

# Felt Evaluations: A Theory of Pleasure and Pain\*

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## Abstract

This paper argues that pleasure and pains are not qualia and they are not to be analyzed in terms of supposedly antecedently intelligible mental states like bodily sensation or desire. Rather, pleasure and pain are characteristic of a distinctive kind of evaluation that is common to emotions, desires, and (some) bodily sensations. These are *felt evaluations*: passive responses to attend to and be motivated by the import of something impressing itself on us, responses that are nonetheless simultaneously constitutive of that import by virtue of the broader rational patterns of which they are a part and that they serve to define. This account of felt evaluations makes sense of the way in which pleasures and pains grab our attention and motivate us to act and of the peculiar dual objectivity and subjectivity of their implicit evaluations, while offering a phenomenology adequate to both emotional and bodily pleasures and pains.

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). What is more controversial is exactly how we should understand, for the purposes of giving an account of the nature of pleasure and pain, the connections among the feeling of pleasure or pain—their phenomenology—the motivation, and the attitude. In particular, should we understand the relevant attitude as a part of the feeling of pleasure or pain itself, or is the attitude something external to the feeling? If the former, should we understand the attitude as a separable component, a part of a reductive analysis, or is the attitude an irreducible part of the feeling itself? Finally, given some account of the connection between the pleasure or pain and the attitude, how does motivation fit in? Is it somehow internal to the attitude,

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\* *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 39, 13–30.

or is it a separable component only contingently connected to the attitude and the feeling?

It is standard practice in philosophy of mind to regard belief, desire, and bodily sensation as the fundamental building blocks out of which all other mental states can be constructed. This is true of most philosophical analyses of pleasure and pain, with different views mixing and matching these various components in new and sometimes surprising ways. This paper rejects this approach and instead sees pleasure and pain as characteristic of a distinctive kind of intrinsically motivating evaluation that is shared in common among emotions, desires, and (some) sensations. I shall argue that evaluations of this distinctive kind, which I shall call “felt evaluations,” can impose themselves on us in feeling (i.e., pleasantly or painfully) only because they are rooted in broader patterns in one’s emotions and desires generally. This means that pleasure and pain are not intelligible as reducible to some more fundamental building blocks but are rather characteristic of a kind of mental state of which emotions, desires, and (some) bodily sensations are species. Moreover, I shall argue, this account of felt evaluations can help explain, more perspicuously than standard appeals simply to a largely unanalyzed and inadequate notion of “desire,” how these states motivate us to act.

## 1 Pleasure, Pain, and Evaluation

Pains hurt—they feel bad; pleasures please—they feel good. How do we understand the kind of goodness and badness at issue in pleasure and pain? One way to make sense of the badness of pain is in terms of an evaluative judgment. According to Norton Nelkin, “pain involves both a phenomenal state ... and a spontaneous, non-inferential evaluation of that state as representing a harm to the body,” where such an evaluation is a judgment.<sup>1</sup> The claim that such judgments are spontaneous and non-inferential is intended to forestall the objection that if pains were to consist in part in judgment, then we could simply control when we feel pain by making or refusing to make the judgment. Rather, the evaluations are thrust upon us—spontaneously. In this way, such evaluative judgments are analogous to perceptual judgments: when I see the redness of a ripe tomato, that redness thrusts itself upon me and I cannot but see it as red; similarly, when I stub my toe, the badness of that sensation thrusts itself on me and I cannot but feel it as painful.

Aside from the difficulties involved in applying this account to animals, which might seem to lack a capacity for judgment, a central problem with Nelkin’s account is that it does not make good sense of the way in which pains motivate behavior. Although some pain behavior is mere reflex, as when you jerk your hand away from a hot stove, in general pain motivates intentional action. Thus, if your arm is strapped down as I bring a lit candle to your hand, you may try

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<sup>1</sup>“Reconsidering Pain,” *Philosophical Psychology*, 7(1994), 325–43, at 332. See also Elijah Millgram’s account of pleasure and displeasure in *Practical Induction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) for a similar judgmentalist account.

to blow the flame out or push me away, actions that are rationally motivated precisely because of the badness of the pain you feel. Nelkin recognizes this and so tries to make sense of such motivation by appealing to desire as a usual but not necessary causal consequence of pain. The trouble is, however, that the connection between the pain and the motivation seems to be much more direct than this, for this all too easily allows for the possibility that pains might not motivate, whereas the idea of a pleasure or pain that is disconnected from motivation is almost unintelligible rather than merely uncommon.<sup>2</sup> Consequently it seems that the kind of evaluation implicit in pleasure and pain must be distinguished from that of ordinary evaluative judgments somehow other than by being spontaneous and non-inferential, and the problem is to find an informative way to articulate that difference.<sup>3</sup>

At this point, it might seem more promising to turn to another way to make sense of the evaluation implicit in pleasure and pain: in terms of an associated desire. The idea here is that the sensation that is the pleasure or pain causes us to desire to keep it or get rid of (or mitigate) it, and it is in virtue of such a desire that we can make sense of the goodness or badness of pleasure or pain. Thus, G. Lynn Stephens and George Graham understand pain to be a composite state consisting of the awareness of a certain phenomenological quale and a desire for relief.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Michael Tye understands pain to be an experience of a disordered state of the body that “elicits an immediate dislike for itself together with anxiety about, or concern for, the state of the bodily region where the disturbance feels located.”<sup>5</sup> In each case, apparently, the thought is that desire

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<sup>2</sup>Nelkin intentionally severs any conceptual connection between pain and motivation in order to accommodate cases of morphine pain, in which under certain circumstances some patients claim to feel pain without minding it. My complaint is that on Nelkin’s view morphine cases are accommodated too easily, for such cases are troubling in that they threaten to undermine our sense that we have any clear concept of pain. (Cf. Daniel Dennett’s “Why You Can’t Make a Computer that Feels Pain,” in *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 190–229.) Conceptual revision may be called for to make sense of morphine pain, but to revise our concepts so as readily to accommodate rare and bizarre cases is to revise them too much. (I shall return to discuss morphine pain in a bit more detail, especially in note 28.)

