

Why People Prefer Pleasure to Pain

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Happiness requires something in its own nature, or in ours, to give it influence, and to determine our desire of it and approbation of pursuing it (Richard Price, *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, Ch. 1, Sec. 1).

Why do we dislike and wish to avoid pain and suffering? Why do we prefer pleasure to pain? There are three answers to be considered. (1) We have a *reason* for wanting pleasure and for shunning pain. Our normal attitudes are guided by some *rational insight* about the nature of pleasurable and painful experiences. (2) Pleasure and pain do not in themselves provide any reason for wanting the one and shunning the other. It is just a brute contingent fact about our constitution that we are disposed to want and seek pleasure and dislike and avoid pain. (3) That pleasure is wanted and pain unwanted is a simple tautology. The attitudes towards the experience enter into the *definition* of 'pleasure' and 'pain'. A 'pleasant' experience is *defined* as a wanted experience and a 'painful' experience is *defined* as an unwanted one. We will be discussing philosophers who have held the second and third positions. I defend the first position.

I. Defining 'Pleasure' and 'Pain'

Though many philosophers these days believe that there is no single definition that will embrace all 'pleasant' experiences, such philosophers have not studied the approach of defining both pleasure and pain by the attitudes had towards them. People have a welcoming attitude towards pleasant experiences. We desire our lives to be enjoyable and we shun pain. We prefer pleasurable to painful experiences. Herbert Spencer equated pleasure with 'a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there' and pain with 'a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and keep out' (*Principles of Psychology*). The word 'feeling' is not crucial here, and one can experiment with different descriptions of the attitudes involved. Some philosophers have defined pleasure as an element of experience which we 'wish to prolong'. C. D. Broad suggested that a pleasant experience is simply one which we 'like' for its quality. Similar definitions are often given for pain. Such definitions make clear the way in which pleasure and pain are opposites.

If such proposals are read as offering a *sufficient* condition, then the particular 'feel' of the experience becomes incidental to its pleasantness or painfulness. There is no experience which could not be a pleasure or pain provided that we have the mentioned attitude towards it. As Kurt Baier said when defending such a view: 'We might have liked and disliked different sorts of sensations from the ones we actually like and dislike, but whatever sorts of sensations we like and dislike, we only call pains those which we dislike' (*The Moral Point of View*, p. 273. Baier has since modified his position).

This consequence of the view some philosophers might find attractive. J. N. Findlay has argued:

Were pleasure and unpleasure peculiar *qualities* of experience, as loud and sweet are peculiar qualities of what comes before us in sense-experience, it would be a gross, empirical accident that we uniformly sought the one and avoided the other, as it is a gross, empirical accident in the case of the loud or the sweet, and this of all suppositions the most incredible and absurd. Plainly it is in some sense trivially necessary that we should want pleasure (or not want unpleasure) . . . (*Values and Intentions*, p. 177).

This argument supports a Broad-type view where pleasure is simply *any* quality of experience that is wanted or 'liked' and unpleasantness any unwanted or 'disliked' quality.

Findlay rightly emphasizes there being *some* intimate relationship between an experience's being pleasurable or unpleasant and its being wanted or unwanted. Unless this intimate tie is fixed within the very meaning of 'pleasure' and 'unpleasantness' it becomes some gross accident that it is the one rather than the other that we want. Why should such an accident be, as Findlay says, 'of all suppositions the most incredible and absurd?' *All* people, *all* dogs, *all* gorillas, and indeed *all* animals shun the painful and welcome the pleasant experience normally when adults. In other respects there are the greatest variations from one animal to another. The extent of such agreement on tastes over pleasure and pain would constitute an extraordinary coincidence if there were no deeper requirement for such agreement. Secondly, is there not something about pain which makes pain a *more suitable* or *more fitting* object to dislike than pleasure? Finally, it must be more than a contingent fact that people prefer what is good to what is bad, and it seems more than a contingent fact that it is pleasure rather than pain that is good (intrinsically).

For the above reasons, the second position outlined at the beginning, that it is simply some brute contingent fact that we want pleasure and do not want pain, is unacceptable. The most obvious way of avoiding this problem of contingency is to adopt the Spencer-type definitions whereby

it becomes true by definition that pleasure is wanted and pain unwanted. Unfortunately, there are also serious problems in this position.

