages, and no consistent explanation to synthesize the two dichotomous goals seems possible.

Further problems arise when we think about the precarious position in which an Epicurean will be placed regarding other people. As Annas[34] observes, the Epicurean cannot be relied upon by others as it will frequently happen that the Epicurean goal of pursuing pleasure will fall into direct conflict with the interests of others. And if there are no external restraints present which would result in pain to the Epicurean, given the choice between my pleasure and someone

else's pain, there seems no reason why any Epicurean would deny themself the pleasure even if it meant behaving unvirtuously. Annas also notes in the same paragraph a curious dilemma for any fully avowed Epicurean. The theory is not one that could be openly advocated. If I announce to the world that the goal of nature is to pursue my own pleasure, then other people will not trust me and this situation would make it more difficult to attain my openly advocated goal. Thus, I could not let others know my genuine intent which seems to pose a serious problem for any acknowledgment on my part to the virtue of truthfulness.

Annas summarizes the primary Epicurean morality problem as follows in the same section. "All these objections are aimed at a theory which 'says' that it gives the virtues intrinsic value, but in fact finds it problematic to do so, given that its final end is pleasure."[35] And even if I am right and the final Epicurean end is 'ataraxia', the difficulty remains. The problem is simply that our intuitions balk at the idea of the virtues having "intrinsic value" and at the same time being means to our own pleasure or tranquillity. Even if we honestly discover that behaving virtuously from a genuine, noble intent turns out to be pleasurable, once the discovery is made it will be difficult to keep this information out of the motivational scheme. And the more this information seeps into the scheme, the greater the temptation to factor from the instrumental value of the virtues. From a pragmatic perspective this situation might not be a bad thing. If we could teach people that behaving virtuously would always "pay-off" in pleasure we might be willing to take the theoretical devaluing of the

virtues as the cost of a more civil world. However, from Epicurus' theoretical perspective it does seem to cause problems for the theory as well as the status of the virtues. If the virtues are instrumental means to pleasure, they cannot have intrinsic value. And if they do not have intrinsic value, the pleasure motive is necessary and self-interest as the motivator seems inescapable.

The last sentence deserves some comment before moving on to the next section. As noted with Aristotle and as we observe in Epicurus there is a certain form of egoism which seems to animate these views. If self-interest is a motivational factor, virtue for virtue's sake is in constant tension with any theory that makes virtue important but stands on a framework which makes happiness the primary motivating factor in life. It is my view that the problem cannot be solved within these frameworks. If one is going to construct a theory which is intended to answer Socrates' question, "How ought we to live our lives?" and one wants to give morality, as genuine other concern, a central place in the theoretical answer, egoistic motivation must be deflated first. Classical Western views tend to ignore this issue and concentrate instead on trying to show how morality will in the end result in enhancing one's happiness. However, we will see later in this work how on the approach of certain ego-deflating Eastern views, the results might be very different.

4. Pleasure's Limit

The role pleasure plays in Epicurus' conception of happiness has been in the forefront of our attention due to its crucial importance to

virtually every topic which Epicurus discusses. This being the case many of the topics which might have appeared in this section have been addressed. Given this situation rather than rehash pleasure's role, I want to examine Epicurus' understanding of pleasure and in particular pleasure's limit. By 'pleasure's limit', I mean specifically the Epicurean problems which relate to pleasure's magnitude and the temporal limit which Epicurus places upon the manifestation of pleasure in one's life. The two principle theses which Epicurus puts forth on these points are as follows. The magnitude limit has already been defined as given in KD III and the principle claim there is that "the limit of the magnitude of pleasures is the absence of pain." The temporal problem concerns the thesis given in a number of places but the main spirit of the position is best exemplified by KD XIX "Unlimited time and limited time contain equal [amounts of] pleasure, if one measures its limits by reasoning."[36] I will now examine each of these theses.

Cicero in _de Finibus Book 1 reports the following position of Epicurus.

> So generally, the removal of pain causes pleasure to take its place. Epicurus consequently maintained that there is no such thing as a neutral state of feeling intermediate between pleasure and pain; for the state supposed by some thinkers to be neutral, being characterized as it is by entire absence of pain, is itself, he held, a pleasure, and, what is more, a pleasure of the highest order. A man who is conscious of his condition at all must necessarily feel either pleasure or pain. But complete absence of pain Epicurus considers to be the limit and highest point of pleasure; beyond this point pleasure may vary in kind, but it cannot vary in intensity or degree.[37]

Though the view here comes from a second-hand source, there seems to be little doubt that one must attribute this kind of position to Epicurus given the cited KD III "pleasure equals no pain" equation. There might be a question-begging problem with the issue that "one who is conscious must necessarily feel either pleasure or pain" as this would only be true if the "pleasure equals no pain" equation is true and no other support is given for the position. However, given Epicurus' collapse of the emotional/physical distinction, he certainly would have some rationale for the view. Someone who had no pain and was conscious would have some kind of positive emotional response towards the condition, even if it were only the tacit acknowledgement of the condition. And if emotions do have bodily correlates, then it would seem that a case could be made for this position. Thus if emotions count as pleasures and pains, there does seem to be some argument embedded in this view. Another way to argue this position within an Epicurean framework would be to note that unlike Aristotle, Socrates, Plato or the Stoics, Epicurus has no qualms about reducing the good to pleasure. Therefore, if good equals pleasure and having no pain is good, it seems a truism that having no pain must be a pleasure.

Of course, these views are not uncontestable, but they do seem to be the argued position of Epicurus. The usual defense of the view that "pleasure just is the absence of pain" takes its support from the Epicurean position given by Cicero in _de Finibus_ where the kinetic/static distinction is cited and explained.[38] On this view, as noted above, there are two kinds of pleasure; one is the restorative and the other a sort of homeostatic condition whereby we experience the

pleasure of being in our "natural state". Kinetic pleasure is characterized by movement, for example the pleasure of satisfying my hunger. Static pleasure is not characterized by movement, for example the pleasure of not being hungry. Annas defines static pleasure as "[t]he pleasure you have when there is no pain or want to be removed."[29] This characterization of pleasure is a good example of how Epicurean pleasure cuts right across the emotional/mental distinction. One is not experiencing static pleasure if one has an unfulfilled desire. Agitating belief states, i.e. states of mind which depend upon propostional content, like anger, joy, contempt or jealousy are subsumed along with toothache, sickness, hunger and burns under the "painful" rubric. The kinetic pleasures are the pleasures we feel as we are being restored to our natural state. The intuition which seems to be driving this view is that the pleasure one experiences in gratifying one's thirst is different from the pleasure one experiences when one's thirst is satisfied, e.g. when thirst is not present. Epicurus clearly considers the latter type of pleasure to be the right one to pursue. And on my reading of Epicurus, the rationale behind the advocacy of pursuing static pleasure would be that 'ataraxia' is most easily maintained under this condition. However, notice again how the collapse makes theory-saving sense at one point, but then has the problem of explaining how the empty desires, those which cause no pain if not fulfilled, can become a problem.

Given the nature of the homeostatic pleasure, it follows in a sense that static pleasure is not something which can be increased. And if 'ataraxia' is a kind of static pleasure, there is some sense to be

drawn from the claim that this kind of pleasure cannot be increased. Tranquillity of mind is not something which comes in quantities. We either have it or we do not, and the idea of getting more of it could only make sense in a temporal context which, as we will see below, Epicurus denies.

The problems with the view that pleasure cannot be increased and is in fact merely the absence of pain are considerable. The first dilemma is that the view might certainly be saved if we could make the 'ataraxia' equals 'pleasure' equation work. However, the difficulty is that Epicurus does not really say this and, as we have seen, too many other theses make the direct identity improbable. The most one could glean from the available texts is that 'ataraxia' is pleasurable, but so are sex and food. 'Pleasure' has a much wider scope than 'ataraxia'. Some pleasures will spoil our 'ataraxia' as Epicurus was well aware. If the critical pleasure we are supposed to be seeking and the one which cannot be increased is 'ataraxia', why does Epicurus in the crucial KD III passage use 'hedone' and not 'ataraxia' when he sets the limit of 'pleasures' magnitude at the absence of pain? One reason, noted by Cicero, is that the early intuitions about pleasure's innate goodness are drawn from the fact that we all like physical pleasure and as long as we stay physically grounded it is hard to deny that pleasure is good, e.g. pleasing. However, when Epicurus talks about 'pleasure' as the final end to be sought, the scope needs to be narrowed. The most he is entitled to is that pleasure is good and 'ataraxia' is the best kind of pleasure, therefore pursue 'ataraxia'. However, just because the right kind of pleasure is not something which can be increased does

assure us that the other kinds cannot be increased and the above passage, i.e. Cicero, clearly does refer to "kinds of pleasure".

Perhaps, we could charitably attribute to Epicurus the claim that only the right kinds of pleasure cannot be increased. This is the approach taken by Annas and it is aimed at the fallout from the Cicero criticism. From Cicero's perspective, Epicurus equivocates when he uses the physical pleasures to establish his claim about pleasure's goodness while, in fact, on Cicero's reading it is only mental pleasures which count as static. And Annas addresses the issue with the following rebuttal.

> Epicurus thinks of pleasure not as a uniform sensation that one could get more or less of from different activites, but rather as what results from fulfilling a desire. In seeking pleasure, what matters is that we fulfill those desires which are natural, and the Epicurean strategy for living the best life is directed at finding and following natural desires. Natural desires, however, do not produce mental rather than bodily pleasures; rather the natural/not natural distinction cuts right across that of mental and bodily.[40]

One technical point before I move on to the thrust of this view. It is not only "natural desires" which we ought to fulfill. It is only the natural and necessary desires that we ought to fulfill. The "natural and necessary desires" are the ones which result in necessary pain if not fulfilled. This point might seem petty as Annas is well-aware of this distinction and the omission is probably only an oversight. However, quite a few technical issues are involved with this point. Technically any unfulfilled desire will disturb our 'ataraxia'. What needs managing are the unnecessary disturbances and these are the ones which result in no pain if not fulfilled.

The pleasure which Annas claims Epicurus is advising us to pursue is simply the pleasure of being in our natural state. It is a condition which synthesizes good health and peace of mind. I have used homeostasis to describe this condition. Annas defines the condition as "what results from fulfilling a desire." When we fulfill a desire both the mental agitation and the physical pain which goaded us to seek out the object of fulfillment are eliminated, and we are returned to the natural condition, e.g. no pain and no agitation. This is a condition which obviously cannot be increased. It is also the condition represented by static pleasure. However, this is a considerably weaker claim than either KD III or Cicero's above cited Epicurean makes. If Epicurus were only claiming that static pleasure cannot be increased or that static pleasure is the best, there would be no problem. However, Cicero's Epicurean and KD III seem to be making a stronger claim about 'pleasure' and not just about a specific kind of pleasure.

I believe that this stronger claim has to be wrong. In order for the stronger position to be true, it would have to be shown that unexpected and unwanted gifts of good fortune do not increase the felt quality of my life experience. If the stronger claim is true, then Epicurus not only has to tell me that being in the natural condition is the most excellent form of pleasure, but also that if I desire something and believe it to be more pleasurable than the natural condition, I am wrong. For example, imagine that I am starving and thirsty when I am presented with a hefty helping of bread and water. The pain subsides and I am now basking in the pleasure of my natural condition when much to my suprise my favorite dessert appears. On

Epicurus' view when I eat the dessert my pleasure does not increase but is only varied, but this still seems wrong. Given the option between a daily dose of bread and water or the daily dose with the dessert attached, I choose the latter everytime, at least as long as I do not have health problems relating to the dessert or its calories. And the reason I choose the latter is because it tastes more pleasing. Epicurus would certainly be correct to tell me that I am unwise to develop this dependency, but he also has to tell me that my belief and the feeling which accompanies it, i.e. that the latter is more pleasing than the former, is false because I am really only preferring a variation. But if I prefer the variation, there may be some reason why I prefer the variation and it might not be only because I have a false belief. An interesting point would be wine tasters or, in fact, any well trained pleasure evaluator. On Epicurus' view the wine taster does not prefer the more pleasurable wine, she simply prefers one variation of pleasure to another, but we still have the same problem. Why the preference? And the only possible answer has to be that the variation tastes better, is more pleasurable.

Another puzzling problem on this topic is that pain does seem to vary in intensity. Some pains are worse than others. 'Worse' and 'more' are certainly appropriate terms to use in describing painful experiences. Our physical intuitions about pain's intensity variance seem quite sound. In fact, these intuitions would form a major factor in properly managing our lives according to Epicurus' recommendations. Yet, if Epicurus is right, the converse intuitions we have about pleasure are not reliable and actually all wrong even though by the

criterion of feeling, Epicurus' avowed measuring stick, the information they present compels us in the opposite direction. The problem is that the physicalism is undermined by doctrine in the pleasure case while the physicalism is used to support and guide doctrine in the pain case, but we find no principled rationale for the decision and it seems to be a rather arbitrary choice. In other words, I might claim that anyone who is conscious must necessarily feel either warm or cold. I might then define 'warmth' as the absence of cold. But it would clearly be wrong to claim that though cold does come in degrees warmth does not. The limit of the magnitude of warmth could be described as the absence of cold. But there is no principled reason why I could not change my description and claim that 'cold' is the absence of warmth, then note that the limit of cold's magnitude is the absence of heat. However, since they both seem to come in degrees any such choice would be purely aribitrary and require strong backing to disengage the counter-intuitions. And this Epicurus does not give us.

The point which needs to be noted on this topic is a distinction between two separate issues. Epicurus may be right about what really is the best kind of pleasure and if he is right about this point, then the best kind of pleasure is not something which can be increased. However, it remains problematic to extend the identifiable qualities of static pleasure to all pleasures. But if these qualities cannot be extended to all "pleasures", then it seems unfair to justify pleasure's goodness by using the common attributes shared by all 'pleasures' under the broad-scope of the term and then use the assent gleaned from the broad-scope use to argue for his project on the basis

of a quality only found in the narrower case of static pleasure. In other words, Epicurus motivates his project with two critical premises. The first is pleasure's goodness and the second a lack of intensity variance. If these are both true, then he has good reasons to endorse his program. Both statements can be true. But in order for both to be relevantly true, 'pleasure' needs to have the same scope in both statements. All pleasures need to have the critical quality of intensity invariance. And it is this point which I contend is suspect. The limit of the magnitude of all pleasures is not the absence of pain.

A second issue on pleasure which Epicurus takes to be of great importance to his project concerns pleasure's temporal limit. According to Epicurus more pleasurable time does not mean more pleasure. In KD XIX he states, "Unlimited time and limited time contain equal [amounts of] pleasure if one measures its limits by reasoning."[41] Two things are worth noting on this passage. The first is the allusion to 'reasoning' might tempt one to think that Cicero is right and Epicurus is, as argued in Section 1, offering a state of mind account. A second point is that the advice here seems to run contra the avowed "criterion of feeling" passage in the "Letter to Meneoceus". There we are specifically told:

> And this is why we say that pleasure is the starting-point and goal of living blessedly. For we recognize this as our first innate good, and this is our starting-point for every choice and avoidance and we come to this by judging every good by the criterion of feeling.[42]

Some readers might be inclined to note the refuting passages which follow this statement where Epicurus clearly advises Meneoceus not to

indulge in certain pleasures and thus not find a contradiction on this issue. However, the refuting passages are all aimed at not indulging in pleasures which will ultimately bring on more pain than they are worth. And thus Epicurus is still, in "The Letter to Meneoceus", using the criterion of feeling albeit modified by Epicurean desire managment concerns while in the KD XIX passage something beyond feeling is usurping the feeling criterion. The critical factor in KD XIX is that it is reasoning about pleasures and not pleasure per se which will deliver the goal.

A defending inclination to this point might come in the form of some reference back to the collapse of the physical/mental pleasure distinction. The argument would be that reasoning correctly is a form of static pleasure. However, if this is the defending move it still in a sense fails. "Good reasoning about pleasure" may be pleasurable. But if good reasoning is pleasurable and this is why we ought to do it, then the role of "good reasoning" is purely instrumental in relation to pleasure. However, the tenor of KD XIX only makes sense in a judgment mode. "Reasoning about pleasure" clearly means making a judgment. We are not being told to reason well in order to produce pleasure. We are being told if we reason well, then we will discover something about pleasure - namely that time is not a relevant factor in assessing pleasure. In fact, the reason we are being told to reason about pleasure is because the "feel" of pleasure cannot always be trusted. Thus, to note the physical/mental pleasure collapse here would be to confuse a felt symmetry with a functional asymmetry.

One last problem on this issue is that there seems to be a

peculiar asymmetry between pleasure and pain. Pains are clearly subject to temporal considerations. Epicurus tells us at KD IV that,

> The feeling of pain does not linger continuously in the flesh, rather, the sharpest is present for the shortest time, while what merely exceeds the feeling of pleasure in the flesh lasts only a few days. And diseases which last a long time involve feelings of pleasure which exceed feelings of pain.[43]

This passage seems very hard to reconcile with the non-temporal status of pleasure. Since there is a tacit implication that the shortness of the severe pain compensates for the intensity, one has to wonder about the nature of the compensation which seems pretty clearly to imply more time spent in pleasure. A possible defense to this objection might be that Epicurus is only talking about the quantity of pleasure and that this quantity is not increased temporally. However, even given this interpretation which is certainly in harmony with the spirit of KD XIX, once Epicurus announces at KD XX that understanding the nature of pleasure has the effect of eliminating the "[n]eed of unlimited time"[44], we can see that more is at stake than "quantity". Living a longer life is not more pleasurable than living a shorter life. Pleasure is a non-temporal phenomena, not only in the sense that its quantity cannot be increased over time, but also in the sense that more pleasurable time cannot be better than less. However, longer periods of severe pain would be worse than shorter ones and nature provides the natural remedy by making the longer pains less intense. But the absence of pain is just pleasure, and if nature's compensation is to shorten the intense pains then one has to wonder what is occurring during this shortened period. And by definition it seems that we have to be in long

periods of pleasure and this must be a good thing. In fact, by Epicurus' own admission it has to be better than high intensity, long-lasting pain which leaves one wondering what makes it better if longer pleasures are not superior to shorter ones?

However, despite the criticism, there may be a way to make sense of the non-temporal status of pleasure as well as the alleged fact that it does not increase. If I am right about Epicurus' conception of happiness being a state of mind account, I think we can see a way that the two counter-intuitive claims of this section could be true. The problems surrounding the two problematic claims stem from the difficulty one encounters trying to get physical pleasures to behave in the same manner as the mental ones. In simple terms, physical pleasures do seem to be subject to both quantitative and temporal variance. If we could reduce all physical pleasures to kinetic pleasures, the problem could be solved by making mental pleasures the only static pleasures, but this we cannot do because Epicurus clearly considers some physical pleasures, e.g. satisfied appetites, to be static pleasures.

In KD XVIII Epicurus does draw a distinction between "mental pleasures" and the "pleasures of the flesh" as noted above in Section 1.[45] He also notes an attribute of "mental pleasures"; the "[l]imit of mental pleasures is produced by a reasoning out of these pleasures of the flesh and of the things related to these, which used to cause the greatest fears in the intellect."[46] There are thus at least four kinds of pleasure in Epicurus' taxonomy of pleasures: kinetic physical, static physical, kinetic mental and static mental. The

physical breakdown of the pleasures should be obvious at this point. I take 'ataraxia' to be the static mental pleasure and view this pleasure as the object of KD XVIII. Kinetic mental pleasures would probably encompass "pleasures" which accompany the satisfaction of states of mind like greed, revenge, lust, etc. Given that all these distinctions are clearly present, there has to be a way to prioritize them. Obviously the static pleasures are superior to the kinetic which only leaves the two types of static pleasures as viable candidates. Since the presence of mental pleasure is by definition dependent upon the management of the physical pleasures, 'ataraxia' as mental pleasure has to be the ultimate priority and the physical pleasures have to be viewed as instrumental means to 'ataraxia'.

If the objective is then 'ataraxia' as a state of mind identified as tranquillity, it might, perhaps, be appropriate to take some liberties with Epicurus' ambiguous language. Epicurus talks of pleasure in two veins and is not careful in distinguishing between them. He discusses 'pleasure' in a wide context as something which we can all feel and all find good. He also discusses 'pleasure' in a narrower context as the end or goal of his project. In the narrow context he is discussing 'ataraxia' as a mental pleasure. If then this is the end goal, it is clear why 'pleasure' in this context cannot be increased in intensity. Mental pleasure, tranquillity of mind, is not something subject to intensity increase.

The temporal problem is more difficult as it still seems that more tranquil time ought to be better than less. However, from a purely technical perspective, anyone who had any concerns about the temporal

duration of their tranquil state of mind probably is not in a state of tranquillity as this thought itself would be one which disturbed one's tranquillity. The present moment could only be a tranquil moment, if there were no future concerns present. This may not seem realistic, but it does at least give an explanation, and if I am correct about the radical nature of Epicurus' internalism it is a cogent explanation. If one has a reason to be concerned about their future tranquillity, this condition in itself indicates that tranquillity of mind is not present. Tranquillity could then not be something about which talk of temporal duration would be appropriate. This would be the case, not so much because more tranquil time might not be better than less, but for the reason that to the tranquil person no such thought can arise. In other words, there is no conceptual role for the temporal thought to play in the belief scheme of the tranquilly composed person.

5. Epicurean Happiness

Epicurus' conception of happiness presents problems for the interpreter because it is difficult to reconcile what he says about 'pleasure' with a genuine hedonic account of The Good Life. He tells us that 'pleasure' is the end we ought to pursue, but when he actually describes the content of the "pleasurable life" it does not look very pleasurable at all. In fact, Epicurus is rather conservative about pleasure and endorses a conservativism rather unbecoming for an alleged hedonist as he clearly advocates passing on any pleasure if its pursuit will unnecssarily disturb one's tranquillity. And, in fact, given that 'pleasure' is nothing more than the absence of pain, the austere

minimalism which emerges would be rather unappealing to many, if not most, aspirants striving for happiness. The only motivation which an educated Epicurean has for doing anything is that if he does not do it, pain will follow. And ultimately even pain can pale into insignificance given the right state of mind.

Happiness for Epicurus is a state of mind. Even the most extreme pain can be neutralized by an astute use of reasoning and rational insight. Our intuitions balk at much of what Epicurus says as we enter a world that seems to mirror Robert Nozick's "Experience Machine"[47]. In this essay Nozick postulates a hypothetical "experience machine" run by very sophisticated psychologists. By properly stimulating points in the brain, the machine can make life "feel" as if one were undergoing one's most pleasuable experience. The intuition which Nozick pumps in this essay is that most of us would not be inclined to enter the machine. We want more than just to feel as if life were going well; we want it actually to be the case that this is so. Thus, the Epicurean world where beliefs usurp objective conditions and life seems to be, and in fact is, going quite well simply because one has a "pleasurable attitude" towards that life seems wrong.

I want to conclude this chapter by addressing two final issues. The first issue is whether my reading of Epicurus is defensible and the second whether this characterization of Epicurus' view is a credible candidate for the best kind of life. As far as the first issue is concerned given Epicurean priorities, I think there can be no doubt that 'ataraxia' as "tranquillity of mind" is the final end of the Epicurean project. Even if one insists on maintaining the "pleasure"

framework, the culminating pleasure is "mental pleasure" whatever that might mean. And Epicurus does set the "limit of mental pleasure" as reasoning about the pleasures of the flesh and not in the fulfillment of particular desires.[48] It is the state of mind of the Epicurean which most matters and "desire fulfillment" only enters into the picture if there is pain involved. However given the presence of the tranquil attitude, even pain does not really matter. It is in the end one's attitude towards pain which controls and determines Epicurean success, and given this "fact" about Epicurean therapy the state of mind depiction has to be correct.

As far as the plausibility of the view is concerned, there is an element in Epicurus' view that I take to be crucial for any explanation of happiness which Epicurus does correctly identify. This element is the legitimate subjective component. If one were not attitudinally "pleased" with the content of their first person experience of life, it seems difficult to claim that one could be happy. And given the presuppositions of the propositional content composing the tranquil state of mind, the presence of 'ataraxia' by virtual definition, e.g. the absence of troubles, when extrapolated by Epicurean standards would suffice for a specification of the legitimate subjective component in an explanation of happiness.

The weakness in the view is the attempt to find psychological immunity from pain. I take this "psychological immunity" from pain, not to be troubled in the presence of pain, to be the penultimate endorsement of Epicureanism. The defining moments of High Epicureanism are the death-bed scene and the wise Epicurean on the rack. Both have

developed the proper Epicurean attitude towards their pain. Not being troubled by their pain, i.e. properly reasoning about pain, is pleasurable not because there is no pain present but because in the presence of pain the Epicurean is able to transcend the "feel" of the pain. Yet, one has to wonder exactly what would be going on in the head of the Epicurean person performing this wonderous feat. If the pleasure of reasoning about pain is present, then, by definition, no pain can be present, but if there is no pain present how can one generate the pleasure of reasoning about it? There could be a temporal solution to certain versions of this problem if the pain subsides following the successful Epicurean intervention. However, in the defining moments, e.g. the death-bed scene and the rack, this is clearly not the case. Unlike the previously cited "distracting effect", in these situations successful Epicureanism depends upon recognition of the painful situation and that seems, again by definition, to mean that pleasure cannot be present. The problem is that 'pleasure' as it is used throughout Epicurus' argument probably has two different senses. One of these senses would be the ordinary physiological sense and the other would be an attitudinal sense such as "being pleasure with one's life." And because Epicurus does not clearly explicate this distinction, the langauge of "pleasure" causes the argument to rest upon a vacillation between the two senses with nothing more than speculative insights and disputable textual arguments to decide the issue of what role "pleasure" is supposed to play, and what the right Epicurean specification of happiness ought to be.

Epicurus had a intuition which is compelling, and that intuition is that tranquillity, peace of mind or a pleasant attitude towards one's life were crucial to any explication of happiness. However, when he tried to wed this compelling intuition to the hedonic framework too many problems arise and thus it might be fruitful to turn to the Stoics who will take the compelling internalist intuition in a non-hedonic direction.

Notes

1. Gisela Striker, "Ataraxia: Happiness as Tranquillity," The Monist 73 no.1 (Jan. 1990), 97.

2. Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 109.

3. Ibid., 109.

4. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 349.

5. Ibid., 347.

6. Epicurus, "The Letter to Meneoceus"(Ep Men), in Classics of Western Philosophy Third Edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1990), 316.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Epicurus, "Principal Doctrines"(KD), in Classics of Western Philosophy Third Edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1990), 318.

10. Ibid., 320.

11. Ibid., 318.

12. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 188.

13. Epicurus, KD XXX.

14. see Epicurus, KD, III.

15. Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire, 114.

16. Epicurus, Ep Men, 316.

17. see Epicurus, Ep Men, 316.

18. Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire, 111.

19. cf. Rosenthal, David M.: "Two Concepts of Consciousness" in The Nature of Mind: ed. David M. Rosenthal: Oxford University Press: New York, NY: 1991. Rosenthall has a couple of arguments pertaining to this issue. Headaches and toothaches do seem to be attention dependent and we do not literally claim that when distracted from their pain the pains cease to exist. Also certain aesthetic experiences seem to require cognitive recognitional capacities, but it seems to stretch things to claim that the untrained eye or ear is missing a certain sensation which only the trained eye or ear can feel. The point which Rosenthal is trying to make is that the problem is cognitive and not physiological. And if he is right, which I believe he is, there may be "unfelt feelings".

20. Epicurus, KD, 319.

21. Epicurus, Ep Men, 316.

22. Epicurus, KD, 320.

23. Ibid.

24. cf. William James Earle, "Epicurus: Live Hidden" Philosophy no. 63 (1988), 102.

25. Epicurus, KD, 318.

26. Epicurus, Ep Men, 316.

27. see Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Book IX.

28. Epicurus, KD, 318.

29. Epicurus, Ep Men, 317.

30. see Joel Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism", in Moral Philosophy, ed. George Sher (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1987).

31. see Bernard Mandeville, "An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue", in British Moralists Vol. I, ed. D.D. Raphael (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc. 1991).

32. Epicurus, KD, 320.

33. Epicurus: KD, XXV.

34. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 341.

35. Ibid., 342.

36. Epicurus, KD, XIX.

37. Cicero, De Finibus I.IX, trans. H. Rachman (Loeb Library).

38. see Ibid., I and II.

39. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness, 336.

40. Ibid.

41. Epicurus, KD, 319.

42. Epicurus, Ep Men, 316.

43. Epicurus, KD, 318.

44. Ibid., 319.

45. see Epicurus, KD, XVIII.

46. Epicurus, KD, 318.

47. cf. Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine", in Anarchy, State and Utopia, (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 42-46.

48. see Epicurus, KD, XVIII.

Chapter 4 'Apatheia': Stoic Indifference

1. 'Apatheia'

Trying to explain the Stoic view of happiness presents a number of difficulties which the two previous views do not present. The major problem is the lack of a dominant voice. Aristotelian and Epicurean views are woven around the basic doctrine of their founding father while the Stoic views tend to cluster around thematic issues. Among these thematic issues there are certain foundational commitments. One such critical commitment is that the successful Stoic will be imperturbable. In the Stoic context 'imperturbable' refers to a state of mind by which the Stoic sage comes to understand that nothing of genuine value can be taken away from him. Seneca calls this condition one in which the subject is "[i]naccessible to impingement".[1] Epictetus gives a similar presentation and adds more Stoic doctrine to the picture.

> So if you are averse only to what is against nature among the things that are up to you, then you will never fall into anything that you are averse to; but if you are averse to illness or death, you will meet misfortune. So detach your aversion from everything not up to us, and transfer it to what is against nature among the things that are up to us.[2]

If one is averse only to what is against nature among the things which are up to us, then one would never suffer because one cannot generate a critical necessary condition for suffering. This critical condition is the emotive state of mind which could be called "psychological

aversion". 'Suffering' as psychological aversion can only come about given certain beliefs. For technical purposes I want to introduce a distinction between 'suffering' and 'pain'. 'Pain' is something we feel in a physiological sense while 'suffering' is dependent upon the presence of a belief. The distinction could, of course, ultimately collapse as Epicurus perhaps thought it did, but from the common-sense perspective there does seem to be a difference between the pain I feel after spraining my ankle and the anguish I undergo as the fact "settles-in" that I will not be able to do my jogging for quite a few days. Whether the Stoics actually make this distinction I will leave for section 5, I am drawing the distinction simply to give us a principled means to distinguish between two apparently different phenomena.

Unpacking Epictetus and Seneca will give us a clear understanding of the Stoic conception of a good life. Seneca advises us to become "inaccessible to impingement". He then goes on to explain that he takes this "inaccessibility to impingement" to be akin to 'tranquillitas' which he describes as "stability of mind"[3] and equates with the Greek 'euthymia' or "well-being of soul".[4] Epictetus offers similar advice. We are told to detach our aversion from the things not up to us. And the "things which are not up to us" are the very same "impingements" of which Seneca speaks. Worldly impingements only have power to disturb us if we allow the disturbance to happen. According to the Stoics, it is in our power not to be affected by the effects of pain, injury, loss of wealth and even death. The problem is not the impingement. The problem is the aversion to the

impingement. The problem is not the things which happen to us. The problem is our judgments about these happenings.

> What upsets people is not things themselves, but their judgments about the things. For example, death is nothing dreadful (or else it would have appeared dreadful to Socrates), but instead the judgment about death is dreadful- 'that' is what is dreadful. So when we are thwarted or upset or distressed, let us never blame someone else but rather ourselves, that is, our own judgments.[5]

Worldly pains, injury, etc, are not dreadful or bad. What is bad are our psychological reactions to them in the form of value judgments we make about them which in turn cause us to suffer. The mature Stoic view as presented by Seneca and Epictetus, as well as Cicero and Marcus Aurelius, is a form of cognitive detachment in which we rationalize externals into insignificance, and what is insignificant cannot cause any suffering. 'Suffering' requires an attitude of attachment. Things about which I do not care, things to which I am indifferent, cannot cause me to suffer. The Stoic version of living the best kind of life will be built around the subject's ability to develop an attitude of 'apathela', i.e. emotional indifference or apathy, towards those things over which we have no control. The way by which we become "inaccessible to impingement" is to cognitively deflate the emotions which cause us to be averse to those things which are not against nature. We take control of our lives by ceasing to be concerned about those things over which we have no control. Marcus Aurelius advises us to contemplate two truths.

> [first, that things can never touch the soul, but stand inert outside it, so that disquiet can arise only from fancies within; and secondly, that all visible objects change in a moment, and will be no

more.[6]

What causes "disquiet" to arise are "fancies within". And the fancies are based upon fundamental errors in judgment; the chief of which is our desire to have things be as they are not and to be troubled by this desire.