<sup>3</sup>I am, of course, begging many interesting questions about the possibility of motivation being internal to judgment itself. If motivational internalism is correct (as I think it is), in order to make sense of the possibility of extreme forms of weakness of will we need some way of distinguishing those judgments that have motivation internal to them from those that do not, and I think this possible only in light of the kind of account of evaluation I shall offer (albeit in the context of emotional evaluations) in §2. For explicit arguments to this effect, arguments which connect emotional and judgmental evaluations, see my “Emotions and Practical Reason: Rethinking Evaluation and Motivation,” *Noûs*, 35 (2001), 190–213, and my *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup>“Minding Your P’s and Q’s: Pain and Sensible Qualities,” *Noûs*, 21 (1987), 395–405. See also Richard Hall’s “Are Pains Necessarily Unpleasant?,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 49 (1989), 643–59.

<sup>5</sup>“A Representational Theory of Pains,” *Philosophical Perspectives 9: AI, Connectionism, and Philosophical Psychology* (1995), 223–39, at 228. See also George Pitcher, “Pain Perception,” *Philosophical Review*, 79 (1970), 368–93; D. M. Armstrong, *The Nature of Mind and Other Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); and Natika Newton, “On Viewing Pain as a Secondary Quality,” *Noûs*, 23 (1989), 569–98.

is a kind of evaluation—its ends are implicitly understood in the desire to be worth pursuing or avoiding—and it is in terms of such an evaluation that the painful experience is a bad one (or the pleasurable experience is a good one).

Nonetheless, understanding the connection in desire between the evaluation and the motivation is not trivial. For on the one hand desire must be distinguished from mere goal-directedness (of a sort exhibited by, for example, chess-playing computers) in that desires motivate because of their implicit evaluations. It is not merely that one antecedently has the motivation, as a kind of goal-directedness, and then somehow comes to endorse this motivation as worthwhile; rather what distinguishes desire from mere goal-directedness is that being motivated in the way characteristic of desire stems from a recognition of its object as worth pursuing or avoiding. On the other hand, the kind of evaluation implicit in desire must be distinguished from that explicit in evaluative judgment because evaluative judgment can be dissociated from motivation in ways in which desires cannot: to evaluate in the way characteristic of desire just is to be motivated to pursue it. Hence, in desire the evaluation and the motivation are inseparable.<sup>6</sup>

The trouble, as I shall ultimately argue, is that a proper understanding of the connection in desire between evaluation and motivation requires understanding desire itself to be a kind of pleasure or pain: such evaluations are ones that please or pain us, and it is precisely for this reason that they motivate us to act accordingly. If this is right, then the standard appeal to an antecedent notion of desire to account for the badness of pain would be viciously circular. To argue for this, I shall take what may initially seem a detour through the emotions, a discussion which will ultimately turn out to be fundamental to understanding pleasure and pain and their goodness and badness. For, I shall argue, to understand what is distinctive about emotions as such is to understand them to be a distinctive kind of evaluative response, namely that of pleasure or pain: to feel fear, for example, is to be pained by danger, where such pain just is the evaluation implicit in one's fear. Consequently, by taking emotions as my paradigm of pleasure and pain I shall develop a more satisfying account that includes both desire and bodily sensations.

## 2 Emotions as Felt Evaluations<sup>7</sup>

As is widely recognized, emotions are not mere phenomenal states but are evaluative responses to one's situation and so have a variety of intentional objects. In particular, the *target* of an emotion is that at which the emotion is directed; if I am angry at you for throwing a baseball at my prize Ming vase, the target of my emotion is you. An emotion's *formal object* is the characteristic evaluation (of

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<sup>6</sup>For more detailed arguments, see my "The Significance of Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 31 (1994), 319–31.

<sup>7</sup>The account of emotional evaluations and of import presented in this section is one I have developed more fully elsewhere, most recently in my *Emotional Reason*. My aim here is to present, without much argument, as much of this background theory as is necessary to make intelligible the sense in which emotions are pleasures and pains.

the target) implicit in that emotion type and distinguishing it from other emotion types, and it is in terms of the formal object that we evaluate the warrant of the emotion. Thus, roughly, the formal object of anger is offensiveness—this is how it evaluates its targets—, and this distinguishes anger from fear, whose formal object is dangerousness. The *warrant* of the anger or fear therefore depends in part on whether its target really is (or intelligibly seems to be) offensive or dangerous.

What is not widely recognized is that in the preceding example, the warrant of my fear of the baseball or anger at you also depends on whether (and how) the vase matters to me—on the *import* it has for me. If I am an art lover, we might expect that the vase is important to me as something to be cherished and protected, so that (in the absence of a protective case) my fear would be warranted; yet if I am out to commit vandalism, the vase may instead matter to me as a worthy target, in which case my fear would not be warranted (but hope or excited anticipation would be instead); or if I were completely apathetic about the vase, no emotion would be warranted at all. This means that my feeling of fear involves not only a formal object (i.e., dangerousness) and a target (i.e., that which gets evaluated as dangerous) but also a *focus*: that background object having import in terms of which, given the circumstances, the formal object intelligibly applies to the target. Thus, the vase is the focus not only of my fear, but also of my anger at you for trying to destroy it, for without the vase's having a particular import to me the ball is not intelligible as a danger or you as offensive. (This point will become important later.)

*Emotional cognitivism*, still the most widely held theory of emotions, tries to make sense of the way in which emotions evaluate their objects by providing a reductive account of emotions in terms of beliefs and desires. Thus, anger is understood in terms of the belief that its target is offensive and the desire to lash out at it, and fear is understood in terms of the belief that its target is dangerous and the desire to avoid or mitigate that danger. Of course, as cognitivists recognize, to have an emotion is more than just to have such a belief and desire, for one can clearly have the belief and desire without having the emotion. So something more needs to be added to the account to specify what is distinctively emotional about emotions—their *emotionality*.

The trouble is, standard attempts to account for the emotionality of emotions—in terms of an appeal to a special kind of desire,<sup>8</sup> to a special kind of belief,<sup>9</sup> and to bodily pleasures and pains<sup>10</sup>—simply fail.<sup>11</sup> After all, how can you ar-

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<sup>8</sup>See, e.g., Joel Marks, “A Theory of Emotion,” *Philosophical Studies*, 42 (1982), 227–42. (Indeed, as I shall argue in §3, we cannot give an account of desire that is independent of the emotions, and so desire is not intelligible as a component of emotions.)

<sup>9</sup>See, e.g., Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially Chapter 10.

