

DO PLEASURES AND PAINS DIFFER QUALITATIVELY?

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Most traditional hedonists such as Epicurus, Bentham and Sidgwick have been quantitative hedonists, but John Stuart Mill introduced an interesting complication into the modern theory of hedonism by insisting that pleasures differ qualitatively as well as quantitatively. What does it mean to say that pleasures differ qualitatively? This question has never been answered satisfactorily, but before we turn to it we must keep a few things about quantitative hedonism clearly in mind.

Hedonism is the theory that only pleasure or happiness defined in terms of pleasure is intrinsically good, and that only pain or unhappiness defined in terms of pain is intrinsically bad. Pleasures and pains are qualities of private inner experience rather than of public sense objects, but we all presumably have the capacity for experiencing pleasures and pains. As qualities of individual experience, pleasures differ from pains, obviously; and according to the quantitative hedonist they may differ from themselves in quantitative ways, in temporal proximity or remoteness, and in causal connections. Apart from temporal and causal relations, a given pleasure may differ intrinsically from some other given pleasure, and a given pain may differ intrinsically from some other given pain in such quantitative ways as duration and intensity. They may also differ temporally with respect to nearness or remoteness in time. And they may also differ extrinsically in their causal connections, one pleasure or pain being causally more probable or certain than another, one tending causally to reproduce its kind purely or as mixed with its opposite.

Traditional hedonists have attempted to distinguish between the "higher pleasures" and the "lower pleasures." Such things as food, drink and sex are standard examples of the lower pleasures, and the higher pleasures are such things as knowledge, intellectual creativity, art, aesthetic creativity, intimate personal relations such as friendship, *etc.* Mill would have agreed with the quantitative hedonists with respect to this classification and its hard core instances. He would also have agreed with them that strictly speaking, the instances mentioned are not pleasures, *i.e.* agreeable feelings, at all, but they are standard *sources* of pleasure. The so-called "higher pleasures" mentioned are actually "higher sources of pleasure," and the "lower pleasures" mentioned are actually "lower sources of pleasure." Quantitative hedonists have attempted to explain in strictly quantitative or causal terms why some sources of agreeable feeling are higher and some lower than others. The higher sources are thus said to give longer lasting and/or more intense pleasures, or they are purer and more fertile in their long range consequences than the lower sources.

That this is actually true is of course a highly debatable matter, though we shall not enter upon that debate.

A. *Mill's Account of Qualitative Differences.* In saying that pleasures (and presumably also pains) differ qualitatively as well as quantitatively, Mill was saying that one pleasure (or pain) may differ from another not only with respect to its intensity, duration and causal connections, but also *as a quality of feeling*. Not only are there higher and lower *sources* of agreeable feeling, but there are also higher and lower *pleasures as pleasures*, if Mill is correct. In other words, the quality of agreeable feeling itself which we derive from doing philosophy or hearing a good concert is different from the quality of agreeable feeling which we derive from eating a good meal or from sexual intercourse. In addition to quantitative and causal differences, there are, according to Mill, *two* more ways in which the experienced pleasures differ. They differ psychologically as qualities of feeling, and they differ normatively in desirability. Only when the first psychological point has been established is it appropriate to turn to the second normative point. The qualitative hedonist must thus answer two questions, first, what does it mean to say that pleasures differ in quality? and secondly, given two qualitatively different pleasures, how are we to determine which is the most desirable or preferable? The first of these questions is the one which concerns us presently, but it must be distinguished clearly from the second. We shall return to this second question later.

What then does it mean to say that one pleasure differs in *quality* from another? Mill himself did little to enlighten us on this. Without attempting to analyze the notion of qualitative differences, Mill immediately diverts our attention to another problem, our second question of how we tell which of two qualitatively different pleasures is the more desirable. But this presupposes that we have already understood the notion of qualitative differences! Mill does ask the question of meaning. That he does not answer it but answers our second question instead is perfectly obvious when we look at his remarks:

If I am asked what I mean by differences of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the most desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.¹

Few if any enlightening discussions of the meaning of "qualitative differences in pleasures" have been written in the more than a century which has lapsed since Mill published his *Utilitarianism*. C. D. Broad suggested that

¹ Samuel Gorovitz, ed., *Utilitarianism with Critical Essays* (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1971), p. 19.

