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Article

In the Theatre, the People Eat Sweets When the Actors Are Poor': Crowding-Out, Overjustification, Pleasure and the Anti-Delian Reading of the Nicomachean Ethics

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Abstract: The crowding-out phenomenon occurs when new extrinsic rewards associated with some past activity "crowd out" or undermine the genuine pleasure one initially experienced in executing said action. This paradoxical psychological occurrence is well-established in the psychological, educational, and industrial management literature and has been operationalized by some institutional policies pertaining to schools and workplaces. The dominant explanation for this experience is the overjustification thesis, which stipulates that subjects become "confused" when extrinsic rewards supervene on activities that were once deemed enjoyable in their own right.

Keywords: crowding-out; aristotle; overjustification; anti-delian reading; pleasure; aufderheide; nicomachean ethics

Introduction

In the following paper, I wish to apply an ancient model of understanding such behavior that might not only help relieve the cognitive dissonance experienced by the subject undergoing a crowding-out feeling but also assist in preventing its very occurrence. The model is Aristotelian. I demonstrate that long before the psychical phenomenon of crowding-out was identified in 1971, Aristotle was already fully aware of such a fact and its deleterious consequences when it came to pursuing the good life. To demonstrate this thesis, I examine the Stagirite's analysis of pleasure *per se* in Books VII and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter, NE). I establish that Book X, chapter IV provides a compact analysis of crowding out, particularly the passage that begins with the line, "In the theatre, the people who eat sweets do so most when the actors are poor." [NE 1175b 12-14 (Ross Trans.)] and, when connected to Aristotle's theory of virtue, provides a novel explanation of the phenomenon that shares some similarities with the overjustification thesis but is vastly superior in terms of its comprehensiveness and explanatory power.

To facilitate this conclusion, I examine Aristotle's position of bodily pleasure and its correlation to the good life (*Eudaimonia*)—a connection that has rightly long-puzzled commentators of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The difficulty is manifold, and any workable solution would involve scrutiny of umpteen passages scattered throughout NE. It is, therefore, beyond this paper's scope to outline the complexity of this issue here. What is manageable, I think, given the space allotted, is to paint Aristotle's model of pleasure *per se* and provide an elucidation of how this model relates to the good life in broad brush strokes.

Of course, even with this modest aim in mind, grasping Aristotle's account of pleasure is challenging. To be sure, Aristotle employs several analogies to elucidate what might be called the "activity based on the natural dispositions" template of pleasure, and yet most of these analogies obscure more than they illuminate, leading to a vibrant debate in the secondary literature regarding how exactly one should understand Aristotle on this front. My procedure will be to spell out a general model of Aristotle's notion of pleasure and to elucidate the leading issue scholars have with his proposal, namely how one may interpret pleasure as a kind of completion to an activity or, as Aristotle metaphorically (and somewhat unhelpfully) puts it: "Pleasure completes the activity not as

the corresponding permanent state does, by its immanence, but as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age." (Book X.4. 1174b 32-34 NE)

Second, I will then look at a reasonably recent interpretation of Aristotelian pleasure by Joachim Aufderheide. Aufderheide offers an ethical interpretation of pleasure, which he also describes as a *tout court* model. This ethical reading extricates Aristotle from the issues presented in the literature. I then operationalize Aufderheide's reading and employ it to the problem of crowding-out.

Third and finally, I discuss how Aristotle was an early observer of the crowding-out thesis and that passages in the NE provide further reinforcement for Aufderheide's ethical interpretation. Moreover, I demonstrate that Aristotle's notion of pleasure, informed by Aufderheide's insights, provides us with an alternative 'subjective' account, one predicated on the person of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), to the dominant explanation of the crowding-out thesis, namely the overjustification hypothesis. Aristotle's model of the psyche, especially in relation to pleasure, also presents us with a superior model that researchers may benefit from employing to combat the deleterious and sub-optimal consequences of many of us who suffer from the crowding-out phenomenon.

Part I: Crowding-Out

In psychology, the crowding-out effect refers to a phenomenon whereby adding external incentives, such as rewards or monetary compensation, for engaging in an activity that individuals initially found inherently motivating, function to undermine or "crowd out" their intrinsic motivation. (Cameron and Pierce, 1994). On the surface, the concept appears paradoxical and implausible as one would think that being paid for simply doing something one already enjoys would intensify and amplify one's reasons for doing it. Take, for example, a person who enjoys playing the guitar before an audience in a local bar and, at least initially, does so without payment. The crowding-out effect suggests that if the bar owner, then pays the individual to play the same songs before that same audience, the intrinsic motivation for performing is diminished.