Firstly, this view makes it logically impossible to desire pain and not to desire pleasure. But, might not a masochist want pain or avoid pleasure? And are there not times when someone does not want to enjoy himself?

Secondly, though Spencer did not realize this, it is an implication of his definition that the particular feel of the experience is incidental to pleasure and pain. What is sufficient is that one have a certain attitude towards the experience. In principle, it must be possible for any feeling or experience to be a pain or pleasure. *Any* sensation or experience would be painful if a desire to be rid of it were introduced.

Findlay, thinking in terms of 'unpleasure' rather than 'pain', argued that pleasure and unpleasantness could not be special experiences. Findlay thought this followed simply from the fact that pleasure and unpleasantness have such a reliable effect on motivation. But there has to be some mistake here. Itches, and even pains, have equally reliable effects on motivation yet there clearly is some limit on the sort of sensation that can be an itch or a pain. As pleasure is connected with a desire to seek the experience, so an itch is connected with a desire to scratch. But not just any sensation could be an itch with the mere addition of a desire to scratch the area. Nor could just any sensation be a pain. Brush your cheek lightly with your finger and you feel a light sensation which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. That sensation would never be an intense pain, nor even a mild pain, whatever desire you might introduce.

Nor could just *any* experience be pleasurable. Consider the pain you feel when the dentist is drilling a tooth and unexpectedly catches a raw nerve. A sensation of that quality or feel could not lose its painfulness and become intrinsically pleasant merely by changing the accompanying desires. Masochism does not refute this claim. The sensation in question remains a pain; the person would not be a masochist unless it were *pain* that he inflicted upon himself. The masochist experiences pleasure *along-side*, and in consequence of, pain. The pain may *cause* him pleasure or delight, but it cannot be intrinsically pleasant.

A definition of pleasure as a wanted experience and pain as an unwanted experience thus begins to appear unsatisfying. By ruling out masochism it seems too tight. By putting no limits on the kinds of sensations or experiences that can be pleasurable or painful other definitions seem too loose. Yet, we must find some close link between pleasure and desire, since it must be more than an accident that it is pleasure rather than pain that we want.

II. The Mill Fallacy

That pleasure is good and that it is desired are obviously interrelated. But which is the more fundamental fact? (1) Is our desire for pleasure a

consequence of pleasure's being good? Is pleasure's being good our *reason* for wanting it? (2) Or, is pleasure's being good a consequence of our desiring it? That the former position is the correct one may be shown by proving the latter to be the incorrect one. There is no sensible third alternative. On any third position pleasure's being good would be neither our reason for wanting it nor a consequence of our desire. From this it would follow that we want pleasure for no reason, or for the wrong reason, and that it is merely through lucky coincidence that what we want is actually good or worth wanting. This proposition would be absurd.

How are we to understand a suggestion that pleasure's being good is a consequence of our desiring it and that pain's being bad is due to pain's being unwanted? One interpretation is that an object's being good is simply entailed by its being desired, or that the word 'good' when applied to pleasure simply *means* 'desired'.

To see the fault in this position we need only recall a lesson gained from studying Mill's *Utilitarianism*. While attempting to establish happiness, or pleasure, as the sole standard for what is good Mill referred to the fact that people desire happiness as proof that happiness is desirable. G. E. Moore pounced on Mill for this, calling it a fallacy, so obvious, 'that it is quite wonderful how Mill failed to see it' (*Principia Ethica*, p. 67). 'Desirable' and 'good' do not mean simply 'desired' but '*worthy* or *deserving* of being desired'. An object can be desired without being worth desiring, or it could be worth desiring without being desired in fact. That people desire to lynch rapists, or enslave their neighbours, does not entail that it is desirable or good that they do so.

Recently, some philosophers have come to Mill's defence, arguing that we do have some sort of proof of desirability in actual desire, though something short of strict deductive proof. It would seem that they are committed to finding some sort of inductive proof.

The distinction between something's being desired and its being worthy of desire can hardly be denied. In what way, then, might desire be inductive evidence of what is worth desiring or desirable? Defenders of Mill have not been clear. The only sense I can give is as follows: actual desire is evidence of desirability in the way that actual belief may be evidence of what is true.