> If the inward power that rules us be true to Nature, it will always adjust itself readily to the possibilities and opportunities offered by circumstance. It asks for no predeterminate material; in the pursuance of its aims it is willing to compromise; hindrances to its progress are merely converted into matter for its own use. It is like a bonfire mastering a heap of rubbish, which would have quenched a feeble glow; but its fiery blaze quickly assimilates the load, consumes it, and flames the higher for it.[7]

The Stoic claim is a strong one. We cause our own misery. The world has no power over our souls. We give it power by making a number of cognitive errors. In the Aurelius depiction we seem to be making two primary mistakes in judgment. These errors I would call a "veiling" or "concealing" error and the second would be a "projecting" error. The true nature of our souls is veiled from us. We do not believe Aurelius' first truth that "things can never touch our souls". This error in judgment appears to be somewhat unique to Aurelius as the other Stoics do not make this claim directly. What Aurelius seems to be claiming is that my soul is always "untouched" by "things" and thus when I believe that my soul is "touched", when I am suffering, my soul's true nature is veiled or concealed from me.

I want to note that the Aurelius view could be problematic. Any view which identifies the soul with reason, as all Stoics do, will

certainly not find it easy to explain how Aurelius' basic problem arises. If incorrect reasoning is my only problem, then my soul is obviously "touched" when I reason incorrectly. If I wish my child had not died, my soul is obviously "touched". In fact, it would seem that it is only because my soul is touched with what I judge to be negative impingement that I would have any inclination to become a Stoic. The less extreme Stoic claim that the "sage cannot be hurt"[8] is the more common depiction of the position. For most Stoics the soul is "untouched", i.e. imperturbed, because of something it does, e.g. reasoning correctly about the value of "things", and not because of its essential nature which seems to be what Aurelius is claiming. What gets concealed when the fancies cause a disturbance in the soul is the soul's rational power to overcome the affect of the impingement and probably not an essential "untouched" essence; at least this seems to be the more standard Stoic view.

The second or "projecting" error is standard Stoicism and a foundational tenet. We project onto our souls a disturbed condition by failing to properly decipher something about the objective facts which Stoic common-sense would have us believe. We are essentially pinching ourselves and then wondering why it hurts so much. The impingement does not cause the problem. The problem is caused by our judgments about the impingement. The critical mechanism by which the disturbance happens is some type of emotional attachment. To understand the Stoic claim, it is necessary that we have a sense of how the Stoics view the emotions. Nussbaum gives an account of the Stoic position on the emotions in <u>The Therapy of Desire.</u>[9] The gist of her interpretation is that the

Stoics hold the view that emotions are cognitively driven. The claim would involve a commitment to some version of the following view which I take to be standard Stoicism. Emotions are distinguished from purely physiological responses like appetites, e.g. hunger or thirst, and physical pains. Emotions require belief content and understanding. Belief content and the ability to understand it are necessary conditions for any emotional reaction. One cannot react from sadness, anger, sympathy, etc. unless one first understands something about the factual situation.[10] There are strong and weak versions of this view. The Chrysippian strong view identifies the emotion with the belief content while the weaker positions view the belief as causally implicated in the production of the emotion. For my purposes here, either view will suffice for exploring the problem as both are committed to the notion that emotions are tightly connected to false beliefs.

From the background of the Stoic emotional theory, we can better understand the central claim of Stoicism regarding happiness, or perhaps it would be better to say unhappiness or suffering. As noted above, according to Stoicism, we make ourselves unhappy. We emotively react to things which impinge upon us. One basic emotive reaction which we make is to wish that "things were not as they are". This belief is central to most negative emotions in one way or another. In sadness, I wish something had not happened. In anger I believe that something ought not to have happened. In sympathy, I view some event as a misfortune. In all these cases, the trigger which sets off the emotion is a belief about "how the world ought to be".

On the Stoic position the wish or desire that "things were not as they are" stems from a failure to fully understand the ways of nature. "Living in agreement with nature" is a central theme for Stoicism. Diogenes Laertius offers the following desciption of 'nature' from the Stoic perspective.

> Now the term Nature is used by them to mean sometimes that which holds the world together, sometimes that which causes terrestrial things to spring up. Nature is defined as a force moving of itself, producing and preserving in being its offspring in accordance with seminal principles within definite periods, and effecting results homogeneous with their source.[11]

This theme of "living in agreement with nature" is best understood from a psychological perspective against the backdrop of a physical determinism. The universe is viewed as a law governed realm of cause and effect. Everything which happens happens because of prior causes. If something happens, that is the way it is, and it is the psychological revolt against this "is", the factual objective reality, which the Stoics view as not living in accord with nature.

Epictetus and Seneca give us a clear view of the Stoic claim on this issue. The Stoic view is not one of passive indifference in which we simply accept things as they are. Stoic determinism does not advocate inaction. What Stoicism advocates is a detachment from the results of our actions. We choose our actions while nature determines the result.

> Remember that you are an actor in a play, which is as the playwright wants it to be: short if he wants it short, long if he wants it long. If he wants you to play a beggar, play even this part skillfully, or a cripple, or a public official, or a private citizen. What is yours is to play the assigned part

> well. But to choose it belongs to someone else.[12]

There is no passive indifference here as far as action is concerned. And Seneca echoes the same theme. "If Fortune has removed you from the first rank in public affairs, stand your ground anyhow and help with the shouting"[13] Nature writes the play and our natural role in action is to play our part well using all the skills we have available. However, it is nature and not us which determines the result, the outcome of the action, and to this result we need to hold firm in our attitude of detachment, 'apathela'. I am free to play the game, free to try as hard as possible to win. But when the game is over, the final score determined, anything short of rational detachment to the result means that I am now averse to one of those things which are against nature. The common-sense pragmatism contained in this advice is strong and compelling. If I have done all I could, tried as hard as possible, then, in fact, things could not have had a different outcome, at least concerning that which is in my control. And any emotive reaction to the contrary is a denial of nature's facts.

The implications of the endorsement of 'apathela' challenge ordinary intuitions, and understanding the ramifications of the endorsement are critical to understanding the Stoic view of living well. There is no insistence on passive indifference, no blind acceptance of fate's hand. I am free to come back another day and fight to win. The only thing which cannot be changed is what 'is', which is, of course, "what is against nature". But beyond this I am encouraged to examine myself, re-evaluate, reassess options, and play on.

A central tenet for both Epictetus and Seneca is self-examination.

> [I]nspect your own nature and whether you can bear it. You want to do the pentathlon, or to wrestle? Look at your arms, your thighs, inspect your loins. Different people are suited for different things.[14]

And Seneca advises us that "Our first duty will be to examine ourselves..."[15] In order to live in accord with nature it is necessary to comprehend nature's ways. Astute observation will tell us all we need know. Epictetus reminds us that "You are invincible if you do not enter any contest in which victory is not up to you."[16]

Stoic training involves nothing more than heeding Epictetus' warning. The scope of the realm of the "invincible" is narrow. As we tred further away from it, we need caution and frank objective honesty. If "you want to be invincible" stay grounded in only those things which are "up to you". And what are those things which are exclusively "up to us"? According to Epictetus these things are:

> Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversions - in short whatever is our own doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices, or, that is, whatever is not our own doing. The things that are up to us are by nature free, unhindered, and unimpeded; the things that are not up to us are weak, enslaved, hindered, not our own.[17]

The line that separates the domain of the free from that of the enslaved is pragmatic and not metaphysical. We are free wherever we find ourselves to be invincible and we are enslaved wherever we are not invincible.

Like the Epicurean view, the Stoic position is radically internalized. However, unlike the Epicurean we are not trying to manage our affairs in the natural world to produce certain effects. What we are trying to do is understand the ways of the natural world's effects so as to minimize and ultimately eliminate emotive responses to the effects, i.e. responses based upon false beliefs. The connection to the Stoic view on the emotions is the backbone of the theory. If we believe that something ought be different from the way it is, we are free to try to change it. But if in our efforts to change it, we venture out of the domain of the free, fail and are troubled by our failure, then the belief content of the emotion which causes the troubles is irrational because we are then wishing things "not up to us" to be "up to us". And this condition is not living according to nature. We become psychologically contracted around an affective state of mind which is based upon a false belief. To eliminate these contracted, suffering, states of mind is the central goal of Stoic therapy. The spirit behind the therapy is rather simple. One cannot have these "psychologically contracting" emotions unless one has a false belief. False beliefs are trumped by true ones. Therefore, insight into nature's ways will eliminate the false belief and the foundation upon which the emotional contraction is based will crumble.

The reason why 'apatheia' is crucial to the Stoic depiction of the good life is that on the Stoic view all our troubles come from emotive reactions to circumstances which are beyond our control. Understanding nature's ways will cognitively detach one from worldly impingement and produce a condition of indifference or 'apatheia'. A

mind attentively animated by an attitude of detachment possesses a second order belief which will override any potential emotive reaction by undermining the false beliefs based upon worldly attachments. Thus, the person who views the world from an attitude of 'apathela' will have defused the motivational power from which the false belief that is responsible for the emotion acquires its power. Of course, questions immediately arise. Why then would a Stoic person act at all? And how is the Stoic person motivated to act given that an apparent critical element in normative motivational structure, i.e. caring about things, seems to be gone from the Stoic's action producing repertoire?

To these questions the Stoics have a reply. We are to act from reason and not from passion in the selection of what is natural. The reasons which we are to act upon are those which stem from virtue. 'Virtue' to the Stoics is the only intrinsic good. Good reasons for action are thus just those reasons which are motivated by virtues. We do what is in accord with virtue. In a certain way on the Stoic view living a fully virtuous life is the same as living according to nature. What motivates a Stoic is the knowledge of the "fact" that virtue is sufficient for happiness. According to Diogenes Laertius a Stoic virtue is,

> [a] harmonious dispostion, choice-worthy for its own sake and not from hope or fear or any external motive. Moreover, it is in virtue that happiness consists; for virtue is the state of mind which tends to make the whole of life harmonious.'[18]

Virtue has the power to transcend the situation. No matter what nature may do to us, as Aurelius noted above, there is always a possible virtuous response. Since virtue is always good and good always benefits

us, any situation will present the rational soul with the possibility of good. "Another particular definition of good which they give is 'the natural perfection of a rational being qua rational'."[19] And once I am aware that my good lies in perfecting myself as a rational being, I have all the motivation I need to drive me to be virtuous.

Virtuous dispositions are thus the result of reasoning well about what accords with nature. The virtues are good because they lead to our perfection and because they lead to our advantage.[20] The virtues represent the skillful means by which we can successfully negotiate the road of life. The Stoic virtues are rather standard for the Ancient World. Diogenes Laertius lists them as "[p]rudence, justice, courage, temperance and the rest."[21]

One criticism often leveled against this view is that there is no motivation to follow this course of living unless one already accepts basic Stoic values. The criticism may have force, but it would have force against any view given that before any view could be a viable candidate for a happy life we would need to know how the end is conceptualized. And the Stoic promise of a "harmonious life" seems as good a place as any to start. In fact, Wittgenstein once characterized happiness in quite similar terms, "In order to live happily I must be in agreement [accord or harmony: Übereinstimmung] with the world. And that is what 'being happy' means."[22]

We still might wonder why the virtuous life is sufficient for happiness. And clearly the Stoic answer is going to be that if being in harmony with nature is the same thing as happiness and since the virtues by virtual definition are the motivational springs for

harmonious living, the case seems sealed. However, there remains the problem of why one has to accept the virtues as affectless and purely cognitive phenomena. Surely Aristotle did not accept this view. And if the Stoic case hangs on a major definitional point of dispute, the force of the argument and the case for a life animated by 'apathela' loses much of its philosophic appeal.

What the Stoics will claim here is that emotions are infected by instability and false beliefs, and that something built on instability and false beliefs is not the right kind of thing upon which virtue ought to be dependent. The Stoics will appeal to the superiority of their position over its rivals. The instability of the emotions arises from their very nature. The element of attachment necessary for the animation of any positive emotion is the breeding-ground for negativity and loss of rational control.

> [s]o the soul - if it hurls itself into anger, love, and the other passions - is not allowed to check its impetus: the very weight and the downward nature of the vice must carry it away and take it to the very bottom.[22]

What Seneca is pointing out to us here is a certain kind of inertia in emotional attachments. The elation we felt in yesterday's loving embrace is responsible for today's jealous rage. The jealous rage was bred in yesterday's love. And, of course, the elation of yesterday's loving embrace was animated by false beliefs. We thought this love was all we needed. We thought the love would last. We denied the possibility of the loved one's death; we had to deny it, otherwise, the love could not have been given the full commitment necessary for its presence. The Stoic lesson of life is given decisively by Epictetus:

> Let death and exile and everything that is terrible appear before your eyes every day, especially death; and you will never have anything contemptible in your thoughts or crave anything excessively.[24]

Trying to control one's emotions is like trying to swim up-stream in a raging river. And if the virtues depend upon our ability to merely moderate and tame our emotions, the project is doomed to failure. Total elimination is the only possibility of success. Only when we come to observe the realm of nature for what it is - a realm of impermanence and instability - will our emotional attachment begin to attenuate. And it is only the total attenuation of the emotions which can secure for us the rational stability and pure objectivity needed to ground the soul in harmony with nature.

'Apathela' thus becomes the central tool by which the Stoic can surmount life's trepidations. The harmony is internal. We extract ourselves from attachment and accept what nature presents. The measure of our freedom is in our ability not to be emotively affected. The soul has the power to reason its way through any dilemma. In fact, given its power to reason there cannot be any dilemmas. Nature presents, we accept.

> Liberty is having a mind that rises superior to injury, that makes itself the only source from which its pleasures spring, that separates itself from all external things in order that man may not have to live his life in disquietude, fearing everybody's laughter, everybody's tongue.[25]

In the end the Stoic endorsement comes down to the intuition that we only have the power to manage our souls. Everything else is beyond our control. Whatever attaches us to this "realm beyond our control" is to

be eschewed. The world does not make us unhappy. Our attachments to the world bring us unhappiness. To be free of suffering-producing attachments, i.e. all attachments, is the primary objective. The way to achieve this objective is to live a life of virtue. The virtues must thus be rational dispositions animated by 'apatheia'. And this explains why, as Diogenes Laertius reports, the Stoics claim that "[v]irtue as a whole will be sufficient in itself for 'eudaimonia' - despising all things that seem troublesome."[24] Fully animated by 'apatheia' and thus without attachments, the fully virtuous person has no means to become unhappy.

2. External 'Apatheia' and the role of "preferred indifferents"

The role of external objects in Stoic theory is essentially one of passive indifference. At times, however, the language used reflects outright hostility towards externals; witness Epictetus exhorting us to successful Stoicism by "despising what is not up to us"[27]. This could be a significant point which will require careful monitoring and I will return to it in section 5 as attachment to one's detachment might be a strong psychological fetter which could undermine the view. However, for now "passive indifference" will be the position to be examined because this seems to be the essential spirit of 'apatheia'. What we need to watch is whether 'apatheia' turns into hostility because if it does, there is a major internal problem.

Since virtue is sufficient for happiness, the view is a strong internalist view because on the Stoic account virtues are just states of mind as indicated above. Things such as health, wealth, freedom from

pain and social role have no intrinsic value and are not even considered to have instrumental value as far as happiness or well-being of the soul is concerned. If one's soul is animated by fully virtuous dispostions then no matter what is happening externally, one's life is as good as it can get; one possesses all that has real value. Our intuitions balk at the extremeness of the view and two questions immediately arise. Why do the Stoics claim that only virtue has real value? And how do they propose that we manage our affairs in the world, if none of it ultimately matters?

The argument for virtue being the sole good is found in Diogenes Laertius.[28] The major thrust of the position is that "goods" such as health and wealth can be used for bad ends, and anything which can be used for a bad end cannot be absolutely good. Pleasure also has this qualitative diversity; some pleasures lead to good while others clearly do not. What makes virtue unique here is that virtue, as the fully virtuous person, can produce only good and thus always benefits us. Thus virtue is immune to negative results while everything else can or could be used to achieve bad results. The thesis is cogent on the surface but it does seem to depend upon a curiously non-Stoic consequentialist argument. What we might expect the Stoic to point towards in regard to health, wealth and pleasure is that they are potential breeding-grounds for attachments and emotions and thus false beliefs. What we find instead in the report from Laertius is a consequentialist view which posits virtue's goodness as being backed by the <u>fact</u> that virtue never produces bad results.

If the Stoic balks at this criticism and claims that it is not

the external result but the internal state of mind of the agent which is the locus of the result, we still might find the intrinsic value of virtue threatened as this still seems like an instrumental argument. Even if we go back to the earlier section[29] where 'good' is defined in terms of benefit, the problem remains. "Benefits" are consequences. A possible defense might be to claim that real "benefits" are only measured on the soul level. The consequences which we ought to be assessing are internal and not external. Virtue always benefits our soul by its very nature because it keeps us living in accord with nature and undermines external attachments since the fully virtuous person would be animated by 'apathela'. However, even if this seemed feasible, it does not provide any independent reason why only virtue is suitable for being of value. It only tells us why a Stoic person would believe this as both the Aristotelian and Epicurean will define 'benefit' very differently. Perhaps, here again we would find the Stoic resorting to a "first principles" argument and offer their starting point as the obviously superior one. Giving external objects Epicurean or Aristotelian value leaves one "accessible to impingement" while giving them no value neatly solves the problem. Epictetus makes a move in this direction when he offers:

> Just as in walking about you pay attention so as not to step on a nail or twist your foot, pay attention in the same way so as not harm your ruling principle. And if we are on guard about that in every action, we shall set about it more securely.[30]

Views which allow external objects any value in their explanation of happiness will find their conception of happiness threatened by

incompleteness and lack of self-sufficiency. Since the Stoic view of virtue cuts all ties to externals, it makes virtue alone fully complete and self-sufficient. Thus the Stoics can claim that their explication of 'virtue' is the best because it meets the opponent views on their own criteria and comes out superior by the opponent's own standard - only the Stoic account of virtue as a state of mind independent of externals meets the completeness and self-sufficiency criteria. Attachment to externals has the potential to harm one's ruling principle. But virtue ought never to be able to harm one's ruling principle. Therefore virtue demands that no value be given to externals, otherwise attachment might arise in the execution of virtue and this would turn virtuous action into a source of evil.

If we are willing to accept this argument on the superiority claim which seems to me to be its genuine strength, we still need some account of how and why we would be willing to accept the counter-intuitive result of the argument which seems to entail the total denial of all worth to any external object. The Stoic move on this issue will be to try to invent a new vernacular for "external object discourse". External objects have at best a secondary type of value, most of the time a neutral value, and at worst a disvalue.

According to basic Stoic doctrine, we are born with certain natural impulses towards certain external objects. Survival demands that we pursue food, water, shelter and any other basic necessities of life. These objects are considered "morally indifferent" but are called also "things preferred". The thrust of the explanation on this issue is designed to account for basic survival pursuits as well as genuine

benevolent civic motivations within a theory which seems on the surface to have no place for such considerations.

The rational immunity of the Stoic sage from external impingement must be protected at all cost while common-sense intuitions about needed external objects must be given some accounting. External objects are considered morally indifferent because their successful or unsuccessful acquisition carries no moral weight, since the consequences of our actions are among those things which are "not up to us". What matters morally is how we interact with externals. Common-sense and survival needs drive us by blind impulse to pursue externals. The impulse-driven blind pursuit of externals turns our ruling faculty over to "what is not up to us". Virtuous actions enable us to assert our autonomy and restore our ruling faculty to its natural freedom.

On the Stoic view the virtues are akin to skills. However, they are special kinds of skills. "Skillful means of reasoning" would, perhaps, best express the idea. If I am faced with a situation that demands a just or courageous response, my exercise of the virtuous skill would be to reason well about my response and what virtue bids me to do. Even if my efforts fail, I have still done the virtuous thing because I have reasoned correctly, virtuously, about the given circumstance. Perhaps, nature does not want justice now as the world needs to see more injustice before it will finally learn. Perhaps, I am not seeing the bigger picture; more fallen heros are needed to make the world understand the true nature of injustice. The external here, the outcome, is morally indifferent from my perspective. I did the morally

appropriate thing and if the outcome seems not for the best, this is not mine to determine. Motive, intent and good virtuous reasoning are the prime moral material. Consequences are morally irrelevant from the perspective of the agent, even though it concerns the consequences about which I am reasoning, and this is why they called externals "morally indifferent." In modern vernacular, we might say that it does not matter whether you win or lose, but only how you play the game.

> Just as certain medicines work by odor without taste or touch, so Virtue, at a distance and unseen, radiates usefulness. Whether she walks at her ease and exercises her rights, or whether her appearances are on sufferance and she is forced to shorten sail, whether she is inactive and mute and pent up within narrow bounds, or whether she is open to the world, whatever her state, Virtue does useful service.[21]

In order to meet the counter-intuitive objection that their view on the value of externals cuts too strongly against common-sense beliefs, the Stoics try to produce a means of external accounting which meets with common sense while at the same time avoids giving genuine value to externals. Since their view of value is a rigid internalist account, technically speaking externals have no value; this is the rationale behind calling them `indifferents'. Diogenes Laertius gives two defintions for the use of `indifferent', but notes that it is only the following which possesses the genuine philosophic point at issue.

> The term "indifferent" has two meanings: in the first it denotes the things which do not contribute either to happiness or to misery, as wealth, fame, health, strength and the like; for it is possible to be happy without having these, although, if they are used in a certain way, such use of them tends to happiness or misery.[22]

The "indifferents" thus have no real moral value but do seem to possess a kind of secondary value which we might call "use value". 'Use value' would represent the function which the external performs in the execution of the virtuous skill. Externals with "good use value" are called "preferred" and those with negative or bad "use value" are rejected. The "preferred externals" lead to harmonius living, indirectly contribute to living in accord with nature, and meet the appraisal of the virtuous expert acquainted with the facts.[22] Nature, survival and the noble pursuit of civic justice will demand that we "pursue" certain externals. These "naturally demanded objects" are "preferred indifferents". What makes them preferred is that they are the material upon which the virtuous skills must operate. Rationally if we understand nature correctly we will be called upon to pursue these objects. However, the objects have no value. The value they get is from the role they play in enabling us to act virtuously. They are the appropriate targets at which we aim, but the reason we aim at them is functional in relation to virtue and not consequential. Our objective is to reason well about the object which we are using. We do what we ought to do because good reasoning tells us that this is the objective we ought to pursue and not because the objective has any value beyond being material upon which good reasoning works. I jog around the track sixteen times not because my objective is "jogging around the track sixteen times" but because good reasoning tells me well-being requires fitness.

Initially the view seems to generate a peculiar alienation between action and objective. The point of the position appears to be a

kind of concession to practicality. There are natural objects which we ought to pursue. Yet, the person animated by a deep sense of 'apathela' seems to have no reason to pursue these objects. This has to be wrong because the appetites are natural, i.e. in accord with human nature which is a part of Nature. However, if the concession allows objects to have "real" value, this would undermine the significance of detachment and threaten the supermacy of virtue. Thus, we see the need for the "preferred" appellation. Objects matter to us not because of what they are, but only because they are sometimes functional components in the successful execution of a virtue. Thus, we might pursue civic harmony or food not because civic harmony or food are valued things, but because virtue demands we pursue them. If we do not succeed in getting our pursued objects, this will not matter because according to Stoic doctrine we will still be quite happpy having done the virtuous thing, i.e. virtue is sufficient for happiness. The only thing that would hinder this would, of course, be some major fault like attachment to results which no Stoic sage would possess.

I believe that the view, despite the vigorous defense, still has a strong counter-intuition as it seems to deflate basic motivational structures in the effort to save the theoretical underpinnings. The Stoics are essentially telling us that common sense is wrong here, but they do not seem to supply any explanation, independent of Stoic values, to support their view. The strongest support they provide is the "superiority appeal" which does have some theory-neutral backing in the sense that all parties to the dispute agree that emotions are problems to rationality and rationality ought

to be our guiding force. But "use value" seems too flimsy to motivate someone to undertake something substantial. If virtue is sufficient for happiness, why would any Stoic sage ever step outside of her narrow circle of friends and family where she had ample "use value" material and engage in more "meaningful", important and universal pursuits? The Stoics have an answer to this question and it is embedded in their moral theory to which I will now turn.

3. The Universal Viewpoint

Like the views of Aristotle and Epicurus, Stoicism works from a 'eudaimonistic' perspective. What this means is that all of these views start from a point of self-examination and ask the question, "What is the best kind of life to lead?" And they all agree that the answer must be directed towards "happiness". As we have seen with Aristotle and Epicurus, this perspective creates a problem for morality as it seems difficult to reconcile the motivational selfishness in the 'eudaimonistic' framework with what genuine morality appears to demand, i.e. a non-instrumental concern for the well-being of others in the sense of recognizing other persons as having instrinsic value. The problem may not be solvable within the a 'eudaimonistic' framework, but the Stoics do offer a reasonable solution. In order to live happily and have a smooth flow of life, the individual must live a fully virtuous life, and the only way to do this is to assume the universal viewpoint.

Stoic "Hollism", or the assumption of the universal viewpoint, does two things. As we have seen, it positively alienates the individual from objective conditions which might otherwise interfere

with happiness by developing the cognitive detachment of the last two sections. And it negatively alienates the individual from contracting her sphere of interest around herself by expanding virtue's domain of operation to the universal viewpoint.

There is a developmental story embedded in Stoic moral theory which is important to keep in mind. As we grow in life, the power of reason gradually assumes dominance over the unreasoned responses which we share with other living things. From a life driven by self-love, impulse and the desire for self-preservation, we come to appreciate the higher powers that we possess such as rationality and understanding which enable us more efficiently and more effectively to achieve the ends to which blind impulse drives us.

At first we glean a measure of insight into the instrumental value which reason possesses. We come to see in the words of Diogenes Laertius that

> [N]ature's rule is to follow the direction of impulse. But when reason by way of a more perfect leadership has been bestowed on beings we call rational, for them life according to reason rightly becomes the natural life. For reason supervenes to shape impulse scientifically."[34]

For beings endowed with reason, the natural life is a life in which reason controls impulse and action. As this insight deepens, our sense of appreciation for the powers of reason grows until we reach a point at which reason comes to be valued for what it is and not merely for what it does. Reason becomes intrinsically valuable, a good in itself as

> "[l]iving virtuously is equivalent to living in accordance with experience of the actual course of

> nature; as Chrysippus says in the first book of De Finibus; for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe.[35]

From groping creatures driven by impulse and the desire for self-preservation, we come to view ourselves as "parts of the nature of the whole universe". And it is by reason that we transcend the ordinary viewpoint and come to appreciate the supreme value of virtue in the universal sense.

> And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe.[36]

And with this statement the motivational problem is supposed to solved. The natural life of reason when properly developed will pull us away from exclusive self-interest and continually expand our viewpoint of concern until it encompasses the whole of the universe.

There is a series of defining equations which link the scheme to provide a basis for Stoic morality. 'Happiness' is a "life lived in accord with nature". A "life lived in accord with nature" is a "life of virtue". A "life of virtue" is a "life of reason". And finally a "life of reason" will be a life "grounded in the universal perspective appreciative of the harmonious nature of the whole". Though not all Stoic writers[37] are in complete technical accord with this explication of the view, it is representative of the general genre and is, I believe, the most popular interpretation. The Stoic position motivates us to virtue and thus to morality by producing arguments intended to show that virtue suffices for happiness and that complete

virtue entails an extraction of oneself from the individual perspective into the universal or cosmic viewpoint.

The later Roman Stoics develop an argument for why this view has to be correct. The argument is basically a holistic argument backed by Stoic determinism. Marcus Aurelius describes the determinist background and its all-embracing power as follows:

> Whatever may happen to you was prepared for you in advance from the beginning of time. In the woven tapestry of causation, the thread of your being had been intertwined from all time to your particular incident.[28]

And in the next passage Marcus ties the thread which intertwines the determinism to the hollsm.

> No matter whether the universe is a confusion of atoms or a natural growth, let my first conviction be that I am a part of a Whole which is under Nature's governance; and my second, that a bond of kinship exists between myself and all other similar parts.[29]

Nature on this view provides a hollsitc foundation for virtue by embedding the individual within a grander scheme and intertwining the individual to all others via the "tapestry of causation". From this background we deduce and fill-in the content of virtue. On this reading cosmic nature in the form of the universal viewpoint provides a foundation for morality.

Once the foundation is in place, determining "right actions" becomes a matter of "part to whole relations" with "duties" being imposed upon us by reason's understanding of the natural relations. Diogenes Laertius provides the following explication of 'duty'.

> Furthermore, the term Duty is applied to that for

> which, when done, a reasonable defense can be adduced, e.g. harmony in the tenor of life's process, which indeed pervades the growth of plants and animals.[40]

Epictetus fills in more content to "Duty" by noting exactly how we rationally deduce it when he announces that "Appropriate actions are in general measured by relationships."[41] The basic strategy adopted here is the use of the holism argument to generate an alienation from self-interest. The demands of rationality and virtue coupled with their critical relation to happiness force the individual to reach out and embrace as much of the "whole" of which one is a part as possible. Duties are functionally determined by the interconnections, relationships, such as father/son, citizen/state, slave/master, etc. Annas describes the culminating Stoic vision in the following terms.

> Further, the Stoics hold that as one progresses in rationality, one comes to extend one's concern outward from oneself to other people, first to one's offspring and relatives, then to other individuals one cares about, then to groups whose connection with one is more and more remote, finally to all human beings. What enables one to do this is a grasp of the distinctive kind of value which virtuous activity has. For just as understanding this put certain constraints on the kind of importance goods like health and security can have for the agent, so it puts certain constraints on the importance to the agent of the fact that it is his own health or security that is concerned, or his wife's or father's health or security. What matters is the agent's virtuous activity, not the fact that it benefits him or someone related or connected to him.[42]

Genuine virtuous activity thus demands an authentic measure of benevolence. Egoistic motivation and the self-contracting emotions are eliminated in a gesture of insight. On this depiction the grasp of the

moral viewpoint, and the motivation to maintain it, is derived from developing human nature. Narrowing our sphere of interest thwarts our development. Self-interest in its pursuit of happiness narrowed its sphere of influence and now it comes to see that the narrowing is no longer in its interest. Happiness depends upon virtue and virtue demands a widening of one's sphere of interest. The ego is caught in a bind. In order to be happy it must develop virtues and in order to develop virtues it must use the "material" that nature provides. This entails broadening its sphere of interest. And the only way to fully widen the sphere and develop all of the virtues is to assume the cosmic or universal perspective. Seneca echoes this insight and its foundational vision for Stoic cosmopolitanism.

> The reason we Stoics have high-heartedly refused to confine ourselves within the walls of a single city but have sought relations with the whole earth and claimed the whole world for our fatherland was to afford virtue a broader scope.[42]

Unlike Aristotle and Epicurus, the appeal to the universal viewpoint does seem to allow plenty of room for genuine other-concern in a view that is grounded in a 'eudaimonistic' prespective. In fact, the view makes other-concern spread so wide that it could be argued that the scope of Stoic other-concern conflicts with our intuitions about close personal relations and that as a result the price one has to pay for "Stoic happiness" may be too high. From the universal perspective, all persons are equal as rational beings and we cease to regard those close to us as "special". Given the elimination of the emotional links which make the "specialness" possible, the rational objectivism of the universal standpoint is all that remains. Nothing

short of a pure pragmatics of harmony based upon rational insights into the nature of virtue could possibly do the job which the Stoic metaphysical view demands.

From my perspective, the Stoic view does do the best job, so far, with this most difficult of problems. From the 'eudaimonistic' perspective, there is probably no way to eliminate every trace of self-interest. What the Stoics provide is an attempt at metaphysically undermining the egoistic impulse. All three of the 'eudaimonistic' views try to demonstrate that altruism and benevolence will "pay-off" in happiness, and that the contrary will ultimately not. Epicurus has, as we have seen, numerous problems on this issue which are brought to the surface most strongly at KD XXXV where he advises that even if we do wrong and are not caught, we will always have to fear possible detection. Aristotle, as noted, also has a problem giving persons intrinsic value and has difficulty avoiding the instrumental use of persons as a means to happiness. The Stoics can avoid these problems because they do not operate within a consequentialist framework.