<sup>10</sup>See, e.g., William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup>Of course, the few brief remarks I provide here are far from a knock-down argument against cognitivist theories of emotions. (For much more fully worked-out arguments, see my *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapter 2.) My aim here is merely to suggest that a different tack might prove fruitful: in order to understand what is distinctively emotional about emotions, we need to understand the sense in which their implicit evaluations are pleasures or

ticulate the special kind of desire (as being especially “strong,” say) or of belief (as involving “full assent”) without making what in this context would be a viciously circular appeal to the emotions? Moreover, and more fundamentally, to understand emotionality in terms of bodily pleasures and pains (caused in the right way by the relevant beliefs and desires) is to diminish the importance of emotions in our everyday lives<sup>12</sup> in a way that misunderstands emotional pleasure and pain. For emotions do not merely involve some pleasant or painful sensation among other components, as cognitivist theories require. Rather, they *are* pleasures and pains and can be redescribed as such: to be afraid *is* to be pained by danger (and not by one’s stomach); such a pain is not a component of, but is rather identical with, one’s fear. This means that emotional pleasures and pains, namely what one feels in having the emotion, are essentially intentional and evaluative, a sense of how things are going—whether well or poorly. Understanding this will require understanding the sense in which emotions are feelings more generally.

Part of the point of describing emotions as feelings is to highlight their passivity in contrast to the more active evaluations we make in judgment: the capacity for emotion is a kind of receptivity to evaluative content, and particular emotions are passive exercises of that receptivity. Conversely, we might say, the import of the situation—the dangerousness of the ball, its having this import given the import of the vase—impresses itself on us in our feeling a particular emotion, in something like the way colors impress themselves on us in perception. This means that import must have a kind of objectivity relative to our emotions as that which our emotions apprehend (or misapprehend) and so as that in terms of which particular emotions are to be evaluated for warrant.<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, the way we passively apprehend import in feeling cannot be exactly the same as that of ordinary perception, for import is relative to the individual: it is constituted by our cares and concerns (witness the difference between the art lover and the vandal). Indeed, import cannot be understood as independent of emotions in general, for if someone were not affected emotionally

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pains.

<sup>12</sup>After all, if what is distinctive about emotions over and above the relevant beliefs and desires is that they cause a certain bodily sensation, then we could get along just as well (or even better) without them. This is roughly the explicit conclusion Jerome Shaffer draws from a consideration of emotional cognitivism in general: “It is easy enough to imagine individual lives and even a whole world in which things would be much better if there were no emotion” (“An Assessment of Emotion,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 20 (1983), 161–73, at 169). I agree: so long as belief and desire are given the central role in an account of emotions, any additional factor used to account for what is distinctive about emotions as such will be by and large irrelevant to an understanding of the warrant of emotions or of the way in which emotions explain our behavior, and so we may well be better off without this additional factor. Unlike Shaffer, however, I take this to be a *reductio* of cognitivist accounts of emotions.

<sup>13</sup>Although I shall spell out below more precisely what I mean in saying that import impresses itself on us in (passively) feeling an emotion, I do not have room here to spell out this notion of passivity in full detail. The idea that emotions are passive should not be understood to be incompatible with our being able to have a kind of control over them, a control we can exercise in part by self-consciously focusing our attention on various aspects of the world and making certain evaluative judgments. For details on such control, as well as a more complete account of the passivity of emotions, see my *Emotional Reason*.

by something no matter what happened to it, we would be hard pressed to say that it had import to her. In short, import is both objective, as rationally prior to particular emotions, and subjective, as conceptually dependent on the shape of one's emotions generally. The problem, therefore, is to make sense of this objectivity of import and how it can impress itself on us in a way that is consistent with its also being subjective and so somehow constituted by us, and to do so in a way that can make sense of the distinctive kind of pleasant or painful evaluative feelings emotions are. I shall now argue that the notion of an emotion's focus is fundamental to solving this problem.

To feel an emotion is not merely to respond to some apparent import in one's situation; in addition, such a feeling *commits* one to the import of both its target and its focus. In one sense, such a commitment is much like that involved in perceptual belief: it is a commitment to things being a certain way, and the warrant of this commitment is to be assessed in terms of whether things really are that way. This sense of emotional commitment is in view from the perspective of the objectivity of import: if the target or the focus does not have (or intelligibly seem to have) the import one feels it to have in the emotion, the emotion is for that reason unwarranted. Yet in another sense, emotional commitments are very different from that of perceptual belief insofar as they involve a commitment to have a broad pattern of other emotions with a common focus, a pattern that constitutes the import of that focus. This needs further explanation.<sup>14</sup>

To have import is to be a worthy object of attention and action: insofar as something has import for one, one ought to pay attention to it and so be prepared to act on its behalf when otherwise appropriate. This means not merely that it is permissible or a good thing to pay attention to it and act on its behalf; rather, it means that attention and action are, by and large, required on pain of giving up or at least undermining the idea that it really has import to one. Of course, this is not to deny that someone who genuinely cares about something may in some cases be distracted by other things and so occasionally fail to attend to or act on its behalf when called for; what is required, rather, is a consistent pattern of both *vigilance* for its being affected favorably or adversely and *preparedness* to act on its behalf.

To be committed in feeling an emotion to the import of its focus, therefore,

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<sup>14</sup>Actually, it needs further explanation than I am able to give it here. It might seem that such commitments must be either cognitive, with mind-to-world direction of fit, or conative, with world-to-mind direction of fit. Both these options would be unacceptable given my aims here. For if such a commitment is cognitive, it might seem, it presupposes what I purport to be offering: an account of the nature of import. Yet if it is conative, it seems to leave mysterious what distinguishes genuinely import-constituting conations (such as desire) from mere goal-directedness (cf. §1). I have elsewhere argued that this distinction between cognitive and conative evaluations is untenable and needs to be rejected in favor of what I call a "disclosive" model of evaluation, for it is only in light of such an account of evaluation that we can make sense of how we are able both to deliberate about value and to exercise control not only over our actions but also over who we are as persons. This is implicit in my understanding of import as simultaneously both objective and subjective and in my understanding of emotions as simultaneously responsive to import and motivating, but it is not something I can develop fully here. (For details, see my *Emotional Reason*.)

is in part to be committed to continue to pay attention to what happens to that focus as the present circumstances unfold, as well as to pay attention to it in other circumstances, and to respond as these circumstances demand. Thus my fear as you carelessly throw the ball in the direction of the vase commits me to feeling relieved if you miss or sad if you don't; it commits me as well to feeling fear of earthquakes, anger at thoughtless neighbors who try to remove a nearby tree stump with a large quantity of dynamite, etc., all because these emotions are proper responses to their situations given my commitment to the import of their common focus. In this way, having a particular emotion commits one to feel a broad pattern of other emotions with the same focus. Indeed, other things being equal, it would be hard to make sense of my initial response as that of fear if I were indifferent to the subsequent fate of the vase and so felt no relief, sadness, etc., because the purported commitment I make to the import of the vase in feeling fear would then be shown to be no commitment at all. Consequently, genuine commitments to import are not merely intellectual assents to an evaluation but also dispose one to be vigilant for what happens to this focus—in other words, to have the broader pattern of emotions with the same focus project into the future.

