

Pleasure and Pain: Unconditional, Intrinsic Values

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Pain and pleasure are among the strongest candidates for unconditional, intrinsic values, one phenomenon bad and another good *in every instance*. When pondering the problem of evil, theologians regularly focus on *pain*, both physical and emotional. Pain is a felicitous example, since in itself pain seems self-evidently, indisputably, objectively bad; some people see evil in the "essential nature" of pain and suffering. We pity pain's victims, condemn its perpetrators, complain about it, combat it any way we can; 'pain' is rooted in '*poena*' — 'punishment'. Pleasure is fundamental to living well. Pleasure, even slight, seems good, which is one reason we love beauty, humor, music, and other innocent sources of pleasure. Even J. L. Mackie and J. P. Sartre, who insist that value cannot be built into an object, assume that in itself, simply through being what it is, pain is bad and pleasure good.¹

¹ Though a central thesis in J. L. Mackie's *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977) is that 'good' and 'bad' designate properties which do not and could not exist, and thus that no object really is good or bad, Mackie grounds robust ontological assertions on the premise that evil exists and is flourishing in pain and other familiar phenomena. Developing ideas sketched in 1977 (p. 232), Mackie in 1982 casts aside disbelief in the reality of evil when he aggressively portrays evil as a threat to orthodox theism for which "no sound solution" exists (p. 253). An omnipotent, wholly good God would abolish much or all pain, suffering and other "first-order evil"; He would not permit the "real, deplorable, unabsorbed evils" sentient beings endure. Here Mackie assumes, rightly, that in itself, being what it is, pain is bad.

The incompatibility people see between a supreme being and evil is between two kinds of objects, the first distinguished by one attribute (evil), the second by another (good). When people mention *pain* as a paragon of evil, they assume pain possesses the former attribute and the proposed deity the latter. When ethicists endorse *anti-realism*, the view that there is no property — goodness or badness — we report when calling an object 'good' or 'bad', they withdraw the foundation which otherwise generates the metaphysical tension people normally sense between theism and pain or other evil.

Though he defends a theory designed to rule out the possibility of something's being

Declaring some pain is *not* bad and some pleasure *not* good, many people consider pleasure and pain *conditional* values. Many people say *every* ethical principle meets exceptions, that there are *no* eternally valid exceptionless moral principles. "There is *no* moral principle, whatever it might be, that will not be admitted to have some exception, even by those sworn to uphold it," writes Richard Taylor (1984: 171). Discovering exceptions to ethical generalizations may seem easy, a task for undergraduates. Joseph Fletcher applauds moralists who reject ethical universals and affirm the 'absolute particularity' of every situation (1966: 25).

Melzack and Wall rate pain *good*, assigning it "real survival value" when it precedes potential serious injury and stimulates immediate withdrawal (1982: 23-24). Lepers may sleep peacefully while rats feed on their fingers: for lepers, *not* feeling pain seems bad. Some people commend pain for sensitizing us to suffering in others and building character.² Were it not *unpleasant* in itself, physical pain would not be bad in itself. People rate some pain pleasant, not unpleasant; even in a respected dictionary pain is judged only *usually* unpleasant. That a lobotomy, an incision into the frontal lobes of the brain, removes all unpleasantness and intrinsic badness from physical pain is philosophical orthodoxy today.

Is pleasure *always* good? Think of Austrian *Schutztaffel* volunteers, who, after machine-gunning and mass-graving non-Aryan villagers in the '40s go on, in anonymity, to enjoy lives rich in pleasure and happiness; few would commend their pleasure. Immanuel Kant (1785) and W. D. Ross (1930: 136) rate only *deserved* pleasure and happiness good. People consider some pleasure contemptible, not good — think of a deranged murderer pleased as he chisels human skulls into lampshades. Deriving pleasure from an act may make the act *worse*, Jonathan Dancy notes

so, Sartre, like Mackie, assumes that pain is bad in itself. While arguing that there is no value in nature to precede, ground, and guide ethical decisions — that each person every instant must *invent* value and morality, Sartre assumes that pain is bad in itself naturally, independently of our decisions and inventions. When discussing a youth in occupied France torn between joining the Free French Forces and thereby causing his mother worry, grief, and possibly hunger, or remaining with his mother and supporting her, Sartre expects the reader to recognize an unreasoned choice in the decision (1948: 35). What has value and is right should appear undetermined, awaiting a forthcoming unguided free choice. However, as Renford Bambrough notes, each detail in Sartre's description presupposes the moral knowledge Sartre denies. A reader recognizes a *dilemma* because he sees an "evenly balanced conflict between *recognized* values," Bambrough writes (1979: 95-96). A reader who saw nothing *bad* in the mother's emotional and physical pain (her worry, grief, and hunger) and no reason to avoid it would not appreciate the dilemma. In Sartre's thinking what is *best* may seem indeterminate, but individual reasons for and against each act are determinate and assumed to have natural intersubjective validity.

² "One learns of the pain of others by suffering one's own pain . . .," Chaim Potok remarks "It destroys our self-pride, our arrogance, our indifference toward others."

(1983: 534). "The pleasure proper to a worthy activity is good and that proper to an unworthy activity bad," Aristotle remarks (1175b 27).

I believe pleasure and pain are unconditional, intrinsic values: in all times and places, cross-culturally and throughout the sentient realm, every pleasure is good and every pain bad in itself. In saying this I use 'pleasure' to encompass every localized and nonlocalized pleasant experience, including the varied experiences we capture with 'enjoyment', 'being pleased' and our numerous other 'pleasure'-idoms; 'pain' I use to encompass every unpleasant experience, including emotional pain and the localized sensations we call 'pains'. Understood in this broad way, 'pain' is a direct counterpart to 'pleasure', physical pain a species of pain. Every physical pain, every sensation we correctly designate *a* pain, is, I believe, unpleasant in itself and in this respect bad.