For the Stoics, the Epicurean problem simply does not arise. There is no need to explain how "good results", i.e. pleasure, might turn sour since the goodness of the action lies solely in the agent's attitude - bad attitude, e.g. non-virtuous, equals bad act - period! And in _On Duties_ citing the error of those who make pleasure "Life's Final End", Cicero definitively states the Stoic view that "[t]heir view is that everything which is morally right is advantageous, and there can be no advantage in anything that is not right."[44] Thus, an improper, e.g. selfish, attitude cannot possibly be compatible with

living in agreement with nature. For Aristotle's problems, the Stoics also have answers. First, they can give intrinsic value to persons. Rationality is intrinsically good. The reason for this is that 'rationality' is, in a sense, the fountain from which the only thing of real value, i.e. virtue, flows. And since persons are seats of rationality, persons can, in theory, have intrinsic value. And the instrumental use of person as a means to 'eudaimonia' also cannot arise within a Stoic framework as any action so motivated would demonstrate a failure to understand the depth and nature of Stoic 'eudaimonia' which is clearly defined as "living in accord with nature and virtue". Again Cicero makes the critical point when he declares the fundamental motivation which reason demands to reach the Stoic end.

> So everyone ought to have the same purpose: to identify the interest of each with the interest of all. Once men grab for themselves, human society will completely collapse. But if nature prescribes (as she does) that every human being must help every other human being, whoever he is, just precisely because they are human beings, then - by the same authority - all men have identical interests.[45]

Thus, the Stoic view attempts to provide a viable solution within a 'eudaimonistic' framework to account for how and why the individual's best interests are best served by assuming the universal perspective and that, in fact, sound rational reasoning will compel one to the assumption of this perspective. The Stoics motivate us to be moral, as do their competitors, by trying to demonstrate that being moral is in our real self-interest. They then deflate the egoism by defining self-interest holistically. The strength of the view is that short of complete ego elimination, the Stoic view offers the most

attractive alternative. A benevolent ego which viewed its happiness as dependent upon the conditions of the whole of which it is a part seems to me the best that can be done within the 'eudaimonistic' framework. And given the deflation of the emotions and the lack of value in externals, the Stoic character which emerges is left with nearly no motivation to do anything immoral which might be the best we can get.

4. The Pleasure Problem

The Stoics are emphatic and quite clear where they stand on the "pleasure" issue. There is no relationship between happiness and pleasure. Pleasure plays no role in the happy life. There are two points, however, which merit attention. The first is that the Stoics do view certain hedonic accounts of happiness as legitimate opponents and, in particular, target Epicurus as advocating such a view. They, thus, marshall a number of arguments to support the view that pleasure cannot be a suitable candidate for the final end of human life. The second point is that the Stoics give no positive value to pleasure, and thus oppose any kind of Aristotelian view which relies on pleasure to "perfect" virtuous activity. This eschewing of any positive value for pleasure does seem counter-intuitive and deserves some examination.

The arguments which the Stoics present against the position that pleasure is our final end run the gamut from highly insightful to almost banal. But the consensus on this position is a common uniting factor in all Stoic writers. As we saw above, Diogenes Laertius reports a simple Stoic example of why pleasure cannot be the "good". The "good" can never lead to negative results and sometimes the pursuit, or even

the acquisition, of pleasure does lead to unfavorable results. Cicero gives a number of Stoic arguments why pleasure cannot be either "The Good" or a even a good. In "The Fallacy of Pleasure" from On Duties III, he opens with a stroke of rhetoric directed at Epicurus and derides Epicurus for reducing wisdom to "the mere sorting out of pleasures and pains". Cicero then directly attacks the Epicurean position with a number of arguments. He notes that Epicurus endorses such virtues as wisdom, fortitude and self-control. Of Epicurus' alleged respect for fortitude he asks, "[w]hat place can fortitude logically occupy in a system which identifies good with pleasure and evil with pain?"[46] On self-control he notes that, "[p]leasure is served by the passions and self-control is their adversary."[47] And finally, he notes that "Integrity, generosity and courtesy, these and friendship too, cannot exist if they are pursued, not because they are desirable in themselves, but for the sake of pleasure and self-interest."[48] In each case the force the argument is the same. Any view which posits pleasure its Final End will find itself internally inconsistent with the open advocacy of the most noble of virtues.

Marcus Aurellus offers the following argument.

> Repentance is remorse for the loss of some helpful opportunity. Now what is good is always helpful, and must be the concern of every good man; but an opportunity of pleasure is something no good man would ever repent of having let pass. It follows, therefore, that pleasure is neither good nor helpful.[49]

We might find this argument question-begging and unconvincing, but again it emphasizes the point that the Stoics form a united front on this

issue. As far as the actual argument is concerned, no Epicurean would be troubled by it on at least two counts. First, "repentance" would be caused by an unnecessary desire by which no Epicurean worth his salt would be troubled. And secondly the Epicurean is going to claim here that Marcus is assuming what needs to be proven - namely that no good man would let an opportunity for pleasure, i.e. real Epicurean pleasure, pass.

Epictetus offers a couple of insightful arguments against pleasure being the End of Life. One appears in The Discourses at Bk. III, Chpt. VII. The thrust of the argument follows Cicero's lead but expands the result. The value of the virtues is deflated by making pleasure life's end as many times in life pursuing the virtuous course of action will conflict with the aims of pleasure. And Epictetus cites the Epicurean problems which arise if the only thing which holds us back from performing actions like stealing, lying and adultery is the possibility of detection and thus potential future pain. In the simplest of terms, if the Epicurean is sure she will not be caught, there is no theoretical reason why she would not perform an "unvirtuous" action which would produce pleasure and this has to be wrong.

The second thesis regarding pleasure which is critical to Stoicism is the counter-intuitive claim that pleasure has no value. In the best case scenario, pleasure might seem at times to be a possible "preferred indifferent". However, Diogenes Laertius denies that the Stoics even considered the desire for pleasure to be a natural impulse.

> As for the assertion made by some people that pleasure is the object to which the first impulse of animals is directed, it is shown by the Stoics to be

> false. For pleasure, if it is really felt, they declare to be a by-product, which never comes until nature by itself has sought and found the means suitable to the animal's existence or constitution; it is an aftermath comparable to the condition of animals thriving or plants in full bloom.[50]

And later, he also notes that many Stoics, e.g. Hecato and Chrysippus, "[d]eny that pleasure is a *good* either; for some pleasures are disgraceful, and nothing disgraceful can be good."[51] The argument is, of course, weak as Aristotle had shown when he noted that just because some pleasures are not good does not mean that all pleasures are not good. However, the point embedded within this argument does show the critical concern - the pursuit of pleasure is clearly problematic for Stoic thinkers with the most important issue being that the desire for pleasure can lead to disgraceful action and thus embracing the doctrine of pleasure undermines the centrality of virtue.

Perhaps, the most important Stoic reason why pleasure cannot be good is because its pursuit breeds emotional attachments. It undermines the will and interferes with the development of a strong sense of 'apatheia' by hindering the Stoic's rational objectivism. The warning which Epictetus gives in The Manual is right to the Stoic point.

> Whenever you encounter some kind of apparent pleasure, be on guard, as in the case of other appearances, not to be carried away by it, but let the thing wait for you and allow yourself delay. Then bring before your mind two times, both the time when you enjoy the pleasure and the time when after enjoying it you later regret it and berate yourself; and set against these the way you will be pleased and will praise yourself if you refrain from it. But if the right occasion appears for you to undertake the action, pay attention so that you will not be overcome by its attractiveness and pleasantness and seductiveness, and set against it how much better it

> is to be conscious of having won this victory against it.[52]

The message in this passage is really the reason why the Stoic sees pleasure as problematic and why it cannot be a good. In the simplest of terms, the potential danger to rationality and cool deliberate judgment is just not worth the cost.

Whether the Stoics supply good enough reasons to accept their main thesis is surely questionable. Perhaps, the most telling argument against these theses is that they all seem to presuppose a Stoic value system which, of course, neither the Aristotelian nor Epicurean opponent would accept. Against Epicurus, I believe that Cicero and Epictetus do provide strong claims as to why the life of Epicurean pleasure and its pursuit cannot be a proper conception of a good or happy life. However, I am less convinced by the second problem and do believe that the Aristotelian might have the more intuitively plausible position. To deny pleasure any value goes to an extreme which makes a demand that none but a convinced Stoic would accept. The better tactic seems to me to be to find pleasure a role and fit the role into the theory rather than fight and deny at all cost our ordinary intuitions, e.g. that pleasure is pleasing and that sometimes that which pleases is good.

5. The Stoic Good life

Perhaps, the most remarkable claim about the Stoic sage is that she cannot be hurt or injured. If the claim is true, Stoicism might present

us with a very serious competitor for the position to be occupied by the best conception of happiness. After all, if Stoic happiness is so powerful as really to be imperturbable, it would then seem to fill-out the critical criteria of finality and completeness in a way superior to the two main rival views which also take these criteria very seriously. And, in fact, if the Stoic could deliver on the imperturbability claim, it might even give us a strong reason to pause and ponder whether the price of accepting a counter-intuitive theory might not be worth the cost.

Seneca and Epictetus offer detailed explanations and arguments to substantiate the imperturbability claim. In "On The Firmness of the Wise Man", Seneca presents the main doctrine. He notes in the first paragraph the heroic and dazzling goal towards which Stoicism directs us by guiding us "[t]o that lofty summit which rises so far beyond the reach of any missle as to tower high above all fortune."[53] The soul of the wise man is like an impregnable fortress. "The wise man is safe and no injury or insult can touch him."[54] The scope of the claim is then clarified and tempered. "The invulnerable thing is not that which is not struck, but that which is not hurt; by this mark I will show you the wise man."[55] In fact, Seneca even points out that getting struck and not being hurt is better than not being struck at all because being struck allows the strength of the sage's Stoicism to shine forth. And Seneca then claims that "[t]he power of wisdom is better shown by a display of calmness in the midst of provocation..."[56] And with this statement this picture of the sage becomes clear.

Once we have the picture of the sage before us, we need then to try to find out why we ought to believe Seneca and the highly counter-intuitive thesis that the sage cannot be hurt or injured. A number of arguments trying to prove the position follow. The power of the arguments in support of the view is at times questionable. For example, he uses a definitional argument based upon injury and evil.

> For if injury is the experiencing of some evil, if, moreover, the wise man can experience no evil, no injury affects the wise man.[57]

This argument obviously begs the question unless Seneca can establish the second premise which is precisely what the non-Stoic will dispute. He does work at this problem by trying to substantiate the connections between 'harm' and 'injury' and then between 'injury' and 'evil' or 'wickedness'.

'Injury' presupposes ownership, but the wise man's only possession is virtue and this no one nor thing can harm.

> But if injury can do no harm to anything a wise man owns, since if his virtue is safe his possessions are safe, then no injury can happen to the wise man.[58]

What Seneca needs here is to "prove" that his radical thesis about personal identity is correct and I take this claim to be that what we actually are, our only actual possession, is our rational soul. However, we do not get an argument. What we get is a story about Stilbo, a successful Stoic, who managed to achieve the radical Stoic identity collapse and remain completely composed amidst the most horrendous of circumstances. The Stoic moral of the tale culminates in Stilbo's reply to the butcher of his city and family that "There is no

reason for you to consider me vanquished and yourself the victor: your fortune has vanquished mine.'[59] Thus, Seneca appeals to the virtues of successful Stoicism and entices us by its charm: successful Stoicism offers great rewards. Radical extraction of personal identity from the material objective level to that of the imperturbable virtuous soul via Stoic 'apatheia' makes one immune to the ravages of injury and harm.

There is some power in Seneca's appeal to Stilbo. Given Stoic theses about the essential equality of rational beings, which does have appeal, we could say that if Stilbo could muster this kind of soul power, then there might be grounds, at least Stoic grounds, to assume that we all could do it. Of course, we still have no argument that the Stoic view on identity is correct. However, if we ignore for the time being possible contemporary replies, it is worth noting that the chief Stoic rivals, i.e. Aristotle and Epicurus, are not going to be overly troubled by the Stoic depiction of the rational soul and the importance of rational autonomy as much as they are going to dispute what matters to the soul. For Aristotle getting right results matters. For Epicurus getting desired and ultimately pleasurable results matters. While for the Stoics, there is no connection between results and the soul's well-being. And it is on this point that one Stilbo who shows no necessary connection between results and happiness makes a strong case by providing a counter-example to the other views.

Seneca then returns to the heart of the argument. Not wanting to leave the issue to be decided by the Stilbo story, he presents another argument.

> Again, that which injures must be more powerful than that which is injured; but wickedness is not

> stronger than righteousness; therefore, it is impossible for the wise man to be injured.[60]

This argument is problematic. The first premise seems on the surface to be false unless we again accept strong Stoic claims about personal identity. From the ordinary perspective there are many things which can injure me, e.g. my pen can pierce my finger, which are not more powerful than I am, unless I assume that I am not my body which might be exactly what someone who desired to dispute this point might assume. And since it does sometimes seem to happen that "good righteous" people get unjustly injured, the second premise needs substantial argument which we do not get unless one accepts the problematic first premise. To cause injury to something, I need not be more powerful than that thing. I only need to be more powerful than the part which I have injured. And it seems to me that if I injure a part then I have injured the whole, even though I may not be "more powerful" than the whole.

It thus seems that if the Stoic position is going to succeed we need to unravel the identity issue as it is the underpinning on which the critical premises stand. The crucial point on this issue is not in what the essence of the soul consists, but rather in what powers the soul possesses. The most important powers of the soul are the ability to extract itself from overly identifying with the body and the power to view itself independent of the body as "rational activity". Now it seems incontestable to me that "rational activity" could make itself inaccessible to impingement. The proper use of the second power could enable the second power to act as a foundation for the first power. The way this is done is by a careful scrutiny of what is, in

fact, under my power. And Epictetus tells us unequivocably that the gods put only one thing within our power and that this is "[t]he power to deal rightly with our impressions, but everything else they did not put in our hands."[41]

He later tells us to ask ourselves the questions, "What is mine, and what is not mine? What may I do, what may I not do?"[42] And then finishes the thought with reply and rebuttal which decisively, for him, seals the identity issue.

> I must die. But must I die groaning? I must be imprisoned. But must I whine as well? I must suffer exile. Can anyone hinder me from going with a smile, a good courage, and at peace?
> 'Tell the secret!'
> I refuse to tell, for this is in my power.
> 'But I will chain you.'
> What say you, fellow? Chain me? My leg you will chain - yes but my will - no, not even Zeus can conquer that.
> 'I will imprison you.'
> My bit of body you mean.[43]

What Epictetus has done in this pasage, very much like what Seneca does, is point out something about our natures, but not necessarily prove the radical extraction of identity from the body to be true. However, this might be enough even if the identity claim were not true. After all, if I possess the power to extract myself from bodily concerns and make myself imperturbable, Stoicism might still have something to offer in the form of a psychological therapy.

One thing which Stoic therapy has to recommend is that it help us become immune to suffering. In section 1, I drew a distinction between suffering and pain and promised to return to the issue to see if the Stoics actually do draw such a distinction. Returning now to

this point will allow us to see how the Stoics can justify their claim that the sage cannot be injured. The crux of the Stoic claim is that as a rational being one cannot be injured or harmed unless one ceases to identify solely with their nature as a rational being. The Stoic claim is not that the sage will not feel pain. The claim is that the sage will be unaffected by this feeling. The sage will feel pain but will not suffer. It is the imperturbable state of mind of the sage that remains calm and serene. Both Seneca and Epictetus make this position quite clear as neither denies that there are pains and pleasures. Seneca tells us that "There is tranquillity, for you, in the midst of the storm..."[44] And Epictetus asks "Who then is a Stoic?" and replies,

> Show me one who is sick and happy, in peril and yet happy, dying and yet happy, in exile and happy, in disgrace and happy.[45]

The Stoic mission is to wrench identity away from the those things, like our bodies, which are not up to us. All suffering mind states result from cognitive errors. We can "unlearn" suffering through cognitive insights into the working of the natural world. If we understand things correctly, 'apathela' will animate our attitude, and we will find Seneca's "calm in the midst of the storm". At least, we will find it as long as we believe the Stoic identity argument. And this is, in a manner, the problem with Stoicism - it will work whether the claims are true or false. Epictetus even acknowledges the point when he announces that

> If one had to be deceived in order to learn that nothing external or beyond our decision is anything to us, I would welcome that deception, from which I

> could lead a well-flowing and undisturbed life.'"

Do we want to be happy or do we want good reasons for being happy? There is a difference and it seems that Epicteus is ultimately willing to claim the difference does not matter. In fact, it would seem that by his own admission, Epictetus' project though, perhaps, a lie would still be a success if by believing his therapeutic advice a deep sense of 'apathela' were to animate us and we ceased to believe that externals really matter even though they still did matter. Of course, most Stoics would not endorse the ramifications of Epictetus' declaration. The Stoic would claim that any depiction of 'happiness' based upon false beliefs cannot be right because "happiness just is living in agreement with nature" and false beliefs make this impossible.

We would thus read Epictetus' declaration as rhetorical, designed for affect and not to be taken literally. Stoic happiness is simply so good that even if it were based upon a false belief, which of course could never happen, it would still be worth the cost. However, putting the rhetoric aside, we will find that happiness is just a state of mind which comes about from correctly understanding the natural world and allowing the 'apathela' which arises from this understanding to do its work. The path to happiness must follow the roads paved by nature and virtue, but unless the rational vehicle by which we travel these roads is fueled by 'apathela' the journey cannot succeed. And 'apathela' can only genuinely arise from Stoic cognitive therapy. Understanding devalues those "things not up to us" and thus deflates

our attachments to them. Without attachment we cannot be perturbed by anything beyond our control and cannot generate any means to be anything but happy.

This is the crucial point for the Stoic. The Stoic does have a reason to be happy. The imperturbability is cognitively driven; it comes about because of reasoning about nature. The dictum of nature is simple and clear. If something is in my control, I can control it and this is acting in accord with nature. If something is not in my control there is nothing I can do about it except accept it and this is acting rationally according to nature. Thus if I am not happy, I have done something wrong and it is clearly in my power to correct the unhappy condition by either acting or acknowledging that there is nothing I can do. And either way, by properly applying Stoic values to my life situation no sufficient reason to be unhappy can come forth.

However, a theoretical problem may still remain in the sense that Stoic 'apathela' will still work if I make a cognitive error. For example, suppose I develop my 'apathela' because I am told the following story. All material objects are the work of the devil. Some may be necessary for survival, but none are really good as they all, even our bodies, distract us from our "pure soul essence". If I believed this story I would develop a semblance of Stoic 'apathela' and this semblance could do the job just as well as genuine Stoic 'apathela'. I would be in the right state of mind, e.g. I would be immune to externals and those things beyond my control. What the Stoic would need to do at this point is to show that eventually the 'apathela' produced by the false belief will come into conflict with

truth and fail to do its job. However, in order to show this, the Stoic would have to produce an independent argument which demonstrated that the appeals to virtue and nature were not only superior to their opponent's views but were, in fact, correct. The Stoics to my knowledge produce no such argument as their usual tactic is to take the "superiority" route.[47] Hence the problem remains unsolved and highly problematic in the sense that the Stoics are committed to a cognitive form of therapy as the means to bring us to happiness, but their depiction of happiness as a state of mind independent of externals leaves the cognitive therapy without an independent grounding in truth to assure us that error does not lead to the right state of mind.[48]

One final point before I conclude concerns the above mentioned issue of "despising those things not up to us". Epictetus does use this kind of langauge and it is also found in Diogenes Laertius.[49] Seneca uses the term 'indifferent'[70] and since externals are generally classified by this designation, the stronger language might be more for effect than representative of a technical position. This issue is important because if the "despising" connotation were used it might undermine the possibility of Stoic success. A constant undercurrent of hostility, or even mild aversion, towards potential attachment-producing objects would make Stoic success an impossibility. I believe that the outright hostility is more for show than it is being used for any serious therapeutic work. However, the question remains whether any cognitive internalist account of happiness which views success as "the absence of inner disturbance" and posits something,

e.g. attachment to externals, as an impediment to success can avoid internal tension as long as the potential impediment is present.

The term 'detachment' is often used to describe Stoic 'apathela'. 'Detachment' as a theoretical "virtue" could be viewed as a problem for any view which emphasizes positive "tranquillity", e.g. Seneca, and becomes even a larger dilemma for views like Epictetus' and Marcus Aurellus' which emphasize the negative "absence of disturbance" depiction. 'Detachment' as an attitude, no matter how mildly one reads the term, is a breeding ground for hostility. If one is cognitively detached from externals there is a "reason for" the detachment. If there is a reason for the detachment in a theory of happiness, the reason has to cite a happiness-mitigating condition. The Stoics do offer such a reason and it is that attachment prevents happiness by creating dependencies upon those things which are not "up to us".

Attachments to things "not up to us" are problematic for the Stoics because they make our happiness dependent upon things beyond our control and this situation will inevitably lead to disturbances. The objective is to end disturbances and the means to attaining this objective is by detaching from those things beyond our control. One of the things beyond our control is the appearance of potential attachment-producing objects. In the presence of such an object, the Stoic must assume the detached attitude. The Stoic position would be that assuming the detached attitude was one of those things up to us. However, implicit in assuming the detached attitude is a judgment about the object. This judgment cannot be neutral as their use of the language of "Indifferents" would have us believe. If it were neutral

then the Stoic has no reason to assume the detached attitude; true neutrality would present no problem and thus no need for intervention. The judgment about the object thus has to be negative or adversarial. In a sense the judgment is actually a mix of positive and negative. Something about the object must charm the subject, or at least have the potential to charm, while Stoic reasoning about the charming effect comes in to overpower the object's enticement. And it seems very difficult to understand how this process would not itself be a source of constant agitation.

Cognitive detachment is constantly engaged in the process of pushing away attachment-producing objects and this internal struggle seems to conflict with the objective. One might imagine here the person who is detaching from a bad habit. There is a continual struggle going on in the presence of the habit's object; otherwise there is no bad habit. The habit's object only ceases to cause a disturbance when there is no affect, i.e. neither attachment nor detachment, and not when the affect is merely trumped by the application of the detached attitude. In other words, if there is a reason to be detached, then there has to be a disturbance. Since there will always be reasons to be detached given the Stoic way of categorizing things, e.g. those up to us and those not, and the Stoic rationalization behind the categorization, Stoic success is impossible.

Any therapy which advocates cognitive detaching depends upon the recognition that the object towards which the detaching is directed poses an actual or potential problem, i.e. that is the "reason" why the detaching is recommended. If there is no problem, there is no need for

a solution. Thus, because there is a need for a solution, there has to be a problem. Since this "problem", e.g. actual or potential attachment, is the reason for the Stoic intervention, the object of the problem has to create a cognitive aversion. 'Cognitive detachment' means that one has a reason not to be attached. If one's detachment is grounded in reason, there will always be a measure of aversion present, and the Stoic subject will be in a perpetual psychological double-bind because the Stoic method uses a means which undermines its success. The necessary condition for success, aversion to attachment to things not up to us, is a sufficient condition for failure. And the sufficient condition for failure is a necessary condition for success.

Thus if one is concerned to account for the legitimate internalist intuition, it might be of value to turn to an internalist view which is not cognitively driven and it is to these kinds of views to which I will now turn.

NOTES

1. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", in The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca, trans. Moses Hades (Gloucester: Peter Smith Pub., 1965), 79.

2. Epictetus, Encheiridion, 2, in Classics of Western Philosophy Third Edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1990).

3. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 79.

4. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 79.

5. Epictetus, Ench, 6.

6. Marcus Aurelius, The Meditations, trans. Maxwell Staniforth (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 4.3.

7. Ibid., 4.1.

8. cf. section 5 and Seneca, "On the Firmness of the Wise Man", in Epistulae.

9. cf. Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire, Chapter 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

10. Contemporary psychology might react unfavorably to this type of view and cite examples of "clinical depressions" in which the patient seems to present "unreasoned" emotional disturbances. In other words, the possible causal vector for emotional disturbance might not be unidirectional. Bodily disturbances", e.g. brain chemistry imbalances, do seem able to cause "emotional" agitation. If this situation is true, then clearly the Stoic view might be wrong, unless the Stoic were, perhaps, to claim that technically the chemical imbalance produces only a pain and the emotive response, e.g. the depression, is still a cognitive reaction to the bodily pain. Thus, the Stoic position could agree with a two-way causal vector and still argue that there are no "unreasoned emotions".

11. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, trans. R.D. Hicks (Loeb Library), VII.148-149.

12. Epictetus, Ench, 17.

13. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 87.

14. Epictetus, Ench, 29.

15. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 87.

16. Epictetus, Ench, 19.

17. Ibid., 1.

18. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.89-90.

19. Ibid., VII.94.

20 cf. Ibid.

21. Ibid., VII.102.

22. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Notebooks 1914-1918 Second Edition, eds. G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans, G.E.M. Anscombe (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 78.

23. Seneca, "De Ira", 1.74,

24. Epictetus, Ench, 21.

25. Seneca, "On Firmness [Constantia]", trans. John Basore (Loeb

Library), XIX.2.

26. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.127.

27. Epictetus, Ench, 19.

28. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.102-103.

29. Ibid., 93-94.

30. Epictetus, Ench, 38.

31. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 86.

32. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.104.

33. cf. Ibid., VII.105-106.

34. Ibid., VII.87.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., VII.88.

37. Annas explores the problems with the above interpretation and argues that this kind of interpretation is more representative of later Roman Stoicism, e.g. Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, than it is of the earlier versions. The basic dispute centers around whether the cosmic or universal viewpoint provides a foundation for morality. The difference which she notes is that in the earlier views 'virtue' and 'nature' are interdependent and that this interdependence makes it problematic to derive 'virtue' from 'nature' as the later theories do. She cites the following passage from Cicero to make the point clear.

> When the Stoics say that the final good is living in agreement with nature, what this means is, I think, the following: always to be in accord with virtue, and choose the things which are in accordance with nature, if they are not in conflict with virtue. (Cicero, Off. III.13)

We do not, on this depiction, discover "cosmic nature" and then call 'virtuous' the behavior and dispositions which conform to it. Rather, this view takes the developmental story very seriously. There is no "natural" foundation which we discover to be our guiding light. Instead there is a dynamic interaction between human and cosmic nature neither of which is sufficient to understand the other. We perfect our human nature by developing virtues which cannot be done unless we understand cosmic nature which in turn makes no sense to us independent of human nature. Thus neither element can be a foundation for the other. In this form, rational development as fully understanding this relation between nature and virtue will lead one to assume the cosmic

viewpoint because one will discover not a foundation for virtue embedded within cosmic nature, but instead a mutual dependence which gives developing human nature an active rather than passive role to play.

38. Marcus Aurelius, The Meditations, X.5.

39. Ibid., X.6.

40. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.106-107.

41. Epictetus, Ench, 30.

42. Julia Annas, "Prudence and Morality in Ancient and Modern Ethics", Ethics, 105, no. 2 (Jan. 1995): 253.

43. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 85.

44. Cicero, Off, trans. W. Miller (Loeb Library),III.2.

45. Ibid., III.5.

46. Ibid., III.33.

47. Ibid., III.33.

48. Ibid.

49. Marcus Aurelius, The Meditations, VIII.10.

50. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.86.

51. Ibid., VII.103.

52. Epictetus, Ench, 34.

53. Seneca, "On Firmness [Constantia]", I.1.

54. Ibid., II.3.

55. Ibid., III.4.

56. Ibid., IV.3.

57. Ibid., V.3.

58. Ibid., V.5.

59. Ibid., VI.6.

60. Ibid., VII.2.

61. Epictetus, The Discourses, I.1, in Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, trans. G. Long (U.S. Book Co.).

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 101.

65. Epictetus, The Discourses, II.19.

66. Ibid.

67. cf. Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 391.

68. cf. Striker, Gisela: "Ataraxia: Happiness as Tranquillity", The Monist 73 no. 1 (Jan. 1990): 97-110.

69. Diogenes Laertius, The Life of Zeno, VII.128.

70. Seneca, "On Tranquillity", 93.

Chapter 5 'Ananda': Nonrelational Happiness

1. 'Ananda'

The Vedantic conception of happiness is usually expressed by the term 'ananda'. Although 'joy' or 'bliss' capture the spirit of 'ananda' better than 'happiness', the Vedantic conception of the ideal or supremely happy life would be a life animated by a constant sense of joy. The Vedantic conception of this 'ananda' is the most radical internalist conception of happiness that we have seen thus far. The following passage from Ramana Maharshi captures the traditional view.

> There is happiness when agreeable things are presented to the mind. It is the Happiness inherent to the Self, and there is no other Happiness. And it is not alien and afar. You are diving into the Self on those occasions which you consider pleasurable; that diving results in self-existent Bliss. But the association of ideas is responsible for foisting that Bliss on other things or occurrences while, in fact, that Bliss is within you. On these occasions you are plunging into the Self, though unconsciously. If you do so consciously, with the conviction that comes of the experience that you are identical with the Happiness which is verily the Self, the one Reality, you call it Realization. I want you to dive consciously into the Self, i.e. into the heart.[1]

The position seems dogmatic in this depiction. The first problem is that the equation of the 'Self' with 'bliss' needs explanation and argument. And secondly, the "association of ideas being responsible for foisting that Bliss on other things or occurrences" clearly depends on the truth of the "Self/Bliss" equation.

I want to make the Vedantic claim as clear as possible before examining the supporting arguments. The main thrust of the position is that persons possess a 'Self'. In Vedantic vernacular the term used is 'Atman'. This 'Atman' or 'Self' is depicted as the unchanging core of each person and is contrasted with the changing surface personality, ego or 'self'. This 'Atman' is also alleged to be one "in essence" with 'Brahman'. And 'Brahman' is the underlying substratum, the Godhead, from which all emanates and of which all is made. Nozick describes the position in the following terms.

> It (the Vedantic view) holds that Atman is Brahman; your underlying identity, what you fundamentally are, is identical to the unlimited, all-inclusiveness from which everything springs and emanates.[2](Bracketed phrase added for clarity.)

The theory then claims that 'Brahman' is essentially unknowable and can only "be experienced" by direct contact through identification. The identification comes about when we cease to identify with our changing personalities, i.e. ego-sense, and realize that we are, in essence, our unchanging 'Atmanic' core which is essentially 'Brahman'. In "The One and the Many" William James accurately describes Vedantic methodology.

> The method of Vedantism is the mystical method. You do not reason, but after going through a certain discipline you 'see', and having seen, you can report truth.[3]

On the testimony of those "seers" or sages who have succeeded in attaining this realization, i.e. James' "seeing", 'Brahmanic' essence is "characterized" as "Sat-Chit-Ananda". 'Sat' is "pure Being" or existence. 'Chit' is "pure consciousness", sometimes referred to as

"pure awareness"; in contemporary idiom, this 'Chit' aspect of 'Brahman' could be described as "consciousness without content." And finally these "seers" noticed that the existence of this consciousness was inherently blissful and in fact the source of happiness.[4]

Both James[5] and Nozick are critical of the metaphysical baggage which the view appears to impose upon us. At this point, I want to ignore the possible metaphysical excesses. What I propose to do is to examine the radical internalization of "happiness" which is advocated by the theory. In other words, the approach I want to take with the view is to assume the truth of the primary metaphysical premise and try to see if the above "association of ideas" dogma can be supported by textual argument. I will, however, briefly outline some of the crucial arguments which are used to support the internalization of Vedantic bliss. I will then examine the defense provided for the conception of Vedantic Bliss as innate, unconditional and that most of us are making a mistake when we believe by an "association of ideas" that "happiness" is being "foisted upon us by things or occurrences". This attempted defense of the radical internalization of "happiness" will unfold by moving through the same schema which I have used for the previously examined views.

My rationale for taking this method is three-fold. The first is simply an appeal to validity. If the Vedantic premises are true, then the radical internalization of happiness must be inescapable. Since this aspect of the undertaking, i.e. internalization, is more important to my overall project than Vedantic metaphysics, it seems the most economical method to follow. The second reason is that if the

argument cannot pass the first test there is no need to do the metaphysical analysis as that analysis would then not be relevant to my project. Finally, if the radical internalization of happiness is cogent, then even if the Vedantic premises are as problematic as James and Nozick believe, there would be some grounds to try to find premises which would deliver the needed support.

The first thing to note about the Vedantic view is that it is not cognitive. This contrasts quite nicely with the Stoic position which is also a radical internal view but is cognitively driven. The technical term 'non-cognitive' should not be used to convey the Vedantic view. The view is not about verbal reports of one's "happiness" being neither true nor false. The view makes the claim that bliss, 'ananda', or supreme happiness, does not depend upon cognitive content; there is no necessary connection between Vedantic bliss and any act of cognition. Vedantic bliss is prior to and independent of objective recognition and thus requires no cognitive mediation.