Actually to have such a projectible pattern of emotions with a common focus, then, is to be vigilant in a way that is necessary for that focus' having import. Moreover, such a pattern of emotions also enables us to make sense of the idea that its focus is worthy of attention. For the pattern, once it is in place, is no mere disposition to attend; it is rather partly definitive of the warrant of its elements as a rational response to their common focus. For example, given the pattern it would be inappropriate not to be sad when I am forced to sell the vase by my financial circumstances, for such a failure would be a failure to attend to my circumstances as I ought, precisely because of the pattern of commitments these emotions focused on the vase involve. Conversely, it is the presence of that pattern of other emotions that makes intelligible the appropriateness of my current fear. In short, the pattern of emotions with a common focus is not merely projectible, it is rational as well insofar as it is partly constitutive of the warrant of its elements, and this rationality makes the focus of that pattern intelligible as worthy of attention.

Of course, to feel an emotion is not merely to attend to one's circumstances in a certain way; emotions also move us, in many cases to intentional action.<sup>15</sup> Thus, fear might lead us to escape the danger, and anger or jealousy to seek revenge. In such cases, the emotion explains the action by motivating it in such a way as to make it intelligible within a broader context of rationality: the evaluation implicit in the emotion's formal object justifies the action by revealing it to have a point, to be (other things being equal) worthwhile in the present circumstances. Such a point can be an end to be achieved, as in the examples just provided, but it need not be: Jumping for joy and crying out of sadness each have a point, but that point is not an end these activities seek

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<sup>15</sup>Emotions can move us to mere non-intentional behavior as well, as when we tremble from fear; such non-intentional behaviors are *arational expressions* of the emotions, and I shall simply set them aside here.

to achieve but is rather celebration or mourning, and the jumping or crying just is that celebration or mourning, an activity made intelligible by the specific kind of import to which joy and sadness are properly responsive. (In this way, such non-goal-directed intentional action can properly be understood to be a *rational expression* of the emotion and so of one's commitment to the import of its focus.)

To say that emotions motivate action in this way is not to say that we inevitably act accordingly. For our emotions may be but one of many sources of motivation, and these other sources may in particular cases, whether rationally or irrationally, override the dictates of our emotions by, for example, overcoming our fear or stifling our joy. Nonetheless, that the kind of commitment to import emotions involve has some influence on our motivation is a condition of the intelligibility of one's having the capacity for emotions at all: to feel sad in a particular case without any impulse at all to mourn is to have a defective commitment to the import of both the focus and the target, and never to have the impulse to mourn when otherwise appropriate is to fail to have the capacity for sadness in the first place.

Again, the importance of this understanding of emotional commitments comes when we consider the patterns of emotional response. To have the requisite pattern of emotions with a common focus is not only to be vigilant to what happens to that focus but also, we can now see, to be prepared to act on its behalf when otherwise appropriate. As before, moreover, such a pattern makes intelligible that focus as being *worthy* of action: it would be rationally inappropriate, other things being equal, to fail to lash out at those who intentionally seek to destroy the vase, precisely because the pattern of commitments to its import these emotions involve is essentially a rational pattern.

The upshot is that these projectible, rational patterns of emotions with a common focus constitute that focus as being worthy of attention and action and so as having import. In short, to have import is to be the focus of such a pattern of emotions, and it is these patterns that make intelligible the subjectivity of that import.

Nonetheless, these patterns also make intelligible the objectivity of import. For to have such a pattern of emotions is to be disposed to respond to situations of a certain kind, where we cannot specify that kind of situation except in terms of the import of the focus of that pattern. Hence the pattern of emotions is in effect an *attunement*, a habituation of one's sensibilities, to that import. Given the rationality of the pattern, any particular emotional response (or even failure of emotional response) is assessed for appropriateness in terms of whether it fits into this pattern as an intelligible projection of it—as, that is, a proper or improper response to the import of its focus.<sup>16</sup> And given the projectibility of this attunement of our sensibilities, we can make sense of that import as *impressing*

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<sup>16</sup>Of course, there is the further question about whether it is rational to have the whole pattern—whether it is rational for the focus of that pattern to have import for one. This further question is about a richer kind of objectivity I cannot discuss here; for details, see my “Emotional Reason: How to Deliberate about Value,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 37 (2000), 1–22, and my *Emotional Reason*.

itself on us: it is situations of this kind—i.e., those involving import—that engage our emotions because these emotions are already attuned to that import by virtue of the broader projectible, rational pattern of which they are a part. Import therefore impresses itself on us by not only grabbing and holding our attention but also priming us to act appropriately.

In short, particular emotions are feelings of things going well or poorly, the result of import impressing itself on us. This is possible only because these emotions are commitments to the import of their foci, commitments which, when they are non-defective, define and institute a broader projectible, rational pattern that both constitutes that import and makes possible its impressing itself on us, grabbing our attention and motivating us to act. Emotions are, therefore, *felt evaluations* insofar as they are commitments of this kind: commitments that both are passive responses to attend to and be motivated by import and are simultaneously constitutive of that import by virtue of the broader rational patterns of which they are a part and which they serve to define.<sup>17</sup>

In light of this account of emotions as felt evaluations we can understand the sense in which they are pleasures and pains. Emotions are pleasant or painful—they feel good or bad—precisely because, as felt evaluations, they are feelings of positive or negative import, where such feelings are modes of caring about something as a proper focus of one’s concern. Thus, 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.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, to feel joy is to be pleased by some good in the sense that the good impresses itself on one in feeling. This account of pleasure and pain as felt evaluations therefore enables us both to understand how pleasures and pains intrinsically motivate and to understand the intuition that pleasure and pain have a special connection to import. Moreover, this account of the sense in which emotions are pleasures and pains in terms of the notion of a felt evaluation makes good sense of the emotionality of emotions.

It might seem that I have ignored the distinctive phenomenology of emotional pleasures and pains, but I have not. 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. This is not to deny that in feeling an emotion we may also feel certain bodily sensations that accompany it, bodily sensations that contribute to our

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<sup>17</sup>Again, this account of import as constituted by projectible, rational patterns of felt evaluations is developed in more detail in my *Emotional Reason*, in the context of a more general account of value.