That in itself *every* pleasure is good and *every* pain, broadly conceived, bad, that there *are* unconditional values and so substantial exceptionless ethical principles, should appear obvious. All moral agents — female and male — implicitly accept this. "The philosophical problem here," writes Thomas Nagel (1980: 109) in a similar context, "is to get rid of the obstacles to the admission of the obvious." I defend my assessment of pleasure and pain primarily by refuting counterevaluations and alleged counterexamples; I rebut attempts to show there need not be good in pleasantness, bad in unpleasantness, or unpleasantness in physical pain. While specifying ways in which pleasure need *not* be good, I attempt to pinpoint the respect in which all pleasure *is* good. When needed, I identify misunderstandings of the unpleasant and pleasant linked to incorrect assessments. The argument is applicable directly to *happiness* and *unhappiness*, which parallel pleasure and pain ethically, and indirectly to other ends.

Various ethical convictions cannot fully accommodate our being able to know pleasure and pain are unconditional, intrinsic values: among them are strict *particularism* (ethical decisions can only be made case by case; there are no sound universal normative principles), *relativism* (all good and bad are relative to time and place), *skepticism* (what is good or bad is undeterminable; any value judgment can be successfully opposed and overturned), and *nihilism* (nothing has value). What supports my thesis overturns these views.

I: PAIN

Good pain

People often rate some physical or emotional pain *good*: they are right to see good in some unpleasant experiences, wrong if they infer there is no

bad in these occurrences. Pain may be good in important respects. Nevertheless, the idea of 'good pain' like 'valuable garbage' or 'tall midgets', though coherent, is paradoxical. Proving something good is not the same as proving it contains no bad.

What we see as good, what we call 'good' *simpliciter*, usually contains at most more good than bad. (We judge books 'interesting' or 'difficult' *simpliciter* for predominant characteristics; interesting books may contain uninteresting passages and difficult books, easy passages. A book need not be flawless to be 'good'.) Good attributable to an unpleasant sensation may outweigh the bad. Physical pain and other unpleasant experiences may be good overall; some we may justly call 'good' *simpliciter*.

Commendation of physical pain based on pain's role as a protective device or character builder is *instrumental*: we commend pain for a good effect, averted injury or improved character. Qualitatively, every pain is bad *intrinsically*, for what it is in itself, in proportion to intensity and duration (severe pain is 'awful'); this bad is separate from bad in any bodily disorder accompanying pain. Indeed, if I am right, pain's educative and protective powers *originate* from its intrinsic badness. When people grow more sensitive to other people's hardships through suffering, they do so because they directly confront the evil others endure when suffering. Animals and people shrink from pain, and inadvertently avert or minimize associated injury, I have argued (Goldstein, 1980), in part because pain is intrinsically bad.

Suppose a retributivist rates some physical or emotional pain *intrinsically* good: "Justly punishing evil people is not merely instrumentally good," he may reason. "That they suffer is intrinsically good, not intrinsically bad." Even retributivists should admit wrongdoers experience bad when punished. Suffering, incarceration, and death render punishment *just because* they are bad to persons subjected to them. We do not ordinarily punish people with lavish meals and world cruises; only if these things were somehow bad for a person (e.g., he hated them and so experienced discomfort from them) could they provide retribution. If something is not merely good overall but *intrinsically* good in an evildoer's punishment, it is not his pain *qua* pain but his being justly punished. Just punishment is a complex of good and bad.

That some people *ought* to be hurt, that it may be *right* to hurt some people, does not entail that some pain is not intrinsically bad. The intrinsic badness of unpleasantness is not equivalent to any simple unqualified claim about what ought or ought not to be done or about what is right or wrong. 'Bad' is not synonymous with 'ought not' or 'wrong'. ("There is a

Humean gap between my neighbor suffering an evil, a toothache . . . and the 'ought' in 'I ought to give him aspirins'" [McCloskey, 1969: 121].) 'Bad implies can' is less promising than 'ought implies can'. *Degrees* of intrinsic badness are not directly captured in 'ought' claims; innumerable degrees of badness are assignable to sensations, but whether a sensation ought to be avoided is a 'yes' or 'no' matter. Pain's disvalue is not always overriding. Though hurting people is *prima facie* wrong, doing so is sometimes best overall: it may sometimes be right to cause suffering; perhaps, some people ought to suffer. That all pain is intrinsically bad entails at most that we ought to avoid pain, or that hurting animals or people is wrong, *when little is gained*. 'X ought to be avoided' is closer to 'X is the worst thing possible' or 'X is bad overall' than to 'X is intrinsically bad'. The latter is akin to 'there is reason to avoid X'. Axiology is not deontology.

Though these distinctions may seem obvious, ethicists who say or imply that there are no unconditional determinate values tend to be insensitive to them, e.g., by showing an occurrence (pain, rudeness, cowardice) may be good overall, people think they rule out its always being bad in itself. Gilbert Harman's case against pain being 'an absolute value' (1984:42-43) collapses when these distinctions are introduced. By inserting these distinctions, we quickly topple Bruce Brower's (1988) attempt to show that kindness, courage, and other virtues sometimes possess no positive value, that 'kindness', 'courage', and various other virtue concepts are not evaluative. We deflect various criticisms people raise against Phillipa Foot's efforts to ground morality in determinate values.

Richard Hare (1981: 74-75) glosses over distinctions used here when, responding to Foot (1958), he advances his grinning schoolboy tale as proof that *rudeness* need not be bad, that the word 'rude' need not imply adverse evaluation. Because the schoolboy grins at what he concedes was 'rude', striking a boy who spit at him, Hare says the schoolboy does not view this rudeness adversely. This oversimplifies. The boy does not think he acted *wrongly*; apparently he regards his action as just and good overall. Nevertheless, he *does* see bad in his 'rude' behavior. He does not kiss but *hits*, and presumably plans to *hurt*, the boy. He is retaliating, responding in kind (bad for bad), for the coarse treatment he received.

