CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

As we explore and ponder the phenomenon of happiness, we may be astounded how the search for happiness consumes us, how it relentlessly drives us forward, how it dominates our rational thoughts, emotions, and actions. We are addicted to happiness. We enjoy the rush of it, but we also suffer from associated withdrawal symptoms when we cannot reach what we want or when a source of happiness disappears. Short of eliminating our needs and replacing them with other equally capable mechanisms to sustain our survival and thriving, there is no way to escape this addiction. If we want to reduce our pain, we have to give in to our needs. They push us to do everything that we can to be as happy as possible. Only, we may not be able to respond sufficiently to the pressures of our needs. We may fail or significantly fall short in satisfying them even if we manage to maximize all available strategies and resources. We may then wonder how happy we might possibly be able to become even if we abide by all the guidance to improve our effectiveness and efficiency that we can develop. Many of the causes for our inability are external to us. They may result from interference by independent forces, obstacles that we might surmount, or more absolute adversities. They may arise from boundaries in our mental or our obviously physical capacities and our inadequate or inaccurate use of these capacities. These adversities, efforts to conquer them, and frustrations in failing may cause us pain. Further constrictions may derive from the conditions for individual, cooperative, and general reconciliation. We may accept some curtailment of our fulfillment if it benefits our overall happiness. If it does not have that effect, we may attempt to change our circumstances or to find a different setting. Such troubles may cause pain as well. Yet, even if we consent to the abridgment of needs for the sake of overall optimized happiness, pain continues to plague us because we cannot satisfy all our needs to their full extent.

The cumulative effect of the resistance we experience regarding the fulfillment of our needs may be difficult to manage. Even if we finally succeed, the frustrations along the way where events do not proceed according to our wishes may sour our victory. We may not derive any happiness from a pursuit, or the happiness we may gain may not or merely marginally be worth the struggle and sacrifice. While careful consideration and planning may permit us to circumvent and conquer many obstacles, many adversities are beyond our control. Their threat may not be visible or fully visible at the beginning, during, or even after a pursuit, or we may have to undertake our pursuits despite their threat. As a result, the amount or the degree of happiness that a pur-

suit will yield is often indeterminate for extended periods. False or incomplete assumptions may necessitate the expenditure of more or different resources than we originally expect. Unforeseen incidents may force us to or suggest that we alter pursuits or temporarily cease them. We frequently do not possess enough information or processing skills to correctly determine the risk, cost, or benefit of pursuits and of their alternatives. Even if our plans are originally sound, subsequent developments may have us revise our strategies. This may make us insecure about our plans and call planning into question. It may instigate us to embark on pursuits with the anticipation that our original plans will have to be modified. We must review strategies before and during our pursuits and determine the requirement and scope of adjustments. As obstacles and setbacks emerge, we have to reassess the relation of risk, cost, and benefit. We have to compare the result with alternatives that are available at the time or might become available in the future. We must decide whether fighting through the difficulties we have already encountered and expect is worth the happiness we hope to derive, or whether we can have more success by changing our strategy. Formerly superior alternative strategies may subsequently not be efficient or effective due to the strategies we previously selected. Our earlier choices may commit us to sequences that limit subsequent selections. Options may have faded. Even if we determine that a better alternative is available, we may be unable to extricate ourselves from a sequence without damage that reduces, equals, or exceeds the benefits of an alternative. We may also hesitate if we are uncertain whether an alternative pursuit is more effective or efficient. Comparing the risk, cost, and benefit of original and alternative pursuits and of shifting from one to another may involve assessments we cannot render confidently. Thus, in addition to incurring pain from unanticipated incidents, we suffer anticipatory pain when we have choices from our struggles to determine the best direction for our pursuits in spite of significant uncertainties.

Much of the pain in our pursuits is experienced because our resources are limited. Even if we succeed, we have to cope with the unavoidable painful consequences of lost resources in our pursuits. Commonly, we can only make progress in our pursuits at the cost of an investment of resources. These in turn regularly constitute the results of previous investments. They represent means that permit us to obtain other means in the fulfillment of our needs. We sacrifice their potential in exchange for better-suited steps toward fulfillment and eventually fulfillment itself. If we do not succeed with such transformations, the invested resources and with them part of our potential for achieving happiness may be lost. Yet, even if we succeed with our strategies,

their pursuit comes at a price. The resources we invested may entirely or in part be consumed in a pursuit. They may be converted and may merge into the result. They may become occupied and degraded. Particularly if the result of their use creates means of higher value than the reduction of their utility for us, it may be difficult to view their investment as a loss. But the fact remains that, upon their employment, many means we had available for the production of happiness are not available anymore or not present in their previous utility. If we wish to repeat a production event or to engage in another pursuit, we will require more supplies and we may eventually have to renew our production tools. It seems that we have to pay for every achievement with the sacrifice or abrasion of our means. For every advance, we have to leave something behind. Beyond the expenditure and wear of resources, we also have to carry the cost that went into securing them as well as the pain and fear we underwent during their production. After we deduct these losses from the pleasure we gain when we succeed in procedural steps and when we achieve fulfillment, we may close our pursuits with only a small gain of happiness or we might even carry a shortfall. If we add these problems to those where we do not overcome obstacles and fail, we may face sizable odds against achieving a happy existence.

Much of the pain we feel may be unnecessary. We may lessen it by developing more and better capacities and by engaging in prudent planning and implementation. We may forestall intentional competitive tendencies and apply enough care and security to control reckless, negligent, and even accidental damage. We may lower costs and risks and increase benefits. We may halt destructive tendencies due to frustration. We may solve problems in the advancement of pursuits short of perfection through competent planning and adjustment, technological and social progress, and by considering destructive reactions. We may forestall the pain of perfection by expanding needs toward their full potential or by adjusting our traits. We may decrease or eliminate pain over the loss of resources in our pursuits by producing an abundance of resources or by recycling. We may also achieve control of interferences from our nonhuman environment. We may fully reconcile our pursuits within ourselves, with the pursuits of other humans, and with nature in general. Still, there remains pain that cannot be erased because of the different character of our needs and the requisite interactions in our pursuits and their reconciliation. We remain exposed to compromise because it remains inevitable that needs, individuals, and nature will negatively affect one another by their existence and ways, even if they are reconciled. These impositions keep inflicting pain on us although they might serve to optimize our happiness overall.

