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Feeling bad and seeing bad

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ABSTRACT

The emotions of guilt, shame, disappointment, and grief, and the bodily states of pain and suffering, have something in common, at least phenomenologically: they are all unpleasant, they feel bad. But how might we explain what it is for some state to feel bad or unpleasant? What, in other words, is the nature of *negative affect*? In this paper I want to consider the prospects for *evaluativist* theories, which seek to explain unpleasantness by appeal to negative evaluations or appraisals. In particular, I want to consider versions of evaluativism which seek to explain negative affect in terms of a kind of negative perceptual experience. These views thus attempt to explain *feeling bad* in terms of *seeing bad*. Now the most prominent evaluativist accounts of negative affect have been developed in the pain literature, and so my paper will primarily be focused on the question of whether evaluativism can provide a plausible account of the painfulness or unpleasantness of pain. I will argue that evaluativism faces serious objections on this score. Since my conclusions can be extended to cover negative affect more generally, however, we have good reason to reject evaluativist accounts of the negative affect involved in *emotional* experience. My arguments will thus have implications for those interested in the nature of emotional valence. I'll conclude with some brief remarks about the shape that a

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'relational' account of painfulness in particular, and of negative affect in general, should take, in light of these criticisms of evaluativism. In my view, such views should appeal, not to negative evaluations to explain feeling bad, but to *dislike*.

Feeling bad and seeing bad

Pain, suffering, and negative emotions have an hedonic or feeling element. In general, this element is one of unpleasantness; in the case of pain, the element is one of painfulness. But in what does painfulness consist? Evaluativists want to answer this by appeal to evaluation or appraisal. Thus, as Brian Cutter and Michael Tye put it, “our pain experiences do not just represent the presence of tissue damage, but also (roughly) represent our tissue damage as being bad for us to some degree.” (Cutter & Tye 2011, p. 91.) On this view, pain would seem to consist of two elements or components. The first, phenomenal state is usually identified with a *sensation*. On some accounts, this is held to be a ‘somatosensory perceptual experience’ that has representational content. In particular, the sensation represents some kind of bodily disturbance or disorder, malfunction or damage. The second element is an evaluation or appraisal of this disturbance, disorder, or damage.

Evaluativists differ over the nature of the appraising state. One possibility is that the evaluation consists of a *judgement* that the sensation (or bodily damage) is harmful to the subject; Norton Nelkin takes this line. (Nelkin 1994, p. 332.) However, it is increasingly common, and rather more plausible, to think of the appraisal as itself a kind of (affective) perceptual experience. Painful experiences are thus held to involve two kinds of perceptual experience – one which informs us of some bodily disturbance, and the other which informs us of the badness of the first somatosensory perceptual experience or the badness of the bodily disturbance.

It might be helpful to have a couple of illustrations of what evaluativists say. So consider, first, Bennett Helm, who thinks that painful experiences are *felt evaluations* and which are a form of emotional response, akin to a perceptual experience. (Helm, 2002) On his view, felt evaluations are “feelings of negative import”, feelings in which the badness of what is going on in one’s body impresses itself upon us, in much the same way that colours impress themselves on us in perceptual experience. Unlike perceptions, however, the felt evaluations constitutive of pain hold our attention and motivate us to act. Note that the relevant feelings are distinct from the feelings of bodily changes that William James identified with emotions. Helm thinks that these are not necessary to emotional experience. Instead, the relevant feelings just are the feelings of attentional focus and urge to act.²

Consider, next, David Bain, who maintains that the state of appraisal is a kind of a perceptual experience. (Bain, 2013) On Bain’s view, “a subject’s being in unpleasant pain consists in his (i) undergoing an experience (the pain) that represents a disturbance of a certain sort, and (ii) that same experience additionally representing the disturbance as *bad* for him in a bodily sense.” (p. 82) Unpleasant pain thus involves two representations, each of which is a form of perceptual experience. As with other versions of evaluativism, Bain thinks that the element of appraisal is essential if we are to explain why pain feels bad. He