D. Z. Phillips and H. O. Mounce, too, trample over these distinctions when they relativize morals and spurn efforts to 'explain away' or 'impose unity on' the 'heterogeneity' of moral practices (1970: 104). To show that there are no determinate facts in human good and harm, that *injury* does not always provide reason for avoidance, they note how Saint Paul did not consider his affliction "a bad thing" (56-57). Their reasoning shows only

that he did not regard the affliction as *bad overall*. Indeed, as Phillips and Mounce portray it, the injury benefitted Paul by constantly reminding him of his vulnerability to *earthly evil* and thereby sustaining a felt need for God.

Naked physical pain

Reducing a pain's unpleasantness and badness to our aversion to the sensation, Richard Hall (1989: 646), Richard Brandt (1979: 132), and R. M. Hare (1964), assume physical pain is unpleasant for a person, and so bad for him only insofar as he dislikes or otherwise emotionally opposes it. If concurrent aversion is the sole determinant, as they tacitly assume, then some people feel pain that is not unpleasant or bad for them. People may welcome pain, i.e., desire it without simultaneously disliking it. ("There have been moments when I'd have liked to have my face slapped," Dostoevsky's underground man confesses.) A person preoccupied with sin may relish pain as self-punishment or expiation.¹ People may be curious, not repelled, over pain. Lobotomized people are indifferent to some pain.

In principle, emotional reaction can be severed from any pain sensation without the sensation changing qualitatively. If all of pain's unpleasantness and badness were contingent on concurrent aversion to pain, any pain, however intense, could in principle shed all unpleasantness while remaining qualitatively unchanged. In some people intense pain might have no trace of unpleasantness or badness. This seems impossible. Concurrent aversion is not necessary for unpleasantness and badness.

Intrinsically, pain remains unpleasant and so bad for someone when he receives it with indifference or pleasure. Antipathy to unpleasantness is normal, not necessary. As with pain, it is possible, though unusual, for someone to be indifferent to what is in itself unpleasant and bad for him. People sometimes welcome unpleasant experiences out of self-punishment or curiosity. Though a masochist may see self-punishment and so pain as good overall, the good he sees hinges upon bad.²

¹ "Drawing his sword from its scabbard he stabbed himself so savagely that he drove the point through his left thigh and the blood spurted out in a rain. When he saw what he had done he said: 'Gracious Lord, God, this is to atone for the offence I did Thee.'" *The Quest for the Holy Grail*.

² "Why can't man like things other than his well-being? Maybe he likes suffering just as much. Maybe suffering is just as much to his advantage as well-being," remarks Dostoevsky's underground man. A person may see suffering, unwell-being, as to his advantage, or good overall and so may welcome it. Seeing suffering as good overall, St. Francis, we are told, cried out, "I thank you, Lord God, for all these sufferings; and I ask you, my

When *normal* people are indifferent to an object, their disinterest may indicate something about the object's hedonic character and worth. *Lobotomy patients* are not normal. Many are profoundly apathetic; some people call these patients 'vegetables'. Lobotomies have been used to calm psychopaths. Patients may be indifferent to insults, degradation, and even imminent death. Hare mentions a son who remarked, "It would make no difference to Dad whether I told him that I had won a thousand pounds or that I was going outside to shoot myself." These patients are often indifferent to events which warrant their concern. Pain is intrinsically unpleasant: this is why you and I dislike it; the lobotomy patient has the same reason to dislike it. Barber reports lobotomy patients untroubled by "uncomfortable dressings" and bad smells. "When incontinent of feces they were indifferent to the odor it spread about their persons and beds," he notes (1959: 438-39). Their indifference to some physical pain manifests an indifference to some unpleasantness.

Suppose a person has a lobotomy or some other brain adjustment that leaves him indifferent to *everything*. Is he beyond good and evil? Ethicists who hinge badness upon current disfavor must answer 'yes'. Their position generates absurdities: we do nothing bad to this person, if, to show medical students a person's insides we wheel him into a classroom and dissect him; or to clear his room we slit his throat and dump him into a river; or to help non-lobotomized people appease aggressive impulses we bind him and use him as a punching bag. Better to drop an oversimplified metaethical premise, that disvalue requires concurrent aversion, than embrace these implications.

Would we call someone's sensation 'pain' if his antipathy toward it were extinguished? The sensation's intrinsic qualitative character need not change: that pain feels as it does intrinsically is not caused by our revulsion for pain but grounds and excites that revulsion. If the sensation does not change, it still is pain. A sensation qualitatively identical to pain *is* pain, whatever the reaction.⁴

Not disliking those sensations we call 'pains' may seem extraordinary, but this is not reason to say a sensation would not *be* pain were it not disliked. The idea of hungering for pain, like that of craving castration, represents an empirical anomaly, a response psychologically queer; it is not self-contradictory, merely linguistically disordered (Goldstein, 1983). To welcome or be indifferent to this or any other sensation is imaginable.

Lord, to increase them. . . ."

⁴ Some say a child could not learn the word 'pain' if pain were identified by its feel. I address this in Goldstein (1985b).

'Pain is intrinsically unpleasant' is closer to 'Pain *merits* our dislike than to 'Pain is disliked'. 'All pain is unpleasant and bad' implies, *not* 'Every person dislikes all pain', but 'For every person there is *reason* to dislike or refuse any pain'. The difference is substantial: compare 'There is reason to believe p' to 'p is believed'; the former is normative in a way the latter is not. 'L does not believe p' does not entail 'There is no reason for L to believe p': so, 'L does not dislike pain' does not entail 'There is no reason for L to dislike pain'. The term 'reason' is not exclusively ethical. 'Reason' has the same meaning in 'reason for desire' as in 'reason for belief': in both cases it signifies a ground or justification for a psychological response.

