

# Exceptions in Nonderivative Value

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Sid is pleased, let's suppose. Is that good? Philosophers of value give three different responses to that question: Yes, No, and It depends. On the third of these views, the answer depends on what Sid is pleased by. If what pleases him is the fine weather, then Yes, his being pleased is good; but if it is someone else's agony, No. On the second, Sid's being pleased by the fine weather is good, and his being pleased by suffering is bad, but his just *being pleased* is "evaluatively inadequate".<sup>1</sup> However, the first view answers Yes. Sid's being *pleased by suffering* is bad; but his *being pleased* is nonderivatively good, no matter what he is pleased by. This is the Mainstream View about the value of pleasure: Plato, Brentano, Sidgwick, Moore, Ewing, Frankena, Chisholm, Lemos and Hurka all hold it.<sup>2,3</sup>

In what follows, I argue that we should reject the Mainstream View and accept the third (It depends) view instead. I shall call this the Aristotelian Alternative, since Aristotle suggests it when he says "that not every pleasure is choiceworthy, and that some are choiceworthy in themselves".<sup>4</sup> Although, sometimes, a person's being pleased is nonderivatively good, there are exceptions: elsewhere it is not good at all.

The popularity of the Mainstream View is not surprising, because there are forceful-looking arguments for accepting it. There is an Argument from Intrinsic Goodness: when we consider the value of being pleased as it is in itself, independently of its relationship to anything else, it is good; so it is always good. There is an Argument from Crudeness: without the Mainstream View's value-distinction, we get the wrong evaluations of many misdirected pleasures. And above all, there is an Argument from Explanation: when a

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.143–4.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protagoras*, 351c2–e7; Brentano, *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*, pp.171, 196; Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, pp.398–406; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p.213; Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, pp.163–4; Frankena, *Ethics*, pp.89–90; Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, Ch. 6; Lemos, *Intrinsic Value*, pp.36, 40, 46; Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, pp.144–9.

<sup>3</sup> Another possibility is to hold that pleasure is derivatively good. According to Bradley, its goodness derives from that of self-realization (*Ethical Studies*, pp.131–2); according to Spinoza, from that of power (*Ethics*, p.257). Kant's view also seems to be that pleasure is derivatively good: see *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:111.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1174a10–11. I do not insist that Aristotle is committed to "the Aristotelian Alternative"—only that this passage suggests it. Two other philosophers who hold the "It depends" view are Ross, *The Right and the Good*, pp.136–8, *Foundations of Ethics*, pp.271–89; and Paton, "The Alleged Independence of Goodness", p.122.

substantive axiological theory—a theory telling us which things are good and bad, and why—is given its most illuminating form, it leads to the Mainstream View.

Such theories typically contain claims of two kinds: base principles making attributions of nonderivative value, whose form is

(B) If and because  $X$  belongs to type  $T$ , then  $X$  has value  $V$ .<sup>5</sup>

and extension principles specifying the relations through which other things derive their value, whose form is either

(E1) If and because  $Y$  bears relation  $R$  to  $X$  and  $X$  has value  $V$ , then  $Y$  has value  $W$

or

(E2) If and because  $Y$  bears relation  $R$  to  $X$  and  $X$  has value  $V$ , then  $Y$ 's bearing relation  $R$  to  $X$  has value  $W$ .

We can call any theory containing such principles a Brentano-style theory of value.<sup>6</sup> Brentano's own particular version (as expounded by Chisholm) has base principles assigning positive value to pleasure, happiness, love, knowledge, justice, beauty, proportion, good intention and the exercise of virtue, and negative value to their opposites, beginning with suffering.<sup>7</sup> To these it adds extension principles including:

Loving the good is good  
Loving the bad is bad  
Hating the good is bad  
Hating the bad is good.<sup>8</sup>

These are instances of (E2) in which  $Y$  is a response (such as a state of being pleased or displeased) directed towards some good or bad object  $X$ , and the relation  $R$  that  $Y$  bears to  $X$  is a relation of positive or negative orientation—favour or disfavour, “loving” or “hating”. So when this theory is applied to sadistic pleasure, a base principle

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<sup>5</sup> If the only bearers of nonderivative value are property-instantiations, then principles of form (B) can be replaced by the simpler schema:  $X$  has value  $V$ . I omit “Necessarily, . . .” from the statement of these principles: I assume that all value-theoretic truths are necessary.

<sup>6</sup> I take it that value theories differ in the degree of comprehensiveness they claim. At one extreme would be a theory purporting to give an algorithm fully determining the assignment of all value-attributes to everything. Most value theories, including those discussed in this paper, have more modest ambitions.

<sup>7</sup> See Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, p.60.

<sup>8</sup> See Brentano, *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, p.23; Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, Ch.6, and “Brentano's Theory of Correct and Incorrect Emotion”. For proposed sharpenings of Brentano's extension principles, see Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, pp.13–16; Lemos, *Intrinsic Value*, pp.74–6; and Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.199, 202. Versions of these claims are part of a long tradition of theorizing about value: they can be found in Plato, *Philebus*, 12c6–13b5, and *Republic*, 505c; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1173b20–31, 1175b24–29; Augustine, *City of God*, XIV.6–7; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae.24.1, 1a2ae.59.2; Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, p.135; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp.207–22; Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, pp.233–5; Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, pp.271–89; Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, pp.163–4; Stocker, “Desiring the Bad”, p.749; and Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Ch.2.

attributes goodness to the pleasure and an extension principle attributes badness to the sadism. “Pleasure in the bad is, as pleasure, something that is good, but at the same time, as an incorrect emotion, it is something that is bad.”<sup>9</sup> We arrive at the Mainstream View.

The main task in defending the Aristotelian Alternative will be to rebut these arguments. The issue is worth pursuing for two reasons. The first is that giving the right account of the value of pleasure and suffering is a task of fundamental importance for any axiological theory. But the second is its relevance to whether we should be trying to formulate such a theory at all.

Accepting the Aristotelian Alternative commits you to the holist view that the same value-bearer can have different values in different contexts: sometimes being pleased is good, sometimes not.<sup>10</sup> But this gives rise to Jonathan Dancy’s challenge: isn’t value-holism best accounted for by the particularist thesis that value-attributions are not explained by a theory structured around general principles?<sup>11</sup> Instead, the direction of explanation runs the other way. If there happen to be any true value-principles, they will be explained by the value-particulars they succeed in describing, rather than the value of the particulars being explained by their instantiation of underlying principles.<sup>12</sup>

My response to the Mainstream View is different. Instead, I want to show how to modify a Brentano-style theory so that it accommodates the Aristotelian Alternative, allowing for variations in the value of states of being pleased and explaining them in a regular way. Any Brentano-style theory generates an iterative procedure for determining what has value: we can adapt this idea to give an iterative procedure for determining what lacks it, specifying exceptions in nonderivative value. We should therefore reject the Mainstream View’s distinction between the value of Sid’s being pleased and the value of his being pleased by suffering. It is a distinction you would only make if your theory forced it on you. But a good value theory does not force it on you. So you should not make that distinction; but nor should you abandon the aspiration to find general explanations in the theory of value.

The discussion is structured as follows. Section I begins with a more careful description of what is at issue between the Mainstream View and the Aristotelian Alternative. Section II presents a simple challenge to the Mainstream View: why should we attribute any goodness to Sid’s being pleased when his pleasure is sadistic? There are three replies: the three arguments just mentioned. But they can be met by modifying a Brentano-style theory to accommodate the Aristotelian Alternative. Sections III and IV introduce the modifications; Sections V-VII explain how this allows us to answer the three arguments. Section VIII addresses an objection, and explains the structure of the resulting view.

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<sup>9</sup> Brentano, *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, p.90.

<sup>10</sup> This is Dancy’s definition of value-holism, which should be distinguished from Moore’s claim that an “organic whole” can have a value which is not the sum of the values of its parts. See Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles*, p.176; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp.83–4.

<sup>11</sup> For the argument from holism to particularism in the theory of practical reasons, see Jonathan Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles*, Ch.5; the corresponding treatment of value comes in Chs 9, 10 and 12. On different conceptions of what it is for a principle to be general, see pp.3–12; on defeasible generalizations, pp.111–17.