These conditions of inevitable pain join the most fundamental cause of pain that arises from the intention of pain to alert us to our body's requirements and to motivate us to safeguard ourselves against existential deficiencies. In that function, pain appears to be a positive force without which we could not sustain ourselves. We may contend that this pain can be minimized with prudent planning and execution and with the appropriate availability of resources. Further, it seems to be merely temporary to the extent it is compensated by pleasure upon the remediation of deficiencies. Notwithstanding, intrinsic characteristics of pain appear to endanger its equalization by pleasure. Pain and pleasure differ in how they adjust. Experiences of happiness are transitory. Intrinsic degenerative mechanisms draw us back into deprivation and pain upon relatively short experiences of pleasure. In contrast, the nonfulfillment of a need does not fade by inherent conditions. Unless the means it requires for its functions are provided, it places us into a state of increasing deprivation and resulting pain. The natural resting point for our emotions therefore appears to be pain. Incidents of happiness seem to constitute temporary escapes from this state. These escapes cannot last because there seems to be no destination of permanence with which they could bond or into which they could develop. Happiness seems to lack the ability to accumulate or to solidify into a state that could serve as a lasting counterpoint to the undercurrent of pain. No matter how strong and solid happiness may appear to be at some point, it remains fragile and rapidly disintegrates. It will not last and we must continually renew it. Unless we keep producing happiness, the undercurrent of pain will pull us back into its domain.

This pressure to generate happiness is bound to leave a lasting effect on us. Even if we currently manage to compensate our deprivations and maintain fulfillment, that state is always under threat of deterioration. We fear its subsiding and that we will not be able to bring forth the necessary frequency and intensity of incidents of happiness to keep us removed from pain. Securing the buoyancy of our emotions seems to become more difficult as we age because we accumulate pain without recourse. As much as we may be able to forget or to suppress pain, much of it still reinforces our base line regardless of whether we could or could not have forestalled it. We remember the pain of compromises, errors, and forced deprivations even if compromises benefited us, errors were compensated, and we defeated forced deprivations. We feel pain about a rising certainty that we will not be able to reach our ideals or change our fate. Moreover, we feel pain of loss about past pleasurable events and frustration about our inability to recreate them that only rises as we also sense a shadow of the pleasure we once felt.

Apparently, we are destined to struggle in avoidance or remediation of pain without a prospect of finally succeeding and freeing ourselves from its grip. Pain seems to be an enduring irritant, an attached weight that will pull us down if we stop struggling. We may therefore consider it a curse that we cannot appear to escape. Then again, it also seems to be an essential motivating force so we avoid deprivation and ascertain our individual and collective survival and thriving. The sensation of pleasure upon fulfillment and its anticipation paired with the mere absence of pleasure upon deprivation would not sufficiently distinguish neutral circumstances from those that damage our interests. Yet the positive function of pain appears to go deeper than motivation and orientation. It appears to be a necessary ingredient for our emotional wellbeing. Pain seems to be a requirement for the production of happiness. We must first experience an emotion that signifies deprivation before we can experience happiness about the compensation of a deficiency. Pleasure seems to obtain its content from its contrast with pain. This would make pain a constructive constituent of happiness.

If the fulfillment of a need is secure, if we do not sense or fear any deprivation, we may not be able to sense much happiness because the contrast of deprivation is absent. This phenomenon does not seem to be limited to instances where we never knew the value of a benefit because we never experienced the related differential. It further seems to apply to situations where we left concerns of struggle and deprivation firmly behind us. We may become so accustomed to, so certain of a continuing or a recurring state of achievement that we are not afraid of losing it anymore. It seems that when we take something for granted, we cease feeling happy about it. For most of human history, exposure to such a state has not posed a great problem. With the exception of the air we breathe and few other general environmental conditions, the ready presence of means to fulfill existential needs has not been a natural state for most humans. Even if resources are available, they often do not benefit us unless we use them. This relative unsuitability of environmental conditions is the source for the development of needs. Competitive struggle has greatly added to our fear and pain regarding the supply of resources. Yet, beyond that, humans have been suffering because most means have to be located, created, adapted, maintained, and secured against other threats. Human development has increased the requirement for such efforts because it has induced more complex wishes. Thus, humans have experienced fear and pain emanating from an environment that is not in harmony with their wishes without intervention and that requires them to sacrifice substantial amounts of resources and incur significant risk to conform it. This experience may

be additionally intensified because advancement in the production of means has frequently brought forth threats or damage to other interests. But technological and social development has also made the supply of nonemotional requirements temporarily or, upon resolving reconciliatory issues with nature, lastingly more secure. The struggles to fulfill such requirements and the related fear and pain may be bound for further reduction and elimination for a growing portion of humanity with advancing technology and automation as well as assistance. However, such provisions of supplies and any prior state of fulfillment due to competitive privilege or fortuity are abnormal. Our emotional mechanisms are not accustomed to such sourcing and have not developed to cope with an abundance of nonemotional resources. Frustration that the manner of their provision leaves needs that require emotional resources unfulfilled and contributes to the deprivation of these combines with a frustration that needs that require nonemotional resources are perpetually fulfilled without meaningful deprivation.