² Helm writes: “to feel fear is to be pained by danger, this distinctive kind of import, in the sense that the danger impresses itself on one, grabbing one’s attention and priming one to act; the emotional response, the feeling of this danger, just is the pain.” (p. 19) And: “Emotions are pleasures and pains not in the sense that they somehow involve certain bodily sensations as a conceptually separable component but rather in the sense that they essentially are a distinctive kind of evaluation, now revealed to be felt evaluations. Consequently, their phenomenology should be understood accordingly: what it is like to feel emotional pleasure or pain is to have one’s attention gripped by the goodness or badness of something in such a way that one thereby feels the pull to act appropriately.” (pp. 19-20)

writes: “the pain is *unpleasant*...only because it further represents that bodily disturbance as *bad* for you. If, stepping into [hot bath] water, an asymbolic has a pain that is not unpleasant, that is because, even though the represented disturbance *is* bad for him, his pain fails to represent it as such; his pain lacks that layer of evaluative content.” (Ibid.)

Evaluativism therefore comes in different shapes and sizes. But why think any of these views plausible? One argument is that evaluativism fares better than rival accounts in capturing the normative and motivational properties that painfulness has. This is Bain’s strategy in his 2013 paper. A more direct route is to highlight the close connections between painfulness and negative evaluation, and suggest that the simplest way to accommodate this connection is to hold that painfulness is a matter of or is constituted by negative evaluation. Helm at times seems to take this route. He writes that “it is uncontroversial that pleasures and pains have a particular feel to them, that they motivate us to act, and that we generally have positive attitudes towards pleasures or things that please us (they feel good) and negative attitudes towards pains or things that hurt us (they feel bad).” (Helm 2002, p. 13) Here the negative attitude is identified with feeling bad. Something similar occurs later in the paper, where Helm states that “Bodily pleasures and pains are evaluative: in feeling them, we feel what is going on in a particular body part to be good or bad. Indeed, for such an evaluation to be missing in a bodily sensation is, under normal circumstances, for that sensation not to be a pleasure or pain at all.” (p. 22)

We’ll see later whether evaluativism does in fact succeed in capturing the normativity of pain; I have my doubts. We can note now, however, that accepting a close connection between painfulness and negative evaluation clearly does not

force us to *identify* painfulness with the negative evaluation – any more than the close connection between painfulness and desire forces us to identify these two things. Nevertheless, even if there are (more) compelling reasons to take evaluativism seriously, the theory won't be acceptable unless it can manage to address certain difficulties. It is to these that I now turn.

2.

I want to begin by considering the standard form of evaluativism favoured by Bain, Helm, and Tye, and which maintains that the negative evaluation is of the bodily disturbance, rather than of the sensation that represents this disturbance. I'll consider the prospects for another, non-standard form of evaluativism in §3.

The first form of evaluativism faces a serious objection, one which was originally raised by Richard Hall, and which Bain considers in response to his own evaluativist proposal. (Hall 1989, p. 647) This is the 'messenger-shooting objection.' (Bain 2013, p. 86) The worry is that evaluativism of this stripe seems to leave an explanatory gap. For what we want to explain is the painfulness, and hence the badness, of the *experience* of pain. Evaluativism tries to capture this in virtue of a representation of some *bodily condition* as bad. But how can a representation of the badness of some bodily condition help us to explain the badness of the experience? Bodily conditions and experiences of those conditions are, after all, two different things; as a result, it seems rather puzzling to see how the badness of one is supposed to be related to the badness of the other. Here is the challenge in Bain's own words: "[H]ow might evaluativists explain why an episode representing your own body part as being in a state that

is bad for you (in a bodily sense) should *itself* be bad for you (in an experiential sense)? What is so bad about being somatosensorily informed that your foot is in a bad state? Suppose you *lack* feet, and know your pain is a phantom limb experience. What is so bad about this experience informing you that the state of a foot you know you lack is bad for you? Why shoot the messenger if you know the message is false? Indeed, returning to the veridical case, why shoot the messenger even if you know the message is true?" (Ibid.)