That people in a village believe that their postman's name is Jack is some evidence that his name is indeed Jack. That his name is Jack is not *contingent* upon their having this belief; rather, their belief, if it is correct, is a contingent consequence of his name's being Jack. Because people are rational they are disposed to believe what they have reason to believe. Given this, there is more than a random chance that there is some truth in what people in fact believe.

Similarly, because people are rational they tend to desire objects when they have reason for doing so. In consequence, there is more than a random

chance that there is good in objects in fact desired. However, people can be mistaken in wanting something as they can be mistaken in believing something. They may desire some food thinking that it is good when in fact it poisons them.

What is said here holds for intrinsic goods and not just for instrumental goods. There remains a distinction between an object's being desired as an end, and its being worth desiring as an end. That people sometimes come to desire money as an end in itself does not entail that money is intrinsically desirable. One who would desire money as an end is simply mistaken or misguided. It is conceivable that some species could evolve so constituted that the individual has a strong desire to stand in a corner pummelling his head with a rubber mallet. The activity would not thereby be intrinsically worthwhile. Rather, we would have a silly, misdirected creature.

The tying of goodness to desire parallels the often ridiculed tying of an action's being good or right to God's commanding it. One asks: Does God command the act because it is right, or is it right because God commands it? If we take the former position, we are admitting that the commanding does not make the act right, and that it must be right on its own account, independently of being commanded. If we take the latter position we are stuck with the implication that if God had commanded us to murder and rape our neighbour rather than to love platonically, these acts would have been good. But this is preposterous. Given this dilemma, we are forced to conclude that an act's being right or good could not originate with its being commanded. The same dilemma arises for one who would connect goodness to God's desires. And this same dilemma arises for one who would tie goodness to *man's* desires. We are forced to conclude that an end's being good and desirable could not originate with its being desired and that the thing must be good and desirable on its own account and independently of being desired.

Thus pleasure's being good cannot be a consequence of its being desired. From this we can conclude, for reasons stated at the beginning of this section, that pleasure's being good precedes our desire for it and is our reason for desiring it.

III. Hume and Epicurus

An experience is pleasurable or painful not merely by being wanted or unwanted but by being worthy of our desire or aversion. But it is possible for something to be worthy of desire without actually being desired. How then does an object which is worthy of desire come to be desired in fact?

By meriting our desire pleasure provides us with reason to desire it. It is, however, logically possible for there to be creatures which do not desire what they have reason to desire. A creature must have a *rational disposition*

Irwin Goldstein

to be disposed to follow reason. Man and other pleasure-seeking animals are creatures of rational disposition. A creature capable of feeling pleasure and pain but having no rational capacity is conceivable. He could be indifferent to pleasure and pain, as he could be indifferent to his own bodily mutilation or death. As it is logically possible for there to be a creature whose beliefs are not influenced by evidence or reason, so it is possible for there to be creatures whose desires are not influenced by good and bad. But such a creature is very different from man. Man is rational; indeed, this rationality is entailed by the very concept of being a man. Entailed by being a man is that one's beliefs and desires will not arise randomly but will arise in conjunction with reasons.

Thus, as Price suggested of happiness, there are two parts to the explanation of why we want and approve pleasure. One part lies in the nature of pleasure, and the other part lies in our own make-up. Pleasure is good and thereby provides a reason for desiring it. We are of rational disposition and thus disposed to desire things when we have reason for doing so.

The account of how pleasure and pain influence action is similar to the account of how they influence desire. It is part of a person's rational disposition that his actions are not arbitrary. An animal who seeks or prolongs some experience because he finds it pleasant has a reason for behaving this way, and his reason is the value he recognizes in the pleasure. David Hume argued that moral or value judgments could not be judgments of reason, or factual judgments, by claiming that if they were they could not influence action. However, that one thing influences another cannot be ruled out *a priori*; indeed, it is *entailed* by the idea of being a man or any other rational animal that one's actions are influenced by reason. Furthermore, even if it is admitted, as Hume insisted, that all action requires desire or passion, it still must be acknowledged that part of being rational is that one's desires do not arise randomly but in conjunction with reason. When rational, one's desires do not have a life or will of their own but are guided by what one perceives as worth having or worth avoiding. Thus reason clearly *does* influence action, either directly, or indirectly by first influencing our desires. In the case of pleasure and pain it is the apprehension, or recognition, that pleasure is worth having and pain worth avoiding that leads to the seeking behaviour characteristic of pleasure and the avoidance behaviour characteristic of pain and unpleasantness.