Intuitively, we would think that payment for performing an activity that one is already motivated to do would only further amplify one's desire to pursue the activity, not reduce it. However, that does not appear to be the case in the social psychology literature. The first researcher to investigate what is now called the crowding-out phenomenon in 1971 was E. Deci. He discovered that students who were paid to work on the same series of puzzles as another group who were unpaid, in fact, spent less time solving the puzzles. (Deci E. 1971, 1972, Deci, E and Koestner, L. 1999). Over the years, numerous experiments have lent support to this occurrence. (Tang and Hall 1995, Peters, Grauerholz-Fisher Vollmer and Arsdale 2022). What's more, the phenomenon has gained widespread currency in not only academic journals across many fields but also in educational institutions as some "...school boards recommend against the use of rewards." (Peters and Vollmer, 2014, 202). In 1975, Lepper and his research team postulated the "over-justification hypothesis" as the cause behind this phenomenon—an explanation that is sometimes conflated with the effect itself (See the APA's definition of the overjustification effect <https://dictionary.apa.org/overjustification-effect>)

The overjustification theory argues that the reduction of intrinsic motivation results from a shift in focus: one now considers the primary reason for engaging in the activity to be the external rewards associated with it and not the intrinsic value one initially placed on it (Lepper, M and Greene, D and Nisbett R.E. 1973, Lepper, M. and Greene, D. 1975). The result is that over time, one can no longer explain to oneself why the activity is intrinsically enjoyable. The explanation relies on the validity of self-perception theory developed by Daryl Bem (Tang and Hall, 1995). A model of the psyche to which I now turn.

Self-perception theory is the psychological thesis that people develop attitudes about their actions in response to their behaviors (Bem, D. J. 1972). Our behaviors, so the self-perception theory holds, at least at times, *produce* our reasons for engaging in them and not vice versa. Thus, given this psychological model, overjustification is thought to explain crowding-out because the subject is now receiving external rewards in performing an action that was once internally motivated, reflects on her behavior, and becomes confused about the real attitude behind it. As Tang and Hall put it, "Therefore a person who initially performs an activity for no reward (reasoning that he/she is doing the activity because it is liked) will become less likely to perform the activity for no reward after being rewarded for its performance (reasoning that they were now doing the activity because they were paid)" (Tang and Hall, 1995, 365).

There is something important to notice in both Tang and Hall's explanation as well as the term "over-justification" itself. The causal onus for the new lack of internal motivation in such crowding-out scenarios is 'subjective.' By subjective, I do not mean to say that is epistemically relative. Rather, I mean to say that the new lack of internal motivation a subject experiences for some previously enjoyed activity is evaluated to have occurred by the very subject who can no longer make sense of the intention behind the action. Crowding out is, therefore, a self-constitutive phenomenon under the self-perception model, as it requires one to reflect and then question one's true motive behind an action. Consequently, a subject begins questioning the validity of one's self-perception and direction as an agent. For example, one might ask themselves: Am I internally motivated to perform this action because I enjoy doing it, or is it because I want the external awards associated with it? In asking such questions and being unclear about the answers, the agent experiences cognitive dissonance. Such cognitive dissonance is not only unsettling but self-undermining vis a vis their very sense of agency.

The overjustification hypothesis, however, cannot explain the cognitive dissonance intrinsic to the nature of crowding out, or so I contend. The problem with the overjustification theory is twofold: 1) It is overly subjective. It has no way to differentiate between internal and external "enjoyment" because both are kinds of pleasure. What is required is an analysis of pleasure *per se*. Aristotle's account of pleasure fills an important gap in this regard.

2) Overjustification presents a superficial account of the motivational structure supporting our desire to take up certain activities. Take the example of the guitarist above. When the guitarist was first learning how to play the guitar, it was not enjoyable (as anyone who has a background in playing a musical instrument knows all too well). Learning how to play the guitar, piano, drums, etc, takes time, effort, and patience. Indeed, patience might be the most important of these three capacities because the learning process can be incredibly frustrating. It is for these three reasons that few people are musical virtuosos. If that's right, then what is the novice's initial motivation to learn the instrument? It isn't enjoyment but to learn how to play well. As Aristotle puts it, we aim (or should aim) at the good as human beings. What the crowding-out thesis shows, so claims my reading of Aristotle, is not the undermining of internal enjoyment as a result of external incentives but rather the destabilization of the virtuous intention underpinning the activity.