How might the evaluativist respond? Bain himself makes appeal to something that he considers "natural and intuitive", namely the idea "that its seeming to you that things are bad for you in some way can itself be bad for you in another way." (Ibid.) To illustrate, he draws an analogy with the unpleasantness or badness of negative emotional experiences such as grief or fear. Bain holds that to be in a state of grief is unpleasant or defeasibly bad; we pity those who grieve. But this is because "grief is a state *in which* a death strikes you as bad...and we recognize that something's striking you that way is itself bad for you." The general idea, then, is that "it can be intrinsically bad for you (in one sense) to be in a state in which something *seems* bad for you (in another sense)." (p. 87)

Although there is indeed something natural and intuitive about Bain's principle, it seems to me that appeal to this idea fails to address the messenger-shooting objection, since there are different states in which things can seem bad to us, not all of which are *themselves* bad. If so, the explanatory gap remains. I'll then argue that the distinctive features of felt evaluations that Helm appeals to do nothing to close this gap.

Consider examples of different states in which things can seem to us to be a certain way. Thus, it might seem to me that there is an oasis in the desert when I believe that there is, or when I perceive that there is, or hallucinate one. Consider, next, examples of different states in which things can seem to us to be a certain way *evaluatively*. Thus, it might seem to me that my answer to the interviewer's question is disastrous when I believe that it is, or have an intuition that it is, or suspect that it is. Now it is clearly not the case that all of these candidates can be the kind of seeming that makes the state intrinsically bad – precisely because not all of these states are ones that are intrinsically bad to be in, or states that make a person a suitable object of pity. For instance, *believing* that something is bad for you is not in itself a state which is bad for you. Suppose that I believe that it is raining and that this is bad for me because I'll get wet. Surely this evaluation of my situation is not something that is *itself* bad for me, or something *in virtue of which* I am to be pitied.³ By the same token, believing that my reputation is under threat, or that the party was terrible, or my behaviour shameful, are not *in themselves* ways in which things seem bad to me that constitute instances of unpleasantness. So it doesn't seem true that a state in which things doxastically seem bad to me is itself bad for me.

Things can, of course, seem to us to be a certain way without our believing them to be that way. This is often true when our imagination has an influence on what we literally see: it might, for instance, seem to you that your dog understands what you are saying without your believing that he does; or it might seem to you that the duck-rabbit figure is a duck at one time and a rabbit

³ Perhaps the belief can be intrinsically bad for me in certain ways should it turn out to be false, since there might be something intrinsically bad about having false beliefs. But this, I assume, fails to be a plausible explanation of the badness of *pain*.

at another; or you might see something 'as' or 'in terms of' another, such as a seeing a long-winded conference question as a piece of attention-seeking. These are cases of mental states that Robert C. Roberts describes as 'construals.' (Roberts 2003, p. 67) The idea that things can seem to us to be a certain way without our believing them to be that way is also often true of our 'intuitive' responses. It might, for instance, seem to you that 'transplant' cases – i.e. cases where one can save five lives by sacrificing a healthy individual and transplanting their organs to five unhealthy people who would otherwise die – tell against consequentialism, since consequentialism holds, counterintuitively, that it would be morally right to sacrifice the healthy individual in this case. But it might seem to you that consequentialism gets the wrong answer here without your *believing* that it does, because you have another secure belief that consequentialism is in fact the correct moral theory. In this case your moral intuitions, and your moral beliefs, are in conflict.⁴ However, construals and intuitions fail to provide the right sort of 'seemings' needed to make Bain's version of evaluativism about the unpleasantness of pain plausible. I might construe a situation as one in which something bad is happening to me – as when I construe the student's question as insulting. Or I might have a 'philosophical' intuition that something bad is happening to me – as when I have an intuitive hunch that my friends don't like my new partner. In neither of these cases am I a suitable object of pity on account of how things seem to me, however; in neither