<sup>18</sup>It should be clear that by “danger” I mean not merely the potential to damage something, but the potential to damage something *that has import*, for it is only in this way that the concept of danger is intelligible as evaluative.

overall phenomenal experience. Indeed, such accompanying sensations are commonplace: people very often feel queasy when afraid or flushed when angry, and these sensations may themselves be uncomfortable or even painful. Nonetheless, such sensations must be understood as something we may or may not feel in addition to fear or anger and not as an essential part of these emotions. So a proper understanding of the phenomenology of distinctively emotional pleasures and pains need have nothing to say about such bodily sensations.

### 3 Desires as Felt Evaluations

So far I have provided an account of distinctively emotional pleasures and pains in terms of the notion of a felt evaluation. My aim in this section is to expand this account to include desiderative pleasures and pains and then, in §4 to include bodily pleasures and pains, in each case understanding them to be felt evaluations.

As I argued in §1, desires must be carefully distinguished from mere goal-directedness on the one hand and evaluative judgment on the other. To have a desire is not merely to have a disposition to pursue a goal insofar as desires find their objects to have import as worth pursuing or avoiding; for such import motivates us by being a reason for acting. So desires differ from goal-directedness by motivating because of this implicit evaluation. Nonetheless, desire must also be distinguished from the evaluations we can make in judgment, for evaluative judgment can be disconnected from motivation in ways in which desire cannot. How, then, are we to distinguish the special sort of evaluation implicit in desire (as essentially motivating) from that explicit in evaluative judgment (which need not motivate)? The answer, I suggested, is in terms of the idea that desires are pleasures and pains, and I shall now make good on this suggestion by understanding desires to be felt evaluations. This answer, however, is complicated by an important distinction between occurrent desires and long-term desires, which I shall consider in turn.

*Occurrent desires* are desires we feel on particular occasions, and they fit my model of felt evaluations quite naturally: to feel an occurrent desire is to have the import of its object impress itself on one, thereby both focusing one's attention on that import and motivating one to act accordingly. Thus, as it nears lunch time and my hunger increases, the sandwich stashed in my desk "calls out my name," grabbing my attention, distracting me from my work, and drawing me to it as worth pursuing. Or, as I walk by the pet shop, the puppy in the window grabs my attention, stopping and tempting me. Insofar as import impresses itself on me in this way, it serves as a standard of warrant for the desire: desires whose objects are not worth pursuing or avoiding (or such as intelligibly to seem that way), such as (without some special story) the desire for a saucer of mud,<sup>19</sup> are for that reason unwarranted.

Given the role of emotions in constituting import, this means that these emotions, and the commitments to import they essentially involve, impose rational

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. Elizabeth Anscombe's *Intention*, 2nd edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

constraints on what occurrent desires it is warranted to feel: to be genuinely worth pursuing and so an appropriate object of desire is to be already the focus of such a pattern of emotions. Thus, my desire to howl at the moon can be warranted because of the way the moon serves as the focus of the relevant projectible, rational pattern of emotions. In such a case I already have the pattern of getting excited as the time for the full moon approaches, fearing that the clouds may obscure the moon (and being disappointed or relieved depending on whether they do or not), getting angry at my parents for forcing me to stay inside at night, etc. Indeed, such a pattern in effect is a commitment to feel the occurrent desire when the time is right, and a failure to have this desire is rationally inappropriate precisely because of that commitment. However, in the absence of such a pattern and the import it constitutes, the desire cannot be understood as a response to import and is for this reason unwarranted.<sup>20</sup>

Yet occurrent desires are not merely responses to the import constituted by such a pattern of emotions but are in addition a central part of that pattern. For desires themselves are commitments to import and as such are commitments to feel emotions whose focus is the object of the desire, when these emotions are otherwise warranted: to desire some end commits one, other things being equal, to fear when the attainment of that end is threatened, to hope when it seems within reach, to anger at those who intentionally thwart one's progress towards it, to frustration at repeated failures, to joy or satisfaction at its eventual attainment, etc.

Moreover, as a commitment to something's being worth pursuing or avoiding—i.e., to the import of some end—desire is a commitment, other things being equal, to the import of relevant means to that end and so to desiring to take those means. Such instrumental desires, as desires of some means merely for the sake of some further end, should not, therefore, be construed as themselves involving a commitment to the import of the means as itself having import for its own sake. Rather, we might say, the *focus* of such desires remains the end in question, as that which has import for its own sake, so that it is this import that impresses itself on one, motivating one to take the means so as to achieve the end.

In this way, occurrent desire is a felt evaluation: a state that is both a commitment that institutes a projectible, rational pattern of other felt evaluations constituting the import of their common focus, and simultaneously, by virtue of the projectibility of that pattern, a passive feeling of that import impressing itself on one in such a way as to capture one's attention and move one to act. It is, therefore, as a felt evaluation that the evaluation implicit in occurrent desire differs from that explicit in judgment. For although evaluative judgments are, in a way, commitments to feeling certain emotions and occurrent desires when these are otherwise appropriate, such judgments, as active—something one does rather than feels—, are not intelligible as the result of import impressing itself on

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<sup>20</sup>This is a bit oversimplified, for import can have sources other than in patterns of emotions. In particular, certain patterns of evaluative judgments can constitute import and so make desire warranted even in the absence of emotions. I have discussed such cases in my "Integration and Fragmentation of the Self," *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 34 (1996), 43–63.

one and drawing one to act by virtue of the attunement of one's sensibilities.<sup>21</sup>

We can now understand how occurrent desires, as felt evaluations, are pleasant and painful. For to have an occurrent desire is to have its object to impress itself on one as worth pursuing or avoiding: it feels good or bad in this way, and this just is to be pleased or pained by it. In saying that the desire for my sandwich or for that puppy in the window is a matter of being pleased by its object in a certain way (by feeling them to be worth pursuing), I am not claiming that this pleasure is a quale merely caused by a certain object. Rather, as with emotions, what it is like in desire to feel such pleasure is to feel that import impress itself on one in such a way that one thereby feels the pull to act accordingly. Although we do not ordinarily think of desires as being pleasant or painful in this way, I think it makes sense to extend our understanding of pleasure and pain to include them because of their affinities not only to emotional pleasures and pains but also, as I shall argue in §4, to bodily pleasures and pains.