The doctrine comes from a number of ancient "insights" which appear in The Upanishads. In The Upanishads we often find a certain structure. This structure consists of an appeal to Vedic revelation followed by an attempt to justify the revelation by argument. In the "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad" the main doctrine at issue and some of its supporting arguments are presented. The central claim is an identity claim. We can deduce that we have a Self from an examination of the three ordinary states of consciousness.[6] These three states are the waking, dreaming and deep sleep, i.e. dreamless, states of consciousness. All other conditions of consciousness, excepting

one[7], are modifications of these three. The argument is that there is some "being" who moves through these states of consciousness and this "being" must be the Self or Atman. The idea is roughly as follows. I worked hard all morning, then took a nap, restlessly dreaming for a while until I fell into a deep sound sleep. The Vedantic claim is that there has to be "something" which passed through these three conditions, holds them together and acts as a stable reference point without which there would be no way to attribute the diverse and sundry experiences to the same person. There must be something behind the three experiences which holds them together. Something must remain the same around which the experiences cohere in order to say that they were all experiences of the same person.

> Which is the Self? The person here who consists of knowledge among the senses, the light within the heart. He remaining the same, wanders along the two worlds seeming to think, seeming to move about. He on becoming asleep (getting into the dream condition) transcends this world and the forms of death.[8]

The passage needs some clarification. The "light within the heart" is a constant refrain which appears consistently; note the reference to the 'heart' in the Ramana Maharshi passage above. Technically speaking, the locus of being, consciousness and bliss, Sat-chit-ananda, is supposed to be in the right side of the heart. A rather banal argument is often given to support this doctrine which is that when we refer to ourselves we usually point to the right side of the heart. There is also a more sophisticated physiological argument which has more cogency.[9] This "more sophisticated" argument

correlates the presence of the "Self", 'Atman', with the "intrinsic" rhythm of the sinoatrial node, i.e. the pacemaker node, in the right atrium of the heart.[10] The "two worlds" are the waking and dream worlds. And the critical line is "he remaining the same wanders along the two worlds."

There is also an epistemological argument which is often used to support the claim of a "being" behind the flux of experience. The argument is in the form of a dialetic whereby one progressively negates as a possible Self anything which could appear as an epistemological object of that Self. The main doctrine is that the nature of any epistemological relationship entails that the "knower cannot ever be the known".[11] The process proceeds in the following manner. I cannot be that tree because that tree is something of which "I" am aware. I cannot be this body because this body is something of which "I" am aware. Whatever "I am" it is something of the nature of "awareness of this body", epistemologically "this body" must be something other than that which is aware of it. Also, I cannot be these thoughts or emotions because these thoughts and emotions are things of which "I" am aware. Ultimately "I" cannot even be this personality who is struggling through writing this essay because this "struggling soul", i.e. ego or 'self', `jiva' is the technical term, is also something of which "I" am aware. And we reach rock-bottom when we come to the blissful existence of pure consciousness without any content.

The next critical point which needs some textual support is the connection to bliss. In other words even if one accepts this sense of "conscious presence" as their Self or Atman, how is the move made

from the existence of this "conscious presence" to the claim that this conscious presence is inherently blissful? The core idea behind the doctrine is again based upon reflective self-observation. The Self's awareness of existing is claimed to be inherently blissful. However, unlike the epistemological problems of the last paragraph, the Self's existence cannot be epistemologically objectified as something distinct from the Self's consciousness. Self-consciousness or awareness possesses Self-existence in a way different from the way it "possesses" other objects. 'Self-existence' must be a part of Self-consciousness and Self-consciousness must be a part of Self-existence. Otherwise we could have one without the other and this would be a metaphysical impossibility. According to Vedanta, Self-consciousness which did not possess Self-existence would not exist.[12] The Bliss aspect of the view simply follows from the common-sense intuition noted above that the awareness of existing is blissful. Thus, the three threads are inherent and innate and there is supposed to be no way to escape this conclusion.

The core passage on the nature of Atmanic Bliss is found in the "Taittiriya Upanishad".

> The Self is the source of abiding joy.
> Our hearts are filled with joy in seeing him
> Enshrined in the depths of our consciousness.
> If he were not there, who would breathe, who live?
> He it is who fills every heart with joy.[13]

'He', of course, is 'Brahman' as 'Atman' as conscious existence. And despite the surface appearance, there is a Darwinian argument in this passage. If mere existence did not contain some basic joy, who would

struggle to survive, to breathe, to live? In fact, Thomas Nagel in his "Death" essay[14] defends a position which comes very close to standing upon basic Vedantic values. `Death' is bad, on Nagel's view, not because of what it is, but because of that of which it deprives us. And that of which it deprives us is "conscious experience" of which more is always better. Even when the bad experiences outweigh the good ones, the prospect of "merely more life" holds out a goad to push us on. Perhaps, an exception might be made for excrutiating pain with no possibility of remission, where there literally would be "no joy". But even here, the point would tend to support rather than refute the primary point - "conscious life" without joy is "no good" at all.

> The situation is roughly this: there are elements which, if added to one's experience, make that life better; there are other elements which, if added to one's experience, make life worse. But what remains when these are set aside is not merely `neutral': it is emphatically positive. Therefore, life is worth living even when the bad elements of experience are plentiful, and the good ones too meager to outweigh the bad ones on their own. The additional positive weight is supplied by experience itself, rather than any of its contents.[15]

What the Vedantic view does is to explain the what and why which Nagel has left out of his explanation. "Conscious experience" in "itself" has positive value because it contains inherent bliss. In a sense the argument simply asks a seemingly rhetorical question about our apparent "innate" love for living. Were it not for this bliss of being why would virtually everyone always want more of it?

There is a second argument which is used to support this view of the innate bliss of "conscious being". On the superficial seemingly

banal version of the argument, it is noted that when arising from deep sleep we always note that "we slept blissfully". The core of the doctrine goes back to the "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad" and an extended discussion that attempts to establish a physiological connection between the heart and consciousness and which tries to establish the "heart" as the locus of consciousness and thus bliss.[16] The critical point however is the claim that as consciousness enters this state of deep sleep it "reposes back" into the heart center and in deep sleep experiences an "excess of bliss"[17] which is then recalled and expressed upon awakening by the tacit acknowledgement that "I slept blissfully." As I said the argument could be seen as banal at worst and perhaps, at best, a case of serious conceptual confusion. After all, is not deep sleep the absence of consciousness? And if 'deep sleep' just is the absence of consciousness, it could be that we are "recognizing" "deep sleep" inferentially from the absence of any consciousness.

Shankara claims this is not the case and presents the following argument in Dakshinamurti Stotra.[18] The following two stanzas are directed at those Buddhists who deny the existence of a permanent entity which moves through the various states of consciousness, but the critical point is how the "slept blissfully" claim allegedly runs deeper than the "banal" reading would have us believe.

> 21. Even during deep sleep, Atman is endowed with being, consciousness and bliss, because self-identity is recognized in the consciousness "I slept blissfully".
>
> 22. The expression "Atman is recognized" is in the reflexive passive voice. Being self-luminous, Atman

knows Himself by Himself.[19]

Shankara is claiming in these passages that "self-identity is recognized" is the same as "Atman is recognized" and that the identity claim involved being in the passive reflexive voice is the same as "Atman recognizes Himself" in the active voice. The "I slept blissfully" claim is thus not an inference, but a direct report on an experience one has undergone. The Vedantic claim is that the presence of the term "blissful" indicates that the "experience" cannot be an inference. In order to note the critical point notice the difference between the following two experiences. I awaken in the parking lot lying on the ground, get up, reach into my pocket for my car keys and notice that my wallet is gone. I infer that I must have been mugged and robbed. I remember nothing about the event, but from the information I have I can figure out what probably happened and I say that "I must have been robbed". Shankara's claim is that if I had used any qualitatively descriptive terms to describe the experience, for example "I was savagely attacked.", then it would not be an inference but a report based upon memory. And thus the person waking from deep sleep ought only to say that she slept deeply, not blissfully. There are numerous issues which could be tracked down from all this not the least of which is the critical Vedantic claim that consciousness can be present in the absence of cognition. However, this issue would take us beyond my intended scope. There should be no question though that the Vedantic claim is committed to a position that does advocate the presence of consciousness in the absence of cognition and Shankara's

argument does offer a reasonable defense for the view.

The final move in the argument ties the 'Atmanic' bliss to ordinary happiness or joy. The ancient claim is essentially the same as Ramana Maharshi's above quoted passage. The source of bliss is internal. "Happiness is inherent" as Ramana Maharshi notes and as the arguments of the last few pages have attempted to demonstrate.

> Joy is of two kinds - relative and absolute. Of these, relative joy is a certain expression of a particle of Bliss through variation in the mental mode due to contact with objects... Absolute Bliss is Brahman alone.[20]

The main contention of the position is that neither objects nor circumstances "cause" happiness. "Contact with objects", be they sensory, intellectual or aesthetic, causes a "variation in the mental mode" which allows a "particle" of the innate Bliss to surface. According to this theory, what happens when one experiences conditional happiness, bliss or joy is much like the accessing of a computer file. The code-word which accesses the file is a non-necessary, arbitrary condition upon which access to the file is dependent. In the same manner, objects and circumstances become non-necessary, arbitrary conditions upon which access to the bliss becomes dependent. And as no particular code-word is necessary and any code-word could be sufficient to access the file, so this innate 'ananda' becomes dependent upon objects and circumstances by a certain "variation in the mental mode."

There is a subtle argument embedded within this position which needs to be noted.

> With the acquisition of the desired object the Jiva(ego-sense) momentarily experiences calmness of

> mind and consequently considerable joy; and when the object is actually enjoyed, the joy is great. Even the prospect of acquiring it gives rise to some happiness.[21]

The argument here is really the core of the doctrine. The critical psychological linchpin is an observation of what happens in the moment of desire fulfillment. This passage is claiming that there is no positive addition or embellishment in the moment of desire fulfillment. What is actually supposed to occur is a certain relaxing of psychological tension. When the psychological activity of desiring stops, be it through fulfillment or extirpation, a calmness descends upon the psychological subject. And in that calmness the "innate bliss" bleeds through. In the absence of desire, the absence of psychologically contracting around a conceived need, what happens is exactly the same as what happens in the moment of fulfillment. When no need is present, there is happiness. And if this contention is true, then 'happiness' is not dependent upon objects or circumstances and only appears to be so dependent because of a mere "association of ideas." One reaches a point in this material where there is no other guide except to make the actual observation and examine one's experiences.

As noted, the metaphysical trappings in which the theory is encased seem extravagant. The view is making a strong claim and offer. It is claiming that 'happiness' does not depend upon objects and circumstances and it is offering this unconditional happiness to all. One objection that needs immediate attention is that Vedantic 'happiness' does not resemble ordinary intuitions about 'happiness' no

matter which view one might hold. And the objection might be that what we have are different concepts of happiness and not merely different nuances of the same concept. However, this charge might be tempered some by noticing certain similarities with the previous theories. For example, Aristotle[22] struggles with the notion that the happy man ought not to be able to lose his happiness. The Vedantic conception of 'happiness' is quite similar on this point and explains why happiness, i.e. 'ananda', is not contingent.

The Stoics pursue a conception of 'happiness' which renders one immune to objects and circumstances. The Vedantic conception also strives for such immunity and provides a better defense. The Stoics literally have to invent a new vocabulary and then claim that our common-sense intuitions about the value of objects and circumstances are wrong. The Vedantic conception makes no such "extreme" move. It admits that the ordinary means to happiness do produce it, i.e. the "particle of bliss", but then simply claims that the means were not necessary. And given the difficulty of citing any necessary objective conditions for happiness as well as the scope of possible sufficient conditions, the view does provide an internalist explanation of the "objective problem" in a manner which seems to me superior to the Stoic view. No matter what objective condition one imagines, it would always be possible for someone to be happy without it, and Vedanta tries to explain why.

Epicurus' conception of 'happiness' shares the Vedantic notion regarding the power of the "association of ideas." The "death bed scenario" and the "wise man on the rack feeling no pain" represent a

clear similarity to the notion that happiness can be produced by a mere "association of ideas". There is also a methodological similarity between Vedanta and Epicurus. Both see mental disturbances and bodily pain as impediments to either 'ataraxia' or 'ananda'. Yogic practices and meditation techniques are designed with nothing else in mind; disturbances of the body and mind must be transcended. It is true that the means and consequences of transcending these impediments are quite different in the two schools, but the recognition of them as impediments is a clear similarity between the two conceptions of 'happiness'. Finally all the ancient Western views see finality and completeness as crucial criteria for their conceptions of 'happiness' and in the end Vedantic 'ananda' would meet these criteria.

It should be noted that I am well aware that these contentions are not indisputable. However, their indisputability is not the issue. What is at issue here is that there is enough similarity between the views to neutralize the "different concepts" charge. There are enough family resemblances to make a case for a shared concept of happiness and that is all that is intended. When the Vedantic man talks about "supreme happiness" he is talking about an answer to the same question for which Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics sought an answer: "What is the best expression of happiness?" And the answer of Vedantic man is a life animated by 'ananda', unconditional bliss.

2. Vedantic Internalism

A principal virtue of Vedanta is 'vairagya' which is best translated as 'non-attachment'.[2a] In rather Stoic fashion, dependency upon

objects hinders the possibility of happiness. However, aversion to objective dependency is also problematic. Shunning objects in order to produce a certain state of mind misses the mark; "dependency on objects" is present whether one is psychologically grasping or avoiding. The ideal is not to be "affectless", i.e. 'apatheia', but rather to be unfettered by the affects. The critical gesture is not a version of cognitive therapy. The critical gesture is a switch in the locus of identity. 'Mind' in Vedanta is part of the objective order of things; thoughts, as noted above, are objects of consciousness. Transcendence of the objective order is to transcend the mind, and by 'transcending the mind' is meant the cessation of identification with any thought construction. In a critical passage from The Bhagavad Gita the ideal is described in the following terms.

> Water flows continually into the ocean but the
> ocean is never disturbed;
> Desire flows continually into the mind of the seer
> but he is never disturbed.
> The seer knows peace...
> He knows peace who has forgotten desire.
> He lives without craving:
> Free from ego, free from pride.[24]

The method and the goal here are very different from cognitive Stoicism. There is no problem-solving therapeutic intervention. Perspicacious thinking does not enter the fray to devalue the objective conditions and impose an objective immunity through understanding and insight. The objective order of things does not impose a problem which the cognating subject through the application of rational deliberation then solves. The content of the problem is not the problem. The problem is attention's attachment to the internal dialogue. 'Non-attachment' is

the freeing of attention and 'attachment' is any condition in which attention is not free. 'Free attention' is to notice the associative nature of thinking. It, 'free attention', is preceded by the observation of the way thinking proceeds without the conscious attention of the subject. It is argued that the ego-sense, or subject, is a consequent of thought and not something prior to thought. 'Attachments' are the associative objects, in the broad Vedantic sense, to which attention is compulsively drawn. In a certain sense the primary internal objective could be seen as the collapse or inversion of attention back upon itself. The problem and its solution are depicted in the following passage from a highly technical meditation manual.

> If you infer its eternal light, then closely investigate whether the light is of itself or not. Everybody falls in this investigation however learned and proficient he may be, because his mind is not bent inward but restlessly moves outward. As long as thoughts crop up, so long has the turning inward of the mind not been accomplished. As long as the mind is not inward, so long the Self cannot be realized. Turning inward means absence of desire. How can the mind be fixed within if desires are not given up?[25]

This passage is followed a few pages later by an elaboration and extended argument of the position. I assume the reader to be somewhat unfamiliar with these views and thus believe it best to include the following extended passage.

> Even the learned are perplexed on this point. External perceptions of the mind are dependent on two conditions.
>
> The first is the elimination of other perceptions and the second is fixation on the particular item of perception. If the mind is

> simply turned away from other perceptions, the mind is in an indifferent state, where there is the absence of any kind of perception. Therefore, concentration on a particular item is necessary for the perception of external things. But since consciousness is the Self and not apart from the mind, concentration on it is not necessary for its realization. It is enough that other perceptions (namely thoughts) should be eliminated from the mind and then the Self will be realized.
>
> If a man wants to pick out one particular image among a series of images passing in front of him as reflections on a mirror, he must turn his attention away from the rest of the pictures and fix it on that particular one.
>
> If on the other hand, he wants to see the space reflected it is enough that he turns away his attention from the pictures and the space manifests without any attention on his part, for, space is immanent everywhere and is already reflected there. However, it has remained unnoticed because the interspatial images dominate the scene.
>
> Space being the supporter of all and immanent in all, becomes manifest if only the attention is diverted from the panorama. In the same way, consciousness is the supporter of all and is immanent in all and always remains perfect like the space pervading the mind also. Diversion of attention from other items is all that is necessary for Self-Realisation. Or do you say that the Self-illuminant can ever be absent from any nook and corner?
>
> There can indeed be no moment or spot from which consciousness is absent. Its absence means their absence also. Therefore, consciousness of the Self becomes manifest by mere diversion of attention from things or thoughts.
>
> Realization of the Self requires absolute purity only and no concentration of mind. For this reason, the Self is said to be unknowable (not objectively knowable).
>
> Therefore it was also said that the sole necessity for Self-Realization is purity of mind. The only impurity of mind is thought. To make it thought-free is to keep it pure.[26]

There are some technical points to notice here. The first point is the nature of the mind. On the Vedantic conception of 'mind', it should be

noted that the 'mind' does not "have thoughts". 'Mind' is its content; if there is no content, there is no mind. Ramana Maharshi says, "Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind."[27] Clearly on the Vedantic view, subconscious regulatory brain processes would not be "mind" activity. I do not believe there is a deep problem here. Even if one subscribes to a version of physicalism or body/mind materialism, the Vedantic point could be simply seen as using 'mind' to explain the verbal corrollary of the brain processes. Another point is that the metaphoric analogy between space and consciousness is to be taken quite literally. Consciousness is the "space" in which mind, i.e. thoughts, appear. Finally the problem presented in this passage is not Descartes' problem. On the Vedantic view the 'cogito ergo sum' would simply be another thought, an object which appears in the "space" of consciousness. Descartes infers his existence from his thinking, the Vedantin views this inference as illegitimate. All one can legitimately infer from the "I think" thought is an awareness of this thought. There are, of course, numerous issues in philosophy of mind embedded within this material. However, their examination is beyond my intended scope.

As for the argument, the core is rather simple. When there are no perceptions present, the awareness of the absence requires the presence of consciousness. Since consciousness is claimed, as noted in the last section, to be inherently blissful and the source of ordinary happiness, there can be no necessary conditions for happiness. The actual source of happiness is consciousness and consciousness must, as the above argument is supposed to demonstrate, always be present.

External objective dependency is eschewed and the source of Bliss is direct and unmediated.

If one follows the train of explanation, the rationale behind the "association of ideas dogma" can now be clearly gleaned. Since we often do become happy or blissful when our ideas are properly associated with the objective conditions that are present, happiness can come about via the objective route. However, since it is also possible that consciousness, and thus happiness, is not necessarily dependent upon any particular objective condition, there remains a legitimate subjective component for the presence of happiness. In fact, even in the presence of our desired objective conditions, it can come about that one is not happy simply because the legitimate subjective component seems to be absent.[28] The Vedantic view simply synthesizes these intuitions and infers the internal nature of happiness or bliss. The argument is basically as follows. There is a legitimate subjective component involved in first person claims of happiness. The presence or absence of this legitimate subjective component can override the presence of mitigating conditions and undermine the presence of apparent causal conditions. Since conscious existence is claimed to be inherent blissfully, the Vedantin locates the source of the legitimate subjective component in this consciousness. And we thus need nothing to be happy because, in a sense, this legitimate subjective component is already present. Ramana Maharshi explains the issue as follows:

> We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects. When the mind goes out, it experiences misery. In truth, when its desires are

> fulfilled, it returns to its own place and enjoys the happiness that is the Self. Similarly, in the states of sleep, samadhi**, and fainting, and when the object desired is obtained, or the object disliked removed, the mind becomes inward turned and enjoys pure Self-Happiness. Thus, the mind moves without rest, alternately going out of the Self and returning to it. Under the tree the shade is pleasant; out in the open the heat is scorching. A person who has been going about in the sun feels cool when he reaches the shade. Some one who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool. A wise man stays permanently in the shade.[29]

Probably the most pressing objection to this kind of internalist view of 'happiness' would be some version of Nozick's "Experience Machine" agrument. There could be two possible ways the objection could have force. One would be pragmatic and the other theoretical.

The pragmatic objection would attack the final claim in the above passage that "some one who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool." We not only want to "feel good" but we want to feel good because of the successful outcomes of our chosen projects. The man in the shade might cease enjoying the shade after his satiation point and need to be scorched again. Some pleasures are certainly like this. The "thrill of victory" could also be a good example on this point. The warm glow of winning the championship only lasts for a relatively short period of time and usually retirement is not the route most champions take. They want the experience again. And some champions will even report that it is better the "second time around", especially after having lost the previously

** 'Samadhi' is a technical term for the culminating meditative condition.

won championship. Vedantic happiness just does not look very much like the kind of happiness most people want, or at least not the kind of life most people would choose to lead. And if Vedantic happiness comes at the cost of living a life that most would find unattractive, there could be a serious problem with the position.

I believe that the Vedantin will simply stand firm on this point and note the futility of the quest. The critical point is whether or not the person going from the shade and back again had what she was pursuing before the pursuit began. The Vedantic claim is that she did. But even if she did, if she did not either know it or feel it, why was it foolish to go to get it in the most readily available manner? The pursuit can then only be foolish after we have received some Vedantic instruction. The critical instruction will come in the form of a message about what it is that we are pursuing. And the claim will be that the pursuit of objective conditions as a "final end" is wrong. Objective conditions are all, at best, merely unnecessary instrumental means to happiness. And dependency upon them makes the happiness we attain through them tentative, unstable and subject to constant back-sliding.

The argument to support this position is a core teaching which appears in _The Upanishads,_ [30] And the doctrinal point which is emphasized appears in the "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad".

> Then Yajnavalkya said: "Verily it is not for the sake of the husband, my dear, that the husband is loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self.
> Verily, it is not for the sake of the wife, my dear, that the wife is loved, but she is loved for the sake of the self.
> Verily, it is not for the sake of sons, my dear,

> that sons are loved, but for the sake of the self. Verily, it is not for the sake of wealth, my dear, is wealth loved, but for the sake of the self.[31]

This passage should not be read as a defense of psychological egoism. The claim is that things are dear to us because they bring us joy; the objects cited are a means of contact with the Bliss of the Self. It is not the apple which we want. It is the sweetness contained in the apple. It is not the sex that we want. What we want is the sweetness contained in the sex. If we could by-pass the objective mediating conditions and acquire the sweetness directly, we would have no need nor desire for the object. Of course, this is the critical point which Nozick will dispute. On his depiction, something is lost if the means are by-passed. Ironically, it will be at exactly this point that the "flight of the mystic" will confront the hard-nosed philosopher on his own terms. Observe what actually happens when one attains the object desired or the successful outcome which is followed by the declaration, "I am now happy". Is some extra "something" infused into the moment, or is it instead that the psychology of seeking stops? The Vedantic view is not claiming that Nozicklan acquisition will not succeed. The claim is only that the attainment is not necessary. And if it is not necessary, then the locus of happiness has to be internal.

From the theoretical perspective, the dilemma is somewhat more difficult. In "The Experience Machine" the critical theoretical problem is that this kind of radical internalist view can lead to the odd consequence that a false belief about the objective facts could produce real happiness, and Nozick believes any view which allows this to

happen has to be flawed. Following the epistemological methodology recommended in his Philosophic Explanations, I would assume that Nozick would advocate some kind of "truth tracking"[32] mechanism to detect and identify the right kind of happiness. If the discovery of the falsehood in the causal belief would alter the happy condition, then the declaration of happiness is tainted. I may think and believe that I am happy. However the fact, that if I knew all the facts then I would not be happy, means that it is not true that all that matters is how life is going internally. The critical point is that if a factual correction alters the internal condition, then the internal condition cannot be all that matters. And if this is correct, radical internalism is false.

In a footnote to the "Experience Machine" essay Nozick notes that views that posit a contact with a transcendental reality which yields "[B]liss or Nirvana"[33] have failed to distinguish this experience of the transcendental reality from a long, "very long", run on the experience machine. I believe that Nozick is wrong on this last point, especially as far as the Vedantic "Bliss View" is concerned. In the first place, there is one rather large difference and this concerns possible unplugging which would be a major problem for Nozick's subject, but would be no problem at all for one had made the "contact". If this seems to miss the spirit of the argument, we could imagine some permanent drug-induced state which most of us would be inclined to reject as a viable means to happiness, but would seem, in Nozickian spirit, to be indistinguishable from Vedantic Bliss. This makes the question much more testing, but I do think we need to be careful and

distinguish between "what is the best explanation of 'happiness'" and "what we would prefer 'happiness' to be".

The core of the dispute will center around two differing intuitions. Nozick believes that our explanation of 'happiness' as a viable answer to the question, "What really matters?" must include some recognition of objective conditions playing a significant role in our answer. The Vedantic view denies any such significance except as possible unnecessary, sufficient access-means to something which is already present. We then conduct the "Experience Machine" experiment in its most testing form and our internalist intuitions are severely challenged.

Suppose the Vedantin introduced an "Anti-Experience Machine". This machine would produce the converse of Nozick's machine. Rather than falsely believing that one's most cherished project had come about when it had not, this machine would make one believe that one's most cherished project had not come about when in fact it had. The person in the "Anti-Experience Machine" would believe that they were unhappy. However, since this person's belief would not be tracking the truth, our Nozickian intuitions have to tell us that this person is not really unhappy. She just thinks she is. The facts which are causing the unhappy condition do not correspond to reality. If we would not be inclined to call the person in "Experience Machine" happy, then we have to be inclined to call the person in the "Anti-Experience Machine" not unhappy. This situation also seems wrong.

There are many other similar conditions which could produce the same problems. Fear, anger, and sadness all seem to behave in the

same manner. One can enter these conditions via the fallacious, i.e. non-truthful, route and it just seems wrong to tell such a person that they are not really fearful, angry or sad. What the Vedantin will claim at this point is that the Nozickian objection is supported by a cognitive underpinning, e.g. beliefs are doing all the work, and this will only support, and not unobjectionably, a view of happiness or Bliss which is cognitively driven. Nozick and those who sympathize with him want to find a reason for their happiness and want this reason to be accurately represented by objective facts. The Vedantin will reply that there are plenty of reasons to be found; any one of which could be sufficient given the right beliefs but none of them are necessary, and that this fact tells us something about the nature of happiness. Nozick believes that the radical internalist has failed to distinguish between the "Transcendental Bliss" and the "very long" ride in the experience machine. The Vedantin might cite Leibniz's "identity of indiscernibles" and point out that the reason the person in the experience machine cannot tell the difference is because there is none. "Experience Machine" happiness like "Experience Machine" fear and anger is the real thing, at least as long as it lasts. Of course, the Vedantin will also note that if the happiness does not last, then it was only an unnecessary, conditionally dependent "particle of bliss" not the "real" thing. And then he will observe that in the case of the objectivist, the happiness never does last.

Given the argument, it then becomes quite simple to see why 'vairagya', or non-attachment, becomes a primary virtue. Attachments create unecessary dependencies. Attachments make conditions upon that

which is claimed to be unconditional. The objective sphere plays a minor insignificant role. Things and occurrences do not cause us to be happy. What they cause is a certain relaxation of the mind which then allows the bliss to be experienced. In this relaxed pose, attention is diverted from objective pursuits; desiring and the psychological tendency to contract attention around conceived needs ceases, and that "relaxing of attention" just is happiness or bliss. In a certain sense the claim seems to be that the absence of unhappiness is happiness and given the supporting arguments this is, in fact, exactly what will be claimed. In the Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, sutra II-42 claims that "Superlative happiness comes from contentment"[34]. Commenting upon this sutra I.K. Taimini notes the following.

> It may be objected that the absence of unhappiness does not mean the presence of happiness which is a positive state of mind. There is a definite reason why superlative happiness abides in a perfectly calm and contented mind. A calm mind is able to reflect within itself the bliss which is inherent in our real Divine nature. The constant surging of desires prevents this bliss from manifesting itself in the mind. It is only when these desires are eliminated and the mind becomes calm that we know what true happiness is. This subtle and constant joy which is called Sukha and which comes from within is independent of external circumstance and is really a reflection of 'Ananda', one of the three fundamental aspects of the Self.[35]

3. Moral Dissonance

No problem presents more philosophic troubles to Vedanta than does the issue of morality. Given the deflation of objective value, it seems difficult to make a positive case for having any genuine moral concerns. Though the traditional views advocate rather lofty

aspirations in the moral sphere, there seems no way to ground the aspirations in theory. Once the connection between the Self and the objective realm is cut, building any kind of moral structure seems an empty project. Though the literature is packed full of parables, fables and depictions of Vedantic heros trying to reconcile the "realm of action" with the pinnacle teachings which abstract virtually every ounce of moral motivation, astute readers more often than not receive the distinct impression that the theory cannot support the recommendation. In The Bhagavad Gita this impression will vividly jump out at the reader as she reaches the concluding chapter. Much like the dilemma of reconciling Aristotle's view in Books 1-9 of The Nichomachean Ethics and the view presented in Book 10, the reader of The Bhagavad Gita is left with the question, "What was the point?" "Why all the training if it all comes down to this?"

The Bhagavad Gita is intended to be a primary "reconciling" manual. How does one motivate action given the non-attached aspirations of the struggling aspirant? The problem can be best understood by using Hume and Nietzsche as a segue into the issue. Hume's claim about personal identity is well-known. He claims that when he searches his mind for "his self" he cannot find any such entity. "Self-identity" for Hume is a conceptual construct, an abstraction from ideas and impressions, and apart from these ideas and impressions there is no self.[34] Nietzsche[37] elaborates the point further by using a grammatical analogy. He points out the inferential nature of self and further explains how the self is nothing more than a conceptual posit. He asks the reader to observe the grammar of the sentence "The

lightning flashes" or "energy moves". The grammar will lead us to infer something called "lightning" doing something called "flashing". And then Nietzsche points out the error. There is no lightning doing the flashing; the 'lightning' just is the flashing. In the same way and keeping in accord with Hume's claim, one is supposed to notice that there is no self doing the thinking, feeling, moving, etc. There is thinking, feeling and moving just like there is flashing, but there is no thinker, feeler, or mover apart and distinct from the action. The self, like the grammatical entification of the lightning, is nothing more than a conceptual posit. Vedanta would be in perfect agreement with Nietzsche and Hume on this point. The empirical ego-sense is an artifical construction. There is no doer doing the action. In The Bhagavad Gita, we find, "All work is performed by the forces of nature. But he whose mind is deluded by egotism thinks, 'I am the doer.'"[38] Eastern thinkers take the ramifications of this insight very seriously. In a way, this insight is the linchpin which unites virtually all distinctly Eastern forms of thinking. However, unlike Hume, they do not go for a stroll and forget about it; they press the issue to its fullest extent.

One point might need some clarifying. Vedanta does talk about a "Self" and it would seem that Hume, in particular, is denying any such entity. Buddha, and Buddhism in general, will agree with Hume on this point and the point is one of the critical differences between Vedanta and Buddhism. In fact, the doctrine of "No Atman", No Self, represents one of the foundational reformations which cause Buddha to abandon his Hindu heritage and begin his radical reconstructive

movement. However, from the perspective at issue here, the 'self' which Vedanta considers illusory and a mere conceptual construct is the empirical ego. "The Self", e.g. 'Atman', is the underlying ground upon which the empirical ego-construction seems to move. "The Self" in Vedanta does nothing. It is not an actor, mover or doer. It is the silent witness, the awareness or consciousness, behind the changing experiences of life. To see this difference between the two views note that Hume claims that his self ceases to exist in deep sleep. "When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible to 'myself', and may truly be said not to exist."[39] And, of course, as we have seen Vedanta will not agree with Hume on this point. Something must remain, even in deep sleep, in order to be able to claim that I did sleep soundly, and this "something" which remains, according to Vedanta, is 'Atman', The Self.

Returning now to the main issue, if one accepts that there is no doer behind the action, no substantial empirical ego, how does morality become an issue? When we make a case for behaving morally, to whom is our case directed, and to "whom" are we recommending that "he" behave in a certain other regarding manner? The Bhagavad Gita is a curious mix which seems to try to mesh Stoic-looking ideals with Aristotelian objectives. The early stages of the text are devoted to a teaching which advocates action with a non-attached attitude. "You have a right to action, but never to its fruit"[40] is the core message. But we must also act, we must do our duty and cannot withdraw from the world and its responsibilities simply because we have heard the teaching about the insubstantial nature of the ego. The same passage

continues, "Neither let your motive be the fruit of action; nor let your attachment be to non-action."[41] And the perplexed warrior is then ordered to fight the battle of battles from which he is recoiling, a civil war against his friends and family, because it is a warrior's duty to fight for noble causes.