⁴ I owe this example to Robert Cowan.

of these cases is it true that something's seeming bad to me in one way is bad for me in the other *relevant* way.⁵

As might be obvious, the right kind of seeming, for the evaluator's purposes, isn't belief or thought, intuition or construal, but an *affective* (in the sense of *phenomenal*) seeming or perception, an *affective (phenomenal)* presentation of the relevant evaluative information. If so, then the evaluator's claim, properly specified, is that being in a state in which something affectively strikes you as bad is intrinsically bad for you. However, this just shifts the explanatory burden. For now the evaluator must explain what is so special, i.e., what is so bad, about the affective presentation of negative evaluative information. If, for instance, the suffering of grief is a matter of how a death affectively strikes one, then we need to know why being struck by this death *affectively* is evaluatively different from being struck by the death *non-affectively*. Or if, for example, the unpleasantness of pain is a matter of how some bodily disturbance affectively strikes one, then again we need to know why being struck affectively by this disturbance is evaluatively different from being struck by this in a non-affective manner. We might legitimately ask: why is an affective mode or manner of presentation intrinsically bad, when other modes or manners of presentation of the same information are not? It is, of course, tempting to say that the affective presentation of information about the relevant events – the death, the bodily disturbance – is unpleasant, and that *that's* what makes it bad; the kind of seeming that will make this version of evaluatorism intuitively plausible will thus be an unpleasant kind of seeming, a way in which the badness

⁵ At least, if we understand 'construal' and 'intuition' in the 'philosophical' sense as referring to some non-affective or non-emotional 'take' on our situation.

of some object or event impresses itself on you in an unpleasant affective manner or mode of presentation. But this would of course be a viciously circular explanation of unpleasantness.

If this is the case, then evaluativism leaves an explanatory gap: the account fails to provide a non-circular explanation of why it is that something's seeming bad to you in an affective way is intrinsically bad, when other states in which things seem bad to you are not intrinsically bad. Without a further story as to how we might close this gap, Bain's version of evaluativism fails to solve the messenger-shooting objection, and as such fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of the unpleasantness of pain. Does anything Helm say about painfulness help the evaluativist out of this difficulty? It seems not. As we have seen, Helm's general take on affective phenomenology is as follows: "what it is like to feel emotional pleasure or pain is to have one's attention gripped by the goodness or badness of something in such a way that one thereby feels the pull to act appropriately." (Helm 2002, pp. 19-20) So on his view what is distinctive about being *affectively* struck or impressed by the goodness or badness of some state is a matter of the feeling of one's attention being gripped and the pull to act, where such feelings are presumably absent when one is non-affectively struck or impressed by good or bad things. But this explanation is problematic. For one thing, it fails to provide an explanation of unpleasantness as opposed to pleasantness. For another, even if Helm can avoid this objection, we might think that any such explanation of unpleasantness is incompatible with the spirit of evaluativism. This is because this kind of explanation makes appeal to features that distinguish affective experience from non-affective experience – in this case, features to do with attentional capture and motivational pull. But then why not

appeal to these features *directly* to explain pain's badness and forego appeal to the relevant evaluation? Compare, for instance, an explanation of pain's badness in terms of pain occupying costly attentional resources and distracting us from other, possibly more important things. Here someone might say that it is this negative cost that explains the badness of painful experiences. But the obvious problem is that any such account will be incompatible with the evaluativist's main claim, namely that it is in virtue of the negative evaluation that pain counts as bad and not in virtue of the costliness of affective experience. So it is not obvious how Helm can avoid the messenger-shooting objection either.