In possessing intrinsic value, pleasure and pain are self-justifying ends; what is intrinsically good or bad is justifiably wanted or shunned as an end. The qualitative character of each kind of experience grounds our intrinsic preference of pleasure over pain. This intrinsic preference, this attraction to pleasure rather than pain, is not arbitrary. Stemming from pain's feeling as it does, there is reason for dislike: to this nonderivative reason is due the irrationality which looms in craving pain as an end. Someone uninterested in avoiding or ridding himself of such sensations would seem not only unusual but mad. There is sound, not merely spurious, justificatory reason for dislike: this, in part, is what it is for pain to be intrinsically bad and worthy of aversion.⁶ That pain is intrinsically bad, presenting intrinsic ground for aversion, a sentient being does not choose, decree, or invent but *confronts* the moment it first experiences pain.

Though it need not be decisive or overriding, for every person there is *some* reason to dislike physical pain and other unpleasant psychological occurrences. Not that it is always irrational to embrace an unpleasant experience: 'there is some reason to' and 'it is irrational not to' are not equivalent. Benefit from enduring an unpleasant feeling could counterbalance the bad, and there could be more reason to accept than reject it. For someone who deserves punishment, desiring pain may be praiseworthy, not irrational.

Pleasure's intrinsic goodness and the desire for pleasure are similarly related. As some unpleasant sensations are not disliked, so some pleasure is unwanted (at a funeral, I might prefer *not* to enjoy myself; while seeing himself as unworthy of good, a person might *not* want happiness [see Goldstein, 1983]). For any pleasure there is some reason to desire it or choose what promises it. In being intrinsically good, pleasure, being what it is, provides sound intrinsic reason for desiring it. In *saying* pleasure is 'intrinsically good' we assign it such a nature, of providing sound intrinsic

⁶ That there is intrinsic reason to dislike pain and prefer pleasure I defend in Goldstein (1980) and (1983).

reason for desire; this evaluation of pleasure is *true* through pleasure having the relational structure we assign it. (*Hare* says we guide action when we evaluate, but when *he* recognizes evil in pain [1964: 76], he is not attempting to guide conduct: as he knows, his readers already avoid pain.) Pleasure's intrinsic goodness — its character of providing intrinsic reason for desire — is motivationally potent to agents like ourselves whose desires are guided by reason (Goldstein, 1980). So construed, intrinsic goodness differs from Moore's 'simple, non-natural' property in being a relational, action-directing property and is hardly so queer as to be something whose existence seems preposterous.⁷

Pleasurable pain

Georg Von Wright thinks *unpleasantness* is always bad but *physical pain* is not, that pain is bad only insofar as it is unpleasant (1963: 70). Some pain is not unpleasant to the person experiencing it, he thinks.

In some respects pain may be *pleasant*: Von Wright says pain from an affectionate pinch may please a child without discomforting him (1963: 71); through pain, religious fanatics may become euphoric and masochists ecstatic; painful exertion may please an athlete; testing a painful loose tooth may satisfy a child's curiosity. Is pleasant pain unpleasant?⁸ Is such pain good, not bad?

What people call 'pleasant pain' is a *mixed* experience containing both pleasantness and unpleasantness. 'Pleasant pain', like 'hot ice', is a complex idea signifying a paradoxical combination of opposing qualities. *Ceteris paribus*, basking in pain is less unpleasant than anguishing over it. However, the experience is not untainted — as enjoying flowers may be — but a mix of pleasure and discomfort (unpleasantness). Enjoying pain, like enjoying senility or disfigurement, is deviant in a way that enjoying flowers is not: a person who enjoys pain likes what is manifestly *bad*.

A religious fanatic's or masochist's pain is intrinsically unpleasant, unpleasant in itself and 'pleasant' only insofar as it produces pleasure — pleasant weather is 'pleasant' in this sense. A zealot may see pain as expiation of sin; for this he needs bad, which explains his interest in *unpleasant* sensations. St. Francis proclaimed he would gladly endure *evil* to demonstrate devotion to God. Masochists regularly, perhaps always, view pain

⁷ Were there objective values, they would be "very strange . . . , utterly different from anything else in the universe," Mackie argues (1977: 38). Though normative properties do differ from non-normative properties, pleasure's goodness as I describe it is not queer. See Nagel (1980: 113-14) for nice criticisms of Mackie's "argument from queerness" against objective values.

⁸ Ruckmick (1928: 117), Boring (in Hardy *et al.*, 1967: foreword), and Seligman (1970) are among those who assume it cannot be.

as self-punishment (even in sexual practices).⁹ Bad is critical: were pain not in itself unpleasant, it would not provide punishment. Masochists enjoy many experiences unpleasant in themselves, not just physical pain; many enjoy humiliation and other intrinsically unpleasant, often self-inflicted, emotions. With a similar outlook, some people castrate or otherwise injure themselves or indulge in being ill. A masochist enjoys intrinsically unpleasant feelings, he likes doing bad things to himself. He takes second-order pleasure in first-order unpleasantness.

Why deny unpleasantness in the pain of a child pleased by an affectionate pinch? Not because the child is pleased. Attractive mixes may include unattractive ingredients. Amused or otherwise, a child typically recoils when pinched. The movement, not entirely reflexive, alleviates discomfort. Intrinsically, the sensation is the same when it irritates as when it pleases, and it irritates because it is unpleasant. Children often delight in amusements containing unpleasant elements. They like to be tickled and teased; when my elder daughter was four years old, she once begged me to yank her hair. (For the masochist, the meaning differs; it is self-punishment or debasement, not friendly prankishness.) Treatises on humor and child psychology might further illuminate childhood amusement. When an adulterer anguishes over his duplicity and so sees his pleasure as *painful*, we do not infer that his pleasure is not pleasant; nor should we infer from someone's finding pain pleasurable that his pain is not in itself unpleasant.

