

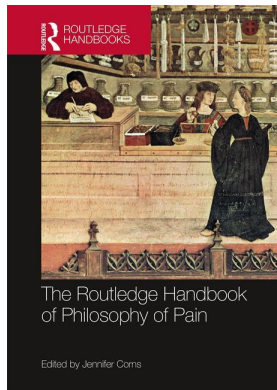
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David Bain

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3

EVALUATIVIST ACCOUNTS OF PAIN'S UNPLEASANTNESS

David Bain

Evaluativism is best thought of as a way of enriching a perceptual view of pain to account for pain's unpleasantness or painfulness.¹

Once it was common for philosophers to contrast pains with perceptual experiences (McGinn 1982; Rorty 1980). It was thought that perceptual experiences were *intentional* (or *content-bearing*, or *about* something), whereas pains were representationally blank. But today many of us reject this contrast. For us, your having a pain in your toe is a matter not of your sensing “pain-ly” or encountering a sense-datum, but of your having an interoceptive experience representing (accurately or inaccurately) that your toe is in a particular experience-independent condition, such as undergoing a certain “disturbance” or being damaged or in danger (Armstrong 1962; Tye 1995).² But even if such representational content makes an experience a pain, a further ingredient seems required to make the pain *unpleasant*. According to evaluativism, the further ingredient is the experience's possession of *evaluative* content: its representing the bodily condition as *bad* for the subject.

Below, I elaborate evaluativism, locate it among alternatives, and explain its attractions and challenges.

1 Locating evaluativism

One *could* use “evaluativism” broadly, for any view invoking evaluations to explain pain's unpleasantness or pain itself, whether these evaluations are experiences, beliefs, or desires, and whether what is evaluated are bodily conditions or experiences. But I'm using the term more narrowly for a view whose essentials are endorsed by Bennett Helm (2001, 2002), Brian Cutter and Michael Tye (Cutter and Tye 2011), and myself (Bain 2013):

Evaluativism

- 1 Your being in pain consists in your undergoing an interoceptive experience (the pain or pain experience) that represents a bodily condition of a certain sort.

- 2 Your pain being *unpleasant* consists in its additionally representing that condition as *bad* for you.

Notice the following. First, like most accounts of unpleasant pain, this is a *composite view*, invoking distinct ingredients to explain pain and its unpleasantness respectively. This structure makes room for pains that are not unpleasant (see Section 2.3). Suppose your pain yesterday was unpleasant and your otherwise identical pain today isn't (thanks to morphine, say). For evaluativists, this is a matter of the two pains representing the same kind of bodily condition, but only yesterday's representing it as *bad for you*.³

Second, evaluativism is a *first-order view*. It explains pains' unpleasantness in terms of states directed at the *extramental* world, not at other mental states. In particular, crucially, the badness that evaluativism says pains represent is the badness not of pains, but of certain bodily conditions.⁴ As I'll put it, they represent *bodily* or *b-badness*.

Third, evaluativism is a *content view*. It says that a pain's being unpleasant consists in its having the right representational content. Contrast, for example, functionalist views that say a pain's unpleasantness consists in its causal role or mode of processing, where this is not taken to constitute the possession of content (Aydede 2014; Aydede and Fulkerson, submitted; see Section 3.2 below).

Fourth, evaluativism is a *cognitivist view*, in the sense that it not only explains pain's unpleasantness in terms of content, but says that pains have, partly in virtue of their unpleasantness, truth conditions. Contrast those *imperativist* views that explain pain's unpleasantness in terms of the receipt of body-issued, experiential commands, such as "Stop this bodily condition!" (Hall 2008; Klein 2007; Martínez 2011).^{5, 6}

Finally, evaluativism is a *phenomenological view*, taking your pain's unpleasantness to constitute part of *what it is like* for you to undergo your pain. It might even be elaborated as a *feeling view*, in the sense of a view on which a pain's unpleasantness is not only phenomenal, but phenomenal *in a way that non-perceptual, central states such as beliefs and desires are not*. (For some reason, however, "feeling view" is usually reserved in the literature for views rejecting intentional explanations of the relevant feeling [Rachels 2000; Bramble 2013].)