<sup>12</sup> This is an application to value of the point Dancy makes about reasons at pp.78–85 of *Ethics Without Principles*.

## I: Misdirected Pleasure and Suffering

The first task is to explain exactly what is in dispute between the Mainstream View and the Aristotelian Alternative.

It is not a dispute about the metaphysics of value or value-bearers. I have formulated the Mainstream View as making different value-ascriptions to two property-instantiations: a person's instantiation of the property of being pleased by suffering, which is bad, and his being pleased, which is nonderivatively good. However, there are various other metaphysical candidates for the role of bearers of nonderivative value—including possible states of affairs, properties, individuals and other kinds of thing.<sup>13</sup> I intend "the Mainstream View" to include a range of different opinions about that. It is often formulated as the view that a person's being pleased by suffering is a bad state of affairs with an intrinsically good part (the person's being pleased).<sup>14</sup> But there is also a version that thinks of a pleasure-state as a particular datable mental event which meets various descriptions, and says of that event that it is both good (in virtue of its being an instance of pleasure) and bad (in virtue of being an instance of pleasure in suffering).<sup>15</sup> For clarity, I shall discuss the version formulated in terms of property-instantiations (continuing to refer to these as the "states" of being pleased and of being pleased by suffering). However, the arguments that follow will apply equally well to the other versions.

Next, a point about "pleasure": it is a commonplace that talk of pleasure and enjoyment refers to a wide range of different phenomena.<sup>16</sup> Many are states of liking something: favourable orientations towards some further object. Brentano must be thinking of states of that kind when he characterizes "[p]leasure in the bad" as a way of loving the bad. So let us concentrate on pleasure-states with that kind of structure: states of liking something. We can focus initially on cases in which one's beliefs are true, so that the intentional and actual object of one's liking-response are the same. Later, we will consider what to say about cases where that is not so.

According to the Mainstream View, although a person's pleasure can be misdirected in such a way that his *being pleased by object O* is bad, his *being pleased* is always nonderivatively good. The Aristotelian Alternative, I stipulate, is the family of opposing views that accept that a person's being pleased can be nonderivatively good, but is not always good. The version I advocate is characterized by three claims that it adds to this core thesis—claims about the *varieties* of goodness and badness that pleasure and suffering can have.

To illustrate what I mean in talking about "varieties" of goodness and badness, we can turn to a case of misdirected suffering. Suppose that treating my friend Una to a fine dinner will

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<sup>13</sup> Each of these candidates has its advocates. For states of affairs, see Chisholm, "The Defeat of Good and Evil", p.22; for property-instantiations, Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.51–8; for properties, Panayot Butchvarov, *Skepticism in Ethics*, pp.14–15; for individuals, Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*, pp.20, 26. Our ordinary evaluative thought and talk seems to ascribe nonderivative value to things of all these kinds.

<sup>14</sup> Moore does that, in offering this as one of his leading examples of an "organic unity": *Principia Ethica*, Sect. 125.

<sup>15</sup> This is a natural way of reading the passage from Brentano quoted in the text above (at note 9).

<sup>16</sup> For a helpful survey, see Leonard D. Katz, "Pleasure". For a careful set of discriminations between different ways of talking about pleasure and enjoyment in English, see J.C.B. Gosling, *Pleasure and Desire*. For Aristotle's discussions, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, iii.10, vii.14, x.5.

make her envious neighbour Ted miserable. On Brentano's theory, there are again two value-attributions to be made. Whenever someone undergoes suffering, that is nonderivatively bad. So Ted's suffering is bad, simply as an instance of suffering; but his suffering's being directed at someone else's pleasure is also bad in another way, as an instance of hating the good.<sup>17</sup>

Now the badness of Ted's hating Una's pleasure seems to be a special kind of badness; it is importantly different from the badness of suffering from physical pain, say. Ted's hatred of Una's pleasure calls for criticism; suffering from physical pain calls for prevention by removing its eliciter. But the converse is not true. Suffering from physical pain does not call for criticism. And Ted's misery at the prospect of Una's pleasure is not something that calls for prevention by cancelling the dinner.

If we say this, what is the "calling for" relation? It is the relation, for which value-theorists have several names, which we assert between a response and its object in using evaluative terms containing suffixes like "-able", "-ful" and "-worthy" ("desirable", "shameful", "praiseworthy").<sup>18</sup> Another name sometimes used for this relation is "fittingness".<sup>19</sup> It is the relation that each good thing bears towards one or more favour-responses and each bad thing towards one or more disfavour-responses.

I shall follow the practice of referring to this relation—the relation between praise and the praiseworthy, desire and the desirable—as the relation of "fittingness" or "calling-for"; but this requires two caveats. First, this practice departs from ordinary speech, which often uses those phrases to refer to all-things-considered appropriateness.<sup>20</sup> An action can be praiseworthy, and hence in our sense "call for" praise, without praise being all-things-considered appropriate (and vice versa). Secondly, this does not require taking sides on whether a fitting attitude *analysis* of goodness and badness can be given, of the kind advocated by Brentano and Ewing, and rejected by Moore.<sup>21</sup> (Nor does it require saying whether there is a further analysis of fittingness itself, nor of favour and disfavour-responses.)<sup>22</sup>

With those caveats in mind, we can use this vocabulary to clarify the thought that there are importantly different varieties of goodness and badness. There are different

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<sup>17</sup> Jamie Mayerfeld, *Suffering and Moral Responsibility*, p.53, makes the convincing point that envy does not always involve real suffering. But sometimes it does, and that is enough to produce examples of this kind.

<sup>18</sup> "Response" and "object" are used here as catch-all terms for the relata of the fittingness relation—so that, for example, not wishing for some not-yet-existing bad state of affairs can count as a fitting "response" to that "object".

<sup>19</sup> Brentano's name for this relation is "correctness": see *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, Sect.22, 23, 27, p.74, and Appendix IX, Sect.13; Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, Ch.5; also Chisholm, "Brentano's Theory of Correct and Incorrect Emotion". The same thought is expressed as a claim about "appropriate" responses by Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp.204–5 and Gerald Gaus, *Value and Justification*, Sect. 6; "worthy" objects of responses by W.D. Ross *Foundations of Ethics*, pp.275–6; and "required" responses by Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, p.52 and Michael Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, Sect. 4.4–5, who distinguishes requirements from fittingness. For the source of this way of thinking, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a24–30.

<sup>20</sup> Ewing clearly uses the term "fittingness" to make judgements of overall appropriateness—see *The Definition of Good*, pp.132–3. In doing so, he follows Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, pp.164–5, 219.) For the "wrong kind of reasons" problem that arises when "fittingness" is used in *that* way, see Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, "Strike of the Demon".

<sup>21</sup> For difficulties with such analyses, see Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, "Sentiment and Value"; also C.D. Broad, *Ethics*, p.265. Nor does it require the "buck-passing" view that value-properties do not themselves give us reasons. (See Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, pp.95–6.)

<sup>22</sup> And it does not treat fittingness as a deontic notion—as for example Chisholm does in *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, pp.52–3, and Ewing in *The Definition of Good*, Ch.5.

kinds of favour- and disfavour-responses—different ways of being for or against something. The different varieties of goodness and badness correspond to the different kinds of favour- and disfavour-responses their bearers call for.<sup>23</sup> A bad thing can call for one kind of disfavour-response but not another: Ted’s hatred of Una’s pleasure calls for criticism, but it does not call to be prevented by removing its eliciter. (Let us say that preventing something in that way is “protectively preventing” it.) Likewise, a good thing (such as Una’s pleasure) can call for one kind of favour-response (such as promotion—doing what conduces to its occurring) but not another (admiration, say). I shall express this by saying that promotion-worthiness is a variety of goodness—but remember: I am leaving it open whether pleasure is promotion-worthy *because* it is good, or the promotion-worthiness of pleasure *is* (part of) its goodness.

This is an invitation to make our value-theorizing more discriminating. It invites us to explain not just why things are good and bad, but why they have the particular kinds of goodness and badness they do. And it opens up the possibility that the same object can call for more than one response. Perhaps the same object could even call for a particular favour-response and a particular disfavour-response—displaying a variety of goodness and a variety of badness.