Aches

No one I know claims to experience *intense* pain which is not unpleasant and so not bad. Many people,¹⁰ however, deny unpleasantness in *faint* sensations they call 'pains'. They should reconsider whether these are pains. Red does not cease to be a color, nor could pain cease to be unpleasant, by growing faint. What is not unpleasant does not 'ache' and is not 'pain'.

Released from thumbscrew and legsplint, the torture victim exiting the vaults of Nuremberg town hall tells the ingoing prisoner, '*Es war gar so nicht schlimm*' ('It wasn't so bad') . . . as tortures go. Overshadowed by severe pain and other weightier evils, a dull ache may seem insignificant; as pains go, it is not bad pain. As we resist labelling 'blue' *simpliciter* what has only a hint of blue, so we resist designating a dull ache, what is minimally unpleasant, 'unpleasant' or 'bad' *simpliciter*. (This may be one reason many people *distinguish* aches from pains and so resist calling an ache

⁹ See Paul Gebhard in Weinberg (1983: 37).

¹⁰ Brandt (1979); Swinburne (1979); Hare (1964).

a 'pain' *simpliciter*.) Yet, slight pain in itself is slightly unpleasant.

Americans consume over ten thousand tons of aspirin annually, most to alleviate *mild* pain. What people cannot easily combat they may not resist, but pain need be no less unpleasant when unresisted. Contented sunbathers regularly accept discomfort. No one opposes *all* unpleasant sensations, averting every unpleasant or bad sensation at all costs. Other concerns may override. Imagine a designer deliberating between two carpets identical but for this: the first emits a chemical which, though otherwise harmless, produces a dull ache in the feet of those who tread. Is the choice arbitrary?

Lobotomy: the suffering reduction argument

A lobotomy has a surprising effect on the experience of physical pain. The operation can reduce the suffering or discomfort a person experiences with pain of a given intensity. Hare, whose prescriptivism prevents him from accepting disvalue as indigenous to ordinary phenomena, thinks what can be reduced can be eliminated. A pain's intensity and its unpleasantness must be independent dimensions such that in principle *all* discomfort and so all evil could be removed from pain (1964: 87):

If we can understand what it would be for the suffering to be reduced while the sensation remains the same, we can surely understand also what it would be for the suffering or the distress or dislike to be altogether removed without any diminution in the pain sensation.

Hare intends this thinking to apply not only to our subjective response to pain, our dislike and emotional distress, but to pain's being unpleasant and bad, qualities seemingly internal to pain. (I agree the dislike and other emotional reaction is removable.) But consider this parallel:

If a car manufacturer can reduce a car's length without reducing the size of the passenger compartment, it also must be possible for him to reduce the length of a car to zero without reducing the passenger compartment.

Parking a car so compact would be delightful. Hare's principle is suspect: that we can reduce the unpleasantness a person experiences when in pain without altering the pain sensation shows that some unpleasantness experienced is not intrinsic to his sensation. It does not show that *none* is.

Some of what we call unpleasant — e.g., breaking bones, bad weather — is so only *instrumentally*, because it causes unpleasantness. Not everything unpleasant is so only instrumentally. Physical pain is a perfect example of something unpleasant intrinsically, in itself.

That all unpleasantness might be shaved off *intense pain* while the sensation remains qualitatively the same in intensity and kind seems impossible. My immediately coming to believe that my name is 'Sarah Bernhardt' merely upon choosing to do so is contingently impossible, but I know what this would be like. I cannot visualize intense pain not intrinsically unpleasant and bad.

Daniel Dennett mislocates the oddity in lobotomy pain when he presents this curiosity as reason to fault *the word* 'pain' and label it incoherent: what is incoherent — or, rather, preposterous — is the interpretation Dennett seems close to accepting and reasoning from, that in lobotomy patients and others we may find *intense pain* which is *to no degree bad* (1978: 221-28).

To understand how a lobotomy reduces unpleasantness felt with physical pain we must distinguish between the physical pain sensation and the unpleasant emotions — the dread, despair, agony, depression, aggravation, and others — that sensation often incites. To dread an exam, be aggravated by a traffic jam, or agonize over lost love is unpleasant. Emotional overlay is discernible in much physical pain. People subjected to chronic uncontrolled pain, who see no relief, may feel deeply distressed; nagging, persisting headaches often irritate. When I stub my toe and am in pain, I may be in good humor: imagine my emotion if the sensation persisted for days. When I am in pain, a friend may comfort me with reassuring words: he eases my emotion, not necessarily my physical pain. Emotional discomforts are separate from, added to, and potentially more severe than unpleasantness intrinsic to any sensory pain they may accompany. When a person in pain experiences such emotions, his experience is more unpleasant and he suffers more than if he is cheerful and free of unpleasant emotion.

A lobotomy lessens the hardship of physical pain by reducing or extinguishing unpleasant emotions otherwise accompanying pain. People now attend less to pain (Barber, 1959: 439). Like a potent tranquilizer, the operation removes the anxiety over pain, what one doctor calls "the disabling reaction to pain."¹¹ The operation does not, could not, eliminate unpleasantness *intrinsic* to pain.

Stripped of accompanying emotion, sensation naked, physical pain remains unpleasant in proportion to intensity. The sensation I experience when seeing red or feeling a leaf brush my cheek is, in itself, neutral, neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Qualitatively, pain is less innocent. Intrinsically, there is reason to dislike pain in a way there is not reason to dislike these other sensations. Nice sensations rarely bother people.