Mill "was so confused that he probably did not himself know precisely what he meant"² by this expression. Brand Blanshard has recently written, quite correctly, that "higher and lower rank among the qualities of pleasure has proved a most obscure notion."³

In the following remarks, I will attempt to give a meaning to the notion of "qualitative differences." Only Mill himself could tell us whether I have given the "correct" explication of his notion, and unfortunately he is not here to communicate with us. Nevertheless, the following does seem to me to be a highly plausible interpretation of his enigmatic concept.

First of all, if we momentarily shift the discussion from the realm of psychology into the realm of linguistics, it seems that Mill might want to say the following things about the words "pleasure" and "pain" (and any synonyms thereof). The quantitative hedonist is committed to saying that these words have a univocal denotative meaning or reference. If we speak of the agreeable feeling of sexual arousal and the agreeable feeling of scientific inquiry or discovery as "pleasures," the word "pleasure" means exactly the same thing in both contexts. That is, the referent of the words is a single quality of feeling, though there may be quantitative differences in intensity and duration. The assumption of a single referent for the word "pleasure" doubtless underlies Bentham's remark that "Quantity of pleasure being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry." Although Bentham is usually quoted as having put it just this way, what he actually wrote makes it even clearer that he assumed that pleasure is pleasure, no matter how we get it. As he actually phrased it in his *The Rationale of Reward*,

Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Everybody can play at push-pin: poetry and music are relished only by a few. The game of push-pin is always innocent: it were well could the same be always asserted of poetry.⁴

This quote, plus the wider context from which it was abstracted, makes it abundantly clear that John Hospers was quite mistaken in writing that Bentham "was convinced that poetry, in its total effects, direct and indirect, does cause more pleasure than pushpin."⁵ Actually, Bentham believed that pushpin was generally more enjoyable, and thus more valuable, than poetry. He held that more people get more pleasure, unmixed with pain, from pushpin than from poetry; and as a quantitative hedonist he assumed that the quality of pleasure is always the same no matter how it is obtained.

² C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1956), p. 232.

³ Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Goodness* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p. 311.

⁴ John Bowering, ed., *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (New York, Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), Vol. II, p. 253.

⁵ John Hospers, *Human Conduct, An Introduction to the Problems of Ethics* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1961), p. 58.

In contrast with Bentham, the qualitative hedonist *should* say that the notions of “pleasure” or “pain” are in a sense ambiguous notions which refer to a wide range of agreeable or disagreeable feelings which are qualitatively distinct. The words have a variety of referents rather than a single referent, and it is no simple claim that the hedonist makes when he asserts that only pleasure is intrinsically good and only pain is intrinsically bad. In a post-Wittgensteinian age, it seems exceedingly naive to assume that everything which has a common name shares a common property, yet this is precisely the linguistic assumption which has misled the quantitative hedonists. It was quite explicitly the chief reason given by Sidgwick in the 19th Century for rejecting Mill’s qualitative hedonism. Sidgwick wrote that “. . . all *qualitative* comparisons of pleasures must really resolve itself into quantitative. For all pleasures are understood to be so called because they have a common property of pleasantness, and may therefore be compared in respect of this common property.”⁶ Instead of common properties of pleasantness and unpleasantness, our multifarious “pleasures” and “pains” probably have nothing more in common than that they are feelings which we wish to sustain and repeat in the former case and feelings that we wish to eliminate and avoid in the latter. “Pleasure” and “pain” are more like “family” concepts than “common property” concepts.

Now, if we turn back to psychology once more, how can we distinguish between different kinds of, *i.e.* qualities of, pleasure and pain? If a meaningful answer can be provided to this question, qualitative hedonism may after all be saved from the oblivion to which it is usually assigned.