I want to approach the dispute between the Mainstream View and the Aristotelian Alternative in this discriminating spirit, attending to the different varieties of goodness and badness. According to the Mainstream View, Sid’s being pleased by suffering can be bad—it can call for a disfavour-response—while his being pleased is good, calling for a favour-response. The version of the Aristotelian Alternative I defend denies this, claiming that when Sid is pleased by suffering, his being pleased calls for the same disfavour-responses as his being pleased by suffering. Putting this more generally and formally:

- (1) For any favour- or disfavour-response *R*, when *S*’s being pleased by *O* calls for *R*, then *S*’s being pleased calls for *R*.

It also makes the corresponding claim about suffering:

- (2) For any favour- or disfavour-response *R*, when *S*’s suffering at *O* calls for *R*, then *S*’s suffering calls for *R*.

To these it adds the further claim:

- (3) No property-instantiation calls for both *R* and not-*R*.

When your being pleased by a given object has a certain kind of badness, your being pleased also has that kind of badness, and lacks the opposite kind of goodness. This is the version of the Aristotelian Alternative I am going to defend. The defence begins with the following simple challenge to the Mainstream View.

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, Ch.5; G.H. von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, pp.8–13; Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, pp.429–30; Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*, Ch.1; Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Ch.2, Sect.3; Gaus, *Value and Justification*, Sect.13–4, Nicholas Rescher, *Introduction to Value Theory*, Ch.2; Judith Jarvis Thomson, “On Some Ways in Which a Thing can be Good”; Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.85–6.

## II: Challenging the Mainstream View

The initial challenge to the Mainstream View is one that its opponents have often made.<sup>24</sup> Suppose Sid takes pleasure in witnessing the suffering of a victim of torture. One property he instantiates is the property of being pleased by *that*. We all agree that his instantiating that property is very bad.<sup>25</sup> Another is the property of being pleased—that is, being pleased by *something*. Now we disagree; but the challenge is this. Why should we attribute goodness to Sid's instantiating this property, *here*? When he witnesses *this* and is pleased, why think that his being pleased by something is good? When *this* is the situation in which he instantiates the property of being pleased by something, why say that it is good?

Now this just poses a question, to which there are replies. But nonetheless it establishes something important. The onus in this dispute lies with the Mainstream View to provide a supporting argument. Its opponents make the usual argument for something's non-existence—namely, that there is no good reason to believe in its existence. Here, the existence-claim at issue is whether Sid the sadist's being pleased has any goodness: that is, whether there is a fittingness-relationship between his being pleased and any favour-response. We can break the challenge into two steps. First, Sid's being pleased by suffering, we agree, calls for disfavour-responses: for example, it is fitting *not* to promote it. If so, perhaps it is not impossible that it is in the opposite way good—that it also calls for promotion. But why would you want to say that?<sup>26</sup> And if you don't—if you accept that Sid's being pleased by suffering does *not* call for promotion, why think that his being pleased does, when that is what he is pleased by? Generalizing, we can ask these two questions:

- (a) For any favour-response *R*, when *S*'s being pleased by *O* calls for not-*R*, why think that *S*'s being pleased by *O* calls for *R*?
- (b) For any favour-response *R*, when *S*'s being pleased by *O* does not call for *R*, why think that *S*'s being pleased calls for *R*?

The onus lies with a proponent of the Mainstream View to provide a good answer to either of these questions. If that cannot be provided, we should reject it, and endorse my version of the Aristotelian Alternative instead.

However, this merely gets the dialectic started. This challenge establishes an onus, but it also invites the three forceful replies I foreshadowed earlier, which are answers to (b).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> This challenge is explicit in Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, p.145, and Jonas Olson, "Intrinsic-ism and Conditionalism About Final Value", p.41. I think it is at least implicit in other opponents of the Mainstream View such as H.J. Paton, "The Alleged Independence of Goodness", p.122; F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, pp.132–8; and Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, pp.271ff.

<sup>25</sup> All sides of *this* debate agree about that. For a dissenting voice, see J.J.C. Smart, "An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics", pp. 25–6.

<sup>26</sup> An individual can call for responses *R* and not-*R*: I can be both lovable (in one respect) and unlovable (in another). It is harder to see how that could be true of property-instantiations—hence claim (3)—but I do not know how to show that this is impossible. For discussion, see Michael J. Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, p.102.

<sup>27</sup> Other arguments for the Mainstream View seem weaker. There is Moore's isolation argument: since Sid's being pleased would be good when isolated from all other features of his current context (including its object), it must be good in that context (*Principia Ethica*, pp.30, 91, 188, 207–11). This begs the question against the Mainstream View's holist opponents: they deny that if a person's being pleased is good in some contexts it must be good in others. Another argument is that unless the pleasure of evildoers is good we cannot explain why it is unjust when they get it. (See Lemos, *Intrinsic Value*, pp.43–4; Slote, *Goods and Virtues*, pp.125–9.) This is met by allowing that the pleasure that it is unjust for evildoers to get is good *for* them—in their interests—but denying that it is good simpliciter.

First, there is an Argument from Intrinsic Goodness.<sup>28</sup> This insists on the distinction between the value something has in itself, independently of its relationship to anything else, and the value it derives from the value of some other thing. That is the distinction between its intrinsic and extrinsic value. For example, when something nice happens to me, my being pleased might prevent me from noticing that you are upset. Then my being pleased is in that way extrinsically bad; but it is still intrinsically good. The same distinction applies to Sid. When he is pleased by suffering, his being pleased bears a bad relationship to its object; but the intrinsic value of his being pleased is the value it has in itself, independently of its relationship to anything else, including its object. The intrinsic value of Sid's being pleased is therefore a value it has whatever he is pleased by. But clearly, if a person is pleased by some innocuous object, his being pleased is good.<sup>29</sup> The "recognitional" view that being pleased always derives its goodness from being a state of proper responsiveness to the goodness of its object is clearly wrong: pleasures with neutral or no objects are good.<sup>30</sup> So considered as it is in itself, being pleased is nonderivatively good. Goodness is intrinsic to the state of being pleased, then, in several senses: it is nonderivative (it does not derive its value from the value of anything else), final (being pleased is good for its own sake), and independent of the relations this state bears to anything else.<sup>31</sup> In these ways, Sid's being pleased is good in itself. But if so, it is good essentially, and therefore always.

Secondly, there is an Argument from Explanation, which appeals to the lucidity and explanatory power of a Brentano-style value theory. When we structure our value theory in this way, the extension principles can be iteratively applied to make plausible value-assignments to response-states of progressively higher orders, with increasingly complex contents.<sup>32</sup> We can explain not only why the enjoyment of suffering is bad, but why the same is true of the enjoyment of others' enjoyment of suffering, suffering at others' enjoyment of enjoyment, enjoyment of suffering at the enjoyment of enjoyment, and so on indefinitely. A Brentano-style value theory can give a neat and satisfying explanation of the value of such higher-order responses, up to any level of complexity. It seems to offer genuine insight into the structure of value.

However, a Brentano-style theory needs to make plausible initial attributions of value in its base principles; and it has to attribute goodness to being pleased in innocuous contexts. The clearest and most perspicuous way to do that follows Brentano in adopting a base principle that attributes goodness to all states of being pleased. Combining this with an extension principle that attributes badness to loving the bad, we arrive at the Mainstream View. So the

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<sup>28</sup> For instances of this argument, see the authors referred to in note 2.

<sup>29</sup> For dissenters at this step of the argument, see notes 1 and 3.

<sup>30</sup> Brentano, *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*, pp.170–1; Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, pp.146–7.

<sup>31</sup> That gives us three criteria for intrinsic goodness: fundamentality, finality and non-relationality. The difference between the first two is illustrated by Shelly Kagan's example of Lincoln's pen, which is good for its own sake (not good *towards* anything further) but derivatively: its goodness derives from that of the Emancipation Proclamation which it was used to sign ("Rethinking Intrinsic Value", pp.285–6). This also illustrates the difference between the second and third: the pen's value is final but relational. For the difference between the first and third: an object might derive one of its values from another of its values—it might be fascinating because it is beautiful. Other criteria in the literature include Moore's criterion of ontological isolation (would pleasure be good if nothing else existed? *Principia Ethica*, Sect.112); Lemos's criterion of intentional isolation (is pleasure necessarily such that contemplating it alone requires that one love it?—*Intrinsic Value*, p.12); and Hurka's criterion of contribution (is part of the overall goodness of the world attributable to pleasure?—"Value Theory", p.358).