Throughout the early stages of the text, we read this message again and again. The insubstantial self is told to use this insubstantial self, to elevate it, to raise it up, while at the same time being continually reminded that this insubstantial self is not the doer of the action.[42] And then in the culminating passages of the final chapter we find the doctrine reach its rather perplexing and seemingly paradoxical conclusion.

> If, indulging in self-conceit, you say to yourself, "I will not fight," vain is your resolution. Your nature will compel you.
>
> Bound by your karma, O son of Kunti, which is born in your very nature, what through your delusion you seek not to do, you shall do even against your will.
>
> The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by his power causes them to revolve as though mounted upon a machine.[43]

The astute reader is totally perplexed. Orders to act, to fight, to do one's duty, all culminating in a declaration that he would have done it anyway and that the universe is merely a machine driven by what seems to be a deterministic Law. Much like the Stoic attempt to reconcile the two apparently irreconcilable poles of the paradox of "doing one's duty in a determined realm of action," The Bhagavad Gita leaves the reader pondering and dissatisfied. And in almost Aristotleian fashion, we

wonder, "Why the training, what was the point?"

To understand any semblance of reason here, one needs to note the genesis of the view. In an earlier chapter, there appears a lofty description of the sage's virtues.

> Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga; charity, self-control, and sacrifice; study of scriptures, austerity, and uprightness;
>
> Nonviolence, truth, and freedom from anger; renunciation, tranquillity, and aversion to slander; compassion to beings and freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty, and absence of fickleness;
>
> Courage, forgiveness, and fortitude; purity, and freedom from malice and pride - these are the wealth of the man born into Divine nature.[44]

We need to trace further back to find how this "birth into Divine nature" comes about. There is instruction and training. The instruction consists in an elaborate explanation in Chapters 13 and 14 about the "forces of nature". These "forces of nature" are called the three 'gunas'. The 'gunas' represent the three primary forms of movement which are the building blocks of the material universe.[45] Since mind is considered part of the objective side of things, "these forces of nature" are alleged to be what moves our minds. Egos, i.e. personality types, are cast as being predominantly of a certain nature, i.e. 'guna'. The three primary forces are categorized as inertia, activity and harmony, 'tamas', 'rajas', and 'sattva'. Transmutation of the personality takes place by a progressive ascent in one's dominate 'guna'. From the inertia of 'tamas' through the activity of 'rajas' to the harmony of 'sattva', the ego is transformed from an inertia to

harmony. And then finally when the 'sattvic', harmonious, transformation has taken place, the benign ego is then transcended in a grand gesture of insight. The basic training involved is somewhat similar to Aristotelian training in that the aspirant must develop higher habits in order to move beyond the baser ones. Yet in the end one still wonders how this fictitous entity manages to do the job. And the culminating realization is to notice that we have ultimately done nothing; the machine of nature was doing it all.

There is a sense in which the doctrine seems to be claiming that we use the ego to transcend the ego. On the charitable side, it can make sense while from the critical prespective the explanation does not seem sound. The sense-making side of the issue is that if ego transcendance is the crucial issue, then clearly a benign ego would be easier to escape than one composed of selfish and gratification-seeking tendencies. On the negative side, it just seems wrong to believe that anything done by a fabrication, and the life of the ego here is usually explained as little different from the life of the dream-self, can cause one to awaken from the false identification. And thus all motivation for morality appears to be based upon beliefs that are inherently wrong. "I" seem to be being moral because my false-self is easier to transcend when it behaves well. Even if the taming story makes moral sense, a kind of "Aesop Fable" to appease the ignorant masses, it does not make metaphysical sense as we are taming something that does not really exist.

I believe that on this issue, perhaps, more than anywhere else in the doctrine, James' criticism of the "mystical insight" does have

much force. The literature does not ever seem to leave the reader satisfied with the explanation. The usual explanation[44] is to use the ego to transcend the ego. Aurobindo offers the following explanation.

> To attain to divine birth - a divinizing new birth of the soul into a higher consciousness - and to do divine works both as a means towards that before it is attained and as an expression of it after it is attained, is then all the Karmayoga of the Gita. The Gita does not try to define works by any outward signs through which they can be recognizable to an external gaze, measurable by the criticism of the world; it deliberately renounces ordinary ethical distinctions by which men seek to guide themselves in the light of human reason. The signs by which it distinguishes divine works are all profoundly intimate and subjective; the stamp by which they are known is invisible, spiritual, supra-ethical. They are recognizable only by the light of the soul from which they come.[47]

The doctrine upon which the Aurobindo passage is a commentary is as follows.

> Even the wise are perplexed as to what is action and what is inaction. Therefore I will tell you what action is, that you may know and be freed from evil.
>
> For verily, one has to understand what action really is, and likewise what forbidden action is, and also what inaction is. Hard to understand is the way of action.
>
> He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a yogi, and he has performed all action.[48]

Some commentators add the following to the last passage, but it does not appear in the Sanskrit text. "Their consciousness is unified and every act is done with complete awareness."[49] The argument offered

as explanation of the doctrine is as Aurobindo notes and James criticizes, an internal observation and then a report on that observation. The real action is not "an action". It is an "observation of" the ego's activity. The ego is driven by the forces of nature. It does not initiate any action. There is no "action" in the ego's action in the sense that there is no inner actor behind the activity. Observing this situation deflates the ego.[50] This deflation is the "secret". Ethical action and the motivation to be moral are brought in through the back door. Acting in conscious awareness of the action leaves the actor no reason to be immoral because the basic motivational machinary behind immoral action is self-interest which egoistic deflation eliminates. We still seem to have no doctrinally legitimate reason to be moral and the docrine leaves us with no other explanation than that the forces of nature will drive us to it.

However, there is a positive side to this dilemma. If we reflect back to the primary Western problem on this issue, we should remember that the most pressing problem for the Western ancients was how to make one behave morally in a manner that was not ultimately driven by self-interest. It seemed, particularly for Aristotle and Epicurus, that their metaphysical structure could not accomodate genuine other concern. Morality always "paid-off" in some good to the subject. Tracing the motivational apparatus back to its source always seemed to result in a "pay-off" for the moral agent. In simple terms, the reason for the moral action always contained a measure of self-interest which seemed to undermine truly benevolent action.

From the Vedantic perspective, the problem is given a

different undercoat. Self-interest is clearly not a problem on this view. Self-interest ought never to be the source of one's motivation, even in the difficult to reconcile training stage where we are taming our egos. Where the egoism problem of Aristotle and Epicurus was the inability to find a reason to be moral without any self-interest, the Vedantin has no reason to be immoral and thus good actions, moral and benevolent ones, flow out of her like rain from the clouds.

In a certain sense the Vedantic view is not so far from our ordinary intuitions despite the highly exotic metaphysical machinations. Good people are just those people who do good things because they are driven to them and that is exactly why we call them "good people". If Hume and Nietzsche, along with Vedanta, are right about the ego, then there may be no really good answer to the question, "Why should I be moral?". He who asks the question has already made the fundamental mistake. "Ordinary morality", as Aurobindo notes, is just not the issue. The question simply does not arise. "Ordinary morality" is strictly a preliminary.[51] As the virtue of 'vairagya', the non-attachment, begins to take hold and the deeper ego-transcending insights are experienced, the person has literally no motivation to be immoral. And we can, at least, glimpse how some measure of genuine benevolence might bleed through. In fact, in a rather odd twist, we could see some primitve behaviorism making its presence felt. If happiness really is as radically internalized as the Vedantin claims it is, then all the reinforcers of immoral behavior would gradually be attenuated. Immoral behavior cannot lead to happiness because it depends upon attachments and reinforcing the ego which are happiness

mitigating conditions. Insight into Vedantic happiness tells us that it comes unconditionally and the critical springs behind immoral behavior are attachments and self-interest.

Thus the Vedantin inverts Aristotle and Epicurus and leaves us with no reason to be immoral. Good actions flow from us simply because that is all that is left, and as long as we live the forces of nature will compel us to act. "Even to maintain your body, Arjuna, you are obliged to act. Selfish action imprisons the world. Act selflessly, without any thought of personal profit"[52] Anything else would make us objectively dependent. Does the egoism return? If it does then the core message has been missed. One does not detach themselves in order to become happy. To make this reading is to misread the message. One simply becomes non-attached because there is nothing to be gained by any attachment. If one believes that by being detached one will become happy, then the egoism does return, but then, of course, the major insight has been lost.

> But those who realize the Self are always satisfied. Having found the source of joy and fulfillment, they no longer seek happiness from the external world. They have nothing to gain or lose by any action, neither people nor things can affect their security.[53]

4. Pleasure and Pain: a non-issue.

There is little to be said on the issue of pleasure and pain from the Vedantic perspective. Neither pleasure nor pain play any significant role in Vedantic theory beyond their ability to create attachments. The Vedantic sage is as immune from pain as the enlightened Stoic or Epicurean. The Vedantic sage has no interest in pleasure. The tradition

as a whole is rather dogmatic on this issue. We find no legitimate advocates, like Callicles or Aristippus, to defend "The Pleasure Thesis". It is almost taken as a given that one who pursues pleasure is doing something rather silly and futile. Pain is given tacit acknowledgment, but pain's sufferer is usually described as a flawed and failed character who has not "seen the truth". Extreme and rather exotic forms of asceticism are common practice and the practice of 'pratyahara', suspension of attention to the sensory faculties, is an acknowledged skill and the methodology can be found in many yoga manuals.[54] The basic methodology is one by which the yogi comes to master the movement of attention. What we all do unconsciously when we "fail to hear" the words spoken to us because we were attending too carefully to something else, the yogi "learns" to do consciously. Many of the "higher" practitioners do debunk most of the extreme versions of these practices, insightfully pointing out how the practice itself is rooted in attachment and thus misses the mark.

Moderation coupled with indifference seems to be the more philosophically secure position. The Bhagavad Gita in numerous places[55] claims that the sage will be indifferent to pleasure and pain. And Ramana Maharshi advocates moderation in "food and sleep".[56] The central focus of the less extreme view is a tempered austerity. The doctrine is very straight-forward as to why pleasure cannot be the end of life and why its pursuit leads to problems. Pleasure is a conditional experience. The search for pleasure is based upon attachment and dependency. Pleasure does not last and when it leaves it tends to set desires and discontent into motion. What one

acquires in the pleasurable experience is a brief pause in the pursuit; a glimpse of the unconditioned, "a particle of bliss bleeds through", as the mind's restless pursuit is quelled by the satisfaction of the pause.

> The joy of the Atman ever abides,
> But not what seems pleasant to the senses.
> Both these, differing in their purpose, prompt
> Man to action. All is well for those who choose
> The joy of Atman, but they miss
> The goal of life who prefer the pleasant.
> Perennial joy or passing pleasure?
> This is the choice one is to make always.
> The wise recognize these two, but not
> The ignorant. The first welcome what leads
> To abiding joy, though painful at the time.
> The latter run, goaded by their senses,
> After what seems immediate pleasure.[57]

From the strong anti-pleasure tirades of Tripura Rahasya where we read, "Fie on human beings who appraise the foulest part of the body as most delightful."[58] to the Tantric Tradition which embraces sensuality to the satiation point in order to break free of it, the message is clear and direct: pleasure cannot be and is not worth the pursuit. The argument, of course, will only succeed if the Atmanic doctrine, or at least the radical internalism, about the inherent nature of the bliss holds up to careful scrutiny. However, given the objective of the Vedantic project, i.e. unconditional happiness, the anti-pleasure position is certainly internally consistent.

> In the secret cave of the heart, two are seated
> By life's fountain. The separate ego
> Drinks of the sweet and bitter stuff,
> Liking the sweet, disliking the bitter,
> While the supreme Self drinks sweet and bitter
> Neither liking this not disliking that.
> The ego gropes in darkness, while the Self
> Lives in light.[59]

The "light" and "darkness" here do not refer to metaphysical, religious postulates. They refer to discriminative insight into the futility of seeking pleasure as a means to happiness. The best one gets is a temporal respite followed by loss, dejection and further pursuit. The message, rather Stoic in tenor, is about running down blind alleys, not about "Seeing the Light" as the following passage from the same section makes definitively clear.

> Know the Self as the Lord of the chariot,
> Know the body as the chariot itself,
> The discriminating intellect as the charioteer,
> And the mind as reins.
> The senses, say the wise, are the horses;
> Selfish desires are the roads they travel.
> When the Self is confused with the body,
> Mind and senses, they point out, he seems
> To enjoy pleasure and suffer sorrow.
>
> When one lacks discrimination
> And his mind is undisciplined, the senses
> Run hither and tither like wild horses.
> But they obey the reins like well-trained horses
> When one has discrimination and has made
> The mind one-pointed.[40]

Sharp, perceptive insight coupled with discrimination and examination ought to tell us that it is unnecessary to make what comes unconditionally dependent and conditional. It just seems intuitively obvious to Vedanta that pleasure seeking has no place in happiness. The hedonist is tacitly dismissed as almost not worthy of reply. The negative polemics from the impermanence of pleasure, the futility of seeking what does not last, the inevitability of its loss, and the web of discontent upon which its quest depends are stock-in-trade rhetoric used to quickly shelve the issue. And pain is also simply not a problem

unless one has failed to reach Atmanic bliss.

The "Katha" pasages above, as well as _The Bhagavad Gita,_ appear to have a Stoic tenor. However the claim is much stronger than the Stoic claim. If we reflect back on the other views for a moment, we will glean the scope of the claim. Aristotle uses pleasure and pain as teaching devices. He respects the ordinary intuition that the happy life must be a pleasurable life and tries to mold us into happy creatures by a judicious use of pleasure and pain. For Aristotle 'pleasure', properly used, is instrumentally valuable. For Epicurus pleasure is more important. It is clearly a good that ought to be pursued for what it is as well as for the tranquillity which it brings. Epicurus uses pleasure, e.g. pleasurable memories, as a positive means to eschew pain. The Stoic is aware of pleasure and pain but remains unaffected by them. Cognitive detachment undermines giving them any power to affect the well-being of the subject. The Vedantic position takes the Stoic view a step further. The Vedantic sage gives them no attention because they are merely objective phenomena affecting an object of awareness, e.g. the ego-sense, which the sage knows he cannot be. In other words any affect by pleasure or pain indicates that the person has not yet discovered his true identity.

The main doctrine stems from _The Taittiriya Upanishad_ where it is claimed, not argued, that pleasure, delight, ordinary happiness and joy are simply temporal glimpses or contact with the Atmanic bliss.[41] One of the core doctrinal arguments supporting the view appears in Sankara's _A Thousand Teachings._ The following passages present a clear version of the argument.

> 6. The Self illumines, without effort, the intellect in the form of sound etc. present before it; like a stationary lamp devoid of any effort which illumines everything within its reach.
>
> 7. Pleasure etc. qualify the intellect identifying itself with the combination of the body and the senses and illumined by the eternal Light of the Self.
>
> 8. For one considers oneself to be distressed by pain in the head etc. The Seer is different from the seen, i.e. that(the intellect) which feels pain. The Self is free from pain as It is the See-er of the pain.
>
> 9. One becomes unhappy when one 'identifies' oneself with the intellect which has assumed the form of 'unhappiness' but not by merely 'seeing' it. The Witness(The Self) of the pain in the body, which is a combination of the limbs and the senses, does not feel pain.[62]

Again we see core Vedantic ideas used to undermine common-sense intuitions. Yet, the doctrine and its argument are not ultimately much more radical than either the Epicurean or the Stoic. The Epicurean manipulates the painful state by embracing the pleasurable memory. The Stoic talks herself out of the painful condition by using cognitive insight. And both are claiming that their method will enable the practitioner to transcend the pain. The Vedantic view tries to do the same thing by undermining conscious identity with the pain's experiencer. Though all three views are counter-intuitive, in my opinion the Vedantic view has the most polished argument because it is at least internally consistent.

All three views try to abstract attention from the pain. The Epicurean diverts attention, but one has to wonder if it is this easy why does the Epicurean not do it all the time and by-pass the stringent

desire management program? If pain is the only legtimate reason to have one's tranquillity disturbed and if pain is this easy to manage, then the whole austere Epicurean project seems vacuous. One simply ought to attain as much pleasure as possible and then when the hurt sets in attend to the pleasure one received prior to the hurt. Yet this methodology is one of the main views that Epicurus does not want to advocate, but given the "goodness" of pleasure and the High Epicurean pain-avodance techniques there is some internal tension in the position. The Stoic position turns attention away from the pain cognitively. However, one seriously has to wonder why the Stoic applies her methods to the "pain" if it does not hurt? There is cognitive dissonance here which cannot be ignored. Cognitive recognition of the pain requires that the experience hurt. But 'pain' does not 'hurt' the Stoic because application of the Stoic method to the pain will tell the Stoic that the 'pain' is one of those things beyond Stoic control. Perhaps, the Stoic only means that the 'pain' will not trouble her. But it still seems hard to believe that the Stoic would use the method on something which did not trouble her, i.e. hurt.

The method of Shankara will not lead to these types of internal inconsistencies. Like most of the other Vedantic issues, the problem is one of identity. Attention is abstracted from the pain by noticing pain's objective nature, noticing the "objective" nature of the sufferer, and realizing that I cannot be either the pain or its sufferer. The abstraction is subtle and effortless. Like noticing the space between the objects, the abstraction of attention is not something one does. It is something that happens when the pull of

objective reality ceases to cause conciousness to identify with any object. Thus, pleasure and pain are clearly impediments, not because of what they are, but because they can only be relevant if the locus of identity is lost. The sage becomes immune to pleasure and pain not because the feeling stops, but because the "feeler" must be something other than he.

The doctrine, of course, does not seem believable, but then no internalist doctrine which claims that we can actually transcend the effects of pain will seem truly believable. And yet, as noted earlier, I do stop feeling the pain of my toothache when the important phone call distracts my attention. Diversion of attention can do what the internalist needs and it is the method used by all three internalist views. And at this point, as least as far as this issue is concerned, it seems to me that the Vedantic view diverts attention in the least problematic manner.

5. Vedanta and Happiness

The obvious criticism to the Vedantic conception of supreme happiness is that it seems that most of us are making a radical mistake in what we take 'happiness' to be. On the Vedantic view, supreme bliss is always present but we simply do not realize it. We are subscribing to some kind of collective error when we express any version of the ordinary notion on how to become happy. We believe that we have to do things, acquire things, have experiences, and attain at least moderately fulfilling and meaningful lives; and Vedanta seems to be telling us that all this wrong. However, it should be noted that all

the ancient views examined here are claiming that most of us are in error about 'happiness'. Even Aristotle makes the following stunning and rather Vedantic comment in Book 7 Chapter XIII of The Nichomachean Ethics when discussing the "common conception" that 'happiness' ought to include some kind of pleasure since everyone pursues pleasure to some extent.

> But since the natural and best state neither is, nor is thought to be, the same for all, they do not all pursue the same pleasure, although it is pleasure that they all pursue. In fact they probably 'do' all pursue the same pleasure, and not that which they think, and would assert, that they pursue; because everything contains by nature something divine. But since the pleasures that are most commonly encountered and are within everyone's experience are the pleasures of the body, these have appropriated the right to the name; and so people think that they are the only pleasures, because they are the familiar ones.[63]

"Everything contains by nature something divine", "they probably 'do' all pursue the same pleasure", and finally the claim at the end of the passage that there may be an error involved in the common conceptions, are all basic Vedantic theses. There is also in The Nichomachean Ethics the Book 10 claims about contemplation being the highest form of happiness, the reaffirmation of the need for any conception of happiness to meet to "self-sufficiency" criteria, and the radical internalization of ultimate happiness. What Vedanta does is essentially the same but it avoids the elitism by deflating the need for cognitive activity. Vedanta makes the experience one of identity which leaves the door open to all to find that "divine something" which "by nature everything contains." The reference to these similarities should not be

construed by the reader as an effort on my part to turn Aristotle into a Vedantic philosopher. The point of the connection is simply to make note of a strong internalist penchant in all the ancient views examined as in the end Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics, like their Vedantic counterparts, radically internalize their conceptions of 'happiness'. And thus to this point, it does seem that for these ancient thinkers some internalist position was inescapable.

I want to conclude this chapter with an explanation and defense of how the Vedantic view might be plausible and then address one critical contemporary criticism of Vedanta. I will contend that if one eschews Vedantic metaphysics and looks at the core doctrine from a different perspective the theory does make a substantial claim which is cogent. The first thing to keep in mind is that most of the ancient theories are metaphysically flawed. What we are usually looking for in these theories are philosophic intuitions which have some plausibility in spite of their metaphysical inadequacies. If one observed the manifestation of happiness in the lives of persons one would note the following. Different people become happy in different ways. And the same person can become happy in different ways. Some experiences of persons depend upon conceptualization about objective circumstances and some do not. For example, being a success, a good friend, or a kind person are experiences of the former kind, while being alive, awake, alert or in pain are not conceptually dependent experiences though we can become aware of them via numerous conceptual routes. The latter experiences are bodily experiences and not conceptual. These experiences are physiological and not conceptually dependent. They are

"feeling" experiences in the bodily, and not in the emotive, sense, i.e. they are not dependent upon cognitive content.

The essential claim of Vedanta is that `ananda', supreme bliss, joy or happiness, is more like being alive or awake than it is like any conceptually dependent experience. It is more like a bodily feeling rather than a state of mind or any other condition based upon belief content. Vedantic `ananda' literally flows in our veins, i.e. the bliss of being[44]. Just as we can become aware of being alive in many ways, or be awakened in numerous manners, so Vedanta claims we can become aware of life's "inherent" joy in an endless variety of ways; none of them being necessary and virtually any being sufficient. For Vedanta when the body/mind complex is in a condition of equanimity, if one looks and observes, one will notice that there is a certain "feel" to this experience. This 'feel' is `ananda'.

It is what one "feels" when one just "feels" good for no reason at all. It is what is not felt on those occasions when success fails to bring happiness. And it is what one "feels" when the agitating desire is fulfilled and the condition of body/mind equanimity restored. It is what Aristotle tries to account for when he makes pleasure supervene upon successful activity,[45] but there is no need for any magical supervening effect. The body/mind agitation stirred by the need or desire simply ceases. It is what Epicurus tries to capture with "static pleasure". And it is that for which the Stoics are groping in their search to be "inaccessible to impingement". Restoration of equanimity to the body/mind complex is to "feel" or be in a condition of harmony. And on the Vedantic view, this "feeling" is both necessary

and sufficient for happiness which to me in a sort of minimalist manner seems to be correct. In a certain sense, the Vedantin in looking for an explanation of 'happiness' acknowledges the need for any view of 'happiness' to account for the legitimate subjective component in any conception of 'happiness'. He then tries to find it. He observes that conscious existence is inherently blissful, and thus concludes that nothing else is needed as long as the blissful feeling is present.

I want to make one last note before moving on. There is a certain sense of irony to the final claim. The most metaphysically extravagant view turns out to be compatible with body/mind materialism. If one reduces mind states to brain states, then the evaluation that "this mind state" is a good mind state, a happy mind state, or a blissful mind state would turn out to be a report upon a condition of the body. Like other qualitative reports on conditions of the body, the primary material of the judgment would be a "feel". Unhappiness would then be a condition of the body, a sort of brain agitation. When the agitation ends and brain equanimity is restored this condition would have a certain "feel". Vedanta is simply claiming that this "feel" is the legitimate subjective component in explaining the presence of happiness and that this "bodily feeling" is in the end the feeling of bliss inherent in conscious existence. 'Ananda' or supreme 'happiness' is on the Vedantic view a non-relational predicate. Saying "I am happy" is like saying "I am alive, aware or awake."

From the contemporary perspective, I think the criticisms of Nozick on Vedanta deserve some attention. Of the main stream thinkers in the Western Tradition, he is the one whom I have found to be most

versed in the doctrine. The most significant criticism of the view concerns the issue of how it can be that we have apparently "forgotten" or failed to notice our inherent blissfulness. In simple terms and the language of my depiction, if happiness is just a bodily feeling, why do we not feel it all the time since it must be present at least as long as we are alive? Nozick couches his query in the more metaphysical vernacular, but the point is still the same.

> However, the importance the theory ascribes to coming to know your own true nature, since in any case you already have it, is left obscure. Nor do such theories find it easy to explain why the perfect and all-inclusive underlying substance is undergoing the process of coming to complete self-knowledge, or why it is temporarily ignorant - if it's so rich, how come it is isn't so smart?[46]

In a footnote to this passage he notes that this dilemma seems to be a real problem for any theory of this type, citing Aurobindo[47] and "Samkhya Yoga"[48] in general as failures at grappling with the problem.

I think this problem is serious and does present Vedanta with a great metaphysical challenge. The allusion to Aurobindo and the 'Samkhya' system allow Nozick to make easy prey of the doctrine. Both defenses use the notion of the infinite coming to know itself through negation of the finite; the infinte all-knowing consciousness assumes finite limitations in order to know itself because it is alleged that only by negating these limitations can the infinite realize its infinteness. And, of course, the argument undercuts the "inherent" greatness of the infinite by shackling it with a limitation.

However, there is another defense of the position which might offer an explanation of the position which is more cogent. The language Nozick uses poses the problem in espistemological terms. However, the ignorance with which Vedanta is concerned is not an epistemic problem. The Vedantic problem is an identity problem. It is not question of "failed smarts", anymore than losing the thread of one's identity in a dream is a question of an epistemic deficiency. The issue is not "How did 'Atman' forget its true identity?" The question is "How does ego fail to remember its insubstantial nature?" And the answer, of course, is "That is exactly what an ego is - an object of consciousness with a failed realization of its insubstantial nature". From the perspective of High Vedanta,[69] asking Nozick's question is like asking why one "forgets", or is ignorant of, one's true identity in the dream. It happens, is inexplicable, and has nothing to do with any epistemic deficiency in the dreaming subject. And the instant the dreaming subject becomes aware of the insubstantial dream-self "object" the dream ends. There is no question of how the dream came about or what purpose it served, unless, of course, one believes in "dream interpretation therapy".

Thus Vedanta will not try to answer Nozick's problem. It will readily admit there is no "answer" in the sense which Nozick demands, but it will also note that the question is wrongly put. The literature is replete with warnings that the use of metaphors to explain metaphysical problems is only pedagogical[70] and should not be taken literally. Posing the problem in terms of an epistemic deficiency generated by an inexplicable metaphysical lack of reflective

self-awareness ignores these warnings. Asking why or how the infinite, all-inclusive, perfect absolute consciousness "forgets" itself and then trying to bring the language of "purpose" and "discovery" into the conversation is to misunderstand Vedanta. Consciousness in Vedanta neither remembers nor forgets. It simply illuminates objects in the field of thought. And asking why it assumes any particular form, or "limitation",[4] is like asking why the light from lamp assumes the form of picture upon which it falls.

In conclusion I note that what Vedanta does provide is a vigilant defense of the radical internalist view. It takes the respect for the legitimate internalist intuition to its limit, but leaves us with too much metaphysical baggage and too many unanswered questions. James' criticism is never really answered. The defense offered is always that we need to stop thinking and simply "Look". And this is, in a sense, exactly what the Buddhist will try to do without the metaphysical clutter.

NOTES

1. Ramana Maharshi, The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1972), 83.

2. Robert Nozick, Philosophic Explanations (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1981), 606.

3. William James,"The One and the Many", in The Writings of William James, ed. John J. McDermott (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1977), 414.

4. The doctrine of 'Sat', 'Chit' and 'Ananda' is an "essentialist" doctrine. According to Vedanta existence, consciousness and bliss are essential threads of each person's 'Atmanic' core and these three threads represent the essence of human divinity; i.e. the aspect of human beings which they share with the Godhead and by which they

transcend human limitations through a process of identifying with that divine core.

5. cf. William James, "The One and the Many". I would note one point of criticism. James attacks Swami Vivekananda in this essay. Vivekananda was more like a minister than a "great Vedantic philosopher". The attack is akin to Quine attacking Jimmy Swaggart. I mention the point because the great, though obscure, Vedantic philosopher Rama Tirtha did tour many major US colleges in 1905-06 and if James really wanted a genuine challenge this is where he should have looked, i.e. the academic rather than the secular community.

6. The three states of consciousness are characterized by change. They represent descriptive modifications of consciousness and thus 'consciousness' itself is alleged to be something beyond its three primary forms of modification.

7. 'Turiya' is the technical term for this fourth "state" of consciousness and is translated and designated as "the fourth". It is that which is the substratum of the three other states.

8. "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad", in The Principal Upanishads, ed. and trans. S. Radhakrishnan (New York: Humanities Press Inc., 1974), IV. 3.7.

9. The literature contains numerous descriptions of how the life force circulates through the body and Vedanta views the "heart center" as being the critical point of emanation from which the life force goes forth. The doctrine has some similarities with certain Chinese acupuncture and acupressure meridians, and it is grounded in a physiological explanation of how the arterial system carries and circulates the blood and thus the life force throughout the body. cf. "Bridaranayaka" IV.2.3, IV.3.20, II.1.19; "Chandogya" VIII.6.1; and "Katha" VI.16.in The Principal Upanishads.

10. According to Mosby's Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Dictionary 4th Edition, the 'sinoatrial node' is defined: "a cluster of hundreds of cells located in the right atrial wall of the heart, near the opening of the superior vena cava. It comprises a knot of modified heart muscle that generates impulses that travel swiftly throughout the muscle fibres of both atria, causing them to contract. Specialized pacemakers cells in the node have an intrinsic rhythm that is independent of any stimulation by nerve impulses from the brain or spinal cord." From the Vedantic perspective, the interesting point which is often used to defend the position of the heart as the locus of "existence, consciousness and bliss" is the "fact" that this node possesses an "intrinsic rhythm" and that this "intrinsic rhythm" being innately independent of bodily systems could literally be viewed as the source of existence. And since the technical "Upanishadic" explanations of the previous note correlate quite well with this "fact", the position does have some grounding beyond mere speculative metaphysical

analysis.

11. This progressive negation of anything that can appear as an epistemological object is often referred to as the 'neti neti' doctrine, "not this, not this". It represents a meditative practice and is a primary device used in Jnana Yoga, the yoga of knowledge.

12. It ought to be noted that this point is in direct conflict with the Buddhist doctrine of "dependent origination" and does represent a foundational doctrinal difference between the two schools of thought. 'Atman' is self-existing, permanent and not of dependent origination; 'Atman' is 'Brahman'. The Buddhist objections to this view will be explained in chapter 6.

13. "Taittiriya Upanishad", in The Principal Upanishads, II.7.1.

14. cf. Thomas Nagel, "Death", in Applied Ethics: ed. Peter Singer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

15. Ibid., 10.

16. cf. "Kaushitaki Upanishad", in The Principal Upanishads, IV.19.

17. Ibid., II.I.9.

18. Shankara: Dakshinamurti Stotra, ed. and trans. Alladi Mahadeva Sastry (Madras: Samata Books, 1978).

19. Ibid., VI.21-22.

20. Vedanta-paribhasa, ed. M. Ananatakrsna (Calcutta: University of Calcutta), VIII.

21. Panchadashi, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri (London: Shanti Sadhan, 1965), XV-17.

22. cf. Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1100b30-35.

23. It cannot be emphasized enough that "detachment" is not the appropriate translation for 'vairagya'. Any "detaching" connotation will create an internal tension, as noted in the previous chapter, and any internal tension undermines the Vedantic objective. Thus, a critical virtue cannot contain any element which would work against the final end.

24. The Bhagavad Gita, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1979), XI.70-71.

25. Tripura Rahasya, trans. Swami Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi (Madras: The Jupiter Press Private. Ltd., 1980), XV-85.

26. Ibid., XVI.34-38.

27. Ramana Maharshi, The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, 5.

28. Some readers might find this notion problematic in the sense that if someone had everything they truly wanted and still claimed not to be happy, then what they were calling 'happiness' would resemble the normative notion of 'happiness' so little as to render the term unless. In other words, if someone claimed to have everything they wanted and still claimed to be unhappy, we might say that this person did not know what 'happiness' means. The charge is philosophically cogent. As Philippa Foot has shown we might say that someone who was not fearful in the face of great danger did not know what 'fear' meant. But the fact remains that for 'happiness' such a state of affairs can and does come about. The person may have a psychological problem, but then this would simply support the internalist view. There is nothing logically, nor practically, impossible about such a condition in the sense that the person claiming not to be happy in the presence of their fulfilled desires does not understand 'happiness'. cf. Philippa Foot, "Moral Beliefs", in Theories of Ethics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

29. Ramana Maharshi, The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, 13.

30. cf. "Chandogya Upanishad" III.1.5, and "Taittiriya Upanishad" II.