Some philosophers have denied that reason has a role in our coming to want pleasure or to dislike pain. Indeed, David Hume denied a role to reason in the acceptance of *any* ultimate end. He argued:

It appears evident that the ultimate ends of human action can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties. Ask a man *why he uses exercise*; he

will answer *because he desires to keep his health*. If you enquire *why he desires health*, he will readily reply *because sickness is painful*. If you push your enquiries further and desire a reason *why he hates pain*, it is impossible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object.

Presenting a parallel argument whereby one thing is desired for the sake of another, and the other is desired as a means to pleasure, Hume proceeds:

And beyond this it is an absurdity to ask for a reason. It is impossible there can be a progress *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection (*An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix 1).

Epicurus is also reported as holding that reason does not guide our attitudes toward pleasure and pain. Diogenes Laertius wrote:

As proof that pleasure is the end he adduces the fact that living creatures, so soon as they are born, are well content with pleasure and are at enmity with pain, by the promptings of nature and apart from reason (*The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. II, p. 663, R. D. Hicks translator).

Though there is sense in both arguments, notice the position into which both philosophers have argued themselves. Both deny that our attitudes towards pleasure and pain are guided by reason. Neither seems to think that the attitudes enter into the definition of pleasure and pain. Consequently, both occupy the position which Findlay calls 'incredible and absurd' whereby it is some gross accident that it is pleasure rather than pain that is wanted and sought.

Secondly, by denying that we have reason for desiring pleasure both philosophers implicitly deny that pleasure is good prior to our wanting or approving it. (If it were good prior to our wanting it, its being good would be a fine reason for wanting it.) Both were thus led to explain pleasure's being desirable as a consequence of our having a favourable attitude toward it or desiring it, and in doing so both commit the Mill Fallacy.

Epicurus referred to our attitude of being content with pleasure and at enmity with pain as *proof* that pleasure is desirable and good (indeed, the *sole* good or 'the end'). But as an object to be desirable and good must not merely be desired but be worthy of desire so it must be not merely something we in fact are content with but be something worthy of our being content with it. Our being content with something no more deductively proves its desirability than does our desiring it.

Hume assigned pleasure's being desirable to its being in accord with human sentiment. He argued: there cannot be a reason for every desire;

something must be desirable in itself and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment. But what is this but to attribute pleasure's being desirable to its being desired? For what does it mean to say that pleasure accords with our sentiments but that it is something we in fact want or approve? In another context the claim that something accords with our sentiments might mean that it is not simply desired but worthy of desiring. But Hume can hardly be interpreted as claiming that pleasure is desirable 'because it is worthy of being desired', for this is circular. To explain why pleasure is desirable one must explain why it is worth desiring. Furthermore, if Hume is ready to distinguish our desire for pleasure from pleasure's being worthy of desire, then why is this worthiness not our *reason* for desiring pleasure? He is here in the middle of arguing that we have no reason for desiring pleasure. Consequently, it seems that by attributing pleasure's desirability to its accord with human sentiment Hume is simply attributing pleasure's desirability to its being desired. Thus when his statements are unpacked, we see that Hume has committed a version of the Mill Fallacy.

That there is a clear distinction between an object's being desired and its being worthy of being desired, and that an object is desirable and good only by being worthy of desire, have not always been within the philosopher's store of wisdom. This becomes obvious once it is pointed out, but will not necessarily occur to every thinker on his own. Had Epicurus and Hume been clearly aware of the distinction, they would have found it difficult to admit that pleasure merits our desire and then to deny that we have reason for wanting pleasure. What better reason could there be for desiring something than its being worthy of that desire?

The claim that we have no reason for wanting pleasure and disliking pain is equivalent to the claim that our attitudes towards pleasure and pain, and our preference of the one over the other, are *arbitrary*. It strikes one immediately as absurd to say that our preference of pleasure to pain is an arbitrary one; the absurdity lies in the obvious fact that pain does not *merit* our desire and approval in the way that pleasure does.