In contrast to occurrent desires, long-term desires, such as the desire to buy a house, are not felt evaluations, for they are not simply a response to import impressing itself on us in particular situations but are rather desires we have throughout many different situations over time. As such, first, they require a kind of vigilance for or attunement to situations with opportunities to make progress towards satisfying them and, consequently (other things being equal), feeling not only the relevant occurrent desires but also the broader pattern of emotions of which these occurrent desires are a part in those situations. Moreover, second, they typically require instrumental or constitutive deliberation so as to provide content to the kinds of situations one must be vigilant for. This means, in short, that long-term desires just are a mode of caring about their objects, where such caring is to be understood as our being committed, by virtue of a projectible, rational pattern of emotions and occurrent desires—of felt evaluations—, to the import of the focus of that pattern.

An important consequence of this account of the sort of evaluation implicit in desire (whether occurrent or long-term) is that we cannot make sense of the capacity for desire as independent of the capacity for emotion (and *vice versa*). For the relevant kind of evaluation implicit in each presupposes as a condition of its warrant a broader projectible pattern of emotions and desires of which it is a part. This means that we cannot make sense of emotions, as cognitivists try to do (cf. §2), in terms of an antecedently intelligible capacity for desire; rather, as I have argued, both desire and emotion are species of the genus of felt evaluations and as such come as a conceptual package.

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<sup>21</sup>Of course, desires need not have a neatly determined object, as in the examples I've provided so far; some desires, such as the desire for something to eat or for a good vacation, have ill-defined objects, and these may seem hard to square with the account I've given so far. Nonetheless, we can understand such indeterminate desires as something like dispositions to have a determinate desire in response to a certain kind of object, dispositions that can be shaped and defined not only by our current (or past) experiences, but also by our evaluative judgments. For details on how to fill out this account, see my *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapter 3.

## 4 Bodily Pleasures and Pains as Felt Evaluations

I argued in §§2–3 that emotions and desires are intelligible as pleasures and pains because they are felt evaluations. Nonetheless, this account of emotional and desiderative pleasure and pain can seem disconnected from our ordinary understanding of pleasure and pain, especially as it is implicated in bodily sensation. What I shall now argue is that emotional pleasures and pains serve as an appropriate paradigm for understanding bodily pleasures and pains: in each case, the feeling itself is evaluative and motivational, such that the evaluation and motivation cannot be relegated to a conceptually separable component, such as a belief or desire. This is because the sort of essentially motivating evaluation implicit in bodily pleasures and pains has a dual objectivity and subjectivity intelligible only in terms of the kind of background import constituted by projectible, rational patterns in felt evaluations. Hence, I shall argue, bodily pleasures and pains also are felt evaluations.

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.<sup>22</sup> What makes such an evaluation intelligible? I shall now argue that such evaluations are subjective in the sense that they presuppose that the subject have some relevant background cares and concerns.

In the case of bodily pains, the implicit evaluation is commonly understood to be made intelligible simply by virtue of the bodily injury that normally causes such pains; indeed, it is hard to know what to make of someone whose bodily pains were only randomly connected to the potential for bodily injury. Nonetheless, this cannot be the whole story about the evaluative content of the bodily pain, for bodily injury, understood in biological terms, is bad only instrumentally, relative to the proper functioning of the organism. The badness of bodily injury therefore presupposes the import of such proper functioning, which must itself have another source. Consider an analogy to a refrigerator: we can understand a faulty temperature switch to be bad from the perspective of its proper functioning, but only because the import (to us) of such proper functioning has its source in our cares and concerns. The same is true of the badness of bodily injury, though in the case of bodily pain, of course, the evaluation is made from the organism's own evaluative point of view. This means that the import to an organism of the proper functioning of its body, and, therefore, the badness of injury, presupposes some relevant background cares and concerns of that organism. The same is true of bodily pleasure as well.

This understanding of bodily pleasure and pain is confirmed when we con-

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<sup>22</sup>This claim is controversial, and my qualification, “under normal circumstances,” is meant to signal the controversy: as I indicated in note 2, some patients under the influence of morphine claim to feel pain without minding it—without, one might think, evaluating what they feel as bad. I shall return in note 28 to discuss morphine pain explicitly so as to clarify and further support my understanding of pleasures and pains as essentially evaluative.

sider similar stimulations of our sense organs that can be either pleasurable or painful depending on the circumstances.<sup>23</sup> Thus, consider a caress. At first blush it may seem that a caress is an inherently pleasant stimulus not dependent on any background concern and so failing to have this kind of subjectivity. This impression, however, depends on an incomplete specification of the circumstances surrounding the caress, circumstances intelligible only in terms of such a background concern. Thus, the caress of a lover as an expression of that love is pleasurable, but the caress of a rapist, even if given with identical gentleness, might well be painful, and the similar bodily stimulation received by accidentally brushing by the velvet drapes is neither pleasant nor painful. In these cases, it is the background concern, for one's lover in the first example and for one's safety and integrity in the second, that accounts for the difference between them as pleasant and painful, and it is the absence of this concern that accounts for the third sensation being neither pleasant nor painful.

One might object that in the case of the rapist's caress, the pain one feels is not that of the sensation of the caress but is rather the pain of terror or some other emotion. After all, it is counterintuitive to say that the same sensation gets evaluated one way (as pleasant) in one situation and another way (as painful) in another. Consequently, although (as I have argued in §2) a background concern may be necessary to make sense of such emotional evaluation, this does not show that it is necessary to make sense of the evaluation implicit in bodily pain. Indeed, the objection continues, a gentle caress is not intelligible as a pain. After all, our understanding of pain, informed as it is by evolutionary explanations of how we came to acquire the capacity for pain in the first place, is of a responsiveness to the potential for bodily injury. Yet a gentle caress, wholly lacking the potential to injure one, could not intelligibly be painful.

In reply, although it may be correct in some cases to describe a rape victim as not pained by the caress itself but only by an emotional sense of what is happening to her, to think that this must be true in every case presupposes an overly simplistic phenomenology. The rapist's touch itself can seem to sear the victim's flesh, and she may shrink away not merely from the rapist (because of her terror) but also from this touch itself (because of how it feels). Notice that I am here denying that the sensation of the rapist's caress is the same as the sensation of a lover's caress, as if the sensation were one thing and the evaluation of it something else (as the objection assumes). For, in the case I am describing, it is the rapist's caress itself that feels bad and motivates the victim's recoil for this reason, and this badness cannot be separated from the feeling (or "sensation") without changing its phenomenology. By contrast, the lover's caress feels good, and this once again cannot be separated from the sensation without changing its phenomenology. Consequently, the two sensations are similar not so much in how they feel but rather in the kind of bodily stimulation that causes them.