Given the above problems with the dominant explanation for crowding out in the literature, I hold that Aristotle may be able to throw some new light on this phenomenon as the Stagirite has a novel and fecund model of the human psyche. To be sure, this connection between crowding out and Aristotle is not new. Tyler DesRoches in "Aristotle's Natural Limit," (2014) makes a convincing case that Aristotle's arguments in support of the natural limit in reference to wealth in *Politics* (Pol 1265a30–36) are indirectly based on a nascent crowding out thesis. In contrast to Desroches, I believe the direct evidence seen in NE Book X chapters IV and V suggests that Aristotle understood this human psychological tendency not just nascently but fully and completely. Demonstrating there are concrete examples of the crowding out phenomenon in NE and using Aristotle's account of pleasure *per se* to explain why they occur, I hope to provide researchers with a new analysis to combat what is obviously negatively affected behavior.

Part II: Pleasure

In thinking about what makes pleasure *qua* pleasure in relation to Aristotle, the first difficulty manifests when one realizes pleasure is discussed in two books in NE: Book 7 and Book X. The question is whether these two accounts are compatible. One suggestion, helpfully offered by G.E.L. Owen, and I will follow him here on this score, is that in the former book, Aristotle seeks to address the status of pleasure in the literature. (Owen, 1971). This book examines the issues pertaining to pleasure by Aristotle's near contemporaries and then provides a succinct elucidation of Aristotle's own view. This view, only tersely stated in Book VII, will be taken up once more in Book X, Chapters 4 and 5, where it is extended and deepened. Thus, if that interpretation is correct, the starting point for properly examining pleasure begins with the current "state of investigation." (Van Riel, 2000, 54-55)

According to Aristotle in Book 7, chapter 11, there are three leading positions on the status of pleasure. These three are 1) The anti-hedonistic position, which declares that pleasure cannot be good under any condition in any mode. It is assumed that here, Aristotle is challenging Speusippus, the

anti-hedonist (Gosling-Taylor 1982, 231-24).¹ In connecting the anti-hedonistic position to the good life, this stance claims that whatever the good life entails, one thing is undoubtedly known: pursuing pleasure is not a part of it. Pleasure must be quarantined lest it infects our pursuit. As I want to stress the relationship between pleasure and the good life, rather than calling this the Anti-hedonistic view, I will baptize this as the quarantine position.

2) There are good kinds of pleasure, such as the pleasure that results from contemplation, but some pleasures are harmful, such as the over-indulgence of bodily appetites. (NE Book VII 1152b 9). One may take it for granted that Aristotle is examining Plato's position, which, although not presented in any one dialogue, can be reconstructed by drawing principally from books V and IX of *Republic* and the *Philebus*. This position holds that pleasure is the end result of a generative process: it quenches different kinds of "thirsts." Some thirsts are noble, like the pursuit of knowledge. But most cravings are harmful. As Socrates puts it, "The soul of the thirsty person, insofar as he's thirsty, doesn't wish for anything else but to drink and it wants this and is impelled towards it." (*Republic*, 440a-440b) The position is often referred to as the Replenishment Thesis in the literature. (Stalley, 1975, Lightbody, 2014 esp. pp. 98-101.)

Under Plato's model, pleasure is a generative process that results when a desire is satisfied. As Aristotle notes in his later critical commentary on Plato's model in Book X 3: "They say that pain is a deficiency of the natural state and pleasure is its replenishment. But these are bodily experiences." (Book X. 3 1173b 6-10 NE) What Aristotle reveals in his usual terse and sometimes cryptic criticism is a problem with the model Plato uses: Plato's position draws on the wrong metaphor, namely the body, to model pleasure *per se*. Thus, just as the body thirsts for liquid, the soul thirsts after knowledge. (Lightbody, 2014) While it is the case that one feels pleasure when fulfilling a desire here understood as lack or a "pain" the connection between pleasure and its fulfillment is accidental because it does not apply to every kind of pleasure, such as the enjoyment one experiences looking at beautiful objects or the act of philosophical contemplation where there is no perceived "pain." What Aristotle is after is no less than the essential nature of pleasure *qua* pleasure.

Finally, we have position three, which we may take to be Aristotle's. The position once more is only briefly touched on here---the analysis will be completed in Book X. According to Aristotle "Pleasures are not really processes, nor are they all incidental to a process: they are activities and therefore an end (Book VII 12, 1153a 9-10 NE). "This is why it is not right to say that pleasure is a perceptible process, but it should rather be called an activity of the natural state, and instead of perceptible, unimpeded." (Book VII 12, 1153a 13-16 NE)

The discussion on pleasure *per se* breaks off here as Aristotle then discusses various kinds of pleasure and how these may relate to the good life. What Aristotle has presented is a foreshadowing of a deeper analysis of pleasure that is picked up again in Book X chapter 4. It is this chapter that works out Aristotle's full position on pleasure, namely that it supervenes on an activity of a natural state and also where Aristotle draws the infamous analogy between seeing and pleasure, a passage where much ink has been spilled in the secondary literature in clarifying what precisely he means.