Illustrating the preceding remarks, we might contrast evaluativism with two *desire views*: the first-order desire view (FOD) and – the orthodoxy – the second-order desire view (SOD). These respectively substitute for evaluativism's second claim – (2) above – something like the following:

FOD

- 3 Your pain being unpleasant consists in your having an experience-based intrinsic desire that *that bodily condition*, represented by the pain, not obtain (Jacobson in preparation; Aydede 2014; Aydede and Fulkerson, submitted).⁷

SOD

- 4 Your pain being unpleasant consists in your having an intrinsic desire that your *pain experience* not occur (Armstrong 1962; Pitcher 1970; Heathwood 2007; Brady 2015).

Both desire views differ from evaluativism. SOD, after all, is a second-order account. And, assuming that desires lack truth conditions *and* lack the kind of phenomenology that perceptual experiences have, neither SOD nor FOD is a cognitivist or feeling view.⁸

2 Motivating evaluativism

2.1 Representationalism, affective intensity, and pain talk

Why be an evaluativist? Brian Cutter and Michael Tye's answer focuses on the representationalist idea that an experience's phenomenal character consists in its representational content (Cutter and Tye 2011).⁹ If representationalism is to be accepted, then a pain's unpleasantness – assuming its phenomenality – had better be explicable in terms of the pain's content. If evaluativism is right, it is.

But what reason is there to reach for evaluative contents specifically? Cutter and Tye are led to do so by a process of elimination. They worry that pain's unpleasantness undermines their representationalism, since their psychosemantics – their account of the determinants of perceptual content (Section 3.3) – allows for two pains to *differ* in unpleasantness while being *identical* in respect of descriptive contents: contents concerning, for instance, the shape, location, and type of disturbance represented. But representationalism and their psychosemantics survive, they argue, *provided* unpleasant pains also have non-descriptive, evaluative content, since their psychosemantics predicts the two pains will – for all their intentional overlap – differ in respect of how *bad for oneself* they represent the disturbances as being (Cutter and Tye 2011: 96, 98–101).

Another reason some think evaluative contents a promising candidate for explaining pain's unpleasantness is that, like unpleasantness, badness admits of degree. This allows us to explain differing intensities of pain's unpleasantness as follows. Just as a visual experience might represent one wall as *brighter* than it represents another, your interoceptive experience might represent one disturbance as *worse* for you than it represents another (Cutter and Tye 2011: 98, 104). Alternative explanations, evaluativists argue, are considerably less attractive (Cutter and Tye 2011: 103–105; Bain 2011).¹⁰

It is also occasionally hinted that evaluativism is supported by our tendency to report – when, say, our feet hurt – that things (or our feet, say) feel *bad*. But such utterances are not really probative, since they might alternatively be interpreted in ways not requiring evaluativism, for instance as saying that the feeling we're having is *itself* bad, or that our feet are in a state that is *causing* a bad feeling, or that we are having an experience that allows us to *infer* – without its *representing* – that our feet are in a bad state.

2.2 Motivation and rationalization

To appreciate another route to evaluativism, suppose you are standing in front of a boulder and *see* that it is wide. This visual experience, many think, is not itself motivational.¹¹ You will be moved to act only given further, motivational states of yours, such as a desire to walk around the boulder. Consider now another case: your hand is dangling in water that is hot enough to cause unpleasant pain, but not to trigger a reflex. Many think that, by contrast with your visual experience, this unpleasant pain *is* itself motivational, perhaps motivating you to lift your hand from the water, and doing so without the need for further motivational states such as a desire to not feel pain or damage your hand (this is compatible with your nevertheless not lifting your hand if – say – your pain is overridden by a stronger motivation, e.g., a desire to recover a wedding ring from the hot water). Now, according to some, what explains this contrast between your motivational pain and your inert visual experience is that the former alone has evaluative content (Helm 2002; Bain 2013).