All is not lost for the evaluativist, however. In the following section I'll consider the prospects for a form of evaluativism which holds that the relevant evaluation is of the *sensation* rather than the bodily damage. As we'll see, this form of evaluativism would seem to avoid the messenger-shooting objection, and so the view represents a promising development of the evaluativist theory. But as we'll also see, such a view faces a serious difficulty of its own; this suggests that we have good reason to doubt the viability of evaluativism in *any* form.⁶

3.

A different kind of evaluativism can be developed. On this view, painful experiences consist of a sensation that represents a bodily disturbance or

⁶ No card-carrying evaluativist has, to my knowledge, proposed such a view – although versions of the desire-theory which hold desires to be themselves forms of evaluative experience come close. For a development of this line, see for instance Graham Oddie's book *Value, Reality, and Desire*, Oxford University Press (2005). But this doesn't mean that it is not worth exploring the possibilities the view offers, especially if it can avoid the messenger-shooting objection. Indeed, as we'll further see, examination of this form of evaluativism will ultimately be of great value in indicating the shape that a 'relational' account of negative affect should take.

malfunction of a certain sort, and a negative evaluation *of this sensation*, where this latter is a form of or akin to a perceptual experience. So on this kind of account, it is the sensation, rather than the bodily state, that we see as bad.

This form of evaluativism would appear to avoid the messenger-shooting objection, since it holds that it is the sensation, rather than the bodily disturbance, which is the object of the negative evaluation. There is thus indeed something distinctive about affective presentations of information about some bodily state, namely that such presentations are *themselves* the object of a negative evaluation. In this way our second form of evaluativism appears to explain what is special about affective, as opposed to non-affective, modes or manners of presentation. Nevertheless, this version of evaluativism faces a serious and well-known objection: namely, that it seems to get the explanatory story the wrong way around. For this form of evaluativism makes the badness of the sensation depend upon a representation of it as bad: it is *because* the sensation is the subject of a negative evaluation that it counts as painful or unpleasant. But it is more natural and more plausible – or so many philosophers think – to hold that we represent the sensation as bad *because* it is bad. The painfulness of pain sensations is the reason why they seem bad to us, rather than our representing pain sensations as bad being the reason why pains are painful.

In support, note that there are general worries about the capacity of mental states to confer value on objects and events: the very nature of states such as perception, belief, desire, and evaluation suggest that these are subject to external normative constraints or are explicable in terms of external normative goals such as accuracy, truth, attainability, or goodness. We might therefore resist the idea that we explain the relevant goals in terms of the states

themselves. Moreover, and as Bain points out, *if* pain sensations were painful because they seemed bad to us, then our impressions or seemings would have to be 'self-verifying' and 'incapable of incorrectness', and this is problematic. (Bain 2013, p. 80) As a result, evaluativism falls foul of a version of the 'Euthyphro problem', and so we are no closer to a plausible explanation for painfulness on evaluativist lines.

It seems to me, however, that evaluativism of this kind is in fact relatively untroubled by this standard objection: evaluativism can avoid the Euthyphro problem, and the associated charge that it makes our impressions self-verifying or incapable of incorrectness. As we'll see, however, this comes at a significant cost: the price to be paid for avoiding the problem is to open the door to other, more plausible relational accounts of painfulness.

Although Euthyphro questions, when raised against 'relational' accounts of painfulness – namely, ones that explain painfulness in terms of the relation between a sensation and an additional element, such as an evaluation or a desire – can seem devastating, this impression can disappear when we consider the questions more closely. Consider Bain's version of the question: "Is it the case (i) that your pain is represented as bad because it is bad, or (ii) that your pain is bad because it is represented as bad?" (Ibid.) As we have seen, many people think that the most natural and most plausible answer here is (i). But is this answer really more plausible? One reason for scepticism here is that in many cases things are represented to us as thus-and-so but not *because* things are thus-and-so. The obvious case here is that of inaccurate or misrepresentation. Suppose I have a perceptual experience of an Irish red setter but in poor lighting conditions: it is dusk, and the red setter appears to be grey. Here the best