B. *Localized and Non-localized Feelings.* In his *Human Conduct*, John Hospers distinguishes between two different senses of “pleasure” and two different senses of “pain.” I believe that this distinction shows great promise in illuminating the hitherto obscure concept of qualitative differences in pleasures and pains, though *Hospers himself does not develop the distinction in this manner nor in any way relate it to Mill’s qualitative hedonism.* Hospers distinguishes between two kinds of pleasure, which he calls “pleasure₁” and “pleasure₂.” Pleasure₁ is non-localized agreeable feeling, and pleasure₂ is localized agreeable feeling. Localized pleasures are those which are given phenomenologically to “raw” experience as being located in some definite part or region of the body, whereas non-localized pleasures do not seem to have a precise physical locus but involve a more general sense of well-being. A similar distinction is made among disagreeable feelings. Localized bodily pains which are given to immediate experience as being in a definite region of the body are what Hospers calls “pain,” though I shall call them “pain₂.” Hospers does not wish to call the non-localized variety of disagreeable feelings “pain.” Instead he calls them “displeasure,” but I really see no serious ob-

⁶ Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1901), p. 94.

jection to calling them "pain₁." Non-localized discomforts have been called "pain" time and time again in the discourse of both philosophers and plain men.

Up to this point, these notions of different kinds of pleasures and pains may seem hardly less obscure than Mill's original notion of "qualitative differences," so let us now explore them in more detail, noticing especially what Hospers has to say about them. Let us begin with the more obvious case of localized bodily pains, pain₂. These are the kind of feelings about which we may sensibly ask and answer the doctor's question "Where does it hurt?" Hospers tells us that "The opposite of pleasure₂ is pain. Pain is a sensation, experienced at a definite place; a pain in my tooth, an ache in my side, a stabbing sensation in my big toe. You can sensibly ask, 'Where (in what part of your body) do you feel the pain?'"⁷ No special introspective skills are required to identify these kinds of disagreeable feeling. All of us except the smallest children can usually understand the doctor who asks us where it hurts, and all of us are familiar with such localized bodily pains as toothache, headache, earache, stomach ache, appendicitis, broken bones, burns, bruises, stabs, cuts, *etc.*

That there is such a thing as localized bodily pleasures might come as a surprise to some people, however. For example, Gilbert Ryle was perfectly willing to recognize localized bodily pains, but explicitly denied the existence of corresponding localized bodily pleasures, pleasure₂. He wrote that

We can tell the doctor where it hurts and whether it is a throbbing, a stabbing or a burning pain; but we cannot tell him, nor does he ask, where it pleases us, or whether it is a pulsating or a steady pleasure. Most of the questions which can be asked about aches, tickles and other sensations or feelings cannot be asked about our likings and dislikings, our enjoyings and detestings. In a word, pleasure is not a sensation at all, and therefore not a sensation on one scale with an ache or twinge.⁸

Since the existence of localized bodily pleasures does not seem perfectly obvious to everyone, I shall spend more time discussing them than was spent on localized bodily pain. In discussing pleasure₂, Hospers tells us that "There are pleasurable sensations, such as those of being tickled, stroked, and rubbed; since these pleasures have a definite bodily location, here it makes sense to ask, 'Where do you feel the pleasure?' – whereas it does not make sense to ask, 'Where do you feel the pleasure you get from reading a good book?'"⁹ Anyone who has ever had his back rubbed, or soaked his feet in hot water, or has been lightly tickled should know that there are localized bodily pleasures, as should anyone who has eaten a good meal and experienced the oral and gastric satisfactions thereof.

Although the existence of localized bodily pleasures does not seem perfectly obvious to Professor Ryle, it does seem obvious to Professor Hospers, and

⁷ Hospers, *Human Conduct*, p. 112.

⁸ Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 58.

⁹ Hospers, *Human Conduct*, p. 112.

it does seem obvious to me. I might add also that it seemed perfectly obvious to Freud and his followers. Although he does not do so, Hospers might profitably have made use of the Freudian concept of “erogenous zones” to further explicate his concept of localized bodily pleasures. In the oral, anal and genital zones, localized bodily pleasures are *commonly* felt, and in talking about such pleasures it *does* make sense to ask and answer the question “Where does it feel good?” When we are sexually aroused, for example, we *can* meaningfully tell where it feels good – in the genital zones, obviously. Ryle is correct, of course, in pointing out that the doctor does not ask us where it pleases us, but this does not imply that we could not tell him. It implies only that we normally do not go in for medical treatment when we are enjoying ourselves! Although it would be socially inappropriate for a doctor to ask us where it felt good, it would not be socially inappropriate for such a question to be posed by a masseur or by a sex partner with whom we are engaged in erotic play. Furthermore, the localized pleasure of *erotic play* is a relatively *steady* pleasure, though there is no doubt a sense in which it has its ups and downs. By contrast, the localized pleasure of *erotic orgasm* is a *pulsating* pleasure. In debating the “merits” of vaginal versus clitoral orgasm in the female, we do ask where it feels good. So Professor Ryle seems to be mistaken on all such counts.