What, then, led Hume and Epicurus to deny a role to reason? Hume argued as follows: though health might be your reason for wanting exercise and avoiding pain your reason for wanting health, one cannot give a reason for hating pain. Pain 'is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object'. One cannot have a reason for every desire: 'It is impossible there can be a progress *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired'.

Hume has here assumed that the only kind of reason one could have for desiring something is that object's being a means to some other object which one desires. Hume rightly claims that it is not for this sort of reason that we hate pain. He is also right to conclude that if every desire had this sort of reason, the existence of a single desire would entail an infinite

number of additional desires. However, Hume's idea of what could be a reason for desiring something is too narrow. It does not here occur to Hume that our reason for desiring something could lie in the nature of the object itself rather than in some connection it has with another desired object. Our reason for hating pain lies not in some effect of pain but in the very quality of the experience. No infinite regress need arise. Health may be our reason for wanting exercise, and the avoidance of pain, our reason for wanting health. *The nature of the experience* is our reason for disliking pain, and that is the end of the matter.

Epicurus' reasoning was quite different. 'Living creatures, so soon as they are born, are well content with pleasure and are at enmity with pain, by the promptings of nature and apart from reason', he reportedly held. This suggests that Epicurus reasoned as follows: since all creatures, including the species of the lowest intelligence, have these attitudes toward pleasure and pain, and since all animals have these attitudes from birth or early in life and thus when their rational capacities are negligible, it cannot be reason or some rational consideration which has determined their attitudes. The desire for pleasure therefore must be instinctive and pre-rational.

However, though the welcoming attitude toward pleasure and the shunning attitude toward pain is common to all animal species which we believe experience pleasure and pain, it does not follow that reason is not involved. For a rational capacity or intelligence is also common to all such animals. Indeed, it may be an analytic point about 'animals' that to be an 'animal' a being must have some rational mental capacity. That children and mice as well as adult human beings are 'content with' pleasure and 'at enmity with' pain does not show that no reason is required in coming to have these attitudes but that no sophisticated reason is required. Creatures of elementary intelligence are still capable of elementary insights.

When we think of Reason, or 'The Intellect', we often think immediately of the more complex rational processes and overlook the primitive ones. However, some rational capacity is involved simply in recognizing a sound or a face as familiar, i.e. as one which one has experienced previously. Even an act so basic as seeking or avoiding something manifests intelligence in many ways. When a mouse avoids a certain turn in a maze after being shocked there earlier, he manifests the rational capacity to distinguish right from left and the recognition that the shock occurred at this spot. In fearing repetition of the shock he manifests inductive reasoning. Seeking or avoiding something entails knowing what one is seeking or avoiding, knowing what one is doing, and recognizing some connection between one's behaviour and the end which is being sought or avoided. An animal who cuts short an activity he finds painful or prolongs an activity because he is finding it pleasant shows a recognition of a connection between the pain or pleasure and his present activity, i.e. he realizes that the present activity

Irwin Goldstein

affects or is responsible for the pain or pleasure. Even the most primitive animals who want pleasure and shun pain have numerous rational capacities such as these. Thus we cannot conclude from the fact that a creature is unsophisticated that its attitudes toward pleasure and pain are not mediated by reason.

Epicurus almost seemed to think that there are some creatures totally devoid of rational capacity who nevertheless are attracted to pleasure and averse to pain. From this premise it would directly follow that their attitudes toward pleasure and pain were not mediated by reason. But, firstly, there are no such creatures; all creatures who have these attitudes towards pleasure and pain in fact have some intelligence. Furthermore, such a premise could never be established by empirical evidence. Creatures who lack language can provide only their behaviour as reliable evidence of their attitudes. The best evidence that some non-lingual being wants and approves pleasure is that he seeks objects or prolongs activities which we expect him to find pleasant or avoids objects or cuts short activities which he finds painful. But, as we have shown, seeking and avoiding require the use of intelligence; similarly, prolonging some activity because one finds it pleasant or cutting short an activity because it is painful require intelligence. Thus the evidence which best shows us what attitudes a creature has towards pleasure and pain also shows us that he has some rational capacity.