The point is not just *that* unpleasant pains motivate, but *how* they do so. Rather than brutally causing movement, the idea goes, pains are motivating *reasons*, rationalizing action

(Helm 2002; Bain 2013, in preparation-a). Again, the way your pain explains your lifting your hand contrasts with the way the fullness of a volcano's magma chamber explains its eruption. Like belief–desire explanations of action, pain explanations are perspectival and normative. An explanation of your hand-lifting in terms of your pain allows me to put myself in your shoes and see from your perspective why your action *should* have seemed reasonable to you. In short, pains figure in rationalizations; and crucially, evaluativists argue, they do so courtesy of their evaluative content. In particular, they are motivating reasons by dint of representing *justifying reasons*: you are moved to lift your hand because your pain represents a *good reason* for doing so, namely your hand's bad state.

Other views arguably make less good sense of unpleasant pains as motivating reasons. Imperativism, for instance, models pains on commands. But a child might command you to stand without your having any inclination to do so (Bain 2011). And even were the command issued by a police officer, and you obeyed, what motivated and rationalized your standing would arguably not be the command per se, but further motivational states, such as a desire not to be arrested (Bain 2011, 2013, in preparation-a).¹²

Might a desire view prove a more potent rival than imperativism? Competing conceptions of desire complicate the answer. For instance, one view – an attempt to make sense of the rationalizing capacity of *desire* – is that desires are truth-apt, experience-like evaluative episodes: your wanting the beer, for instance, involves it striking you as good (Oddie 2005; Helm 2002). Now, on this conception, some desire views of pain risk *collapsing* into evaluativism. In particular, FOD's body-directed desires start to look a lot like evaluativism's body-directed evaluative experiences.¹³

Alternative conceptions of desire avert the threat of collapse. But some doubt that desires on these alternative conceptions can rationalize (Bain 2013). Moreover, even if they can, evaluativism arguably still makes better sense than desire views of pain's rationalizing role. For pains arguably constitute a distinctive category of motivation, intermediate between brute causes, on the one hand, and desires, on the other (Bain in preparation-a). While pains rationalize, they are nonetheless more basic than desires: more peripheral, less (in one sense) cognitive. They are, it might be said, reason-constituting *urges*, not instances of *your* wanting to act in this or that way, or to achieve this or that end, but rather ways in which *the world* (in particular, your own body) gives you reasons for action, reasons indeed for *desire*, rather as visual experiences are not *themselves* judgments, but ways in which the world gives you *reasons* for judgment (Evans 1982; McDowell 1994; O'Sullivan and Schroer 2012). This picture belongs with the idea that pain's unpleasantness is an experiential, phenomenal matter (Section 1). Like that idea, some will reject it. But evaluativists are not alone in finding it attractive.¹⁴ And evaluativism is a compelling way of accommodating it.¹⁵

2.3 Extending evaluativism

Evaluativism arguably illuminates more than the intensity and rationalizing capacity of pain's unpleasantness.

There are, for instance, data that some construe as showing that beliefs evaluating bodily conditions can influence the unpleasantness of the pains those conditions cause. In one case, for instance, it is suggested that soldiers' beliefs that their wounds had saved them from an horrific battlefield made the pains those wounds caused less unpleasant (Hall 1989; Beecher 1959). If real, this phenomenon can be attractively explained by evaluativism as a case of cognitive penetration, involving our doxastic evaluations of bodily conditions having a top–down influence on our experiential evaluations of the same conditions.¹⁶