¹¹ Freeman and Watts (1948: 747-54).

Suppose you are in pain which is not linked to bodily injury. Nearby are two medicines. One will remove the pain, the other only the emotional reaction to it. I would pick the first. Naked pain is more unpleasant than no pain. If pain were not uncomfortable for apathetic lobotomy patients, *deliberately* causing them pain would not be serious. Inflicting pain seems wrong just because of the intrinsic unpleasantness.

If someone thinks we remove all unpleasantness from physical pain by lopping off the emotional reaction to it, he implies that pain is unpleasant only because it is emotionally disturbing. Extinguish the emotional disruption and you remove all unpleasantness. On the contrary, pain stimulates emotional distaste because it is unpleasant in and of itself. There is reason to recoil from what is unpleasant; if pain were hedonically neutral there would be no reason to dislike it for itself. To remove an aversion is not *ipso facto* to remove justification for that aversion. When a person stubs his toe, we err if we say, 'If only he were not emotionally disturbed by his pain, it would not be unpleasant for him'. These principles apply to a lobotomy patient's pain. Pain *arrives* unpleasant, which is why it disturbs.¹²

Because reading is 'unpleasant' only instrumentally, through causing unpleasant feelings, it is unpleasant only *to some people*. Effects vary. Intrinsic unpleasantness is not relative in this way: physical pain is intrinsically unpleasant *for everyone*.

"We might explain a lobotomy patient's behavior by denying unpleasantness in his pain; to disallow this is to prejudge an empirical issue." Suppose a person speaks of 'sensations without duration' in some proposed explanation. Must we respect his proposal in the spirit of not prejudging an empirical issue? No. Explanations which employ principles known to be false in advance of future experience we discard safely. Pain without unpleasantness is unimaginable.

Clearly, some of a person's hedonic assessments of his own sensations are corrigible. When someone denies unpleasantness in a localized sensation he calls 'pain', his assessment is muddled, mistaken, and so corrigible. (Not that 'pain', used to designate a localized sensation, just means 'unpleasant sensation': pain in this sense — physical pain — is *one* unpleasant sensation, an itch, or a shock another.) That people differently assess the same sensation in themselves (e.g., mild or gratifying pain)

¹² Peter Singer recognizes that though pain may cause unpleasant emotions, it is in itself unpleasant. "If . . . we decided to perform extremely painful or lethal experiments on normal adult humans . . . the resultant terror would be a form of suffering additional to the pain of the experiment," Singer observes (1979: 52). "The same experiment performed on non-human animals would cause less suffering since the animals would not have the anticipatory dread."

shows *someone* misjudges his own sensation. Not that his sensation is other than it feels or that it possesses an illusory quality. A person who presumes that since he enjoys pain, his pain is in no way unpleasant, makes an incorrect inference and consequently misjudges his sensation's qualitative character.

Suppose Andromedans feel no unpleasantness when their brains are in conditions New Yorkers find painful: are their neurological flickerings 'pains which are not unpleasant'? If they experience a sensation qualitatively identical to human pain, it cannot miss being unpleasant and intrinsically bad. (I might as easily imagine intense pain ceasing to be intense in some world while the sensation remains internally unchanged in every respect.) Do these other-world inhabitants experience no discomfort because their sensation differs qualitatively from ours? Do they feel no sensation? In either case they are not in pain. Pain is a particular sensation, whose association with neurological activity is contingent. Should that activity occur without this sensation in our world or another, it occurs without pain. For any creature, real or imagined, pain is unpleasant and intrinsically bad.

Employing a familiar, but now well-criticized, argument, Thomas Hill (1984: 369) cites "pervasive disagreements" over what has intrinsic value as a reason to doubt the knowability of intrinsic values and, ultimately, the possibility of anything objectively having intrinsic value.¹¹ Pervasive *unresolved* disagreements over whether, say, trees have intrinsic value is reason to say that a tree's intrinsic worth is currently uncertain. But uncertainties over trees is little reason to doubt pain's intrinsic badness. The conviction that pain is bad in itself is well-founded; direct acquaintance with the sensation grounds and confirms this evaluation (which is one reason there are few nihilists, Ayer-type emotivists, or theologians who say the universe contains *no* bad). That pain is at least ordinarily intrinsically bad is widely accepted; the intrinsic value of *some* pain is disputed, but these disputes are resolvable.

Sidney Hook (1974: 148) thinks that a belief in unconditional values is not only false but *dangerous*. On principle, ethicists committed to exceptionless values are uncompromising, intolerant, and so menacing, he says. Not all unconditionalists are. Anyway, I feel less secure with people who do *not* recognize evil in all pain than with those who do.

¹¹ Bertrand Russell (1935: chap. 9), D. H. Monro (1967: chap. 1), J. L. Mackie (1977) are among many who use this argument, which Bambrough (1979: 18 ff.), Nagel (1980: 115-17) and others have since criticized.

II: BAD PLEASURE

"Happiness may be *extremely bad*," writes Kant (1785), "it may encourage pride or presumption if there is not a good will to correct (its) influence." Kant's negative rating of happiness is instrumental and compatible with a positive assessment of intrinsic value.

Are pleasure and happiness always *intrinsically* good? Different kinds of pleasure are distinguishable, and, finding support in an analogy, Socrates suggests only some pleasure is good intrinsically: "so far as being a color goes each one is the same, but we all know that black is not just different from white but as opposite as can be" (Plato, 12d). Might it be that only *some* pleasure has an intrinsically good hue?