Non-localized pleasure₁ does fit the pattern developed by Professor Ryle reasonably well, however. Here questions about location do seem inappropriate, and they do not seem to come as throbbing, stabbing, burning, or pulsating. Since Ryle neglected the point, the same may be said for non-localized pain₁ or displeasure, it needs to be pointed out. In discussing non-localized pleasure, Hospers writes that

We may speak of pleasure – let us call it pleasure₁ – in the sense of a pleasurable state of consciousness, one with “positive hedonic tone.” It seems to be impossible to define it further, for the term refers to an experience which, like so many experiences, no words are adequate to describe. We can only cite typical circumstances under which this experience occurs: we may derive this kind of pleasure from such sources as a refreshing swim, from reading a good book, from grappling with a philosophical problem, from creating a work of art, or from talking with congenial persons. Pleasure in this sense is, as Aristotle said, an accompaniment of activity; of course different people experience pleasure and experience it to widely different degrees and from widely varying activities: some people experience pleasure from mathematical pursuits, for example, and others do not. From whatever sources it may be derived, pleasure is an accompaniment of an activity, like a frosting on a cake – the frosting tops the cake but is not found by itself apart from the cake.¹⁰

Other sources of non-localized agreeable feeling mentioned by Hospers include “good books, symphony concerts, and doing one’s duty” and even “the pleasures of worshipping God.”¹¹ *Where* does it feel good when we are enjoying a good book or a concert? *Where* are the pleasures of mystical

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

rapture located? There seems to be no clear meaning to these questions because these pleasures are not localized in some definite part of the body such as the right side of the abdomen or the back of the head. The localized pleasures of eating a peppermint ice cream cone are clearly concentrated in the oral zone of the body, but the non-localized pleasures of hearing a concert are just as clearly *not* concentrated in the auditory zone of the body, though these are the senses which are being stimulated.

Non-localized pain₁ which Hospers prefers to call "displeasure" is said by him to be "not a sensation and thus not locatable, and it makes no sense to ask, 'Where did you feel the pain you experienced at hearing the bad news?'"¹² He further explains that "Displeasure would include all unpleasant states of consciousness, such as we experience from bodily pain, from hearing bad news, from situations involving distress, anger, terror, and jealousy."¹³ It is of course possible to extend this list of kinds of non-localized disagreeable feeling to include the affective components of such states of mind as intense grief over the death of a loved one, and the "existentialist" moods of dread, despair, melancholy, loneliness, boredom, alienation, disappointment, meaninglessness, and guilt. It should be noticed that non-localized feeling is not the same thing as universally localized feeling. The former has no definite bodily locus at all, whereas the former seems to be present "all over." Fatigue and chill are universally localized discomforts, whereas the pleasures of drunkenness are universally localized comforts. The taste and gastric pleasures of drinking are regionally localized, but those of drunkenness itself seem to be felt "all over."

Most of the "sources" or kinds of non-localized pleasure₁ mentioned above by Hospers would appear in the traditional lists of the "higher sources of pleasure" and in Mill's list of the "qualitatively superior" pleasures. Also, most of the sources or kinds of localized bodily pleasure₂ would have appeared in the traditional lists of "lower sources of pleasure," and in Mill's list of the "qualitatively inferior" pleasures. We shall soon see that the lower pleasures typically generate the higher ones, but it is true that the basic pleasures of food, drink and sex are localized bodily ones. To be sure, the difference which we have developed between pleasures and pains thus far has been primarily one of *locus*, but once this difference is clearly understood, it is really not too difficult to see that the agreeable or disagreeable feelings themselves are just not qualitatively the *same* feelings, capable of differing as feelings only in intensity and duration. The agreeable feeling of scientific discovery or philosophical creativity is just not the same *kind* of feeling as the localized agreeable feeling of a back rub or an erotic erection, only different in intensity and duration. The disagreeable feeling of intense grief over the death of a loved one is just not the same *kind* of disagreeable feeling as that of a burn, bee sting, or toothache, only different in intensity and duration. We just happen to have an impoverished vocabulary for dealing with