Evaluativism also illuminates pain asymbolia, a bizarre and rare disorder resulting from brain damage (Berthier et al. 1988). Asymbolics, when pinched and the like, *say* they feel pain. But, remarkably, they deny it is unpleasant and don't attempt to prevent or stop the stimuli. Call these anomalies their pain indifference. Less often reported is their general *threat* indifference: the ways in which they fail to respond even to bodily threats that are *not* causing pain, for instance threats that are issued verbally or presented only in *visual* experience. So what might explain both kinds of indifference? Colin Klein's answer is that asymbolics' brain damage makes them incapable of a basic kind of *care* about their own bodies (Klein 2015a). But while this would illuminate their threat indifference – they don't protect bodies they don't care about – how might it explain their pain indifference, in particular their pain's not being unpleasant? Evaluativism supplies an attractive answer (Bain 2014). Caring about *x* is plausibly a condition on representing threats to *x* as bad for you (Helm 2002). Hence it is argued that, just as you won't regard a threat to a vase as bad for you *if* you don't care about the vase, so too your interoceptive experience won't represent a condition of your body as bad for you – hence won't be unpleasant – if you don't care about your body.¹⁷

Evaluativism is also attractively adaptable. It can be tweaked to account for sensory unpleasantness *in general*, and sensory pleasure too. For instance, the latter might be taken to involve experiences representing certain circumstances as *good* for oneself. Consider, by contrast, an imperativist view on which an unpleasant pain in your foot is a command to *protect* your foot. It is unclear how this might be tweaked to account for other unpleasures, let alone pleasure.¹⁸ Notice, finally, that standard accounts of emotions such as grief invoke evaluative states. Hence evaluativism about pain might be the key to capturing the intuitive kinship between sensory and emotional suffering.

3 Challenges

3.1 Bodily badness

One challenge for evaluativists is to say something sensible about the nature of b-badness.¹⁹ If b-badness seems spooky, one worry goes, then those like Cutter and Tye who adopt evaluativism in order to avert the threat that pain's unpleasantness poses to naturalism have really only deferred the problem.

Cutter and Tye try to overcome the worry by explaining b-badness as an objective, natural property, explicable without reference to mental states. A bodily condition's badness for you, they claim, is its aptness to *harm* your body, in the sense of impeding its *proper functioning* in a Darwinian sense (Cutter and Tye 2011: 99–100). This account's naturalistic purity is attractive; but some may fear that harmfulness in this sense is insufficiently normative to sustain the sorts of arguments for evaluativism sketched in Section 2.2: that a state's b-badness for you defeasibly *justifies* your intrinsically desiring that state to end, for instance, or that representations of b-badness can themselves *rationalize* action.

We might alternatively construe b-badness as subjective. One subjectivist view identifies a bodily condition's being b-bad for you with its frustrating an intrinsic desire of yours. This, notice, is not FOD. Whereas FOD explains pain's unpleasantness in terms of a desire for an experientially represented bodily condition to cease, the current view explains it in terms of an experience representing the desire-frustrating-ness (if you will) of a bodily condition, albeit representing that property not *as such* but under the mode of presentation, *being bad for me* [Bain in preparation-b; see also Section 3.3 below].²⁰

A different subjectivism identifies a bodily condition's being b-bad for you with its causing – or being disposed to cause – unpleasant pains in you. Most evaluativists eschew such accounts, perhaps worried that explaining unpleasantness in terms of the representation of b-badness would be viciously circular if b-badness is in turn explained in terms of the production of unpleasantness experiences. It is worth noticing, however, that *some* philosophers are happy to explain the phenomenal character of an object's *looking red* in terms of the visual representation of redness, even while explaining redness in terms of an object's disposition to cause experiences with that character (McDowell 1994).

There are yet other approaches to b-badness, some modeled on metaethical accounts of moral badness. For instance, Helm holds a no-priority view of b-badness (Helm 2001)²¹ and there is also room for a projectivist or error theory according to which b-badness is represented but never instantiated. But I shall not explore or add to these options here.