<sup>32</sup> See Hurka, *Virtue, Vice and Value*, Chs 1 and 2.

second reply to our challenge is this. The most lucid and illuminating way of accounting for the value of pleasure- and suffering-states that take other such states as their objects is via a Brentano-style theory with this base principle. But that generates the Mainstream View.

The third argument is an Argument from Crudeness. Surely, your being pleased can call for promotion when your pleasure is misdirected. Take the enjoyment of bad music. This can be an unfitting response to its object—when a song is trite, lifeless, poorly constructed and badly performed, in those respects it calls for dislike and therefore non-enjoyment.<sup>33</sup> So, as the Mainstream View accepts, pleasure in such songs is misdirected and in that way bad. But although the misdirection is bad, the pleasure itself is still good. How else can we allow, as surely we must, that giving a lover of bad music the music she loves is good? If thrash metal is what Violet loves, then I should give her a thrash metal CD for her birthday, not *Winterreise*. On the Mainstream View, Violet's philistinism is bad but her being pleased is good—just as Sid's sadism is bad but his being pleased is good. Sadism is much worse than philistinism, though. So that is why, on balance, Violet's listening to thrash metal calls for promotion but Sid's getting the spectacle of others' suffering does not. Without the distinction in value that the Mainstream View makes, our view is too crude to allow for what is obviously the right thing to say about such cases.

So the onus-challenge to the Mainstream View is met by three forceful replies. My response will be to show how a Brentano-style theory can be modified to accommodate the Aristotelian Alternative, and that because of this, all three arguments fail. I set out the modifications next, then show how to apply them to our target examples, and then respond to the three arguments.

### III: Modifying a Brentano-Style Theory

The Aristotelian Alternative is arrived at by combining two claims. First, in innocuous cases being pleased is indeed nonderivatively good, as the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness claims. But secondly, when your being pleased by some object lacks goodness, so does your being pleased—there is an onus in favour of this nonexistence claim. The Mainstream View objects that this is an unstable combination. To show that that is not so, we can start by showing how the Aristotelian Alternative can be accommodated within a Brentano-style theory of value. Two modifications are required.

A value theory that accommodates the Aristotelian Alternative must contain principles for the attribution of nonderivative goodness that allow for exceptions. Further, a theory that accommodates the particular version of the Aristotelian Alternative I advocate—the one endorsing claims (1)–(3)—must go beyond generic attributions of goodness and badness, and tell us about the particular kinds of value that value-bearers have, by specifying the particular favour-and disfavour-responses they call for. It must tell us not just about the goodness of pleasure in general but its promotion-worthiness in particular.

If so, the theory will need to contain a principle for the attribution of value to pleasure that looks like this:

(P1) A person's being pleased calls for promotion, unless the fittingness of that response is undermined.

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<sup>33</sup> Enjoying such songs *can* involve a failure of proper appreciation, when it misjudges their aesthetic merits. However, it might instead be a kind of amusement at incompetence, or an appreciation of the skill with which self-consciously cheesy musicians succeed in hitting their target. For an entertaining discussion, see Erik Anderson, "Sailing the Seas of Cheese".

This principle makes a nonderivative attribution of a particular variety of goodness—namely, promotion-worthiness—to the state of being pleased, but allows for exceptions. We can express this by saying that, according to (P1), a person’s being pleased is *presumptively* promotion-worthy: it calls for promotion unless the fittingness of that response is undermined. Corresponding claims can be made about the other favour-responses that being pleased presumptively calls for. For example:

(P2) A person’s being pleased calls for sympathetic pleasure, unless the fittingness of that response is undermined.

Similar exception-hedged claims can specify the disfavour-responses that someone’s undergoing suffering presumptively calls for, including:

(S1) A person’s undergoing suffering calls for protective prevention, unless the fittingness of that response is undermined.

(S2) A person’s undergoing suffering calls for sympathetic dislike, unless the fittingness of that response is undermined.

These principles could be supplemented by others specifying the other favour- and disfavour-responses that these states presumptively call for; but these will be enough for us to work with here.

The first proposed modification to a Brentano-style theory, then, is the inclusion of these exception-hedged principles. They prompt an obvious question. When are their exception-clauses satisfied? Our version of the Aristotelian Alternative is also committed to some answers to that question. The second modification is to add a principle that generalizes those answers.

Recall that our version of the Aristotelian Alternative makes these claims:

(1) For any favour- or disfavour-response  $R$ , when  $S$ ’s being pleased by  $O$  calls for  $R$ , then  $S$ ’s being pleased calls for  $R$ .

(2) For any favour- or disfavour-response  $R$ , when  $S$ ’s suffering at  $O$  calls for  $R$ , then  $S$ ’s suffering calls for  $R$ .

(3) No property-instantiation calls for both  $R$  and not- $R$ .

According to claims (1) and (3), the exception-condition in (P1) will be met whenever a person takes pleasure in  $O$  and pleasure in  $O$  calls for non-promotion. And according to (2) and (3), the exception-condition in (S1) will be met whenever a person’s suffering is directed at  $O$  and suffering at  $O$  calls not to be protectively prevented. These two cases are instances of the following general pattern. A response-state  $X$  (such as being pleased) presumptively calls for some higher-order response  $R$  (such as promotion); but when  $X$  is itself misdirected towards some object  $O$ ,  $X$ ’s being directed towards  $O$  can call for the opposite higher-order response, not- $R$ . When that is so, the fittingness of  $R$  as a response to  $X$  is undermined. Formulating this as a general principle for the undermining of presumptively fitting responses, we have:

(U) If  $X$  is a state-type that presumptively calls for response  $R$ , the fittingness of  $R$  as a response to  $S$ ’s being in state  $X$  is undermined if and only if:

- (i) *S*'s state of *X* is oriented towards object *O*,
- (ii) *O* calls for not-*X*, and
- (iii) *S*'s being in the state of *X*-towards-*O* calls for not-*R*.

Principle (U) goes beyond claims (1)–(3) in two ways. First, it generalizes from those claims, asserting that the general pattern they exemplify is sufficient for undermining the fittingness of a presumptively fitting response. But secondly, it asserts that this pattern is not only sufficient but also necessary. That should be treated as a working assumption: it assumes that this is the only source of the exceptions allowed for by our exception-hedged principles. That is the simplest form for a theory accommodating claims (1)–(3) to take, so it will be clearest to consider it in this form. However, perhaps the fittingness of a presumptively fitting response can be undermined in other ways, that do not fit this pattern. If so, (U) would need to be expanded to include them, and our theory elaborated in that way.

With these two modifications, a Brentano-style theory can accommodate the Aristotelian Alternative. It can do by supplementing its base principles of form (B) with the exception-hedged principles (P1), (P2), (S1) and (S2), and supplementing its extension principles of form (E1) or (E2) with the undermining principle (U). The principle (U) functions as an extension principle of a new, negative, kind: it governs the non-attribution, not the attribution, of value. (U) relies on prior assignments of value to the objects of response-states, in order to determine which higher-order responses those states do *not* call for.

When we incorporate these principles into our value theory, the application to Sid's sadistic pleasure runs as follows. Sid's being pleased presumptively calls for promotion, according to (P1). But his pleasure is directed towards a further object—someone else's agony—so it satisfies condition (i) in (U). What does that object call for? According to (S2), it presumptively calls for dislike, and as long as *it* (the agony) does not in turn have some further object that calls for a response other than suffering, it does not meet the conditions for undermining. So the object of Sid's pleasure calls for dislike, not pleasure, and condition (ii) is satisfied. Moreover, it is not controversial that condition (iii) is satisfied: Sid's being pleased by suffering calls for non-promotion. So the three conditions in (U) are all met: Sid's being pleased does not call for promotion. The application to Ted's envious suffering follows the same pattern. Given that Una's pleasure calls for sympathetic pleasure—(P2) applies, and there is no undermining—Ted's suffering meets conditions (i)–(iii) and the application to it of (S1) *is* subject to undermining.