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

the diversity of feelings involved, but we need at least as many words for "pleasure" and "pain" as the eskimos have for "snow." Mill does not develop in much detail a distinction between "qualitatively bad" and "qualitatively worse" pains; but if he had, he doubtless would have maintained that although localized bodily pains are bad enough, they are not as intrinsically undesirable as the qualitatively different and worse non-localized disagreeable feelings which are the affective ingredients of fear or terror, anger, hatred, jealousy, loneliness, boredom, alienation, disappointment, anxiety, dread, despair, melancholy or guilt. Nevertheless, it does seem clear that there are significant qualitative differences among pains, *i.e.* disagreeable feelings, just as there are among pleasures. Seeing that pleasures and pains differ in locus is not the same as seeing that they differ in quality, but it is a key that unlocks a previously closed door into which we may enter to gain new visions of the complexity of human feelings and of any theory of value which would identify human feelings as intrinsic goods or intrinsic bads.

Classifying the above mentioned "pains of soul" as non-localized does not entail a denial of the fact that they are often accompanied by localized discomforts. Rollo May has written that:

... acute loneliness seems to be the most painful kind of anxiety which a human being can suffer. Patients often tell us that the pain is a physical gnawing in their chests, or feels like the cutting of a razor in their heart region, as well as a mental state of feeling like an infant abandoned in a world where nobody exists.¹⁴

Although John Hospers rejects qualitative hedonism as unintelligible in his short discussion of Mill,¹⁵ he nevertheless makes a move in his discussion of the hedonistic conception of "happiness" which a quantitative hedonist who does not recognize differences in quality is not entitled to make.¹⁶ In explicating what he still believes to be a quantitatively hedonistic conception of "happiness," Hospers tells us that "Clearly, it is pleasure₁ that is of relevance to ethics, and it is pleasure₁ which people have (however dimly) in mind when they say that pleasure is intrinsically good."¹⁷ He further suggests that for the hedonist "It is pleasures₁, not pleasures₂, that are the ingredients of happiness, though of course pleasures₂, by causing pleasures₁, may thereby sometimes contribute to happiness."¹⁸

What must be recognized, however, is that the quantitative hedonist has no basis whatsoever for discriminating against localized pleasures as pleasures, or localized pains as pains. For him, pleasure is pleasure, and pain is pain. Furthermore, an adequate hedonistic definition of "happiness" must include

¹⁴ Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York, Dell Publishing Co., 1969), p. 150.

¹⁵ Hospers, *Human Conduct*, p. 59.

¹⁶ The qualitative hedonist at least recognizes differences in kind between pleasures. I would include instances of both types of pleasure in a hedonistic definition of "happiness," while maintaining that one type is more important or essential than the other.

¹⁷ Hospers, *Human Conduct*, p. 113.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

everything which the hedonist regards as intrinsically good, or else happiness plus something else will be intrinsically good; and the hedonist might turn out to be a pluralist! Similarly, the hedonistic concept of “unhappiness” must include *everything* which the hedonist regards as intrinsically bad. Hospers does not say explicitly that localized bodily pains are excluded from the hedonistic conception of “unhappiness,” because he does not discuss “unhappiness” in this context. If localized pleasures are excluded from “happiness,” logical symmetry would seem to require that localized pains be excluded from “unhappiness.” This would be a very strange result, however. If there is anything that *all* hedonists agree upon, it is that prolonged, excruciating, bodily pain is an intrinsic evil, to be avoided for its own nasty sake. Unhappiness, in the hedonistic sense, as a complete hedonistic answer to the question of intrinsic evil, will clearly have to include both such non-localized discomforts as those of jealousy, grief, guilt, despair, *etc.*, and also such localized discomforts as the pain of a toothache, a bee sting, or terminal cancer. If this is granted, symmetry, as well as the assumption that “pleasure is pleasure” would seem to require that “happiness” in the quantitatively hedonistic sense must include both localized and non-localized pleasures.