With that prefacing in mind, I now elaborate on Aristotle's view expressed in Book X. 4. I begin with the seeing analogy mentioned above. "Seeing seems to be at any moment complete, for it does not lack anything which coming being later will complete its form; and pleasure also seems to be of this nature. For it is a whole, and at no time can one only find a pleasure whose form will be completed if the pleasure lasts longer. For this reason too it is not a movement. For every movement takes time and is for the sake of an end...But of pleasure the form is complete at any time and every time." (Book X.4. 1173b-15-1174n5 NE) The upshot of Aristotle's comparison between seeing and pleasure aptly captures what we today might call the phenomenology of pleasure: just as there is no coming into being regarding the act of seeing, there is no coming into being regarding the feeling of pleasure. While it is true there can be a perceptible ramping up of pleasure vis a vis its intensity and purity and of course, a corresponding dampening, when pleasure is experienced, it is known just as clearly as when one sees an object.

In a relatively condensed passage, Aristotle proceeds to build on his analysis. He has two aims: 1) He will now begin to connect pleasure to its corresponding state of activity, i.e., if the comparison between seeing and pleasure is fitting, then just as every organ is activated in relation to some object, so too pleasure will be activated in relation to some activity; 2) If Aristotle is on the right track in that

¹ Speusippus is mentioned by name in VII 13, 1153 b 5.

regard, then the ensuing question logically follows: What are the particular activities that are natural to the species namely the human being or rational animal? An answer to this last question will connect Aristotle's naturalism broadly construed to his normative doctrine. It is here where Aufderheide's ethical reading is novel and fills in a critical lacuna in the literature.

Turning now to the first aim, Aristotle writes: "Since every sense is activated in relation to its object, and a sense which is in good condition acts perfectly in relation to the most beautiful of its objects... it follows that in the case of each sense the best activity is that of the best-conditioned organ in relation to the finest of its objects." (X.4 1174b 15-39 NE). This is obviously the case so Aristotle thinks because pleasant objects and sounds correspond to a natural faculty. For example, we see a beautiful work of art and immediately derive pleasure from the very act of perception. We hear Miles Davis' "Blue in Green" and instantly feel pleasure. But what is also interesting to note, which may seem foreign to us, at least from our contemporary point of view but not so for Aristotle, is that we can extend this comparison that involves the senses to that of intelligence as a natural faculty: As Aristotle evinces in Book X 4, "So long then as both the intelligible or sensible object and the discriminating or contemplative faculty are as they should be, the pleasure will be involved in the activity." (Book X 4 1174b 34-36 NE) The pleasure derived, Aristotle says, completes the activity because it supervenes on it like the bloom of a rose or youth. The parsing of this quotation will be critical for the platforming of Aufderheide's position, as we will see shortly.

With this preliminary investigation out of the way, we now see problems with Aristotle's analysis. Recall what Aristotle noted earlier in Book VII: "This is why it is not right to say that pleasure is a perceptible process, but it should rather be called activity of the natural state, and instead of 'perceptible' 'unimpeded'. (VII 12, 1153a 12-15, trans. Ross NE) The ability to appreciate the best in life, whether construed as sensory enjoyment, such as the finest music, or intellectual gratification, such as the beauty of a logical proof, is conditioned by the object and the capacity to grasp it. Given the "are as they should be" parsing above in Book X 4 and now connecting that line to the unimpeded phrasing of Book VII 13, it would be natural to think that, for Aristotle, pleasure does not occur when the faculty, whether sense or intellect is obstructed from working as it ought to in relation to its corresponding activity. If that's right, we have at least two conditions for the manifestation of pleasure: 1) the proper working of a natural state, and 2) the correct activity associated with that state.

And yet it is precisely by making what appears to be an apparent link between two passages that we finally arrive at the source of much confusion and consternation in the secondary literature. For now, consider the following question: What truly is the connection between the activity of a natural state and pleasure? Two principal interpretations of this connection occur in the scholarship, forming an unsatisfactory disjunctive syllogism: 1) posits that pleasure is identical to the unimpeded activity of a disposition in its natural state. Suppose this horn of the syllogism is accepted. In that case, this makes for a very tight logical tethering between the activity perfectly carried out and the deriving of pleasure resulting from it. The consequence of this position is deleterious for Aristotle's overall project in NE, which is, of course, to demonstrate that *eudaimonia* is primarily achieved through the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtues. However, if pleasure is identical to the activity of dispositions that conform to our natural state, then it would appear that pursuing virtues is also pursuing pleasure. As logicians might put it, pleasure is a substitution instance for *eudaimonia*, making Aristotle a hedonist of one stripe or another.²