Another challenge for evaluativists, less often noticed, is to ensure their specifications of pain's neutral, pain-constituting content and its evaluative, unpleasantness-constituting content cohere. Some, for instance, take pain's neutral content to represent "bodily disturbances," a phrase some use to refer to *nociceptor activity* (Armstrong 1968: 315, 319). But it is implausible that nociceptor activity might be accurately represented as *bad* for you, at least on some accounts of b-badness. Sometimes, Cutter and Tye instead take pain's neutral content to represent "tissue damage" (Cutter and Tye 2011: 91–92). But there is a worry here too, for *your foot's being damaged* is not obviously distinct from *your foot's being in a state apt to harm you*, which content Cutter and Tye invoke in their account of pain's distinct *evaluative* content.²² Sometimes, they seem inclined to say instead that pains represent only determinate kinds of damage: one representing a toe as *burned*, say, another a finger as *cut* (Cutter and Tye 2011: 92). But unless these two experiences represent the cut and burn as instances of damage, or at least of some common kind, it is unclear what representational commonality makes them both pains.

In short, while evaluativists (including me) often intend the phrase "bodily disturbances" only as a promissory note for an account of pain's neutral content, cashing that note may turn out to be a challenge.²³

3.2 Evaluative content

Worries about b-badness go hand-in-hand with worries about its perceptual representation. Evaluativism's critics argue, for instance, that if Cutter and Tye's account of b-badness *and* their psychosemantics were both correct, then b-badness could not be perceptually represented (Aydede 2005).

On Cutter and Tye's psychosemantics, your current experience represents blue (say) just in case the following holds: in the circumstances in which the human visual system evolved, you undergo experiences of your current experience's type if and only if and *because* something blue is present. As we might put it, perceptual representation consists in experience types *tracking* properties in *ancestral circumstances*. Why think this rules out the interoceptive representation of b-badness as Cutter and Tye understand it? One reason is that the "because" in Cutter and Tye's psychosemantics seems to require, in order for b-badness to be perceptually represented, that it *cause* the tracking states; but Cutter and Tye think b-badness is an *extrinsic* property – the same cut to your hand might be *very* bad for you in a bacteria-rich environment but only *moderately* bad for you in a cleaner environment – which some think prevents it being causally efficacious.

As well as entertaining non-causal interpretations of the crucial "because," Cutter and Tye insist that extrinsic properties in general and b-badness in particular *can* cause (Cutter and Tye

2011: 101–102). To see this, begin by noticing that Cutter and Tye characterize the tracking states in the pain case *functionally*. One kind of tracking state, for instance, is what we might call *H-states*, states whose role is to produce a *high* degree of damage-avoidance behavior. Suppose, then, that you right now have a cut finger; that you are in ancestral (bacteria-rich) circumstances; and that you are in an H-state. Surely, Cutter and Tye argue, it is – thanks to natural selection – *because* conditions of your cut’s intrinsic type cause *severe harm* in ancestral circumstances (that is, are *very bad* for humans in those circumstances) that they typically cause H-states in humans in those circumstances, hence that yours causes an H-state in you *now* (Cutter and Tye 2011: 100–101). Others, however, will question whether this shows that your current cut’s aptness to harm you has caused your H-state. They will point out that the very same cut as caused an H-state in you now in ancestral circumstances would have caused the very same H-state in you *even in cleaner, non-ancestral circumstances*, circumstances in which the cut would *not* have been apt to severely harm you, that is (crucially) would not have been *very bad* for you. So it can seem to be the cut’s intrinsic properties rather than its severe badness for you that causes the H-state. The debate continues.²⁴

There is, notice, no obligation for other evaluativists to follow Cutter and Tye’s lead in trying to explain pain’s evaluative content within the strictures of their tracking psychosemantics. For one thing, other psychosemantics exist. One possibility, for instance, is a functionalist psychosemantics on which an experience’s occupying the right functional role *constitutes* its possession of evaluative content. This appeal to functional role, notice, contrasts with Aydede and Fulkerson’s (Section 1): it is an explanation of, not an alternative to, evaluative content.²⁵