Of course, a gentle caress does not on its own have the potential to injure the rape victim, but why should we think this potential is essential in every case

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<sup>23</sup>Note the careful wording here: I do not want to say that the sensation in these cases is similar, for the one sensation will be pleasant and the other will be painful. I shall return to this point later.

to making intelligible the evaluation implicit in the pain? Even if our coming to have the capacity for bodily pain can be explained in part by the role a responsiveness to bodily injury can play in our evolutionary fitness, this does not on its own mean that our capacity for bodily pain is entirely fixed by such a responsiveness to injury. (After all, our capacity for bodily pleasure is not similarly fixed by the contributions it makes to evolutionary fitness.) Although such an appeal to biological fitness can explain why we should develop certain sorts of responsiveness to our environment, it cannot on its own explain why some of these responses are intelligible as pleasures and pains given the way pleasures and pains involve evaluations. Moreover, as I shall argue below in response to a second objection, precisely what gets felt as pleasant or painful can, within limits imposed by our biology, be shaped in response to a changed sense of what is good or bad, and this too is a part of their phenomenology. Consequently, we ought to be highly suspicious of the sort of understanding of bodily pleasure and pain presented in the objection precisely because it leads to such an overly simplistic phenomenology.

The upshot is that the evaluations implicit in bodily pleasures and pains are subjective in that they presuppose certain background cares and concerns of the subject. This means that bodily pleasures and pains depend on the relevant pattern of felt evaluations constitutive of those cares and concerns—i.e., of import. Thus, in the case of bodily pain, which typically (but not always, as the caress example illustrates) presupposes the background import of bodily injury, the failure in general to display a pattern of emotions and desires focused on bodily injury makes the response unintelligible as that of pain. For example, as my torturer places me on the rack and prepares to turn the crank, I ought to become afraid, and my fear ought to become relief when the torture ceases; I ought to want him to stop, and so, other things being equal, to plead for him to stop, and I ought to be frustrated when my pleas go unheeded;<sup>24</sup> after you rescue me I ought to be grateful; etc. If such a projectible, rational pattern of emotions and desires focused on bodily injury were entirely absent, I would not be intelligible as experiencing bodily pain, no matter how much I may scream or writhe in response to the torture, for in such a case the relevant background concern necessary to making sense of the relevant implicit evaluation would simply be missing.<sup>25</sup> The same is true of bodily pleasures, though the background concern that makes intelligible their implicit evaluation may be considerably more varied than that for bodily pain.

Although the evaluations implicit in bodily pleasures and pains are subjective in this sense, they nonetheless are objective as well, as is clear when we consider their phenomenology: in feeling bodily pleasure or pain, we do not

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<sup>24</sup>Of course, other things may not be equal: my concern for my dignity may require that I not plead for mercy, for example.

<sup>25</sup>This can explain why we, as well as certain “higher” animals like dogs and cats, can experience bodily pleasures and pains, but insects like ants do not: although insects may, for example, struggle in the face of a broken leg, they lack the kind of capacity for caring, for things having import to them, that makes possible the kind of evaluation of what goes on in particular part of their bodies as good or bad that is essential to bodily pleasure or pain. For a more developed account of the differences here, see my “The Significance of Emotions.”

make the relevant evaluation by having an attitude in response to what we perceive; rather, the goodness or badness of what is happening in particular parts of our bodies impresses itself on us directly in our feeling. In the context of the subjectivity of the necessary background evaluation, this objectivity is intelligible only if we understand bodily pleasures and pains to be a part of the more general emotional and desiderative attunement to that import. Indeed, this is just what we find: bodily pleasures and pains are, in effect, a kind of commitment to that import and so are a commitment to having the relevant other emotions and desires when otherwise appropriate. This is revealed in two ways.

First, to feel a bodily pleasure or pain is to be committed to feeling the relevant emotions and desires in that, other things being equal, it would be rationally inappropriate to fail to feel, e.g., fear in the face of anticipated pain, anger at someone who intentionally inflicts pain on you, frustration at the lack of physical contact with a lover, etc. (As I argued above, consistently to fail to feel these emotions and desires undermines the requisite background import and so calls into question the intelligibility of that sensation's being a pleasure or pain.) Conversely, second, the commitments we feel in emotion and desire to the background import in turn commit us to feeling bodily pleasure and pain when these are otherwise called for; indeed, such background import provides the standard in terms of which our bodily pleasures and pains can be evaluated for warrant.

One might object to this latter claim that bodily pleasures and pains are not intelligible as warranted or not, as correct or incorrect, and that we do not hold people responsible for "mistaken" pleasures and pains. In this way, my account seems overly intellectual: surely, it might be thought, bodily pleasures and pains are merely ways in which a sensation feels, which is something we can understand without all this "cognitive" baggage.

What motivates this objection seems in part to be the thought that bodily pleasures and pains are mere qualia: purely phenomenal states having no intentional content whatsoever. Yet such a view does not make sense of the way in which pleasures and pains are intrinsically good and bad, and as such provide *prima facie* reasons for action. Qualia cannot be understood as intrinsically bad, for merely to have a quale is not on its own to have a reason to stop having it. Of course, it might be thought, we can understand hurting (and so the way in which a pain motivates action) in terms of the quale's triggering our dislike for it.<sup>26</sup> However, because the badness must be understood as intrinsic to the pain, such an appeal to our disliking the quale in order to account for the badness, as an appeal to something extrinsic to the pain itself, must fail. For the issue is not merely that of whether one in fact dislikes the quale, but whether it warrants that dislike—whether it is itself bad. The mere fact that some quale

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<sup>26</sup>See, for example, George Graham's *Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 185: "Painful qualia (feelings) naturally trigger psychological mechanisms or overt actions to eliminate the qualia or their causes." See also Richard Hall's attempt to understand the badness of painful qualia in terms of their association with "nociceptual reports of bodily damage," which itself is bad ("Are Pains Necessarily Unpleasant?," 647).

typically causes the desire to eliminate it is insufficient to account for the kind of reason pains provide for action, for such an appeal to desire leaves the question of such rational warrant unanswered: what reason does pain provide for our having such a desire? In the case of the qualia view, there can be no answer.