The second horn is seemingly weaker and presumably more widely accepted in the literature (Urmson, 1988, Rist, 1989). It argues that the feeling of pleasure completes the activity, but pleasure is not guaranteed even if said activity is performed flawlessly and the organ to which the activity corresponds is in perfect working order. To flesh this out, imagine, for example, a trip I take to an art exhibition celebrating the work of Caravaggio. I am well-versed in art history, and Caravaggio is my favorite Italian painter. I am greatly anticipating seeing the works of such a master up close, and my

² Gosling Taylor argues for this interpretation explicitly. For a discussion, see Strohl, M. (2011), 'Pleasure as Perfection: Nicomachean Ethics 10.4-5', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 51: 257-87. Gonzalez, F.J. (1991), 'Aristotle on Pleasure and Perfection', *Phronesis* 36:141-59. Harte, V. (2014), 'The Nicomachean Ethics on Pleasure' in R. M. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge), 288-319

eyes, as the organ that corresponds directly to this activity, are working just fine. However, I cannot enjoy the work when I am at the exhibition. Such a circumstance is not only possible but relatable to most people. What conditions make such a disappointing experience possible if pleasure is said to be dependent on the activity? The problem with this interpretation, then, is that it is still unclear how pleasure supervenes on the activity, like the bloom of a rose or youth. Just as with these examples, there is an explicit causal dependency where the bloom of youth depends on underlying youthful capacities that must be activated in some way, such as actualizing the capacities of 'youthful' health, vigor, and vitality, whatever that may mean and yet unlike these examples, pleasure may fail to follow from the activity.

What's even more problematic for this interpretation, though, is Aristotle's insistence that pleasure has causal properties of its own. For example, in BOOK VII. 2, Aristotle is at pains to discuss the different reasons why men commit good or bad actions. Aristotle's distinction between the continent man and the temperate man is pertinent to our investigation. The man of practical reason knows the full scale of pleasure "For, unlike the temperate man who does not have excessive or bad appetites, the continent man must. For if the appetites are good, the state of character that restrains us from following them is bad, so that not all continence is good; while if they are weak and not bad there is nothing admirable in resisting them." (BOOK VII 1146a 11-17) The passage suggests that the continent man can resist pleasures detrimental to pursuing a virtuous life. This fact entails that he has the power to resist them (he is not akratic) and that he knows their lure (he is not like the temperate man who, by his very nature, does not pursue pleasure excessively). What is salient for our purposes is that Aristotle then provides a number of analogies that purport to show how pleasure can knock out our active capacity for prudential thinking, leaving us like the drunken mathematician who both knows and does not know Pythagoras' theorem.³ In other words, just as the mathematician knows the theorem but cannot recite it because he is drunk, so the akratic individual knows virtue, but only in potential; he cannot actualize it because he is too excited at the anticipation of pleasure. Further examples that mark the causal powers of pleasure are noted in Book X.5, which I will examine in more detail below.

With this disjunctive syllogism clarified, I now turn to Aufderheide's solution, which, seemingly like all scholars in the literature, will need to pick one of these alternatives to defend.

Part III: The Anti-Delian Reading

Aufderheide's thesis is unique in the literature. First, he rejects the standard and second horn of the interpretative disjunctive syllogism above, which stipulates that pleasure supervenes on some activity by completing it and is not guaranteed even if the action is perfectly fulfilled. Second, Aufderheide demonstrates there is a more nuanced interpretation of the first horn. Where a minority of scholars have accepted the tautological interpretation of the first alternative, where it is assumed that pleasure must follow a perfectly performed activity and that then said pleasure is conceptually bound up with that performance, Aufderheide instead offers a psychological thesis: all things being

³ The passage regarding the causal powers of pleasure examines pleasure via the framework of akrasia or weakness of will. Aristotle writes: "The incontinent man is like the people who get drunk quickly and on little wine, i.e., on less than most people." (1151a 3-4 NE) The question of Aristotelian weakness of will is a veritable cottage industry in the secondary literature. The discussion is complex and rather sophisticated as any workable solution would also need to demonstrate how exactly pleasure can cause us to choose a sub-optimal choice of action. Such an account however would need to consider the "good" from the "bad" syllogism as well as how Aristotle modifies Socrates's eliminativist solution to the problem. It is beyond the scope of this paper to tackle that issue here. For an account of Aristotle's Socratic solution to weakness of will see: Brian Lightbody "On Becoming Fearful Quickly: A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Somatic Interpretation of Socratean Akrasia." *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* Vol. 17 Issue 2, 2023, 134-161. For Socrates's treatment of weakness of will, see Brian Lightbody, "Socratic Appetites as Plotinian Reflectors: A New Interpretation of Plotinus's Socratic Intellectualism." *Journal of Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 14 No.1, 2020, pp. 91-115.

equal, pleasure will follow from the result of fine action. To showcase this novel position, Aufderheide's argument will have a general form, which he calls the Anti-Delian reading. This reading serves as a hermeneutical touchstone for interpreting specific troublesome passages in NE. Once these passages are interpreted in accordance with Aufderheide's new reading, these passages, in turn, serve to confirm his interpretative schema.