Even if we manage to address the negative effects caused by the production methods of nonemotional resources on our emotional resources, our ultimate challenge appears to be to develop the ability to be happy without commensurate actual or anticipated pain. As long as deprivation is the base condition of our existence in many respects, we can regularly afford to shun pain and disregard it as a constructive requirement of our happiness. We can focus on fighting it as the antithesis of happiness. Yet the fact remains that we could not produce happiness without its opposing presence or potential. The implications of the constructive function of pain are fundamental. The most palpable evidence for the constructive character of pain is that happiness seems to be directly related to the intensity of the pain it follows. Happiness appears to increase with the distance from pain we cover in its pursuit and its attainment. That suggests that increasing and maximizing our happiness does not only call for proficiency in fulfillment activity. We may also contemplate the possibility that we can benefit from increasing or maximizing our pain before fulfillment. To examine this issue, we may want to review the satisfaction that occurs without significant fluctuations compared to incidents where we recover from more significant depths of pain due to actual or anticipated deprivation. Pursuits may not present themselves as dramatic sequences. Rather, they may constitute relatively constant or predictably recurring activities to maintain the satisfaction of needs. In ideal supply situations, most of our needs display secure, balanced patterns with only minor fluctuations between the rise of a need and its fulfillment. The full extent of some of our needs only becomes noticeable upon exceptional circum-

stances that disrupt the unbroken supply stream or call it in question. We may contrast such a pattern with less perfect settings where needs move in more conspicuous fluctuations between deprivation and fulfillment. When we balance the pain against the pleasure in each of the two modes, we discover that there is no noteworthy difference in net happiness. If our needs are steadily and securely met, the strength and length of pain are negligible but pleasure is minimized as well. Initially, the dimensions of pleasure that we obtain from the fulfillment of a more pronounced state of actual or anticipated pain may appear superior. Because our happiness is contingent on the movement from pain to pleasure, it requires previous pain and its intensity correlates to the intensity of that pain because it creates distance. Still, although pain may be a motivator to push us toward pleasure, it is also its antithesis. It consumes and threatens to extinguish happiness. We purchase amplified pleasure by a preceding degradation in pain. Because the intensity of pleasure depends on the intensity of pain, an increase in pleasure seems to be balanced by the unhappiness we must endure as precondition. The result seems to be ultimately similar to what we derive from fulfillment activity that omits great movement. A more dramatic movement does not seem to be able to produce a surplus of happiness because it depends on factors that define each other in relative terms and seem to cancel each other out upon completion of the movement between them. It might appear as if this neutralization would be limited to ulterior needs and that the pleasure we derive from movement due to our need for pursuit could yield a surplus. But that purported advantage appears to be canceled as well because we must first engage this need in damaging pursuits. Hence, there does not seem to be any point in generating pain to heighten experiences of happiness.

More than that, approaches to pursuits that more widely oscillate between pain and satisfaction risk pushing us into an overall experience of aggravated pain because they involve the creation or permission of threatening or damaging circumstances. Such methods are by definition less secure than a method that centers on a more immediate and predictable balancing of needs with fulfillment. By voluntarily succumbing to or inducing actual or anticipated pain to feel compensating happiness, we increase the risk that we might not be able to recover or not fully succeed in escaping that pain or fear. The margin between the state of deprivation or threat from which we plan and believe ourselves able to recover and a state where that is not or only incompletely possible decreases as we increase or permit the increase of deprivation or its threat. We escalate the risk that we might be overcome by circumstances that are out of our control. Even to the extent

recovery is possible, other disadvantages counsel against the deliberate incurring of actual or anticipated pain. Seeking or allowing deprivation or its threat is generally likely to result in an overproportional drain on resources compared to a more constant and secure method of fulfillment. Although there may be cases where we may expend the same resources in a large exertion that we would expend in smaller intervals if we maintained an established, stable process, the difference of effort is regularly greater. That may be attributable to the fact that a larger deprivation spread may necessitate a disproportional amount of the same resources. Further, a recovery from deeper levels of deprivation may involve more complex and tenuous sequences that not only increase our risk of failure but also impose on our resources differently even if the risk does not materialize. Particularly our rescue from the materialization of catastrophic risk that we might voluntarily incur or into which we might involuntarily slide upon approximation may require an inordinate amount and quality of resources. In addition, creating or deepening our deprivation or its threat would necessitate the expenditure of resources in a destructive fashion. We stand to lose the resources we invest in that action as well as the state of means we destroy. Similarly, allowing resources to deteriorate or to become threatened would constitute waste. All these resources we invest and lose in the facilitation and remediation of actual and anticipated pain would be missing in the immediately following or in future pursuits of the affected need or other needs regarding which we still suffer natural deficiencies and threats. Hence, the aggravation of our needs by artificially heightening pain seems to be dangerous and counterproductive.

In spite of such insights, we appear to be drawn to heightening our pleasure by increasing our pain. We may argue that a more constant method of fulfilling our needs by installing and maintaining reliable supply mechanisms does not provide the same happiness. In fact, we may assert that its stability precludes the production of happiness. While it may prevent most of the pain of actual and anticipated deprivation, it delivers that relief only at the price of a complementary lack of pleasure. The resulting dull neutrality may be unacceptable to us. Given the pain we may incur from pursuing or allowing a degradation of our fulfillment status and the insecurity of meeting the demands of our needs thereafter, we might struggle to achieve neutrality. But we may not care about that because we are addicted to the sensations of happiness. We deem ourselves unable to exist without creating happiness even if it means that we incur overproportional pain. Our addiction to happiness may persuade us to take actions that are not objectively in our individual or collective interest. Like any other addiction,

it urges us to do whatever is necessary to satisfy our craving regardless of the consequences. Our principal needs for individual and collective survival and thriving might seem to provide some correcting force because they focus on long-term, constant requirements concerning survival and overall wellbeing with regard to thriving. They also appear to be the only needs from which we appear to derive continuous satisfaction without the requisite of earlier deprivation. But even these needs seem to profit from threat and deprivation as long as these are not irreversible. Even the optimization of pleasure for these needs may then be incongruent with the idea of maximized conditions for our survival and thriving. If we are straining enough for experiences of happiness, we may imperil the future fulfillment of any of our ulterior needs for a temporary rush even if we might regret our decision and sustain additional pain in the long run. We may even be willing to risk or sacrifice our individual and collective survival because the fulfillment of our ulterior needs may mean little if we cannot feel satisfaction about it.