So: when a Brentano-style value theory is modified in this way, it makes value-attributions that accord with the Aristotelian Alternative rather than the Mainstream View. It has yet to be explained how that helps us answer the three arguments. However, before we turn to that, we face another explanatory task.

I pointed out that it is not controversial that Sid's being pleased by suffering meets condition (iii): this state calls for non-promotion. But what can be said to explain why it meets that condition? Should we say that *all* states of being pleased by suffering call for non-promotion? Why or why not? Where should we look for an answer to that? And while we are about it, we can ask the counterpart question for misdirected suffering: it may not be controversial that Ted's suffering at Una's pleasure calls not to be protectively prevented, but what explains why that is so?

To know how to apply the principles just described, we need to know how to answer these questions. So let us address them next.

#### IV: Opposition and Correction

Sometimes, one person's being pleased by another's suffering calls for non-promotion; sometimes, one person's suffering at another's pleasure calls not to be protectively prevented. It is not in dispute that this is so. But what explains why this is so?

I think this can be explained by examining how the misdirection of such states *matters*. We can start with the first case. Why does a sadist's being pleased by someone else's suffering matter, so that it calls for non-promotion? There are two complementary explanations of this.

To see the first, consider this (admittedly horrible) question: If you learned that someone you love was being tortured and that you could do nothing to stop it, but that it was in your power to determine whether some other sadistic person got the pleasure of witnessing it, why would you resist that? One answer is this. To facilitate the onlooker's pleasure would be a further mistreatment of the victim, beyond the torture itself—even if the victim never knew about the onlooker. Perhaps, in that kind of case, we should deny that the further mistreatment would be a further harm: it may be better classified as a violation of the victim's dignity than of his welfare.<sup>34</sup> But it would mistreat him, all the same. It would treat his suffering as not having the importance it does—as not mattering in the way it does. And that amounts to treating the victim himself as not having the importance he has.

Promoting the onlooker's pleasure would treat the victim's suffering as not mattering in the way that it does, I say. Just how *does* it matter? In ways including the ones reported by (S1) and (S2). Suffering calls presumptively for protective prevention and sympathy. Here, nothing undermines the fittingness of those responses, so it does call for them. The sadist takes pleasure in two things: the suffering, and its infliction. In doing so, he treats those things as not mattering in the ways they do. In enjoying the suffering, his attitudes are contrary to (S2); in enjoying the infliction, they are contrary to (S1).

In saying this, I do not claim that an onlooker's simply having a private experience can itself amount to the violation of someone's dignity. But if I were to act to present someone's suffering to an onlooker as an object of enjoyment I would then be *doing* something to him which would be a form of mistreatment—something for which it could make sense to apologize later. It is because promoting the onlooker's pleasure would be a way of mistreating the sufferer that it calls for non-promotion.

There is a second, more general explanation of why pleasure in serious suffering calls for non-promotion. Suppose the onlooker's pleasure is directed at the suffering of an animal. Then it is less plausible to say that promoting this would be a further, dignity-violating form of mistreatment, beyond the infliction of the suffering itself. However, the onlooker still fails to treat the infliction of suffering as mattering in the serious ways it does—the ways reported by (S1) and (S2)—and the rest of us face the question how to react to that. Each of us has the choice of whether to participate in the “community of response” that treats not only the infliction of suffering but also others' positive attitudes towards it as unacceptable. What I mean by a community of response is a practice of making certain responses of favour or disfavour, accepting norms for making those responses, advocating those norms to each other, and insisting that those norms are complied with. Sadistic pleasure is in fact treated as unacceptable through a practice of this kind; and there are two kinds of justification for this. There is an instrumental reason for

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<sup>34</sup> See Stephen Darwall, *Welfare and Rational Care*, pp.14–16.

us collectively to sustain such a practice: it can help to reduce the infliction of suffering itself. And there is a non-instrumental reason: it is a way for us together to express our abhorrence of cruelty—to say that the infliction of suffering matters, in opposition to those who treat it as though it does not. When the victim of suffering is a person, this is an expression of solidarity. It is thus fitting for *me* to make the oppositional responses as a way of joining in this collective practice. I can thereby express my solidarity with the victim, even if I cannot protect him. This kind of opposition—“solidarity-opposition”, we can call it—includes non-promotion, as part of a package of disfavour-responses that include denunciation, abhorrence, the suspension of certain relationships, and so forth.

That gives us two explanations of why pleasure in serious suffering calls for non-promotion: one that appeals to the importance of not mistreating the sufferer, and one that appeals to the importance of joining the community of response that opposes such pleasure. Now let us turn to the case of misdirected suffering—as exemplified by envious Ted, who suffers at the prospect of Una’s pleasure. Why does his state of suffering-at-pleasure call not to be prevented by removing its eliciter? This case is in one obvious respect unlike that of sadistic pleasure: facilitating Ted’s envious suffering is not a way of mistreating Una. However, there is this similarity: there is a “community of response” that sees such attitudes as calling to be corrected, not indulged. When we participate in this practice, we do not just recognize in common that envious suffering-responses are flawed; we avow that recognition to each other and insist that it is shared. As before, this practice has an instrumental and a non-instrumental justification. Instrumentally, sustaining this practice encourages us to be less envious, more generously celebratory. Non-instrumentally, it expresses the shared view that envy is a corruption of good relations between people (the generously celebratory ones). So it is because this practice is worth participating in that I am called not to prevent Ted’s suffering by withdrawing Una’s dinner invitation. Envious suffering calls for a disfavour-response that includes not preventing it by removing its eliciter.

The question we faced at the end of the previous section was how to explain when a case meets the last condition in (U):

- (iii) *S*’s being in the state of *X*-towards-*O* calls for not-*R*.

We have now seen two ways of doing that (no doubt there are others). We can explain why being pleased by *O* calls for non-promotion by explaining why it calls for the disfavour-response of solidarity-opposition, and why that disfavour-response includes non-promotion. And we can explain why suffering at *O* calls not to be protectively prevented by explaining why it calls for the disfavour-response of correction, and why that disfavour-response includes not protectively preventing it.

## **V: The Argument from Intrinsic Goodness**

Proponents of the Mainstream View can accept most of the claims I make in the previous section. They accept that Sid’s being pleased by suffering is bad: I just offered an explanation of the particular kind of badness it has. What is in dispute is not that, but the claim that when being pleased by suffering is bad in that way, being pleased is not good. I argued that there is an onus in favour of accepting that claim; but as we saw, the Mainstream View has three arguments in response. In Sections III and IV I have shown how to modify a Brentano-style theory in a way that accommodates that claim, generalizing and

formalizing it as the principle (U), and how to explain when condition (iii) in (U) is met. Now I need to explain how this supplies what is needed to rebut the three arguments.

The first of these was the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness: that since being pleased is good intrinsically, it must always be good. In reply, we can point to the distinction suggested by Aristotle. When he holds both “that not every pleasure is choiceworthy, and that some are choiceworthy in themselves”, he suggests a distinction between having nonderivative goodness (goodness that does not derive from the goodness of anything else) and exceptionless goodness (being always good). We have seen how to configure a Brentano-style value-theory in a way that preserves this distinction. When a person’s being pleased *is* good, it is nonderivatively good; but there are exceptions—sometimes, it is not good at all. Since this distinction is coherent, the inference on which the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness relies—an inference from nonderivative to exceptionless goodness—fails.

The Argument from Intrinsic Goodness might seem to show that this distinction is not coherent. To say that a person’s being pleased is nonderivatively good is to say that it does not derive its goodness from the goodness of anything else: it is good simply because it is an instantiation of the property of being pleased. But if one instantiation of the property of being pleased is good simply because it is the instantiation of that property, how can any other instantiation of the very same property fail to be good?