31. "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad", II.IV.5.

32. cf. Robert Nozick, Philosophic Explanations, Chpt. 3.

33. Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974),43.

34. Patanjali, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, ed. and trans. I.K. Taimni (Wheaton: Quest Books, 1981), II.42.

35. Ibid., 249.

36. cf. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (New York: Penguin Books, 1987),Book I, sec. V.

37. Friedrich Nietzche, A Geneology of Morals, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), Chpt. 13.

38. The Bhagavad Gita, III.27.

39. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, 300.

40. The Bhagavad Gita, II.47.

41. Ibid.

42. cf. Ibid., VI.5-6 and III.27-30.

43. Ibid., 18.59-61.

44. Ibid., 16.1-3.

45. Vedanta uses a unified field theory in which all things objective are classified as modifications of one primary substance, 'prakriti'. The theory is consistent with quantum mechanics' reductivism whereby all objective phenomena are reduced to movements of energy and the kinds of movement are then categorized as being primarily of three distinct types. The analogy of the three states of H/2/O, e.g. solid, liquid and gaseous, is often used to explain the claim.

46. cf. The Bhagavad Gita, VI.5-6.

47. Sri Aurobindo, The Message of Gita (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Dept., 1977), 74.

48. The Bhagavad Gita, IV.16-18.

49. The Bhagavad Gita, trans. Eknath Eswaran (Tomales: Nilgiri Press, 1987), 87.

50. In a technical sense as long as one lives there is some element of an ego present. The body cannot survive without it. However, the ego is relatively benign at this point. Yet, it does remain philosophically problematic as the picture presented is often one of merely role-playing and this does seem to deflate the ultimate value of morality which, of course, Vedanta can never really escape.

51. Most of the technical manuals, especially the more elevated ones, seem to down-play ordinary morality. The best recommendation it is given appears as a sort of necessary preliminary which is usually explained in terms of a needed preparation stage for the virtue of "non-attachment". Essentially, the 'yamas', self-restraints in action, and the 'niyamas', vows of abstention in attitudes, are akin to our ordinary moral precepts, but here are mere "warm-up exercises" before the real contest.

52. The Bhagavad Gita, III.8-9.

53. Ibid., III.17-18.

54. 'Pratyahara' is a technical skill which the Yogi or Sage develops. It is alleged to consist in the voluntary abstraction of attention from the sensory field. cf. Patanjali, The Yoga Sutras, II.54-55.

55. cf. The Bhagavad Gita, II.14; V.20-22; V.14-24.

56. Ramana Maharshi, The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, 30.

57. "Katha Upanishad", II.1-2.

58. Tripura Rahasya, IV-75.

59. "Katha Upanishad", III.1.

60. Ibid., III.3-7.

61. "Taittiriya Upanishad", II-5.

62. Shankara, Upadesa Sahasri, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1979), XVI.6-9.

63. Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1153b20-35.

64. I do believe that the physicalism should be taken very seriously and would even argue not only that it has to be the right reading, but that it might even be ultimately plausible.

65. cf. Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. 10. chpt.IV.

66. Robert Nozick, Philosophic Explanations (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard, 1981), 606.

67. The Aurobindo reference is to The Life Divine Bk. II-1 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publications Department, 1980). I would only comment that wrestling with the perfection problem as Aurobindo does is a second rate tactic that will fall to all of Nozick's criticisms. I would also note that in my experience, at least from the Indian perspective, the highly educated and technically astute Aurobindo is not considered a "realized being", and that thinkers such as Ramana Maharshi and Rama Tirtha are considered far more significant voices within the tradition by the tradition.

68. "Samkhya Yoga" is technically not the same thing as Vedanta though it does possess many Vedic roots and the system mirrors much of the core doctrine. However, it is a different system with critical doctrinal differences. And it does usually advoate the kind of position Nozick criticizes, but I would also argue that Nozick's problem is one of the points where the two schools do diverge.

69. see Rama Tirtha, "Maya or the When and the Why of the World", in Practical Vedanta (Honesdale: The Himalayan Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy, 1978), 138-157.

70. see "Kena Upanishad" II, and "Brihadarayaka Upanishad" 4.14, in The Principal Upanishads.

71. cf. Robert Nozick, Philosophic Explanation, 607-608. Nozick does

consistently use the language of the "infinite, perfect consciousness assuming limitations" and this tactic according to my understanding of Vedanta is to misunderstand the doctrine.

Chapter 6 'Nirvana': Transconceptual Happiness

1. 'Nirvana'

It has always struck me as somewhat strange that mainstream 20th century Western Philosophy has not been more inclined to examine and evaluate basic Buddhist doctrine. The core of the original Buddhist doctrine is anti-metaphysical, anti-essentialist, anti-conceptual and deeply interested in the "bewitching power of language". The Buddhist, however, is not content merely to answer questions about language and its power. Buddhism, much like the picture Nussbaum paints of Seneca[1], sees philosophic analysis as a worthless activity unless it changes the way one lives and experiences life. For example, suppose one read Richard Rorty's "The contingency of selfhood"[2] or Derek Parfit[3] on the insubstantial nature of personal identity and believed what one had read. From the Buddhist perspective, this experience would be fundamentally worthless unless the radical insights which the new belief brought changed the way life was experienced. In fact, from the Buddhist perspective, unless these kinds of "deep truths" cause a major "turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness"[4], one has merely "word knowledge" which to the Buddhist is worth about as much as the paper upon which one can print it.

Once I was in a seminar in which Hume's theory of "no-self" was being discussed. The professor asked if anyone could explain the argument and one student offered an explanation of the argument. The professor then commented that the student was convincing and asked the

student if he believed that Hume was correct in that one's empirical ego-sense was a mere thought construction and that the ego-sense was a based upon a false belief. The student replied that he did. The professor then complimented the student for his display of philosophic acumen. The student then turned to a friend, and in a gesture of great pride smiled and pointed his thumb at himself. From the Buddhist perspective this is a clear case of much learning and no insight because anyone who really _believed_ that the ego-sense was a false belief could not, if they really believed it, be proud of what his fictitious ego had done.

As I noted in the last chapter, virtually all of Eastern thought pivots around the ego issue. However, the perspectives of Vedanta and Buddhism are very different. From the Vedantic viewpoint, the objective is to identify with that which inherently transcends egoistic life. From the Buddhist perspective the Vedantic view is problematic because it requires the truth of the metaphysical hypothesis that there is "something" which "inherently transcends" egoistic life. For the Buddhist, the metaphysical hypothesis is not necessary and the objective is simply the transcendence of egoistic life. This position should not be construed to imply that no Buddhist does any metaphysics. There is a developmental problem within Buddhism and many versions of Buddhism do contain metaphysical doctrines.[5] For my purposes, I will take the conservative route and use primarily sources which represent and maintain the radical anti-metaphysical approach found in the early original material. I will assume in the spirit of the early doctrine that "the house is on fire", i.e. egoistic

life is full of suffering, and that it does one little good to speculate on who designed the building or of what material it is made.

The culminating depiction of the supremely happy life is usually designated by some use of the term 'Nirvana'. Since Buddhism in its purest form eschews conceptual analysis, explicating 'Nirvana' is a problem.

> But Nirvana has no tangible form('nimitta') and it neither comes into existence nor ceases from working. To attain Nirvana, therefore, is to see into the truth of things, 'yathabhutam', that is, as unborn, as not affected by categories of intellectual construction.[6]

The term 'Nirvana' literally means 'to extinguish' or 'to blow out'. And what the attainment of 'Nirvana' extinguishes or blows out is the psychological suffering inherent in egoistic life. The notion of egoistic life as 'inherent suffering' stems from some simple observations. These observations represent foundational "truths" in Buddhist doctrine. One observation is that suffering in the form of psychological discomfort exists. Another observation is the "truth" of impermanence. The "truth of impermanence" is the fact that all phenomenal objects, be they states of mind or objective "facts", do not last. And in rather Stoic fashion when the two observations are wedded together, we reach the heart of the doctrine. Psychological suffering is causally related to the denial of the truth of impermanence; the cause of this suffering is some kind of either acknowledged or tacit denial of the truth of impermanence.

The superficial explanation of these observations and the remedy for the problem is usually couched in terms of the ordinary

conceptions of happiness and their dependence upon attachments to objects, be they things or states of mind. What happens next in the "ordinary" Buddhist argument is that it is noted that given the great truth of impermanence, the life of attachment and desire fulfillment as a means to happiness is doomed to failure. Whatever one wants or desires in order to be happy will not last and in the end all that one will find is suffering. In fact, the whole life of "seeking to fulfill one's desires", even one's significant desires, is simply a life which presupposes unhappiness. And thus the ordinary Buddhist strategy is to extinguish the impetus which moves one to conceive of one's happiness as in any way causally related to the fulfillment of any desire. Much like the other ancient theories, the Buddhist will claim that our ordinary intuitions about happiness are wrong. What is somewhat unique about the Buddhist view is that rather than presuppose unhappiness and then try to find out how to alleviate it, the Buddhist presupposes happiness and then looks to find what we are doing to undermine it.

On the surface, the similarities between the ordinary Buddhist story and Stoicism seem quite close. However, when one moves from the common secular versions of the Buddhist doctrine to its philosophic core, we find a position that has a vision which radically departs from the Stoic view. The critical difference between the Buddhist position and that of the Stoics will pivot around the role of cognition. In the "ordinary" Buddhist doctrine, cognitive insight into the nature of psychological suffering acts as a preliminary motivator to minimize one's attachments. However, High Buddhist doctrine will not use any kind of cognitive detaching. The Buddhist will ultimately not "detach"

but rather glean a measure of insight, i.e. "the turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness", which eradicates any attaching pull on attention from the threads woven by the process of conceptualization. In this version of the Buddhist argument, the "doctrine of emptiness" will be used to anchor the argument. The truth of emptiness, 'shunyata', entails that all concepts are empty, i.e. void of essential threads.

I will use a Western analogy to try to present a semblance of the basic idea behind the doctrine of emptiness. Suppose that some version of Quine's or Wittgenstein's anti-essentialism about concepts were true; our concepts about reality do not represent or correspond to any "given" objective facts. Our interpretation of the facts always contains concepts derived from "cultural posits"[7] and thus Quine's position that from an epistemological perspective Homer's gods and the truths of science are on the same footing is the logical result which must follow. There is always some element of contingent, i.e. non-binding, subjectivity involved in any conceptual analysis of factual reality. Our concepts about reality cannot mirror reality because the very nature of conceptual analysis contains an inherent bias. I want to make one note about this "doctrinal" comparison between Quine/Wittgenstein and Buddhism. Both Quine and Wittgenstein take the ramifications of their "anti-conceptualism" in very different directions both from each other and from the Buddhist position. My point in using them in this context is only to introduce the doctrine and not to claim that either Western philosopher has hidden Buddhist tendencies. Buddhist doctrine has little similarity to Quine's

pragmatism, nor Wittgenstein's "ordinary language" position. The only point of interest from my perspective is that both Western philosophers support some type of "anti-essentialist" viewpoint in the sense that our concepts about the world cannot do "essentialist" representational work.

Something akin to this picture is the starting point of Buddhist reflection on life. In a certain way, the Buddhist pushes this doctrine in much the same manner as I had the Vedantin push Hume. If the philosophic position is correct, what happens to the way one lives one's life? One possible answer would be to try the Rorty method[8] which might be described in the following terms. Since anti-essentialism is true and all concepts are contingent by-products of ways of talking, and since 'human beings' are essentially language users, then the best kind of human life would be one in which we each uniquely create our own self-descriptions. I bring Rorty into play at this point because there is a point in Rorty's depiction of the best kind of life which needs addressing and will set the stage for the Buddhist view.

If someone "really" believed Rorty's premises, and then actually engaged in the process that he is advocating, their life would possess a measure of cognitive dissonance which would border on complete internal incoherence. Faced with the pinnacle anti-essentialist conumdrum of living out one's life in a vacuous world of contingent fabrication, Rorty opts to be the best fabricator possible. One's life becomes a sort of novel-writing activity in which the writer gets to play whatever role suites her best. I do not want to

deny that the activity might not be enjoyable. But what I would deny is that anyone could avoid massive cognitive dissonance and believe both of Rorty's premises at the same time. No one except someone who believed Rorty's second premise that "human beings" are essentially language users would opt for Rorty's vision of the 'Summum Bonum", but this is exactly one of the beliefs Rorty cannot believe due to the content of first premise. It makes for a nice Zen Koan[9], but I doubt that is what Rorty intended. The more interesting problem will lead us to the kind of problem the Buddhist wants to confront. If the anti-essentialist is right, what happens when one sees the "truth" of non-essentialism; even the concept that we are essentially language users? If we are really trapped by the pictures our use of language paints, then what does one who literally sees the "picture trapping" experience? The Buddhist claims the answer to be a unique liberating experience whereby the psychological suffering generated from conceptually driven experience is extinguished. And this condition of living they call 'Nirvana'.

In The Lankavatara Sutra the error involved in taking what one's concepts represent to be what factually is the case is called "false-imaginations".

> False-imaginations rise from the consideration of appearances: things are discriminated as to form, signs, and shape; as to having colors, warmth, humidity, motility or rigidity. False-imagination consists in becoming attached to these appearances and their names. By attachment to objects is meant, the getting attached to inner and outer things as if they were real. By attachment to names is meant, the recognition in these inner and outer things of the characteristic marks of individuations and generality, and to regard them as definitely

belonging to the names and objects.[10]

The important point to note on this passage is that the scope of "false-imagination" is quite broad. It is not just our interpretations of "the world" which fall under the rubric but any use of conceptual analysis which posits "characterisitc marks of individuations and generality, and to regard them as definitely belonging to names and objects". And, ultimately on this view, in a sort of Berkeleyian[11] fashion the "objects" about which we talk are alleged to be just names with conceptual ramifications.

I offer the following example to help clarify this point. 'Unhappiness' is a name. Let us say that it designates a certain state of mind. We can define this state of mind any way we like. All that matters is that it could refer to a state of mind and that the person using it knows what it means. The claim will then be that this state of mind represents a condition which is connected to a whole series of conceptualizations, none of which contain any essential components. The state of mind is thus based upon false-imagination because there would be some conceptual, e.g. discriminatory, content involved in the assessment. For example, it would be very difficult to be unhappy unless one believed some fact to be the case. However if the anti-essentialist premise is true, then this fact which one must believe and all the facts which support it, i.e. the whole network or web in which this fact is embedded, cannot be essential truths. In other words, the Buddhist is claiming that some essentialist belief content, i.e. "these beliefs represent the facts", is a necessary

condition for suffering. And even at this point if one opts for an internalist view and claims that one could be unhappy simply because one did not "feel good" internally, there would remain a judgment about the "feeling" which depended upon some kind of conceptual underpinning. Thus, the whole grip of the picture loses its subjective sting because without some belief in the truth of the conceptual content there is no way for the conceptual content to agitate. And without the subjective sting, e.g. psychological agitation, there is no way in which one could enter the condition, i.e. state of mind, called "unhappiness".

What the Buddhist is claiming is that 'unhappiness' as psychological suffering is a conceptual phenomenon which sprouts from three roots. These roots are denials of the great "truths", e.g. egolessness, impermanence and emptiness. When one stops this denial there is the "turning about in deepest seat of consciousness". When one stops the activity of conceptualizing about the impermanent and the indeterminate as if they contained something essential, lasting and determinate, something happens and this something is the indescribable experience or condition called 'Nirvana'. In a certain sense the Buddhist is making a rather simple and almost trivial claim. If the anti-essentialist view is correct, one cannot generate any reason to be unhappy and this absence of unhappiness just is happiness. Call "that" 'Nirvana' and "this" conceptualizing about the inessential and impermanent. When one stops doing "this" what is left is "that" and "that" just is what it is - namely the absence of "this". And in the absence of "this" one cannot produce suffering.

The Tathagata's Nirvana is where it is recognized

> that there is nothing but what is seen of the mind itself; is where, recognizing the nature of self-mind, one no longer cherishes the dualisms of discrimination; is where there is no more thirst nor grasping; is where there is no more attachment to external things. Nirvana is where the thinking-mind with all its discriminations, attachments, aversions and egoism is forever put away; is where logical measures, as they are seen to be inert, are no longer siezed upon; is where even the notion of truth is treated with indifference because it is causing bewilderment; is where getting rid of the four propositions, there is insight into the abode of Reality. Nirvana is where the twofold passions have subsided and the twofold hinderances are cleared away and twofold egolessness is patiently accepted; is where by the attainment of the "turning-about" in the deepest seat of consciousness, self-realization of Noble Wisdom is fully entered into - that is the Nirvana of the Tathagatas.[12]

The description of 'Nirvana' in this passage is given in purely negative terms. It is explained as the absence of certain activites. And the most important activity which is absent is the activity of conceptualizing. In stark contrast to the Rorty Method, the Buddhist does not identify a bogus activity and then advocate its use as a type of "best we can do" palliative. If the anti-essentialist doctrine is true, there is something somewhat unconvincing in idealizing the pragmatic turn. On the Buddhist view there comes a point where the "essentially" vacuous process simply cannot be used to palliate. The metaphors which we call our lives, and the circumstances in which they unfold, have to be called into question. And the Buddhist will argue that "calling them into question" radically alters the way one lives within the sphere of conceptually-driven experience.

What the Buddhist is going to claim at this point is that any

condition produced by a conceptually-driven thought construction is empty and void of binding content. Psychological suffering depends upon the presence of a belief about some experience. And it also depends upon a second order belief about the first belief. This second order belief is a "value judgment" about the content of the first belief. The first belief conceptualizes the experience and the second belief evaluates the conception. The first belief is a conceptual interpretation of an experience and the second belief an evaluation of the interpretation. However, the content of the first belief has no essential threads. It is 'shunya' or essentially empty. In order for the second order belief to produce any kind of psychological agitation, the empty nature of the first belief must be subjectively denied. And when one ceases to deny the empty nature of all conceptual interpretation, no reason not to be happy can be generated and the absence of that activity, i.e. generating conceptual reasons not to be happy, just is 'Nirvana'.

> Everything changes, everything passes,
> Things appearing, things disappearing.
> But when all is over - everything having appeared
> and having disappeared,
> Being and extinction both transcended. -
> Still the basic emptiness and silence abides,
> And that is blissful Peace.[13]

One of the points to notice is that there is nothing here which precludes the forming and even acting upon second order beliefs. What happens is that a certain subjective circuit is defused. The connection between the experience of living and the conceptual reality in which it unfolds loses its pull. There is no tension between a

subjective idealism and a realist perspective on life. The world is not denied, what is denied is that 'world' represents anything with essential content. In contemporary language what 'world' represents, or that to which it refers, is essentially empty. This does mean that there is nothing there except an idea. It does not mean that the world vanishes when no one is perceiving it.

> It is like a wheel of fire made by a revolving firebrand which is no wheel but which is imagined to be one by the ignorant. Nor is it not-a-wheel because it has not been seen by some.[14]

What this passage is supposed to make clear is that no conceptual content can do any essential representational or referential work. It cannot be said that it is a wheel because no essential correspondence between the concept and the appearance exists, nor can it be said that it is "not-a-wheel" because it has not been perceived as that would presuppose that there was "something" to which 'wheel' did correspond. The argument is making no claim about the nature of factual reality. It is only claiming that we have no adequate bridge by which to contact it. It cannot be said that it is a 'wheel' nor that it is 'not-a-wheel' not because of anything about what it is, but because of what 'wheel' is. And what 'wheel' is is essentially empty; something beyond both affirmation and negation. D.T. Suzuki states the view in the following terms.

> For him the world is perceived 'yathabhutam' stripped of all its logical predicates and also its so-called objective trappings; the world thus appearing in its nakedness has been designated empty(sunya) by the Mahayanists. It is in this sense, therefore, that it can be said there is nothing substantial in the world, nothing which has

> individuality(atman), nothing which can be grasped; and it slips through the hands, one predicate disappearing after another, so it cannot be designated as being(sat), nor by its opposite, not-being(asat). No term that admits of antithesis can be applied to the world, as it is beyond logical opposites.[15]

'Nirvana' is simply the realization of the empty nature of conceptual analysis. Nothing changes. There is no-thing to change. The world does not disappear. What never was cannot no longer be. Does the ghost to which 'ghost' referred no longer exist when the child reaches the age of reason and insight? What no longer exists is a certain subjective pull which belief in the concept's imagined referent imposed upon the child's attention. Extend the analogy to its limit and what is left is a glimpse of 'Nirvana'. The ghost is gone and what is left is just the howl of the wind clanging the chimney flew. Nothing really changes, but it is all very different. One fixes the flew instead of hiding from the ghost. 'Ghost-sound' produced fear, 'flew-noise' produced annoyance. The objector wants to say there is a difference. 'Flew-noise' corresponds to or represents reality. It "tracks truth" or passes reliability tests. It has pragmatic value. 'Ghost-sound' does none of these. The discomfort of being awakened from the flew-noise is legitimate while the fear produced by the ghost-sound is all imagined.

Perhaps one replies, "Call it whatever one likes. 'Flew-noise' or 'ghost-sound', 'chimney-whistle' or 'wind-song', of course, we all hear it and what we all hear is the same thing. It makes the child afraid. It makes the sleeper annoyed. It makes the reader angry and the thinker disturbed." And how does the sound do all this? How does the

sound alter one's psychological state? How did the child move from playful tranquillity to the condition of fear, or the thinker from deep concentration to agitated disturbance? We want to say the sound did it. But then one has to ask which sound? Responding cleverly we say, "That sound! That sound disturbed my concentration." And the question is then asked, "Did sound disturb concentration, or did 'sound' disturb 'concentration'?" The former cannot happen without the latter and the latter cannot happen at all. Qualitative subjective states cannot be produced from purely objective referents without conceptual mediation. And when one flashes into that realization by seeing the emptiness of concepts, their lack of causal efficacy without essentialist beliefs, the Buddhist will claim the experience to be a glimpse of something very special and this they call 'Nirvana'.

2. External Problems

The role objective conditions play in the Buddhist theory is quite different from any we have seen. On the surface the Buddhist project has certain similarities to both the Epicurean and Stoic views. Desire management is clearly critical to the Buddhist agenda and there appears to be a rather Stoic stance which is assumed in the 'Nirvanic' condition. Nonetheless, the Buddhist position is quite different from either of these views. The role external objective conditions play is a curious mix. Buddha acknowledges that pain and the suffering it causes are in a sense "problems". The Four Noble Truths[16] are framed in a quest to overcome and move beyond the suffering he views as inherent in ordinary ego-bound living. However from the Buddhist perspective it is

not technically objective conditions which "produce" or "cause" the suffering. Objective conditions are indeterminate, i.e. "empty", and thus neither their presence nor absence are relevant for genuine Buddhist happiness. As far as 'Nirvana' is concerned, objective conditions neither embellish nor diminish its presence. Suffering is caused by a certain psychological pose towards objective conditions, and the Buddhist project consists in "uncausing" the suffering by deflating this pose.

From the Buddhist perspective there is no relationship between 'Nirvana', supreme happiness, and any objective condition. The rationale behind this position has nothing to do with objective facts or the experiences derived from objective facts. The problem is not anything about the "world". The problem is a subjective dependency which arises from a certain psychological posture or pose. The inner life of the ego, i.e. the sense of separateness and individuality, is viewed as not much different than the "self" which appears in a dream. The 'self' or ego-sense, e.g the sufferer, is an idea constructed from conceptual interpretations of experience. The notion of "self-image" might be one way to explain the issue. From the ordinary common-sense perspective "self-images" can "get hurt". When a "self-image" gets hurt from the ramifications of objective experience, there is suffering. However, a "self-image" is merely a psychological pose. What exactly is it that "gets hurt"? The "self-image" is an idea. It is a psychological posture towards experience which adds something to the experience that is not part of the objective conditions. From the Buddhist perspective, the problem of suffering or unhappiness is causally related to

objective conditions not because of anything about objective conditions, but rather because the "subject" of the experience must tacitly assume a certain psychological framework.

What the Buddhist will claim needs to be done is to challenge and undermine this framework rather than successfully manipulate its content. By successfully challenging the framework, the experience's subject, i.e. the self-image or ego-sense, disappears and what remains is objective "reality" void of the causal means to produce psychological affects.

> It would be better for the unlearned worldling to regard this body, built up of the four elements, as his Ego, rather than the mind. For it is evident that this body may last for a year, for two years, for three, four, five, or ten years, or even for a hundred years and more; but that which is called thought or mind, or mind-consciousness, is continuously, during day and night, arising as one thing and passing away as another thing.[17]

The "psychological pose" is to assume an identification with thought, or mind or mind-consciousness and evaluate from that perspective. And the passage cites the magnitude of the error by advising that one would be better served by identifying with only the body. Unlike Vedanta there is no essential core which is concealed by this process. The process does not conceal an inner essence; it merely generates the impression of an abiding subject, e.g. the self-image, behind the flow of experience.

As noted, Buddhist "therapy" has a certain similarity with Epicurus' desire management program. For Epicurus false beliefs are the critical factors in the process of deciding upon which desires one

ought to act. The false beliefs of concern for Epicurus are identified as those beliefs which support desires whose non-fulfillment will not result in pain. Buddhist doctrine takes a very similar approach, but instead of focusing the issue on pain the Buddhist will examine suffering. And what the Buddhist will claim is that suffering is always produced by empty beliefs because objective conditions are conceptually indeterminate, e.g. beyond affirmation and negation, and the subject of the experience, e.g. the ego-sense or self-image, is a fabrication. Thus, rather than control and temper desires, the Buddhist will undermine the framework which produces the suffering.

In relation to objective conditions, 'suffering' is best defined as the condition of not having what one wants and being troubled by this situation. By being 'troubled by this situation' is meant the presence of some propositional evaluation about this situation which creates a subjective dependency. For example, take the objective fact that I do not have a certain job and add to this fact the belief that I cannot be happy unless I get this job. Since I do not have this job but do have the subjective belief about the job's causal relationship towards my happiness, I will psychologically suffer. And what the Buddhist will claim is that the most efficatious route to take here is to eliminate the belief rather than struggle with the circumstances. This need not mean that I need no longer want the job, nor that I stop pursuing it. All it means is that the subjective dependency relationship between the job and my happiness is empty.

An argument could be produced to substantiate the preliminary spirit of the claim. There is no necessary relationship between the

"job-desire", in fact any desire, and happiness. Since it is also possible for someone to have unfulfilled desires and still be happy, then the belief that one cannot be happy without this job, or the object of any desire, is empty. As I said this would only be a preliminary goad, but it does capture the message of Buddha's early polemic. Suffering can be alleviated through understanding and insight. However, the project does not stop here. Suffering can also be eliminated by radically undermining the framework rather than simply becoming adept at its manipulation.

An examination of 'suffering' will reveal the presence of certain factors all of which the Buddhist claims are essentially empty. Two critical factors which must be present for suffering are the belief in an abiding ego-sense and some belief in a correspondence relation between the propositional content and the state of affairs it designates, be it an objective or subjective condition. These two factors are the foundation for any psychological framework. And what the Buddhist is claiming is that suffering can be eradicated by simply noticing that at least one of these foundations of the psychological framework is empty. When this insight occurs, suffering can no longer come about because the mechanism which produces it can no longer function.

> Then said Mahamati to the Blessed One: Why is it that the ignornant are given up to discrimination and the wise are not?
>
> The Blessed One replied: It is because the ignorant cling to names, signs and ideas; as their minds move along these channels they feed on multiplicities of objects and fall into the notion of an ego-soul and what belongs to it; they make

> discriminations of good and bad among appearances and cling to the agreeable...
>
> Because of folly they do not understand that all things are like maya, like the reflection of the moon in water, that there is no self-substance to be imagined as an ego-soul and its belongings, and that all their definite ideas rise from their false discriminations of what exists only as it is seen of the mind itself. They do not realize that things have nothing to do with qualified and qualifying, nor with the course of birth, abiding and destruction, and instead they assert that they are born of a creator, of time, of atoms, of some celestial spirit. It is because the ignorant are given up to discrimination that they move along the stream of appearances, but it is not so with the wise.[18]

Objective reality does not directly cause suffering. The cause of suffering is always based upon a conceptual interpretation. The delusion, i.e. the ignorance, is not Platonic. There is no trading of a lower grade of reality for a higher one. The "objective problem" is one of beliefs. Objective reality can only "cause" suffering when certain beliefs are present. The Buddhist is making a rather modest claim. "Suffering" by definition is a psychological condition and without certain subjective beliefs suffering cannot occur. I cannot be lonely, sad, fearful, or angry unless I have certain beliefs. And once the empty nature of these beliefs is seen, there is no way for the "normal" pyschological mechanism to produce disturbing mind states. The doctrine simply points out a methodological flaw. The two components which constitute the framework that produces suffering are empty. Both the belief in a correspondence relationship between concepts and the objects of experience, and the conceptualized "self-image" or ego-sense lack essential threads; and without any essential threads, the

mechanism which produces suffering is defused. We cannot generate unhappiness once we glean the insight, i.e. "the turning about in the depths of consciousness", that the beliefs which are necessary to generate it are empty.

There is a sense in which the Buddhist seems quite close to the Stoic view here as both views seem to be down-playing objective value for a reason; both views seem to be seeking the transcendence of objective conditions because of something about objective conditions which makes them unable to affect the psychological status of the person. However, there is one major difference between the two methods. The Stoic attempts to rationalize the disvaluing of objective conditions while the Buddhist devalues the constitution of the rationalization. In the former case, one uses a cognitive process to correct a cognitive flaw. Conceptual error is corrected by conceptual clarification; a "proper" understanding of the objective world produces a detaching effect. For example, the Stoic might reason along the following lines. Since virtue is the only thing of real value and since the presence of hunger in my life bears no relationship to my behaving virtuously, hunger can have no value and thus there is no reason to be disturbed by it. The <u>fact</u> that hunger has no "real" value trumps its felt affect.

In the Buddhist case, the insight into the alleged vacuous nature of rationality's components discredits the data gathered from the process. No evaluation about the fictitious inner entity's condition derived from the indeterminate objective conditions can be psychologically binding. In order for any psychologically binding

condition to be produced, one must believe that the information about the objective conditions is accurate and that this information applies to a subject of the experience. And the Buddhist will, of course, claim that his "insight" has demonstrated that neither of these conditions can be the case. In a certain sense, the Buddhist is claiming that if one stops believing in the framework's foundation, nothing the framework generates can have psychological force.

From the Buddhist perspective, 'Nirvana' is the optimal condition of human living. It is a condition whose primary indicator is an insight into the conceptual nature of lived experience by which the subjective sting of lived experience is "blown-out". Neither the presence nor absence of any objects of experience can make any difference here. A certain psychological pose is defused. Nothing outward changes but everything is different. Perception may still present us with an "objective world"[19]. We may even continue to make objective evaluations about this "world". But what the Buddhist claims cannot be done is to bring that "world" into conceptual space, make evaluations, and then legitimately psychologize about the status of the subject unless we have not had the "insight" into the empty nature of the foundation.

Looking at the objective world, Aristotle actively sought the successful navigation of its ill effects. Epicurus sought to manage and minimize them. The Stoic tried to deny them and the Vedantin refused to feel them. The ideal was always the same - by therapeutically intervening one could overcome the world's ill effects and positively

embellish the quality of one's life. In each case the "objective-world" issue is posed in the form of a problem to be solved. The Buddhist does not find a given "objective world". 'Objective world' is a participatory fluid experience. "Objective world" can only be judged within a certain framework. Frameworks are non-binding, contingent, participatory experiences. They, i.e. frameworks, are claimed to be nothing more than an extension of semantic possibilities.

Some of these possibilities subjectively soothe us and some sting. The possibility called 'the objective world' does both. When this possibility is present the framework will dictate the response. But since the framework is contingent upon the semantic possibility, there is now a fifth option for how we might handle the "objective world".

> On the contrary my teaching is based upon the recognition that the objective world, like a vision, is a manifestation of the mind itself; it teaches the cessation of ignorance, desire, deed and causality; it teaches the cessation of suffering that arises from the discriminations of the triple world.[20] ('Triple world' is the sphere of desire, form and no-form,'kama', 'rupa', and 'arupa', and simply denotes the realm of phenomenal, psychological experience.)