Instead, we must understand bodily pleasures and pains to have intentional content: what is happening to or in one's body is evaluated as good or bad in light of some background concern, and here we find bodily pleasures and pains subject to illusions, such as phantom limb pain. Nonetheless, this brings us back to the point of the objection: it may seem odd to understand bodily pleasures and pains as a kind of commitment to this evaluative content.

In reply, first, it is important not to mischaracterize the kind of commitment at issue. The point of calling bodily pleasures and pains, like emotions and desires, "commitments" is to make sense of their place within a broader rational structure: these are rational commitments both to other felt evaluations with the same focus and to action, where the structure of such commitments, by constituting import, makes intelligible the standards of warrant for particular felt evaluations. Such a commitment is passive not only in that it is responsive to import impressing itself on us but also in that it is not susceptible to direct control by revising our active judgmental evaluations. Indeed, on the account I have offered, it is important not to overintellectualize this commitment to import by understanding it to be a cognitive matter, and it is for this reason that I rejected cognitivist theories of emotions in §2, replacing it with my account of felt evaluations.

Second, we can and do assess bodily pleasures and pains for warrant, depending on whether their objects (what is going on in one's body) can intelligibly seem to have the relevant import. Thus, we criticize children for feeling pain too readily ("That doesn't hurt! Don't be a sissy!"), and we criticize each other for taking pleasure in inappropriate objects (such as deviant sexual pleasures). Of course, with bodily pleasure and pain we allow an extremely broad range of evaluations to be intelligible, and so for the most part have little room to criticize others for feeling pleasure or pain without warrant. But to say that there is little room is not to say that there is no room at all.

Finally, what we each take bodily pleasure and pain in can vary over time, and can to some degree be controlled through training, depending on one's sense of the relevant evaluations. Thus, when you initially start an exercise regimen, you may feel the effects of this exercise on your muscles to be painful; yet, perhaps with the encouragement of your trainer, you may come to reconceive these effects as indicative not of bodily damage but of increasing strength and endurance and even come to feel "the burn" as pleasant, thus significantly altering your experience. The same is true of other kinds of experience, such as the change that takes place between your first taste of coffee or beer and your subsequent refined appreciation for "that" flavor. Of course, there are limits, imposed on us by our biology, on the extent to which we can modify our experiences of things as pleasant or painful: it is not realistic to think that you can develop a refined appreciation for the pleasures of a dentist's drill. (This way in which evaluative concepts infuse our experience of pleasure and pain is much

like the way color concepts infuse our experience of colors, an experience which, despite our shared biological heritage, may well vary from culture to culture and even from person to person: witness disputes about whether certain colors really are blue or green.)<sup>27</sup>

In short, bodily pleasures and pains are sensations whereby an evaluation impresses itself on one, such that the sensation both motivates action in light of that evaluation and is partly constitutive of that evaluation by virtue of being a part of a broader rational pattern of emotions and desires. In all these respects, bodily pleasures and pains are like felt evaluations, and my claim is that we can therefore make best sense of them as being felt evaluations: particular bodily sensations are pleasant or painful insofar as what is going on in the relevant body part feels good or bad, where such goodness or badness impresses itself on us and primes us to act accordingly by virtue of the kind of commitment to import these sensations are. That bodily pleasures and pains fit into this broader rational pattern of emotions and desires, therefore, is not an incidental consequence of their being bodily pleasures and pains but rather is constitutive of them as such. Bodily pleasures and pains just are felt evaluations.<sup>28</sup>

Of course, bodily pleasures and pains are essentially phenomenal states; once again this phenomenology is intelligible in terms of the account of these states as felt evaluations. Thus, the delight or the hurt of bodily pleasure or pain is a feeling of the import, the goodness or badness, of what is going on in one's body impressing itself on one and so holding both one's attention and motivation in its grip; it is precisely in this way that bodily pleasures and pains feel good or bad. Of course, what we feel when we have bodily pleasures or pains will have qualities other than merely their delighting or hurting us: we experience bodily pleasures not only as delighting us but also as smooth, gentle, warm, etc., and we experience bodily pains not only as hurting us but also as burning, aching, stabbing, or even tickling—that is, we feel these sensations along the various dimensions of touch, including temperature, pressure, and texture, and as located in particular parts of our bodies. Consequently, the experiences we have when we feel bodily pleasure or pain are richer than what I

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<sup>27</sup>For a detailed account of the kind of control we can have over our felt evaluations, see my "Freedom of the Heart," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 77 (1996), 71–87, and my *Emotional Reason*, especially Chapter 6.

<sup>28</sup>This account of bodily pains as felt evaluations enables us to make sense of the troubling phenomenon of morphine pain (cf. notes 2 and 22). How can some patients while under the influence of morphine be, as they claim, in pain that is nearly as intense as it was before they received the morphine, though they are not bothered by it and have no particular desire to do anything to get rid of it? (Cf. A. Keats and H. Beecher, "Pain Relief with Hypnotic Doses of Barbiturates and a Hypothesis," *Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics*, 100 (1950), 1–13.) The answer is that such sensations are intelligible as pains because of their historical connection with sensations that did hurt, that did bother their subjects, though we can understand them as abnormal, defective pains insofar as they are now disconnected from the normal pattern of emotions and desires constituting their import. Hence morphine pains are intelligible only as parasitic on this normal pattern of felt evaluations. We should not, therefore, see morphine pain as a reason to eliminate any conceptual connection between pain and hurting or feeling bad, as Nelkin, Hall, and Conee ("A Defense of Pain," *Philosophical Studies*, 46 (1984), 239–48) do: the conceptual connection remains in place even if morphine pains are defective in the way just indicated.

have just indicated, with the delight or hurt being itself a part of the sensation: as the torturer brings the lit match up to my arm, the feeling that impresses itself on me is of this as not only burning but also, and what is inseparable phenomenologically, bad and to be avoided; this total experience is the painful burning sensation. Nonetheless, the core of these experiences of bodily pleasure and pain as such, a core we can separate conceptually, is the felt evaluation.

## 5 Conclusion

I have argued that pleasure and pain are not atomic constituents of other mental states (such as desire or the emotions), nor are they compound states made up of further atomic constituents. Rather, what makes something be a pleasure or pain is that it is an instance of a more general, *sui generis* kind which I have identified as felt evaluation. Such states are a distinctive sort of passive evaluation, simultaneously both responsive to and constitutive of import by virtue of their place within a broader scheme of rational commitments to other felt evaluations and to action. It is, therefore, this more general rational pattern definitive of felt evaluations that makes intelligible both the phenomenology and motivational effects of pleasures and pains.