But that objection is met as follows. On the version of the Aristotelian Alternative I have described, what a person’s being pleased has simply in virtue of being the instantiation of that property is not goodness but *presumptive* goodness. Every instantiation of the property of being pleased does have *this* second-order property: the property of being good-unless-its-goodness-is-undermined. Being pleased presumptively calls for favourable responses that include promotion; but the fittingness of such responses can be undermined. But then, if the value-realm is structured as the Aristotelian Alternative represents it, this has the following pair of implications. When there is no undermining, a person’s being pleased can be good without deriving its goodness from that of its object—or indeed from the goodness of anything else. (The “recognitional” view of the value of pleasure should indeed be rejected, as the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness rightly insists.) But sometimes, being pleased can be bad, when it is misoriented towards a bad object; and then it derives its badness from that of its object.<sup>35</sup> Bad instantiations of the property of being pleased are derivatively bad; but good ones remain nonderivatively good. When being pleased is good, it does not derive its goodness from its *not* having a bad object, any more than your cheerful greeting derives its goodness from not being a spiteful insult. It has goodness in virtue of what it is, not in virtue of what it is not.

This gives us another distinction: a distinction between whether something’s goodness is relation-dependent and whether it is derivative. On the Aristotelian Alternative, what the state of being pleased possesses, independently of its relation to any object, is presumptive goodness. It does not possess *goodness* independently of its relation to any object, since having the wrong object can deprive it of goodness. So its goodness is relation-dependent. But when it *is* good, its goodness is nonderivative: its goodness does not derive from the goodness of anything else.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The badness of *being pleased* (when it is bad) derives from the badness of its object. But that is consistent with accepting that the badness of *being pleased by a bad object* (when it is bad) is nonderivative.

<sup>36</sup> Compare the “conditionalist” claim that final goodness (goodness for its own sake) may be conditional on context—as defended by Olson, “Intrinsicism and Conditionalism About Final Value”, p.35.

Since this view is coherent, the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness is unsuccessful. It attempts to infer the nonderivative goodness of Sid's being pleased when his pleasure is sadistic from the nonderivative goodness of his being pleased when his pleasure is innocuous. But that inference fails. It fails because the goodness of being pleased could be nonderivative but relation-dependent in a way that allows for exceptions, as the Aristotelian Alternative claims.

## VI: The Argument from Explanation

The Argument from Explanation was that given the strong attractions of a Brentano-style theory of value, we should accept the Mainstream View as one of its implications. The reply is that when a Brentano-style theory is modified as I have done, it retains its explanatory power without endorsing the Mainstream View. So it is false that the only way to give a lucid and illuminating account of the value of pleasure-states is by embracing the Mainstream View. A Brentano-style theory can instead accommodate the Aristotelian Alternative, without being weakened in any way.

The power of a Brentano-style theory comes from its repeated application of a small number of principles to explain how the structure of value ramifies. This strength is retained when we make the modifications I have described. A value theory containing principles such as (P1) and (P2) accounts for the value of innocuous pleasures just as well as the Mainstream View: it agrees that they are nonderivatively good. But it does so without attributing any goodness to Sid the sadist's being pleased. To evaluate that case, two applications of the theory are needed. First, we must apply it to the suffering Sid enjoys. The principles (S1) and (S2) apply to that, but since (U) does not there is no undermining of the fittingness of protective prevention and sympathetic dislike. Given that the victim's suffering calls for these responses, Sid's pleasure in it is misoriented, and given the nature of the misorientation, it calls for solidarity-opposition and hence non-promotion. So Sid's being pleased satisfies (U), and the fittingness of promoting it is undermined. Similarly, evaluating Ted's envious suffering requires two applications of the theory. We must first determine what Una's pleasure calls for: (P1) and (P2) apply to that, but since (U) does not there is no undermining of the fittingness of promotion and sympathetic pleasure. Since Una's pleasure calls for these responses, Ted's envious suffering is misoriented, and given the nature of the misorientation, it calls for correction and hence calls not to be protectively prevented. So Ted's undergoing suffering satisfies (U), and the fittingness of protective prevention is undermined.

A tempting complaint is that a theory with this structure does not *explain* why Sid's being pleased lacks goodness: it is just configured in a way that is consistent with that judgement. But where explanations are called for, they have been provided. The principle (U) invites three explanatory questions. First, what makes it true? The answer to that, admittedly, is: Nothing. That has to be the answer because (U) is a nonexistence claim—a claim about what lacks *R*-worthiness. For something to lack *R*-worthiness is for there to be nothing that makes it *R*-worthy. The second question is: Why accept that? Because (unless the arguments for the Mainstream View succeed) there is an onus favouring this nonexistence claim. The third is: What explains why it applies to cases such as Sid's being pleased? That was answered in Section IV.

It might also seem that modifying a Brentano-style theory in the way I propose makes it less simple, thereby reducing its explanatory power. There are two replies to that. First,

this is only a sensible objection to a theory that gives a more complicated account than its rival of the *same* phenomena. But in this case, the rival theories only differ where they disagree about the phenomena. They give the same simple account of the value of a person's being pleased when her pleasure has an innocuous object—this is nonderivatively good—and disagree about its value when the object is not innocuous. The Mainstream View is not to be preferred for giving a simpler theory of the phenomena, if it gets the phenomena wrong. But secondly, in an important respect it is the Mainstream View that is less simple. It distinguishes between the value of Sid's being pleased and the value of his being pleased by suffering, claiming that that distinction is needed to make sense of the widely shared thought that “innocuous pleasures” can be nonderivatively good while “badly directed pleasures” are bad. According to the Aristotelian Alternative, there is no need for that value-distinction, and we should discard it.

### VII: The Argument from Crudeness

The Argument from Crudeness can now be answered too. This argument was that if we say that being pleased fails to call for promotion whenever one's pleasure is misdirected, then we get some cases clearly wrong: cases like Violet's enjoyment of bad music. The version of the Aristotelian Alternative I have described has two main resources for avoiding crudeness in its treatment of this and other cases.

The first is that in order to have a case of undermining, there needs to be an explanation of how all three conditions of (U) are met. In particular, an account is needed of how condition (iii) is met—an account of the kind supplied in Section IV's discussion of solidarity-opposition and correction. But in the case of Violet, this is not available. The misdirection of her pleasure towards bad music just means that conditions (i) and (ii) are met; condition (iii) is not. Our explanation of the opposition-worthiness of sadistic pleasure clearly does not apply to the enjoyment of bad music: promoting *that* is not a way of mistreating anyone; no solidarity-opposition is called for. So the promotion-worthiness of Violet's being pleased is not undermined.<sup>37</sup>

This also explains why our proposal does not lead to the crude claim that pleasure in others' suffering is never promotion-worthy. Many counterexamples to that blanket claim have been put to me: the enjoyment of marathon-running, politicians' humiliating gaffes, violent movies, consensual sadomasochism, the infliction of deserved punishment, the pain that shows your doctor that your medication is working, and so on.<sup>38</sup> But cases of undermining through solidarity-opposition, I claim, are those in which either promoting the enjoyment fails to treat the sufferer as mattering in the way he does, or it is opposed by a community of response worth joining. So I do not make the blanket claim. And examples like these only have plausibility as counterexamples to the blanket claim to the extent that neither of those explanations of undermining applies to them.

I think it is also too crude to claim that suffering at others' pleasure never calls for protective prevention. If a state of this kind reaches an Othello-like level of intensity,

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<sup>37</sup> However, we can still accommodate the judgement that her being pleased by bad music is bad. “Being pleased by bad music” can refer to the dispositional state that is her bad musical taste, or to a particular episode of pleasure taken in an instance of bad music. Both of those, as misdirected states, call for criticism. The first—the bad musical taste—also calls for non-promotion. But the second calls for both criticism and promotion. It manifests a variety of goodness and a variety of badness.

<sup>38</sup> You could sensibly doubt that some of these cases really involve *suffering*—but not all of them.

removing its eliciter would not count as *indulging* it. So the explanation I gave of the undermining of (S1) would not apply there either.