explanation for my representing the red setter as grey won't invoke its being grey, since it isn't true that it is grey. Or suppose, as a nervous type, I am afraid of monarch butterflies, and so I have an emotional experience of a monarch butterfly as dangerous. But here too the best explanation for my representing the butterfly as dangerous won't invoke its dangerousness, given that it is harmless. In both of these cases I represent things as I do in part because of certain features of the (perceived) object in question, and because of certain facts about lighting conditions, or an encounter with a swarm of monarch butterflies when I was a child, etc. What the explanations don't involve is an appeal to the real existence of the feature that I represent the object as having. Now I take it that there are no Euthyphro-type dilemmas in the offing when it comes to misperceiving colours or recalcitrant emotions: it's not the case that I represent the dog as grey because it's grey, nor the case that the dog is grey because I represent it as grey. By the same token, it's not the case that I represent monarch butterflies as dangerous because they are dangerous, nor the case that they are dangerous because I represent them as so. Neither answer is correct in these cases.

Consider now a similar point with respect to pain. Suppose a subject is experiencing phantom limb pain. According to the form of evaluativism discussed in §2, this will involve her representing some bodily disturbance as bad. But again, the explanation of her representing this as bad will not invoke the fact of the badness of the bodily disturbance, because there is no bodily disturbance. So it would be a mistaken explanation of the state's seeming bad to our subject to invoke that state's actually being bad. And once again, we should be equally disinclined to maintain that the bodily disturbance is bad because our

subject has an impression that it is bad. For there is no disturbance in her missing limb, and hence nothing bad going on in that missing limb. So to the question “Is it the case (i) that some bodily disturbance is represented as bad because it is bad, or (ii) that the bodily disturbance is bad because it is represented as bad?”, the correct answer in this case is again “neither.”

But how will this help evaluativism of the second kind? Well, the fact that Euthyphro questions are not always appropriate with respect to our evaluative representations raises the possibility that they are not appropriate with respect to our appraisals of our sensations. That is, if there are reasons to be suspicious about the general claim that something’s seeming a certain way evaluatively must either be explained in terms of its being that way evaluatively or must be capable of conferring value on to that something, then we can cast doubt upon the idea that the most plausible explanation of some sensation of bodily disturbance seeming bad to a subject must invoke the fact that the sensation really is bad, whilst avoiding a commitment to an implausible form of subjectivism. Now to make this work, of course, the evaluativist will have to provide the relevant explanatory details: the claim that Euthyphro questions don’t work with respect to phantom limb pain and recalcitrant emotions is only plausible because we have other and plausible explanatory options in these cases. The evaluativist will have to provide something similar: namely, a (more) plausible explanatory option than those offered by the Euthyphro questions, and thus an explanatory option that involves neither an appeal to the badness of the affective representation, or a commitment to an implausible form of subjectivism. Luckily for the evaluativist, there is another option to hand.

The important thing to bear in mind is that evaluativism is a *relational* account of painfulness. All such relational accounts explain the badness or painfulness of pain in terms of a sensation and some other component: a desire that the sensation cease, an imperative that we act so as to reduce the sensation, a negative evaluation of the sensation, and so on. If so, however, then strictly speaking those who support relational theories should deny that it is the *sensation* that is painful or bad. They should, instead, maintain that what is painful or what is bad is the sensation *plus* the other component (desire, imperative, evaluation). It is thus *the whole experience* consisting of a sensation *and* some desire or imperative or evaluation that is the bearer of the evaluative property, and that has normative and motivational force. If so, however, then evaluativism can provide a plausible explanation of why Euthyphro questions are not appropriately applied to her account of painfulness. Since it is the compound experience of the sensation *plus* negative assessment of this sensation that is painful or bad, it is false that we negatively evaluate the sensation as bad because the sensation *is* bad. For the sensation, by itself, is not bad. And since it is the compound experience of sensation plus evaluation that is painful and hence bad, it is false that the evaluation of the sensation *makes* this sensation bad. For again, the sensation, by itself, is not bad. So this form of evaluativism doesn't succumb to the Euthyphro problem. We can, moreover, see why evaluativism isn't committed to holding that the relevant appraisals are self-verifying or incapable of incorrectness. For if the above is correct, our evaluations of the badness *of the sensation* are all mistaken. Far from being self-verifying, our evaluations all turn out to be wrong. The fact that evaluativism is a relational