Though Hospers’ distinction between two types of pleasure and pain is of very questionable utility in the attempt to understand the quantitatively hedonistic concepts of “happiness” and “unhappiness,” nevertheless it might help us to understand what is meant by the qualitatively hedonistic claims that the lower pleasures are “physical” or “sensory,” and the higher pleasures are “mental” or “non-sensory.” These expressions are to be found in our popular discussions of hedonism as well as in the writings of such philosophers as Plato and Mill. Yet, this obscure way of contrasting pleasures and pains has seldom if ever been well explained, and there are certain interpretations of these terms which just don’t work at all. If by “physical” or “sensory” it is meant (1) that these pleasures result from the stimulation of the “external” senses of touch, taste, hearing, sight, smell, this is often just as true of the “higher” pleasures as the “lower” ones. The “higher” enjoyment of any of the “fine arts” involves stimulation of the senses, especially those of sight and hearing. The joys of friendship come from *visible* friends, for most of us at any rate. There is another way of contrasting the “physical” with the “mental” which also does not work. If by “physical” it is meant (2) that some bodily, physiological, or neurological processes are concomitants of agreeable and disagreeable feeling, then this again is presumably just as true of the higher as the lower pleasures. The distinction which Hospers makes between localized bodily and non-localized pleasures and pains would not be at all obviated even if the neurological theory which says that “Pleasures and pains are all really in the brain and never in the left side or right jaw” should turn out to be true. This distinction is independent of neurology, both in the sense that it could be explained to a person who knows so little about anatomy that he does not even know that human beings have brains, and in the sense that it is a phenomenological rather than a neurological distinction. That is, it is based upon how pleasures are given to immediate experience, as localized or

non-localized, rather than upon a detailed knowledge of anatomy. After all, it is the phenomenology of pleasure and pain that really interests the hedonist, for it is *experienced* pleasure and pain that is good or bad in his view. Nevertheless, neurological processes probably are causes or concomitants of every experience of pleasure or pain, whether it be localized or non-localized; and if this is the case, then "mental" pleasure cannot be distinguished from "physical" pleasure on the grounds that the latter involve neurological (physical) processes whereas the former do not. The most meaningful way to explain the distinction between the "mental" and the "physical" seems to be the phenomenological one suggested implicitly by Hospers. (3) The "physical" or "sensory" pleasures and pains are the localized bodily ones, and the "mental" or "non-sensory" ones are the non-localized ones.

Traditional quantitative hedonists have always been interested in the causal contexts and consequences of pleasures and pains. If qualitative hedonism is developed along lines suggested above, new paths of investigation are opened up. It would now be possible to explore the causal connections between localized and non-localized pleasures and pains, i.e., between the higher and lower pleasures and pains. Let me give a few illustrations. Such causal connections need not be immediate in time, and other causal conditions are always presupposed in all such illustrations.

Hospers has done some thinking already about the causal connections between different types of pleasure and pain. He has pointed out that pleasure₂ does normally give rise to the generalized feeling of well-being involved in pleasure₁, that similar relations usually obtain between localized bodily pain and displeasure, and that the masochist is unusual or abnormal because he obtains pleasure₁ from localized pain₂.¹⁹ The localized pleasures of eating and drinking and sex play do usually give rise to a generalized feeling of well being, and the localized pains of injury and disease do usually give rise to a generalized sense of depression, despair or hopelessness about oneself. It is possible to carry this investigation of causal connections far beyond where Hospers left it, however. The localized pleasures of sex do not always give rise to a generalized sense of well being for everyone, but only in certain contexts. One possible interpretation of the popular saying that "Sex without love is meaningless or empty" is that here, for some people, only pleasure₂ is generated, but not pleasure₁. The localized pleasures of sex may also generate the localized pains₂ of childbirth or venereal diseases and the non-localized pain₁ feelings of guilt or possibly even the "mental" discomfort of an unwanted pregnancy. The mother attempting to comfort the child whose pet cat has been run over by an automobile may do so by diverting his mind from the non-localized pains of grief by generating localized pleasure₂ through stroking him or giving him candy to eat. The person who goes to a concert when he is physically ill may find that his pain₂ prevents him from achieving his pleasure₁, and if he goes after just having broken up with his girlfriend he may find that his pain₁ inhibits his pleasure₁. Sustained pain₁ may give rise

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

to the pain₂ of psycho-somatic diseases, and the sustained pleasure₁ of love may decidedly enhance the localized pleasures₂ of sexual intercourse. Possibilities for exploring causal connections between "higher" and "lower" pleasures and pains seem both interesting and endless.