There is another sensible-looking way of handling the innocuous cases of “enjoyment of suffering” like marathon-running and politicians’ humiliation. Here, suffering is not the intentional object of a pro-attitude: what is liked is not *suffering*, but something else (the fortitude of the runner, the absurdity of the gaffe).<sup>39</sup> However, I think that this response, which makes the value of the enjoyment of suffering depend solely on its intentional object, itself turns out to be too crude. To see this, suppose the intentional and actual object of one’s response differ. Perhaps I know that, although you are not a sadist, if I show you a torture you will mistake it for clowning and find it funny. Here, the actual object of your enjoyment is someone’s agony, although its intentional object is innocent clowning. And the actual object matters, in the way emphasized by our earlier explanation. Your enjoyment (inadvertently) treats what is in fact terrible as not mattering in the way it does. That is why it would be fitting for you to regret the mistake if you discovered it, and why promoting your enjoyment would indeed be a way of mistreating the victim.<sup>40</sup> Your attitude would call for solidarity-opposition and thus for non-promotion, in the same way as the earlier examples. So our account *does* still generate an explanation of undermining in this case.

However, it is not only the actual object of one’s attitudes that matters; their intentional object does as well. Suppose that Sid mistakes someone’s clowning for agony and enjoys *that*. Here, Sid treats what *would* be terrible as not mattering in the way it would—so that is also a way of failing to treat the apparent victim as mattering in the way he does.<sup>41</sup> Again, it calls for solidarity-opposition and therefore non-promotion. Since both of these cases are covered, the implication is that where our principle (U) talks of being “oriented towards object *O*”, this should be read broadly, as ranging across both the intentional and actual objects of our attitudes of favour and disfavour.

We can also consider the corresponding cases of suffering through ignorance. If I suffer because I falsely believe you have benefited—I mistake your tears of sadness for tears of joy—then my suffering-state calls for correction in the way all envious attitudes do.<sup>42</sup> But if I suffer because I make the opposite error, mistaking your tears of joy for tears of sadness, then my suffering-response does not call for correction (only my beliefs do). So there is an explanation of undermining in the former case but not the latter. Here, the account makes a distinction where one seems to be needed.

The other main resource for avoiding crudeness comes from the distinctions my version of the Aristotelian Alternative recognizes between the varieties of goodness and badness, in focusing its explanations of undermining on particular favour- or disfavour-responses. For an illustration, consider a case of *Mitleid* in which you are upset by your loved one’s suffering. Here, it might seem attractive to follow Brentano in saying that as an instance of hating

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<sup>39</sup> See Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.204–6.

<sup>40</sup> Contrast this real-life case, though. The actor Andrew Sachs was badly burned during the filming of a scene in *Fawlty Towers* in which his character Manuel catches fire. When we laugh at his virtuosos clowning we are not mistreating his suffering, or him.

<sup>41</sup> Suppose I could show Sid a movie which he will believe records real torture, although it is only a computer-generated image. In enjoying that movie, Sid would not be mistreating anyone—so the first explanation of why his enjoyment calls for non-promotion would not apply. But the second would. His attitude is still one of positive orientation towards the mistreatment of other people, so it still calls for opposition, by joining the community of response that insists on its unacceptability.

<sup>42</sup> That is true whether you exist or not.

the bad this is intrinsically good—and that this is a problem for my view, since here your suffering is not misdirected, so condition (ii) of (U) is not met, so there is no undermining of the application of (S1) and (S2), so my view must classify your suffering as having the varieties of badness implied by (S1) and (S2). However, I think this is importantly right. Your suffering is in *those* ways bad. It calls for protective prevention, as (S1) implies: we must say this in order to explain why we respond well to the prospect of people’s *Mitleid* by preventing the loss that elicits it.<sup>43</sup> And it calls for dislike, as (S2) implies: we must say this in order to explain why, when Sid enjoys tormenting you by exposing you to the suffering of those you love, his state is misdirected in a way that is just as opposition-worthy as his enjoyment of physical torture. So these implications are importantly right; but at the same time, our view allows that your suffering’s being a fitting response to its object can call for responses of endorsement or approval. So your *Mitleid* is also in that way good.

I conclude that, like the Argument from Intrinsic Goodness and the Argument from Explanation, the Argument from Crudeness also fails. When the Aristotelian Alternative is developed in this form it is more, not less, discriminating in its value-attributions than the Mainstream View.

Therefore, since all three arguments fail, the case in defence of the Mainstream View collapses, the onus against it stands unanswered, and the Aristotelian Alternative should be accepted instead.

### VIII: Circularity?

That completes my argument for the Aristotelian Alternative. Before concluding, I discuss an objection. Examining it will help to bring out some distinctive structural features of the proposal I am making.

I have not described a comprehensive value theory. Rather, I have made a proposal about how a Brentano-style theory should be supplemented in order to give the right value-assignments to pleasure and suffering. However, if we modify a Brentano-style theory in the way I describe, it becomes structurally similar to a proposal Hurka rejects as circular.<sup>44</sup> Although he finds it attractive to deny goodness to pleasure when it has an evil object, he concludes that the circularity-problem makes this untenable and instead embraces the Mainstream View. My proposal needs to be defended against the same objection.

The view rejected by Hurka is a Brentano-style theory that includes the hedged base principle:

(BG) Pleasure is intrinsically good, except when its object is intrinsically evil

and the extension principle (he calls it a “recursion clause”):<sup>45</sup>

(HG) If  $x$  is intrinsically good, hating  $x$  for itself is intrinsically evil.

<sup>43</sup> It calls for the prevention of the suffering-eliciting loss, but not for the prevention of your suffering once the loss has occurred: the “protective prevention” referred to in (S1) covers the former but not the latter.

<sup>44</sup> *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, pp.144–9. For discussion and endorsement, see Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.222–6.

<sup>45</sup> An extension principle deserves that label if it is part of a theory aiming to supply a recursive function for value-attribution: a function providing an algorithm for determining, for any given object, the value of that object. However, I doubt that that was Brentano’s aim, and it is not mine.

According to Hurka, the flaws in a theory with this structure become apparent if we try applying it to a three-level case of the following form: Sid takes pleasure in Ted's envious hatred of Una's pleasure. If we want to deny goodness to Sid's pleasure, we must claim that the exception-condition in (BG) is satisfied: the object of his pleasure (Ted's hatred) is intrinsically evil. That requires a prior application of (HG) to Ted's hatred: he hates something intrinsically good (Una's pleasure). But that requires in turn that we can already evaluate Una's pleasure as intrinsically good, relying on a prior application of (BG). So "(BG) is to be restricted by a recursion-clause (HG) that in turn requires a completed (BG) before its own claims have substance."<sup>46</sup> Hurka's problem is this. When we ask, "Which pleasures does (BG) classify as intrinsically good?" we are offered the answer, "Those whose objects are not classified as intrinsically evil by principles including (HG)." But when we ask, "Which objects are classified as intrinsically evil by (HG)?" we are told, "Those forms of hate directed at objects classified as intrinsically good by principles including (BG)." The explanation travels in a circle.

My proposal invites a similar objection. What value does it assign to Sid's being pleased in Hurka's case? That depends on whether it is one of the exceptions allowed for by (P1) and (P2). To settle that, we must ask whether it meets conditions (i)-(iii) in (U). We can only answer that by first determining what response Ted's suffering calls for. That depends on whether *it* meets conditions (i)-(iii). And to settle *that*, we need to determine what response Una's pleasure calls for. That depends on whether this, in turn, belongs to the exceptions allowed for by (P1) and (P2). But determining what those exceptions *are* was our initial problem. So don't we have the same circle?

However, this objection is mistaken. It is true that in this case we must first apply the proposal to Una's pleasure. But we can do that, without any circularity. Suppose Una's pleasure is directed towards the taste of a nice meal. There are three possible views about such states of sensory pleasure:

- (E1) Sensory pleasure is a state without an attitude-object structure.
- (E2) Sensory pleasure is a state of liking sensations that are intrinsically attraction-worthy<sup>47</sup>
- (E3) Sensory pleasure is a state of liking sensations that are neither good nor bad.

The third of these views seems the most plausible: it is supported by the phenomenon of hitherto pleasant sensation which is no longer experienced as attractive—as when you eat a food beyond the point of satiety.<sup>48</sup> However, on any of these views, sensory pleasure never has an object that calls for any other response.<sup>49</sup> No further application of our

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<sup>46</sup> *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, p.148.