It must be admitted that other evaluativists, including me, have said little about what if any psychosemantics we have in mind. But three points assuage the worry that we are simply ignoring an obvious problem. First, it is quite unclear that *anyone* has, in respect of *any* perceptual contents, an acceptable reductive psychosemantics. Second, you need not be a dualist to think no reductive account can be given. Finally, beyond the pain case – regarding emotional experience, for instance, and vision too – the idea that experiences might enjoy so-called high-level contents, concerning (for instance) natural kinds, affordances, threats, or indeed values, is rather widespread. In crediting pains with evaluative content, it is not clear that evaluativists are saying anything more outré than what is often said in other cases.

3.3 The badness of unpleasantness

Recall that the badness that evaluativists think pain’s unpleasantness *represents* is not the badness of pain or its unpleasantness (Section 1). Nevertheless, that unpleasant pain is bad, indeed *non-instrumentally* bad (bad independently of the badness of its consequences), can seem like common sense. And this, four critics have argued, poses a problem for evaluativism (Aydede and Fulkerson, submitted; Brady 2015; and Jacobson 2013).

Evaluativism takes your unpleasant pain to consist in your undergoing a representation that a body part of yours is in a state that is bad for you – yet this representational state, the critics argue, is not *itself* a state that it would be non-instrumentally bad to be in. After all, experiences rarely instantiate the properties they represent; a visual experience of a cube is not itself cuboid. So why think an experience representing badness-for-you is itself bad for you (non-instrumentally)? The critics often make this point in terms of *belief*. Suppose you believe you’re terminally ill and that your being so is bad for you. If your belief is true, then of course your situation is indeed bad for you. But is your *believing* it is bad for you *additionally*

bad for you (non-instrumentally)? Does it itself make your situation non-instrumentally worse? Surely not, they argue. And we should say the same about *any* representations that things are bad for you, including the interoceptive experiences with which evaluativists identify unpleasant pains. Call this the *normative objection*.²⁶

The problem might be sidestepped by denying the non-instrumental badness of unpleasant pain, as some non-evaluativists do (Martínez 2015). But, evaluativists have not taken this route; and indeed I have recently argued that the badness of pain's unpleasant is *not* entirely a matter of its bad effects, such as anxiety and distraction (Bain in preparation-b).

Another response is to question whether the critics themselves can accommodate the badness of pain's unpleasantness. The critics tend to explain the badness of unpleasant pain in terms of some notion of desire-frustration. But three of them embrace something like FOD, which arguably compromises their explanation.²⁷ Suppose you have an unpleasant pain in your foot that you know to be caused not by a condition of the foot, but by a central neuropathy. FOD says your pain's unpleasantness consists in a foot-directed desire for the pain-represented state of damage (say) not to obtain. The problem is that in this case the desire is *not* frustrated, or even *believed* to be frustrated.

The critics might reply that you nonetheless *experience* desire-frustration. But what does this mean? Perhaps that your experience represents (illusorily) a state of affairs that, though you know it doesn't, *would* frustrate a desire of yours if it obtained. But it is unclear that this situation would be non-instrumentally bad for you. Perhaps, instead, the idea is that the property you experience a state of your foot as instantiating is *desire-frustrating-ness*, even if you do not experience it under that mode of presentation. But if, as seems plausible, the mode of presentation under which you represent it is *being bad for me*, this suggestion collapses into evaluativism, in particular the version that explains b-badness in terms of desire-frustration (Section 3.1; Bain in preparation-b).