This behavior appears to constitute a lesser form of the destructive mechanism that we are tempted to engage because of a perceived perfection in our ulterior pursuits. That we have trouble finding sufficient conditions of pain means that we are approaching perfection in the pursuit of ulterior needs. Seeking or permitting deprivation or its threat before we achieve perfection serves the same purpose as more dramatic destructive movements when fulfillment continues after satisfaction has waned. When ulterior needs become perfected, we suffer pain from the denial of our need for pursuit as well as from our inability to generate events of movement that would allow us to experience actual or anticipated satisfaction of ulterior needs. However, that pain has no constructive outlet. As a result, we stand to experience increasing pain without a chance of converting it into happiness. To remove these obstructions to our happiness, we may deem it necessary to destroy our state of fulfillment. While we incur pain during that process and by its results that immerse us in deprivation, that pain may seem preferable because it allows us to generate happiness again in our pursuit of ulterior needs and our need for pursuit. We would rather suffer temporary pain from destruction than the continuing and increasing pain of stasis. The objective of elevating pleasure through antecedent pain differs from the objective of creating pain by destroying an ultimate state that prevents us from experiencing pleasure only by a lesser level of distress over a lack of movement that we require to generate happiness. In both instances, the generation of sufficient distance between pain and pleasure might initially appear legitimate because it enables such a movement between them. But that evaluation may be

placed in doubt upon deeper consideration because of the risk that we might not be able to control the level of the detriment we incur. Even if that technical concern could be allayed, we experience internal opposition on a more fundamental level because we tear down what we previously dedicated ourselves to build only to repeat the same cycle. We position ourselves in the absurd situation where we buy pleasure over acts of advancement and fulfillment with pain caused by willful regression. Such futile behavior might be necessary to produce procedural happiness. However, it detracts from our principal objectives of securing our individual and collective survival and thriving as well as the fulfillment of subordinated needs in their support. In spite of our frustration when we approximate or perfect fulfillment because we are currently deprived or we fear the cessation of progress, we also suffer present and anticipatory pain from the destruction of fulfillment and the fact that we generate that destruction. As soon as we engage in destruction or shortly thereafter, we regret such acts because they cause us pain. Only, before we discover the painful consequences of destruction, our anticipation of these may be too weak to direct our behavior against the urgency of our present pain from, or our fear for, a lack of movement. Even if we attribute value to having our needs securely fulfilled, we may temporarily ignore it in the belief that induced deprivation or its threat will only be brief and that fulfillment will be restored. Yet, even if we should recover, the pain we would induce under the influence of our destructive impulses upon perfection or its approximation would be continual. We would deliberately spend most of our existence in painful degradations or imperilments of fulfillment, or in its reconstitutions during which we are subject to the threats of pain that are coincidental or intrinsic to pursuits. The endless circularity of such conduct may seem pointless to us and further dampen our motivation in pursuits and the happiness we may be able to derive from them.

Destructive mechanisms that arise from the approximation and accomplishment of perfection can then momentously contribute to a negative balance between pain and pleasure. We may realize that they are as senseless and damaging to our overall happiness as the pain we exact upon one another and ourselves by unwarranted or ill-managed activities of destruction upon obstructions during our pursuits, and by competitive behavior among our needs, with other humans, and with our more extended environment. We may recognize that causing pain or other damage to us or aspects of our environment threatens to turn us into perpetrators of unhappiness under the guise of improving happiness. Some pain may be inherent to the phenomenon of needs and their pursuit. It may be a price we must pay for the opportunity to se-

cure and maximize our existence. We may have to suffer it to become aware of our requirements and appropriate strategies to address them. Similarly, our human and nonhuman environment may have to suffer some encumbrances as a consequence of our existence, and these encumbrances might reflect on us. We cannot exist without causing turbulences. Some of these turbulences may be desirable by us or by other humans and may be in the apparent interest of nature because they lead to constructive results. But pain and other encumbrances invariably represent damaging states from which we must seek to distance ourselves even if we sometimes are forced to undergo them to reach a constructive outcome. The potential for achieving distance from pain that is contained in our needs upon reconciliation, including our need for collective survival and thriving, seems to give us appropriate room for growth to defeat destructive impulses in approximation and upon reaching perfection. Further, we may at some point elect to adjust our needs if more vigorous attitudes toward pursuits are no longer necessary. Additionally, unnecessary destructive maneuvers upon blockages during pursuits as well as competitive demeanor can be prevented by reconciliation. Reconciliation may also mend technical weaknesses in our pursuits by cooperation. We thus have the power to create a significantly happier existence. Yet, achieving this goal requires a continuing commitment. Short of adjusting our needs, we still must control the danger of having needs commanded by destructive or competitive impulses, even with a developing expansion of our need for collective survival and thriving. Apart from managing our needs, we may have to address technical aspects of pursuits to secure constructive results.

To forestall subversion by destructive and competitive impulses and establish competent technical guidance, we may advance normative criteria for good and bad practices by ourselves and together with other individuals. The establishment of norms that do not leave room for destruction in consequence of perfection or its approximation may be relatively late. They may trail normative standards that may already have been formed against destructive impulses in reaction to obstructions during pursuits and opposing competition. The same standards may be made largely applicable. But we recognize that destructive acts during pursuits as well as competitive acts may be legitimate in some situations. Regulation allowing exceptions for their legitimate exercise joins other principles that judge behavior according to its context. In the course of preparing stipulations that regulate behavior, we discover that comparatively few circumstances subject to regulation warrant categorical judgments. But humanity's past and possibly even our current inclinations have been to establish simple, categorical guidance.

