

Phil. 609. Handout 14. BOOK VII, 11-14; BOOK X, 1-5

Distinguish: pleasures that are a release from pain, pleasures that are good in themselves.

Pleasure: not (a) a motion or process (*kinēsis*), but (b) an activity, a “being-at-work” (*energeia*). The differences:

a. motion/process (<i>kinēsis</i>)	b. activity (<i>energeia</i>)
example: walking to Baltimore, looking <i>for</i> something	example: taking a stroll, looking <i>at</i> something
it is either fast or slow	it is neither fast nor slow, just active
once completed, you stop (as in making a table)	it is always completed, always finished, even as it starts
the goal is separable, comes only at the close	the end (<i>telos</i>) is always immanent
motion is a means toward something	an activity is an end in itself

Pleasure attaches to an activity: it crowns the unimpeded (*anempodiston*) activity of our various powers and has the same character or quality as the power it crowns. It's the bloom on the rose. Pleasure is not a detachable experience.

The activity in question is not a means to the pleasure; they are interwoven; you cannot separate them, you cannot even clearly ask whether one is *for* the other (X 4, 1175a18-19).

Distinguish between the pleasant “for someone” and the pleasant “in itself.” The virtuous man is the best measure of what is truly pleasant in itself.

The best activities bring the best pleasures, but the better should not drive out the good.

BOOK X, chapters 6-9

In chapter 6, Aristotle first excludes *amusement* (*paidia*, from *paizō*) as the highest good or end. Amusement or entertainment is sometimes sought for itself. It can be a relief (recreation), but it obviously is not the highest good for man. He treats it first to “get it out of the way” and to draw a contrast.

Then, note the sequence:	Chapter 7:	the best:	the life of thinking.
	Chapter 8:	the second best:	the life of action.
	Chapter 9:	the good for the many:	attaining reason through law.

Chapter 7: The life of thinking as the most excellent life, because it engages the activity that is best, most continuous, most pleasant, most self-sufficient, most leisurely, most an end in itself. It engages the best part of ourselves. Such a life is more than human, it exercises the divine part of us. We are capable of being agents of truth.

Chapter 8: The life of moral virtue and its action is best in a second sense and it responds more adequately to actual human needs. Contrast with the life of thinking. (The life of thinking itself, even though it is the highest life, still has to be integrated into a human life.)

Chapter 9: The public aspect of reason: law helps people to become good. Law brings reason into the lives of others who may be deficient in reason. The law is an embodied reason endowed with force. We must learn how to legislate, and the sophists are not good teachers of this skill.

Chapters 7 & 8 describe two forms of life and not everyone shares in them in the same way; but even moral goodness is in its core a share in mind, and life under law is also a share in reason.

Note remark about the godlike in X 9, p. 199, 1279b20-33.