Evaluativists can also respond to the normative objection more positively. One strategy is to explain your pain's badness in terms of your intrinsic desire for its unpleasantness not to obtain (Cutter and Tye 2014; Bain in preparation-b). This strategy should not be confused with instrumentalism or SOD. It does not explain the badness of pain's unpleasantness in terms of the badness of its consequences; and the idea is not that pain's unpleasantness consists in anti-*pain* desires, but that the *badness* of pain's unpleasantness consists in anti-*unpleasantness* desires. However, the strategy has consequences some find awkward. Suppose that, instead of having anti-unpleasantness desires, a person (call her Strangelove) intrinsically wants the *continuation* of her pains' unpleasantness. Except in respect of their practical inconsistency with her other desires, Strangelove's pro-unpleasantness desires are not rationally criticizable, for they are directed at nothing antecedently bad. Moreover, they render her pains' unpleasantness non-instrumentally *good* for her.

An alternative strategy avoids these consequences (Bain in preparation-b). It starts by disentangling what is being asked of evaluativists. Suppose the question is: "Why *think* that experientially representing that your body is in a condition that is bad for you is *itself* bad for you, given that *believing* it is bad for you is not?" Given that question, evaluativism itself is arguably a plausible answer. For it is plausible, evaluativists argue, that your pain's *felt* unpleasantness consists in your experientially representing – contrast *believing* – that your body is in a state that is bad for you. So, if we are right, it is plausible that if pain's unpleasantness is non-instrumentally bad for you, then experientially representing the badness-for-you of certain bodily states is *also* non-instrumentally bad for you. This would be question-begging if the case for evaluativism were based on the non-instrumental badness of such representations. But, as we have seen, it isn't.

If the question is instead, “Can evaluativism *explain* the non-instrumental badness of pain’s unpleasantness?” evaluativists might reply that normative explanation comes to an end somewhere. FOD theorists, after all, invoke the badness of desire-frustration to explain pain’s badness while tending not to say *what* is bad about desire-frustration. If such quietism is permissible, it should be available to evaluativists too.

Suppose, finally, the question is, “If the badness of an unpleasant pain consists in its content, why isn’t a belief with the same content also bad?” In reply, evaluativists might note the parallel with the following question, sometimes put to representationalists: “If the phenomenal character of a visual experience that a red apple is before you consists in its content, why doesn’t a belief with the same content have the same phenomenal character as the experience?” The parallel is illuminating because if you take pain’s unpleasantness to be an aspect of how it *feels*, as some evaluativists do (Section 1), an answer to the latter question might also answer the former. Again, something more generally needed might also meet the normative objection: namely, an account of why the content of a perceptual experience constitutively contributes to a *feel* in a way in which the content of a belief does not. And even the barest sketch of what philosophers say on this front is suggestive in the present context.

For instance, some say that a visual experience of a red apple – unlike a belief that a red apple is before you – is an episode in which you do not merely *represent* but putatively *encounter* an apple and its redness, or are *acquainted* or in *contact* with it, or have the apple putatively *present* to you. Sometimes, these ideas are fleshed out via a broadly Kantian distinction between spontaneity and receptivity – between *thinking*, construed as a process you are in some sense in charge of, and *experiencing*, construed as a process in which the world instead *impresses* itself on your senses. Now, if the idea of the non-instrumental badness of *representing* that a situation is bad for you is unconvincing, evaluativists might well point out that we do not invoke just *any* representations; we invoke episodes in which you putatively *encounter* or have *impressed* on you the badness of your situation, episodes in which its badness is putatively *present* to you. The idea that episodes of *this* sort should themselves be bad for you is considerably more compelling. The metaphors need cashing, of course, but that is something philosophers of perception are working to do. In short, there is an alternative to answering the normative objection in terms of second-order desires.

A residual worry, concerning motivation, remains. Construing unpleasant pains as representations of the badness of bodily conditions, evaluativism arguably explains how pains motivate actions aimed at minimizing *those bodily conditions* (Section 2.2). But it does not explain what motivates behavior aimed at *pain itself*, such as the taking of painkillers. Even if evaluativists can explain what *justifies* taking painkillers, the worry goes, they cannot explain what *motivates* it. But replies are available (Bain in preparation-b). Evaluativists might argue, for instance, that whether or not anti-unpleasantness desires explain the badness of pain’s unpleasantness, such desires exist and are what motivate our reaching for the aspirin. In short, the worry about motivation doesn’t look fatal.