We tend to categorize circumstances as good if they assist us in fulfilling our needs. If they detract from that fulfillment, we designate them as bad. This labeling seems appropriate on a rational level where we gauge the utility of conditions for the fulfillment of our needs. In addition, our attribution of these predicates happens on an emotional level. We develop an affinity for causes that bring pleasure, that make us feel good. Conversely, we cultivate an antipathy against events and conditions that cause us pain, that make us feel bad. Our attributions of good and bad travel past a mere equation of these designations with success, pleasure, and happiness on one side and failure, pain, and unhappiness on the other. To anticipate and alter effects, we use them to describe more than effects. We project our conclusions and sensations regarding results on objects, events, or persons as initiators and agents of these results. We view them as good, bad, or neutral depending on whether they contribute to a pleasurable, painful, or indifferent result. Moreover, we may attribute good, bad, or neutral qualities to types of objects, events, and persons due to our impressions of representatives. Even if we have not had any or enough personal experience with causes, we may judge them based on communicated opinions and claimed experiences of others. We may even render assessments based on potential or tendencies we might directly or indirectly discern.

Categorizing causes in this mode can fulfill important functions for teaching and learning about classic concepts of happiness. It might also be useful when we must instantly assess the likelihood of damage or benefit or identify possible sources. Recall of a categorization could save us critical time on occasions where we cannot engage in exploration and assessment. However, we may frequently not properly characterize an object, event, or person with these general categorizations. Usually, the same capacity can be good, bad, or neutral depending on the context. Further, the context from which we have gathered our assessment may differ relevantly from the conditions in which we apply our judgment. Our impressions may be faulty, and assessments issued by others may be erroneous or purposely misleading. Objects, events, and persons may change or may not be representative of a whole class. Hence, the categorization of an object, event, or person as good, bad, or neutral founded on direct or indirect impressions frequently merely affords us an initial presumption that may prove to be inconclusive or incorrect. To approximate an accurate judgment, we must investigate whether nonconformities with circumstances that prompted our categorization exist. If we find differences, we must ascertain whether they alter the presumed effect of an object, event, or person on our needs. Our investigations are complicated because we may meet mixtures of

good, bad, and neutral characteristics. To judge subjects correctly, we must determine whether they yield more pain or pleasure or whether their effects neutralize each other regarding our concerns. If we sense or predict residual pain or pleasure, we have to quantify the result and compare it with alternative subjects that we might identify.

Most imminently, we may apply such assessments to grade our perceptive, rational, emotional, or obviously physical dispositions and behavior. Apart from practical concerns, we may be particularly interested in our needs because we recognize that they steer our activities. Their function as adjudicators of good and bad by their display of pain and pleasure may not except them from our judgment. Because needs present themselves in a condition of pain when they are not fulfilled, we may consider them to be commonly or potentially bad. Particularly if we consistently suffer from a lack of fulfillment regarding a need, we may designate it as bad. We may also call it bad if it causes problems for the fulfillment of other needs. Conversely, we may designate needs as good if we find reliable satisfaction for them or if they advance the satisfaction of other needs. If we can relate our experiences regarding needs with areas of our body, we may categorize such parts as good or bad as well. Depending on the weight or lack of differentiation among our impressions, we may extend such classifications to more generalized aspects or the entirety of our person. On a more considered level, we may make categorizations of needs dependent on their usefulness. To the extent we recognize that a need is essential or helpful for our individual or collective survival and thriving, we may deem pain over its nonfulfillment necessary to alert us of a vital or at least important deficiency and to motivate us into remediation. We may judge such a need as categorically good and blame other factors if we incur pain regarding it. We may maintain our judgment regardless of our ability to fulfill it and even if we understand that pursuing it requires compromises from other esteemed needs. To the extent we perceive a need as damaging for our survival and thriving, we may call that need and its demands bad. By judging our needs in such a manner, we may classify parts of our personality as good or bad. We may except our physiological identity from such judgment unless we deem our personality to be affected by physiology. If we perceive experiences of adversity or benefit to have causes or to be influenced by causes outside ourselves, we may include these into our categorizations as well. We may judge all objects, events, and persons in our environment as good, bad, or neutral depending on their potential and actual assistance, damage, or detachment regarding the qualities we ascribe to the entirety or aspects of our self. We may even apply our judgment to sources that we deem

to have created or influenced us or other persons or other factors that affect us. We may entertain these judgments regardless of a right or a possibility to acquire accommodation or recourse. We instead tend to base them on whether and by how much objects, events, or persons potentially or actually advance, detract from, or leave undisturbed aspects that we consider to be good or bad. But neutrality may not save any aspects from our judgment if we deem they should favor us.

We may attempt to conduct ourselves in accordance with these judgments. We may strive to create, protect, and support aspects that we deem good and to curb, contain, or convert what we regard as bad. Our assessments may be topical or more principled. We may organize conclusions and the consequences we draw from them as commands or principles according to which we would like to behave and according to which we would want our human and possibly our nonhuman environment to behave. Yet we soon discover resistance to our categorizations and attempts to establish commands and principles on them. Our judgments may not be homogeneous because they may represent assertions by traits with differing points of view. We may further discover that our judgments are being challenged by individuals with different ideas of good and bad. As a consequence of these circumstances, as well as other circumstances with which we have to work that resist our wishes, we may often have to compromise standards internally and externally. We may also realize that most circumstances we meet represent better and worse selections on a scale rather than absolutes. They contain both good and bad either by their intrinsic or by coincidental attributes. Together with the dependence of the good, bad, and neutral qualities of conditions on their context, we encounter a complexity in the design and implementation of our pursuits that we may find bewildering at unreconciled states of our development.