The rational insight about pleasure and pain which guides our attitudes is simple and basic and thus accessible to unsophisticated animals. No complex reasoning or comparing of pros and cons is needed to recognize something intrinsically good and worth having in pleasant experiences and something intrinsically bad and worth avoiding in pain. The good or bad in these experiences is not hidden; it is not merely contingently associated with the experiences waiting to be noticed or discovered. Experiential qualities do not exist undetected; that quality of a sensation or experience which is good or bad we necessarily must be conscious of. That there is something in a pleasant experience worth having and something in a painful experience worth avoiding is obvious.

IV. Richard Hare

An Emotivist or Prescriptivist moral philosopher would resist my thesis. I hold that pain is bad independently of our attitude towards it and that pain's being bad is our reason for disliking it. For these philosophers there is no property or fact of pain which *is* its-being bad. Thus pain could not provide us with reason for disliking it *by being bad*. For an Emotivist, by calling pain 'bad' one is merely expressing some present emotion or attitude toward pain. For a Prescriptivist, by calling pain 'bad' or pleasure 'good'

one is merely performing some speech act of condemning pain or commending pleasure.

Such philosophers, however, will stumble upon major weaknesses in their theories when they are asked to explain *why* we should desire and approve or commend pleasure rather than pain. Without acknowledging some property of *merit* in the experience, they will be unable to give a sensible and sound answer to this question. The problems they are vulnerable to are well illustrated by Hare's discussion entitled 'Pain and Evil' (*Aristotelian Society Proceedings, Supplementary Volume, 1964*).

Why, for Hare, do we have such negative attitudes toward pain?

The constraints we are under are contingent, though they are readily explicable. There are good reasons why very few people get into a state in which they do not mind high intensities of pain. Nearly all causes of pain are also causes of harm to the organism; pain is, therefore, such a good warning device—and has indeed been developed as such—that we have acquired, partly by evolution and partly by learning, a very firm disposition to avoid pain; and this disposition is associated with a subjective feeling of dislike (p. 96).

Pain is correlated with bodily harm. In consequence, there was a survival advantage to animals who dislike it. By disliking and avoiding pain an animal would, unwittingly, be avoiding bodily harm. Animals who disliked pain were more fit to survive than those who did not, and thus a universal dislike of pain resulted from evolutionary forces. This account, though plausible at first sight, is riddled with problems.

Hare speaks of this connection with bodily harm as a 'good reason' for disliking pain, and he may be thinking that this connection provides our justification for disliking pain. But it does not. That one thing signals the presence of something bad provides no justification whatsoever for disliking that thing or regarding *it* as evil. An alarm which is a good warning device of fires or burglars would not be disliked or called 'evil' for being so, and pain's being a reliable sign of bodily harm does not in itself give us reason for disliking pain or calling pain 'evil'.

Furthermore, pain is an *intrinsic* evil—something bad on its own account and independently of any connections it may have with other evil things (such as bodily harm). Pain would be bad even if not correlated with bodily harm. The justification for disliking pain and calling it 'bad' is to be found in the intrinsic nature of the experience.

Hare's account may be read as a causal hypothesis, but here too it runs into serious problems. Pain is correlated with harm and thus through evolution nature has engrained an aversion for pain. A dislike of pain has survival advantage. Within this explanation of the origin of our dislike, it is a primitive, unexplained fact that pain already happened to be correlated

with harm. But how is it that pain came to be correlated with harm in the first place?

Within Hare's thinking, that pain has a particular feel to it is incidental to its coming to be disliked and avoided. Dislike is engrained because the sensation happened to be correlated with harm. A sensation of a different quality would have served quite as well. Had pleasurable and tingling sensations been correlated with harm, nature would have as happily engrained dislike of *them*. Had pain not been correlated with harm, people might have easily been indifferent to it or perhaps even desired it.

An implication of Hare's view is that the uniformity throughout nature in our attitudes to pleasure and pain is an accident. One sensation could serve a warning function as well as another; all that is needed is for nature to engrain dislike of it. It could be as natural that some people should have pleasant or tingling sensations correlated with harm, and consequently disliked, as it is for some people to have blue eyes while others have green eyes. Thus, in the end, it remains on Hare's view some bizarre accident that our attitudes to pain are uniform and that we prefer pleasant to painful sensations. And this is unacceptable.