The general form of the argument begins with the Oracle of Delphi, which stipulates, "Most noble is that which is most just, and best is health; But pleasantest is it to win what we love." Aufderheide argues that Aristotle quotes the Oracle in 1099a purposely to demonstrate that these three qualities, generally associated with the good life, are, in contrast to the Oracle's pronouncement, in fact, inseparable. As Aristotle himself writes: "Happiness then is the best, noblest and most pleasant thing in the world, and these attributes are not severed as in the inscription at Delos." (Book I.8 1099a 25-26 NE) The scholarship acknowledges that all three are needed in varying degrees when pursuing the good life, but it also assumes that singular activities correspond to one of the three virtues above. Aufderheide argues against this. He offers a literal interpretation of 1099 a. In other words, if I aim to pursue *eudaimonia*, these three components will necessarily comprise *any* potential action I take. Moreover, such a view does seem to cohere with the overall message of *Nicomachean Ethics* as a whole. Quoting all of the passages that support this claim cannot be made given space limitations, but here is a representative example: "Human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there is more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete." (Book I. 7 1098a 16-18). Following Aufderheide, the most complete action is one where all three virtues noted by the Delian oracle are contained within a single action. The ultimate standard, at least for Aristotle, in this regard is clearly the act of contemplation: "Since the pleasure derived from contemplation is most pure, and purity, rather than intensity of duration determines what is most pleasant (Book X. 5, 1175b35-1176a3 NE) the ethical reading of x.4 gives Aristotle all the means to unite the finest, best and most pleasant in the life of contemplation." (Aufderheide, 2016, 304-305).

There is a second component to Aufderheide's interpretation. This part now links the Anti-Delian reading from Book I. 8 with Aristotle's fulsome account of pleasure in Book X 4-5. This second component, which is needed to complete Aufderheide's reading, concerns the individual who can judge correctly the criteria of the fine as that "action as best, most noble and most pleasant." On that score, the ultimate authority regarding the properties of actions is the good man: "But in all such matters that which appears to the good man is thought to be really so. If this is correct as it seems to be, and virtue and the good man as such are the measure of a thing, those also will be pleasures which appear so to him, and those things pleasant which he enjoys." (Book X. 51176 a 14-19) We might say that while all three components of the finest action are contained in the act of contemplation, they are only fully realized in the psychological architecture of the good man. (Aufderheide, 2016) Where the best, pleasantest, and most just are all necessary ingredients found in the raw dough of fine action, it is the man of practical wisdom who, with his right intention, moral and intellectual virtues, and proper realization of the activity, provides the only oven capable of baking these ingredients into a suitable and usable product with proper form.

Using what we may call the full Anti-Delian reading as an interpretative touchstone, Aufderheide now applies it to the troublesome passages I noted above. The first concerns the general definition of pleasure taken from VII. That passage, if we recall stresses that pleasure was the unimpeded activity of the natural state. (VII 13, 1153 a 12-15). Scholars have focused on the word "unimpeded." Most commentators then use Aristotle's later exemplifications of the line as seen in Book X 4 to further flesh out what the Stagirite means (Broadie, 1999). For example, Aristotle observes: "Each man is active about those things and with those faculties that he loves the most e.g. the musician is active with his hearing in reference to tunes, the student with his mind in reference to theoretical questions and so on in each case now pleasure completes the activities and therefore life, which they desire." (X.4 1175a 12-16). In so far as the musician's ear is attuned to beautiful songs, when the perfect object, in this case, melody, meets his auditory faculties, which allow him to appreciate the complexity and harmonious qualities of a tune, the act is unimpeded, and pleasure is the result.