Our confusion may cause us to seek clarifying simplicity for organizing our pursuits. We may avoid objects, events, and persons that require complex evaluations to justly evaluate their functionalities regarding our interests. But such evasion may often not be possible, the least of all with regard to our self. In that case, or because we refuse to retreat in the face of complexities, we may decline to undertake complex evaluations and deal with ourselves and our surroundings pursuant to simplified assessments by dividing the world into good and bad. In that case, incorrect judgments may become enshrined as wishes of how we want the world to be that we may defend against counterindications. Such approaches may be encouraged and reinforced by forces that seek to override differentiated considerations and wish to manipulate us into subscribing to their views and fighting opposing views.

The perceived opposing nature of good and bad may lead us to imagine these qualities as opposing powers that are clinched in a fundamental battle. Because we observe their presence and activities not only in our surroundings but also within us, we may believe that human perceptions, thoughts, emotions, endeavors, other features of the human body, and the sources of these phenomena are manifestations of this battle. We may imagine that the struggle between the good and bad focuses on humans individually and collectively because humans appear to be uniquely able to choose between good and bad, appear to represent the highest stage of nature's development, and seem to have a central function and potential in shaping nature. However, the apparent permeation of the world by good and bad may make us believe that these are more generally sourced and intentioned forces that attempt to attain influence over us and use us for their causes. While we may not purport to understand these entirely, we may interpret adversity as part of a campaign by bad forces to obtain satisfaction from our pain, extinguish the good in us, and punish or destroy us if we act as agents of good. We may further interpret appearances of good choices that turn out to be bad as deceptions by bad forces to disable our defenses, make us instruments of their agenda, or intensify our pain. We may contrast these forces with forces that seek our salvation from pain and our survival and thriving but may also pursue our punishment or destruction if we should act as agents of evil. Our neutrality might not be acceptable to either side. Because both forces seem to significantly rely on humans to participate in their battle, we may view humans as both subjects and recruits in a larger struggle of good and bad.

The apparently fundamental nature of that struggle demands to be reconciled with our concept of the world's and of our creation. We may presume that the force that created nature, life, humanity, and us individually is interested in the prospering of its creation, and we may therefore regard it as good. Yet, considering our exposure to suffering and existential threats may cause us to have doubts in the goodness of the creative force. We must explain why it would produce evil and involve itself and us in a seemingly comprehensive conflict with it. If we deem the creative force to be ultimately evil, we have to explain its efforts as well. We may alternatively assume that bad constitutes an external force of an independent creation. But that would require explanations how it has come to exist and has permeated a seemingly good creation so deeply. Regardless of where our attempted reasoning takes us, the imagined struggle between good and bad forces prompts us to construct elaborate concepts to explicate their origin, motivations, actions, and destinations and how we and our experiences fit into these.

Attributing what is conducive and deleterious for us to opposing forces and trying to make sense of our existence in such a setting may insert negative tribal and hierarchic instincts into our consideration and subject our judgment to them. It may harden our position to an intolerant, aggressively competitive, and destructive stance and the formulation of a mission to vanquish aspects of the world we consider bad. Our eagerness may make us willing to incorporate ourselves into power structures that purportedly fight evil and to renounce any nonconforming views. Our attribution of good and bad to opposing forces may lead to tragic consequences because its dogmatic divisiveness and fanaticism may not be conducive to, and might prohibit, a particularized, nuanced consideration of circumstances and a scaling of circumstances according to their comparative merit or deficiency. The absolute nature and intensity of categorizations may prevent us from considering our needs and their pursuits, from building an effective council of traits, and from accomplishing individual, collective, and general reconciliation of our needs. Our assumed or self-authored judgments stand with a claim of unassailability that we are disinclined to disavow even if we unnecessarily suffer from them. Having accepted principles of good and bad to control us, we may interpret our own incompatible mental impressions and external information that urge us to reconsider our stance as temptations by bad forces. We may further categorize the demeanor and even the existence of dissenting individuals as bad because they might interfere with our pursuits and because they seem to represent an opposing force in the larger struggle we imagine. The resulting inability to optimize the pursuit of our happiness is bound to inflict pain on us that is bound to grow, and our frustrations are likely to seek permitted outlets against objects, events, and persons we have identified as bad. More than that, our zealous, unquestioning fight to overcome opposition to our principles may appear to confirm the fallacies in our doctrine because it generates adversities. We may not see that by fighting evil under false concepts, we enter a stage of ultimate ruthlessness in unjustifiable competitive and destructive strategies because we proceed under the impression of absolute righteousness.

A reconciled perspective of us and the world refines our view of good and bad into concepts that are more conducive to our happiness. We are destined to improve our value judgments as we progress from primitive, topical concepts to a more comprehensive understanding of needs in their interrelation with our other needs and with our human and nonhuman environment. Reconciliation is a good that maximizes human survival and thriving. Although it may include destructive and defensive competitive maneuvers, it is in essence a procedure in which

objectives become compromised among one another to make the best of the circumstances we encounter. This prevents us from making categorical assertions or taking unconditional actions regarding most circumstances. To carry out appropriate reconciliation, we must consider that circumstances may represent a blend of good and bad factors and that categorizations of good and bad may change with the context. Its optimization processes show us that good and bad frequently must be selected in gradations to optimize our happiness. Its flexible inclusion of circumstances teaches us that we must not to harden our positions into strict categorizations of good and bad. Rather, we must continue reconciliation as new circumstances come to our attention. To make it as well-rounded as possible, we have to seek out relevant information. While we might devise and seek guidance from categorical principles, reconciliatory solutions may frequently call for more involved considerations past the simplicity of categorical decisions. Ultimately, reconciliation does not leave room for mythic powers of good and bad that battle each other. It induces us to comprehend good and bad as status descriptions for the same concern. As synonyms for pleasure and pain, they denominate the range between deprivation and fulfillment. They must attach to a need to have meaning. As indicators of its fulfillment status, they represent marks on opposing ends of the same scale. That means that they must have a common denominator by which they can be compared. Investigations of how pain and pleasure physically come about endorse this consideration. The same mechanisms appear to detect, convey, and interpret absence, presence, and volume of the same type of physical stimulant for both. But even if we could not physically confirm the common nature of pain and pleasure, their unity of scale is essentially evident because one subsides when the other increases.