This passage should not be read as a thesis about perception. Perception is not the problem. The "problem" is the belief that the sense-mind's conception of an objective world galvanizes the semantic framework and presents the subject with objective data which can then be extrapolated via discriminatory functions and perform legitimate and causally efficacious roles in the psychological context. In the same text we find,

> By the cessation of the sense-minds is meant, not the cessation of their perceiving functions, but the cessation of their discriminating and naming activities which are centralized in the discriminating mortal-mind.[21]
> (`Sense-minds' is correct in this context. From the perspective of this text there is a "seeing mind", a "feeling mind", etc. for each of the senses and a sixth mind(manovijnana) which particularizes and coordinates the functions of the five "sense-minds".)

The allusion to "like a vision" needs to be read in the context of the discriminatory faculty's ability to produce suffering from its primary functions. These functions are ignorance, desire, action and reading objective causal relations in a manner which seems to produce binding, non-contingent psychological effects, e.g. greed, hatred, attachments.

The objective world and its relationship to Supreme Happiness or `Nirvana' becomes a moot point; not because of anything about the objective world, but because everything "that world" does to us hinges upon a prior conception which from the `Nirvanic' viewpoint, i.e. non-conceptual, cannot have any binding psychological effect. The idealism in the above passage should not be viewed in the manner of reducing the "world" to an "idea". The Buddhist can no more say that the objective world is only an idea than he can say anything else about "it". The heart of the claim is that "conceptual interaction", e.g. psychologizing, with the world is the same as conceptualizing in a vision.

The only change is that the conceptual fuse which links "objective world" to the ego-sense's psychological machinery is blown-out. The presence or absence of objective conditions can only

qualitatively affect any experience when the experience is processed through the conceptual web. Like Epicurus, desires are problematic because their mismanagement will produce suffering. Unlike Epicurus, the scope of problematic desires is much wider for the Buddhist. Any desire driven by selfish craving will cause further suffering by deepening the dependency upon psychological processing. Buddhism is not anti-empirical, it is anti-psychological in the sense that the pursuit of positive affective psychological states via objective dependency is an activity constructed upon empty beliefs. The fetter is not objective need, but subjective craving, neediness, clinging and dependency.

Obviously an objectivist will disagree with this position. The simplest objection would involve death or pain. Objectively speaking it seems that both of these conditions do deserve serious psychological attention and that anyone being psychologically disturbed by their presence would certainly be justified. Thus, much like the Stoics the Buddhist view seems to force an extreme counter-intuitive position upon us. I believe that this is one of the most difficult dilemmas for the Buddhist. They are committed to two theses which make the resolution tenuous. In the first place, they are not inclined to deny the presence of pain but they do want to claim that psychological agitation about pain can be avoided. The realist strand in Buddhist thought readily admits the presence of pain and it admits that pain hurts. Much of Buddha's original polemic is directed primarily at the presence of pain in the body and the problems[22], i.e. suffering, which arise from it. On the other hand, the core of the teachings is focused on "uncausing" the unnecessary suffering produced by the pain. Thus, it is

best if I switch the topical order at this point and move directly into the pleasure/pain issue leaving morality's role for section 4.

3. Pleasure, Pain and Transcendence

Undermining the discriminatory functions has the effect of loosening certain ties to the objective world. The doctrine has a clearly cogent side from which it acquires the plausible side of the intuition. Following the thunder-storm as the sun is breaking through the clouds, I clearly "see" rainbow-like colors reflected on the surface of a puddle as I jog by it. Knowing full-well that the colors I see are not "really" representations of "colored-water" but simply reflections on the water's surface caused by the sunlight striking the water, I do not believe that the "colored-water" which I "see" is really colored. Perceptual illusion is overpowered by insight into the nature of the event. The psychological insight which the Buddhist gleans from the "turning about in the depth of his consciousness" tries to push the analogy further and is not very different from the above case in which the "ghost-sound" is transformed by the "flew-noise". If one can change the nature of the "objective" framework, one can cause changes in the psychological reponse mechanism.

The Buddhist at times appears to want to push the analogy to the limit.

> The mental habit of looking outward by the discriminating-mind upon an external objective world must be given up, and a new habit of realizing Truth within the intuitive-mind by becoming one with Truth itself must be established. Until this intuitive self-realization of Noble Wisdom is attained, this evolving mind-system will

> go on. But when an insight into the five Dharmas, the three self-natures, and the two-fold egolessness is attained, then the way will be opened for this "turning about" to take place. With the ending of pleasure and pain, of conflicting ideas, of the disturbing interests of egoism, a state of tranquillization will be attained in which the truths of emancipation will be fully understood and there will be no further evil out-flowings of the mind-system to interfere with the perfect self-realization of Noble Wisdom.[23]

In passages like this one, what one might call the "soft truth" of perceptual error is stretched to a limit which seems to strain common sense. It easy to understand how perceptual "corrections" can cause psychological changes, but the magnitude of the framework alterations in these kinds of passages pushes things to a point which common sense may find beyond belief.

There is a sense, as the above passage demonstrates, in which the Buddhist does claim that pain, as well as pleasure, can be transcended. The sohisticated Buddhist will not be inclined, as the Stoic was, to deny that pain hurts, nor will she claim that pain can "not-be-felt". The presence of pain, like the presence of most common-sense realist perceptions, is not the problem. And this situation only seems to deepen the dilemma. Pain does not appear to be necessarily connected to conceptualization. However from the Buddhist perspective, this appearance that pain is not necessarily related to conceptualization is somewhat deceptive. Pain is a psycho-physical experience. To get from pain to aversion requires more than a mere physical response. The Buddhist simply sees pain as a kind of knee-jerk reaction with no necessary psychological reaction attached to it. In

fact, the Buddhist sees no problem at all here. The problem is not pain, rather the problem is the suffering caused by pain.

This issue may be one in which the radically different frameworks create an unbridgable gulf. The Western inclination is to objectify 'pain' as an adjective applied to a subject. The Buddhist tends to frame the issue as an adverb applied to an experience. The former reads the objective condition from the personal subjective perspective while the latter reads the situation from the impersonal objective viewpoint. From the viewpoint of the subject, there is a problem with the presence of pain, but from the impersonal viewpoint there are only different kinds of experiences and these can only be personally "psychologized" by changing the framework.

There is an interesting asymmetry between the Stoic and Buddhist regarding the issue of pain which will perhaps make the depth of this dilemma clear. The Stoic would claim that pain is a dispreferred(read bad) indifferent, but also claim that pain does not hurt. The Buddhist claims that pain does hurt but is not bad. From the common-sense perspective, the Buddhist seems committed to a bizarre thesis: pain hurts but is not bad. Suzuki puts the point in the following terms.

> When you are to suffer a pain for one reason or another, you just suffer it, and have no other thoughts about it. When you are to enjoy a pleasure you just enjoy it, and have no other thoughts about it. By thus experiencing what comes to you, you experience 'shunyata' in which there is neither dualism nor monism nor transcendentalism. This is what is meant by the statement which makes up the basic teaching of the 'Prajnaparamita' that "when I thus talk to you, there is no talk, nor any hearing; nor is there any talker, and no audience

either" - which is 'shunyata'.[24]

And as Westerners we recoil from the verbiage. Suzuki's framework is conceptually empty and with no occupant, i.e. the concept of pain, in the "conceptual" space, there is no way evaluative discourse can get started. Perhaps an example would make this "clear". The feeling of pain or hurt is one thing. The concepts of 'pain' or 'hurt' are something else. 'Bad' is a conceptual term. In order to apply 'bad' to the feeling of hurt or pain, I have to bring the feeling into conceptual space. This I do by conceptualizing the experience and this, of course, is precisely what Suzuki's framework will not allow him to do because for Suzuki conceptual space is essentially empty, 'shunyata'. This should not be taken to mean that Suzuki will not ever conceptualize. All it implies is that the 'shunyata' insight will trump the conceptual explication and thus deflate any psychological effect. Notice the difference between the Stoic and the Buddhist. In the Stoic framework, reasoning about the pain causes a judgment which renders the pain value-neutral and thus overrides the normative "felt" disvalue that is usually attached to the experience - reason overwhelms physiology and the pain no longer hurts the Sage. For the Buddhist, the framework is very different. The pain hurts; there might even be avoidance behavior, but there is no judgment about the pain being bad. Both frameworks seem to be denying an objective fact - namely that pain is often a bad thing to undergo or that it hurts, and both frameworks seem to be denying something most of us find normative about the ordinary use of 'pain'.

It might be of interest to examine if both of the two possible abuses of langauge are as problematic as they appear to be. One standard method used in evaluating the abuse of ordinary language is to use a criterion based upon "ordinary" recognition. If the alteration in normal use results in a failure to be able to recognize that about which we are talking, then the argument can legitimately be accused of staking its claim on purely definitional criteria and in essence merely changing the meaning of the terms at issue. The issue here would be an example of Philippa Foot's[25] argument that not to be fearful, or at least apprehensive, in the presence of danger would imply that the person at issue had changed the meaning of 'danger'. Clearly the Stoic does have this problem. Anything which did not hurt would no longer be considered a 'pain', and calling the 'pain' a dispreferred indifferent does seem to be an attempt to save the theory by use of a change in meaning. "Hurt" pretty clearly seems to be a necessary condition for the presence of pain and one might seriously wonder what it is which does not hurt or injure the sage.

On the other side of the issue, it does seem possible to describe a 'pain' as not being bad and still be able to recognize and respond to the pain as a pain. A case could made for there being no necessary connection between 'pain' as ordinarily used and 'bad'. Some pains could be evaluated as 'good', e.g. vigorous exercise, some diets, with no problem to the uses of ordinary language. The objection might be made that it is not the pain which is being called 'good' but the effects which the pain will bring about and that in the absence of these effects, or the primary intention behind the activity, the pain

would not be called 'good'. There are two possible replies to this objection. One reply is from the Western perspective and the other is a more Buddhist-like answer. The first would be that the value attributed to pain has to be instrumental. The judgments we make about the good or bad value of a pain are always based upon what the pain does to us. For the objection to have force, one would have to claim that 'pain' is intrinsically bad, but can lose its "intrinsic" badness when it leads to favorable results which, of course, leads to a logical contradiction. Thus "pain" cannot be intrinsically bad. The Buddhist reply to this objection would be to reject the instrumental framework itself. 'Pain' in the Buddhist framework is neither good or bad; it just is. And if this skews ordinary usage of language the Buddhist will reply "so much the worse for ordinary language." In fact, one of the primary objectives of the whole Buddhist project is to go beyond the semantic and conceptual limits which the ordinary use of language impose upon our psychological condition.

> There are four kinds of word discrimination, all of which are to be avoided because they are alike unreal. First there are the words indicating individual marks which rise from discriminating forms and signs as being real in themselves and, then, becoming attached to them. There are memory-words which rise from unreal surroundings which come before the mind when it recalls some previous experience. Then there are words growing out of attachment to the erroneous distinctions and speculations of the mental processes. And finally, there are words growing out of inherited prejudices as seeds of habit-energy have accumulated since beginningless time, or which had their origin in some long forgotten clinging to false-imagination and erroneous speculations.[24]

The Buddhist makes a distinction between the experience and

the conceptualization of that experience. The conceptualization of an experience requires the use of words. Certain words have a perfuming effect; 'vasana' is the technical Sanskrit term used to describe this effect. Conceptualizing pleasant experiences tends to produce positive 'vasanas' while conceptualizing painful experiences tends to generate negative 'vasanas'. 'Pleasure' and 'pain' are packed with particularly powerful 'vasanas'. The 'vasana' produced by words is like the conceptual wake or tracks which the experience leaves behind; 'habit-energy' is the translation used in the above passage. As the insight into the 'shunya', e.g. empty, nature of conceptual reality takes its hold, the power of the 'vasanas' is defused and one is left confronting the pain experience free of conceptual limitations which simply means that it may hurt but it does not have to be bad.

> Disciples should be on their guard against the seduction of words and sentences and their illusive meanings, for by them the ignorant and dull-witted become entangled and helpless as an elephant floundering about in the mud.[27]

I want to make one final note. None of this precludes a common-sense pragmatic approach to life. Neither pain's hurt nor any ensuing avoidance behavior need disappear. The Buddhist is simply claiming that the psychological baggage attached to the experience is not necessary. I may be hungry and try to find some food, but I can find a way to undergo that experience and not psychologically suffer by transcending the conceptual ramifications of that experience.

4. The Amoral Dilemma

The role of morality and the relationship between the 'Nirvanic' condition and morality poses problems in Buddhist "thought". Once the radical anti-conceptual doctrine of High Buddhism is fully understood, it seems that the only ethical option left is an "amoral" one and there can be no relationship between morality and 'Nirvana'. Though "The Precepts"[28] represent a code of moral behavior, there seems to be no sound "theoretical" way in which the radical anti-conceptualism can ultimately accomodate a genuine moral theory. Moral discrimination always contains an element of conceptual understanding which has to be theoretically empty, 'shunya'. The student or novice may be encouraged to be moral at the preliminary stages[29] as a "means" towards the tough ego-crushing work which must be done in order to transcend the ordinary conceptual framework, but in the final stages of the confrontation with the conceptual mind the transcendence of "all" framework-bound judgments appears to shatter any possible binding moral foundation.

Some theorists[30] propose a holistic, interrelational view in which mutual beneficence acts as a kind of "fall-out" from the ego-shattering 'Nirvanic' extinction of selfish motivation. Others, the tradition in general, offer a depiction which finds the sage engulfed in a flood of compassion, similar to Humean sympathy, which holds the freed personality in check.[31] Some opt out of the ad-hoc attempts and try to explain the unique amoral position of the enlightened sage by noting, as was done in the last chapter, that in the absence of groping egoistic desires, the sage has no motivation to be immoral. Thus even though technically there is no right or wrong, the sage

cannot do anything "wrong" because this would require a selfish motive. Finally there is the view of Dogen expressed by Hee-Jin Kim which claims that "Morality and enlightenment* are inseparably related to one another so much so that one without the other is not authentic as far as Dogen is concerned."[32]

Whichever explanation one prefers, the claim seems to me to be that there is no tension between morality and the radical anti-conceptual insights which the sage comes to possess. 'Nirvanic' realization precludes the normative motivational structure, e.g. ego-clinging and selfish desires, which immoral actions appear to require. The general tenor of the moral doctrines seems to be attitudinal, but there are consequentialist views[33], and the nature of moral value simply does not ever receive the kind of attention one finds in Western texts. The best defense for morality that is found in the traditional literature is in texts like The Diamond Sutra where it is shown that morality is not imcompatible with Nirvana, but no real argument is given as to why immorality is not unless one accepts the view that all immoral action has to be selfishly driven. In a sense the lack of consensus is reflective of the general anti-conceptual "framework" which supports the core doctrine. However, the scope of this issue is generally beyond my present intents.

There are two points which do matter to the topic of happiness or 'Nirvana'. The first concerns the absence of any positive connection between doing morally correct actions and reaching the 'Nirvanic' condition. There is no reward for behaving morally from the 'Nirvanic'

* 'Enlightenment' should be read as equal to the 'Nirvanic' condition.

perspective. The best one acquires is the diminishing of one's 'karmic' dept, but even this is nebulous as the action cannot be motivated from any design upon reward. One of the genuine problems with assessing the doctrine is that the texts speak to us from the egoless position while most of us have to read these texts as ego-bound individuals. From the theoretical viewpoint this makes interpretation at best very difficult and at worst impossible. One cannot, as the texts often admit, understand the radical insights until one has had the radical insight, but once one has the radical insight there is no longer any need for the text. And then to compound the problem, we are often told that the texts cannot give one the insight.

On the positive side there does seem to be a genuine attempt at arguing that there is something wrong with benevolent action which uses the action as means to self-reward. In other words, the Buddhist, like the Vedantin, is very sensitive to the problem which haunts the views of Epicurus and Aristotle, e.g. the instrumental use of persons as a means to one's happiness. The Diamond Sutra contains numerous pasages which strongly criticize the "instrumental use" problem.

> Subuti, if a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, in practicing charity conceives within his mind any of these arbitrary conceptions discriminating himself from other selves, he will be like a man walking in darkness and seeing nothing. But if the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, in his practice of charity, has no arbitrary conceptions of the attainment of the blessing or merit which he will attain by such practice, he will be like a person with good eyes, seeing all things clearly as in bright sunlight.[34]

The passage here is clearly the antithesis of the ancient Greek

dilemma. Where Aristotle and Epicurus struggle to find a place for genuine benevolence within what appears to be an egocentric framework, the Buddhist devalues any benevolence done from an egoistic perspective.

> And what is the root of demerit? Greed is a root of demerit; Anger is a root of demerit; Delusion is a root of demerit...
>
> And what is the Root of Merit? Absence of greed is a root of merit; absence of anger is a root of merit; absence of delusion is a root of merit...[35]

The "Root of Merit" is thus read in a sense which demands the deflation of all egoistic intents. The sage enters the moral realm, the sphere of conceptual interactions with others, with nothing to gain and everything to lose. No egoistic action regardless of intents or consequences produces any merit. Rather than attempt to establish a relationship between happiness and morality which makes immorality interfere with the possibility of happiness and then struggle with the problem of genuine benevolence whereby ultimately selfish intents may produce morally good results, the Buddhist frames the issue in such a way that allows no moral merit for selfish intents. Thus meritorious consequences are just appropriate actions done from non-egoistic intents and the intent/consequence distinction collapses. From the perspective of moral merit "good consequences" are just those results which come about when one acts appropriately to the objective circumstance in the absence of any of the egoistic faults. And what the sage gains is not any positive embellishment of the quality of her experience. Any such "positive embellishment" would presuppose a

conceptualized ego-sense. Thus the sage has no reason to be moral and no means to be immoral.

However, despite the benevolent sounding veneer, the view is quickly tested when the amoral undercore is exposed. "Acting appropriately" is intended to be read in a mild and benign manner, but from the radical anti-conceptual perspective 'appropriate action' cannot be explicated with enough, in fact with any, specific content to do any genuine moral work. Since the ultimate success of the 'Nirvanic' project depends upon the transcendance of the egoistic conceptual mind, and since morality, at least ordinary morality, appears highly problematic to frame in a non-conceptual framework, we seem to be left with no way to criticize an apparent, at least from the ordinary viewpoint, immoral sage. Where the Aristotelian and Epicurean appeared to advocate the instrumental use of persons as a means to one's happiness because of their egoistic frameworks, the Buddhist conversely seems unable to be critical of apparent normative "inappropriate" actions done from the non-egoistic perspective. The problem is very real in contemporary Buddhism. The current literature finds itself engulfed in the debate about the "wrongness" of HIV infected "masters" engaging in compromising Tantric sexual practices with students.[34] Some contend that these "masters" can coherently be criticized within the tradition while others taking the radical anti-conceptual "high ground" simply claim that those who criticize have just not "seen" the truth of conceptual emptiness as in the end there can be "no right or wrong".

The late Chogyam Trungpa, an advocate of the "no right, no

wrong doctrine" poses the problem in the following terms.

> Sanity lies somewhere between the inhibitions of conventional morality and the looseness of extreme impulse, but the area in-between is very fuzzy. The bodhisattva delights in the play between hestitation and extreme impulsiveness - it is beautiful to look at - so delight in itself is the approach to sanity. Delight is to open our eyes to the totality of the situation rather than siding with this or that point of view. The bodhisattva does not side with rejecting convention, mocking everything out of sheer frustration, trying to get the world to acknowledge him. Nor does he side with blind dogma, holding back out of fear, trying to mold the world to conform to rigid ideas and rules. The bodhisattva takes delight in polarities but does not side with either extreme. He accepts what is there as the message and explores it further and further, and the conflict between the polarities becomes his inspiration. In order to be a communist, you must have a model of what not to be, which means you must understand capitalism, so capitalism is your model.[37]

The message in this passage is a sharp, dual-edged sword which in one stroke can cut the knots that tie the psychologically suffering soul to the source of unhappiness while at the same it frees that same soul from the normative parameters which check and constrain the "extreme impulses". The Bodhisattva delights in the freedom, but we may not delight in the Bodhisattva. Like the rest of us, the Bodhisattva frolics in the dance of sanity between the polarities of the malicious and the benevolent; unlike the rest of us the steps of the Bodhisattva's "sanity-dance" demand a level of improvisation which seems to us not to be 'sanity' at all. Then to make matters worse should we not approve, the Bodhisattva will fall back onto the doctrine of emptiness and demand that we supply the essential definition of 'sanity'. We might try the "family resemblances route" and then tell

the Bodhisattva that his dance does not at all resemble ours. But at this point, he will only smile and tell us that this ability to improvise is exactly what it means to be 'sane'.

From my perspective this particular problem, i.e. relating morality to happiness, is the most difficult problem for the Buddhist to solve within our framework. On the one hand, it seems to me that there can be no way to produce any non-stipulative doctrine which can formulate any necessary, or even sufficient, conditionality upon the presence of moral behavior and the manifestation of happiness in a person's life. On the other hand, if we do not restrict immorality by at least making it result in unhappiness, something seems intuitively wrong and reason will be inclined to reject the results as being unworkable in practice. The Buddhist tries to "reign things in" by the use of the preliminary moral structure, the radical ego-shattering and its defusing of selfish motivation. However, when push comes to shove and we reach that "high" ground where the sage embraces 'shunyata', a leap of faith is demanded which might make many very uncomfortable. And the reply we get will only be "so much the worse for your 'discomfort'."

In the final stanza of "The Heart Sutra", we find the following famous Buddhist mantra.

> Listen to the Mantra, the Great Mysterious Mantra: 'Gate', 'gate', 'paragate', 'parasamgate', 'bodhi', 'svaha'! Gone, gone, gone to that other shore; safely passed to that other shore, O Prajna-paramita! So may it be.[38]

The 'Prajna-Paramita' is best understood as the crowning virtue of Buddhist Wisdom. 'Paramita' represents a perfection or supreme virtue and 'prajna' denotes wisdom of the highest order connoting a type of synthesis between the highest knowledge and limitless compassion. On the Buddhist view one cannot have real wisdom unless one has this limitless compassion towards all others, and one could not possibly have this limitless compassion unless one were truly wise. Perhaps, this needed and intimate connection between supreme Buddhist knowledge and limitless compassion is the driving insight for those who claim that morality and 'Nirvana' are inseparably connected though it may not at times seem so obvious to those who examine the position from a different conceptual framework. The Buddhist needs compassion in order to account for any moral commitment by the enlighten sage, but it remains questionable from my perspective as to whether or not he is entitled to it.

5. The Other Shore

'Nirvana' is often characterized as arriving at the other shore. It is a conceptually harmless characterization meant only to be read in a metaphorical descriptive manner. There literally is no "other shore", only an absence of activites, e.g. egoistic actions, selfish desires, conceptualization, essentialist beliefs, etc., which keep one bound to living within the suffering-producing framework. This framework is the metaphorical shore from which one needs to move. "Leaving this shore" is not a movement from one place to another, it is an insight into the psychologically binding nature of lived conceptual

experience. And thus the "Other Shore" called 'Nirvana' is nothing more than what happens when the activites which generate the binding framework cease.

Since no positive depiction of 'Nirvana' can be given, nor is any appropriate, it seems that in assessing the Buddhist view of what constitutes the best possible kind of life, we are left in a most difficult situation - one cannot say what it is. However, we can clearly see what it is not. It is not Aristotelian. Successful living within a teleological framework does not get one to the "Other Shore"; success is irrelevant. It is not Epicurean. Appropriately negotiating the pleasure/pain framework does not take one to the "Other Shore". Pain is not relevant. It is not Stoic - cognitive detachment from the deterministic framework does not bring one to the "Other Shore". Nor can it be Vedantic as there is no essential core to be reached and thus the "Other Shore" cannot be reached by finding one's unchanging essence. It is not a state of mind and it is not a state of the world; yet it is not "not a state of mind", nor not "not a state of the world."[39] The culminating insight is expressed in the famous Buddhist equation which declares that "'samsara'(this world) and 'Nirvana' are the same". Perhaps, it might be expressed, or at least hinted at, as the transcedence of the binding nature of the semantic framework embodied in "the world" and embedded in "the mind".

"The Other Shore", 'Nirvana', is not some other realm. There is no barrier which separates one from 'Nirvana' other than the "conceptual wall" which has been erected in the imaginary place one might call "conceptual space". Still, metaphors cannot be taken

literally. There is no "conceptual space" which needs to be "cleared". And the mistake of reading the metaphor literally is noted and refuted by Hui Neng when he compares his insight with the understanding of Wo Lun a famous "space clearer".

> Wo Lun has ways and means
> To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
> When circumstances do not react on the mind
> The Bodhi tree will grow steadily.
>
> Hui Neng has no ways and means
> To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
> Circumstances often react on my mind,
> And I wonder how can the Bodhi tree grow?[40]

'Bodhi' as noted denotes the knowledge aspect of the 'Prajna-Paramita" and Hui Neng is pointing out the conceptual nature of Wo Lun's understanding. 'Bodhi' cannot grow; once the insight into the conceptual nature of lived experience has arisen, that is it. The shine of the diamond remains in spite of the dust which collects upon it. If one believes that removing the dust enhances the shine, then one does not understand the nature of the diamond. From this side of clouds the sun is obscured, from the other side of the clouds the sun always shines. The claim is that looking out one sees the clouds, i.e. concepts and the world, and then hears the teaching about "emptiness" and tries to push the clouds away. But the very effort of pushing only creates more clouds, e.g. concepts. The culminating Buddhist notion is paradoxical. The 'Other Shore' is prior to and immanent. It is not "something" to be uncovered. It is simply what is left when the activites which conceal it cease. 'The Other Shore' is an insight into the nature of the experiences of the conceptual mind, not an

understanding of the conceptual mind. The difference is subtle, but clear. Although I am not deeply versed in Wittgenstein's "therapeutic" approach to solving philosophic problems, I want to use one of his "therapeutic insights" to bring out the difference between 'understanding' and the 'insight experience'.

> I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking.
> It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say " I know what I am thinking."
> (A whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar.)[41]

If one understands this passage, they "see" the technical dilemma: the use of relational grammar in the case of a first person utterance turns a process into an entity and creates a dualistic framework quite similar to Nietzsche's insight regarding the "lightning flashing". It is clever and impressive and "seeing" and "analyzing" the flaw means one has "understood". However, from the perspective of "insight", something very different happens. A critical fuse in the psychological machinery is blown. The thinking process does not stop. Perception does not come to an end. Pain still hurts. Circumstances continue to react upon the mind. But they lose all power because the grammatical entity upon which they previously lit has disappeared. 'Understanding' is seeing why this must be true while 'insight', according to the Buddhist, is living one's life in that "truth".

There is no positive explication for 'Nirvana' because the 'Nirvanic' experience deflates the framework upon which positive description of experience rests. The answer is sure to dissatisfy and

that is also clearly its intent. The very notion of wanting conceptual analytical "satisfaction" from a Buddhist explanation indicates that one has no "insight". Neither conceptual analysis nor its quality solve the problem; the problem from the Buddhist position is the subtle affects which conceptual analysis leave behind; e.g. the need to be conceptually satisfied. These subtle affects are the threads from which suffering is sewn. When one "sees" the empty and impermanent nature of the threads, the warp and woof, e.g. ego-sense, of the fabric begins to unravel. As the core unravels, the means to produce suffering, e.g. unhappiness, vanishes and from the Buddhist perspective that just is 'Nirvana'.

I want to end on two notes. One is a reply to what might appear to be an unrealistic and nihilist undertone which makes the view seem far-fetched and unappealing. The other note is a more positive possibility which might be worth consideration.

On the negative side, I am sure that some readers will find the Buddhist depiction of 'Nirvana' as pushing the concept of happiness beyond recognition. This kind of life does not look like the kind of life most people would want to live. The elimination of suffering certainly has appeal, but the lack of any positive embellishment by the successful outcome of our undertakings leaves the view in a motivational void. The dilemma seems to be explaining motivated action that is not attached to the result, explaining the desire to act in the absence of the desire to succeed, or in an even weaker sense reconciling the desire to act with the relational irrelevance of one's

happiness to the outcome.

The normative depiction of happiness is one in which the circumstantial outcomes of one's undertaking usually matter greatly when assessing whether or not one is happy. Certainly there are exceptional people who in spite of failure and unfulfilled significant desires still manage to lead happy lives. However, these kinds of cases are just what I called them, "exceptional". The normative framework for human beings is one in which actions matter and the actions matter in a way which tightly connects the results of the actions to the evaluative assessment about the quality of one's life. The Buddhist denies that this is the case. The Buddhist view, as well as most Eastern views, will not relent on this issue. If one is unhappy, e.g. suffering, it is always because of the presence of a selfish desire based upon the conceptual ramifications of denying at least one of the Great Buddhist "Truths". And this basic tenet would seem to exclude all circumstantial embellishments given the scope of the doctrines of emptiness and impermanence.[42]

There is no doubt that the view can appear unattractive to our ordinary framework. The Buddhist view, like the other four views, challenges the ordinary notion of happiness. The depiction of suffering as always being a condition animated by a selfish desire might, on a rigid and narrow construal of 'selfish', be technically true, but a case could be made for a "less narrow" construal of 'selfish' which made a distinction between "rational needs" and "unnecessary wants". The Buddhist, of course, will not allow any compromise position. The "rational need" may result in hurt or pain and we may even engage in

behavior to alleviate the situation. However given the Buddhist's commitment to the doctrines of "emptiness" and "no-self", neither pain nor hurt can be legitimate sufficient reasons to be unhappy or suffer. And from a technical perspective, if there are no legitimate reasons for suffering there can be no role for positive embellishment to play because giving any role to positive embellishment would in turn legitimize some suffering. If some readers are inclined to say at this point that it is possible to have a desire for a better condition and not suffer, then those readers would not be attached to their desires and would be advocating a version of the Buddhist position. Anyone making such a claim would also have to be saying that the absence of that desire's fulfillment was not sufficient for unhappiness as that is what "not being attached to one's desires" means.

There might be some inclination to believe that we are really talking about two different concepts of 'happiness', but I am convinced, as was the case for Vedanta, to note that there are enough similarities, at least in the ancient literature, to believe that the notion of the 'supremely happy life' is recognizable as a shared concept. The problem is not that the parties to the dispute understand 'supremely happy life' differently. The problem is, again, the kind of life which each party thinks fills the bill. The kind of life which the Buddhist believes "fills the bill" is a life in which the mechanism which produces suffering is "blown out". And unless one can find something wrong with the core doctrines of emptiness, impermanence and no-ego, the "unattractiveness" generated by the loss of positive embellishment may be something which the ordinary viewpoint cannot

accept but remains theoretically sound.

One last possible objection to the insignificance of positive embellishment might concern the rigid happiness/unhappiness polarity. It could seem that the argument depends upon there being only two possible options: either one is happy or one is unhappy. If there is an intermediate condition, e.g. neither happy nor unhappy, between happiness and unhappiness, then the notion of positive embellishment has a legitimate role to play. For example, if it is possible for someone to be neither happy nor unhappy, then this person could legitimately argue that they need something to make them happy. What the Buddhist wants to claim here is that there cannot be a neutral condition, or that the "neutral condition" just is happiness. Now, in the example, the presence of the embellishing desire undermines happiness the instant the subjective relationship between the desire's fulfillment and happiness arises. Thus, any neutral condition must be one of happiness because 'happiness' is by definition the absence of this subjective relationship, i.e. selfish desire and its resultant suffering. There can thus be no neutral condition, or at least no neutral condition which supports the idea of "positive embellishment" because the moment a notion of "positive embellishment" arises the condition lacks something and is no longer neutral. If the neutral condition needs embellishing then the neutral condition is deficient, and once a deficiency arises the psychological machinery of suffering will be set in motion. If this were not the case, the person would be in the precarious position of claiming that there is nothing wrong with her condition but it could be better.

A case might be made for a neutral condition by citing a distinction between "not happy" and "unhappy". It does seem cogent for someone to claim that she is not happy and still also claim that she is not unhappy. The Buddhist could be accused of conflating the two notions. However this would only be sustainable as long as the person did not mind "not being happy". And again it would seem very difficult to explain how this person could avoid sliding into the suffering condition. The neutral condition would be by definition a "not happy" condition. The person would then have to be aware of a possible "better" condition, e.g. happy, and this would immediately nullify neutrality. If the "neutral condition" is something the person would prefer to have improved, then it is not a neutral condition.

On the positive side, I believe that the Buddhist view offers a unique solution to one of our major problems. This problem has been finding an explanation of the legitimate subjective component. All of ancient views examined here envision happiness as an end which ought to be final, self-sufficient and complete. However actually connecting these criteria to the legitimate subjective component has been highly problematic. Specifying exactly what internal conditions must be present in order to be happy seems from the ordinary perspective an incredibly difficult undertaking. And from the theoretical perspective, if the anti-essentialist is correct, it is an impossible task.