The examples Aristotle then uses in 1175b seemingly provide further evidence for what Aufderheide would argue is a narrow reading of "unimpeded." For example, the musician attending a philosophical argument hears the sounds of a flute and loses all interest in the line of reasoning being advanced. The rationale behind this behavior, so Aristotle argues, lies in the nature of pleasure

itself. "So the pleasure connected with flute-playing is that which destroys the activity concerned with argument." (Book X 5 1175b 5-6) Or consider when Aristotle examines dual activity events such as individuals who appreciate tragic plays and enjoy eating sweets at the theatre. These individuals Aristotle observes consume more of the latter than they usually would if the actors are poor. As Aristotle describes it, the alien (*allogria*) pleasure associated with eating sweets knocks out the pleasure of enjoying a gripping tragedy such that we no longer can focus on the play, much like the musician, upon hearing a flute, cannot attend to arguments. Summarizing the power of pleasure in itself Aristotle claims "the more pleasant activity drives out the other, and if it is much more pleasant does so all the more, so that one ceases from the other." (Book X. 5 1175b7-10)

The problem here, according to Aufderheide, is that because scholars think that every activity has one single 'proper pleasure' each activity has a singular distinguishing property. (Aufderheide, 2016). For example, listening to music provides aesthetic pleasure, and therefore, it is merely aesthetic. Exercising provides for the enjoyment of one's body; therefore, exercising is purely a somatic virtue. This reading is too restrictive. What we are after is not what the musician appreciates, nor how this appreciation can be integrated into the good life. We are also not interested in what the personal trainer appreciates either. No, what we want to know is what the good man knows. And presumably, the good man knows how appreciating beautiful music or physical exercise is best, just, and pleasantest in itself. It may be the case that listening to music is still impure compared to the act of contemplation. Still, it must be in relation to the good person, without qualification, as Aufderheide remarks. (Aufderheide, 2016). In other words, the goodness of an action is only finally realized in the psychology of the man of practical wisdom.

Thus, under this reading, the defeasibility of pleasure can be non-viciously connected to its *non-impediment*. As Aufderheide summarizes his view:

Acknowledging the defeasibility of pleasure as a criterion for a state of character, Aristotle calls pleasure a sign for the relevant underlying state. Pleasure is not conceptually guaranteed even if a lover engages in a beloved activity. The lover's character guarantees the pleasure (and other responses) as long as nothing psychologically interferes. Thus on the ethical reading I have proposed, the claim 'for as long as the sense-object and the sense are the most outstanding or as they should be there will always be pleasure should not be understood as a conceptually true claim. It is rather a claim true *ceteris paribus*: unless something interferes, a virtuous person will enjoy virtuous action or, more particularly the perceptions and thoughts integral to those actions." (Aufderheide, 2016, 300)

I return to the disappointing Caravaggio art exhibit to concretize Aufderheide's brilliant and original interpretation. Why do I fail to experience pleasure in attending this art exhibition even when all of the external conditions for fine and noble activity are met? The answer is psychological. My failure to experience pleasure in this case is due to my character. For example, perhaps my attendance conflicts with responsibilities I have to a dear friend who needs my help: I attend the exhibit anyway, but the knowledge I am not being virtuous by failing to help out a friend gnaws at me as I stare at Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew*. The person of *phronesis*, in contrast, pre-establishes such psychological conditions required for pleasure beforehand. The person of practical wisdom who attends the same exhibit can witness the splendid and sublime and enjoy it because he has fulfilled his ethical responsibilities beforehand. Recall that Aristotle claims that pleasure is guaranteed to supervene on the activity if it is "unimpeded." Under Aufderheide's interpretation, the unimpeded condition is met only if both the external and psychological prerequisites for virtuous activity established by the person of practical reason connect. As I will demonstrate below, Aufderheide's reading of Aristotle on pleasure provides us with the necessary normative grounding to truly understand and combat the crowding out effect.

To close out this section, a criticism that Aufderheide acknowledges is that his reading may appear "too ethical": for if every action is an opportunity to realize the fine and it is "the fine" for which all individuals strive via their very nature then the good individual which we all aspire to be is tasked with always maximizing his efforts to reach it. (Aufderheide, 2016, 304) Although he does not elaborate on what being too ethical means, we might translate Aufderheide's self-critique here as too demanding. We will need to leave that self-criticism unremarked.