theory thus prevents it from being committed to an implausible form of subjectivism about value.

Evaluativism can, therefore, escape the standard Euthyphro objection to relational accounts. Nevertheless, the way in which evaluativism manages to do so raises another worry that casts serious doubt upon the theory; and it is not obvious how evaluativism can avoid this problem. To see this, note again that for the evaluativist, what is bad or painful is not the pain sensation itself, but a combination of the pain sensation and a *mistaken* evaluation of this sensation as bad. So on this view what is bad is having a sensation that you wrongly see as bad. But this makes it seem as though the badness of painful experiences is *epistemic*: painful experiences are bad *because* they involve a mistaken evaluation. For suppose we ask: what's bad about an experience in which one wrongly sees some sensation as bad? The obvious answer is that this involves an inaccurate representation. And this, we might think, fails to capture the nature of the badness involved in painful experiences.

The account, relatedly, fails to adequately capture the normativity of painfulness. For if the badness of pain is, ultimately, epistemic, then it would seem that we are making some kind of normative error when we are motivated by a painful experience to do what we can to make the sensation cease – rather than, say, stopping seeing the sensation as bad. The thought that painful experiences generate *practical* reasons therefore sits uneasily with the evaluativist's explanation of the badness of such experiences. And if a theory of painfulness cannot easily explain the platitude that painful experiences give us (defeasible) reasons to act, this might be regarded as sufficient to reject that theory. If so, then our second form of evaluativism fares no better than our first.

4.

To this point the paper has been negative: I have argued that both forms of evaluativism face serious difficulties when it comes to explaining the painfulness of pain, and to this extent ought to be rejected. If these arguments work, then we can be equally doubtful about the capacity of evaluativism – of any stripe – to explain unpleasantness or the badness of negative affect in general. The hedonic element common to guilt, shame, disappointment, and grief is not therefore to be explained by appeal to the negative evaluations that these emotions involve. In the space that remains I'll explain, briefly, how relational accounts of painfulness and negative affect might be developed in order to avoid these criticisms. Our discussion of the difficulties faced by evaluativist accounts of both kinds can thus prove helpful in illustrating the shape that a relational account should take.

We saw in §3 that evaluativism makes the badness of pain an epistemic affair. A more plausible relational account should therefore appeal to an element that isn't capable of misrepresentation. An obvious candidate, and one which is familiar from the pain literature, is the element of *dislike*.⁷ On this view, unpleasant experiences in general are constituted by bodily sensations that we dislike. For example, painful experiences are constituted by pain sensations that we dislike; unpleasant experiences of hunger are constituted by hunger sensations that we dislike; itches are constituted by feelings on the surface of the

⁷ A number of theorists have maintained that the unpleasantness of pain is a matter of a subject's disliking a sensation of bodily disturbance. These include Armstrong (1962), Hall (1989), Pitcher (1970), and Tye in his earlier work (1995). But none argue that the dislike view ought to be accepted because, at least in part, it avoids the problems faced by evaluativist accounts.