Because pain and pleasure build on the same infrastructure and constitute gradations on the same scale, they can inform us of the requirement status of a physiological system represented by a need. Indications of deprivation or fulfillment and of the entirety of the spectrum between these extremes are required to provide us with competent information that assists the management of our activities. We can only trust an indication of fulfillment if we can trust that there would be an indication of nonfulfillment if it occurred. More fundamentally, we would have no concept of fulfillment for any of our needs without a concept of nonfulfillment. We would not even possess an indication that we have a requirement. A sensory difference appears to be critical to indicate nonconducive circumstances in an environment that does not necessarily indulge our needs. Further, the complexity of deficiencies that may afflict us seems to require a detection of pain in addition

to a mere absence of pleasure to effectively point us to causes of deficiencies. We also have to be able to sense the size of disparity between pain and pleasure to comprehend the urgency of needs. Pain detracts from our happiness. But if we eliminated our ability to sense or anticipate pain, we would not have eliminated the causes for pain and their deleterious consequences for our survival and thriving. We would only remove much of our autonomous ability to detect injurious effects.

We may consider that we can remove pain from our life not only through reconciliation and the development of better and more resources through technology. We may think that we can address its accrual more fundamentally by transferring our emotional mechanisms to artificial processing facilities that may be produced by technological advancement. This idea appears to be concordant with our general propensity to avail ourselves of technological assistance to, and amelioration and replacement of, our physiological facilities. With our advancement, temptations may mount that we rely on such devices. Our subjection to procedures that install and maintain them poses a risk of incompatibility, malfunction, dependence, and abuse. Still much more menacing appears to be that their attachment and integration may require or effect profound changes that may cause us to lose our self.

This might be a particular danger if we were to outsource emotions. We might program an emotional adjunct to make us act and react precisely as we would or would want to act and react while sparing us the burden of pain. Because everything, including emotions, can ultimately be deciphered into logical correlations, a system of nonemotional sensory and programmed rational facilities can trigger the same preventive and remedial activities as a system that is directed by emotional mechanisms. Such a mechanism would also necessarily deprive us of the ability to experience pleasure. But we should not suffer much if any overall loss and might even gain because we frequently struggle to surpass experiences of pain with pleasure. Since we are susceptible to an excess of pain, we may be inclined to resign the concept of emotional indications and motivations to a technological system that can steer us. We might retain nonemotional perceptive, rational, and other physiological aspects that interface with such a system. Yet, if such a system is to be effective in channeling humans and humanity toward optimized chances for survival and thriving, its processes would have to be similarly developed and complex as those of our personality. The externalization of such processes threatens to reverse our relationship with machines. It would produce adjuncts that might be more human than we would be without them. The externalization of our directing functions might be completed if we would endow the externalized sys-

tem with nonemotional perceptive, rational, and obviously physiological functions. This seems to be likely given the developing superiority of technological solutions in these regions that would enable superior decision and execution. We would then have no function left except as carriers of physiological features that such external facilities would be programmed to support and protect. Even if we integrated such facilities into us and transferred functions to them in assistance or as a displacement of our original facilities, the artificiality of such a setting might give rise to consequences that we might not fully anticipate. We might be able to more easily grasp the relegation of our perceptive, rational, and obviously physical mechanisms by more proficient external mechanisms. We may imagine that the outsourcing of emotional facilities might improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our survival and thriving as well. Only, it is different because it would eliminate an experience to which we have traditionally dedicated our life. Even if we can rationally conclude that our emotions are merely an instrument to secure human survival and thriving, the emotional aspects of our person appear to us instinctively as our essence. The prospect of externalizing our emotions to an assistance facility might therefore fill us with existential fear that may resemble our fear of death because we stand to lose a large aspect of what it means to be alive. We might also have such a fear when we supersede nonemotional perceptive, rational, and obviously physical mechanisms with exterior appliances. But in these cases, we could preserve adequate interaction with our nonemotional perceptive, rational, and obviously physical facilities to prevent feeling deprived of such facilities. This does not seem to be a viable approach we can take with our emotions. While it might be possible to filter our emotions, the numbing effects may cause our happiness to suffer. We may therefore reject externalizing our pain-pleasure mechanisms.

The preservation of our pain-pleasure mechanism and its functions puts us into a potentially incongruous position. While we cannot benefit from allowing or inducing damage or its threat so we can generate pain or its anticipation, we must preserve pain in some shape to guide our actions and experience happiness. We may solve this problem with imagination. We may be able to position ourselves into a sufficiently painful situation in our mind by remembering painful experiences to feel a sufficient intensity of pleasure over the fulfillment of a need. However, because the pain of deprivation we sense is unique to each need, we might have to experience a meaningful intensity of pain with respect to every need to derive appropriate emotional references. Obtaining such references of pain may not seem to pose a problem in an imperfect world because we are bound to experience some depriva-

tion regarding all our needs. Nevertheless, such experiences may be at intensities that do not provide us with the necessary contrast to elicit full emotional appreciation of fulfillment. Further, they may not enable us to competently select among alternative manners of pursuit or appropriately react to threats. To increase and maximize our capabilities in these areas, we have to be able to scale our experiences of pain to possible extremes as well as intermediate levels. But incurring pain over the entirety of its possible spectrum appears to be a poor way to learn because it would expose us to much of the evil we seek to avoid. Even if this exposure is restricted to one occurrence for each relevant level of pain in a spectrum for each need, the severity of the illustrative pain might cause dramatic damage to our happiness. We may prefer to learn about the expanse of possible pain without experiencing it. To some extent, we can experience a simulation of pain through imagination. If we possess a reference that exemplifies the type of pain, we might be able to modulate it by comparing circumstances we have not experienced with that reference. Yet, even if we can quantify or qualify objective differences, we might not be able to infer accurate emotional knowledge in correlation with them. Overestimation or underestimation of the pain to be incurred from exposure to unfamiliar conditions may cause us to make inappropriate choices. Although we might learn from such errors, this education that exposes us to the pain we are trying to avoid is less than ideal. We would remain trapped in trials.