Section IV: The Anti-Delian Reading and Overjustification

With Aristotle's account of pleasure in hand, we can see how the overjustification theory may be connected to Aristotle's philosophical psychology and, by extension, Aufderheide's interpretation,

as noted above. If we recall, Aristotle holds that every choice is the starting point for some activity, and that said activity, per Aristotle's minimal construal of pleasure, is the ground for the possibility of pleasure. The best choices are ones that are predicated on natural predispositions, unimpeded, and that are initiated by an active intention. Turning now to Aufderheide we might now ask: What should this intention reflect? The answer: It should reflect nothing less than the full knowledge that this activity here and now is the most pleasant, best, and just of all the ones we could choose if, that is, we aim to pursue the finest in life. As per Aufderheide's Anti-Delian reading, these three considerations are inseparable in relation to every possible choice that aims at the fine as such, even though one may be ignorant of that fact. This Aufderheide acknowledges is evidenced by tracking back to NE 1. 8 "Happiness then is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing in the world, and these attributes are not severed as in the inscription at Delos" (Book I. 8. 1099a 24-26). No activity is aesthetic per se, just per se best per se pleasant per se because they reflect the moral and intellectual constitution of the acts of the practically wise agent. Every activity is shot through with the normative precisely because they are all connected to the agent's view of the fine, excellent or noble *tout court*. Moreover, the ultimate yardstick for deciding which activity to choose can only be determined by the person of practical reason. In this sense, Aristotle's account of crowding out is 'subjective' like the overjustification theory, even though both positions track back to different albeit naturalistic understandings of the human *qua* human. However, Aristotle's position goes beyond overjustification by providing an account of the sometimes deleterious properties of pleasure itself. We need to examine how pleasure emerges and its intrinsic nature to see this.

Pleasure emerges after completing a fine activity and when all its conditions are filled. It is destined to arise provided we pursue the proper aim of our nature, the activity is noble and is excellently fulfilled in that the external conditions for completing the activity are perfectly met, and finally, no impeding psychological conditions are present. Understood in this way, it is clear that pleasure supervenes on an activity and is causally dependent on said activity. Of course pleasure also occurs when one is engaged in activities that are far from "fine" or "excellent." Aufderheide successfully avoids the first horn of the disjunctive syllogism noted above that tethered pleasure to a fine activity conceptually, thereby turning Aristotle into a hedonist of one stripe or another.

Turning now to the intrinsic nature of pleasure, however, we also know that pleasure all by itself can narrow our ability to see some activity in relation to the whole, which is, of course, the pursuit of *eudaimonia*. Pleasure supervenes on the action and, therefore, is dependent on an activity, but it also has downward causal effects that could affect our future potential to perform the right activity at the right time with the right intention. We see this when we briefly looked at Aristotle's account of the continent individual. We choose the wrong action when our knowledge of the fine is not actualized but only exists in a dispositional state.

Given this construal, Aristotle's diagnosis is a more sophisticated refinement of the overjustification hypothesis. While the overjustification hypothesis emphasizes one's inability to clearly understand one's true motivation for pursuing an activity, Aristotle's strategy is different: per his view, pleasure has causal properties, which can crowd out a more encompassing focus of one's life. And what should this focus be? Simply stated, to put pride of place in aiming at the good in a comprehensive, totalizing manner. Although pleasure supervenes on some activities and not others, it has the causal capacity to confuse one about what virtues to pursue and when to pursue them, just like the musician who perhaps should be attending to a philosophical argument but who is led astray by hearing the melodic song of some flute player in the background. To flesh this out a bit more, I return to the example of the guitar player at the bar.

The guitarist enjoys playing his guitar the most when he is playing at his best. If the guitar player is only interested in playing those songs he knows well, then he might suffer from crowding out if he is rewarded with money for his playing. However, Aristotle's solution would easily counter this. As long the guitarist continues to hone his craft by expanding his repertoire to play ever more intricate and beautiful songs, in other words, the guitarist is motivated to be the best guitarist he can be, then he is pursuing that which is fine, excellent. There should be no issue in receiving monetary compensation or internal pleasure, for that matter, provided his pursuit remains pure. Per Aufderheide's ethical reading, pleasure for the guitarist is guaranteed if he maintains his intention to be the best guitarist possible and the external conditions for excellent guitar playing are present (e.g., the guitarist has the right equipment, the right environment, etc). The pleasure that necessarily

follows does so not because it is logically connected to the virtue of playing an instrument well, but because it is “unimpeded” as Aristotle puts it, both contextually and psychologically.

In conclusion, Aristotle’s account of crowding out, along with the philosophical psychology and particularly his account of pleasure which subtends it, is a clarion call to be very careful indeed when it comes to monetizing hobbies or unreflectingly taking up the advice put forward by some educators, “to find something you love doing for your career because then you will never work a day in your life.” If Aufderheide’s Anti-Delian reading of NE is correct, then the task for agents hoping to achieve *eudaimonia* is to be hypervigilant, ethically speaking, before undertaking any action and ensure that when they do perform an activity, they are doing so with the right intention in mind: they are aiming for the best, the most excellent. For if we are not careful enough, then alien pleasures unconnected to the virtue of watching tragic plays become the sole reward for attending the theater, causing one to eat too many sweets.

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