skin that we dislike; and so on. Since it is the compound which is, strictly speaking, bad, this version of the relational theory is not subject to the Euthyphro problem. For it is not the case (to focus once more on pain) that a subject dislikes the pain sensation because *the sensation* is bad, nor the case that *the pain sensation* is bad because the subject dislikes it. Instead, what is bad is the experience of having a pain sensation that one dislikes. Moreover, since dislike is not capable of being mistaken or inaccurate – we are not subject to criticism on the basis of our disliking some sensation, or liable to the charge that we are getting something wrong – then the dislike account isn't faced with the charge that it thereby makes the badness of painful experiences a purely epistemic matter. What is bad is experiencing a sensation we dislike, rather than experiencing a sensation that we mistakenly think is bad. As a result, the dislike view can avoid the Euthyphro problem but in a way that doesn't leave it open to the criticisms in the last section that undermine evaluativism.

Still, it might be argued that the *spirit* of the objections raised against evaluativism remains, and that the dislike view is subject to versions of the criticisms above. For instance, although dislike cannot be mistaken or erroneous in the way that a perceptual experience of the sensation as bad would be, we might nevertheless question the capacity of dislike to supply normative and motivating reasons, and hence question the capacity of dislike to capture the normative and motivating status that painfulness is supposed to have. For if we dislike some sensation but not because *the sensation* is in some way bad, in what sense is our dislike a rational or an appropriate response to the sensation? And if dislike is not rational or appropriate, then it is difficult to see how we can have genuine normative reason to rid ourselves of sensations that we dislike. Ought

we not, instead, to stop disliking them? Mere dislikes, like mere desires, seem to lack the normative status to generate genuine normative reasons to act, or to give me good reason to do anything.

When applied to dislike, however, this criticism is unconvincing, in so far as it rests on the assumption that states that are not themselves rational or appropriate cannot generate normative reasons. And this is an assumption that we have good reason to reject. Think, to illustrate, of gustatory dislikes. Suppose I dislike the taste of aubergine. This is, clearly, not something on the basis of which I am subject to rational criticism: my dislike is neither rational nor irrational, neither appropriate nor inappropriate. For there is nothing *intrinsically bad* about how aubergine tastes. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that I have good reason not to eat aubergine precisely because I dislike how it tastes. Dislike can therefore have the kind of normative status that is capable of generating normative reasons, even though it is not itself a response to reasons. And it shouldn't be thought that there is something strange or mysterious about a state that is not responsive to reasons and yet can provide reasons. Consider ordinary everyday perceptual experiences: these are not responses to reasons, not rationally appropriate or inappropriate, but nevertheless provide reasons to believe that things are thus-and-so. So there are paradigm cases of states that can supply reasons without being reason-responsive; and there are clear cases where dislike of some state gives us good reason to avoid being in that state. Taken together, these points provide good support for the view that a relational account of painfulness which appeals to dislike can both avoid the criticisms that undermine evaluativism, and capture the normative and motivational aspects that painful experiences are supposed to have.

Of course, much more work would need to be done before any such account is ultimately plausible. Even if this kind of relational account can avoid standard criticisms based upon Euthyphro questions, and avoids the problems faced by evaluativism of either stripe, a story would need to be told about how disliking pain sensations that are not intrinsically bad can nevertheless make sense from the standpoint of our reasons and motives. This will be a story that explains the *point* of our pain system operating as it does – by getting us to avoid bodily damage via getting us to act so that sensations that we dislike cease – rather than more directly. This will, as such, be a story that explains why there is good reason for us to dislike pain sensations, even though the reasons are not provided by the intrinsic disvalue of such sensations. I think that this kind of explanation is possible: for there are motivational advantages, in terms of speed of response and stability of the state in question, of a pain system that operates *via* dislike of pain sensations. At least, such a system has advantages when compared with a system operating with more cognitively sophisticated, reason-responsive mental states. This suggests that there are good reasons for a pain system to operate with states of dislike *because* these states are not responses to reasons or values provided by sensations themselves. But this will, unfortunately, have to be a story for another occasion.⁸

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