Hare did not directly ask what, if anything, *justifies* our disliking pain and calling it 'bad'. The question is crucial. I have already noted that no justification for considering pain intrinsically bad is found in pain's being a sign of bodily harm. One might, however, suggest that the fact that we dislike pain itself justifies calling pain bad. But it does not. If an object did not warrant our aversion of it, it would not warrant our calling the object 'bad' either. The fact that someone dislikes Indians does not establish that he would be justified in calling them 'evil'. Only if one is justified in disliking something is he justified in considering it bad.

A suggestion that desire or dislike might itself justify calling an object 'good' or 'bad' is another version of the Mill Fallacy. As something must be not merely desired but worth desiring to be desirable and good, so it must be worth desiring and not merely desired to justify our *calling* it 'desirable' and 'good'.

That we *are* justified in calling pain 'bad' could not seriously be denied. No one would claim that a judgment that pain is normally bad is an arbitrary judgment, and that it is no less appropriate and sensible to *commend* pain as being universally worth seeking and intrinsically good. Hare nowhere doubts that we are *right* in calling pain 'bad'. Where then lies our justification for disliking pain and calling it 'evil'? It will be clear by now that our reason for a negative attitude toward pain lies in the intrinsic nature of the experience. It is by feeling the way it does, i.e. awful and bad, that pain justifies our aversion of it. Similarly, our justification for desiring pleasure and calling pleasure 'desirable' and 'good' lies in the intrinsic quality of the experience. It is by being good and meriting our desire that a pleasant experience provides justification for desiring it and commending it as 'good'.

Meriting aversion must be some *fact* about pain. That pain merits our dislike could not give us reason for disliking pain without being a fact about pain. That pleasure merits our desiring it is our reason for desiring pleasure. But this merit of pleasure could not provide a reason for desiring pleasure unless it were some fact about pleasure.

That pleasure provides reason for desiring it entails that it provides justification or merit for desiring it and that it is worth desiring. And to say that pleasure is worth desiring is equivalent to saying that it is desirable. These concepts—providing reason or justification for desire; meriting desire; being worthy or deserving of desire; being desirable and good—are all interconnected. If the first one represents some (abstract) property of pleasure, as it plainly does, then those which it entails also must represent some property.

That pain provides reason or justification for dislike is a factual claim. But this claim entails that pain warrants, merits, or deserves our dislike. And this entails that pain is undesirable or bad. These propositions are all interconnected. If the first one is factual, as it clearly is, then those which it entails are also factual.

The argument in this paper drives us to the conclusion that pleasure's being desirable or worthy of desire and pain's being undesirable or worthy of dislike are *facts*. One who would deny a factual status to such merit would be hit by numerous serious problems. He will be unable to show why the judgment that it is pain rather than pleasure that is 'bad' is not arbitrary. Yet the judgment clearly is not arbitrary. He will be unable to provide a workable account of why we should dislike and avoid pain rather than love and seek it. Yet there clearly must be some important reason. He will be vulnerable to the numerous objections found against the two accounts which were alternatives to my own in explaining our preference of pleasure to pain.

There are special features of pain sensations not shared by pleasant or tingling sensations which make them particularly well suited as correlates of bodily harm. To miss this is to miss the heart of the matter. Nature, through evolutionary forces, chose pain over pleasant or tingling sensations to be correlated with harm because pain, being bad and worth avoiding on its own account, is something creatures have reason to avoid on its own merit. The consequence of pain's being associated with harm is that rational creatures tend to minimize harm; but they do so for the wrong reason. An animal favours a hurt leg, not to allow it to heal properly, but with the awfulness of pain as his reason. Had pleasant experiences been correlated with harm we might expect people and animals to be drawn to physical harm as smokers are to cancer.

Conclusion

The arguments which have driven us to our views of pleasure and pain will

drive us to the same position on other ultimate ends. That knowledge, love, justice, or dignity may have intrinsic goodness cannot be a consequence of our desiring them. The attitudes we have to intrinsic goods are not themselves accidental and arbitrary. The value of these ends does not originate with our having favourable attitudes to them. Ignorance and hatred would not become intrinsically desirable merely by a creature's coming to desire them as ends. That knowledge and justice have intrinsic goodness is one of man's reasons for desiring them. As Richard Price wrote in his *Review* (Ch. III):

Why, therefore, reasonable beings love truth, knowledge, and honour, is to be answered in the same manner with the enquiry, why they love and desire happiness.

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