The only alternative we seem to have left to cure our emotional blind spots if we are not willing to sample representative intensities of pain ourselves is to sense them through a transfer of emotions. Such a transfer seems possible to some extent based on our capacity to identify emotionally with other individuals due to our basic commonality with all other humans. Still, a transfer of emotions is difficult because it can solely arise indirectly through representational communication. Moreover, differences among individuals in how they relate representational to emotional concepts may impede accurate communication. Beyond that, an identification with portrayed pain may be difficult because the recipient may connect a different level or even type of emotion to the same occurrences. Further, specific acquired or genetic dispositions may greatly influence the occasions and intensities of original and empathic pain that humans experience. Additional disparities may be caused by differences in concurrent or previous experiences or in fulfillment status. For all these reasons, emotional reactions by others may not translate well to us. We might improve emotional identification by limiting our investigations to individuals who are similar to us in their emotional reactions. However, to establish relevant similar-

ity, we would have to obtain profound insight into what moves other individuals. To draw applicable lessons, we would further have to find individuals in possession of an instructive depth and extent of painful experiences. To gain suitably broad instruction, we may have to sample a multitude of similar individuals. To the extent we can find such settings, we may have some successes adopting indications of pain we have not directly experienced. By witnessing or otherwise receiving information how relevant individuals react to particular circumstances, we can estimate the intensity of pain we would feel under the circumstances. We may let these lessons instill fear in us that can incentivize us to escape similar suffering from similar conditions and to appreciate that we are spared from having to experience such pain. Notwithstanding such effects, to the extent the reactions of similarly disposed individuals exceed emotional reactions we have had to deprivation regarding any need, our inability to trace emotional intensities may persist. We may only comprehend that the emotions appear to exceed the most extreme intensity in our experience. This may not grant us sufficient absolute direction or guidance, or information to choose among alternatives that surpass our experiences. Even if we have experienced similar intensity in other needs, the difference among needs may keep us at a loss to emotionally comprehend the anguish others suffer if we have experienced the same type of pain solely at reduced levels. Thus, even empathic transfers from similar individuals could leave us with a limited understanding how their experiences would affect us.

Still, in spite of potential imprecisions, empathic transfers may afford useful deterrence to avoid painful circumstances and raise our appreciation more accurately than based on our autonomous imagination alone. Missing connectivity may be remedied by the provision of more direct channels of empathic transfer than representational manners. Yet, as humanity succeeds in creating circumstances that deflect experiences of pain, we are at risk of losing access to sufficiently deep sources to maintain an adequate empathic understanding. To prevent that some depths of pain will have to be experienced to be emotionally understood, it appears necessary to record and preserve experiences of pain that allow sampling after the passing of those who suffered the pain. If this is impracticable or insufficient, we may have to find technological means to create adequate impressions of pain by simulation. Where that is impossible or ineffective, we may have to resort to controlled experiences of pain in consequence of actual harm or its threat to preserve the ability to experience pleasure and to prevent individuals from unnecessarily experiencing pain. Such lessons might join with those that must be learned to discourage infliction of pain on others.

Such escalating strategies may reduce the infliction of pain to a minimum of didactic occurrences that involve direct sampling. Nevertheless, they must produce a meaningful amplitude of initial and continuing or recurring pain even if accompanying damage is to be minimized. That is not only to produce an adequate contrast to happiness but also because imagined pain has to be a sufficient deterrent to dissuade us from inappropriately reacting to other incidents of pain. The pain we have to fight has several sources beyond technical and developmental inadequacies and errors that we might be able to overcome. Internal and external compromises we must enter to increase and optimize our happiness, as well as the fundamental laws and conditions of our world that dictate our potential, will continue to weigh on us. Our happiness remains further encumbered by the partial divergence between our desire to achieve and maintain fulfillment of our ulterior needs and our motivations for pursuit. Because we find ourselves either in pursuit or in perfection, we will never fully escape the accrual of pain from our needs unless and until we can afford to adjust them. Finally, we derive as much pain from not knowing our future as from finding answers we dislike and may develop additional pain if we cannot change what we find. We may worry that we might not be able to secure our needs even if they are currently secure. Empathy, rational insight and fear that counsel against competition and destruction, and extended needs for individual and collective survival and thriving may struggle to keep frustrations and destructive tendencies in check during our ascent and as we approach perfection. We may have to keep working on each of these sources for constructive motivations to secure our individual and collective survival and thriving. Although we may wonder how much happiness we can derive with these methods, they appear to represent the best conditions that we can arrange.

While some pain appears to be unavoidable and without function, some incidents of countervailing pain and fear seem to be necessary to keep us on the right pathway toward happiness. They, together with frustrations they are set to contain, destroy or at least delay our dream of perfect happiness as the complete absence of pain and presence of pleasure. Some pain will have to remain until we have eternally secured and maximized individual and collective survival and thriving. Only then would we want our motivations to relent or to be adjusted to a state of mind that allows us to partake in happiness without pain. Such an event appears to be sited far in the future and may never arrive. It may even remain inherently impossible. Therefore, despite all our maneuvers to reduce pain, it remains a foreseeably necessary condition for happiness and the purposes of happiness to unfold.