The distastefulness in a mass murderer retiring to days rich in *undeserved* pleasure seems to lie not merely in bad effects; his pleasure may seem intrinsically repugnant. Still, there is good even here. We denounce this pleasure *because* of its good; moral degenerates luxuriating in health, happiness, or long life seems repugnant for the same reason. They do not deserve good. Not only is pleasure good in other circumstances: it must be good in these circumstances for a wrongdoer to gain what he does not deserve. Nor is his pleasure good only in *his* eyes: outsiders condemn it because they see good in it. 'All happiness is good in itself' does not entail 'It would be good overall for every human being, immoral and moral, to be happy every moment of his existence'.

We might *detest* a mass murderer's undeserved happiness: when I assign intrinsic good to it, I do not recommend, endorse, or approve such happiness or 'project' other positive sentiment.

Many people condemn sadistic and malicious pleasure. The assessment of such pleasure is more complex than it seems. While verbally condemning 'pleasure', critics typically condemn a multi-dimensional pleasurable reaction, not only the pleasure in it. In part, they condemn the sadistic or malicious *person*; we condemn him for violent, sadistic behavior or unkind, malicious comments and his deliberate indulgence in such pleasure. (Our disapproval is milder when someone reflexively feels malicious pleasure but ignores or squelches it.) When people take pleasure in cruelty and so find it pleasant, their cruelty is not intrinsically good but is pleasant and good derivatively.

Malice seems *immoral*. Pleasure is a *nonmoral* good; it contributes directly to well-being in the way intelligence, health, beauty, strength, and wealth do. An evil person may possess intelligence, health, and other nonmoral goods in abundance. The unforgettable good a coquette promises a man is not intended to improve him morally.

The immorality in malice does not oust and replace the nonmoral good otherwise present in pleasure — how could it? — but co-exists and overlays it. Pleasure's intrinsic nonmoral goodness is fixed and constant; in proportion to degree and duration malicious pleasure matches pleasure from other sources. Malicious pleasure need not feel different from other pleasure or be qualitatively inferior. The immorality may dwarf the good — in some circumstances malice seems terrible, while the good in a fleeting pleasant emotion is small — but there is good. Arguably, malicious pleasure is sometimes or always bad overall, and the world is worse with it, better off without it; net good does not automatically increase when pleasure increases. By noting that pleasure can make the act it accompanies worse, we do not show there is no valid universal ethical principle in pleasure.

Malice resembles adulterous pleasure in being a mix of nonmoral good and immorality. While deeming the world *worse* for containing his wife's recent pleasure, the incensed husband can see good in his wife's coarse pleasure: her experiencing overpowering *good* sensations — with another man — is part of what sickens him. He might retaliate, repaying himself, by treating himself to extramarital good sensations heretofore denied.

"Malice is an intrinsically bad state of affairs, not merely *in spite of*, but *because of*, its pleasantness . . .," writes C. D. Broad. "We do not regard (it) as evil, simply as a means" (1930: 234). Perhaps malice and sadism *are* intrinsically bad, bad in themselves and independently of their effects — if a Florida executioner sadistically enjoyed electrocuting law-breakers, his pleasure might appear indecent even without bad consequences. However, malice could be intrinsically bad because of its pleasantness without the pleasantness in malice being intrinsically bad.

Malicious and sadistic pleasure are complex emotions. Both are cognitive; though new born babies may experience pleasure, they do not feel malice. A malicious person enjoys what he *thinks* is someone else's misfortune; he does not enjoy misfortune of which he is ignorant. (A presidential aspirant may feel malice when he *thinks* his rival's domestic improprieties will soon appear in *Newsweek* when in fact it is his own unconventional associations which are currently fascinating that weekly's proofreader.) Malice and sadism are bad *partly* because of their cognitive character, not solely for their pleasurable-ness; we may accept this without having fully specified what the pleasurable-ness is and how it is related to the emotion's cognitive component.¹⁴ If anything is intrinsically bad in malicious or sadistic pleasure, it is not the pleasurable-ness of the emotion

¹⁴ Elsewhere I argue that the pleasure and belief are distinct, causally related occurrences (Goldstein, 1981).

as such but the larger, relational cognitive complex. What is true of the whole need not be true of the part. The complex pleasurable emotion is immoral; the pleasurableness of the emotion is an intrinsic nonmoral good.

To understand sadistic and malicious pleasure we must see good in it. If a youth's street brutality is motivated by sadistic pleasure, he experiences a good feeling when hurting others: insofar as this good feeling motivates his violence, he beats to create, intensify, or prolong the good feeling. When people maliciously delight in the swift downfall of their province's *nouveau riches*, they feel good over this development. Malice may lead them frequently to rekindle the topic and explore different facets of the reports: they wish to repeat or prolong the good feeling experienced when maliciously pleased and so, temporarily, to alleviate personal disappointments and painful, seething resentments. Rivals who maliciously enjoy publicizing our shortcomings irritate us partly because in their enjoyment they benefit from our loss.

Remorse is analogous to malice: though it may be praiseworthy, a person who feels the pain of remorse experiences discomfort when contemplating his wrongdoings; when acting to ease his conscience, he acts to reduce this bad feeling.

Condemnations of carnal pleasure resemble those of malice. Puritans typically object to a multi-faceted experience and not only to the pleasurableness in it. They connect lust, degradation, irresponsible behavior, and other real or alleged vices to sexual excitement, and their condemnation of the pleasurable whole is grounded partly in their evaluation of these ingredients (many of which non-puritans might assess similarly). That there are nonmorally good qualities in the pleasurableness of sexual experience is not thereby ruled out. Puritans or ascetics who spurn sexual pleasure in the spirit of renouncing earthly good recognize good in sexual pleasure. If sexual pleasure is Satan's allurement, Satan is shrewd enough to entice us with *good*.