Related topics

Chapter 2: Pain and representation (Cutter)

Chapter 4: Imperativism (Klein)

Chapter 9: A view of pain based on sensations, meanings, and emotions (Price)

Chapter 22: Pain and cognitive penetrability (Jacobson)

Chapter 19: Pain and rationality (Fulkerson and Cohen)

Chapter 27: Bad by nature: An axiological theory of pain (Massin)

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 “Unpleasantness” and “painfulness” aren’t synonyms. Nausea is unpleasant but not painful. But “is painful,” as applied to experiences, may yet mean “is an unpleasant pain.”
- 2 See Chapters 9 (Price) and 2 (Cutter).
- 3 Helm (2002: nn. 2 and 28) may not intend a composite view.
- 4 Klein, by contrast, approves of a view on which a pain’s unpleasantness consists in the evaluation of the *pain* (Klein 2015b: 185).
- 5 Imperativists tend to think contents (contrast sentences) have moods, e.g., indicative and imperative (Martínez 2011: 79–81). My formulation of cognitivism remains neutral on this. Cognitivism might also be put in terms of “direction of fit,” but see Bain 2013: S84, for complications.
- 6 See also Chapter 4 (Klein). Notice that Klein (2015b) explains only pain, not its unpleasantness, in terms of commands.
- 7 In fact Aydede and Fulkerson invoke only “desire-like” states. Not everything I say about FOD, e.g., that it’s not a feeling view, applies to their position.
- 8 Klein’s account of pain’s unpleasantness sometimes appears to invoke (second-order) judgements. If so, it is also not a feeling view (Klein 2015b: 186). Nelkin’s oft-cited approach invokes (first-order) judgements, but it is an account of pain, not its unpleasantness (Nelkin 1994).
- 9 See also Chapter 2 (Cutter).
- 10 See Klein and Martínez, submitted, for reply.
- 11 This allows that *some* visual experiences are motivational, as for instance Siegel thinks those representing “mandates” are (Siegel 2014).
- 12 For reply, see Klein 2015b.
- 13 This conception is also problematic for SOD (Bain 2013: S79–S80).
- 14 Hall 2008: 530–532; Klein 2015b: 17, 128.
- 15 See Chapter 19 (Fulkerson and Cohen).
- 16 On cognitive penetration, see Stokes 2013 and Chapter 22 (Jacobson).
- 17 Against Klein’s and my appeal to “care-lack,” see de Vignemont 2015.
- 18 I assume this is one reason Klein’s imperativism (invoking protective commands) is an account of pain, not its unpleasantness (Klein 2015b). Martínez’s imperativism (which *is* an account of its unpleasantness) looks easier to extend; but see Cutter and Tye 2011: 105.
- 19 See also Chapter 27 (Massin).
- 20 Schroeder explains unpleasantness in terms of experiential representations *that one’s intrinsic desires as a whole are on balance less well satisfied than expected* (Schroeder 2004: 97).
- 21 Aspects of Helm’s story are redolent of both the desire-frustration account and the allegedly circular account just mentioned.
- 22 They might say damage is harm whereas b-badness is *aptness* to harm. But the resulting view would be unattractive: that your unpleasant pain represents a condition both as harming you and as apt to harm you.
- 23 Kindred challenges include assigning different bodily sensations (e.g., pain and itch) different neutral contents, and assigning different displeasures different *evaluative* contents *if* it is thought that their unpleasantness differs.
- 24 See also Chapter 2 (Cutter).
- 25 Cutter and Tye’s functional characterizations of the tracking states may seem to approximate this approach.
- 26 It is also known as the messenger-shooting objection (Bain 2013; Jacobson 2013, in preparation).
- 27 The exception is Brady (2015).

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