<sup>47</sup> Ewing seems to endorse a view of this third kind when he says, "For a person with my sense of taste it is after all appropriate to like strawberries" (*The Definition of Good*, p.167).

<sup>48</sup> A person who has eaten too much chocolate can still recognize the taste of chocolate; so it seems that this element of sensory experience is common to the first and last mouthful, but changes from being an object of liking to disliking. For the neurological details, see Edmund T. Rolls, "Taste, Olfactory and Food Texture Reward Processing in the Brain, and the Control of Food Intake".

<sup>49</sup> A fourth view is that it is indeterminate which of the first three is correct (compare Dennett, "Quining Qualia", Section 4). But if, on any of the first three views, sensory pleasure never has an object that calls for any other response, the same is true on the fourth.

exception-hedged principles is needed to settle that. If so, Una's pleasure is not subject to undermining, and does call for sympathetic pleasure. So we can evaluate her pleasure, and therefore Ted's suffering which takes her pleasure as its object, and therefore Sid's pleasure which takes Ted's suffering as *its* object, without any circularity.

Indeed, the theory discussed by Hurka is not circular either. As long as Una's pleasure does not have an intrinsically evil object, the combination of (BG) and (HG) says that her pleasure is intrinsically good, Ted's suffering is intrinsically evil, and Sid's pleasure is not intrinsically good. Actually, in saying this, that theory is too crude: the example lacks enough detail to tell whether Sid's being pleased is promotion-worthy or not.<sup>50</sup> Ted's envy might be the sort of silly state that does not call for sympathy, and Sid's pleasure in it the kind of *Schadenfreude* that is not mistreatment; or it might be an intense, Othello-like state that would make Sid's being pleased by Ted's suffering call for solidarity-opposition. So the view discussed by Hurka should be rejected; but it is not circular.

The mistake made by the circularity-objection is this. If we introduce an exception-hedged base principle such as (BG), (P1) or (P2) into our theory, it is natural to think that we will need to rely on a prior application of the *other* principles of the theory to specify which cases count as exceptions, on pain of circularity. But that is not so. There would indeed be a fatal circularity in a theory in which, in order to apply a given principle to a particular object of evaluation, we had to rely on a prior application of that principle to the *same* object. But there is no such circularity in a theory in which, in order to apply a given principle to one object of evaluation (such as Sid's pleasure) we rely on a prior application of that principle to another, different object of evaluation (such as Una's pleasure).

In a theory that contains the exception-hedged base principles (P1), (P2), (S1) and (S2), and invokes the extension principle (U) to determine the exceptions, (U) does not function by providing us with a list of exception-cases, identified prior to any application of the base principles. Instead, the exceptions are generated through the repeated application of all the principles of the theory, at successively higher levels. The first step is to apply the theory to pleasure- and suffering-states that do not have objects that call for the opposite response—for example, sensory pleasure and suffering.<sup>51</sup> These states do not satisfy condition (ii) in (U), so the presumptively fitting responses to them are not subject to undermining. Value-assignments to those states can then be used to determine the value of higher-level pleasure- and suffering-responses to them, by applying the same set of principles; from there, we can determine the value of responses to those responses,

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<sup>50</sup> Another problem with this theory is that it makes the value of Ted's envious suffering dependent on whether Una's pleasure is good or bad. But Section IV gives the right view about this: the correction-worthiness of *envy* as a response to Una's pleasure is independent of the value of the object of her pleasure.

<sup>51</sup> In most cases, we will be able to begin by evaluating a pleasure- or suffering-state that does not have some further pleasure- or suffering-state as its object. But there is also the case imagined by Zimmerman: Jones is pleased at Smith's pleasure-state, which is a state of being pleased at Jones's pleasure-state. Zimmerman's earlier view is that the value of those states is indeterminate ("On the Intrinsic Value of States of Pleasure", pp.44–5); his later view is that both are good (*The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.221–2). On my view, the answer is again: It depends. If we allow that neither state has any feature in virtue of which it calls for displeasure, then neither state satisfies condition (ii) in (U); so the presumptively fitting response of sympathetic pleasure is not undermined; so both states are good. However, an exception is possible. Suppose Smith and Jones both believe that the other's pleasure is malicious, and *that* is what pleases them. Then the application of (P1) and (P2) could be subject to undermining, and both could lack any kind of goodness.

and so on. We could do this, without circularity, even in a theory with *no* unhedged base principles.<sup>52</sup> With any Brentano-style theory, there is an iterative procedure for determining what has value: when it is modified as I have described, there is also an iterative procedure for determining what lacks it.

### IX: Conclusion: Hedged Principles and Explanation

There are two main conclusions. First, we should reject the Mainstream View about the value of pleasure, and accept the Aristotelian Alternative instead. Secondly, we should not be quick to move from recognizing the limitless complexity of the evaluative landscape to abandoning the aspiration to produce a general theory that explains it. A regular value-holism remains credible, explaining this complexity as resulting from the iterative interaction of a set of relatively simple but exception-hedged principles. This gives us a model for value-explanation that is not a matter of subsuming particular cases under exceptionless generalizations, but it still gives us a principle-to-particular-case direction of explanation.

Whether this deserves to be called a defence of “generalism” against “particularism” is debatable.<sup>53</sup> But without entering that terminological debate, the substantive interest here has been in supporting the prospects of a holism-friendly axiological theory that offers credible explanations of the structure of value. The paper contributes to the more general project of showing that exception-hedged principles can play a genuinely explanatory role in ethical theory, by spelling out a particular way in which such principles can operate within an axiological theory: they can themselves play a role in explaining when the exceptions are, and are not, realized.<sup>54</sup> It is *because* suffering, as such, presumptively calls for sympathy and the fittingness of the response is not undermined that Sid’s being pleased by it is opposition-worthy. And because of that, his being pleased is not promotion-worthy.

I close by acknowledging two limitations in my argument. First, fully defending a proposal in axiological theory means showing that it is superior to every rival. Of course, I have not done that. Much more modestly, I have sought to answer three arguments for one alternative. True, that alternative is the Mainstream View, and the arguments I have focused on are I think the most powerful and influential ones in its favour. However, I have not shown that there is no other good argument through which the Mainstream View can discharge the onus I claim it bears. Nor have I shown that other alternatives to the Mainstream View fail: alternatives denying that being pleased is ever nonderivatively good.<sup>55</sup> Such views incur a burden which mine does not: the burden of explaining where

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<sup>52</sup> Suppose all the principles in your value theory have the form:

If and because *X* belongs to type *T*, then *X* has value *V*, unless (a) *X* bears relation *U* to *Y* and (b) *Y* has value *W*.

Then there are two ways to settle the value of an object *O*, prior to any other value-assignment: (i) if *O* does not belong to any type *T*, and (ii) if *O* does not bear any relation *U* to another object.

<sup>53</sup> That distinction can be drawn in as many ways as there are definitions of “general principles” and justificational claims about them. For discussion, see the contributions to Hooker and Little (eds), *Moral Particularism*.

<sup>54</sup> For other contributions to that more general project, in its application to reasons rather than values, see Horta, “Reasons as Defaults” and *Reasons as Defaults*; Lance and Little, “Defeasibility and the Normative Grasp of Context”; and for discussion, Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles*, pp.111–17.

<sup>55</sup> See notes 1 and 3.

good pleasure-states get their goodness from. But I have not shown that that burden cannot be discharged.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, the account I offer of the conditions under which undermining arises is open-ended. According to principle (U), undermining occurs when, although a state presumptively calls for response *R*, it is misoriented in a way that makes not-*R* fitting; but exactly when is that? I have given two explanations—oppositional and correctional—of how this can be true, but no algorithm for producing further explanations. If there is such an algorithm, it could be used to replace condition (iii). But I doubt that there is one. Any further way in which a response is misoriented could potentially generate a kind of undermining, and I cannot see how to circumscribe the ways in which that could happen. We just have to keep looking for them. A Brentano-style theory of value can give us insight into the structure of value; but it cannot provide all the resources we need in order to determine the varieties of goodness and badness that things (sometimes) have and lack.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> For Zimmerman’s discussion of this issue, see *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*, pp.225–6.

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