Explicating the meaning of the psychological claim that pleasures and pains differ qualitatively is not the same as accepting or rejecting the normative features of a qualitatively hedonistic answer to the question "What things are intrinsically good?" Before a philosophical position can be accepted or rejected, it must first be clearly understood. Pleasures and pains do seem to differ qualitatively as well as quantitatively, and the psychological thesis of qualitative hedonism at least makes sense.

Critics of Mill's qualitative hedonism usually claim that in adopting it, Mill was really abandoning hedonism altogether in favor of some pluralistic or ideal utilitarian alternative. There is no doubt that certain features of traditional quantitative hedonism are abandoned by qualitative hedonism. For example, quantitative hedonists have usually assumed the linguistic thesis that where two or more things are called by a common name, there is a common property; but accepting qualitative hedonism is tantamount to rejecting this linguistic thesis. Also, the assumption that the relative value of intrinsically good states of conscious feeling can be determined by measuring merely the duration, intensity, and causal connections of these states is abandoned by qualitative hedonism in its insistence that other things being equal, a higher pleasure may be less intense or prolonged than a lower pleasure and still *better*. New and non-quantitative ways of measuring worth are called for by qualitative hedonism, and however successful or unsuccessful it was, Mill's "consensus of experienced judges" test was an attempt to provide such a way of measurement.

The theory of qualitative hedonism which I wish to offer will include some of the following features. It will be maintained that instead of there being a single quality of pleasantness which all "pleasures" have in common, there are instead only innumerable qualitatively different feelings which we wish to sustain and repeat. Furthermore, these qualitatively different feelings seem to be inseparable in practice and even in logic from their so called "sources" or "objects," since they cannot be fully distinguished or identified independently of some of the non-affective properties of these objects. Not only are there two classes of localized and non-localized agreeable feelings, but even within one of these classes there are qualitative and perhaps even valuational differences among the feelings which we wish to sustain and repeat. As for localized pleasures, for example, we enjoy eating peppermint ice cream, drinking hot tea, soaking our feet in hot water, and having our back rubbed. But even these localized enjoyments do not have a single quality of pleasantness in common. Instead, each of them has its own *distinctive* feeling tone which we wish to sustain and repeat. The same sort of thing must be said for localized pains. The pain of novocain as it wears off is qualitatively distinct from the pain of the needle which inserted it into the gum, and both of these are distinctly different from the pain of toothache, or a drill without novocain.

Such oral pains are again quite distinct qualitatively from the pain of a bee sting, burn abrasion, pin prick, or the breathlessness of emphysema. The distinctive feeling tone of a specific pain or pleasure cannot be fully identified in direct experience, thought, or imagination independently of some of the non-affective properties of their "sources" or "objects." This is also true of examples of non-localized enjoyment and suffering. The intrinsically good non-localized feelings of rational contemplation and inquiry are available only in conjunction with rational contemplation and inquiry; those of love, friendship and other forms of personal intimacy are derivable only from love, friendship, and other forms of personal intimacy. Similarly, the sufferings of guilt, loneliness, boredom, despair, *etc.* are not available to us in total separation from those emotions and beliefs which constitute grief, guilt, loneliness, alienation, boredom, despair, *etc.* There is no way for qualified judges to "isolate" any of these distinctive feelings totally from the non-affective properties of their so called "sources," even in imagination, to determine if anything of intrinsic value or disvalue is lost or gained in the absence of these sources. The pleasures of contemplation would not be the pleasures of contemplation in the absence of contemplation, the pleasures of eating peppermint ice cream would not be just those pleasures in the absence of eating peppermint ice cream. Nor would the pain of grief or the pain of a toothache be just those pains in total isolation from the non-affective properties which they accompany in experience, thought, and imagination. "Pleasure" and "pain" concepts are intentional concepts, just as are the concepts of "desire" and "consciousness."

If all of this is true, then qualitative hedonism may be a much more plausible answer to the questions of intrinsic good and evil than it has been commonplace for philosophers to assume.

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