The Buddhist characterizes this component as "the absence of the psychological activity of suffering". This approach evades the problem of trying to establish causal relations from indeterminate

data. Even if it is disputable whether or not the objective conditions are indeterminate, it cannot be disputed that one treads on very unstable ground when trying to make subjective conditions determinate. And on the issue of happiness, it is the subjective element which causes the most difficult dilemmas. The virtue of the Buddhist position is that by not stipulating what must be present and only noting what cannot be present the view can work a legitimate causal argument. It identifies the causally mitigating conditions and then says eliminate these and the problem is solved. This approach enables one to work with the data present and find the causal relationship by examining an actual present condition, i.e. unhappiness. Instead of asking, "What will make me happy?" one asks, "What is causing me to be unhappy?" The former method requires speculation while the latter only observation.[43]

The Buddhist view of happiness has a paradoxical look. It intentionally strains the ordinary intuitions about happiness and at times uses language designed to disturb and upset the logic of "good" reason. Even the life of the "happy" Buddhist sage defies and strains what we take happy people to be as there is no connection between the affairs of his life and the value ascribed to that life. Yet when one peels away the dull and drab appearance, there is, ironically, right on the surface a rather austere, empirical, logically sound argument upon which the doctrine stands. One is either happy or not happy. If one is happy then this person does not need any help. If one is not happy, the Buddhist tries to supply a causal method which is grounded in actual observation to alleviate this condition. Nonetheless, the Buddhist will

never be able to satisfy those who come to the argument with a prior conception of happiness. If one wants to find a theory which meets their conception of happiness, the Buddhist cannot supply it. The Buddhist can only tell us why we are not happy and if more is needed Buddhism will be found sadly deficient.

NOTES

1. cf. Martha Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 317.

2. Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony and solidarity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Chapter 2.

3. Derek Parfit, Reasons and Persons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Part Three.

4. The Lankavatara Sutra, in A Buddhist Bible, ed. Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 309. This refrain is repeated constantly throughout The Lankavatara Sutra and is the core message of the text. "Lived experience" allegedly becomes very different when the ramifications of radical Buddhist anti-essentialism actually manifest in a person's life. The "turning about" rattles the very foundation of ordinary living and the life of living "under the influence" of conceptual interpretation is permanently undermined.

5. Buddhism seems to develop in a peculiar manner. From the austere anti-metaphysical beginnings which are directed primarily at Vedanta, it moves through Mahayana Buddhism which begins to incorporate basic metaphysical principles. The progression then moves to Tibet where one finds a full-blown metaphysics that seems more like Vedanta than Buddhism, and the development culminates by coming full-circle to the radical anti-metaphysical teachings found in Zen. Today, all four variants can be found and there is really no "consensus" on which position best reflects the original doctrine; although each school will argue that "its interpretation" is best.

6. D.T. Suzuki, Studies in The Lankavatara Sutra (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1981), 127.

7. see W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", in From A Logical Point of View (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

8. see Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony and solidarity, Chapters 1 and 2.

9. 'Koan' literally means puzzle. It is a seemly paradoxical riddle

that is used as a mediation device in which the student ponders the non-cognitively answerable riddle; e.g. What did your face look like before you were born? And if the exercise is successful the student will glean a measure of insight into the transcendence of the conceptual mind. The use of Koan practice is often depicted as a means of deliberately undermining the cognitive faculty. There is disagreement on this last point and some commentators explain the Koan's role differently, although the explanation given here is more commonly used. cf. Hee-Jin Kim, Dogen Kigen Mystical Realist (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1978).

10. The Lankavatara Sutra, 289.

11. The Berkeleyian thesis to which I am referring in this passage is the notion that when we talk about 'sensible things' we are in fact talking about ideas.

12. The Lankavatara Sutra, 355. The following are rough translations/interpretations of some critical technical terms used in the passage. 'The Four Propositions'- it is, it is not, it neither is nor is not, it both is and is not. 'The Twofold Passions'- two kinds of evil passions classified as primary and secondary and usually couched in extended explanations. The 'Twofold Hinderances'- wrong judgments and irrational passions and given the extent to which the Buddhist plumbs life the scope here becomes quite broad. The 'Twofold Egolessness'- neither material objects nor persons have any abiding, essential core.

13. The Heart Sutra, in A Buddhist Bible, ed. Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 84.

14. The Lankavatara Sutra, 281.

15. D.T. Suzuki, Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra, 115.

16. The Four Noble Truths form the backbone of Buddha's original teachings and can be found in "Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta" more commonly known as "The Sermon at Benares" in The teachings of the Compassionate Buddha, ed. E.A. Burtt (New York: New American Library, 1955). These four truths are usually translated as follows. 1. Life is full of suffering. 2. The cause of this suffering is selfish desire. 3. The way to end the suffering is to end selfish desire. 4. And the way to do this is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path.

17. Samyutta-Nikaya 21.7, in A Buddhist Bible, ed. Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 39.

18. The Lankavatara Sutra, 282.

19. There is a conflict in Buddhism regarding theories of perception. The early idealism of the "mind-only" doctrine as advocated in texts

like The Lankavatara Sutra and The Surangama Sutra is often disputed by a realist strain in Buddhist thought. Since my main interest is not the issue of perception this topic is beyond my intended scope. The early texts seem to advocate a view similar to Berkeley while the later realist strain departs from this position. For my purposes this issue does not really matter. What makes a view distinctly Buddhist is the belief that the suffering "caused" by the objective world can be "uncaused" by an insight into the nature of subjective experience. Thus, whether the world is reduced to an idea or not is essentially irrelevant for my purposes. However for those interested in the issue I recommend the following texts. Joan Stambaugh, Impermanence Is Buddha-nature (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990) and Hee-Jin Kim, Dogen Kigen Mystical Realist (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1987).

20. The Lankavatara Sutra, 283.

21. Ibid., 308.

22. One could view this issue as highly problematic in the sense that the primary motivation to following Buddha's teaching seems to be based on the fact that pain "causes" suffering. Thus it could be construed that it is the "badness" of pain which is the problem, and the doctrine could be viewed as making 'pain' objectively negative. However, as the view unfolds the psychological explanation does appear to take the dominant position. The goading provided by "pain's badness" serves more to motivate the unlearned than as an actual Buddhist thesis as it is ultimately the suffering caused by the pain and not the pain per se which is Buddha's problem.

23. The Lankavatara Sutra, 309.

24. D.T. Suzuki, The Awakening of Zen (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1987), 83.

25. See Philippa Foot, "Moral Beliefs" in Theories of Ethics, ed. Philippa Foot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

26. The Lankavatara Sutra, 285.

27. Ibid., 286.

28. cf. "The Panca Sila"(The Five Precepts), in What The Buddha Taught, Walpola Rahula (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1959), 80.

29. The analogy of the "raft" is often used here. One uses the raft to reach the "Other Shore", but upon reaching one's destination one no longer has any need for the vehicle which one used to reach the destination. In other words, I need to have a moral code and follow it in order to restrain and ultimately crush my ego and the selfish desires which move it to action. After the success of the ego-crushing

work, I no longer need morality because there is nothing to restrain.

30. D.T. Suzuki, The Awakening of Zen, 66.

31. The depiction of Buddha as a "Bodhisattva" is usually used at this point in the doctrine. The `Bodhisattva' is one who out of compassion dedicates his or her life to helping others see the great Buddhist Truths. Whether this tactic solves the problem seems to me questionable. On the one hand compassion can be used as means to explain the motivation for "post-enlightenment" action. But the real problem is that from a theoretical point if the compassion does not arise, there remains no way to criticize "post-enlighenment" immoral behavior unless one stipulates a connection between the two which would seem to require some semblance of binding conceptualization.

32. Hee-Jin Kim, Dogen Kigen Mystical Realist, 206.

33. cf. Ibid., Section Five "Monastic Asceticism: The Way of Ritual and Morality".

34. The Diamond Sutra, in A Buddhist Bible,ed. Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 90.

35. Majjhima-Nikaya 9, in A Buddhist Bible, ed. Dwight Goddard (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 34-35.

36. cf. Stephan Butterfield, "Accusing the Tiger: Sexual Ethics and Buddhist Teachers", Tricycle I no.4 (Summer 1992), 46-51. And "Interview with Pema Chodron", Tricycle III no.1 (Fall 1993), 16-24.

37. Chogyam Trungpa, The Myth of Freedom (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1988), 118.

38. The Heart Sutra, 86.

39. The double negation is a constant Buddhist tactic which I suspect might rankle those committed to logical acumen. But it needs to be remembered that the Buddhist is committed to defying the logical need to categorize and ultimately views this need as an impediment. In a certain sense these kinds of statments, quite common in the literature, might be viewed as an early attempt to "cure" the need for metaphysical analysis.

40.Hui Neng, "Temperament and Circumstances", in The Diamond Sutra and The Sutra of Hui Neng, trans. A.F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1969), 82.

41. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophic Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1968), 222.

42. cf. Walpola Rahula, What The Buddha Taught, Chpt.VIII. Rahula

defends an interpretation of Buddha's view which advocates some measure of compatibility for ordinary social and economic welfare with the radical "High" Buddhist ideals. The interpretation uses an "instrumental use" view to reconcile some kinds of worldly desire fulfillment and the radical anti-conceptual interpretations. However, it is my view that any reconciliation can only be a preliminary crutch and ultimately the radical view must be either completely accepted or totally rejected.

Chapter 7 Conclusion: The Best Chance of Success

One thing which emerges from this study is the tension and conflicting intuitions which surround the major themes. The conflict between internalism and externalism, the role of morality, and the place for pleasure and pain in an explanation of 'happiness' are not easy issues to decide. And, of course, finding a defining explication for the kind of life which best exemplifies 'happiness' is the most difficult task of all.

Each of these issues presents a dilemma in which the common-sense perspective clashes with the theoretical viewpoint and one is left having to make a "choice" that cannot completely satisfy both sides of the tension. For example, common sense tells us that the objective conditions of one's life have to matter to some degree. But then there is no way to create any necessary connection between any particular objective conditions and the manifestation of happiness in one's life. Common sense would prefer that morality have some significant role in the life of the happy person. Yet it just has to be wrong to claim that immoral people cannot be happy because there is no logical relation between morality and happiness that would make the latter impossible in the absence of the former. Finally, the person undergoing extreme unnecessary pain does not appear to be a very promising candidate for a happy life, but again formulating the specifics of the relational connection is full of counter-factual possibilities. Common sense will tell us that objective deprivation,

immorality, and extreme pain ought to be conditions that deprive one of a happy life, but theory shows us that it is difficult, if not impossible, to make the needed connections. If this is correct, and I believe it is, then none of these views can satisfy us completely because each makes a choice on these issues and thus leaves the door open to cogent objection. Perhaps, the best one can do is to find the view which best characterizes the happy life and then offer the best defense possible.

Before offering what I take to be the most defensible view, I would like to reflect back on the major thematic issues to see what we have learned from this study, attempt to locate any common threads which run through all the views, and note the significant places where the views differ.

On the external/internal issue, it seems that in the end all these ancient views opt for some version of internalism. Even Epicurus and Aristotle, who give the most relevance to external considerations, are ultimately driven to an internalist conception of 'happiness'. Epicurean 'ataraxia' and Aristotle's final explication of 'eudaimonia' as contemplation in the end simply placate the externalist intuitions and opt for a final conception of happy living which is internally grounded. The other three views have no use at all for externals and will outright eschew, rather than try to veil or temper, their opposition to external dependency. Now, of course, some defenders of externalism will not view Aristotle as offering an internalist account of happiness as some scholars do prefer the Aristotelian view which depicts happiness as a "kind of life". However given what Aristotle

does say in NE Book X, I believe there can be no question about the kind of life which Aristotle thinks is best, and that life is a life of contemplating Divine Truths. Hence, I would claim that all of these views make internalist turns.

It is certainly true that the degree of the internalism will vary, but all these views do try to exploit what I would call the "internalist advantage". I take this advantage to have quite a few theoretical assets. The first asset is that the internalist can always explain failure without the possibility of theoretical refutation. Since the mastery to be assessed is not objectively assessable, failure can always be explained by the lack of internalist mastery. Another internalist advantage is that no externalist view can supply a finite list of necessary and sufficient conditions for happiness. And any effort to do so could be refuted and, in all likelihood, would be refuted by at least one of our five internalists. Finally the internalist has on his side what I have called "the legitimate subjective component". I believe this element to be the only thing close to a necessary condition for happiness and the internalist by giving it priority palliates the most compelling intuition on this issue. If one's life does not "feel right" on the inside it just seems wrong to believe that anyone could be happy. Thus, I would add that not only were these ancients internalists but that they were quite clever to be such from the theoretical perspective.

On the issue of morality things do not work out quite as well for our ancient thinkers. None of the them want it to be the case that the immoral person becomes a viable candidate for happiness, but they

all have problems in showing why this must be true. Epicurus cannot possibly make any connection between morality and happiness given his stated priorities. The pursuit of "pleasure" is simply not compatible with any genuine "other concern". Aristotle tries to make the connection but cannot avoid the "instrumental use of persons problem" and thus could be accused of devaluing morality for the sake of theory. Of the Western views, the Stoics do the best job here, but finding a place for morality within their theoretical structure requires the assumption of strong metaphysical premises, e.g. Stoic Holism, the identity thesis, and a change of language which leaves much to desired.

The Eastern views avoid the self-interest problem of Aristotle, the language problem of Stoics and the pleasure problem of Epicurus by deflating the ego and undermining the ordinary conceptual framework. They thus leave us with no reason to be immoral and no motivational structure in which immorality can result in happiness because immorality gets tied to selfishness and the prerequisite for Eastern happiness is no selfishness. However, though the Eastern views do avoid the problems which undermine the Western views, they are not without their own difficulties. Both views want to advocate an ethic grounded in the absence of selfishness. However once the radical nature of their ego-shattering polemic is exposed, there seems little room left for morality being anything more than a crutch which the enlightened sage has no reason to use.

What is most interesting here is the different directions taken by the two perspectives. The Western views attempt to connect

morality to happiness by making moral behavior causally efficacious in the production of happiness while the Eastern views concentrate on making immorality causally efficacious in producing unhappiness. Neither attempt, in my opinion, succeeds and it just may be the case that morality, though we might prefer it to be, cannot be causally connected to happiness in a thoroughly satisfying manner.

When we come to the issue of pleasure and pain, we find an interesting alliance as there is a clear break within the sectional ranks in which the Stoics side with the Eastern viewpoints. Both Epicurus and Aristotle think that the happy life ought to be a pleasurable life. Though the technical roles which pleasure plays in these two views are quite different, their actual approaches to pleasure are not that different. Both view pleasure as good, significant and important in their conceptions of happiness. Both are cautious in the presence of pleasure; austere Epicureanism is not that different from moderate Aristotelianism in practice. And the crucial similarity is that they both believe that a life not animated by pleasure is an unworthy candidate for a good life.[1] What is most interesting about this somewhat unusual alliance is that on so many other issues Aristotle and Epicurus have no qualms about bucking common sense but here they are unrelenting in their need to conform to it. In fact it might even be argued that this issue is the only place where any of these views shows real respect for the "ordinary common-sense viewpoint".

The other three views clearly share the common thread that pleasure is not a good to be pursued and that pain is not a mitigating

condition for a happy life. These three views share a cluster of theses on this issue. Pleasure and its pursuit are problematic in that the activities associated with pleasure and its pursuit tend to make one dependent upon contingent conditions. All three positions posit happiness as not being dependent upon empirical outcomes and thus giving any positive value to pleasure would run counter to the core of these doctrines. Another point of agreement centers around the consensus in these views that pain has no relational role to play in assessing happiness. Though there are pragmatic methodological differences amongst the three positions, they all share the notion of devaluing emotive reactions and thus advocate viewpoints which endorse viewing pleasure and pain from a stance of indifference. They thus all take the counter-intuitive stance that disassociates pleasure from happiness and does not consider pain to be a happiness-mitigating condition.

Finally the last major thematic issue concerns the final conceptions of happiness. Each view is very different on this issue though there are similarities which are shared in varying degrees. All the views seem to agree that some measure of internalism has to play a major role in any conception of happiness. The disagreements stem from the amount of external influence that is allowed to come into play in the final acccounting. The central conflict stems from prioritizing first principles. In particular, the five animating conditions, e.g. 'ataraxia', 'ananda', etc., are the source of the problem. Comparing a life to a symphony, one might view the conditions represented by these five terms as the proposed dominant theme of a life. Thus, the best

final conception of happiness would be that animating condition which best represented the condition whose absence from the dominant position would make happiness impossible. In other words, is one of these conditions clearly important enough that we would be inclined to say that its absence excludes the possibility of happiness?

Though I will contend below that 'joy' best represents this condition, there is probably no way to decide this issue in a completely satisfactory manner. Before one could answer the question, one would first have to define 'happiness'. And given the definition which each participant offers, the relevant condition is going to meet the stipulations and criteria which the view advocates. Thus, in order to actually accomplish the task in a manner which does not assume what needs to be proven, one would need a theory-neutral definition of 'happiness'. The question is where would one find such a definition?

My proposal is to introduce a sixth theory which is, perhaps, as theory-neutral as one is going to find and would have been available to all our participants. I would call this sixth view "the ordinary notion of happiness". I take the following to be a fair representation of this view. From the ordinary perspective 'happiness' is a state of mind that is causally related to external conditions and might be defined as "being pleased with one's life". The view accomodates idiosyncracies while at the same time being committed to most common-sense intuitions. The view has flexibility while remaining anchored around a stable core. Personalities can differ about the causal relevance of many, if not most, of life's experiences, but there is a cluster of conditions which are "virtually" necessary for

happiness. A rough outline of these conditions would include, food, water, shelter, companionship, a means to make a living, and some degree of autonomy and freedom. As one moves away from this core, significance will vary although one could prioritize. Perhaps one could draw a figure with concentric circles to represent the viewpoint. Core items or experiences are those which have very high correlations with happiness across the population. The further one moves from the center or core, the less likely it would be to find consensus.

As far as the major issues are concerned, the view would claim that certain externals do generally matter, but there could surely be people for whom this might not be true. And the further removed from the center a particular item might be, the more likely disagreement will happen. However, the view remains an externalist view as on the ordinary conception of happiness someone starving in poverty is not a likely candidate for happiness. On the issue of morality, the view would be pragmatic. The ordinary view would not deny that the successful crime-lord could be happy. But it would in most cases not advocate such a lifestyle. The possibility of being caught, punished, imprisioned, etc., would not be worth the risk and thus being moral would be viewed as a pragmatic means towards a happy life. The ordinary view would embrace pleasure, at least "wholesome" ones and quite probably a moderate degree of "unwholesome" pleasures. Pain would clearly be viewed as an impediment to happiness with the degree of the impediment being correlated to the length of time and intensity of the pain. And, of course, the ordinary view would recognize the possibility of trade-offs in this area. For example, it would make sense for

someone who believed the ordinary view to attend "painfully dull" philosophy classes for the sake of one's degree and thus a better job, or to engage in vigorous "painful" exercise for the sake of health. Finally as a final explication of the kind of life with which one is most likely to be "pleased", the view would offer some version of a "satisfaction view of happiness" in which important and significant desires and needs are fulfilled. And 'fulfillment' would be construed here in both the sense of "feeling good about what came about", i.e. emotive, and it actually being the case that the need or desire was met.

All of our ancient theorists would have disagreed with this view and would, in fact, tell anyone living a life based upon these beliefs that she was incorrect about 'happiness'. On at least some points, and for some of the ancient views on many points, the ordinary view is in direct conflict with the ancient theorists. This circumstance also represents a major difference between those who hold the ordinary viewpoint and the ancients. The ordinary viewpoint is more pliable than our ancient theorists. Though those who hold the ordinary view point may dispute the kind of life which would be the happy life, they are not as inclined as the ancients to believe that those with whom they disagree in their conceptions of happiness cannot be happy. Some may think a particular conception of happiness to be odd or peculiar, but the ordinary tendency is to give great respect to the old Latin dictum "de gustibus nondisputandum est", i.e. in matters of taste let there be no dispute.

The criteria for instantiation of the ordinary view are so

non-specific that it allows considerable flexibility. If a person remains within the broad bounds of common sense, there is from the ordinary perspective an incorrigibility about their testimony to the presence or absence of happiness in their life. One could say that for the ordinary view it is not absolutely necessary to be completely "right" or in accord about 'happiness' in order to be happy. While from the viewpoint of our ancient theorists, the specifics of 'happiness' must be completely clear before the assessment can be beyond dispute. I know that there are gray areas here and characterizing "what the ordinary person believes" is, of course, to venture into an area that is both treacherous and disputable. However, I think it is defensible to claim that the ordinary view of happiness is quite eclectic, highly tolerant of difference, and reasonably comfortable in not demanding strong specifying criteria. And in this sense, the view is in direct conflict with these ancient positions. On all of our ancient views, not having a completely clear and correct conception of happiness undermines the possibility of finding happiness no matter how "reasonable" one's common-sense defense might be.[2]

The "weakness" of the ordinary view is that it cannot withstand the assault of philosophic rigor with which the ancient theorists will assault it. The view does not sort out necessary and sufficient conditions very well. Success often depends upon circumstances over which the individual has little or no control. And it sets such an ill-defined course that we cannot really be sure what the objective is and how one is supposed to go about attaining it as the end seems to differ and bend depending upon the

impossible-to-categorize idiosyncratic whims of the individual.

The question we might pose to bring this all to a close is the following. Suppose someone in ancient times believed the ordinary intuitions but had failed miserably living by the criteria of the ordinary view. This person suspects that something might be wrong with the ordinary view, but deep-seated beliefs cannot be pushed too far from one's core intuitions. This person is willing to bend but not break the foundation upon which his life has been built. This person chooses to enter an eclectic Middle-Eastern school in which all five of these doctrines are taught.

Initially, the Aristotelian view has great charm. Successful living in which a sufficient supply of significant external goods is important does not shake the ordinary foundation very much. Viewing morality as instrumentally helpful also agrees with the ordinary viewpoint. The idea that a happy life must be a pleasurable life is also appealing. Our pilgrim might at this point think that perhaps the ordinary view was correct and that he was just not properly trained in executing it. And, of course, he will find the needed training in Aristotle. Some of the training is rather rigorous and some basic value beliefs require adjustment, but he had suspected such a situation to arise. He likes Aristotle's common-sense approach and, in particular, the way the system "corrects" his beliefs without forcing radical alterations. However, eventually our pilgrim reaches NE Book X and the foundation is severely rattled. The idea of spending one's life contemplating the eternal truths simply does not comport at all with the ordinary deep-seated beliefs which our pilgrim cannot stop

believing. And then to compound the problem our pilgrim remembers that he was merely a "C" student and honestly wonders how he could possibly "succeed".

Dissatisfied with Aristotle, our pilgrim approaches Epicurean texts. Again, initially there is a certain measure of enticement. A life of pleasure and tranquillity does not shake the foundation at all. The training seems less stressful and the road is open to all regardless of their "innate" abilities. The desire management project seems like good common sense and a life without pain has great appeal. However, as our pilgrim plumbs deeper he notices the austere nature of Epicurean pleasure. The idea of retreat into the garden had a certain charm. But once the full ramifications of this lifestyle are taken into account and the gloss of the surface pierced, the magic begins to wane. Epicurus writes about friendship, but given his commitment to pleasure it seems difficult to really care about anyone else. Epicurus idealizes pleasure, but digging beneath the surface Epicurean pleasure is very bland. The ordinary intuitions fit quite nicely with the ideas of mental tranquillity and the absence of pain. However, he then reads the death argument and the story about the happy Epicurean on the rack and things become unsettled. The reason the Epicurean view had so completely charmed him was the ordinary appeal to tranquillity and pleasure. But once he unpacks Epicurus' view of good living, the tranquillity only comes at the cost of all his ordinary intuitions about the pleasures which he thought he would be getting. What Epicurus calls "pleasurable" simply does not look very pleasant to him and he rejects the Epicurean view.

Our pilgrim next examines some Stoic texts. Initially these have some real power. After all, his ordinary method had failed and the Stoics are clearly opposed to most of the criteria he thought were needed for happiness. The Stoics are strong internalists. Perhaps, this is where he had gone wrong. He thought happiness, as the ordinary view would have it, came from without. He thought pleasure mattered and pain was something which the happy person had to avoid. He thought that virtue was a means to an end, though this was not something openly admitted. He even gets a bonus as the Stoics soothe the deep veiled fear that Aristotle's elitism might be right and that he was doomed to failure. Anyone can become truly happy here. Our pilgrim realizes, of course, that the position will require a major revision in his beliefs, but he had sensed that for some time now. However as he observes successful Stoics, he does not like what he sees. They do not look like happy people. 'Apatheia' sounded great on papyrus, but it does not "feel" very good. He is told it is not supposed to feel good. The "negative" Stoicism of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius begins to resemble the life of a living corpse. However before quitting the project he stumbles onto some of Seneca's more "positive" views and reads about being "well-affected", e.g. 'eupatheiai'[3]. Yet much like Epicurus what Seneca calls being "well-affected" does not appear very pleasurable to him. And he concludes that the price one must pay for Stoic success is not worth the result. Stoic 'apatheia', though giving him the great power of being imperturbable, takes away much of life's ordinary sweetness. At this point, he is willing to sacrifice many of his ordinary intuitions about 'happiness' but simply cannot let go of

the notion that there must be some genuine positive "feel" to the experience and this the Stoics cannot provide.

He then turns to the Eastern texts. The Buddhists have some interesting things to say. They seem to hit many of the correct points. The Four Noble Truths strike him as very appealing. The intuitions which they demand he release are ones he can sacrifice. Life is full of suffering and if the cause of this suffering is just selfish desires, there is some possibility here. The doctrine of "impermanence" also has some appeal and reminds him of some of the worthwhile points he had found in Stoicism. Though initially a staunch externalist, his belief in externalism is beginning to wane given the consistent opposition to it he has been finding, and thus Buddhist internalism does not disturb him very much. The preliminary Buddhist moral view also seems quite sound. You simply do the right thing and since selfish desires cause suffering there seems to be no reason to do anything wrong. And the crowning Buddhist virtue of compassion gives him something of genuine worth towards which to strive. The neutral stance towards pleasure and pain is also somewhat acceptable. Pleasure still pleases and pain still hurts, but he need not radically alter his language and he sees some real possibility of weaning himself away from his deep belief that pleasure is connected to happiness. If the pursuit of pleasure comes from a selfish desire then unhappiness will follow. However, as our pilgrim digs deeper he comes upon this strange doctrine of "emptiness". All of his beliefs are essentially empty. The Buddhist is not just shaking his ordinary foundation; the Buddhist is demanding that the whole structure of his beliefs crumble. The Buddhist is demanding

something which neither Aristotelian rigor nor Stoic extremes demanded; the Buddhist is ultimately claiming that he must give up not only some of his questioned beliefs but his entire ordinary framework. The things he had found so charming about the view are simply crutches, rafts, to take him this "other shore", but in order to reach this "other shore" he must first burn the raft itself. And thus our pilgrim closes the book on Buddhism. Too much of a pragmatist to take the final leap and too sincerely involved at this point to opt for the secular gloss, he rejects the Buddhist position.

Rather somber and somewhat dejected our pilgrim pulls himself together and enters the room where Vedanta is taught. The topic is about a strange word he has never heard before. The word is 'ananda' and he is told it means supreme joy or bliss. This sounds somewhat inspiring to him and initially does not shake his foundation at all. In this system the happy life is a life animated by a feeling of joy. This sounds very interesting. The view is a strong internalist position. Happiness comes from within; externals do not matter. This kind of view still does not sit perfectly well with him, but it does seem to contain one message which his foray into self-improvement continues to present to him. And then he notices something which strikes him as a reasonable compromise to his intuitive trepidations. The view does not actually claim that joy or bliss cannot come from externals, it only claims that this is not necessary. As far as external conditions are concerned, none are necessary and any could be sufficient. He is told that these relationships are very important because they lead to an internalist explanation of joy.

He wonders how and why these explanations must lead to an internalist explanation of 'happiness'. The answer he finds is that joy or bliss comes from within. He wonders from where it might come. The texts indicate the bliss or joy is connected to the body; it is a bodily "feeling". And the texts claim that any experience animated by this feeling is a happy experience and that a happy life would be a life animated by this feeling, a life whose dominant theme was one of joy. The texts tell him the feeling is always present. He wonders how this could be true since he does not always feel this feeling. The texts claim that his thoughts prevent him from feeling this feeling by imposing conditions upon its access. He notices that when he feels joy it is usually because the dependent conditions that his thoughts impose have been met. He also notices that sometimes he just feels joy for no reason at all. He is told that the only way these two occurrences can be explained is by the hypothesis that the joy must already be there, and since it cannot be correlated to any particluar external experience it must come from within.

Though the lure of this strange Eastern system is great, our pilgrim rejects it. There is just too much that is unexplained, and he cannot accept the idea that he is already happy, fails to notice this, and is somehow responsible for his apparent unhappiness. Though he finds the idea of happiness being connected to joy quite compelling, this system seems to stress and strain the foundation of his belief system beyond recognition.

Convinced that none of these methods of happiness will fully satisfy him, our pilgrim decides to leave the school and continue his

search on his own. However, he does not cast aside all he has learned and while walking away he begins to compile a list of those insights he considers to be of most value and which might be helpful. The list represents what could be called those intuitions which might offer "the best chance of success". He is convinced that externalism cannot be the answer. No matter what he has or does, if life does not "feel right" on the inside, one cannot be happy. He also finds Aristotle's early ideas about 'happiness' being an activity quite convincing. He thinks the happy life ought to be like a dance in which the internal and external are synthesized so completely that the subjective distance between the dancer and dance dissolves. He believes that this "perfect dancing" can only come about by alleviating psychological conflict which he thinks requires careful attention to externals, morality, pleasure and pain, and he notes that the schooling on these issues alone may require a lifetime of monitoring. By 'careful attention' he means that though there seems to be no logical connection between these three aspects of life and happiness, he cannot accept that these three areas of living do not matter at all. However, he is also aware that the more involved he becomes in these aspects of life, the more difficult it becomes to remain free of internal conflict. Caring about externals, morality, and pleasure and pain makes him dependent and leaves him prey to the whims of circumstance while not caring seems impossible. He concludes that an austere minimalism would be the best policy and that, at least at times, some internal conflict cannot be avoided. He senses that contentment, tranquillity of mind, has to be present, but he also believes that tranquillity alone is probably not sufficient for

happiness. Something else must present and he is certain that this "something else" must be joy or bliss because no life without it could possibly make him happy. In other words, something like Vedanatic bliss must be a major animating force in the happy life. In fact, he views this "blissful joy of living" as a clearly necessary and sufficient condition for his conception of a happy life. He wonders if he might be accused of naively defining 'happiness' as a life full of bliss or joy. He accepts the charge, but demands the accuser produce a better definition.

NOTES

1. Some readers might object to this characterization by citing the Epicurean on the rack. However, on my reading of Epicurus, the mind state of the Epicurean on the rack would be animated not by rack's pain-producing circumstance, but instead by, for example, some fond memory of past pleasures.

2. There are numerous interesting philosophic problems which arise from this dilemma. For example, to what extent is it legitimate to question first person reports on happiness? Does the concept function like 'pain' and possess an appropriate measure of incorrigibility? Or is it more like 'fear' in that it has some justifiable subjective elements, but the concept remains at least minimally tied to a consensual fabric by some shared threads? The latter seems the more reasonable position, but we then have to be willing to tell the drug addict or the Nazi guard that they are not really happy when indulging their favorite pastime. It seems that I can tell someone that he is incorrect in his conception of happiness, but it is difficult to tell him that he is not happy. However, if a "correct" conception of happiness is necessary for happiness, then someone without a "correct" conception cannot be happy. Thus it may be that in a significant sense, the ancients were correct. The ability to correctly identify happiness precedes any possibility of finding it. Ultimately solving this problem is beyond my scope here as the only point I want to make in the above section is that the ordinary view and the ancients disagree on this issue - the ordinary view allows much more latitude here than any of the our ancient views allow. One source of interesting reading on this topic is found in William James', "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", in The Writings of William James, ed. John J. McDermott (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1978). I take the heart of James' message to be that we are all blind

in this area. His argument claims that it may just be a "fact" of human psychology that due to the extreme subjective nature of "what makes life significant" other's claims to be happy are beyond dispute. For James, the concept of happiness has a legitimate measure of indeterminacy across persons and thus the "blindness".

3. cf. Seneca, "The Happy Life" in The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca, trans. and ed. Moses Hades (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith Publishers, 1965). In this text the sage does appear to glean a measure of "positive affect" from his life of virtue.

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