In the *Philebus* Socrates partly in jest but cleverly asks Protarchus, "What is the common feature in bad and good pleasures alike that makes you call all pleasures a good thing?" (Plato, 13b). Though Protarchus, who thinks no pleasure is bad, objects to the question, he might have replied "pleasurableness" or "intrinsic, nonmoral goodness." (These are not distinct replies if the former term is defined by reference to the latter.) Perhaps Socrates would prefer Protarchus to name a quality other than pleasurableness coloring every pleasure, a quality which, because it is itself good, explains why pleasure is good (as I partially explain a *peach's* goodness by mentioning its pleasant taste). But pleasure is its own good-

making quality in every pleasurable experience. Pleasure is intrinsically good because of what *it* is, not because it carries some *further* quality which is good in itself and which accompanies or colors pleasure.

Theoreticians who say or insinuate that *no* substantial value judgments are decisive or true, that none convey genuine information about the world, often focus on assessments of what is moral or good overall, or of what is right and ought to be done, and generalize from these. (To drive a wedge between *value* and fact, D. H. Monro alleges that *moral* disputes are irresolvable in ways that empirical disputes are not [1967: Chapter 1]). Because many diverse considerations are relevant, these high level assessments are often contentious; assessments vary from one society to another, and the truth may seem an open question. On complex ethical matters what is good overall often seems undetermined even after protracted deliberation. Scepticism is natural. Few ethicists set out to demonstrate that all value judgments are indeterminate by pointing to the dubiousness of pleasure's intrinsic goodness or pain's intrinsic badness; few beliefs are more certain, less disputed, than that in itself pain is bad and pleasure good. Major normative disputes less often arise at this simpler, lower ethical level. Pleasure's intrinsic, nonmoral goodness is not a permanently irresolvable open question. Mackie appeals to "the well-known variation in *moral* codes from one society to another" when attacking the objectivity of values (1977: 36, my italics). Where are the societies whose individuals in act and word acknowledge nothing bad in pain?

III: PLEASURE AND PAIN: SELF-SUFFICIENT, UNCONDITIONAL VALUES

What is good overall, right, or obligatory varies according to effects. Each is context-dependent and may vary across cultures. Evaluations of what is so *universally* are hazardous; such high level principles seem inevitably to meet ^{exceptions} ~~expectations~~. We need not expect exertion to be good overall universally: its value hinges on effects, which vary. What is right may vary with context and so cross-culturally. Even stealing and killing are sometimes right (Noddings, 1984: 93). If he is using 'moral demands' to designate duties (actual, not *prima facie*) and to exclude intrinsic badness, Gilbert Harman may be correct in saying "there are no basic moral demands that apply to everyone" (1984: 27).

Though calling *all* members in a class good is risky, *intrinsic* universal evaluations can be less precarious than other universal evaluations. Pleasure's intrinsic worth is not context-dependent and so not subject to contextual fluctuations. When in pain, I can immediately recognize bad even if I am oblivious to the sensation's context and indifferent to moral con-

siderations; pain's intrinsic badness is not founded in and so potentially undermined by pain's surroundings. Because we direct so many evaluations to what is good overall or morally good, much of what we justly call 'good' *simpliciter* is good only in some circumstances. This helps camouflage the fact that pleasure and other value-conferring ends are good in themselves unconditionally.

Pleasure is good as such, because of its pleasurable nature, not because of some further good quality which colors pleasure and may or may not be present. The foundation of pleasure's goodness, its pleasurable nature, marks every pleasure. How could pleasure fail to be intrinsically good?

G. E. Moore's reasoning resembles mine when he writes that a judgment of intrinsic goodness "if true of one instance of the thing in question, is necessarily true of all" (1903: 27). Since at least *some* pleasure is good intrinsically simply because of its pleasurable nature, pleasure should always be good intrinsically, whatever the society, and so be an unconditional value.

Pleasure's standing as an intrinsic value is founded in pleasure's nature. Appreciating its value and understanding what pleasure is are not independent projects. Intrinsic goodness is not merely incidental to pleasure; I suggest it is fundamental to what makes an experience pleasure. As hot and cold are opposites in temperature and north and south in direction, so pleasure and pain, both physical and emotional, are opposites in intrinsic *agreeability*. Heat is *ipso facto*, and thus always, linked to high temperature; so, achieved in a virtuous or vicious activity, pleasure in itself is *ipso facto* and so always agreeable and pain *ipso facto* and so always disagreeable.

I propose that pleasure's goodness — which for me is, in part, its character of affording valid, intrinsic grounds for desire — fixes pleasure's agreeableness, and pain's badness dictates its disagreeableness.¹⁴ Pleasure and pain, then, contrast with experiences of warmth or coldness, which are linked to value only incidentally: pleasure and pain are opposites through their opposing intrinsic worth. For every pleasure, intrinsic goodness is fundamental to what marks a psychological occurrence, localized or nonlocalized, as pleasure. Grounding dislike, having disvalue, is a defining feature of the unpleasant and so common to *all* unpleasantness.

¹⁴ Timothy Sprigge judges similarly when he writes, "Whether we like to call it a natural or non-natural quality we can recognize the inherently soliciting form of the good as that very universal the presence of which makes an experience a pleasure" (1985: 461).

This view of pleasure answers pluralists, who detect no property shared by all pleasure which unites the diverse phenomena we label 'pleasure' into a single class.¹⁶ The interrelated properties of pleasure's agreeableness, its natural tendency to attract sentient beings and, more fundamentally, its intrinsic nonmoral goodness and intrinsic grounding of desire unify the psychological occurrences, localized and nonlocalized, we label 'pleasure'. Pain, physical and emotional, forms a single class opposite to pleasure through its disagreeableness, its tendency to repel, its intrinsic badness and grounding of aversion.¹⁷

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¹⁶ I name and criticize pluralists in Goldstein (1985a).

¹⁷ R. Brandt, R. M. Hare, Al Mele, M. Smith, Lance Stell, this journal's anonymous referees, and many other people contributed to molding this paper into its present form.

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